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Historically, scholars have agreed that the people in Nepal have come in migratory waves from her two great neighbouring countries Tibet and India, while Nepal became the meeting ground. The Nepalese includes not only the people who are inside Nepal but also descendants of Nepalese who may not have ever visited their fore-father's origin place, regardless of their birth place or citizenship.

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Sam

I. Introduction

Bhutan is a small land locked Himalayan kingdom located between Tibet to the north and India to the south, east and west, with a population of less than 800,000. The geographical features have highly influenced the settlement pattern of the people. So, the people live scattered around in the valleys and hills across the country. During the ancient times, the country was known by several names, but from 17th century it was known as Bhutan to the outside world.[1] The country practice Tibetan Buddhism from 7th century, Hinduism came along with the immigrant Nepalese form 1865 and Christianity began to grow in minimal rates since the 1960s.

Historically, scholars have agreed that the people in Nepal have come in migratory waves from her two great neighbouring countries Tibet and India, while Nepal became the meeting ground. The Nepalese includes not only the people who are inside Nepal but also descendants of Nepalese who may not have ever visited their fore-father's origin place, regardless of their birth place or citizenship.[2] Nepalese in Bhutan are known as the *Lhotshampas* or Southerners have migrated from Nepal and India mainly after 1865.

They are of multi ethnic groups of Aryans and Mongoloids with distinct cultural practices, both in religion and in their traditional ways of life. Majority of them are Hindus, and others especially Tamangs and Sherpas are Buddhist. The arrival of the Nepalese to Bhutan for employment or for settlement during the 1960s form India and Nepal was the period when the actual history of Christianity in the country begins. But, due to the ethnic crisis almost half of the Nepalese had to leave Bhutan during 1990 and among them, many were Christians, who later became agents of gospel particularly in eastern Nepal.

II. The Land and People of Bhutan

Bhutan is home to less than 800,000 people, the majority of them engage in subsistence agriculture and live scattered in the many valleys across the country. The landscape can be divided into three horizontal regions, the southern foothills range from 200 to 1500 meters above sea level, the central region is 1500 to 3500 meters and the northernmost region with snow-capped mountains exceeds 7000 meters. The high mountain ranges and deep rivers have not only formed a natural barrier to protect the country from outside influence and annexation but have also resulted in population scarcity regions with a sparse population, varied and diverse as the geography of the country itself.

Generally, people in Bhutan can be divided into two major ethnic groups; the group first are the *Drukpas* which includes the people of eastern, western and central regions. The other group is the *Lhotshampas* who mostly live in the southern regions of the country, starting from east to the west.

The *Drukpas* make up 75 percent of the population following Tibetan style Mahayana Buddhism. The *Sharchokpas* or people of east, are the largest ethnic group in the country and speaks *Sharshopa* language. They are believed to be the aboriginal inhabitants of Bhutan. The people of the west and central region are called as *Ngalongs*, the ethnic group of the king, migrated from Tibetan plains. They speak Dzongkha language, which has been adopted as the national language from 1961. *Dzong* means fortress and *Kha* means language, the language spoken in the fortress. The other ethnic group is *Lhotshampas* or southerners, migrated from Nepal and India particularly after 1865. The influx of Nepalese continued to Bhutan even after the 1960s for the road building works and other development projects.[3] Today they make up 25 percent of the total population and speak Nepali language quite different from Nepal. Majority of *Lhotshampas* are Hindu, some follow Buddhism and minority follow Christianity.

Among these two ethnic groups, 19 different languages are spoken throughout the country. English is the medium of instruction in the schools and therefore widely spoken. The national dress is *Gho* for men and *Gira* for women. National dress should be worn during office hours, schools and festivals. Bhutan has a formalized dress code and a behavioural code named *Driglam Namzha.* The word *Driglam* means discipline and *Namzha* is the system. Overall, the composite term means the rule for discipline in behaviour. *Driglam*

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[1] Dorji., *History of Bhutan,* 13.
[2] Perry, *Nepali Around the World,* 2.
[3] Misra, *Bhutan: Society and Polity,* 93.

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Namzha teaches people a code of conduct to adhere to as members of a respectful society. It is a good manner which is adopted by the individuals, based on the concept of Buddhist good conduct. It includes many types of behaviour including how to speak to those in authority, how to serve and eat food, and how to dress.

III. The Religious Background of The Bhutanese

The archaeological evidence indicates that there were settlements in the country dating back to 2000 BC.[4] People were nomadic herders, which still practiced by some *Drukpa* community. Bonism, the animistic tradition was the main religion in Bhutan before the arrival of Buddhism. Buddhism was introduced by the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo in AD 659.[5] It was further strengthened by the arrival of *Padma-sambhava* in AD 746, the Indian Tantric[6] master also known as Guru Rimpoche or Precious Master, and also widely considered to be the second Buddha.[7] Ever since Buddhism has been an integral part of the people's culture in Bhutan. The society is also very much governed by the principles of Buddhism. The Buddhism practiced in Bhutan has absorbed many features of Bonism, which was the animistic traditional belief practiced by the people of ancient times.

IV. The Political Background of Bhutan

During the olden times, there were internal conflicts for centuries in Bhutan among the local rulers. However, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgal united Bhutan in AD 1616, after his arrival from Tibet. He became the first religious and secular head of the country, and eventually, a new government of dual system was established with a civil leader *Desi* and religious leader *Je Khenpo.* After Zhabdrung's death in 1951, Bhutan again returned to internal conflict between the various local rulers *Penlops*. This internal chaos led to the rise of Trongsa Penlop Ugyen Wangchuk, who successfully defeated all the political opponents. In 17th December 1907, he was chosen as the first hereditary king of Bhutan. Since then Wangchuk Dynasty was established which continue to rule the country to this day.

Again after Ugyen Wangchuk becoming the first hereditary monarch brought peace, unity, prosperity and ruled till 1926. Second king Jigme Wangchuk ruled from 1926 to 1952 and he was one of the first Bhutanese to receive English education in Bhutan. Third king Jigme Dorji Wangchuk ruled from 1952 to 1972, and he is also known as the father of modern Bhutan. "In the course of time, the planned development activities were undertaken and the country joined world organisation such as the Colombo Plan in 1962, the Universal Postal Union in 1969, and the United Nations Organization in 1971 to strengthen and maintain international relations."[8]

Bhutan had no foreign invasion or colonization and remained a sovereign state as a result of its geographical isolation. The kings continued to bring many modern reforms to Bhutan while keeping its traditional culture unharmed. In 2006 the fourth King abdicated the throne, passing it to the Crown Prince who is now the fifth King. In 2008 the country officially made the transition from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. Under the new system, the elected Prime Minister takes care of the administration of the country while the king continues as the head of state. In Bhutan, the king is the most loved and respected individual in the whole country.

V. The Economy of Bhutan

Bhutan has a distinct socio-economic identity because it is a small, mountainous and landlocked country. The environmental regions have largely impact on the socio-economic development of the country. However, Bhutan is endowed with a variety of natural and mineral resources. Since the introduction of planned social and economic development from 1961, rapid economic transformation in Bhutan had occurred.

Bhutan is identified as one of the poorest countries in the world, but poverty in Bhutan is relative and nil compared to some regions of India. As the majority of Bhutanese still being producing farmer families, nobody is starving. The agriculture and animal husbandry are the economic backbones for rural Bhutan. At the same time, urban centres are growing and modern facilities have arrived.

Because of the fast flowing rivers through the steep mountains, the Hydro Electric Projects are major the economic backbone of the country. Only part of the hydropower is consumed domestically and the maximum of the power produced is exported to India.

Bhutan being producer of various vegetables and fruits some agro industries are developed and also a number of small scales industries are established. Almost all the factories are based on the materials available within the country. Bhutan also has several mines and mineral resources which include copper, coal, dolomite, graphite, gypsum, lead, limestone, marbles, mica, slate, talc, tungsten and zinc.[9] These mineral resources are used for domestic requirements and also exported abroad.

Tourism is another important sector for the revenue in hard currency. Tourism has a great prospect

[4] *Bhutan Silk Road Travel,* "History of Bhutan."
[5] Berthold, *Bhutan: Land of Thunder Dragon,* 1.
[6] Tantric involves the use of meditation, yoga and other rituals.
[7] *Bhutan Explorer,* "History of Bhutan."
[8] Dorji, *History of Bhutan,* 32.
[9] Dorji, *Bhutan History,* 19.

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for Bhutan and it has emerged as a fast-growing industry. Bhutan's mountainous beauty, national parks, and domestic festival are the key elements of tourism development.

Even though Bhutan's economy is one of the smallest but it is also the fastest-growing economies in the world. [10] In its foreign trade relations, Bhutan depends predominantly on India and also from Japan, USA, and some European countries. Socio-economic development is based on the philosophy of Gross National Happiness or GNH. It was initiated by "His Majesty the 4th King in 1972 and is a development approach that seeks to achieve a harmonious balance between material wellbeing and the spiritual, emotional and cultural needs of the society."[11]

"Since Bhutan has been the sovereign country from time immemorial, it has its own coinage. Bhutan also has its own currency equivalent to Indian rupees."[12]

VI. The Diasporas of The Nepalese

The unification of Nepal by King Prithvi Nayaran Shah in 1769 has been important for the security of the country and new era begins with a new identity in the history of Nepal. But on the other hand, it caused a large number of migration to the neighbouring countries, because of the oppressive land and labour policies which threatened the survival of the people. In the meantime, because of the expansion of British power in India, they began to recruit for the soldier and also to meet the development needs of the British India. Opportunities were opened for the Nepalese for labour works with a reasonable wage, for the new tea plantation industry in Assam and Darjeeling, mining projects, construction of roads and railways and for factories in burgeoning urban centres. Therefore the Nepalese immigrated first to Darjeeling and Sikkim, into southern Bhutan, into Assam and throughout Northeast India and even to Burma. The first group of migrating from Nepal was Newar tribe during 7th century to Tibet and China, who were traders and skilled builders. Among the ethnic Nepali, about 57 Newari families living in Tibet were the first converts to Christianity by Jesuit missionaries during the early 18th century.[13]

VII. Immigration of Nepalese to The Southern Bhutan

Though the first presence of Nepalese in Bhutan is traced as far as early 7th century AD, the first documented evidence is found only after 1624 AD. They were carpenters, masons and skilled artisans brought by the rulers of Bhutan at different times to construct Buddhist monasteries. These artisans were given place to settle down in some southern regions of Bhutan. However, the larger scale of Nepalese immigration to southern Bhutan has happened after signing the Treaty of Sinchula in 1865 between British-India and Bhutan which brought an end to the Duar wars and established peace in that region. [14] Many migrated directly from Nepal and others from the adjoining areas of India, then gradually extended to the various regions of southern Bhutan.

The economic transformation brought through Nepalese employed by the British in Darjeeling and surrounding states encouraged the rulers of Bhutan to welcome Nepalese immigration.[15] They came to Bhutan in groups of individuals and families and sometime entire villages came bringing with them animals and household items.

VIII. The Early Socio Economic Life of Nepalese in Bhutan

Nepalese were encouraged to settle in southern Bhutan by the ruling elites to convert the untouched forest into agricultural farmlands. When the immigrants first arrived, southern Bhutan was a dense jungle with a hot climate and malarial.[16] It was the home of many wild and dangerous beasts and most uninviting for human settlement, yet the land was very fertile and suitable for the cultivation. They cleared away enough vegetation to plant a diverse range of crops and create pastures for their cattle to graze.

They could cut down, burn the jungle and cultivate any plot of land as they pleased for the purpose. "The burning and clearing of the forest was much appreciated during those periods because of backward state of cultivation and abundance of forest and cultivable land."[17] The Nepalese cleared the forests and turned them into agricultural land and villages, organizing themselves as cultivators and developed the area into good productive regions. There were also constant quarrels between the Nepalese settler and the Drukpas of Haa Dzongkhag for the winter grazing grounds because cattle rearing and dairy products were one of the chief sources of income.[18] The village life in Bhutan was carried on exactly as in Nepal and there was no supervision by the Bhutanese officials. "However from 1964, the administration of southern Bhutan was directly taken over by the central authorities and a special commissioner was appointed for the south."[19]

Eventually after Nepalese became large in population, some were appointed to bridge between the

[10] "Bhutan Economy Update," 8.
[11] "Country Statement: Bhutan," 1.
[12] Dorji, *History of Bhutan,* 19.
[13] Perry, *Nepali Around the World,* 17.
[14] Sinha, *Bhutan: Ethnic Identity and National,* 36.
[15] Misra, *Bhutan: Society and Polity,* 80.
[16] Phuntsho, *The History of Bhutan,* Chapter The Land and its People.
[17] Sinha, *Himalayan Kingdom Bhutan,* 164.
[18] Ibid., 29.
[19] Misra, *Bhutan: Society and Polity,* 81.

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ruling Drukpas and the Nepalese for collecting taxes and other administrative purposes. Dasho Jhulendra Bahadur Lama from Samtse Chengmari is one of those persons. He managed to get an education at Kalimpong which enabled him to speak and write English. He was recruited as an assistant to the delegation of King Ugyen Wangchuck to Delhi in 1911, since then he remained loyal to the kings till his death in 1975.[20] Then his son Durga Das Lama continued the work. Durga Das Lama was also the first and most influential person among the Christians in Bhutan, who has brought more than hundred of household to Christ during 1970s.

IX. The Population and Integration of Nepalese in Bhutan

In the year 1932 C.J Morris, the Assistant Recruitment Officer for the Gorkha Regiment visited some of the south regions of Bhutan to find young men for the military purposes, he estimated around 60,000 Nepalese from the total population of 300,000.[21] But he was in the view that the actual numbers of the immigrant Nepalese were much higher since he did not visit the interior parts were the Nepalese were settled. In 1907 during the coronation of Bhutanese first king Ugyen Wangchuck, Nepalese has been not recognized, might be since they were not considered as true citizens of the country.

Later from 1958 Nepalese migration to Bhutan has been banned, since Bhutan government wanted to integrate Nepalese into the mainstream of the Bhutanese society. Before that Bhutan did not had any rules for immigrants. In 1975 the immigrant Nepalese were granted regional identity as *Lhotshampas* or southerners. Later in 1990s about 50,000 Nepalese were sent out of Bhutan considering as illegal immigrants especially after 1958. Among the Nepalese who entered Bhutan during 1960s for private and government employment, some were Christians and they gathered for fellowship in the camps for their own spiritual benefits, which became the start of church history in Bhutan. At present Nepalese make up 25 percent of the country's population and enjoys equal rights with other ethnic groups.

X. Conclusion

Bhutan remaining isolated helped to preserve its deep Buddhist traditions. The wise kings of were able to manage the county with every possible method which at present became one of the peaceful countries in the world. The country had to open for the socio-economic development from 1961, which was also the period when the first church fellowships began among the Nepalese who came for employment in infrastructure projects and public services. Hinduism came to the country especially from 1865 with the arrival of immigrant Nepalese from India and Nepal.

Significant changes occurred with the arrival of Nepalese and have contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of the country.[22] The Nepalese cleared huge areas of forest to make farmland and became dominant people in southern Bhutan. At present Nepalese are found in every urban area of the country, serving in different kinds of government and private sectors. Many of them are highly educated, skilled, wealthy and in authority among the Drukpa establishment. Today southern Bhutan has become main doorways especially for business with India with economic promise.[23] Nepalese are more responsive to Christian faith than the Drukpas the aboriginal people of Bhutan. However, there were few Drukpas who became Christian from the 1980s and at present, they also conduct small fellowships in Dzongkha and *Sharshopa* language in several places.

[20] Sinha, *Himalayan Kingdom Bhutan,* 167.
[21] Sinha, *Himalayan Kingdom Bhutan,* 30.
[22] Phuntsho, *The History of Bhutan,* Chapter The Land and its People.
[23] Ibid.

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