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From the Field



**Student Journal of the Anthropology Programme,
Royal Thimphu College**

Vol. 5, No. 1 (2025)

Jottings from the Field

Student Journal of the Anthropology Programme,

Royal Thimphu College

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Jottings from the Field is a student lead journal intended to showcase the writings of Anthropology students in RTC. This is the fifth volume of the journal, which highlights some of the best ethnographic research and experiences of the students. It also provides an opportunity for interested students to learn the skills needed to run a publication.

Contents

Introduction to the Journal

RICHARD KAMEI AND DOLMA CHODEN RODER 4

CHOENING PELMO AND SUREKHA SUBBA 5

Local Governance in Bhutan: Examining the Dekiling Gewog of the Sarpang Dzongkhag

SONAM DORJI 6

The Forgotten Taste: Changes in Food Preferences in the Jaray Community of Eastern Bhutan

TSHERING LHAMO 7

Smoking Culture in Thimphu: Perceptions, Identity, Gender Difference and Buddhism

RIGZIN NIMA 9

Interview with an Anthropologist: Dr. Kevingu Khate

KEVINGU KHATE 11

Interview with Alumna: Pema Lhazom Namgay

PEMA LHAZOM NAMGAY 14

Missing Parts: A Lifetime of Feeling Incomplete

NAMGAY CHODEN 17

Significance of *Khamti* Rice in Bhutanese Society

PEMA DORJI, PEMA ZANGPO, AND KINLEY DEKAR 33

**The unseen hand, the guiding star: Reflecting on the 70th Birthday of a King
we never knew (Yet Live By)**

SANGAY DORJI 38

Languages of My Life: A Personal Journey Through Multilingualism

CHIMI DORJI 40

Beyond Devotion: Tamzhing Monastery and Pema Lingpa's Claim to Authority

SUREKHA SUBBA 43

Laya: The Synergy Between the Traditional and Modern

ANDREW S. FLETCHER 46

Wednesday

CHHIMI WANGMO 48

Applied Anthropology: Snippets of applied project work from 2025

RICHARD KAMEI, KHENRAB WANGCHUK TSHERING, TSHERING
LHAMO, TASHI TENZIN, RINZIN PEM SELDON, AND SHERAB
WANGMO 51

Introduction to the Journal

From the journal's Faculty Advisors

As the fall semester at Royal Thimphu College (RTC) is soon coming to an end, the fifth edition of “Jottings from the Field”, a journal from the anthropology programme of RTC, is back. The continued vibrancy of the journal since its launch in 2021 is a testament to the quality of the ethnographic work produced by anthropology students and alumni. We take immense pride in exposing our anthropology students to the academic world and helping them acquire the skills necessary for publishing a journal. The journal's members, all anthropology students, were engaged in various tasks, including correspondence, copy editing, peer review, photo editing, and publication, to make this journal a success.

This year, we introduced one change: we have decided to use the ‘Garamond’ font style in place of the ‘Baskerville.’ This change will ensure smooth coordination in copy editing tasks. As in previous years, we received submissions on a variety of topics. This year’s issue covered various topics related to Bhutan from anthropological perspectives, which were peer-reviewed among the journal members and later at the faculty level of the anthropology programme. In our issue for this year, to commemorate His Majesty, the Fourth King’s 70th birth anniversary, we have one article that pays tribute to his legacy. We are grateful that “The Bhutanese,” where the article was originally published, are allowing us to share it again here.

We would like to thank the journal members for their hard work, dedication, and rigour in making this issue a success. We would also like to thank our anthropology colleagues for their continued support in various capacities: Dr Pheiga Amanda Giangthandailiu, Dr Shawn Christopher Rowlands, Dr Kevingu Khate, Dr Tiatemsu Longkumer, and Ms. Deki Yangzom, as well as all the authors. We also want to extend our gratitude to Kezang Choden. We look forward to the next chapter of our journal in 2026.

We hope that this year’s edition is an engaging read for the readers.

Richard Kamei and Dolma Choden Roder

From the Journal's Senior Editors

We are delighted to welcome you to this year's edition of "Jottings from the Field", the fifth issue of Royal Thimphu College's student-driven Anthropology journal. Every year, this journal serves as a testament to our students' curiosity, creativity, and academic rigour, and this edition is no different. These pages contain an engaging mix of study abstracts, reflective essays, field reports, and creative contributions. Together, they reflect the many opinions and developing interests of RTC's Anthropology programme.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the editorial staff, whose dedication, patience, and collaboration created this publication from concept to completion. We also genuinely thank the authors who trusted us with their work, faculty members who offered suggestions and encouragement, and the students who provided images that add visual life to this issue. Lastly, we would like to thank Dr. Richard Kamei and Dr. Dolma Choden Roder, our journal advisors and supervisors, for their unwavering support and dedication, without whom this journal would not have taken shape. Through their guidance and the efforts of the editorial team as well as the authors who submitted their work, this publication has grown into a meaningful platform for scholarly exchange.

As you explore this year's edition, we invite you to engage with the questions, perspectives, and stories that live within these pages. We hope this issue inspires you to create conversations around the topics discussed and encourage further enquiry into the diverse worlds we inhabit. Thank you for joining us in celebrating the curiosity and commitment that continue to shape "Jottings from the Field".

We hope your experience with this edition is as meaningful and enriching as it was for us making it.

Kind regards,

Choening Pelmo and Surekha Subba, Student Senior Editors

Local Governance in Bhutan: Examining the Dekiling Gewog of the Sarpang Dzongkhag



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Selected Capstone Project Abstract of 2025 Anthropology Graduate

Abstract

This ethnographic research explores local government in Dekiling Gewog in Sarpang, Bhutan, and how the local community participates in the local government. Using participant observation, interviews with officials and residents, and document review, the study examines decentralisation and power relations in the daily life of people in Dekiling. The findings indicate that while local governance is valued for its accessibility, its effectiveness is limited by resource constraints, capacity issues, and central government's influence. The research also examines the role of power, where the authority is often constrained by a set of limitations in achieving decentralised governance. Service delivery is inconsistent, and citizen participation, though encouraged, faces significant barriers due to various factors. Cultural practices are selectively integrated into local governance, showing an ongoing balance between tradition and modern administration. This study presents the lived realities of local governance, highlighting the community's experience of the complexity of the political system. This study is an effort to contribute to existing scholarship on local governance from Bhutan's context.

Keywords: Power Relations, Decentralisation, South Asia, local governance, Bhutan

The Forgotten Taste: Changes in Food Preferences in the Jaray Community of Eastern Bhutan



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Selected Capstone Project Abstract of 2025 Anthropology Graduate

Abstract

This research explores the changing food habits in the Jaray community of Eastern Bhutan, influenced by external factors such as globalisation and development, which introduced road construction and access to markets. In the past, the diet of the community consisted of locally grown maize, and vegetables both wild and homegrown but more recently, their diet has shifted towards imported rice, processed goods, and non-local ingredients. This research seeks to address how these dietary changes accompany changes in social value, class distinction within a society, and attitudes of different generations towards food, using data collected in anthropological field research which included interviews, participant observation and kitchen visits. The findings show how food consumption reflects broader social structures and changing values in Jaray. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus and distinction, the study shows that food choices are shaped by both class-based taste and generational experiences. While older individuals associate traditional foods with resilience and cultural identity, younger generations lean towards modern convenience and taste. These patterns show how food has become an emblem not only of socio-economic status, but also of shifting culture. Furthermore, these findings stimulate critical thought regarding food sovereignty in rural Bhutan where local food production and consumption are increasingly dominated by imported goods. This research adds to the anthropological discourse and also analyses the emotional and cultural markers of change

across generations. It shows how change demands critical focus on the means through which the values and hierarchies are enacted through community food preferences.

Keywords: Food habits, change, globalisation, development, food sovereignty, generational change, habitus, distinction, identity, Bhutan.

Smoking Culture in Thimphu: Perceptions, Identity, Gender Difference and Buddhism



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Selected Capstone Project Abstract of 2025 Anthropology Graduate

Abstract

In Thimphu, the rising visibility and acceptance of smoking present a cultural and social challenge that calls for a deeper understanding beyond health concerns. This anthropological research focuses on the perception of smoking in Thimphu, analysing smoking as a culture and identity, where the research explores the relationship and reasons for smoking. Moreover, it further investigates gender perceptions, explaining the differences in the way society perceives men and women. In addition, there is a discussion on smoking in public places and the government's decision to legalise tobacco, where the research delves into the effect on non-smokers and its influence on them and explores the relationship between Buddhism and smoking. Oral stories regarding tobacco are narrated, and the spiritual aspects of smoking are examined. Explaining it based on the theoretical concepts of performativity and habitus, the research examines how the environment, upbringing, and social expectations shape behaviours and choices related to smoking. It shows how smoking is not just a personal act but something people do repeatedly in ways that express and shape their social identity, especially concerning gender and group belonging. This anthropological research focuses on the perception of smoking in Thimphu, analysing smoking as a culture and identity, where the research explores the relationship and reasons for smoking. Moreover, it further investigates gender perceptions, explaining the differences in the way society perceives men and women. In addition, there is a discussion on smoking in public places and the government's decision to legalise tobacco, where the research delves into the effect on non-smokers and its influence on them and explores the relationship between Buddhism and smoking. Oral stories regarding tobacco are narrated, and the spiritual aspects of smoking are examined. Explaining it based on the theoretical concepts of

performativity and habitus, the research examines how the environment, upbringing, and social expectations shape behaviours and choices related to smoking. Furthermore, it shows how smoking is not just a personal act but something people do repeatedly in ways that express and shape their social identity, especially concerning gender and group belonging.

Keywords: Smoking culture, Identity, Gender perception, Buddhism, Performativity

Interview with an Anthropologist:

Dr. Kevingu Khate



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The current second-year anthropology student, Phub Dorji, conducted this interview

1. What drew you to anthropology, and how did you develop an interest in biological anthropology in particular?

I have long been captivated by human diversity, intrigued by how various cultures can share similarities while still exhibiting a myriad of differences. This fascination is one of the primary motivations behind my decision to pursue anthropology as a field of study. From the various branches of anthropology, I find myself particularly drawn to biological anthropology. This specialisation not only delves into the evolutionary and biological aspects of humans but also offers extensive hands-on practical training. I appreciate the opportunity to engage directly with a variety of instruments and methodologies, which allows for a deeper understanding of human physiology and evolution. The dynamic interplay between culture and biology in this field continually inspires me to explore and learn more about the complexities of human existence, and to contribute to them through teaching and research as a profession.

2. Who are some of your biggest influences or mentors in the field of biological anthropology?

Regarding your question, I would say that many people have influenced me to pursue a career in biological anthropology. To be specific, I find that the people around me are very instrumental; those would be my college and university professors. They played an important role in guiding and nurturing my academic journey. They all brought a unique perspective and expertise to the classroom, enriching my understanding of the subjects I studied. Their guidance and mentorship were instrumental in fostering my intellectual curiosity and developing my critical thinking skills.

Beyond just imparting knowledge, they created an engaging learning environment that encouraged discussion and exploration of complex ideas. Their dedication to teaching and passion for their fields inspired me to pursue a career in biological anthropology, and I am satisfied with the path I have taken so far.

3. What theoretical frameworks guide your work, and how do they influence your understanding of human biology and culture?

The biocultural framework resonates deeply with me because I view it as a lens for examining and exploring my area of research. This approach not only emphasises the interplay between biological and cultural factors but also helps me to take into consideration the often-overlooked elements that can influence my findings. By acknowledging these unseen variables, I am better equipped to understand the complexities inherent in my work and to develop more nuanced conclusions in my research. This holistic perspective broadens my research horizons, allowing me to explore the intricate ways in which cultural practices and biological factors interconnect, ultimately enriching my scholarly pursuits.

4. How do you communicate your research findings—especially those rooted in biological anthropology—to broader audiences, including non-specialists?

The majority of my research work is published in academic journals; this is one of the many ways in which I contribute to the body of knowledge in my field. Additionally, I share my findings through various platforms, including conferences, seminars, and training workshops. At these events, I engage with fellow researchers and practitioners, presenting my work and facilitating discussions that can lead to collaboration and learning, as well as relearning from such engagements. These opportunities enable me to receive valuable feedback, stay current on the latest developments in my field, and enrich my knowledge.

5. What has been your experience teaching anthropology in Bhutan, particularly in relation to the local biological and cultural contexts?

It has been a great privilege and a responsibility to teach this subject here in Bhutan. As anthropology (in general, and biological anthropology even more so) is still a very new and unfamiliar subject option in Bhutan, being able to talk about it with others is always a privilege. The biological anthropology field has a huge scope in this country as it is still pretty much untouched in the academic sense.

6. What recent developments or emerging trends in biological anthropology do you believe Bhutanese researchers and students should pay close attention to?

I feel that all four domains of anthropology need to be given importance equally. However, with respect to biological anthropology, the rapid and continuous rise in the prevalence of Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Bhutan is a major concern which needs to be dealt with at the earliest. This is one (of the many) areas where the country will require the help and expertise of anthropologists to tackle this complex burden, and understand its biological and sociocultural causes and implications.

7. Given the rapid environmental and societal changes globally and locally, how can biological anthropologists make meaningful contributions to Bhutanese society and policymaking?

As anthropologists are trained to respect different cultural values and practices, they are aware of multiple political and government systems. By acknowledging the significant changes unfolding around us, while equipped with knowledge of human biological variation, we become the perfect individuals to bring about meaningful contributions, whether in society or in developing new policies. We also highly emphasise collaborations with people from multiple disciplines and social strata, which gives us an advantage in rapport building and earning trust among smaller groups in society, especially when general policies need to be tailored to specific, vulnerable groups. Anthropologists aid in developing more sensitive and inclusive policies that are easier to implement and more readily accepted by people from all walks of life.

Interview with Alumna:

Pema Lhazom Namgay



Anthropology 2024 graduate

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This current third-year anthropology student, Sonam Lhamo, conducted this interview

1. Tell us about yourself, including your educational background, current professional status, and future goals.

I completed my BA in Anthropology from the Royal Thimphu College. The programme shaped much of who I am today and deepened my interest in research and cultural studies. At the moment, I am working as a Research Associate with the Research and Development Office (formerly the Himalayan Centre for Environmental Humanities). I assist with fieldwork, logistics, documentation, and research activities under the Perpetuating Highland Heritage project.

Looking ahead, I hope to continue learning and eventually pursue my Master's. My long-term goal is to make gradual progress in research and ultimately contribute to academia in the future. I still have a lot to learn, but I am motivated to build on the foundations I received at RTC.

2. How did you come to know about the anthropology programme at RTC? What led you to take it up?

I first learned about the programme through RTC's prospectus and through seniors who spoke warmly about the department. I chose anthropology because I felt drawn to understanding people, culture, and the world around us in a deeper way. I was also intrigued by how the subject encourages us to question assumptions and appreciate multiple ways of living and knowing.

3. As you look back at the anthropology programme at RTC, any reflections or thoughts you would like to share?

Looking back, I feel very grateful for the anthropology programme at RTC. It broadened my thinking and helped me see the interconnectedness of society, culture, and environment. The fieldwork experiences especially taught me humility and the importance of careful listening. I owe a lot to the faculty who supported and guided me patiently throughout the four years. Their mentorship continues to influence how I approach research today.

4. Could you share your experiences as an anthropology student currently studying outside Bhutan?

During my exchange programme in the Netherlands, I had the chance to take courses in social and developmental psychology, migration and diaspora studies, religion, and heritage studies. Studying outside Bhutan exposed me to different academic environments and ways of understanding anthropology. It also made me appreciate Bhutan's cultural richness even more. Overall, it was a valuable learning experience that helped me grow both academically and personally.

5. Tell us about your research interests and what made you develop them.

My research interests are still evolving, but they are slowly taking shape around sacred ecologies, gendered roles in highland pastoralism, and human–animal relationships. These interests developed from my undergraduate research and later expanded through the fieldwork opportunities I received in my current role. Spending time with communities in Haa and Sephu, listening to their stories, and witnessing their intimate connection with the landscape has had a profound impact on me. I feel fortunate to have learned from them.

6. Do you have any advice for the current anthropology students of RTC regarding opportunities after graduation?

Anthropology can open up many possibilities in research, cultural documentation, development work, NGOs, and even environmental fields. My small piece of advice would be to stay curious, read widely, and value fieldwork.

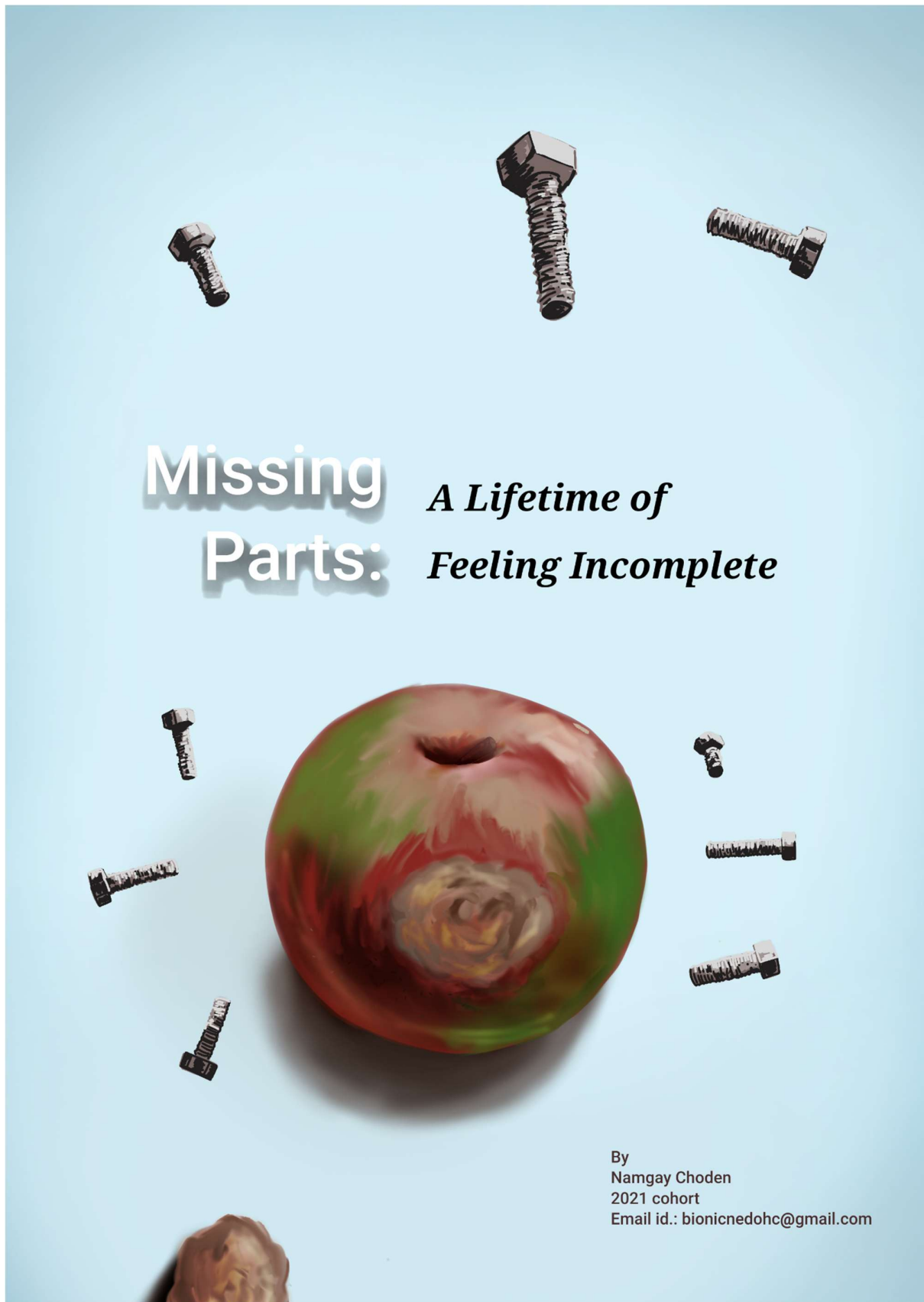
7. What advice would you give someone wanting to pursue higher studies in anthropology?

(I don't think I am in a position to be commenting on that, as I am yet to pursue)

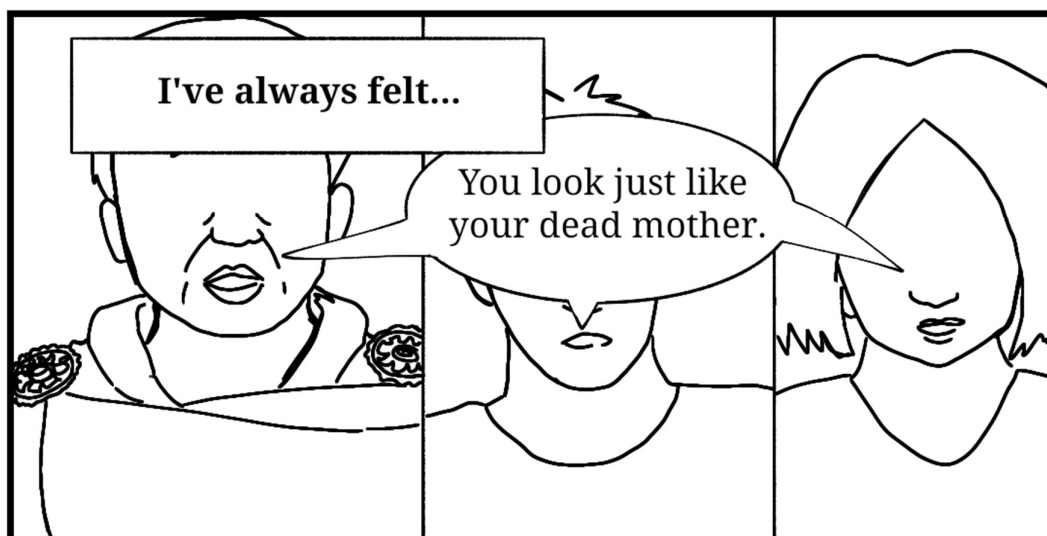
8. Any comments you would like to share for RTC students in general, and anthropology students in particular?

To all RTC students: cherish your time at the college. It is a space where you grow not only academically but also as a person.

For anthropology students: remember that anthropology teaches us to listen, observe, and engage with humility. Allow your fieldwork and readings to shape you. Every encounter, every conversation, and every assignment will teach you something if you remain open to learning.







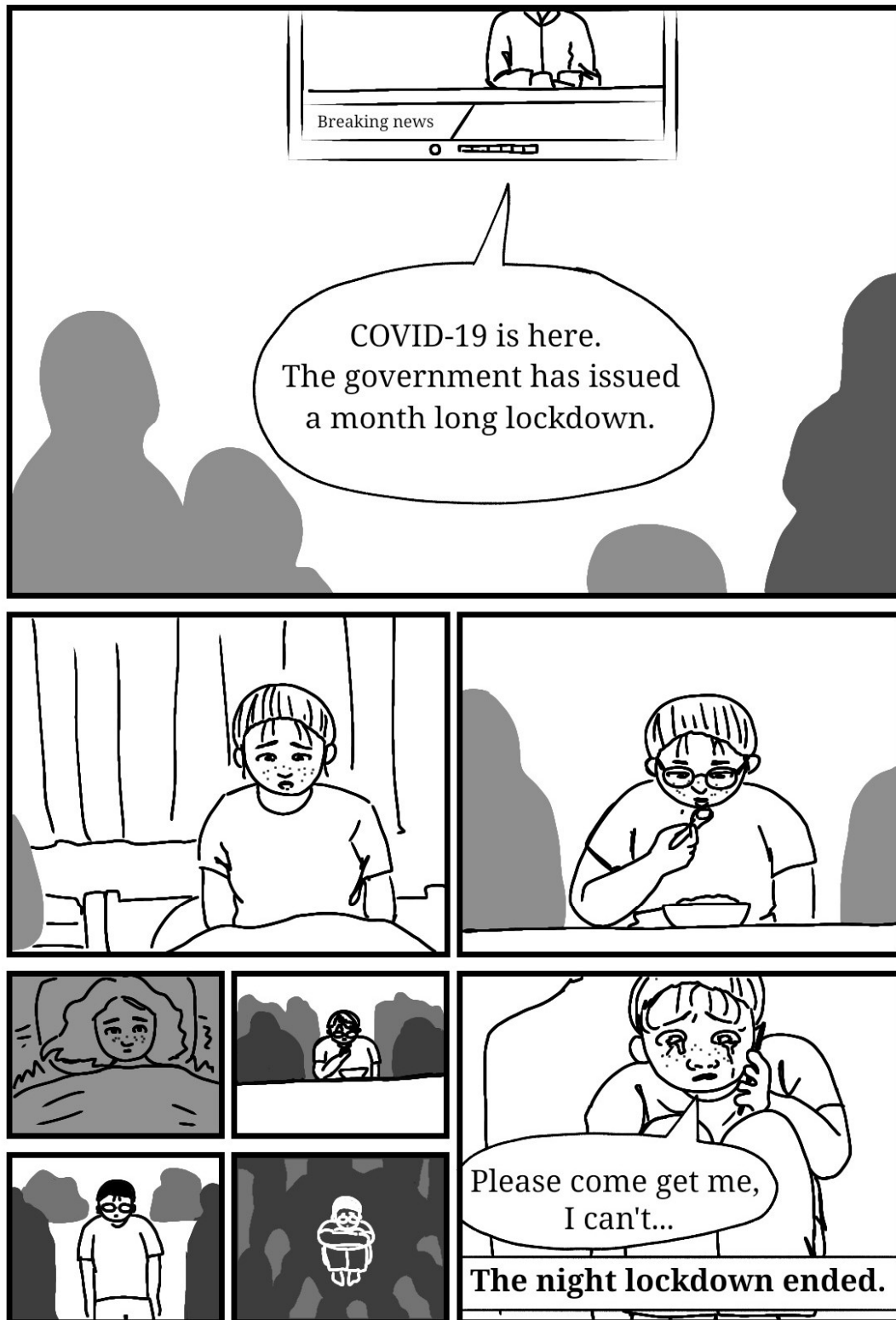








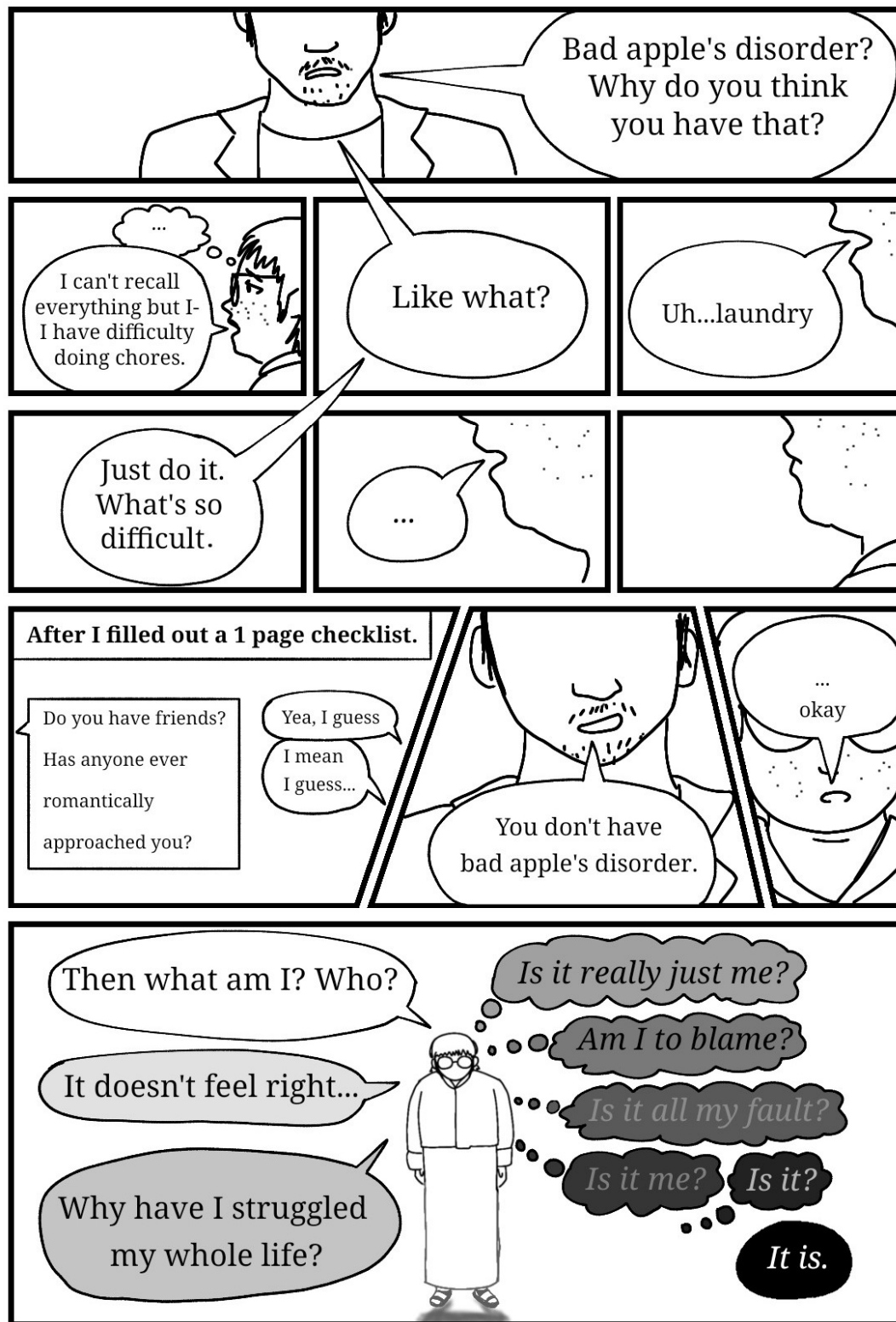


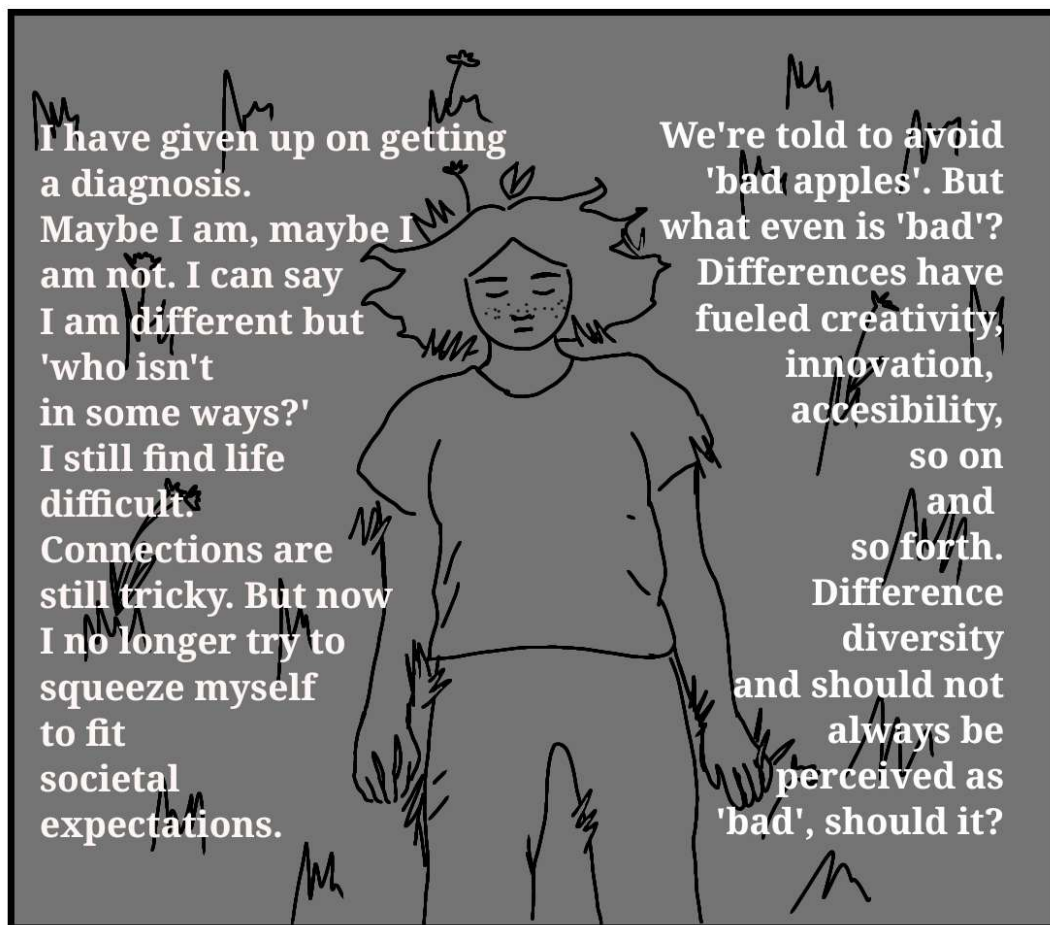
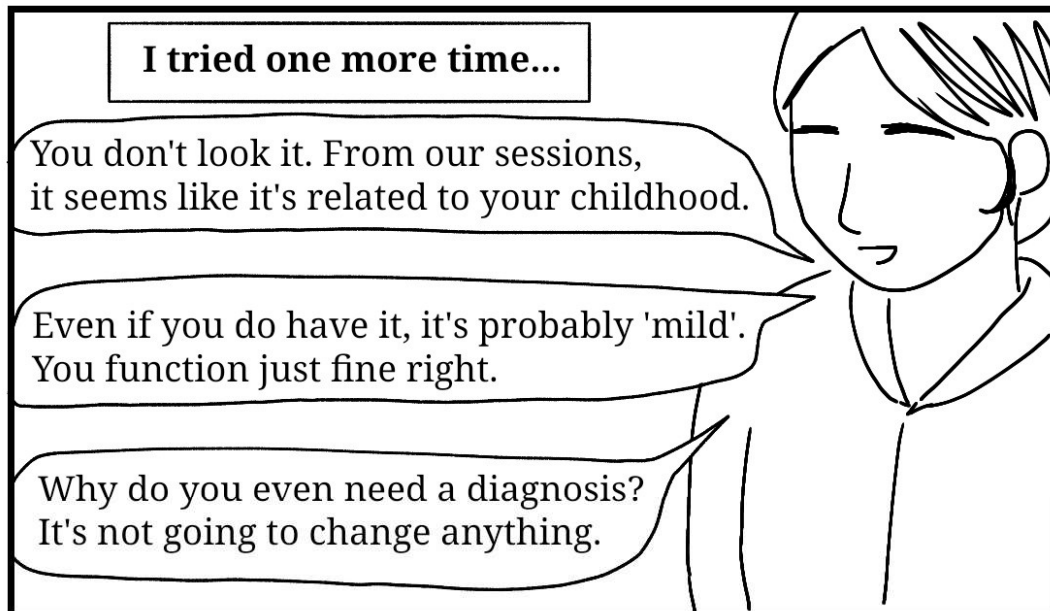












Notes from the author:

This is based on my life and the experiences I have had. I would like to say that with this comic, I tried to highlight moments that captured my differences. Though this may seem biased, I would like to clarify that I have felt this way for a long time, so much so that it has become difficult to connect with (or sometimes even remember) times I felt safe or content with myself (as with difference comes mild aggressions and loneliness).

As the scenes in this comic show, I was always 'slow', 'selfish', 'quiet', and generally a 'little odd.' These are all words that people (close ones and strangers) have either said to me or at least implied since I was little (from what I remember, starting elementary days). These are also words I had subconsciously come to associate with myself and self-worth. I felt like I was broken and that there was something inherently wrong with me. My differences felt like a moral failing; "Others seem to manage just fine, why can't I?" It did not help to be in a society that felt set in its ways, where difference of any kind was seemingly frowned upon (then again, this might just be a skewed perception of someone who never felt like they quite belonged).

In school, we were told to avoid bad apples (bad friends, and bad people). However, as I went through life, I came to notice that the word 'bad' seemed to mean 'different' as well. If you acted out of the norm, you are either to be avoided, moulded to fit societal expectations, or ridiculed. My whole life I was scared of being 'bad'; I took token phrases at face value, phrases like "honesty is the best policy", "always give your hundred percent", and so on. I became small; I did not want to take up space because I felt that was what was asked of me. I wanted to fit in but nothing seemed to work. I grew more distant from the people around me as I grew more resentful (of society and myself) and burnt out.

Then I came upon videos of the "bad apple's disorder"¹, and suddenly I felt understood like I had never been before. I found online communities made by 'bad apples', read the experiences they shared, read a book one of them recommended to me, and giggled at the humorous memes they posted. I was overcome by a need to find out if I really was a 'bad

¹ This is a name I have given to this difference not only because I am not a person who is clinically diagnosed with it (thus I feel I cannot speak on their behalf) but also because of the negative perception surrounding it as well as misinformation. To be clear, it is not a 'disorder', it is just that it is being treated as such.

apple' (though I felt very sure I was). However, psychological professionals I went to, all said I was not or that it was probably 'mild'. I felt stripped of this part of myself I felt so sure of; like finding out that the pond was simply a mirage after days being thirsty in a desert (except it was not days, it was years).

However, now I have come to terms with the idea that I may never be diagnosed or even go through the process as diagnosis is full of barriers (in terms of cost, policies, societal perception, and non-existence of proper diagnosis for adults in the country). I am choosing now to focus on my needs as they come. Though I may never be able to say that I am or am not a 'bad apple', I can say for sure that differences should not mean 'bad'.

P.S. I do not mean to criticise the country's mental health system. Mental health could not be a priority for a small country with limited resources. However, from what I can see, things are improving.

Significance of *Khamti* Rice in Bhutanese Society

Pema Dorji, Pema Zangpo, and Kinley Dekar

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Khamti rice is one of the distinct varieties of rice grown in the southern and eastern parts of Bhutan, particularly in Pemathang and Phuntshothang in Samdrup Jongkhar. These areas share close ethnic and cultural ties with the neighbouring Indian states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, which have influenced the cultivation and exchange of this variety. Known for its aromatic quality, long grains, and soft texture, *Khamti* rice is highly valued and often used for ceremonial occasions. Beyond its role as a staple crop, *Khamti* rice functions as a cultural artefact that reflects ecological adaptation, inter-ethnic interaction, and the emergence of new local identities. Its production and circulation in rural markets show how agricultural livelihoods in Bhutan are deeply intertwined with social and environmental relationships. Drawing on Appadurai's (1986) idea of the "social life of things," *Khamti* rice can be understood as a commodity that does not fully enter the realm of commercial exchange. Instead, its value remains embedded in customary land use, specialised knowledge of cultivation, and ritual practices, which give it meanings that extend beyond economic worth.

Farmers such as Yonten and Hari Bahadur Rai² highlight how rice is grown using traditional organic methods without reliance on chemical inputs, thereby maintaining ecological balance and reinforcing cultural identity. Yonten explained, "In the past, all the farmers traditionally used organic methods relying on local seed preservation, natural fertilisers like cow dung and manual transplanting following the seasonal monsoon cycle." This implies that deep-rooted tradition and the associated knowledge system make it resistant to commodification in the typical agribusiness model. Therefore, understanding the cultural significance of *Khamti* rice and its role in local food systems demonstrates how a seemingly ordinary crop can provide a deeper insight into Bhutan's agricultural economy.

² Interviewees. Their interviews were taken in 2024 for the biography of the Bhutanese commodity assignment

From the perspective of history, *Khamti* rice traces its roots to an ethnic Tai speaking group called *Khamti* people living in the border regions of Arunachal Pradesh and northern Myanmar. According to Saikia and Verma (2023), the cultivation of *Khamti* rice in Bhutan is attributed to migration, cultural diffusion and ecological adaptation in the Duar and Himalayan foothills. An interviewee, Yonten confirmed this oral narrative: “*Khamti* has been here before I was born... Oral narratives from the past dictate that *Khamti* has been brought from the Northeast region of India where people went to do the trade there and also the historical migration.” Similarly, Hari Bahadur Rai recalled that the rice has been “passed down through generations” in his community. The integration of *Khamti* rice into rituals, marriage feasts, and Bhutanese festivals signifies purity, prosperity, and the importance of the event to the people who consume it. In regions where Buddhist and animist traditions coexist, *Khamti* rice is used in rituals to mark the cycles of life and agricultural time.

From an anthropological perspective, *Khamti* rice reflects the idea of Marcel Mauss’ “gift”, where the exchange of the grain is not solely for its economic value but also a medium for reciprocity and social bonding during events such as harvest festivals and communal rituals (Mauss, 2002). Both interviewees affirm its use in ritual: “People here prefer the local products for special occasions such as *Lochhoe*, *Thruebab* and *Losar*,” noted Yonten. Hari Bahadur Rai added that *Khamti* is part of “major festivals like *Dashain*, *Tihar* and even Bhutanese celebrations like *Thruebab*.” Its cultivation is gender-specific, involving the intergenerational transmission of agricultural knowledge on how to plant, when to plant, and the amount of water needed for growing rice. Women in particular play a crucial role in seed selection and post-harvest processing, thus making *Khamti* rice a medium for maintaining kinship and knowledge continuity. The grain becomes more than a food source, as it also serves as a repository of social memory, ecological wisdom, and ethnic identity in Bhutan’s culturally diverse agrarian society.

For the production of *Khamti* rice, most farmers rely on traditional farming systems, including indigenous knowledge, organic methods, and community cooperation. Cultivation usually begins around May and June, with the arrival of the monsoon season, when the fields are ploughed with oxen. Some farmers use power tillers and low-impact tools for preparing the field. Both Yonten and Hari Bahadur confirm this seasonal timeline. Hari Bahadur described, “We usually plant in late June or early July and harvest by November.” The seeds are selected based on traits such as their aroma, grain size and resistance to pests. According to Chhogyel et al. (2015), *Khamti* rice is cultivated using organic fertilisers, unlike the hybrid varieties that use chemical fertilisers and mechanised methods. This highlights the form of resistance to agribusiness and

state-driven agricultural interventions. It highlights the autonomy of local farmers and their strategic adaptation in maintaining agricultural diversity. The labour exchange, known as “*Laktsab*”, is a vital part of the cultivation and harvesting of crops, which directly demonstrates communal solidarity and shared responsibility among farmers. Production is also influenced by local beliefs, such as attributing the successful harvest not only to the technique but also to environmental harmony. This helps maintain the importance of *Khamti* rice in the community as it signifies the grower’s identity, culture and also helps them economically. Therefore, the farming of *Khamti* rice involves a reciprocal relationship between humans and the environment. The production process provides insight into how rural Bhutanese communities sustain both their livelihoods and cultural values amid increasing environmental and developmental pressures.

The distribution of *Khamti* rice is done through informal local markets and community networks. Compared to mass-produced rice on the market, *Khamti* is less visible in urban markets, but it holds a prestigious status in local and village-level trade. Although it has gained popularity among urban populations in recent times, farmers still reserve a considerable portion for domestic use and gift-giving, which highlights its dual role as both sustenance and cultural capital. “Now people living in the urban areas are seeking to consume it mainly during the special occasions,” Yonten explained, while Hari Bahadur added, “We sell directly to urban customers or through relatives and middlemen... even tourists and hotel owners have shown interest.”

Recently, the government has shown interest in organic and heritage rice, making *Khamti* a suitable commodity for the market. However, the integration of *Khamti* rice into formal economies remains limited due to low volume production, a lack of infrastructure, and weak policy support for the grain (Dendup et al., 2021). Nevertheless, these limitations also serve as safeguards against the commodification of cultural crops. Keeping *Khamti* rice within controlled social spheres suggests that distribution is not only governed by market logic but also by the norms of kinship, ritual obligation, and ethical food sharing. “Middlemen are the ones who come to the village for vacations and holidays, take the rice and later send the money to us,” said Yonten, highlighting the informal trust-based exchanges that shape the local rice economy. As Bhutan balances tradition with development, *Khamti* rice symbolises the negotiation between subsistence values and emerging economic aspirations within rural agrarian life.

In conclusion, *Khamti* rice stands as a powerful symbol of Bhutanese agricultural heritage, serving far beyond its role as a staple crop, where it encapsulates a way of life that is deeply embedded in local knowledge, ritual practice and intergenerational transmission. The *Khamti* rice,

grown in the southern and eastern parts of Bhutan, reveals the history of cultural diffusion from neighbouring regions of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, while also highlighting its ceremonial uses, community significance, and modes of cultivation. *Khamti* rice resists easy market integration due to its intimate ties with customary land use, organic farming practices and rituals, unlike other commodified rice varieties. This resistance reflects the autonomy of Bhutanese farmers who maintain ecological integrity and cultural identity in the face of modernisation. The production and distribution of *Khamti* rice illuminates a unique form of rural resilience and sustainability. Labour-sharing, the use of organic fertilisers and the reliance on seasonal cycles showcase a deep connection between humans and the environment. At the same time, its limited but growing presence in urban and tourist markets highlights the dual identity of *Khamti* as both a sustenance commodity and a prestige commodity. Informal trade networks, kinship-based distribution and the symbolic role of the rice in rituals and gift economies demonstrate that its value transcends monetary metrics. Thus, *Khamti* rice demonstrates that a local product can serve as a cultural artefact, enabling rural Bhutanese farmers to navigate the pressures of development while preserving their heritage. As Bhutan focuses on organic agricultural products and sustainable development, the *Khamti* rice can be seen as a model for integrating traditional practices, illustrating how cultural context shapes the understanding and value of agricultural commodities.

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The unseen hand, the guiding star: Reflecting on the 70th Birthday of a King we never knew (Yet Live By)



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As His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck approaches his 70th Birthday Anniversary, it's not just a date on the calendar for us, the youth. Oh no, it's a profound, almost cosmic moment for deep, often dramatic, reflection. We are citizens, yes, but more than that, we are the inheritors of a nation and a philosophy sculpted by a Monarch who, like the North Star, didn't just illuminate Bhutan but became a guiding light for human development, challenging the very notion of what progress truly means in a world obsessed with material gains.

Now, for a generation like ours, swimming in the turbulent, often chaotic waters of rapid change and relentless globalisation, the Fourth King's Gross National Happiness (GNH) isn't just a concept; it's an incredibly potent, profoundly relevant guiding star. We didn't live in his immediate reign, no, but his influence permeates the very air we breathe, the values we instinctively hold, and the collective narrative of leadership that resonates so deeply with us. We're a generation grappling with fundamental questions of purpose, sustainability, and genuine well-being, and it's as if His Majesty laid out the blueprint for answers decades ago.

My own understanding of Bhutan, its unique trajectory, and its almost mythical resilience, has been utterly shaped by this unseen hand. GNH, a philosophy conceptualised and championed by His Majesty, isn't some dusty academic theory; it posits that true progress must be a delicate, holistic balance. It's the material and the spiritual, the collective and the individual well-being, all woven together. And honestly, this vision, conceived decades ago, feels remarkably, almost eerily, foresighted today. We're living in an era increasingly marked by environmental crises, a looming mental health pandemic, the scars of COVID-19, and the gnawing social fragmentation that inevitably stems from unchecked materialism. In this context, GNH isn't just relevant; it's a

lifeline, a contrasting philosophy that reminds us that “might makes right” shouldn’t just apply to economic power, but to the power of a happy, balanced society.

His Majesty’s contributions are not merely footnotes in history; they are monumental pillars shaping our present and future. Think about his visionary commitment to environmental conservation, a leader understanding the intrinsic, almost sacred link between a healthy environment and human happiness. He didn’t just talk about it, he formally mandated a minimum of 60% of Bhutan’s land under forest cover. This wasn’t just policy; it was a covenant with nature, a causal link ensuring our very breath.

And then there’s the truly mind-boggling act of his strategic and voluntary transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy, culminating in 2008. This wasn’t a king clinging to power; it was an unparalleled act of selfless leadership, willingly ceding absolute power for the long-term benefit and empowerment of his people. It’s a lesson in humility and foresight that transcends political boundaries, a profound challenge to any notion that “might makes right” only applies to those who consolidate control. He flipped the script: might makes right, for the people. Furthermore, His Majesty’s emphasis on cultural preservation and the promotion of a unique national identity stands as a powerful counter-narrative in an increasingly globalised world, where cultural homogenization is a growing, often insidious, concern. He showed us that our heritage isn’t a burden; it’s our superpower.

Thus, His Majesty’s 70th Birthday reminds us that our roots, our shared history, our pristine environment, and our visionary leaders like him have gifted us, his citizens, an opportunity to reflect on a legacy that continues to inspire and guide. Our unique ways of life are not obstacles to progress but essential components of a rich and meaningful existence. His articulation of GNH, his unwavering commitment to the environment, his selfless democratic reforms, and his dedication to cultural identity offer not just historical facts, but timeless wisdom – wisdom that shapes the very fabric of our lives.

For the youth of today, these are not just tales from another era; they are living principles that we live in and by every day. They are the foundations upon which we are building a future that we pray will not only be prosperous but also sustainable, equitable, and profoundly, authentically happy. Such is the enduring, impactful testament of His Majesty’s reign, a guiding light for a generation that, though separated by time, is inextricably bound by his vision.

Languages of My Life: A Personal Journey Through Multilingualism



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I still remember the quiet evenings with my late maternal grandfather, sitting beside him as he slowly guided my small fingers across pages filled with Dzongkha and English alphabets. These moments are etched in my memory not just as lessons in language, but as the beginning of understanding who I am. This linguistic autobiography is a reflection on the languages that have shaped my identity, the people who nurtured my language, and the cultural roots intertwined with every word I speak. Growing up multilingual in Bhutan, I have come to recognise how each language I speak connects me to different dimensions of myself. For instance, Dzongkha, Hindi, and English are not just tools of communication—they are bridges to family, media, education, and identity. While Dzongkha is my mother tongue, Hindi brought laughter and colour to my childhood through movies, and English became the gateway to knowledge and the wider world. My journey with these languages is woven with memories, challenges, and growth.

Language Acquisition

Language came to me not through classrooms, but through connection. My earliest memory of learning a language is sitting on my maternal grandfather's lap, writing letters on paper while he gently corrected me. He was not just teaching me to write, but he was showing me how language could be a bond, a source of pride, and a legacy. At just four years old, I could already recognise English and Dzongkha letters, thanks to his patient teaching. He also sparked my curiosity about Hindi, which I had absorbed through cartoons, Bollywood films, and our conversations. I couldn't read or write it, but I began speaking it instinctively. By the time I entered pre-primary school, I had a head start in both English and Dzongkha. This gave me confidence, especially as most subjects were taught in English. Still, speaking English remained a struggle. I could write it well, but my spoken fluency lagged behind. For years, I rehearsed every sentence in my head before speaking. It wasn't until high school that I found my voice, shaped in part by

documentaries and educational YouTube videos, where I heard English used clearly and meaningfully. My exposure to other languages, such as *Lhotshamkeba* (Nepali) and *Tsangla* (Sharchop), has been more limited. Though I never felt pressure to learn them, for Dzongkha was often enough one of the widely spoken languages. I admire their beauty and complexity. These languages surround me in the voices of friends and classmates, reminding me of Bhutan's rich linguistic diversity.

Dialects and Accents

Living in Punakha, I speak Dzongkha with a distinct regional accent. It is subtle, but noticeable to those who listen closely. I have learned to identify people from Paro or Haa just by their intonation or vocabulary. It carries my history and signals where I come from, being a member of the "*Wang Gay*" (the eight Dzongkha-speaking districts). Code-switching has become second nature. I shift between English, Dzongkha, and sometimes Hindi, depending on who I'm with and what we're discussing. In school or formal settings, I default to Dzongkha and English; with family, it's always Dzongkha. When chatting with friends, I often mix languages for humour or clarity. Language has often been a mirror of belonging. Speaking Dzongkha at home connects me to tradition and family. Speaking English in academic settings marks me as educated and capable. But the moments I struggled to express myself fluently, especially in public speaking, left me feeling small and unsure. These moments taught me that language is also a form of power, and I have spent years reclaiming that power by improving my fluency and confidence through repetition.

Language and Education

Language has been both a ladder and a barrier in my education. My early literacy in English gave me an academic edge, but it didn't prepare me for speaking the language aloud. In government schools, the emphasis was on writing, not conversation. Those who spoke English fluently were often praised or singled out as "bright and stylish" by the students. I hesitated, afraid of making mistakes and having never used English as my primary language. Over time, I realised that fluency isn't perfection, it's courage. I pushed myself to speak more in class, to join discussions, to make mistakes and learn from them. Watching English content online helped me hear how language flowed naturally. Slowly, my fear faded, giving way to appreciation. I now see English not as a foreign imposition, but as a tool for connection and ambition. It is key to the global world, where I hope to make meaningful contributions one day.

At the same time, my bond with Dzongkha has deepened. It is the language of my grandparents, my roots, and my cultural soul. Though I once prioritised English for its utility, I now value Dzongkha for its emotional and spiritual resonance. They serve different purposes, but both are essential to who I am.

Conclusion

Writing this autobiography has helped me realise that language is more than just sound; it is also a means of preserving memory, shaping identity, and passing on inheritance. I have come to appreciate the deep influence of my grandfather, who lit the spark of curiosity and learning. I have reflected on the moments of silence, shame, and growth that shaped my voice. And I have learned that every language I speak carries a different version of me. As I move forward, I remain proud of my multilingual background and determined to keep growing. Language is a lifelong journey of connection, expression, and transformation. I now walk this path with clarity and confidence, knowing that my voice is not just heard, but understood, and I can understand others, refining my language and acquiring new phrases, while connecting with people's thoughts.

Beyond Devotion: Tamzhing Monastery and Pema Lingpa's Claim to Authority



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This was written for a 'guest lecture report'

On the 2nd of April, 2025, the third-year anthropology students of Royal Thimphu College (RTC) were given a guest lecture on Buddhist (and Bhutanese) art by Dr. Ariana Maki. She was invited to speak on her research on Bhutanese art as her article titled "Visual Transmission: Bhutanese Art and Artists in the 17th-19th Centuries" (2017) was included in our syllabus this semester. Dr. Maki is an art historian focused on Buddhist art currently with the University of Idaho, in the United States. She first came to Bhutan in 2007 and volunteered at the National Museum of Bhutan in Paro for two years, the National Library for one year, and worked at the College of Language and Cultural Studies (CLCS)³ as a Fulbright scholar from the US.

Dr. Maki's talk was on Tamzhing Lhakhang⁴ in Bumthang, founded by Pema Lingpa in 1501, consecrated in 1505, and how the temple provides multiple claims to authority. She argued that Tamzhing is not just a temple but also a site where Pema Lingpa is claiming his authority as an individual, his assertion of claim to the geographical area of influence where he is placing himself in the political hierarchy of his time (his political leadership), and his position as a religious master. She brought to light how there is a difference in the story of the *lhakhang* in terms of oral traditions (which revealed the secret biography) and textual, "not-secret" autobiography of Pema Lingpa. She claimed that there is an external and internal, an outer and a secret account of the creation of the temple.

Dr. Maki stated that the paintings at Tamzhing intrigued her interest because of two scholars namely Micheal Aris who argued that to understand paintings we must first understand the choice and location of each figure and group represented, and Holly Gailey who stated that

³ CLCS is a school under the Royal University of Bhutan located in Taktse, Trongsa, Bhutan.

⁴ Temple

Pema Lingpa's career begins from Bumthang (his place of origin) and gradually disseminates from the discovery site (where the *terma*⁵ was revealed) into the surrounding areas. Here, Dr. Maki questioned how the paintings created a geography on the walls of the *lhakhang* and what message Pema Lingpa was trying to convey to us. She argued that the message conveyed is that Tamzhing is not just a temple but a place where Pema Lingpa is validating his legitimacy as a *tertoen*. His paintings and murals are not just works of art but is him placing himself politically within and alongside Karmapa with whom he had a relationship of shared teachings. He is showing that his work at Tamzhing is unique and that they are only found in his practice, discovered in his teachings.

Dr. Maki's lecture presented a compelling interpretation of the Tamzhing lhakhang as Pema Lingpa's political manifesto. It was interesting to see how she went beyond looking at Tamzhing as a site of worship and stressed on the symbolism of Pema Lingpa's message of him asserting his legitimacy within Bhutan's spiritual hierarchy. Her use of Aris' iconographic analysis and Gailey's diffusion model helped further strengthen the claims about the painting's geographical symbolism. Aris' iconographic analysis focuses on reading visual symbols, such as symbols or motifs, to uncover the deeper meanings, and in contrast, Gailey's diffusion model explains how these visual ideas move across regions and cultural boundaries.

In speaking of geographical symbolism, Dr. Maki's lecture reframed my understanding of the paintings at Tamzhing as also being capable of functioning as maps that represent Pema Lingpa's assertion of claim to a geographical area of influence. The contrast in the oral and textual narratives of the *lhakhang* that she brought up was also relevant to concepts discussed in our module, specifically religious and political authority, whereby I was able to think about the question of who controls Bhutan's historical discourse. This lecture helped me think more critically about Bhutan's religious art and go beyond just seeing them as paintings of Buddhist figures. I now recognise that Tamzhing lhakhang and its paintings are not just devotional but are strategic tools for consolidating the authority of both Pema Lingpa's position as a *tertoen* as well as Bhutan's Buddhism.

In conclusion, Dr. Maki's talk challenged us to approach Bhutanese religious art as not just passive devotional paintings but also as active narratives of Bhutan's history and politics during Pema Lingpa's time. She helped frame Tamzhing Lhakhang as a site that negotiates identity, lineage, and legitimacy through visual representations. Dr. Maki's lecture not only brought to

⁵ Treasure

light the different roles of Tamzhing but also helped raise important questions on the dynamics of authority, narratives, and influence in Bhutanese religious art.

Laya: The Synergy Between the Traditional and Modern



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Reflecting on my time in Bhutan, I think of the countless people I met. Classmates, mutual friends, random people on the streets of Thimphu, among so many others. One topic of conversation that would always be brought up was where I had been and where I would be travelling within the country. I visited places such as Punakha with the beautiful *Dzong* perfectly placed alongside the river, Phobjikha Valley watching the Black-necked Cranes, climbing to Paro Takstang (twice!), and so many others, but the one place that always brought surprise and even a sense of secondhand excitement was when I mentioned I would be going/had been to Laya for the Royal Highland Festival. The Highland Festival, something that few tourists, let alone Bhutanese, are able to attend, gave me motivation to make the most of the trip and take in every aspect of the culture that was presented.

Starting by going up some long, winding (and perhaps mildly dangerous) roads, I was already experiencing the route locals of Laya had to take to travel outside of Gasa *Dzongkhag*. After the beautiful ride up to the base point, the hike up to Laya presented the second part of the journey that locals have to take. Along the route, there were countless mules led by locals carrying the supplies the village needed. This was one of the first instances I saw that contrasted with the traditional, in this case being the goods transport, and the modern, being the want and need of goods from the “outside”. I should first say that Bhutan, in general, is an amazing example of how modernisation can advance society without abandoning the traditions and cultural values that are held dear. However, Laya is an even more extreme example. After arriving at the homestay, I began to see exactly how life is lived every day. Even though Laya lacks some of the amenities that Thimphu or Paro may offer, from an anthropological perspective, it is interesting

to immerse oneself in different ways of living and thinking about what one personally takes for granted.

After meeting the homestay family and exploring the grounds for a bit, it was time for dinner. As someone who loves Bhutanese food, the food in Laya was not what I was expecting at all. It was extremely simple, consisting of plates of rice and vegetables, along with limited amounts of boiled water. Observing and partaking in the average dishes that locals eat made me question whether they think of other regional Bhutanese dishes in the same way that I thought of theirs. Before coming to the country, I had the impression that every region would be extremely similar, if not exactly the same, due to the small size and population. However, I discovered it couldn't be further from the truth, with the food being just the first example in the case of Laya.

When it came time to go up to the festival grounds, I was wearing my *Gho* (the traditional Bhutanese attire for men), prepared to be respectful and immersed in the cultural festivities. As the Highlanders participated in local dances, music, competitions, and more, this was the second main realisation of the cultural diversity that Bhutan has, even from other parts of the nation, as people from all around the country came to take part in the festival. The clothing, dances, customs, and everything else being presented were very interesting to observe from a cultural anthropology perspective. While all these activities, the traditions cherished for so long, were being conducted, there was an unmistakable contrast with the modern. All the people with smartphones who were creating content about the festival were contributing to the promotion of the unique cultures of others, while the whirring of helicopters occasionally flying above highlighted the modern ability of mass cultural exchange.

I have countless stories about my time in Laya. Many of which are about my friends, the natural elements, and the stunning views. However, the vast majority come from the people I met across the country and the world, as well as the traditions and customs I observed and was a part of. I always look back on my time there as my personal discovery of how the coexistence of the traditional and modern can be beneficial; of how the traditional influences the modern, and how the modern, in turn, promotes the traditional. Because if I have learned anything from this experience, it is that at the end of the day, we are all human, and we all have something to share.

Wednesday



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I heard laughter from a distance,

The fall that day,

Revealed the innermost of what's inside.

With flush cheeks,

I blamed the day, Wednesday.

Mom always burned sung on Wednesday,

Dhoen, Shindrey, Soendrey

'Will be waiting for Wednesday', she said.

Cause Wednesday was my bad day.

The low test scores,

Feeling feverish too,

Bawling my eyes,

I blamed the day, Wednesday,

Cause Wednesday was my bad day.

It always seems to appear in the middle of the week's journey with a gloomy tone.

A day that is weighted down,

There is a feeling of bad luck that follows.

Oh, Wednesday, you harbinger of bad luck,

How you seem to be mocking and jeering.

I do not know,

Perhaps there is a celestial alignment where luck takes ease.

Oh, Wednesday,

I sense your presence as the sun rises, a menacing shroud.

A magnet for accidents and blunders, as though given by fate.

Unexpected events were happening, one after another,

Plans go apart, ambitions fade,

Cause Wednesday was my bad day.

It seems as though the cosmos is working together to try my fortitude in this conflict.

Every step forward encountered obstacles,

A never-ending struggle against the flow of life.

I do, however,

Detect a glimmer of courage or a spark inside this web of hardship.

Because it is in the face of adversity that our true character emerges.

Wednesday presents me with several challenges,

That compels me to face my inner strength.

To find the strength to stand and battle above the sea of bad luck,

Because my fortune is not permanently tied to the stars or the day itself,

But in how I decide to view the difficulties Wednesday presents,

Cause Wednesday always cannot be my bad day.

Applied Anthropology: Snippets of applied project work from 2025

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The Applied Anthropology module is crucial for anthropology students, as it provides a glimpse into professional life. The module is taught during the final semester as part of the anthropology programme at Royal Thimphu College. This module prepares students to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned from their anthropology study in non-academic settings. In the past few years, anthropology students worked with various organisations like the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the World Food Programme (WFP), Tarayana Foundation, the Bhutan Ecological Society, the Royal Academy of Performing Arts (RAPA), the Druk journal, Nazhoen Lamtoen, SAMUH, Cottahe and Small Industry (CSI), Queer Voices of Bhutan, the Bhutan Oral Literature Project, etc. It also makes them see how they will contribute to real-life settings by making them identify key skills and apply their knowledge. The skills include, but are not limited to, research skills, teamwork, statistics, analytical skills, public speaking, presentation, and writing. Regarding knowledge, students draw from what they learn within and outside the classroom as part of coursework, such as visual projects, research projects, field visits, lecture series, or conferences.

To enable students to fulfil the objectives of the applied anthropology module, they have to choose an organization for project work, which is then finalised by the anthropology programme. Various organisations were approached ahead of the semester and based on mutual interests, prospective organisations are chosen and finalized. They engaged in project work for almost one and a half months while their regular semester is ongoing at RTC. This is crucial for students, as this exposure and experience prepare them to transition into professional life at the intersection between their time at college and life outside the college.

In this report, like the previous ones from the last few years, we present the milestones achieved in the Spring Semester of 2025 for the applied anthropology module's project work. In the spring of 2025, anthropology students worked with various organisations, including the Department of Tourism, Royal Textile Academy, the Bhutan Oral Literature Project, Helvetas, and Phensem. The students had a learning experience by contributing to real-life scenarios. They also learnt about the expectations and opportunities lying ahead. Taking note of these milestones, the summaries of project work with the five organisations for the Spring Semester 2025 are provided below.

Spring 2025, Applied anthropology projects

Department of Tourism (Khenrab Wangchuk Tshering)

The project collaborated with the Department of Tourism (DoT) involved a mini-research to develop promotional materials aimed at enhancing tourism across all 20 Dzongkhags in Bhutan. Six of us, as anthropology students from RTC, were involved in this project. We focused on researching and compiling comprehensive tourism-related information, specifically highlighting the cultural, adventure, and wellness aspects that each region in the country offers. This project work also aimed to contribute to enhancing tourist experiences in the country. The contribution underlined the religious sites, facilities of hospitality, festivals, and other events that take place across the country. The DoT also encouraged us to recognise as many places in each district that could fit into tourists' tours and travels that tourists can visit. Through this project work, we realise the potential of anthropology in making meaningful and positive contributions to everyday lives. What we learnt from the anthropology program, cultural heritage was applied in this project, as it helped identify buildings and places that hold significance for Bhutan.

The Bhutan Oral Literature Project: Culture, Language, Environment (Tshering Lhamo)

In adhering to the applied anthropology module, five of us anthropology students engaged in project work with the Bhutan Oral Literature Society. The organisation we had chosen provided us with a scope for applying anthropological methods and theories in the Bhutanese context. The Bhutan Oral and Literature Society is known for documenting and revitalising the vanishing languages, cultures and traditional ecological knowledge. Taking note of the organisation's objectives, we were able to relate what we learnt from our anthropology study. Our project work focused on community mapping and genealogy, wherein for the genealogy aspect, each of us examined family history and lineage; and for the community mapping project, we fulfilled our

respective tasks by identifying, marking, and documenting all cultural, historical, and spiritual significance sites in our respective villages. Having successfully completed our project, we felt that our contribution is relevant in contemporary Bhutanese society, where modernity and globalisation are impacting the lives of people.

Phensem (Rinzin Pem Seldon)

The organisation we had chosen for the applied anthropology project work is Phensem. The organisation is dedicated to working closely with families to support their children with special needs. The value of the organisation is also grounded in parents' support and self-care, as parents are the first ones who need emotional support and guidance. The main objective of Phensem is to advocate for the differently abled members and what the organisation has to offer, and to help others understand differently abled people.

We made weekly visits to the organisation and helped them create assistive tools designed to help individuals with disabilities cope with challenges and emotional breakdowns. We coordinated and worked in a group to generate diverse ideas and create new assistive devices that can be accessed by people in need. For example, creating assistive tools such as motor movement grips, bottle cap sequencing stories, and emotion-matching cards, which can be used by parents at home, makes it easier for children to access diverse experiences and engage in various activities. Our project is a case of applied anthropology because it involves contributing to and engaging with an organisation to make a positive impact.

Museum Division of Royal Textile Academy (Tashi Tenzin)

Ten of us anthropology students were involved in an applied anthropology project this year, by collaborating with the Museum Division of the Royal Textile Academy (RTA) in Thimphu, a leading institution focused on maintaining, interpreting and showcasing Bhutan's treasure of traditional textiles. The RTA helps preserve cultural objects and also works to increase the public's involvement, making the museum more interesting for guests and deepening their understanding of Bhutan's culture through its textile arts.

The primary goal of this project aligned with the core principles of applied anthropology and the mission of the RTA. In a museum setting, we applied anthropological science to the study of the socio-cultural aspects connected to handling and presenting textiles. The work allowed us to learn about procedures to preserve cultural artefacts. In addition, the project focused on using anthropology to understand how things such as textiles transmit meanings related to culture,

organisations and history in Bhutan, much like the material culture approach. Ultimately, the project supported the RTA's activities, providing us with practical experience and a deeper understanding of anthropology as it relates to cultural heritage.

Helvetas Bhutan (Sherab Wangmo)

In the final semester, we had an Applied Anthropology module, which allowed us to explore and contribute to fields beyond academia. Six of us anthropology students collaborated on a project with Helvetas Bhutan. One of the organisation's objectives is focused on women's empowerment and youth. Our project work was designed to contribute to community-based tourism in the region, employing women and youth by conducting mini-research using semi-structured interviews with homestay owners to understand their experiences, challenges, and opportunities in tourism. We also examined documents about the case studies from countries such as Vietnam, Laos, and Nepal to draw on their community-led tourism models and apply them to the Bhutanese context. At the end of our project work, we presented our findings from the interviews and provided some feasible ideas to Helvetas Bhutan, along with recommendations for preserving local cultural identity without compromising the tourism business.

Conclusion

The Spring semester of 2025 marked another milestone for anthropology students through their applied anthropology project work. Anthropology students from RTC demonstrated their capabilities through their contributions to all five organisations, which were reflected in the final outcomes of their respective project work. A collaborative work with all five organisations shows the potential to bring positive impacts to real-life scenarios. They also highlight the relevance of anthropological knowledge and skills. Through such project work, students gained experience of professional life awaiting them in the course of their respective endeavours. The valuable experiences students gained from applied anthropology will help them in their transition from being a student at RTC to the settings outside academia.