

## **Acknowledgements**

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**Seeta Giri**

## GLOSSARY

<b>ara</b>	distilled alcohol made from cereals
<b>bangchang</b>	brewed beer, made from cereals
<b>bangchung</b>	lunchbox made of bamboo
<b>cham</b>	wooden beam used to build house
<b>champaka</b>	white flowery seeds from <i>Oroxylum indica</i>
<b>chanjey</b>	gift
<b>chathrim</b>	rules and regulations
<b>chorten</b>	stupa/ Buddhist monument
<b>chunyer</b>	drinking water and irrigation water watchman
<b>chuzhing</b>	irrigated land where paddy is grown
<b>dambro</b>	green leafy vegetable collected from forest ( <i>Elatostema platyphyllum</i> )
<b>deng</b>	Tree fern ( <i>Cyrtosperma</i> spp.)
<b>duth</b>	deity
<b>dzong</b>	fort
<b>dzongkha</b>	national language of Bhutan
<b>dzongkhag</b>	district
<b>genja</b>	agreement
<b>geog</b>	smallest administrative unit, equivalent to a Block
<b>gho</b>	dress worn by Bhutanese men
<b>gomchen</b>	lay priest
<b>guli</b>	fruit of <i>Persea fructifera</i>
<b>gup</b>	elected head of <i>Geog</i>
<b>kamzhing</b>	dry land where non-irrigated crop is grown
<b>kappa</b>	pin made of bamboo
<b>karma</b>	deed
<b>kasho</b>	court circular or royal decree
<b>kera</b>	belt
<b>khengkha</b>	dialect of the <i>Khengpas</i>

<b>kidu</b>	welfare, term used for a welfare petition to the King
<b>kira</b>	dress worn by Bhutanese women
<b>kulima</b>	nettle plant ( <i>Giardina diversifolia</i> )
<b>lhakhang</b>	Buddhist temple
<b>Lhotsamkha</b>	language spoken by Lhotsampa
<b>Lhotsampa</b>	Bhutanese people of Nepali origin living in the south part of Bhutan
<b>mang</b>	community
<b>mangap</b>	village elder (also assistant to gup)
<b>mangrimdo</b>	ritual performed for the well being of a community
<b>Mempas</b>	Monpas of Wangling, Jangbi and Phumzur
<b>menyer</b>	village forest guard
<b>meptshi</b>	torchwood from pine tree
<b>migmar</b>	Monday
<b>Monkha</b>	dialect of the Monpas
<b>naem</b>	daughter-in-law
<b>nye</b>	sacred pilgrimage site
<b>pacha</b>	cane shoot (used as vegetable)
<b>pagay</b>	dress worn by Monpa men and women
<b>palang</b>	bamboo pail used as water/wine container
<b>pamo</b>	female traditional healer (shaman)
<b>patang</b>	Bhutanese knife
<b>pawo</b>	male traditional healer (shaman)
<b>phurba</b>	thunderbolt
<b>puja</b>	general term in Nepali for religious prayer ceremony
<b>reedam</b>	traditional forms of sanctions
<b>sadag</b>	deity of the land
<b>saptolemi</b>	labour contribution to Royal Government
<b>sathram</b>	land record
<b>shinglep</b>	wood used as roofing shingle
<b>shingnyer</b>	agriculture crop damage arbitrator
<b>sisiseng</b>	Oak tree ( <i>Quercus griffithii</i> )
<b>so-dalang</b>	a tightly woven container made of cane
<b>sokshing</b>	government forest registered in individual's name for collection of leaf litter

<b>togo</b>	jacket worn over the kira
<b>Thram</b>	a certificate issued by the Land Record Office to the proprietor of registered land as proof of ownership
<b>Thrimzhung</b>	Supreme Laws
<b>Chhenmo</b>	
<b>Tsamdo</b>	grazing land
<b>tseri</b>	forest land registered in an individual's name for shifting cultivation
<b>tshoesa</b>	vegetable garden
<b>tshogpa</b>	elected or nominated head of a village
<b>wangpem</b>	edible orchid ( <i>Calanthe Spp.</i> )
<b>yika-makhu</b>	oil extracted from the seeds of <i>Aesandra butyracea</i>

## ACRONYMS

BMNP	Black Mountain National Park
DoFS	Department of Forestry Services
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
NCD	Nature Conservation Division
NEC	National Environment Commission
NSB	National Statistical Bureau
NITM	National Institute of Traditional Medicine
NTFP	Non timber forest products
Nu.	Ngultrum, Bhutanese currency (US\$1=Nu. 45)
PCS	Planning Commission Secretariat
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
RGOB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RNR	Renewable Natural Resources
SGP	Small Grants Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## Contents

Foreword.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Glossary .....	iv
Acronyms.....	vii
Contents.....	viii
Introduction.....	ix
1: Bhutan, An Overview.....	1
2: Origin and History of the Monpas.....	10
3: Socio-Economic Context and Cultural Diversity.....	22
4: Biological Wealth.....	51
5: Traditional Management of Natural Resources.....	130
6: Conclusion and the Way Forward.....	145
Bibliography.....	149
Annexure.....	154
Index.....	157

## **Introduction**

June 24, 1999. It was a bright sunny day. I began walking down from the roadhead towards Mangdechhu, the major river basin of central Bhutan. Three porters went ahead of me carrying the essentials - sleeping bag, clothes, candles, vegetables and other grocery items. I was followed by my companions- District Forest Officer, Deputy Ranger, and Ap Nakari from Jangbi village who I had only just met. The walk to the river was very short and we were at the Mangdichhu suspension bridge in about 15 minutes.

The view of the river was magnificent and I stopped for a few minutes capturing the beautiful view with my camera. Somehow I felt that I would come again to this place. The excitement of visiting a remote indigenous community in the buffer zone of the Black Mountains made me continue my journey towards Jangbi, the first Monpa village that I was to visit.

Compared to some of the Kheng villages that I had trekked to before, the walk to Jangbi was gentle. As we passed through the forests and streams, Ap Nakari would pluck leaves of the plants beside our trail and tell their names in his local dialect, Monkha, and what they use it for. Similarly, he would point to the trees and describe the taste of different fruits. After two hours of walking we could see a few houses with a couple of orange trees around them. Cattle and roosters roamed nearby.

Soon we began to see a cluster of houses and Ap Nakari informed that we had reached Jangbi. As we walked towards the Community Primary School, where arrangement for my



stay was made, we passed by friendly-looking faces. Some of them had already known that I was coming to visit their village.

The school was the only modern structure in that village surrounded by thick forests and mountains. My room was one of the classrooms, as the school had closed for summer holidays. The Deputy Ranger who turned out to be a great cook, guide, translator, and research assistant brought me a steaming mug of tea. While I began to sip my tea, I saw people gather around the school building. The Deputy Ranger led them to my room and I was offered fruits, eggs and local wine by the Monpa men and women. As in most other rural villages, the Monpas show great hospitality greeting visitors with food and local wine.

The sun was setting down, and I was called by the District Forest Officer to another classroom where local people had gathered. I was told that we could meet and discuss potential project ideas with the people. I had joined UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) as National Coordinator a few months back, and was invited to visit this community to discuss management of cane and bamboo, the most commonly used resources by the local people. The people needed sustainable supply of cane and bamboo, not only for their household consumption, but also as raw material for their handicraft items which they bartered or sold in the nearest market at Langthil for essential goods such as rice, oil, salt, and clothes.

On my way back to Thimphu, I began to reflect on my two-day stay in Jangbi with warm and friendly Monpas. Ap Nakari was always around me to answer any query I had. During my stay, I also had the opportunity to meet with

Sampa Taula, a respected elderly clergyman from Jangbi. He most eloquently narrated the oral history of the Monpas.

What struck me most about this community was that though not very far away from Trongsa, one of the major towns in Bhutan, it managed to retain its centuries-old traditions and culture. Most of all, the interdependence between the Monpas and the forests around them was of special interest to me. How these two entities have co-existed, while most other parts of the country, and the world for that matter, is grappling with the problem of environmental degradation, unsustainable land-use pattern, and, most of all, loss of culture and tradition!

It was then I decided that I would come back again to this community, and learn more about this indigenous people and their environment. It was also important to document their rich indigenous knowledge of the wild flora, its uses, and management, before it is lost.

This book, “The Vital Link: Monpas and Their Forests”, attempts to capture the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of the Monpa way of life and how the people and their forests have co-existed and sustained each other for ages. In many ways, this book is a tribute to the special bond between humanity and nature that the wonderful Monpas so beautifully affirm and advance.

**Seeta Giri**