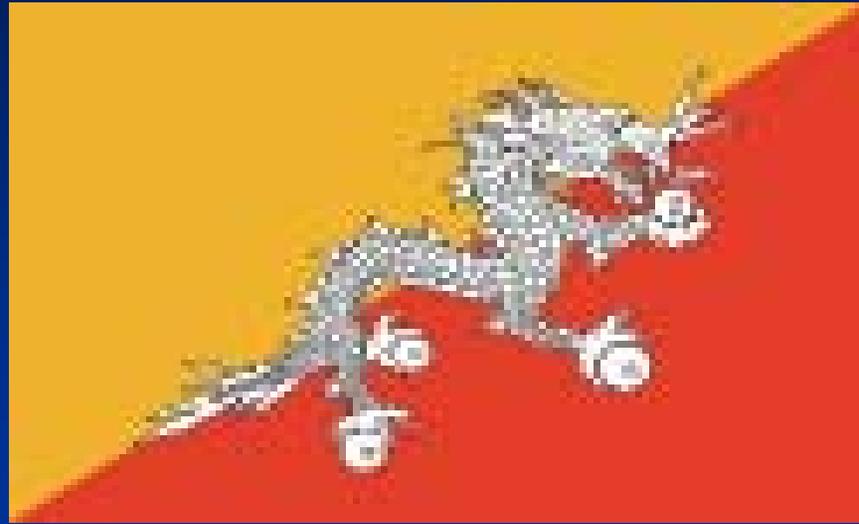


# REFUGEES FROM BHUTAN



HISTORY, CULTURE AND  
TRADITIONAL PRACTICES



# Map of Bhutan



# District map of Bhutan



# “BHUTAN” THE LAND OF THUNDER DRAGON

- ❖ Location: Tiny kingdom between China and India.
- ❖ Population: 672,000 out of which more than 110,000 are refugees in camps in eastern Nepal.
- ❖ Ethnicity: Ngalongs (25%-30%), Sarchops (35% - 40%) and Lothsampas (28%-33%).
- ❖ Main religion: Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity.



# Men and Women in Bhutan



# Lothsampa Culture in Bhutan



# Lothsampas: Nepali speaking Bhutanese.

History of living in Bhutan for generations. Nepali speaking population started settling in South Bhutan from 1880s onwards. Various reasons for migration:

- ❖ **Create economic base**
- ❖ **Protect encroachment from south**
- ❖ **Famine**
- ❖ **Natural Disasters**
- ❖ **Ethnic conflict in Nepal**
- ❖ **Personal stories**



# Same family before and after



**Before (In Bhutan)**



**After (In Camp)**

# PERSECUTION AND TORTURE

- ❖ 1990: Demonstration asking for cultural rights.
- ❖ 1990-1992: Mass arrest, government closes schools, removes officials from jobs and first refugees flee to India.



# Refugee Camps in Nepal

- ❖ Seven refugee camps
- ❖ Well maintained and structured

## Social organizations

- ❖ BRAVVE
- ❖ CVICT



# Refugee Camps in Nepal *Cont..*

- ❖ BHA Camp Committee
- ❖ Refugee Women Forum
- ❖ School Systems
- ❖ All caste groups are enrolled in the schools and all are involved in camp administration activities.



# Life in the Refugee Camp

- ❖ 108,000 Bhutanese refugees in the camps
- ❖ 40,000 of those are children
- ❖ Failed negotiation between Bhutan and Nepal
- ❖ Impossibility of local integration in Nepal
- ❖ US has agreed to resettle 60,000 refugees from Bhutan
- ❖ Rest will go to Canada (5000), Australia(5000), New Zealand(2000-3000), Netherlands (1000), Denmark, Norway, Sweden and some other European countries.



# Effort to return



# Resettlement



Ganga Ram looks over documents that his wife Nar Maya used in her job interview. The couple's daughter Hretika plays on the family bed as her parents talk about how the interview went.

Photos By Robert Cohen ([www.stltoday.com](http://www.stltoday.com))



Ganga Upreti Missouri, USA

Khina Maya in New York, USA

# Background of refugees

- ❖ Over 98% of the refugees are Lothsampas comprising of different caste groups
- ❖ Small population of Sarchops and Adhibasis make the remaining population.
- ❖ Less problem with younger generation
- ❖ Older people feel strongly about caste system, religion and tradition.



# Background of refugees. *Cont..*

- ❖ Caste Systems
- ❖ Family Sizes and Dynamic
- ❖ Gender role.



# Social Norms

- ❖ House visits
- ❖ Diets
- ❖ Greetings
- ❖ Festivals
- ❖ Marriages (Small % of inter caste marriages)
- ❖ Child birth
- ❖ Death



# Demographic Structure of Refugees

- ❖ 100% speak Nepali
- ❖ 35% has functional English
- ❖ 60-70% Hindus
- ❖ 5-8% are Kirat
- ❖ 2-3% are Christians and other minorities.
- ❖ Rest are Buddhist



# Vulnerable groups

- ❖ Single female household e.g. Ganga
- ❖ Widows
- ❖ Vulnerable adults
- ❖ People with Physical Challenges



# Vulnerable groups

- ❖ Torture victims (3% - 4%)
- ❖ People with history of mental health
- ❖ Illiterate or Semi-Literate Population (around 30 to 40%)
- ❖ Family support while in the camp is strong



# Resettlement Issues

- ❖ Welcome Packet
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ House visit
- ❖ Appropriate Clothing
- ❖ Modern Appliances
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Basic Food
- ❖ Community
- ❖ Temples
- ❖ Culturally Sensitive during Employment



# Recommendation

- ❖ Empower Refugees as soon as possible
- ❖ Support Groups
- ❖ Culturally Appropriate elderly program
- ❖ Special attention to vulnerable groups
- ❖ Community gardens
- ❖ Long term case management services to vulnerable groups
- ❖ Educate the local community



# Concept of Health and Disease

- ❖ “Karma Ko Phal”
- ❖ “Satho Janu”
- ❖ “Graha Dasha”
- ❖ “Aahar”
- ❖ “Pitri and Kul Deota”
- ❖ “Behar”
- ❖ “Bhoot Pret”
- ❖ “Aachar”
- ❖ “Bokshi Lagnu”



# Common Remedies

- ❖ “Jhar Phuk”
- ❖ “Dhami Jhakri”
- ❖ “Graha Jap & Puja”
- ❖ “Vaidhya/Drungtso”
- ❖ Modern Medicine



# Common problems of Victims of Torture (2,402/90,000)

- ❖ Diminished visions
- ❖ Karma Ko Phal ( result of Karma)
- ❖ Dukha laagyo (sadness)
- ❖ Jharko laagya ( irritation)



# Constitutional Monarch and Elected Prime Minister



His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck  
The Fifth Druk Gyalpo



Prime Minister of Bhutan

# Ancient and modern seat of Govt.



# Antiquity Meets Modernity



# Camp Situation



Goldhap camp before fire



Goldhap camp after fire

Thank you

We welcome any questions

Namaste

