

**PROCEEDINGS AND RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE 38TH SESSION OF NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY OF BHUTAN HELD FROM THE 5TH TO 19TH OF MAY 1973  
CORRESPONDING TO 5TH DAY OF THE 3RD MONTH  
OF WATER BULL YEAR**

1. MATTER RELATING TO APPROVAL ON THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY  
LHENGYE SHUNGTSHOG

- i. It was proposed to lift the ban on private trucks and permit them to ply against the payment of a revised tax.
- ii. To streamline the process of awarding contracts for construction works, which was hitherto being done by the Royal Advisory Council, it was proposed to henceforth empower the Heads of departments to award contracts directly as per the existing rules.
- iii. As resolved in the previous session, the precious materials such as statues and scriptures and kusung Thuten of the government owned monasteries/ Temples were to be collected and preserved by the government. Such objects being kept by private or public monasteries and temples were henceforth to be registered with the government, which was to keep proper records of the items.
- iv. As per the discussions in previous session, the imported labourers would not be permitted to keep private vegetable gardens, domestic animals and birds. The Lhengye Shungtshog proposed that they be permitted to keep small kitchen gardens and fowls for personal use only and not for commercial purposes, but that they be forbidden from keeping cows, pigs and goats.

The above proposals made by the Lhengye Shungtshog were received and approved by the Assembly.

2. MATTER RELATING TO VALUABLE ANCIENT RELICS HELD BY THE PUBLIC IN  
PRIVATE RESIDENCE

Numerous valuable and ancient relics representing the national culture are owned by some private citizens and kept in their residences were to be listed in the government records. The

owners of such relics could, if they so desired, sell them within Bhutan alone (even to the government) but they were not permitted under any circumstances, to sell or present them to any person outside the country.

3. MATTER RELATING TO CIVIL BUDGET FOR 1973-74

The Assembly considered and approved the civil budget for 1973-74 (excluding those of the Royal Bhutan Army, Royal Body Guards and the Ministry of Development) submitted by the Hon'ble Finance Minister.

4. MATTER RELATING TO THE PRIVY PURSES OF MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

Although the Assembly had in the past approved the grant of privy purse to the members of the Royal Family for their personal expenses, His Majesty was pleased to point out that it had not been specified as to how long the members of the Royal Family would be eligible to receive the privy purse. In this connection, the Assembly resolved that the members of the Royal Family would receive privy purse benefits throughout their lives as per existing rates.

5. MATTER RELATING TO THE EXTENSION OF SERVICE OF THREE MINISTERS

Resolution No. 30 of the 34th session of the Assembly had fixed the term of a Minister at 5 years. Since three of the Ministers i.e. the Ministers for Home Affairs, Finance, and Trade, Industry and Forests had each completed their 5 years term, the question of their retirement was raised. However, His Majesty commanded Assembly to extend their term for one year upto the next spring session (40th), which the Assembly accordingly agreed to do without voting.

6. MATTER RELATING TO PERMIT AND TAX FOR BAMBOO

As per resolution No. 20 of the 32nd session certain taxes were levied on bamboo procured for house construction and roofing. However, the current Assembly session resolved to abolish taxes on and permits for bamboo procured for purely domestic and non-commercial purposes such as the construction of houses, cowsheds and fences.

7. MATTER RELATING TO TAX ON FIREWOOD

In some districts firewood was procured against cash after the payment of taxes. The Assembly decided that henceforth no permits would be necessary for dry firewood, but in the case of wet firewood, permits would have to be obtained from the Department of Forests even if the wet wood in question did not belong to the species restricted by the government. However, in view of the fact that there were some areas in Bhutan where no tree was available for firewood other than the restricted ones, the Assembly resolved that the requisition of firewood should be provided to the Forest Department, which would then make the necessary markings for the required quantity. No tax would be levied on such firewood.

8. MATTER RELATING TO THE INCREASE IN NUMBER OF TREES FOR SHINGLES

As per resolution No. 25 of the 32nd session regarding granting of trees for making shingles, it was decided that the trees would be granted as per the size of the house and to the maximum extent of 30 trees, However, the Assembly also resolved that a circular to this effect would be issued by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Forest.

9. MATTER RELATING TO LABOUR FOR THE RENOVATION OF PUNAKHA DZONG

Tashichho-dzong was built with the combined efforts of Bhutanese from every district. As such, in view of the historical importance of Punakha Dzong, it was proposed that a similar national effort be made for its repair and renovation. But as every district had its own Dzong which was repaired by the local people whenever necessary, members did not agree that labourers from every district should be spared for the repair of Punakha Dzong. Therefore, it was decided to combine the efforts of Sha, Wangdi and Paro for Punakha Dzong's repair. Should the manpower provided by these districts prove insufficient, then foreign labourers may be imported, and carpenters and masons would be brought from other districts all over Bhutan.

10. MATTER RELATING TO ASSISTANCE FOR THE REPAIR OF PUBLIC MONASTERIES

In this connection the government of Bhutan was receiving Nu.3 lakhs annually from the government of India during the third five year plan. The Assembly members requested that, of this sum, two lakhs be spent for the government owned monasteries and Nu. one lakh for the public monasteries belonging to various villages. As per resolution No. 29 of the 32nd

session of the National Assembly of Bhutan both categories were to be renovated after due investigation and approval of the government. As such, the Assembly resolved that the decision taken under the said resolution would stand valid.

11. MATTER RELATING TO OPENING OF SUB-DIVISIONAL OFFICE IN NEOLY

Members from the Neoly area under Samdrupjongkhar division submitted to the Assembly their difficulties in having to travel through India in order to reach the sub-divisional office at Samdrupjongkhar for various purposes. In this context, the members requested that a decision be taken regarding the setting up of a sub-divisional office either at Neoly, Okhaldunga or Nalpara, since the population of this area was considerable. The Assembly decided that the Lhengye Shungtshog should deliberate over the matter and submit its decision to the next session.

12. MATTER RELATING TO VARIOUS DEPARTMENTAL WORKS

During this the 38th session of the National Assembly of Bhutan, the public submitted many petitions on matters under the purview of the Ministry of Development. Most of the petitions for projects schemes were incorporated within the Third Five Year Plan with a view to completing them within the plan period. However, some important projects and schemes not covered by the Third Five Year Plan would be reviewed by the Representative of His Majesty in the Ministry of Development and efforts would be made to implement them. The remaining projects would be considered for implementation in the next plan.

13. MATTER RELATING TO GOVERNMENT FIXED QUOTAS

A necessity was felt for the pooling of a consolidated fund for payment of Shaptolayme. The committee set up for this fund felt that some extra profit could be derived from the quotas of such items as CGI sheets, sugar and cement received from Government of India. It was decided that the Lhengye Shungtshog, keeping in view the overall objectives of boosting the fund through these quotas, should find out whether there was greater benefit in the government retaining these quotas or in giving them to private on a commission basis. The Lhengye Shungtshog was to submit its findings to the next session.

14. MATTER RELATING TO LAND FOR THE LANDLESS IN SOUTHERN BHUTAN

Many landless people in Southern Bhutan were given land for cultivation by the government. However, it was later found that there were still many more landless people and all their names were listed by the government for allotments of land to them. Dates for distribution of these allotments, along with their exact locations, would be fixed by the government. However, the Assembly decided that once these allotments were made, no further requests for land would be entertained.

15. MATTER RELATING TO GUP'S ALLOWANCES

It was stated that the headmen of villages were paid allowances ranging from Nu. 150/- to 500 according to the amount of revenue collected on behalf of the government. However, as taxes had been greatly reduced of late the amount of revenue collected by the headmen had correspondingly decreased. Therefore, a debate was held on whether the allowances of Gups (at the rate of Nu.150 to Nu.500) should also to be decreased or not. However, in view of the responsibilities and pecuniary condition of the Gups, the Assembly decided to keep the existing rates intact.

16. MATTER RELATING TO CURRY ALLOWANCES FOR RABDEY MONK BODIES

Several members representing the Rabdey voiced the difficulties faced by the Rabdey Monk Body in view of the irregular supply of vegetables from the new harvests of the public. As such, the Assembly decided to pay 25 ch. each to the monks per meal in lieu of curry allowance. These allowances would be paid to those who were actually present at the meal time and not according to their nominal registers. This decision was to be implemented from the 1st April, 1973.

17. MATTER RELATING TO FIRST OFFERING OF CROPS (THOGPHI) TO THE MONK BODIES AND RABDEYS

As per resolution No. 18 of the 28th Session of the National Assembly of Bhutan, the villagers owing farmland were to contribute one de per household of any kind of crop to the Monk Bodies and Rabdeys as Thogphi. In those areas where crops did not grow, the villagers were to contribute 1 sang of butter per household in accordance with their wish. It was

pointed out that in the absence of a representative of the Monk Body or Rabdey, it was of great inconvenience to the public to reach the offering to the Monk Bodies. Therefore, the house decided that henceforth the Monk Body and Rabdey would send its own representative to collect 'Thogphi'. The local Dzongda would inform the respective Assembly members with a request to assist the representative in the collection. After collection, the 'Thogphi' would be taken to the Dzongs and the Gedun/Rabdey by the people.

However, they would be paid portorage by the Monk Body as per the rules.

#### 18. MATTER RELATING TO THE MINUTES OF THE ASSEMBLY

After each session, the Assembly distributed to each member a copy of the decisions passed by the Assembly on returning to their respective districts, it was discovered that many members were mishandling their copies by lending them out or losing them. As this was detrimental to the interests of the country in general and the Assembly in particular, it was decided that henceforth all the members, while allowing interested citizens to copy them out for personal reference, should keep their copies most carefully, so as to be able to hand them over in good order to the next elected member.

#### 19. MATTER RELATING TO NATIONAL DRESS

In accordance with the decision of Lhengye Shung tshog, the Assembly resolved that those Bhutanese operating modern machinery in workshops, factories etc., where the use of the Bhutanese 'kho' was inadvisable would be permitted to wear other dresses. National other than Mechanics would not be permitted to wear any other dress in lieu of their national dress. However, though students and trainees receiving education/training in foreign countries would be permitted to wear foreign clothing during their stay abroad or while travelling to and from Bhutan, they would have to revert to the national dress while vacationing in Bhutan. Any person violating this rule would be arrested and given one month's imprisonment.

#### 20. MATTER RELATING TO BAN OR LONG HAIR FOR BHUTANESE MALES

Bhutan being a developing country, it was found necessary to send trainees and students abroad for various periods of time. On certain occasions, however, they had returned with

western traits and fashions, such as the keeping of long hair. Bhutan having monastic origins, its menfolk traditionally kept the length of their hair within prescribed limits. As such, it was feared that the introduction of fashions such as the keeping of long hair would gradually lead to an erosion of the nation's cultural identity. Therefore, the National Assembly decided that with effect from 1st July, 1973, no Bhutanese male would be permitted to keep his hair beyond the prescribed limit. Any person found violating this decision would be arrested and awarded one month's imprisonment regardless of rank.

21. MATTER RELATING TO EXEMPTION OF LAND TAX UPTO 8 LANGDOS OF LAND

As per resolution No. 1 of the 36th session of the National Assembly, the exemption of land tax upto 8 langdos would not be appreciable to amalgamated wet and dry lands. As it was found that this decision had proved advantageous only to the rich land-owners, but not to the poor, the current session of the Assembly decided that henceforth except for Southern Bhutan, the people of interior Bhutan would be permitted to combine wet land, dry land, shifting cultivation land and vegetables patches to make up the requisite 8 langdos for tax exemption.

22. MATTER RELATING TO DRAMI

Since the dramai (General handymen living in Monasteries) could not carry out the major repairs by themselves, the local people came and helped them. Therefore, it was decided that henceforth the Dramai must come forward to work with the general public in such works as the major repairing of Dzongs. In case any monasteries suffered natural calamities such as fire, flood or earthquake, then the entire population under the local Dzungda was to come to their aid. Minor repairs of the monasteries, however, would have to be carried out by the Dramai, while the public would be responsible for the minor repairs of Dzongs.

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