



Lesson 1.1 – Active Citizenship

Finding Examples of the Democratic Process in Bhutan's History

Introduction and Motivation: Ask students to describe examples of groups of students working together on a problem. How do they organize themselves? How do we solve our community's or nation's problems in a democracy?

SMART¹ Objective:

At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to identify steps involved in the democratic process. Students will also apply terms and ideas to describe ways that problems were solved in Bhutan's history.



National Standards met in this lesson:

- ✓ The Ministry of Education's mission statement calls on Bhutan's schools to *"create the necessary learning space and opportunities to engage the genius and potentials of all the children and youth of the country in keeping with provisions of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan..."*, which this lesson does by introducing students to democratic skills necessary for action under Bhutan's Constitution.
- ✓ Where appropriate, use this lesson to reinforce national grade-level curriculum and standards.

News Literacy concepts or skills to be incorporated

The Power of Information: What is the value of reliable information in a democracy?

Transparency: For upper-level students, this lesson can be connected to ongoing debates in Bhutan about the amount of information government should make available to citizens.

Values/Life Skills:

The concept of GNH, coined by His Majesty the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, focuses national efforts by measuring four pillars: good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation.

This lesson develops student understanding of good governance and skills in democratic participation.

¹SMART is an acronym that reminds us our lesson can be more effective if the objective is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.



The Democratic Approach:

- ✓ Identify Problem
- ✓ Gather reliable information
- ✓ Identify and recruit allies
- ✓ Examine alternative policies
- ✓ Propose public policy, or
- ✓ State grievances to government representatives
- ✓ Develop an action plan to win official adoption of policy

Suggested Vocabulary:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| • Democracy | • Vote |
| • Democratic Process | • Voting |
| • Action Plan | • Listening |
| • Petition | • Alternatives |
| • Redress | • Consequences |
| • Coalition | • Activism |
| • Proposal | • Campaign |
| • Partner | • Advocate (Verb/Noun) |
| • Persuade | • Active Listening |
| • Participation | |

Teachers should explain and replace vocabulary words as needed.

Strategy for the lesson:

1. Teacher introduces vocabulary as it relates to democratic process overall
2. Teacher provides examples in which citizens rallied together to make change, with particular emphasis on citizen activities before the constitution, so as to help students understand democracy can be seen as a new word for processes that have long been in practice in human cultures that the new constitution organizes in a systematic way. For example in Bhutan, there was selection of village representatives to take concerns to the king and a weekly time for the king or his representative to hear grievances and requests for help.
3. Build checklist of activities that citizens can take in a democratic society.
4. Brainstorm basic 10 actions that citizens can take in a democratic society (Writing letters, petitioning, running for public office...etc..)
5. Students can complete worksheet of terms/activities



Pivotal Questions:

- Question students on whether or not they have ever felt as if they had no say or choice in certain situations.
- Show the list of vocabulary words and have students guess their meanings.
- Write the vocabulary words on the board, and allow the students to guess the topic of the lesson.
- Take examples of democracy in the classroom (class/school captains), and ask students to elaborate on the process of how that person became a leader
- Ask students if they have ever felt powerless? Do they feel as if their skill or knowledge is overlooked? Do they feel as if adults don't listen to them?
- From responses, transition students into case studies in which voices of common people have led to change

Lesson Summary:

(Best if there is at least one at the midpoint and another at the end)

Democracy is a big word, but can you use it to describe the way you and your friends organize a game or projects you are assigned to do for class? How does accurate, reliable information improve your ability to work together?

What about in Bhutan's history? Are there examples of democracy at work even before there was a Constitution? How important was information to those people?

Lesson extensions and connections:

Often bridges the lesson to future instruction and may, at times incorporate the original aim/problem. May be part of a final or concluding summary.

Students will in following lessons apply these approaches after reviewing historic examples in which Bhutan's citizens have solved problems using democratic methods even before the Constitution was adopted. The point of this is to expose students to the idea that democratic action is a human impulse that a Constitution merely organizes.

Attachments, materials and sources:

Suggested Case Studies: (Concrete examples of theories in action)

- Reversal of government's licensing of mountain trekking in 1994
- Tobacco ban

One source of material for your case study on mountaineering could be this 1985 article by Peter Mould, published in The Alpine Journal Mountaineering in Bhutan (2)



By Peter Mould²

Bhutan has the dubious distinction, along with Upper Volta and Vietnam, of being one of the World's lowest income countries. Those who know how to interpret official statistia will realise that the figures do not necessarily denote an appalling quality of life for the people but can be explained, in part, by a persistence of a subsistence economy. To the traveller this characteristic can be summed up in one word, 'unspoilt'. The mountaineer should add another word 'untouched', or 'virgin' as the Bhutanese seem to prefer. In relation to the total number of high peaks Bhutan must have more unclimbed summits than any other country.

The Government of Bhutan has a policy of strictly limiting the number of foreign visitors and only gradually expanding tourist facilities. Up to 1983, cultural tours and trekking, both organised by the Government's Tourism Commercial Organisation (TCO) were the only permitted forms of tourism. In 1983, Bhutan decided to introduce mountaineering by adding expeditions to the activities organised by its TCO.

I cannot do better than quote the words of the Minister in introducing Bhutan Mountaineering Regulations:

'Bhutan is a country of born trekkers and mountaineers. Mountaineering and trekking in the country is part and parcel of the life of our people who have never looked at it as a sport in the past.

'It has been in the thought of the Royal Government of Bhutan that the country should open its many virgin - even yet to be named - mountains to the mountaineers of the world. This thinking could be put into action only from 1983 onwards. Even now, the Royal Government of Bhutan has opened only a limited number of peaks, since the country has been following the policy of controlled tourism, for it places much value in the preservation of the ecological balance along with cultural and traditional values. However, the Royal Government may open many more peaks in the years to come in a very paced manner.

'With the introduction of mountaineering in the Kingdom, Bhutan hopes to further its existing close co-operation and friendship with all countries.

'Mountaineers and trekkers let us all abide by putting into action a famous saying - take nothing but pictures leaving nothing but footprints.'

The Mountaineering Regulations are fairly detailed and, particularly for parties visiting an area for the first time, somewhat restrictive. Key regulations are:-

- An expedition must have a permit, applied for at least five months before arrival, issued by the TCO, PO Box 159, Thimphu, Bhutan.*
- Members of the team must have a Bhutanese visa and Indian Transit visa.*
- Application, on the prescribed TCO Form MI, must include a map of the proposed approach and ascent route, and a letter of recommendation from the 7 JilChu Drake/ram lheJangolhan side l'horu: Capt. Ai. S. Kahlr*

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² (The information on which this article is based was provided to the author in early 1984 by the General Manager, Tea, through an introduction by His Excellency Dasho Dago Tshering, Bhutan's Ambassador to Bangladesh. Their help is duly acknowledged.)



Government or Mountaineering Association sponsoring the team.

- *The team must comprise at least seven members.*
- *The prescribed peak royalty (non-refundable) must be paid in full six weeks after receipt of the permit otherwise the permit shall be cancelled.*
- *Normally, no mountain guide or porter may go above base camp although the TCa may allow up to two Bhutanese to scale the peak.*
- *The team must list all equipment it intends to import and not bring into Bhutan articles not approved by the TCa.*
- *The expedition must confine its activities to climbing the permitted peaks and not vary the chosen ascent route without the TCO's prior approval.*

Services provided by the TCa comprise provision of transport; a mountaineering executive and porters to accompany the team; provision of food up to Base Camp; and all logistic and support arrangements to and from base camp and at base camp. The latter includes radio communication between base camp and the capital, Thimphu. Beyond base camp, the team is on its own. There apparently are arrangements for rescue, including helicopter evacuation, but, for this a US\$3000 refundable deposit must be paid to the TCO.

Modern transport facilities have come late to Bhutan. The first road, from the Indian border to Thimphu, was not opened until 1962, but now there is a network of about 2000km linking the main valleys. There is now an airport at Paro, about 50km from the capital, and Druk Air runs daily flights from Calcutta. This is a vast improvement on previous access by air to Bagdogra in India and onwards by road into Bhutan.

In 1983, the TCO opened one mountain, Jitchu-Drake (7000m) to expeditions. An Austrian and a Japanese team attempted this difficult peak that year but neither succeeded. A further Japanese team was granted permission for the peak

in the 1984 pre-monsoon season. Whether or not any team is successful, the TCO

intend to open Ganghar-Pansum (7516m) in 1985 as well as Jitchu-Drake. Other peaks will be added when each new addition is climbed. There are also four, minor, 6000m peaks open to expeditions for ascent in the course of trekking.

For anyone interested in the possibility of organising a party, the first step must be to write to the General Manager of the TCO.