



# The spirit of volunteerism

BY PASANG NORBU

There were Koreans who sang in tune, Japanese who played wind and stringed instruments, recovering Bhutanese alcoholics singing a self composed redemption song, a wall where you could practice spitting doma juice as a form of modern art, a tree hammered with crushed pet bottles and stray puppies in boxes for canine lovers to take.

This mixture of nationalities and subtle messages was a part of the International Volunteers Day, celebrated at the Thimphu Clock Tower Square on December 3, to pay tribute

to the spirit of volunteerism and take stock of positive contributions made by International as well as Bhutanese volunteers.

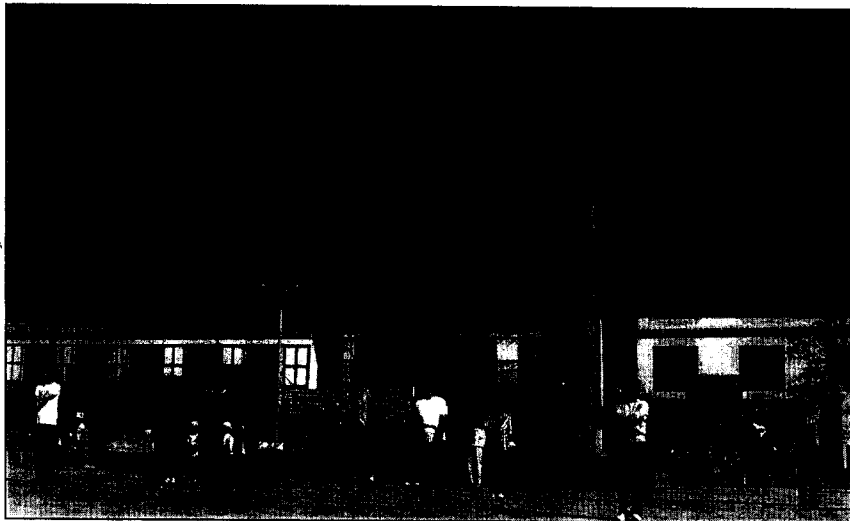
International volunteers in Bhutan have contributed enormously to the country's development efforts. International volunteer organisations in Bhutan are United Nation Volunteers (UNV), Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) and Volunteer Service abroad (VSA).

In recent years a number of volunteer groups have emerged in Bhutan who have put aside their own work and ventured to help with the less privileged, the physically disadvantaged,

the chemically dependant, stray and injured animals and even in creating a cleaner environment.

Funded by the UN, the event was carried out by the Volunteers in Bhutan (VIB), which consists of members ranging from government and international organisations, civil societies and individuals. The VIB Committee works towards recognising and supporting volunteers in Bhutan.

Winners of the essay competition on "How can you contribute towards Gross National Happiness being a volunteer?" presented their essays and were awarded individual prizes by Lyonpo Jigmi Singay, who graced the event.



Volunteers perform at the clock tower square

If you choose to contribute to society and help in some small ways towards improving the quality of life of fellow citizens, you could join up in some of the local organisations that promote volunteerism. These organisations are involved in different activities.

YDF (Youth Development Fund), besides functioning as a funding mechanism for youth development and empowerment activities, it also raises awareness among youth. YDF essentially provides funding and assistance to activities related to the disabled, school dropouts, juvenile delinquents, unemployed youth and youth from remote places.

RENEW (Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women) aims at promoting gender equality and empowering disadvantaged girls and women by educating and rehabilitating them.

Tarayana Foundation works at uplifting and enhancing vulnerable rural communities by providing educational scholarships, improving income generation and living conditions of indigenous disadvantaged communities through skills development and improved housing, and training rural youth in various crafts, assisting them in production setup and market sourcing.

Kuzoo Group targets the Youth at informing and creating awareness on youth related and development

issues through its FM Radio, newsletter and interactive website. Besides these, Kuzoo also organises club activities with the aim of improving youth participation.

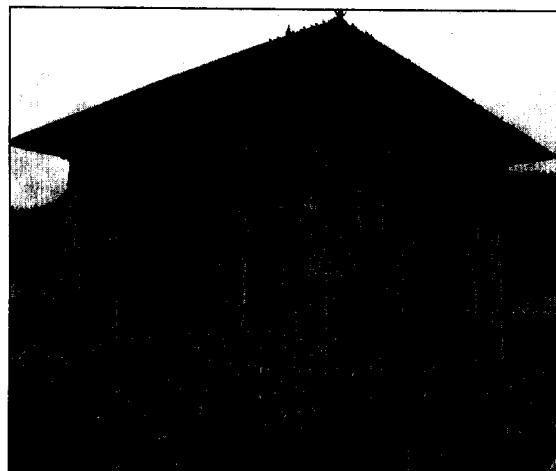
VAST (Volunteer Artists Studio of Thimphu) works at promoting the importance and value of art and targets at nurturing the creative talents of the Bhutanese youth by guiding and assisting young artists in exploring their potential.

REWA provides support for chemically dependant youth by providing counseling and support services.

Draktsho Vocational Training Centre for Disabled offer skills development opportunities to generate employment through training in souvenir making.

RSPN (Royal Society for the Protection of Nature), targets at environment conservation through education, applied research and information dissemination. It organises various environmental awareness programs such as clean up campaigns, nature clubs in schools and institutions throughout Bhutan.

# Kangsoel Chhenmo concludes in Drametse



The Drametse monastery in Mongar



Terton Pema Lingpa, "treasure revealer", surrounded by 14 small images.

The lay-monks performed mask dances, *terchams* including the Drametse *Ngachham* during the *tshachu*. Led by Lhalung Sungrul Rinpoche, a fire offering (*Dragpoi Jineg*) ceremony was conducted along with the *Mecham* at the courtyard on the night of December 3.

The Drametse monastery, perched on a hilltop, overlooking Kanglung, Yonphula and Uzorong gewogs of Trashigang dzongkhag and the nearby villages, was founded by Ani (nun) Choeten Zangmo, the great grand daughter of Terton Pema Lingpa in the late 15th century. Her *Kudung* (embalmed body) is still preserved in the *lhakhang*.

The four-day annual *Kangsoel Chhenmo* or festival in Drametse monastery in Mongar dzongkhag concluded yesterday with the unfurling of *Paling Thongdroel*.

Thousands of devotees received blessings from the 28 feet by 33 feet *Thongdroel* depicting the image of

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### Dzongkhag Administration, Thimphu

TDA/EDN-112/2006/

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

The winners of the Intra School Essay Competition on Anti-Corruption for Thimphu Dzongkhag are requested to attend the Anti-Corruption Day celebration at Khasadrapchu MSS on 9th December, 2006 at 8.30 am and collect your prizes.

CATEGORY I :	First	-	Yeshe Wangchuk	XII Arts	-	Rinchen HSS
	Second	-	Kuenzang Namgay	XI Com	-	Rinchen HSS
	Third	-	Dupchu Lepcha	XII Com	-	Nima HSS
CATEGORY II :	First	-	Thinley Peday	VIII	-	Jigme Namgyel LSS
	Second	-	Dewan Giri	VIII	-	Changangkha LSS
	Third	-	Clarissa L.G	VIII	-	Lungtzenampa LSS

District Education Officer