

## **Brief Official Biography of His Majesty the King of Bhutan**

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His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck was born on February 21, 1980, as the eldest prince of King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. His Majesty attended public schools in Bhutan before pursuing higher studies in the US and in the UK. His Majesty attended National Defence College, New Delhi.

On 9<sup>TH</sup> of December 2006, His father, the Fourth Druk Gyalpo abdicated and His Majesty became King in a simple prayer ceremony between His Majesty and His father. His Majesty made his first public address as the King at the National Day celebration on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2006 in Changlingmithang Stadium in Thimphu. Formal coronation ceremonies took place two years later, on November 1, 2008 according to the will of the people and government.

Since then, His Majesty has been personally overseeing the smooth foundation of a strong vibrant democracy. He has travelled the length and breadth of the country to meet with the people and discuss the draft Constitution and the introduction of parliamentary democracy. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan was adopted on July 18<sup>th</sup> by the people represented by the first elected government.

His Majesty focused efforts in resolving long standing land issues by launching the National Cadastral Resurvey project in August 2007, in overseeing rebuilding efforts following major earthquakes and floods in 2009.

As King His Majesty has spent most of his time mainly within Bhutan's remote villages.

His Majesty the King is a keen and accomplished artist and photographer.

**Title (formal):** His Majesty the King  
or His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo (meaning *dragon King*)

**Title (short):** King Jigme Khesar or King Khesar

**Name:** Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

**Date of Birth:** 21<sup>st</sup> of February 1980

**Education:**

Department of Politics and International Relations, Oxford University

Wheaton College, Massachusetts, USA

Cushing Academy, Massachusetts, USA

Yangchenphug Higher Secondary School, Bhutan

Lungtenzampa Lower Secondary School, Bhutan

**Professional programs:**

Foreign Service Program, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University

National Defence College, New Delhi, India

Innovations in Governance, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

**Patronage:** Patron, Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry

President, Bhutan India Friendship Association

Patron, India Bhutan Foundation

Patron, Bhutan Scouts Association

Patron, Royal Society for the Protection of Nature

Patron, European Convention of Bhutan Societies

Patron, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies

**Honours:** Honorary Doctorate Degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Rangsit University, Thailand

Honorary Degree of the Doctor in Laws, University of New Brunswick, Canada, October 2005

Honorary Degree of the Doctor in Laws, University of Calcutta, India, October 2010

**Interests:** Painting, photography, reading, sports

## Quotes of

### His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck of Bhutan

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#### **During the public consultation on the Draft Constitution (2006-07)**

*“Today, in the womb of a strong and peaceful monarchy, we have begun to nurture the hopes of a vibrant democracy. It is this endeavour that we must henceforth uphold as our greatest priority – the success of democracy. For in the success of democracy lies the consolidation of our nation’s achievements and the future happiness and well being of Bhutan.”*

#### **On people’s welfare**

*“True welfare must be taken to the doorstep of the people. We must ensure that not even for a day longer should a person suffer the pains of dire poverty, of injustice or of neglect and disability. They must be identified as soon as possible and provided welfare.”*

#### **Youth**

*“Bhutan’s success or failure will ultimately depend on the strength of your (the youth) commitment – your willingness to embrace challenges and hard work. Unlike other countries, with our small population, it is not enough that a few of you excel - every single one of you must strive to be the best. This is the only way you can secure the future of our nation – through excellence.”*

#### **On quality of education - I**

*“ ... if our Vision for the nation is not contained in the pages of the books that our young children hold, in the words of our teachers as they lead their classrooms, and in the education policies of our governments then let it be said – we have no Vision,” His Majesty told the people recently. He has always reminded the people that, “a nation’s future will mirror the quality of her youth – a nation cannot fool herself into thinking of a bright future when she has not invested wisely in her children.”*

#### **On quality of education - II**

*“Contemplate! For what a grave mistake it will be to dream with great optimism of taking our nation from this successful democratic transition into a future of even greater success, without realizing that it is not us but our*

*children who must secure that success for the nation ... When the sun sets every evening, we go to sleep in the comfort that it will rise in the morning and things will be the same. Do not however let the light of education ever go out. For if it should become dark, even for a moment, we will find that generations of our children will suffer its effects and the light on a bright future for our nation will take decades to shine again ... Our nation's Vision can only be fulfilled if the scope of our dreams and aspirations are matched by the reality of our commitment to nurturing our future citizens."*

## **Democracy**

*"The highest achievement of one hundred years of Monarchy has been the constant nurturing of Democracy. This has culminated today in the first sitting of Parliament and the start of democracy, whereby my father and I, hereby return to our People the powers that had been vested in the kings by our forefathers one hundred years ago. We do so with absolute faith and confidence, offer our complete support and our prayers for the success of democracy. As King, henceforth, it is my sacred duty to ensure the success of our new democracy so that it will serve to fulfil the aspirations of our people always."*

## **Bhutan-India Friendship**

*"There has been no other time in our history that our relations have been as strong, as vibrant and as dynamic, as they are today. The strength of our friendship is even more striking when viewed in the context of the profound changes that have taken place in the world in the last few decades. With modernization our peoples have a greater awareness of the world beyond our region. And though awakened to new realities and experiences, our friendship has evolved, as only true friendship can, over time. From religious and cultural links to political and economic cooperation - today our ties encompass a great diversity of areas and issues on which we work closely together in each other's best interests. In the eyes of the international community, the relationship between Bhutan and India stands as a model of partnership and cooperation."*

## **Values and tradition**

*"My deepest concern is that as the world changes we may lose these fundamental values on which rest our character as a nation and people. It is critical that we are able to recognize Bhutanese character irrespective of how far we look back into the past or into the future. The Bhutan we see is vastly different - unrecognizable even - when compared to the Bhutan in the time of our first King. Yet, the character of our people and the nature of our fundamental values have remained unchanged. Henceforth, as even more dramatic changes transform the world and our nation, as long as we continue to pursue the simple and timeless goal of being good human beings, and as*

*long as we strive to build a nation that stands for everything that is good, we can ensure that our future generations for hundreds of years will live in happiness and peace.”*

### **On the Constitution:**

*“This Constitution was placed before the people of the twenty districts by the King. Each word has earned its sacred place with the blessings of every citizen in our nation. This is the People’s Constitution.*

*And today, through this, my Hand and Seal, I affix on to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, the hopes and prayers of my People.”*

### **From The Coronation Address**

*“It is with immense gratitude and humility that at this young age, I assume the sacred duty to serve a special people and country. Throughout my reign I will never rule you as a King. I will protect you as a parent, care for you as a brother and serve you as a son. I shall give you everything and keep nothing; I shall live such a life as a good human being that you may find it worthy to serve as an example for your children; I have no personal goals other than to fulfil your hopes and aspirations. I shall always serve you, day and night, in the spirit of kindness, justice and equality.*

*As the king of a Buddhist nation, my duty is not only to ensure your happiness today but to also create the fertile ground from which you may gain the fruits of spiritual pursuit and attain good Karma.*

*This is how I shall serve you as King ... I end with a prayer for Bhutan - that the sun of peace and happiness may forever shine on our people. I also pray that while I am but King of a small Himalayan nation, I may in my time be able to do much to promote the greater wellbeing and happiness of all people in this world – of all sentient beings.”*

### **On Mass media**

*“Media - newspapers, television, radio and the Internet – must play a very important role. I appreciate that while some of the media agencies are young and lack adequate resources they have strived to perform their duties with complete commitment. Hereafter, media will be vital in keeping people well informed and in encouraging debate and participation - key to a vibrant democracy.”*