



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE



Exploring Bhutan

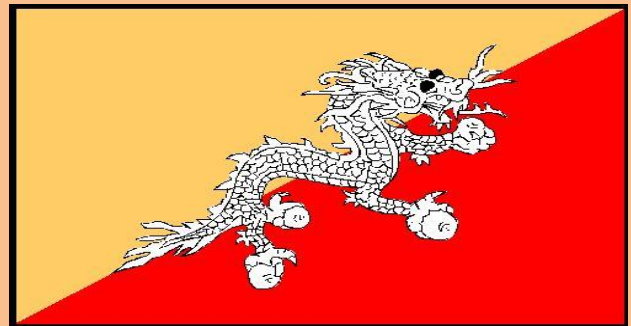
Bhutan is located between India and China. Since 1991 over one sixth of Bhutan's people have sought asylum in Nepal, India and other countries around the world. The majority of these refugees are Lhotshampas, one of Bhutan's three main ethnic groups. This group was forced to leave Bhutan in the early 1990s. Over 105,000 Bhutanese have spent more than 15 years living in refugee camps established in Nepal by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Others are living outside the camps in Nepal and India, and some have gone to North America, Europe and Australia. . (www.photovoice.org/bhutan.)



Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal

Tips for Communicating with Non-native Speakers.

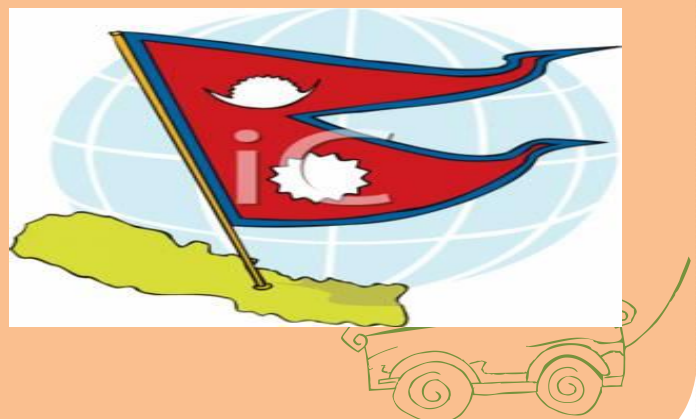
- Use a friendly approach. Impatience will impede your ability to communicate and can isolate your listener.
- If the other person did not understand what you said repeat it as you said it the first time
- Speak a little slower than normal. It takes more time to parse a foreign language; give your listener that time. This goes along with being patient and articulating clearly.
- If the person is new to English, keep in mind that on a certain level s/he will be "translating" his/her language to yours. His/her English words and expressions are influenced by his/her mother tongue, so things that might sound impolite to you are not always meant in that way. For example, a plain "No" might seem too direct, whereas "I don't agree," if said politely, keeps open the door of communication. Try to listen "between the lines" before judging the other speaker's manner.
- Write things down. It's sometimes easier to understand written language than spoken language. (www.wikipedia.com)



Bhutan Flag

The story was written by one of our Bhutanese refugees, Kudlip Acharya for this advanced ESL writing class here at JSRCC. For more stories on Nepalese refugees, go to the website listed above.

Nepal Flag



KULDIP ACHARYA

A DAY WHEN EVERYTHING WENT RIGHT

This is an excerpt from a narrative that one of our ESL students wrote for his advanced ESL writing class....

I still remember that day: it was a dark and cold morning. Northern clouds were moving down to the mountain belt of Nepal where I used to live. I spent most of my early childhood in the southern part of Nepal, a land of the Himalayas. The northern wind would freeze everything on the mountain belt. That day I felt the cold really bad, as I was very poor. I could not afford even a jacket to cover myself. So I was walking back and forth, trying to warm myself up, wearing a pair of flip-flops, blue half pants, and an old white shirt.

It was very cold, but I did not complain. I knew that this is the way of nature; this is how we all survive on this earth. My entire body was shaking in the rhythm of the cold wind, and I was rubbing my hands to keep myself warm, but it was not enough. I was trying my best to keep myself strong, but I could not fight the cold. I had been standing on a water tap for a while when I suddenly heard a loud announcement: "Today the UN is going to donate jackets in front of the UNHCR office!" I said to myself, "Wow! I am fortunate today!"

We all went in front of the UNHCR office with excited faces and big smiles. We were told that all the clothes were donated by the American Embassy. Different people got different sizes and quality; it all depended on how lucky they were. I got a grey jacket. I felt so happy! "I have an American jacket and it fits me. That's great!" Then I looked inside and the tag of the jacket caught my eyes: although the jacket was from America, it was made in China. That was interesting! It didn't matter from where it came, I was very thankful that I had something to keep me warm. After I saw that it was made in China, I remember saying something funny: "If God makes everything, then God must be China!"

In the meantime, they announced the third country resettlement opportunity to the people gathered in front of the UNHCR office. Some people showed extreme interest in it, some did not. The officers distributed some papers which contained information about the process of resettlement in America. They said, "It might take three years to complete the immigration process and open an immigration office in Nepal." I had always dreamed about becoming an American citizen. I was very excited to hear the news, because I knew that it was an opportunity for me. I said to myself, "Wow! Living together with the Americans, I can't believe it!" My family and I were very interested in resettling in the USA. ...



Bhutanese Refugees in Dallas Texas

Language

Bhutanese, or Dzongkha, is the language of the Ngalop. It is a Southern Tibetan language that is partially intelligible with Sikkimese and spoken natively by 25% of the population. Tshangla, the language of the Sharchop and the principal pre-Tibetan language of Bhutan, is spoken by a similar number of people. It is not easily classified and may constitute an independent branch of Tibeto-Burman. Nepali constituted some 40% of the population as of 2006. The larger minority languages are Dzala (11%), Limbu (10%, immigrant), and Kheng (8%).^[31]

Culture

Inheritance in Bhutan generally goes in the female rather than the male line. Daughters will inherit their parents' house. A man is expected to make his own way in the world and often moves to his wife's home. Love marriages are common in urban areas, but the tradition of arranged marriages is still common in the villages. Although uncommon, polygamy is accepted, often being a device to keep property in a contained family unit rather than dispersing it. The previous King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who abdicated in 2006, has 4 Queens, all of whom are sisters.

The University of Texas at El Paso in the United States has adopted Bhutanese architecture for its buildings on campus, as have the nearby Hilton Garden Inn and other buildings in the city of El Paso. (www.wikipedia.com)

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