

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY THE HON SPEAKER DURING THE 8TH SESSION OF THE FIRST PARLIAMENT

1. As the historic 8th Session of the Parliament begins on this auspicious day, it is indeed an opportune moment for the Members of Parliament, to be able to pledge Oath of Allegiance to democratic constitutional monarch, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck in pursuant to the provision of the Constitution of Bhutan. This rare opportunity has been occasioned due to the blessings of Triple Gem, merit of the people and fruition of our collective destiny.
2. After the submissions made by the Hon Prime Minister and some of the Members, it is needless for me to add on it. However, on behalf of the rest of the Members and on my own behalf, I would like to reiterate that as Bhutan was going through continuous period of internal strife, diseases and calamities without any peace and happiness, the Government, Dratshang, Regional Chieftains and the entire Bhutanese People unanimously enthroned Gongsa Ugyen Wangchuck as the first hereditary monarch of Bhutan on 17th December, 1907 to usher peace, stability and happiness in the country. Similarly, this was resonated by His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo during His Coronation on 2nd June, 1974.
3. Today, the offering of Oath of Allegiance to democratic constitutional monarch by the representatives of the people after 104 years marks the epoch making era in which the happiness, socio-economic development and the security and independence of the country is enhanced and strengthened.
4. This has been possible due to the strong and unflinching dedication, trust and confidence of the Bhutanese people in the Wangchuk dynasty. We all know that Bhutan witnessed unprecedented progress under the wise guidance and leadership of 1st Druk Gyalpo Gongsa Ugyen Wangchuck, 2nd Druk Gyalpo Jigme Wangchuck, 3rd Druk Gyalpo

Jigme Dorji Wangchuck and particularly under the reign of 4th Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck.

5. His Majesty the 4th Druk Gyalpo, in view of the peace and happiness of the country and the people, successfully removed the grave security threat posed by the presence of militants in our country by personally leading the flush out operation in 2003 and strengthened the sovereignty and security of the country. His Majesty in his address during the 98th National Day celebration in Tashi Yangtse Dzongkhag on 17th December, 2005 proclaimed several significant reforms. With great sense of joy, I would like to reiterate that His Majesty proclaimed as “I would like our people to know that parliamentary democracy will be introduced in Bhutan by the year 2008. I have every confidence that our people will be able to choose the best political party that can provide good governance and serve the interest of the nation”.
6. He also said “I would also like our people to know that the Chhoetse Penlop will be enthroned as the Fifth Druk Gyalpo in 2008. It is my wish and prayer that during the reign of Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Palden Drukpa will remain strong and glorious, that our country will achieve greater prosperity with the sun of peace and happiness shining on our people”.

Accordingly, not only democracy was introduced and the Fifth Druk Gyalpo was enthroned but also a political party was elected by the people. Within the period of three to four years we have witnessed greater peace and economic development which is primarily due to the prayers and wishes of Fourth Druk Gyalpo.

7. Due to the farsighted vision and wishes of the 4th Druk Gyalpo, we are able to enjoy continued peace and happiness.
8. Moreover, we have not only signed the Constitution of Bhutan on 18th July, 2008, but also enthroned our 5th Druk Gyalpo and celebrated 100 glorious years of Monarchy. Bhutan also hosted 16th Summit of South

Asian Association of Regional Cooperation and it has produced significant results in the country.

9. As the Royal Wedding has been conducted, we the Members of the Parliament are very fortunate to embrace this opportunity to pledge an Oath of Allegiance to Druk Gyalpo on this very auspicious occasion. Therefore, we the Members would like to express our sincere appreciation to His Majesty and the Members of the Royal Family. As we offer the Oath of Allegiance, we pray for greater peace, happiness and economic development in the country under the Wangchuck dynasty.

10. Due to the merit and fortune of the Bhutanese people, Ashi Jetsun Pema Wangchuck has been taken as the Queen of Bhutan. To this, we the Members of the Parliament would like to offer our heartiest Tashi Deleg. Her Majesty the Queen's first visit to the Parliament after the Royal Wedding is indeed very auspicious gesture for which we would like to express our sincere thanks. Within the short span of time, Her Majesty has given us unambiguous confidence to believe that her gracious actions would further enhance peace, happiness, solidarity and unity in our country.

11. As democracy was introduced for the first time in Bhutan, the Bhutanese people gave Druk Phuensum Tshogpa the opportunity to serve and form the government. Since then, the Government under the leadership of Lyonchhen Jigme Yoezer Thinley with the support and cooperation of the Cabinet Ministers, Members of the Parliament, Bhutanese people, religious organizations, civil organizations and armed forces have been always striving to serve in fulfilling the interest of the country and people.

12. This 8th Session of the First Parliament will be held for 13 days. As provided by the Constitution, during this Joint Sitting of the Parliament, it is hoped that about four Bills which could not be passed last year would be endorsed as Acts.

13. In addition, it is hoped that the National Assembly will be able to pass the following Bills;

1. Consumer Protection Bill of Bhutan 2011
2. Disaster Management Bill of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2011
3. Education City Bill of Bhutan 2011
4. Druk Gyalpo's Relief Fund Bill of Bhutan, 2011

14. Some of the general public and media suggested amending the Tobacco Control Act 2010 to remedy the difficulties faced in implementing the Act. Therefore, Lhengye Zhungtshog submitted the Tobacco Control Act (Amendment) Bill to be treated as urgent Bill, which shall be recognized by both the Houses and accordingly amend the Act.

15. As the elected local leaders in the Local Government shoulder important responsibilities in serving the interest of the people, it is crucial to provide commensurate consideration and facilities to their responsibilities. Therefore, a report on the revised emoluments as endorsed by the Lhengye Zhungtshog will be tabled in the House.

16. I would like to sincerely thank His Majesty Druk Gyalpo, Her Majesty the Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, Members of the Royal Family, distinguished guests for kindly gracing the Opening Ceremony of the 8th Session.

17. Lastly, I hope and pray that with the blessings of the Triple Gem and collective merit of the Bhutanese people the 8th Session would be concluded successfully. ***(11th Day of the 11th Month of the Iron Female Rabbit Year 4th January, 2012)***

Tashi-Deleg!

