# ISBS 2025 Kyoto
## The 2nd Conference of the International Society for Bhutan Studies



## Date

February 4-6, 2025

(*International Symposium: February 7, 2025)

## Venue

International Seminar Hall in the Clock Tower,
Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan

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# Acknowledgements

# Welcome Remarks

Welcome to ISBS Kyoto 2025. We are honoured to host an international conference on Bhutanese studies at Kyoto University. Kyoto, the former capital of Japan, has been the centre of history, philosophy, and culture. With its numerous Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, Kyoto can be said to be a city which combines tradition and modernity. It is also a centre of wisdom, with numerous universities and research institutes. Kyoto is similar to Bhutan in that it values the harmony of tradition and modernity. It is, therefore, a very appropriate venue for an international conference on Bhutan. We sincerely hope participants will learn about the fascinating and unique country of Bhutan and share their academic insights while enjoying Japanese culture and tradition.

Seiji Kumagai

Convener of the 2nd Conference of the

International Society for Bhutan Studies

## Introduction of ISBS

Founded in Paro, Bhutan, in 2015, ISBS has expanded its activities since its launch conference at Oxford University in 2019. This conference will continue the ISBS philosophy and provide an opportunity to think together about global happiness and well-being based on the latest research findings on Bhutan.

As stated on the ISBS official website  https://www.isbsbhutan.org/, the conference will be held with the following objectives:

The ISBS 2025 reflects the ISBS aims in microcosm:

1. As the ISBS is multidisciplinary, the conference will feature papers on topics from linguistics to history to natural science to Buddhism to economics and business and so on.
2. As the ISBS promotes research excellence, papers will reflect the cutting edge research internationally on Bhutan.
3. As the ISBS seeks to support Bhutanese scholars, both junior and established, this conference will feature their voices alongside international scholars.
4. As the ISBS seeks to create intellectual community and academic exchange the conference will provide spaces for mentoring, networking, and sharing.
5. As the ISBS seeks to contribute to the happiness of future generations, the ethos of our exchange will be to engage both the guardians of culture and tradition and those able to use the research to enact positive change.
6. As the ISBS seeks to be inclusive, we welcome gifts that support the participation of all scholars.

# Committee of the 2nd Conference of ISBS

## Organizing Committee

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# Maps of the Venue

## Location of Kyoto University

See the access on the website: [Directions | KYOTO UNIVERSITY](https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/access)

https://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/access          You can see  from the QR code →

Kyoto University is located in Kyoto City. The nearest Airports are Osaka International Airport (Itami) and Kansai International Airport (KIX). The conference venue is in Yoshida Campus.
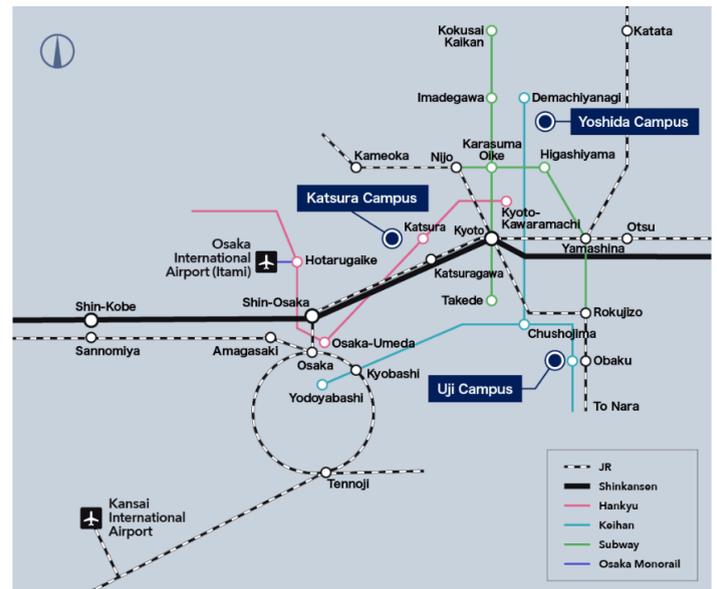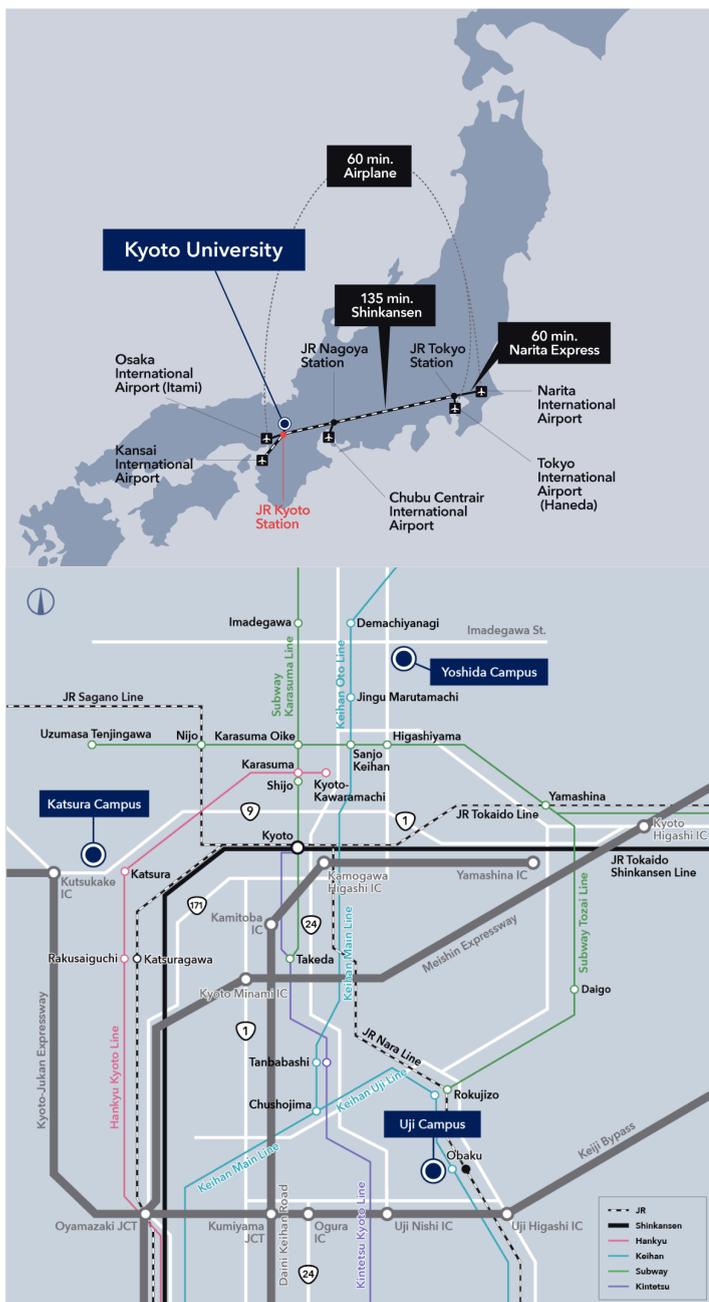
## Location of the Clock Tower Centennial Hall

Clock Tower Centennial Hall is located on the main campus of Kyoto University, Yoshida Campus. The **building number [3]** on the main campus map is the hall. All sessions and events are held in the **International Conference Halls and Meeting Rooms on the 2nd Floor of the building**.

**Location of conference rooms: the 2nd floor of Clock Tower Centennial Hall**



REGISTRATION DESK

Meeting rooms IV III

International Conference Hall III II I

W.C.

W.C.

II I

2nd Floor Plan
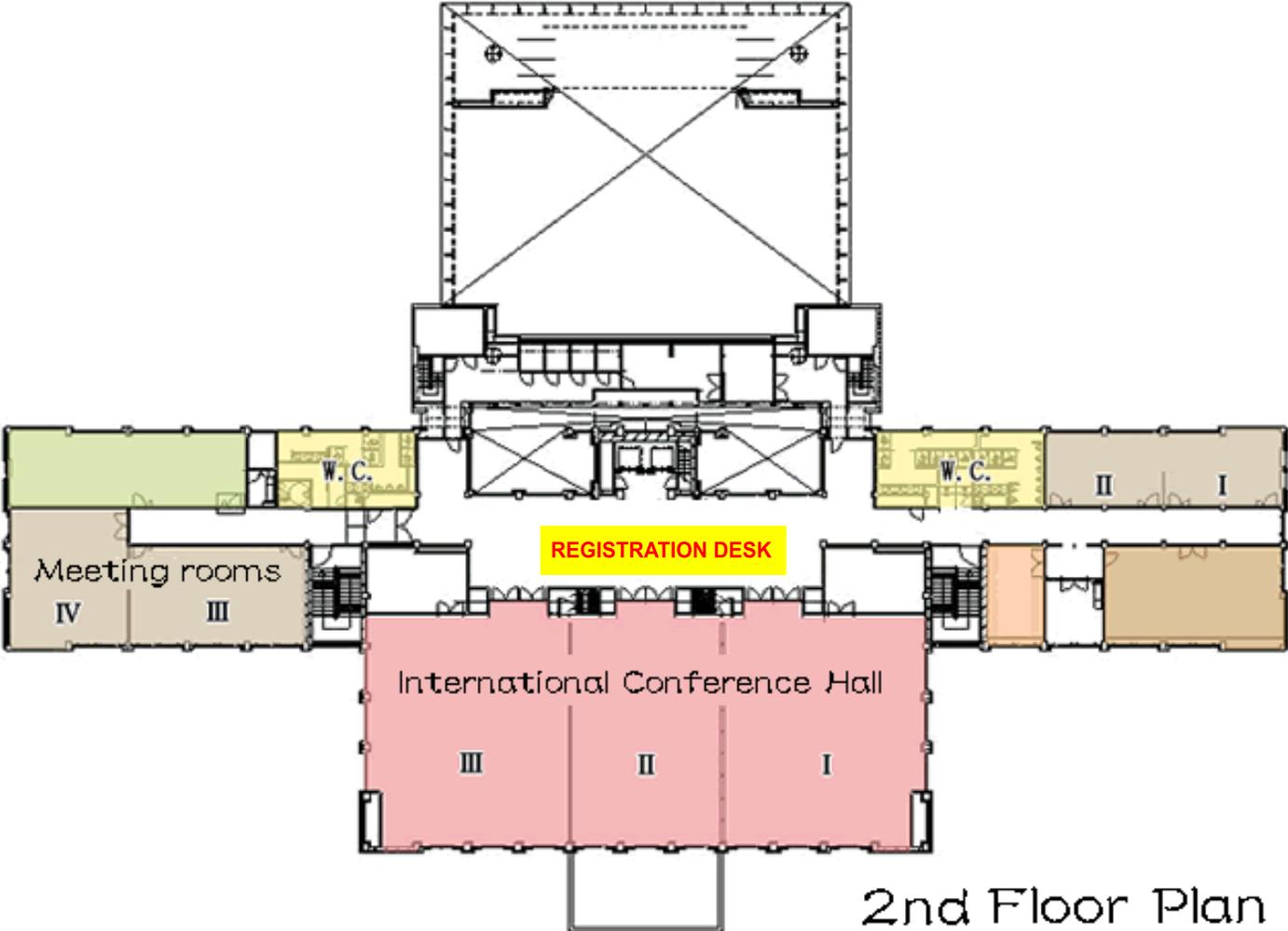
## Schedule

| 3rd. Feb. 2025 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 14:00-17:00 | Registration | Lobby in front of Hall 2 |
| 16:00-18:00 | Reception | Hall 2 |

| 4th. Feb. 2025 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9:20-11:00 | Registration | Lobby in front of Hall 2 |
| 11:00-12:30 | Opening session | Hall 1 |
| 12:30-14:00 | Lunch | Hall 3 |
| 14:00-15:00 | Keynote Talk 1, 2 | Hall 1 |
| 15:00 | coffee break | Meeting Room 4 |
| 15:20-17:00 | Presentation session 1 | Hall 1, Hall 2 |
| 18:00-19:50 | Welcome Dinner | Hall 3 |

| 5th. Feb. 2025 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9:20-11:00 | Presentation session 2 | Hall 1, Hall 2 |
| | coffee break | Meeting Room 4 |
| 11:30-12:30 | Presentation session 3 | Hall 1 |
| 12:30-14:00 | Lunch | Hall 2 |
| 14:00-15:00 | Presentation session 4 | Hall 1 |

| 6th. Feb. 2025 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9:20-11:00 | Presentation session 5 | Hall 1, Hall 2 |
| 11:00 | coffee break | Meeting Room 4 |
| 11:30-12:30 | Keynote Talk 3, 4, 5 | Hall 1 |
| 12:30-14:00 | Lunch | Hall 2 |
| 14:00-16:30 | Business Meeting | Hall 1 |
| 17:00-19:00 | Dinner | Hall 2 |

| 7th. Feb. 2025  International Symposium:  The Future of Well-being |
|---|
| **14:00-16:00, Hall 3** |

## Detailed Timetable

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ewoS91Cl44qjSfDGhjTPnKWwtwBEpIe8DMdyElQFFog/edit?usp=sharing

* The timetable can be viewed at the above link and QR code. It may be revised before the day of the conference.

# International Symposium:  The Future of Well-being

## 7th. Feb. 2025

13:30-        Door open

14:00-14:05  Opening Remarks

Yukiko Uchida (Kyoto University, Institute for the Future of Human Society)

14:05-14:20  Introduction

### "Research and Development of Kokoro Technology towards Well-going and Well-being"

Seiji Kumagai  (Kyoto University, Institute for the Future of Human Society)

14:20-15:00

### "Measuring Well-being and Poverty to Guide Policy Action"

Sabina Alkire (University of Oxford)

15:00-15:10  Break

15:10-15:50

### "Well-being in the History and Culture of Bhutan"

Karma Ura (Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research)

15:50-16:00  Conclusion

Seiji Kumagai

16:00-16:30  Informal Social Gathering of Speakers and Audience

# Paper Abstracts

| ID 1 * | Progress Report on the Plan to Implement BuddhaBot (Buddhist Chatbot) in Bhutan |
|---|---|
| | Seiji Kumagai, Seimin KIMURA, Takahiko KAMEYAMA, Kaworu KOMINAMI, Gawa Matsushita, Miguel Alvarez Ortega, Yuka YAO, Keiki NAKAYAMA, Isamu KIUCHI, Seita SASAKI, Toshikazu FURUYA, Choten Dorji, Dendup Chophel |

The speed of development of artificial intelligence in recent years has been remarkable. A joint research group led by Seiji Kumagai (Kyoto University) and Toshikazu Furuya (Teraverse, Co., Ltd.) developed and released a Buddhist chatbot AI, called "BuddhaBot" March 12, 2021. We further developed a new chatbot "BuddhaBot-Plus" by integrating BuddhaBot with ChatGPT4 (July 18, 2023). We have further diversified our Buddhist chatbot AI by creating "VasubandhuBot" and "ShinranBot" (September 12, 2023).

We have refrained from making BuddhaBot available to the public in Japan because the easy release of the cutting-edge technology is likely to lead to misuse and abuse. However, we received a request from Bhutan's Central Monastic Body and the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs in 2022, to open BuddhaBot to the public in Bhutan. After a series of discussions on the feasibility of its implementation in Bhutan, we decided to conduct an international project to open the BuddhaBot to the public in Bhutan.

In this presentation, we will introduce the plan to implement BuddhaBot in Bhutan and report on its current progress:

1) Overview of the structure of the system of BuddhaBot

2) Contents of the BuddhaBot implementation project

3) Specific methods and 3-step milestones of the project implementation:

-Trial at monasteries (Tango Monastery, Tashiccho Dzong, Simtokha Dzong)

-Trial by the general public (Thimphu City)

-Public release (Whole land of Bhutan)

| 5 | **Gross National Happiness (GNH) and the Sustainable Development Goals, in comparison to African Ubuntu and indigenous Buen Vivir** |
|---|---|
| | **Dorine  Eva Van Norren** |

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—a normative (non-binding) global international environmental agreement (IEA)—claim to be universal as they were multilaterally negotiated between UN member states. However, is giving the Global South a seat at the table truly inclusive development? This research looks at a cross-cultural comparison of the African philosophy of Ubuntu (specifically in South Africa), the Buddhist Gross National Happiness (Bhutan) and the native American idea of Buen Vivir (e.g. Ecuador) and how they view the SDGs, how they view 'development', 'sustainability', goals and indicators, the implicit value underpinnings of the SDGs, prioritization of goals, and missing links, and leadership. Viewed through the lens of the three cosmovisions of the Global, the SDGs do not effectively address the human–nature–well-being interrelationship. Other cosmovisions have an inherent biocentric value orientation that is often ignored in academic and diplomatic circles. These claim to be more promising than continuing green development approaches, based in modernism. On the positive side, the SDGs contain language of all three worldviews. However, the SDGs are not biocentric aiming to respect nature for nature's sake, enabling reciprocity with nature. They embody linear growth/results thinking which requires unlimited resource exploitation, and not cyclical thinking replacing growth with well-being (of all beings). They represent individualism and exclude private sector responsibility. They do not represent collective agency and sharing, implying that there is a need for 'development as service', to one another and to the Earth. Including these perspectives may lead to abolishing the word 'development' within the SDGs, replacing it by inter-relationship; replacing end-result-oriented 'goals' with process thinking; and thinking in cyclical nature, and earth governance, instead of static 'sustainability'. The glass can be viewed as half full or half empty, but the analysis shows that Western 'modernism' is still a strong underpinning of the SDGs. Bridges can be built between Happiness, Ubuntu and Buen Vivir in re-interpreting goal frameworks, global governance and the globalization process. The research uses a critical realist approach, as part of post-colonial economics and law. No other comparison between these worldviews have been done before, nor worldviews in relation to the SDGs.

| 6 | In Search of Buddhist Journalism; Influence of Buddhism on Bhutanese Journalists' Conceptions of their Roles and Values |
|---|---|
| | Tshering Yangki, Andreas  Schuck |

Global diversity of journalistic culture is a rising field of inquiry in journalism studies. Studies on conceptions of journalistic roles and values increasingly acknowledge the influence of contextual factors such as religious values on journalistic professional worldview. Formulated on Shoemaker and Reese's (1996) theory of the 'hierarchy of influences,' this study draws on the limited existing literature on Buddhism and journalism, as well as the novel concept of Buddhist journalism, to empirically examine the influence of Buddhist communication values on Bhutanese journalists' conceptions of their roles and values in the Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan. Mediation analysis using the PROCESS model 4 (Hayes, 2012) of a quantitative survey (n=45) among Bhutanese journalists reveals a statistically significant influence of Buddhist journalistic values on Bhutanese journalists' conceptions of their roles and values. The analysis shows that Bhutanese journalists are driven by the Vajrayana Buddhist value of Tha damtsi (Moral integrity and social commitment) to serve as the custodians of Bhutan's environment and culture in their roles as journalists. Their journalistic values closely align with the Buddhist right speech doctrine, embodying traits of affectionate, intuitive, and harmonious speech. These findings provide an image of Bhutanese journalists, torn between rather two conflicting paradigms of professional values of conformity to the mainstream journalistic norm of objectivity, and to the Buddhist journalistic values of indirect and emphatic speech. It shows that journalists negotiate the mainstream journalistic roles and values to best fit their national priorities as well as the cultural sensitivies and sensibilities of their respective countries. Findings also mirror the concept of developmental journalism and Asian values in journalism reported in studies as well as the aspirations for public service press and middle- path journalism in Bhutan. Overall, these findings speak to the ongoing discourse on diverse perspectives regarding journalistic roles and values, which question the notion of universal journalistic norms. It thus recognizes global diversity in journalistic cultures shaped by personal and socio-political contexts.

| 7 | **Religious advisory, social reforms and the unity of lay and clerical authorities in Bhutanese socio-polity: Examining the Je Khenpo's reform initiatives on societal excesses and wastefulness** |
|---|---|
| | **Dendup  Chophel** |

The embeddedness of Buddhist influence in the society and polity of Bhutan is premised upon the ideological and institutional arrangement of chos srid zung 'brel. However, even as Buddhism acted as a principal influence on societal organization and practices, both lay and monastic leaders have historically emphasized moderation as the cornerstone of this union between religious and secular forces and imperatives. As the country transforms with increased affluence on the one hand, and competitive pressure to demonstrate religiosity on the other, the country's Buddhist leaders have been at the forefront of restoring moderation of societal excesses and wastefulness as a cornerstone in the upholding of traditional values and practices in the society. The current Je Khenpo, His Holiness Trulku Jigme Choedra, Bhutan's constitutionally enshrined supreme Buddhist leader, has through a series of edicts and advisories (chab shog) sought to moderate excesses in Buddhist communal and ritual practices. Through a systematic study of hundreds of such advisories issued since 1996 to institutions, individuals and groups to promote ethical and sustainable socio-cultural and devotional practices, this paper examines how Buddhist influence actually instrumentalizes socio-political actions. The paper also draws on ethnographic observations of the private monastery of His Holiness the Je Khenpo in Eastern Bhutan. An important contribution of this paper is the examination of innovations that are taking place in the Eastern Bhutanese monastery and in monasteries across the country that seek to realign potentially extractive doctrinal and institutional innovations with the pre-existing social ideals, norms and solidarities. Therefore, the paper extends existing studies on the role of Buddhist figures and institutions in shaping social and ritual practices of people, which significantly influence how people engage, and to what extent, with the economy and polity of the country.

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| **8** | **Play, Community, and Society: Case Study on Digital Gaming in Bhutan** |
| | **Hitoshi  Fujiwara** |

This research aims to explain how people's playing habits raised on the new technology form the new community, the new culture, and the new society. Focusing on the formation process of the digital gaming community in Bhutan as a case study, the conflict with the existing society and the originality of the Bhutanese gaming culture are stated. Precedential to the case study, the following fundamental questions on the terminology of 'society' should be brought up: what the element of society is; how the relationship between society and information; and how the society has been transformed. The theories of Social Systems, Fundamental Informatics, and Mobilities are consulted as the research framework. Then, the recent discussion about Game Studies would also help to understand the practices of game players.

Bhutanese society has drastically modernized through the penetration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for a quarter century. Internet and mobile technologies have introduced new habits: watching movies on YouTube; listening to music on SoundCloud; and playing digital games. Currently, Bhutanese youngsters also have easy access to the global gaming market to enrich their playing lives. Regarding 'PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG)', a globally popular online multiplayer game, thousands of Bhutanese players have formed a community on Facebook to share their impressions, skills, or experiences. On the other hand, old-fashioned Bhutanese adults believe that gaming is a bad habit. Parents had argued against playing 'PUBG' due to its addictive and violent nature, and the government had decided to ban playing temporarily. This type of conflict in Bhutanese society seems to follow its predecessors, Japan and other Western countries.

The author has been focused on this theme for 5 years and had collected the following data through online/offline fieldwork: Results of interviews on 'Attitude toward Playing Video Games' with over 300 Bhutanese from 2021 to 2022; Results of academic workshops on Game Studies at Sherubtse College and Jigme Namgyel Engineering College in 2023; and Articles and posts related to digital gaming on Bhutanese media and social media. Using these data, how the Bhutanese players start to play a digital game, what the process of forming the Bhutanese gaming players' community is, and how the conflict between the gaming community and existing society will transform, are described in detail.

| 9 | **Dark Retreat (mun mtsham): Illuminating the Darkness by the Light of Dark Meditation Techniques in the Early Vajrayānā Buddhism** |
|---|---|
| | **Choten  Dorji** |

Vajrayānā Buddhism has come a long way based on its cosmic views regarding the universe and enlightenment developed from ritual, practice, and meditation. This research will illustrate the extent in which we can understand the profound insight and techniques laid down in Vajrayānā Buddhism with written records dating back to at least 400 C.E. The paths to enlightenment, including various meditation practices were laid down by Sākyamuni Buddha, that subsequently promulgated by great Indian sages and Tibetan masters. Perhaps, the practice and meditation integrate the lesser vehicle's path of seeking selfrealization and the higher vehicle's addition of working for the enlightenment of all sentient beings into a quick path that can be obtained in one short lifetime.

In this way, Vajrayānā path builds up the earliest Buddhist tradition but employs many of the same insights and techniques. This research will explore the types of major meditation in the earliest tradition collaborating with the perspective of techniques from manuscript to Sūtras and insight into the Milarepa's meditation. This paper at the frontline will introduce the Dark Retreat, popularly known as mun mtsham that was practiced not so long ago in far eastern remote of Bhutan. Dark Retreat is an ancient practice, attested in many Buddhist traditions where one is locked in a designated darkroom for several days in prayers and meditation. This practice perhaps forces you to forget about space, time, body, and rest of the world, instead, making yourself dedicated to the movement of your mind and consciousness.

On a very simple note, the dark retreat is basically termed as an unguided meditation practiced that existed in the later Buddhist era. This pioneering technique of meditation emerged in 1729 when the great Jigme Lingpa (Wly. 'jigs med gling pa) and his successive lineage holder focused on the philosophy of Sandhayābhāṣā or the 'Twilight Language' which can be explained in two ways, one in a refined sense while the other in a gross sense. It is a language that may be explained by the light of the day or by the darkness of the night, and in fact, it was the technical method to lighten the darkness by the light of the dark. The dark retreat does not simply refer to meditation, but it is used to designate the entire range of Buddhist practices for conduct, motivation, and visualization. The practical objective of dark retreat is to reveal the true nature of phenomena and the mind treading on the essential points of the path that leads to liberation.

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| **10** | **Invoking Choe kyongs, Konchok Solkha,** <br><br> **Ancient Ritual Offering and Cultural Belief of Central Bhutan** |
| | **Tenzin  Dorji** |

This paper examines the Konchog Solkha (dkon mchog gsol kha དཀོན་མཆོག་གསོལ་ཁ) 1 , an indigenous ritual practiced by a few households in Taktse and Tashi Dingkha village under Drakteng Gewog in Trongsa, Bhutan. It is a one-day appreciative invocation and offering to five choe kyongs, local tutelary deities Yultsen Dorje Dagtsen (yul btsan rdo rje drag btsan ཡུལ་བཙན་རོ་རྗེ་བྲག་བཙན་), the aquatic deity Menmo Tashi Wangzom (sman mo bkra shi dbang 'dzoms སྨན་མོ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་དབང་འཛོམས་), and Zhidag (གཞི་བདག་ bzhi bdag). This is performed to protect cattle, crops, and the people themselves, to ward off yearly obstacles, and for prosperity. Therefore, it is an annual ritual conducted by a Bonpo priest (Pha jo ཕ་ཇོ) for the betterment of the households and the community at large.

In the past, the Konchog Solkha was practiced by more households. However, it has declined as some households embraced the practice of Buddhist annual rituals (lo chog ལོ་ཆོག) like the majority in the villages. In 2023, I decided to document the practice, which takes place on any prosperous day from the 16th to the 30th day of the eleventh or twelfth months of the lunar calendar. I also observed the ritual, conducted interviews with the Phajo and other knowledgeable people in the village for more information and elaboration of the detailed event. This practice helps assemble people to socialize, inculcates cultural values in youth, and clears predicaments of people and obstacles of the year. Therefore, it is beneficial in creating a harmonious community.

Keywords: Ancient ritual, Konchog Solkha, Offering and Invocation, Tutelary Male Deity and Aquatic Deity Menmo, Culture, Community's welfare.

| 11 | The Role of Personal Transformation in GNH |
|---|---|
|  | Lungtaen   Gyatso |

Gross National Happiness (GNH), a holistic approach to measuring progress, was introduced by Bhutan as an alternative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). At the heart of GNH is the belief that sustainable happiness and well-being emerge not merely from economic prosperity but from a deeper and more personal transformation at the individual level. This abstract explores the critical role of personal transformation in the context of GNH, highlighting its fundamental principles and practical implications for individuals and society.

In GNH the notion is that true happiness begins within the individual, requiring a profound shift in mindset that leads to spontaneous behavioral and lifestyle changes. Personal transformation involves the cultivation of mindfulness, awareness, emotional resilience, and ethical conduct. Mindfulness, as emphasized in GNH, fosters self-awareness and a present-focused mindset, enabling individuals to manage stress and negative emotions effectively. By developing mindfulness, individuals can achieve a state of inner peace and contentment, which are essential for their overall well-being.

Emotional resilience is also pivotal to personal transformation within the GNH framework. Practices like meditation, reflective thinking, and maintaining a balanced lifestyle contribute to emotional stability and mental clarity. By prioritizing mental well-being, individuals can better navigate life's challenges, reducing stress and improving their overall quality of life. This personal growth is essential for creating a resilient society capable of adapting to change and adversity.

Ethical conduct, another cornerstone of personal transformation, is integral to GNH. It encompasses values such as honesty, integrity, and compassion, guiding individuals to act in ways that benefit not only themselves but also their communities. This ethical foundation encourages altruism and social responsibility, fostering a more harmonious and cohesive society. Compassion and empathy are particularly emphasized, promoting a culture where individuals care for one another, thus enhancing collective happiness.

In essence, the role of personal transformation in GNH is to create a foundation for lasting happiness that extends beyond material wealth. By fostering mindfulness, emotional resilience, and ethical behavior, individuals can achieve a state of well-being that supports a happier, more equitable society. This holistic approach to happiness, rooted in personal transformation, underscores the potential of

GNH to inspire global paradigms for development and well-being. Through individual growth and transformation, GNH envisions a world where happiness and well-being are accessible to all, promoting a sustainable and harmonious future.

The paper will adopt literature review, qualitative research (interviews, focus groups), quantitative research (surveys, statistical analysis), case studies, mix methods approach. The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive and integrative approach to understanding GNH by focusing on personal transformation.

The study will conclude that personal transformation plays a pivotal role in achieving Gross National Happiness ultimately leading to a more harmonious and equitable society.

| 17 | How can "PBL for GNH" programs working with local communities lead to the development of a sustainable society? |
|----|----|
| | Maiko  Okuda, Takehiro Hirayama |

・Background

In Bhutan, migration from rural to urban and international emigration is increasing. Facing similar challenges in Japan, Ama Town has tackled this issue through project-based learning (PBL) by collaborating with the local community and contributed to the revitalization of the community. Based on this project and supported by the JICA Partnership Program, we implemented an educational program called "PBL for Gross National Happiness (GNH)" in three pilot schools in the Chukha Dzongkhag in Bhutan. Although PBL was already introduced in Bhutan, our program is unique in that it focuses on properties and problems of the place where the school is located, and students try to solve these issues proactively. In addition, we intended to link PBL and GNH in the following ways

(1) Purpose of each project is for GNH.

(2) Process of conducting the project itself contributes to GNH.

(3) Competencies developed through the project are important for GNH.

・Method

Teacher training started in 2022, and the program was conducted from March to October 2023, mainly in "club activities", 48 students from grades 8 through 12 participated. Each school's project had a different theme: local vegetables promotion, waste management, and eco-tourism. Students' self-evaluation of their competencies, activities in community and wellbeing were measured by online questionnaires before and after the program in 2023. The questionnaire items were developed based on the items of the "High School Attractiveness Evaluation System" developed in Japan, with some items added after discussion with teachers from the pilot schools. The competencies items were asked using the 6-point scale and analyzed by dividing them into proactivity, collaboration, inquiry, and prosociality.

・Result & Discussion

The analysis was conducted on 38 students whose completed both items in pre- and post-program. Compared to the preprogram, the post-program scores for "talking with adults in the community" and "participating in local events" were higher, and the post-program scores for collaboration, inquiry, and prosociality were higher. Although it is necessary to consider the effect of other educational activities, it is suggested that students' competencies can be developed through this program, in which they work as a team in cooperation with the local community. For prosociality, there are items such as "wanting to engage in policy making", or "wanting to invent new technology or service", so this program can contribute to the development of future generations who will support the sustainable development of the country.

| 18 | Bhutanese Folk Song Tsangmo as Happiness Media for Future Education |
|---|---|
| | **KIYOKO KURODA, Yoshihiro Ino, Atsuko GONDO, Takehiro Hiyayama** |

Through more than 15 years of fieldwork-based research on Bhutanese folk music, the presenters have recognized its uniqueness and universal cultural value. Our fieldwork on Bhutanese folk music in Paro in 2010, Chang yee in Punakha in 2012, Tshangka and Tangsibji in Trongsa in 2013, Merak in Trashigang in 2014, Samtengang Central School in 2015, Tseza in Dagana in 2017, Laya in Gasa in 2018, in Haa in 2019. Details of these studies are reported in Ino, Kuroda, and Gondo (eds.), A Study of the Bhutanese Play Song Tsangmo: An Introduction to Music Education in the 21.5th Century, March 2022. This presentation aims to rediscover the value of the Bhutanese song Tsangmo and propose it as Happiness Media. Tsangmo is a traditional, playful singing dialogue in Bhutan. There are two ways to play: one is to sing and divine while pointing at items with a stick, and the other is to compete by singing alternately in two groups. No longer played in daily life today, it is still a medium that connects people inside and outside school, such as in competitions, club activities and assignments in Dzongkha language classes. Tsangmo has also become a new medium for connecting people beyond the local community through competition for radio programs and social media. These are played in a type of alternating singing and competition.

Mr. Kunzang Dorji (former RAPA chief researcher), who chaired the inter-school Tsangmo competition we organized in Thimphu in September 2016 said, "On a world map, Bhutan is only a dot. But it could be a culinary salt." With these words, he highlights the importance of traditional Bhutanese culture at home and abroad. By reevaluating Tsangmo's research from his perspective, we rediscover the value of Tsangmo as a Happiness Media. In other words, Tsangmo may be a small culture in the world view, but its ways and heart have the potential to be indispensable to the happiness of the people. Happiness is ultimately obtained through individual dialogues. We propose a direction that contributes to future education by considering Tsangmo as a Happiness Media.

| 20 | Main self-reported reason of suicide attempts was family related issues in Bhutan in 2015 |
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| | Hiromi Kohori Segawa, Nidup  Dorji, Pemba Yangchen, Ryota Sakamoto, Yuichi Imanaka |

Mental health issues are increasing in Bhutan. Suicide is a severe mental health issue and affects all societal segments in the world. However, the issue is still under-researched in the general population of Bhutan. Suicide is preventable if addressed in a timely and appropriate fashion in our society.

This study explored self-reported reasons for suicide attempts, and focusing on the vulnerable social background of the Bhutanese population. We used the secondary data from the Gross National Happiness survey 2015 in the analyses. Logistic regression for the vulnerable social backgrounds to test relationships between the factors influencing suicide attempts among the Bhutanese population, and qualitative content analysis for the self-reported -reason of suicide attempts were employed.

From a target population of 7149, 325 reported suicidal ideation, and 68 attempted suicides. Women reported higher suicidal ideation (5.9%) and attempts (1.3%) than men (2.7% and 0.5%, respectively). The younger generation reported higher suicidal ideation and attempts. Regarding the 65 cases analyzed qualitatively, family-related issues were the main triggers for suicide attempts (53 cases), such as violence or neglect (9 cases), emotional conflict (9 cases), fighting or quarreling (9 cases), and alcohol consumption (8 cases).

This study discusses the changes in social dynamics in a sample representative of the Bhutanese population, and suggests not only strengthening basic family bonding and support but also community support and public systems. Furthermore, it highlights the need for mental health support targeting women and the younger generation.

Keyword: Suicide attempt, suicide ideation, GNH, family bonds, family transformation

| 23 | **Exploring the Influence of Madhyamaka Moral Philosophy in Bhutan's Public Sphere in the Pursuit of Sustainable Development and Gross National Happiness** |
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| | **Khentse  Gyatso** |

The kingdom of Bhutan has centuries of history being governed by theocracy with the spread of the Madhyamaka school of Buddhism, and today, it is the only country in the world to have Vajrayāna Buddhism as a state religion. The ethics and philosophy of the Madhyamaka tenet system have been guiding principles that shape the moral outlook of Bhutan's public sphere, both in the past absolute monarchy and the contemporary constitutional monarchy regimes. The designation of Druk Chokyi Gyalpo, righteous ruler, has been conferred upon successive royal kings of Bhutan for their righteous effort to reign the kingdom by following the doctrines of Buddha's teachings, specifically, the Madhyamaka philosophical heritage of Drukpa Kagyud Lineage propagated in Bhutan by the founder of Bhutanese state, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal.

In the last few decades, the Royal Government of Bhutan has gained incredible recognition worldwide for its accountability and commitment to promoting sustainable development and gross national happiness as the measures for assessing the nation's growth despite being less advanced in economic, industrial, and technological oriented progress. This paper delves into the influences of Madhyamaka's moral principles in Bhutan's public sphere in general. Notably, it analyses specific Madhyamaka moral precepts that guide governing bodies and the general public to remain firm in sustainable development and gross national happiness. The paper anticipates that although the religious and moral values of Madhyamaka philosophy have been a bedrock for the belief system and moral outlook of the people and the government of Bhutan to achieve favourable global recognition, nevertheless, in the contemporary age of globalization, there are significant challenges for Bhutan to preserve and pass on its indigenous moral values in the face of growing capitalist mindset, individualism, and the most adversely, the problem of migration.

Keywords: *Madhyamaka*, Moral philosophy, Bhutan's public sphere, Sustainable development,Gross National Happiness

| 24 | **Describing Pastoral Culture: A Focus on Yak Recognition Vocabulary** |
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| | **Shiho  Ebihara** |

Pastoralism is one of the cultural substrata that illustrate the high and cold Himalayan region and Tibetan Plateau. From a linguistic perspective, a series of words related to pastoral life, such as topography and weather of the rangeland, livestock management, milk processing (yogurt, butter, cheese), livestock production, dung (by livestock and season), clothing culture, food culture, living culture (types of tents and parts of tents), religious culture (life liberation) are folk vocabulary that reflect the worldview of the speakers, which is closely connected to the ecological environment and the culture of their livelihood. It is an urgent task to describe the unique vocabulary of these cultures, which is being lost with the decline of pastoralism. In this presentation, The present author would like to focus on vocabulary for recognizing yaks (Bos grunniens L.). These iconic animals characterize the Himalayan region and Tibetan plateaus, among the cultural vocabulary for pastoralism. The vocabulary for recognizing yaks covers various expressions such as age, male/female, physical features (i.e., colors and patterns of fur, horn shapes, etc.), role, and behavior. The present author will report on the initial research on the Laya language of Bhutan and the results of the research in north-eastern Tibet, and north-central Nepal. Then, prospects will be discussed.

| 25 | ***Satong* (fallow land) and *Gungtong* (absentee households) in Bhutan: Examining rural depopulation through abandonment of rural lands and houses, and migratory trends** |
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| | **Phuntsho  Rapten** |

Bhutan is largely an agrarian country where 57% of the total population reside in the rural areas and engage predominantly in the subsistence farming for their livelihoods . However, rural depopulation is a growing concern. Two administrative categorizations enable researchers and policy makers to assess the extent of this problem. They are called satong , the assessment of fallow land and gungtong , the assessment of absentee household s . The prevalence and incidence of satong and gungtong have increased over the years. 24% or 66,120.28 acres of the total agricultural land (2.93% or 278,126.39 acres) remained fallow in 2019. Likewise, gungtong increased by 16.7 % from 5,129 in 2 019 to 5,988 in 2024 75% of them belonged to the six eastern districts. Besides being critical for Bhutan's food security, Bhutanese villages are the source of its diverse agro pastoral cultural traditions that form the bedrock of its community vitality.  This paper examines the complex multiple driving forces influencing satong and gungtong. Situational assessment at the national level was based mainly on the census reports and the government's administrative data. This was further corroborated by field visits and interviews with people in the most affected communities . Such visits and consultations have been carried out in six of its 20 districts and 11 of its 205 gewogs (county) in the country's southern, central and eastern regions.

The findings showed that most districts that experienced higher negative net migration reported higher proportion of gungtong and districts with higher number of gungtong also showed higher satong in the country . There was a strong positive correlation (0.79) between gungtong and satong . However, there are other interrelated factors mainly the human wildlife conflict, shortage of irrigation, labour shortage and high cost of production, and market inaccessibility that significantly influence abandonment of agricultural lands and villages. Increased fallow land was associated with decreased crop production and increased import. As this research was carried out as part of the parliament's review study, this paper highlights the complex and interrelated causes and outcomes of this issue and recommend appropriate policy and legislative interventions.

| 27 | **Rethinking Tshechu from Depopulated Area in Eastern Bhutan** |
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|    | **Yoshiki  Ishiuchi**                                            |

It is well-known that migration is a severe problem in Bhutan today. The migration from eastern Bhutan is particularly marked, and in depopulated areas, in addition to labour shortages, the expansion of abandoned land, and human-wildlife conflicts, the survival of small-scale festivals held in villages is becoming difficult. In cultural anthropology and the sociology of religion, it has been argued that collective rituals and festivals are places where people share a worldview and values that are unique to the community through participation. Therefore, whether these rituals and festivals can be inherited and maintained is important when considering the community's survival. This paper, therefore, examines the practice of village tshechu in Bartsham, Trashigang. The author conducted participative observation and interviews about the history and practice of these village tshechus.

Bartsham, located on the southern slopes along the Gamri Chu, has relatively high number of "empty houses (gungtong)" compared to other areas. Bartsham is about an hour's drive from Trashigang Town and comprises 30 villages and 5 chiwogs, situated in a temperate forest at altitudes between 800m and 2,800m. During the farming season, rice and maize cultivation is carried out on gentle slopes, while during the off-season, village tshechu is usually carried out in tshokhangs, private houses and temporary huts built on vacant land. Tshechu means 'the tenth day of the month' and is a festival to commemorate the outstanding achievements of Guru Rinpoche. However, in local villages, tshechu is used as a general term for festivals, and the days and scale of the tshechus vary from one village to another. This paper uses the term 'village tshechu' to distinguish it from large-scale tshechu held in dzongs and famous monasteries. Based on the data obtained through this research, this paper presents a diachronic analysis of the village tshechu and considers the practice and forms of survival of the village tshechu in depopulated rural areas.

Finally, this paper provides (1) a newly more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of tshechu in Bhutan, (2) a better insight into the situations where village tshechus have been exposed in depopulated areas, and (3) emphasizes an emergent need to document such local and unique festivals in Bhutan.

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| **28** | **Active Buddhist Kingship and Symbolic Constitutional Monarchy**<br><br>**The marriage of traditional monarchy and modern democracy in Bhutan** | |
| | **Sonam  Kinga** | |

The fundamental tenets of modern liberal democracy make the idea and practice of Buddhist kingship a big suspect. This is because Buddhist kingship is regarded as a form of divine kingship drawing legitimacy from God. Without popular basis for legitimacy, Buddhist kingship deemed archaic with divine origins is supposedly contradictory to modern democratic ideals. Yet in Bhutan, the introduction of parliamentary democracy in 2008 and the promulgation of a written Constitution did not constitute a negation of Buddhist kingship. Rather, it reaffirmed the Buddhist character of kingship while defining the regime as a Constitutional Monarchy at the same time. On the one hand, the King has to be a Buddhist embodying the union of the spiritual and temporal orders (chos srid lugs gnyis). On the other hand, religion and politics has to be separate and royal family must remain above politics. The concept of Buddhist kingship advocates active but righteous governance in adherence to the precepts of Buddha Dharma while that of a Constitutional Monarch requires the ruler to be merely a ceremonial and symbolic head. How did Bhutan harmonize the seemingly contradictory idea and practice of active Buddhist kingship and symbolic Constitutional Monarchy? I argue that the Buddhist idea and institution of chos srid lugs gnyi has been successfully enacted in the framework of democratic principles of separation of powers. Besides, the Constitution created space for an active Buddhist kingship in non-political ways while ensuring adherence to the idea of an inactive and non-partisan monarchy situated above politics. This enables us to think of a model of Buddhist constitutionalism where the Mahayanist ideal of Buddhist kingship (Chos rgyal) founded on the union of spiritual and temporal authority is able to re-express itself through institutions of parliamentary democracy by upholding the ideals and values of modern Constitutions.

| 29 | **Geographical Research on the Emplacement of "International Student-Workers" from Bhutan to Australia** |
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| | **Kikugawa  Shota** |

The purpose of this research is to clarify how is the mechanism of "International student-workers" rapid increase from Bhutan to Australia and how they are emplacing to the Australian society even though they are in very unstable situation. Australian society is pointed out to be transforming from an immigrant country to "guest worker" country (Chris and Stephen, 2020). In recent years, especially from South Asia countries, the number of " International student-workers" is increasing, who are not only studying but also earning tuition fees, living expenses, and remittance fees through part-time job.

Since 2022, the number of " International student-workers" from Bhutan to Australia has been rapidly increasing. However, little attention has been paid to historical relationship between the two countries through "studying abroad" since the 1960s. In this research, I collected the article related to the topics about both countries from the Bhutanese newspapers, Kuensel (188 articles in total from 1968 to May 2024), The Bhutanese, and Bhutan Times, and analyzed them diachronically. As a result, it became clear that relationship between Bhutan and Australia has built at the national level through "Government-sponsored students" since the 1969, and at the organizational level such as universities or education consultancies through "Private Students " since around the 2010s. In addition to such macro and mezzo scale relationship, individual network such as relatives and friends also become important to move to and emplace in Australian society.

In addition to the literature research, I conducted field pre-research in Perth, Western Australia for three weeks from February 2024. Bhutanese students in Australia are mainly studying at master course of graduate school, working long hours through part-time job, and living in shared houses. They seem to be integrated to the society but at the same time, they are facing different life changes such as study and work environment, living place, food, religious environment too. In that mobile and global society, they are emplacing themselves by, for example, using English skills, earning high salary, utilizing networks of relatives, friends or even ethnic organizations such as Bhutanese associations, restaurants, football clubs and so on.

This research will require a detailed analysis of what kind of challenges each of Bhutanese students are facing and how they are trying to overcome that situation, considering the diverse attributes of "Bhutanese" such as age, gender, religion, years of stay, family situation, kind of work and so on.

| 30 | **Note on Zorarakye, a local deity of North-eastern Bhutan.** | |
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| | **Françoise  Pommaret** | |

While the classical sources concerning local deities tend to classify them in categories which seem well defined, ethnographic research in the Himalayas gives alternative views. Originally pre-Buddhist, the local deities, all considered as bound by oath (*dam can*) by Guru Rinpoche and as protectors of this world (*'jigs rten pa'i srung ma*), are given epithets (*sa bdag, gnas bdag, gzhi bdag, sgo srung, yul lha, gter bdag*) which vary according to the roles they carry out within their territory. The epithets also depend on the local vocabulary and usages of the territories but these deities are essential to the communities as they have a pact with the deities , giving them offerings in exchange of protection and prosperity.

Zorarakye (Zo ra rva skyes), a deity of a remote corner of Bhutan is a representative of this fluid terminology and of the incredible varied lexical range found in the naming of the local deities who rule over the Himalayan communities. Zorarakye (Zo ra rva skyes) is the deity of the region of s Kurtoe (Kur stod) and especially of Khenpajong (Mkhan pa ljongs,) a "hidden region" (*sbas yul*) of Lhun rtse district in north-eastern Bhutan.

The iconography of the deity will first be examined before trying to understand the deity's genesis and its links with other deities such as Pehar and Tsi'u dmar po. Lastly how its cult is found in different holy places of Lhuntse and Bumthang.

| 31 | **Climate Change, Development and Cultural Practices in the Highlands of Bhutan** |
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| | **Ritu Verma** |

Bhutan is regarded as the world's first climate negative country. It did not contribute to the climate emergency, but rather acts as a critical carbon sink due to its vast forest cover, mitigation efforts and low carbon footprint. Nevertheless, it experiences the negative impacts and loss and damage from climate change generated elsewhere on the planet. As a result, climate shocks, unpredictable weather and erratic temperatures are experienced by communities throughout the country. Such impacts are often felt acutely at higher elevations, such as northern Bhutan, where steep slopes intensify landslides and flooding, harsh mountain environments deepen agricultural land and pasture scarcity, and mountain passes become treacherous and render remote communities inaccessible during winter and monsoon months. This paper comparatively overviews three highland areas in north-west Bhutan, including communities where pastoralism is practiced but highly understudied from a socio-cultural lens. It investigates the ways climate change generates critical risks for pastoralists and farmers in terms food security, livelihoods and wellbeing. It further explores the way climate change is laid upon and exacerbates ongoing socio-cultural changes brought about by development, tourism, and consumer-capitalist in-roads. Of particular interest is the interplay of climate, economic and socio-cultural changes that impact spiritual-ecological practices, human-wildlife interactions, gender and kin relations, and social networks and identities in response to new emergent realities. The paper draws on rare longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork and anthropological analysis sustained over a decade, highlighting the way multiple, concurrent changes are being actively negotiated, and the various coping strategies that are engaged by highland communities in the face of transformations in local ecological environments, livelihood practices and access to resources. It reflects on how these changes effect pastoralism and agriculture, as both a livelihood and way of life, and ultimately nuance context-specific cultural-spiritual notions of wellbeing – as well as gross national happiness itself.

Key words: climate change, development, cultural practices, anthropology, highlands, wellbeing.

| **32** | **Prologue for Fostering Social Work in Bhutan:**<br><br>**A Japanese Medical Doctor's Perspective** | |
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| | **Kiichi Hirayama** | |

Bhutan has successfully transitioned from a least developed country and is expanding healthcare. The next step in its development agenda is to address welfare and livelihood issues. During my involvement with the JICA Grassroots Project in Trashigang district, I conducted assessments in various communities, including Bartsham, Kanglung, Lumang, and Merak. My observations revealed a significant material and psychological burden on children, particularly those from families with disabilities and those living in poverty. I also noted a lack of comprehensive information sharing between schools, hospitals, and Gewogs, hindering effective support.

Inspired by the community care meeting model in Japan, where stakeholders collaborate to address individual cases, I convened a community support meeting in Kanglung. This meeting brought together local stakeholders, including the Gup, RENEW representatives, the primary school principal, Sherubtse College DEAN, a college counselor, SSU students, and the CMO. We discussed the case of a young caregiver who had dropped out of school due to complex family circumstances. By respecting the child's desire to return to school, we consulted with the Pema secretary and facilitated the child's enrollment in another boarding school two weeks later. We also explored support options for the grandfather's living arrangements within the Gewog.

As Bhutan enters an aging society, the need for nursing care is expected to increase, alongside the challenges of caregiver burden and social support for families. Social work emerges as a crucial element in addressing these issues, both in resolving problems within communities and in connecting individuals with external support when necessary. The accumulation of case studies like this can inform solutions for other regions and contribute to the development of national policies.

The Bhutanese government has proposed strengthening the multi-sectoral task force and community-based support system network (MSTF-CBSS). Community support meetings hold immense value for this system. The Mongolian model, which has organized local multidisciplinary teams to address children's problems for the past decade, serves as a valuable reference.

This presentation aims to engage participants in a discussion on fostering a unique social work approach in Bhutan. We will explore the embodiment and support of this system, including its formation and the development of necessary human resources.

| 34 | Copies of Bhutanese Royal Missives in the Van Manen Collection at Leiden University |
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| | Samten  Yeshi |

A new door opened for Bhutan at the beginning of the 20th century. Ugyen Wangchuck (1862–1926) became the first hereditary monarch on December 17, 1907, replacing the traditional theocratic system. Under his leadership, Bhutan began looking toward its southern neighbour instead of the traditional north for its security and development.

A collection of six meticulously hand-copied Bhutanese royal letters found within the Van Manen Collection of the Leiden University Library, collected by Dutch theosophist turned Tibetologist Johan van Manen (1877–1943), gives us a glimpse into the king's concerns and the dynamics he faced in establishing his new role. The king sent five letters in 1921; one was sent to the viceroy of India and four to the governor of Bengal and his sister sent another letter. Four of these six letters were addressed to Lord Ronaldshey (1876–1961), who was then the Governor of Bengal and have been alluded to in his book (1923). Later historians have used this information to recount some of the historical anecdotes of the period.

These handwritten copies in the Van Manen collection are the only known versions that contain the original exchange between the Bhutanese royal house and the British. The letters consist of expressions of gratitude, appeals for support, and concerns shared regarding the future stability of Bhutan. More importantly, they reveal the diplomatic dynamics at play when Ronaldshey visited Paro, during which the king absented himself when he was to receive an imperial award of the order of Knight Grand Commander (GCIE) from Ronalshey.

Examining the narratives of Bhutan's early modern history associated with these correspondences, this paper will, therefore, look at these copies of royal letters, along with other relevant records in the collection. Focusing on the period in which these six letters were written, I shall explore the plans, concerns, and possible diplomatic dynamics faced by Bhutan's first monarchy.

| 37 | **Do we come back to normal? Post-pandemic social and economic issues in Bhutan and Japan** |
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| | **Yoshiaki  Takahashi** |

When do we go back to normal? Many people asked themselves this question during COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Gallup, in March 2024, 43% of American said their lives were completely go back to normal, but another 43% said they will ever get completely back to the normal before the pandemic. How about Asian countries? Many of Asian countries did well to prevent loss of human life due to coronavirus. In terms of COVID-19 mortality rate, for instance, South Korea, Japan and Bhutan has the 127th, the 131st, and 212nd among 232 countries or regions, according to One World in Data. Bhutan was fully open to tourists without quarantine from September 2022. Japan downgraded legal classification of COVID-19 as same as flu in May 2023. However, when we look at current social and economic issues in Asian counties, these issues existed before the pandemic, but coronavirus might make the situation worse.

One of the common problems in Asian countries are urban and rural imbalance in economic and social conditions. In this paper, the author explored the issues in Bhutan and Japan based on data mainly from Bhutan Living Standard Survey (BLSS) and Japan Happiness and Quality-of-Life survey (J-QoL). The statistical analysis shows that trust is one of key issues. Some conceivable explanations for results and their potential implications are discussed.

| 38 | **Impact of School Closures on Rural Communities in Bhutan** |
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|    | **Kohei  Morishita**                                         |

Bhutan has made great efforts to promote education, and many small schools have also been opened in villages. For example, "community schools" were established with the support of local people for construction and running. In recent years, however, increasing migration from rural to urban areas and declining birth rates have occurred. The number of primary schools and secondary schools with primary classes in Trashigang Dzongkhag increased until the 2010s, but since then small rural schools have been consolidated into large schools to improve the quality of education and the "central schools" policy is ongoing.

In one case of the school closure in Trashigang Dzongkhag, all the children, even PP (Pre-Primary) class children, had to leave the villages because of the closure. Many children ended up staying in boarders, while others chose to stay in relatives' homes. In some cases, not only children but also other members of their families have also left the village (Ex. there was a case where the mother and sisters left the village and the father stayed in the village). Some children were homesick and had challenges with relationships and other issues at their new schools and boarders, and their parents were worried about their children leaving the village. In the case of the village, almost all the children who left the village because of the closure come back only during the summer and winter vacations. Parents usually visit their children several times per month and bring snacks or pack lunch to eat together, give some pocket money, wash their children's clothes, and bring some food to keep in their children's place.

Because of the closure, people in the nearby village reopened the old boarding facility and welcomed the children. The purpose was to support the village where the school was closed and keep enough students in their school. The villagers request that some migrated people or friends donate, and some of them seem to donate as a Buddhist way of performing moral acts.

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| **39** | **Bhutan's Currency of 'Trust': Building a Trustworthy Country** |
| | **Lilly  Yangchen** |

Trust forms the basis of a human relationship at both an individual and an institutional level, and the subject is of growing interest globally, gaining more importance and investment due to its increasing role in strengthening governance and enhancing socio-economic growth. Against this backdrop, the concept of trust merits a central focus in Bhutan's ongoing transformation efforts to make Bhutan a fully developed country within our lifetime, as envisioned by His Majesty The King. To realise this ambitious goal, the Royal Vision highlights the need to leverage social capital like trust as the nation's highest currency so that Bhutan can become one of the most trustworthy countries in the world. It is also a strategic approach to boost Bhutan's national brand and international business opportunities. With the new Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) Special Administrative Region, one of His Majesty's most significant initiatives, trust and trust-building become even more prominent in Bhutan's development discourse. The city project's primary asset and attraction point for foreign investment is Bhutan's brand identity, known for its development philosophy of Gross National Happiness and leadership under His Majesty. With all these developments, Bhutan has a clear direction. What this study explores is the process of trust-building at a national scale, considering questions like what constitutes a trustworthy country and how Bhutan can become one; where a culture of trust-building begins; what are the causes and conditions that create a conducive environment for trust to thrive; what mechanisms are already in place for Bhutan to achieve this goal; where do the challenges and opportunities lie? These guiding questions help situate Bhutan's context and case study within the broader conversation on trust in the rest of the world, especially as perceptions of "trust deficit" are rife in the global scene today. The research looks at the abundantly available literature on trust worldwide as well as Bhutan's own constitution and the recently launched 13th Five Year Plan, where the subject is emphasised in key areas like the judiciary and governance sections, respectively.

| 43 | Toilet to Wastewater management, complete package to Bhutan with Japan made technologies |
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| | Sara  Ogawa |

Sewage treatment facilities are available only in limited areas within and near Thimphu city in Bhutan. Sewer pipes themselves are not installed to the entire area due to reasons such as geographical features, and 23% of Thimphu's wastewater is not treated as of today.

General wastewater treatment method in Bhutan is to use 'septic tanks' which does not have processing function, and the sewage and sludge need to be vacuumed and removed from the tank when its full. Environmental pollution and health hazards to residents are becoming a problem, with sewage leaking from tanks flowing into the surrounding area and emitting a foul odor, and untreated sewage flowing directly into rivers.

Members of JOYLET launched a project in 2019 to upgrade school toilets packaged with basic health education, such as toilet cleaning and hand washing, in coordination with Bhutan Toilet Organization (BTO), NGO from Bhutan. We have installed 2,800 SATO toilets provided by LIXIL Corporation, into 400 schools in 19 Districts, and continuing to provide technical service for maintenance.

In 2020, we sent 6 Japan made Johkasou tanks to BTO to help introduce a new, more effective wastewater treatment method to Bhutan, as to follow up the toilet project and complete the waste treatment by our project. 4 of them have been installed in Thimphu city in collaboration with the city government, and the water testing result from those 4 tanks has successfully showed the impact Johkasou tanks can bring to Thimphu city. We presented the performance results and economic benefits not only to the city government but as well as to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT) of Bhutan in Jury 2024 after the long project suspension due to COVID.

Following those pilot studies, there is growing demand and plans to further adopt Johkasou Technology in priority communities and important wetland conservation sites in Bhutan, complementing government initiatives and addressing developmental gaps, thanks to the reputation BTO gained over the years including their success with school toilet upgrading project.

However, the lack of proper fecal sludge treatment facilities leaves the sustainable sewer management service chain incomplete. We aim to provide a vacuum truck to transport sludge to the sludge treatment and drying facility as our next steps.

| 44 | **Ergative marking system in the Brokkat language** |
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| | **FUMINOBU  NISHIDA** |

The Brokkat language is an endangered Southern Tibetan language spoken by about 100 people as their mother tongue in the village of Dur (Dhur) in Chokhor Valley of Bumthang District in central Bhutan. Brokkat is spoken by descendants of pastoral yakherd communities. It is what the Brokpas of Dur (Dhur) call their language. In Dzongkha the language might be termed B'umtha-D'ûr-g'i Bjo-bi-kha 'the language of the Brokpas of D'ûr in Bumthang'. Almost all the nomadic Brokpa yakherds in northern Bumthang have already been linguistically assimilated to the Bumthang speaking majority. Curiously enough, only the Brokpas who have resided permanently and live cheek by jowl with Bumthang Dur have retained their language. There are an estimated eighty households in Dur, roughly twenty five percent of which are Brokpa households and the rest of seventy five percent are Bumthangpa households. To my knowledge, there are only forty active speakers of this language at present.

This paper investigates the role and application of the ergative case marking system in the Brokkat language, which is spoken in Dur Chiwok, Bumthang Dzongkhag, Bhutan. Ergativity pertains to the differential marking of the subject of a transitive verb (the "A" argument) in contrast to the subject of an intransitive verb (the "S" argument). In ergative languages, a morphological distinction often arises: some transitive subjects receive an ergative case marker, while others do not. In Brokkat, the ergative case marker is explicitly employed to denote the subject of a transitive clause, typically affixed to the A argument (the transitive subject). Nonetheless, not all transitive subjects are marked with the ergative case.

This paper will examine the factors that influence and determine the distribution of ergative markers, including verbal lexical semantics, the animacy of arguments, Tense-Aspect-Mood (TAM), and information structure.

| 46 | **A preliminary linguistic geography of Khengkha dialects and their origins** |
| | **Benjamin Philip Hewitt** |

This paper describes a preliminary geographical distribution of Khengkha dialects and how they may have originated using select phonological, morphological, and lexical differences observed. In my talk I will outline the main features of Khengkha dialects. Khengkha remains a largely undocumented and threatened East Bodish language of central Bhutan spoken by approximately 20,000 people. It is characterized by a high degree of dialectal diversity that has so far remained undescribed.

Previous description of Khengkha has been limited: a language learners' booklet (Yangrom & Arkesteijn 1996), a sketch orthography (Chamberlain 2004), some vocabulary and glossed sentences (Takumi 2021a, 2021b, Tenzin 2022) and a sketch phonology and glossary (Hewitt 2020).

Data for this talk was collected from October to November 2023 and March to August 2024 from over 30 villages in three contiguous districts of south-central Bhutan: Zhemgang district, lower Trongsa district, and western Mongar district. Khengkha is a language that forms part of a dialect continuum with Bumthang and Kurtöp. Khengkha dialects are not necessarily closer to each other than to either Bumthang or Kurtöp. The geography of Khengkha dialects suggests several waves of movement out of the Bumthang valley into their current distribution. Khengkha dialects largely follow the distribution of drainage basins downriver from Bumthang. Chamberlain (2015) explains how watersheds are a significant feature in understanding language variation.

These dialects of Khengkha are easily distinguished broadly from each other by clear phonological and morphological differences. Khengkha is spoken in a range of environments including subtropical habits that have a markedly different flora and fauna compared to its closest linguistic relatives Bumthang and Kurtöp. In the domain of flora and fauna, lexical borrowings and innovations allow the evolution of Khengkha dialects to be tracked on a village level, showing how Khengkha has spread, and the direction villages have been founded. The comparative method is utilized to establish a relative chronology of Khengkha dialects based on language innovations. Furthermore, dialect differences correlate with the distinct cultural practices observed between different Khengkha villages. Khengkha itself has played a significant role as a ritual language in Bon practices for both the Khengkha as well as neighboring language groups in close contact with the Khengkha. Today, increased mobility and development is seeing dialect differences rapidly levelled and more broadly local language and culture transmission is ceasing in favor of new national and international norms.

| 47 | **Regional Promotion Function of the Roadside Station (Michi-no-Eki) in Bhutan: A Case Study of Haa Visitor Information Centre** |
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|    | **Yuka Yao** |

Roadside stations, or "Michi-no-Eki" in Japanese, were born in Japan in 1993 as roadside rest facilities, and now have many functions such as selling local products. As an effective tool for regional development, they are also utilized in other countries. It is noted that Michi-no-Eki can address social issues in developing countries and directly benefit locals (Yokota, 2006: 11).

In Bhutan, a roadside station named "Haa Visitor Information Centre" (hereafter HVIC) opened in Haa in 2019, through a JICA Partnership Program with one Japanese NGO, one Bhutanese NGO, and Haa Dzongkhag. As one of the recent problems in Bhutan, young people migrate from rural to urban areas for better jobs (National Statistics Bureau, 2020: 7). A mechanism is needed to ensure sufficient profits in rural areas. This study analyzes how the roadside station is used for regional promotion in a rural area of Bhutan. There have been very few studies analyzing roadside stations other than Japan, and this is the first study on the case of Bhutan.

This study first organizes the general regional promotion function of roadside stations through a literature review. Secondly, it investigates the background and process of introducing roadside station HVIC in Bhutan and its resulting regional promotion function. The data was collected from several documents regarding the JICA project and HVIC, and from the semi-structured interviews conducted in 2020 with two stakeholders from the Japanese and Bhutanese sides respectively. Thirdly, the study identifies the features of the regional promotion function found in this case, and the factors contributing to those features.

This study has so far revealed that in Bhutan, where tourism is an important industry, roadside station HVIC is trying to promote regional development through tourism. HVIC is a new channel to sell locally produced souvenirs so that tourists can obtain "Bhutanese" and "local" products in Haa, where there used to be only foreign products. This is different from Japanese Michi-no-Eki's function of direct sales for agricultural products that farmers do not sell in the usual distribution channel. HVIC also provides local guides, homestays, and information to tourists visiting Haa.

In the presentation, analyses with the data from fieldwork in Haa planned to be conducted this year (October to December 2024) will be added.

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| **48** | **Transition of Religious Sphere in Contemporary Bhutan: Vernacular Rituals to Buddhist Ceremonies** |
| | **Mari   Miyamoto** |

The roles that indigenous healers and ritual masters have played in rural Bhutan consist integral part to sustain spiritual stability of the society. Even in 2000s, in the central as well as the eastern part of Bhutan, people used to call Paw and Pamo whenever member of family become unwell or sick for their healing rituals. Basic Health Units that the government provides in rural areas are the last option for people to send their patients. What they must do first is asking Tsip to read the condition of the patient and clarify the causes of the symptoms that torture the patient. If the reason of the symptom is local gods/goddesses or deities in the area, firstly they must apologize and offer gifts such as Ara to them and try to tame their anger. If people ignore those deity's anger, it leads worser situation to the patient even after she/he is sent to hospitals with better facilities.

However, those customs and practices have been wiped out in the last two decades drastically. While modern education expands even in rural areas, those vernacular practices have been gradually considered as superstitious and irrational. Especially the ones with animal sacrifices to local deities are marginalized and discriminated due to Buddhistic precept of the prohibition of killing living things indiscriminately. In rural Bhutan, an integral connection between humans and nature has been nurtured through belief in and reverence for local deities, but the marginalization of these indigenous rituals is transforming the intimate connection people have with their natural environment. In the field of cultural anthropology, the geological epoch of the Anthropocene and the ethnography of multi-species have long been noted as an alternative worldview to anthropocentrism. In Bhutanese society, the connection between Buddhism and environmentalism has long been self-evident. However, behind the scenes, the worship of nature deities that actually secured the connection between humans and the natural environment and the animist worldview are now disappearing, and I would like to consider here how this may affect the Bhutanese people's view of nature and their daily practices.

| 49 | **Bhutan as a Biodemocracy: Navigating Culture, Development, and Change** |
| | **Nitasha Kaul** |

In this paper, I provide a conceptualisation of what I call 'biodemocracy' and why we need it. My scholarly endeavour proceeds from a desire to link the political and the ecological, and draws upon my previous work in critical political economy that links Value with values, and my ongoing work linking developmental narratives and biodemocracy in the context of Bhutan (a small state with a pioneering approach to environmental issues). I argue for an understanding of biodemocracy that allows us to explicitly recognise in analytical terms the interdependence of all life forms. The paper includes both empirical and analytical findings from over a decade of research. In an era of impending global ecological disasters, there is an overarching responsibility of reframing democracy as a system towards the people and the planet. This can be done by thinking through how consciousness and consent around responsible production and consumption can emerge under such conditions. Biological and ecological challenges are also interlinked with what role we envision for narratives of feeling and experience when it comes to these challenges and their mitigation. The evolving cultures and practices of democracy in Bhutan offer examples of good practice and learning for the wider world in how to navigate through the often competing challenges and priorities of development, preservation, inclusion, and societal expectations. Thus, this paper drawing upon multiple disciplines is as much about Bhutan as it is about some of the most pressing global challenges and how small democratic states navigate them.

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| **50** | **Revisiting "Bon in Bhutan": from the viewpoint of community ritual** |
| | **Kengo Konishi** |

In Bhutan, "Bon" has been viewed as a set of practices that are derived from pre-Buddhist traditions. It has been positioned as an unorganized indigenous practice in opposition to the systematized and organized "Yungdrung Bon" of Tibet. It has also often been incorporated into Buddhist values and worldviews through Buddhist "civilization" projects. As Kelzang Tashi (2023) summarizes, the central practice of Bon in Bhutan focuses on achieving worldly benefits and has no clear doctrine or organization. Because it is unorganized, it survives in deep engagement with everyday life; Huber (2020) and reports from around Bhutan by Bhutanese researchers have revealed in detail how rituals are deeply connected to community vitality.

Through a previous study of Yungdrung Bon monasteries and villages in northeastern Tibet, the presenter showed how villages faced with economic growth and population outflow maintained connections through rituals such as chorten construction and cham. The process involved community members sharing the effects of purifying and protecting their villages through concrete materials and experiences. These rituals included elements such as deities incorporated with local history that do not appear in common doctrine. It indicates that Yungdrung Bon also contains many "unorganized"indigenous aspects.

Based on these arguments, this paper will discuss the social transformations and significance of rituals faced by local communities in Bhutan. It will focus on the specifics of community connectedness in Bhutan beyond the distinctions between bon or buddhist, organized or unorganized. In particular, through the description of the ritual process and interviews with practitioners, we will focus on how the reality of deity is experienced and shared through the experience based on their bodies. It will then shed light on what can create community vitality in the face of population outflow and a lack of successors to rituals. It is also an attempt to present a perspective on the transformation and future of the "worldly matters" which has been the territory of Bon.

| | **Perceived Sources of Happiness:** | |
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| **51** | | 49 |
| | **Things Bhutanese think would make them live a truly happy life** | |
| | **Karma Wangdi** | |

This study is aimed at answering two questions: a) what are the perceived sources of happiness for Bhutanese, and b) how does the perceived sources of happiness differ among people belonging to different socio-demographic subgroups.

Text data collected through cross-sectional nationally representative sample survey involving over 25,000 (8,500 each in 2010, 2015, and 2022) Bhutanese aged 15 years or older using open-ended question was content analysed, classified and coded using inductive category development approach and deductive category application approach.

The statements of the perceived sources of happiness reported by respondents were classified into 18 major categories and 42 sub-categories of sources of happiness. The most frequently cited source of happiness among 18 major categories is 'money and financial security' followed by 'health and wellbeing', 'family and family relationships', 'asset ownership', and 'education, employment and job satisfaction'.

A significant gender difference in citation of sources of happiness was observed. The results also reveal existence of significant difference between different socio-demographic status such as rural and urban, age, and education in citation of the sources of happiness.

| 52 | **Happiness among monks and youths in Bhutan** | 50 |
| | **Jigme Phuntsho** | |

In the nationwide GNH surveys, people in the traditional monastic and modern education institutions are largely underrepresented. Therefore, a separate survey was conducted in 2023 to study their wellbeing and related areas.

Based on that data, this paper will discuss about the state of happiness among these population subgroups, along with factors that contribute to their happiness vis-a-vis the general population drawing lessons from the general GNH surveys.

# Notice for participants

## 1. Precautions before participation

-Hotels in Kyoto tend to fill up quickly, so it is better to make hotel reservations early.

-If you pay the participation fee onsite, please prepare enough cash because you must PAY ONLY BY CASH (Japanese Yen only).

## 2. Local precautions after arrival in Japan

-February is the coldest season in Japan. The average temperature in Kyoto in February is 5.1 °C, with an average high of 9.7 °C and an average low of 1.4 °C. It rarely snows.

-Buses and cabs in Kyoto are typically jam-packed, so it is recommended that you allow plenty of time for travel. Trains and subways are punctual.

## 3. Precautions for the day before and day of registration

We recommend you register on the afternoon (14:00-17:00) of February 3rd because the reception desk is expected to be crowded before the opening session on February 4th. Please enjoy the reception and mingle with other participants between 16:00 and 18:00 on February 3rd.

-Those who pay the participation fee onsite are required to PAY ONLY BY CASH.

## 4. Notes about the Venue

All conference sessions and events will be held on the second floor of the Clock Tower Building. Please take the elevator or stairs from the first to the second floor.

-Please eat and drink in the halls and rooms, as eating and drinking are prohibited in the lobbies and hallways.

-Please be careful with your valuables during sessions, lunches, and dinners, as the rooms are not locked.

## 5. Internets and wifi

-You can use the Wi-Fi in the conference building. A Wifi ID and Password will be announced at the venue.

## 6. Reception, Meals, and Coffee Break

-We will offer the reception (3rd of Feb.), lunches (4th, 5th, and 6th of Feb.), and dinners (4th and 6th of Feb.) in Hall 2 or Hall 3.

-We will hold the coffee break in Meeting Room 4.

-Please eat and drink inside the halls and rooms, as eating and drinking are prohibited in the lobbies and hallways.

## 7. Precautions for presentations

-The time slot for general presentations is 20 minutes, consisting of 15 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for Q&A. Please finish your Q&A as soon as possible to allow time for the next presenter to take over.

Please check your presentation slides in advance during lunch, coffee breaks, and other breaks. If you use clips and audio, please check them before your presentation.

-Please also prepare a PDF of your slides in case the PowerPoint presentation does not work correctly.

-We cannot provide printing assistance for handouts, so if you have handouts, please print them out and bring them to the venue.

-If you cannot participate on-site and wish to make a video presentation, please let the organising committee know as soon as possible.

## 8. Hospitals, Troubles, etc.

-If you are injured, ill, or in trouble, please inform the organising committee or staff.

-If you are seriously injured or ill, please ask people around you for help, call 119, and ask for an ambulance.

-If you are involved in a theft or other crime, please ask people around you for help, call 110, and ask for the police.

## 9. Sightseeing Places/Restaurants in Kyoto

-The organising committee will not organise official excursions. Please ask the organising committee staff and Japanese participants for tips on activities and places to visit (maybe together).

You can find events and (vegan/vegetarian) restaurants in Kyoto City on the website of Kyoto City Official Travel Guide: Kyoto City Official Travel Guide.