Gross National Happiness: a Tribute

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led to the rock of truth, grafted into the tree of knowledge, C I James left us a great little tale of wisdom.

big dog saw a little dog chasing its tail and asked, 'why are you chasing your tail so?' Said the puppy, 'I have mastered philosophy and solved the problems of the universe which no dog has before me; I have learned that the best thing for a dog is happiness and that happiness is in my tail. Therefore, I am chasing it; and when I catch it, I shall have happiness.

Said the old dog, 'My son, I, too, have paid attention to the problems of the universe, and I have formed some opinions. I, too, have found that happiness is a fine thing for a dog, and that happiness is in my tail. But I have noticed that when I chase after it, it keeps running away from me, but when I go about my business, it comes after me'.

Without appearing to gurufy the barking quadruped, had the world heeded to the counsel of the senior dog, the lot of the Homo sapiens might have been far happier than the predicament of a 'feverish little cold of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy'. They would else have been a tremendous 'force of nature' as imagined by Bernard Shaw.

The world indeed went about its business, but like the junior dog, in a Faustian transaction bartering its soul for the gratification of its material and immediate desires. Human beings court happiness myriad ways, and the faster they follow it, the swifter it flies from them. Almost everything promises happiness to us at a distance, but when we come nearer, either we fall short of it, or it falls short of our expectations.
But we can all do a little - we can begin gradually to work towards a vision and the way of life we believe would be the right way, rather than following blindly along a path of development that we fear is incapable of responding to the profound needs of human beings. The creation of a society in which gross national happiness is equal to or greater than gross national product presupposes a change in our daily lives. As I am, so is my nation.

Bringing about general happiness is not a question of adapting to a life, which we constantly have to sacrifice our pleasures for the sake of others. This would hardly be possible for most of us. Arriving at a situation of gross national happiness is not a substitution of a life of sacrifice and renunciation by the Bhutanese.

His Majesty the King has dreamt for us a Bhutan where our success will not necessarily be measured by economics or statistics, but by the level of happiness and contentment that the Bhutanese are able to enjoy - from Sibsoo to Sakten, from Lunana to Lalai.

"The success or failure of our five-year plans will be measured by the level of happiness and contentment of the Bhutanese people" said His Majesty in an audience he granted us once. This concern is a reflection of His Majesty's belief that the goal of life cannot be to own and consume as much as possible, because our dependence on material things is destructive of real joy and an intense experience of the celebration of living. Happiness is not available in a condition of inner passivity or emptiness, nor is it found in an escape from the process of life.

So said Helen Keller: 

"Our success and happiness lie in you. External conditions are t
The whole of the Bhutanese society, our entire way of thinking, must gradually be changed, through a change in the individual. The way the situation is today, an attitude that is built on ideals that everyone can espouse is easily spread. If at least the enlightened or educated Bhutanese could begin by being a little more responsible - with understanding that everything we do is bound to have an impact on other Bhutanese - we will already have accomplished a lot.

Gross National Happiness cannot be brought about cheaply. We must enlist every Bhutanese - man, woman, and child. They must be able to tell apart the genuine from the artificial; they should learn that consideration for others is more important than carving a career for themselves, that the worth of people is measured not by what they have, but by what they are.

that we are called upon to renounce are our false values and faltions of success - which actually obstruct our appreciation of life's pleasures. We need to understand that the pleasure of enjoyment is chasteningly enhanced if it is accompanied by a spirit of sharing: we fulfil ourselves more fully in relationships. 'It is the way our sympathy floes and recoils that really determines our lives', as in the language of D.H Lawrence in 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'.

aching ourselves how to live more simply, more harmoniously, and a little more genuinely is a real step towards working for national happiness. A Bhutan of gross national happiness has to be created in the heart of every Bhutanese before it can be lived in.

e Bhutan of gross national happiness may not be born in our time - we ourselves may not reach the Promised Land, but we will have helped create it. Little by little, and perhaps, faster than we think, once a new attitude has emerged, we will have created a new Bhutan our own conscious efforts.

ice the idea of gross national happiness grips the national psyc
s enough'. Such a nation 'will pattern a new social and economic order for this and all future generations'. One could echo the spirit of Frank Buchman.

Let us take one step, only one step, and be more imaginative, a little more genuine. Let us be more human again. Perhaps we will one day be able to invite the world to a marriage of gross national happiness and the results of physical enterprize. This is the only Bhutan we have. Come, let us crown her with the fruits of His Majesty's dreams.

References


Powdyel, T.S. (1988) *Gross National Happiness, a Tribute*, Kuensel, July 30, Thimphu. The current paper is based mainly on this article.

When I said that you stimulated me I meant, that your mistakes guided me towards the truth. Not that you are entirely wrong in this case. The man is certainly a country doctor. And he walks a good deal.

"Then I was right."

"No, no, my dear Watson. A dog has been in the habit of carrying this stick behind his master. The marks of his teeth are very well seen. These marks are too broad for a terrier and not broad enough for a mastiff. It may be yes, it is a spaniel. I looked at him in surprise. He was now standing at the window. It was necessary to make a home of my own. We are not so wrong, after all."

"And now, Dr. James Mortimer. I think that it is Mr. Sherlock Holmes to whom I am speaking. Yes, and this is my friend Dr. Watson. Glad to meet you, sir. After all, life's better when we're happy, healthy, and successful. So to help you on your journey, please enjoy these feel-good quotes about happiness and being happy to help you find joy and satisfaction in life. Happiness Quotes. happiness is a direction, not a place. How simple it is to see that we can only be happy now, and there will never be a time when it is not now. Gerald Jampolsky. Happiness is a by-product of an effort to make someone else happy."

When we had finished she slipped from the table, returning with my twelve-bore and field glasses. We went out onto the lawn. She scoured the view until she found a triffid on the move well beyond our fences and then handed the glasses to me. I watched the thing lurching slowly across a field. It was more than a mile away from us and heading east. Now keep on watching it, she said. She fired the gun into the air. The tractor the worst because it is a loud noise, and it keeps on, so that they can easily find where it comes from.

But they can hear the lighting-plant engine quite a long way too. We've seen them turn this way when it starts up. I went out of the house, but I did not know where to go and how to get the three dollars. For an hour I was walking along the streets of Washington and was very tired. At last I came to a big hotel. "I shall go in and have a rest," I thought. I was sitting there when a beautiful small dog ran into the hall. It was looking for somebody. The dog was nice and I had nothing to do, so I called it and began to play with it. I was playing with the dog, when a man came into the hall. He wore a beautiful uniform and I knew at once that he was General Miles. You asked me how much I wanted for the dog, and I said that I wanted three dollars. But I never told you that it was my dog." General Miles was very angry now. "Give me back my three dollars and take the dog," he shouted.