

# **INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT: TAKING ‘THE MIDDLE PATH’ TOWARDS GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS\***

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Within Bhutanese culture, inner spiritual development is as prominent a focus as external material development. This follows from an original meaning of development in [a] Bhutanese context in which development meant enlightenment of the individual. I hasten to add that enlightenment is not solely an object of religious activity. Enlightenment is [the] blossoming of happiness. It is made more probable by consciously creating a harmonious psychological, social, and economic environment.

*Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley<sup>†</sup>*

## **Introduction**

Nearly four decades of development in non-western nations have rendered the term ‘development’ problematic to say the least.<sup>2</sup> It has become painfully obvious that development has been neocolonialism incognito. Many well-intended programs have been started in South America, Africa, and Asia in an effort to bring the luxuries of industrialization to

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underdeveloped nations. These programs have been exposed not only to be infused with euro-centric notions of concepts like development, progress, value, and economics, but also to have actually impeded the health of their respective communities in a number of ways.<sup>3</sup> There is room to say that, by and large, efforts of development have failed miserably. Certainly there have been small victories, and in some cases, important improvements. Nevertheless, upon a close examination of development, one becomes aware of how well-intended efforts have only further entrenched the problems created by colonization.

What is needed is a new way of approaching development along with a close exploration of why efforts, thus far, have been drenched in complications. One response understandably, is to avoid development efforts altogether, and leave other nations alone to solve their problems on their own terms. This is a very inviting approach, an approach that Bhutan has been more successful with, than many other countries. However, given the globalization that is now occurring at a rapid rate, it is clear that, to use Edgar Morin's terminology, we have entered the Planetary Era.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it would be naive to think that Western nations can avoid exerting a huge pressure towards industrial development in the rest of the world or that a small country such as Bhutan can or should avoid the benefits of such development. Consequently, we need to look even closer at the idea of development and discern how this concept and its applications can be salvaged. How can we divorce the concept of development from the eurocentric currents that have permeated it for 40 years? How can we reformulate development to honor all cultures at their level of existence, be it agricultural, industrial, or informational? In other words, how do we achieve unity-in-diversity, how can we sing a *unitas multiplex*? What would it look like to support the entire spectrum of development both in individuals and their countries, without privileging one place (e.g., informational) over another (e.g., agricultural), while acknowledging the impact that each has on the other. What would such an integral approach to development look like?

This article explores this new approach as it is manifesting in Bhutan in two parts. In Part I, I begin by discussing some of the alternative indicators of development that have been employed over the years. After highlighting the limits of even these expanded measuring sticks, I will introduce Bhutan's notion of Gross National Happiness (GNH). In order to give the impulse behind GNH a firmer theoretical foundation, I will connect it to Ken Wilber's integral model, which provides the most substantive footing for honoring and integrating objective, intersubjective, and subjective realities. In fact, Wilber's model was designed for the explicit purpose of integrating these three spheres of truth. Thus by placing GNH into Wilber's framework, it takes on a momentum hitherto unseen as a result of capitalizing on the progress that Wilber has made in this endeavor. Wilber's model allows GNH to step out of the conceptual realm and contribute to pragmatic action in the world. An analysis of development using Wilber's model is provided to further demonstrate its relevance to Bhutan's GNH.

In Part II, I will introduce the field of Integral Ecology, inspired by Wilber's model. Integral Ecology is an approach to the environment that incorporates science, culture, and spirituality in formulating appropriate responses to the environment. As such, Integral Ecology is very much in alignment with Bhutan's chosen 'Middle Path' to development. In fact, The Middle Path can be seen as one version of Integral Ecology. As a way of illustrating the value of Integral Ecology, in providing a clearer understanding of The Middle Path to development, I will provide three brief case studies from Bhutan. Indeed, it is only through such a middle path that Gross National Happiness can be achieved.

## **Part I - A Framework for Gross National Happiness**

### *Alternatives to GNP and Their Limits*

In most cases development and its measurement has been reduced to economic (quantifiable) dimensions, as defined by the Western world. Thus, what is called for is an approach to development that also honors interior (qualitative) dimensions in the service of ecological sustainability, cultural preservation, and spiritual development. This is an integral approach that does not force multiculturalism, liberal pluralism, conservative approaches, or even holistic notions on any culture but rather allows each culture to cultivate its own unique interior dimensions such as values, mutual understanding, phenomenological experiences, intentionality, integrity, trustworthiness, and justness. By honoring both the interior and exterior domains each individual and culture is allowed to develop through the stages of being-in-the-world in their own way, at their own speed based on their unique psycho-socio-historical situation. Despite the long-time need for an integral approach to development it is only now that such an approach is gaining currency.

Historically there have been a few attempts to revision development as 'integral.' As early as 1975, UNESCO (The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations) called for what it termed an 'integrated' approach to development, which was defined as, 'a total, multi-relational process that includes all aspects of the life of a collective, of its relations with the outside world and of its own consciousness' (as quoted by Esteva, 1997; p. 15). Currently, there are movements in 'third world' countries to go 'beyond development' by focusing on community needs and offering a space for interiority. Charlene Spretnak (1991) points out that this space is needed because 'expressing one's interiority, or subjectivity,' is considered dangerous, in the current model of development (p.194). This denial of interiority is what leads Prosperino Gallipolli, an Italian priest who has been working in Mozambique for over thirty-years, to conclude, 'underdevelopment is a spiritual problem' (as quoted in Spretnak, 1991, p. 194). Here, underdevelopment does not refer to a lack of material goods (exteriors) but rather to a lack

of the spiritual spaces (interiors), which need to be honored and cultivated (developed) for people to be genuinely happy. Clearly, many countries and communities are yearning for what Bhutan recognizes as essential: the need to honor interiority.

Despite previous attempts to 'go beyond' development (as it has been narrowly defined) integral approaches to development have been thwarted, time and time again, by a compulsory affinity to economic measures of progress. Economics is for the most part an exterior science that gives little room for the realms of interiority. Besides, as Merchant (1992) points out 'neocolonialism uses economic investments and foreign aid programs to maintain economic hegemony,' (p. 25). Thus, solely relying on economic measures ties countries to terms established by Western countries. In agreement, Esteva (1997) points out that development became even more impoverished as a term when its first promoters reduced it to economic growth (i.e., the income per person in economically underdeveloped areas). In response to this over-emphasis on economics and its accomplice the Gross National Product (GNP)<sup>5</sup> there has been a movement to devise alternative measures of progress.<sup>6</sup> Spretnak (1999) ironically exposes that the way the GNP works is that it actually thrives off crises (non-progress) such as oil spills, crime, and divorce because they create capital in the form of jobs (pp. 97-98). In other words, the more crises we have as a nation, the more progress (GNP) we experience. This irony is why new measures of progress have been developed. In effect, to try and take into account the ecological, cultural, and psychological costs of such crises.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the efforts of these alternatives (e.g., Eisner's total income system of accounts, the Integrated Economic and Environmental Satellite Accounts, the Green National Product, and the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare) they have largely remained tethered to quantitative frameworks, and thus have failed to take into account qualitative (interior) dimensions of human experience. Even the esteemed Human Development Index (HDI) created by the United Nations Development Program remains quantitative because it just

adds such variables as life expectancy, literacy rate, and per capita income to the GNP list. Admittedly, when HDI calculates for such things as freedom and gender difference it moves closer towards incorporating interior dimensions but it still views those qualitative variables through their exterior correlates (e.g., How many people have access to voting poles? How many women are in the work force?). Thus these alternatives are successful in expanding the narrowly defined variables of GNP to include other variables, but these new variables still are focused on exteriors: things that can easily be measured statistically. In other words these alternative index systems are just more comprehensive quantitative formulas that are still only concerned with data, numbers, and figures. These are just expanded frameworks of GNP and as such don't cure the problem but offer bigger and more colorful band-aids. The challenge is to move beyond solely quantitative methodologies and include qualitative research methods, which are sophisticated techniques designed to measure feelings, values, attitudes, and perceptions. The measurement of these subjective and intersubjective realities is done through the analysis of in-depth interviews, participant-observer techniques, group interviews etc.

There have been a few countries that have challenged the dominant paradigm of development. Particularly noteworthy is Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, which draws heavily on Buddhism.<sup>8</sup> This movement which has grown from a two-week 'holiday work-camp' for high school students in 1958 to a network of over 4000 villages across the island is quite a success story.<sup>9</sup> Like Bhutan, the movement uses a definition of development that, 'goes beyond those that confine themselves to measuring gross national products, growth rates, per-capita income,... It represents the process [necessary for] total happiness' (as quoted by Macy, 1983, p. 32). While Joanna Macy (1983) doesn't explicitly establish an alternative index system through her discussion of the relationship between Buddhism and development in Sri Lanka, her documentation of this movement is very valuable, especially for a country like Bhutan which is trying to establish Gross National Happiness. The relevance is easily

seen, for example, when the president of the movement, Mr. A.T. Ariyaratna states:

No program will be effective, furthermore, that tries to separate the economic [objective] aspect of life from the cultural [intersubjective] and spiritual [subjective] aspects, as do the capitalist and socialist models of development, with their sole emphasis on the production of goods and their neglect of the full range of human well-being. For [an individual's] well-being, the needs of the whole person must be met, needs that include satisfying work, harmonious relationships, a safe and beautiful environment, and a life of the mind and spirit, as well as food, clothing, and shelter. (Macy, 1983, pp. 13-14)

Obviously, Bhutan's GNH is not the only attempt to go beyond an adherence to Gross National Product by explicitly embracing subjective and intersubjective dimensions. However, Bhutan's approach to development is distinct in that it does not just add qualitative variables to the list of quantitative ones but explicitly makes interiors (e.g., happiness) the starting point for assessment and it takes The Middle Path to achieve this.<sup>10</sup>

### *Bhutan's Unique Approach to Development*

Bhutan has caught the world's attention with His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck's concept of Gross National Happiness, which is contrasted with Gross National Product. People the world over are very interested in such a notion because many individuals (and countries) are experiencing the limits of the scientific worldview as represented by things such as GNP. The term Gross National Happiness was coined in the late 1980s by His Majesty, but as Stefan Priesner (1999) makes clear, the concept itself has a much longer history, emerging out of the unique cauldron of Bhutanese culture: an alloy forged from such ingredients as Buddhism, feudalism, national security issues, and the absence of colonization. In the vision document, *Bhutan 2020*, the role

of GNH for Bhutan's development is explained (and worth quoting at length):

The guiding principles for the future development of our nation and for safeguarding our sovereignty and security as a nation-state must be complemented by a single unifying concept of development that enables us to identify future directions that are preferred above all others. This unifying concept for the nation's longer-term development is already in our possession. It is the distinctively Bhutanese concept of Maximizing Gross National Happiness... The concept of Gross National Happiness was articulated by His Majesty to indicate that development has many more dimensions than those associated with Gross Domestic Product, and that development should be understood as a process that seeks to maximize happiness rather than economic growth. The concept places the individual at the center of all development efforts and it recognizes that the individual has material, spiritual and emotional needs. It asserts that spiritual development cannot and should not be defined exclusively in material terms of the increased consumption of goods and services. (p. 45).

The idea of Gross National Happiness has generated a lot of public dialogue. First, in His Excellency Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley's Keynote Speech delivered at the Millennium Meeting for Asia and the Pacific in November of 1998. This speech was later published in the pages of *Kuensel*, Bhutan's national newspaper, invoking many responses from readers.<sup>11</sup> The surge of interest resulting from all of this public discussion led to the formulation of a one-day workshop on GNH in March of 1999. Five-months later the papers that were presented at this workshop were collected and published by the Centre for Bhutan Studies in a volume entitled *Gross*



*National Happiness.* In May/June of 2001 Kuensel ran a three-part series, 'The Origin of Happiness' by Khenpo Phuntshok Tashi. Also, more recently (November 2001), Bhutan Broadcasting Services (BBS) hosted a special program on GNH.<sup>12</sup>

There is much agreement that GNH is a good idea, for many it offers the glimmerings of refuge against the steadfast tide of scientific reductionism. For others it provides relief from the stale indicators of development that enjoy so much currency. But everyone is wondering how to measure it. Some suggest it is too subjective and therefore eludes measurement, while others want to isolate correlates (e.g., reports from the health clinics of decreasing levels of stress related conditions) and measure those.<sup>13</sup> But for you to measure something, you have to know what you are measuring. For the purposes of this paper I will define happiness as a subjective state of well-being that fosters feelings characterized by such terms as contentment, joy, delight, pleasure, and satisfaction. This subjective state can be shared (e.g., in a family or community) and is often marked by the physical features of smiling and laughter. Regardless of whether or not this working definition proves viable one of the important tasks ahead for the concept of GNH is the establishment of some kind of definition. To be sure the Buddhist tradition has much to say about 'happiness' and will be a rich source of material for the endeavor of procuring a definition.

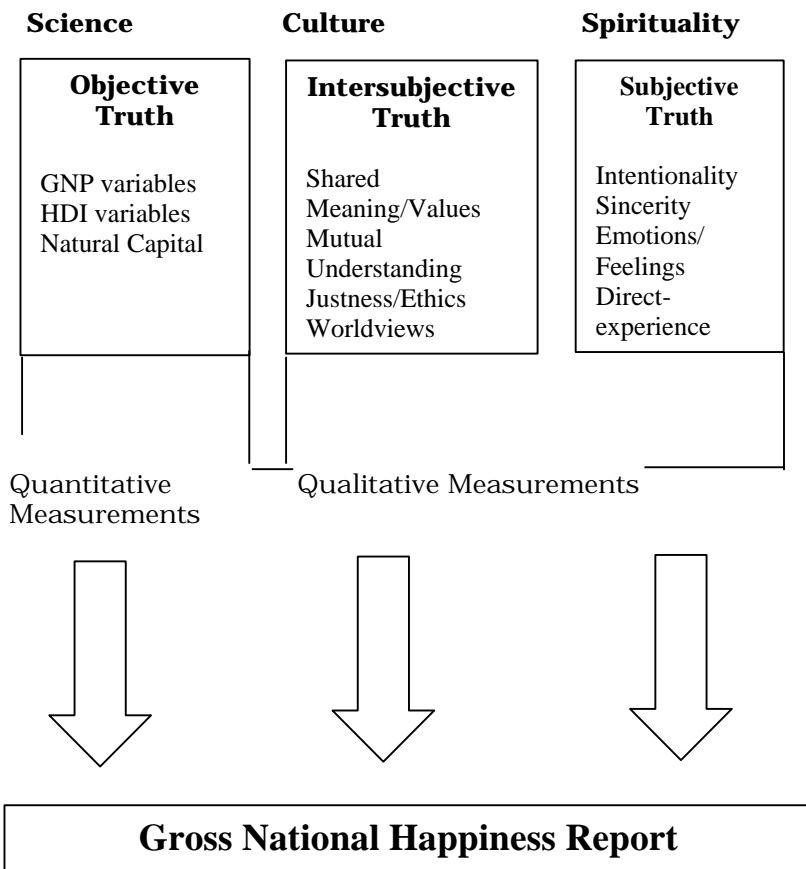
It appears that this inspiring concept is reaching an important crossroads. It has floated through conversations for around 15 years falling off the lips of ministers and shopkeepers alike. Not to mention that approving references to it often appear in government documents and various reports. Likewise, the attention of the world is enchanted with this fresh and much needed concept. So before it is too late, before Gross National Happiness joins the heap of slighted neologisms, Bhutan is well-advised to further develop its notion of GNH. After all, Bhutan has the opportunity, not just to substantiate a concept that serves as its own foundation to development, but also to offer a gift to the global village. In an era where happiness has been overwhelmed by

excessive material consumption, Bhutan has the chance to inject the importance of happiness back into the mindstream of the global culture.

*A Proposal for Measuring GNH*

If the Royal Government of Bhutan really wants to substantiate this concept, I propose that it establishes a team of individuals (a GNH committee perhaps) who compile information from a variety of sources, and in some cases maybe even hire researchers to perform specific tasks. The information gathered will then be the source for a *Gross National Happiness Report* issued every five years (at the conclusion of each five-year planning cycle). In step with the RGoBs stated objective to achieve ecological sustainability, cultural preservation, and honor individual spiritual development, this report would be divided into three sections: Science, Culture, and Spirituality (see Figure 1).<sup>14</sup> These three sections also represent the three spheres of truth acknowledged throughout history.<sup>15</sup> Due to the scope of this presentation I will not be able to go into detail about the various methodologies that are employed in each domain. Instead I will just provide an overview that points to the directions such a report could take. The presentation of this report is based on Wilber's model, which will be presented in the section below.

**Figure 1: Measuring Happiness**



The first section would include the standard quantitative indicators as associated with the Gross National Product as well as those found in the expanded inventories such as the Human Development Index or the Genuine Progress Indicator. Basically, this section would cover the measurable variables such as the number of houses with electricity, number of schools and health clinics, number of students in college, the literacy rate, birth and mortality rate, immunization coverage, life expectancy, telephones and internet connections in the

country, per capita income and so on. This section would also include natural capital, adjusting for changes in quantity (depreciation) and quality (degradation).<sup>16</sup> In short, this section would combine (to the extent possible) all the current indexes into one, while adding additional ones. As a result of this compilation, Bhutan would emerge with the most comprehensive list of exterior indicators available. In addition, it would take into account the 'hidden costs' that many of the more sophisticated indexes incorporate (e.g., erosion, transportation costs of goods). Most of the variables in this section will be assessed by objective means utilizing the system sciences of ecology and economics. Also, this section will perform an analysis of infrastructure within the country, as represented by such things as the educational, health, technological services available. This section will largely represent the standard approach to assessing development.

The second section will establish Bhutan's break with current approaches to development and highlight its unique commitment to 'happiness.'<sup>17</sup> This section will focus on intersubjective truth. The field of philosophical hermeneutics has long fought against the scientific monopoly on truth.<sup>18</sup> Hermeneutics is often referred to as the 'art of interpretation.' The proponents of hermeneutics have successfully demonstrated that *in addition* to the objective truth, characterized by the scientific method, there are other forms of truth that cannot be reduced to the observable (i.e., a subject looking at an object).<sup>19</sup> Instead this intersubjective truth exists between two subjects in relationship (e.g., in dialogue or through a shared cultural context) and therefore must be interpreted. Consequently, this is the domain of shared meaning, mutual understanding, justness, ethics, and worldviews. To assess this kind of truth, you have to enter into dialogue with individuals, find out what is meaningful to them, discover how they view justness, or see the world. To incorporate these variables into the *GNH Report*, researchers trained in qualitative research methods would have to be sent into field, to visit a representative sampling of communities across Bhutan. For example, these researchers could conduct triad interviews and group interviews using a

predetermined questionnaire that explores the religious and cultural realities of that community. This kind of procedure can reveal if individuals (and communities at large) are satisfied with their local legal system, the attendance at cultural festivals, the availability of religious counseling, the visits of tourists, their access to farm equipment or the internet, etc. Then, based on the recurring themes that emerge across the country, developmental strategies can be formulated. Also, policies can be implemented to respond to the findings of the *GNH Report*, either by supporting the things that foster happiness (e.g., providing better access to education or technology) or by responding to the things that are impacting it (e.g., creating specific kinds of tourist regulations).

The third section will continue to break new ground and further establish Bhutan's commitment to GNH. This section will focus on subjective truth. Now for some this seems like an oxymoron. But keep in mind that this form of truth isn't in lieu of objective truth but rather in addition to it (and intersubjective truth). Each form of truth needs to be honored on its own terms for all three of them highlight qualities that neither of the others captures. This is why anything less than an integral approach leaves something to be desired. Just as philosophical hermeneutics has gone to great lengths to establish its unique claim to truth along-side science, the field of phenomenology has made a forceful case for its own distinctive form of truth against the monopoly of scientific truth. Phenomenology can be characterized as the domain of direct-experience.<sup>20</sup> As such it is often considered the home of spirituality and the transpersonal domains. Consequently, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism have much in common with the theoretical underpinnings of phenomenology.<sup>21</sup> Both Buddhism and phenomenology provide methodological means (e.g., meditation or forms of inquiry) for coming into contact with direct-experience, which Buddhism uses to reveal the emptiness of self and world and phenomenology uses to contact 'things in themselves.' The subjective domain also includes the emotions and feelings as they arise in our body-mind, as well as intentionality and sincerity. This kind of truth is assessed through self-report.

Upon hearing or reading someone's description of a subjective state (be it anger or a spiritual reality) you have to decide for yourself if what they are telling you is true for them. It doesn't matter if it isn't true for you, because you might have a different experience, but maybe you can relate to their experience and in that sense there is empathy: a resonance between their experience and yours. For the purposes of the *GNH Report*, the same researchers used to document (and later analyze) the intersubjective truths of Bhutan would be used for obtaining a large representative sample of self-reports from across the country. Again, a simple questionnaire or audio-recorded interviews could be used to solicit responses to a number of issues in order to gauge whether Bhutanese report to be happy on the whole. For example, you could collect 1000 self-reports from all over Bhutan, distill the themes, and present those themes with a representative example in the *GNH Report*. As additional reports are done (every five-years) you would start to see 'happiness' trends.

Of course, what I have presented above is a very condensed version of a complex procedure. However, my point is that the tools to measure 'happiness' as it occurs in both the intersubjective and subjective domains do exist. There are sophisticated techniques and rich traditions that have spent a lot of time developing the validity of these modes of truth. It is only the constraining dominance of the scientific worldview with its sole claim to truth that has obscured our relationship with these other legitimate enterprises. Thus, the measuring of GNH is only a matter of drawing on the resources available.

Basically to assess happiness, you have to go out into the communities and talk to people. Understandably this could seem like a daunting task, but in fact, it is quite easy, though it will require investment (i.e., time and money). But if the RGoB is as committed to GNH as it claims to be then it would seem that establishing something like the *GNH Report* outlined above would be the logical next step. Only by beginning to use the concept of Gross National Happiness, can refinements be made in its formulation as an index.

Thus, the *GNH Report* will combine the best of both worlds, avoiding the extremes of rampant materialism and subjective whims. It will do this, by bringing together the established quantitative means of assessing development and placing them side by side with the sophisticated techniques of qualitative analysis. In doing this, the three realms of truth (i.e., objectivity, intersubjectivity, and subjectivity) are honored. As additional reports are issued trends will become visible and brought into further analysis. This kind of approach will establish a recursive relationship between the concept of Gross National Happiness and its measurement.

### *Wilber's Integral Model*

In order to further substantiate the concept of GNH, I would like to point out its compatibility with Ken Wilber's integral model. Wilber is an American theorist who has been characterized as a philosopher of consciousness. In addition to being a highly accomplished Dzogchen practitioner (and a student of Kalu Rinpoche among others) he is the author of twenty books many of which are translated into thirty-four languages (making him the most widely translated academic author in America).<sup>22</sup> Throughout his many books and articles, Wilber has advanced the most comprehensive model of knowledge the world has ever seen: integrating all domains of understanding into a single conceptual framework.<sup>23</sup> The scope of Wilber's enterprise is far reaching and unfortunately beyond the scope of this article. However, the interested reader can consult any of his numerous books: particularly noteworthy are, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (1995), *The Eye of Spirit* (1997), *Integral Psychology* (2000), and *A Theory of Everything* (2001).

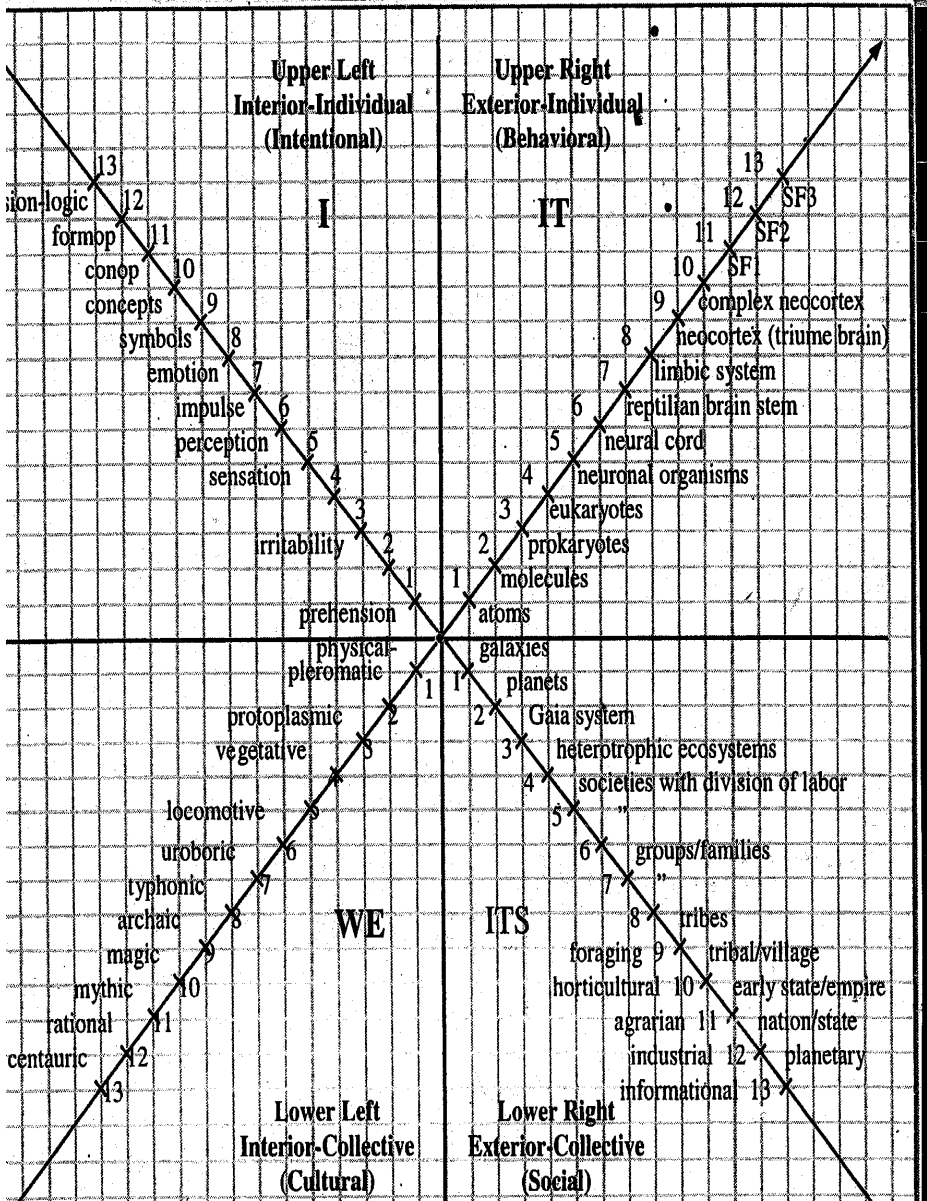
What I would like to do here is to show how Wilber's model (which is being used for everything from prison reform and the analysis of micro-bacterial soap, to business workshops and psychology courses, to name just a few of its applications) can service the concept of Gross National Happiness. By placing GNH into the framework that Wilber has articulated, which I've already begun in the proposal for measuring GNH, it benefits in a number of ways. First, it derives more explanatory power, by being connected to the domains that

historically have explored interiors (e.g., happiness). Second, its relationship to exteriors is clarified. Third, it profits from all the scholarship that Wilber has amassed (and points too) in service of explicating the relationships between interiors and exteriors. Fourth, it gains a wider audience by being connected to a model that is obtaining more and more currency as people look for a way out of the narrow alley of scientific and economic reductionism. Wilber has single handedly done more to legitimize the simultaneous value of science, culture, and spirituality than any other theorist. Consequently, Wilber is helping to pave the way for the wider acceptance of such concepts as GNH.

In addition to the benefits GNH gains from an affiliation with Wilber's model, they are at base symbiotic. The goal of both, GNH and Wilber's model, is to honor interiority in the face of a world obsessed with exteriors. In order to accomplish this goal they each take Nagarjuna's middle path: GNH acknowledges the importance of GNP (and its expanded versions) but insists there is more to measuring development, while Wilber acknowledges the importance of the natural and human sciences but is adamant that the domains of culture and spirituality are just as important. Wilber's model is often referred to as being 'all-quadrant, all-level.' This is because he divides the three value spheres (objective, subjective, and intersubjective) into four quadrants (by splitting the objective sphere into its individual and collective manifestations) and then explains at length that each of these quadrants have levels of complexity, with correlates in the other quadrants (see Figure 2). It is worth noting that the opening quote of this article, provided by Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley, also proclaims the need for a balance between the three value spheres: economic (objective), social (intersubjective), and psychological (subjective).



Figure 2: Wilber's Four Quadrants



The details of this map need not concern us for now, but I think it is important to begin to see the complexity of his model (this figure being only one simple representation of it). Nevertheless, let me give a quick illustrative example using the diagram above (other examples will be provided below). Lets say I decide I need to prepare for dinner and I have the thought 'I want to go to the grocery store.' Now Wilber's model demonstrates that this thought has at least four dimensions, none of which can be separated because they co-arise. First there is the individual thought and how I experience it. This is represented by the psychological structure of formop (formal operations) in the Upper Left quadrant (UL). At the same time, there is the unique combination of neuronal activity, brain chemistry, and body states that accompany this thought. This is represented by a state of the complex neocortex (SF2) in the Upper Right quadrant (UR). Likewise, there are ecological, economic, political, and social systems that supply the grocery store with items to sell. This is represented by the systems included in the nation state in the Lower Right quadrant. Similarly, there is a cultural context that determines if I associate grocery store with an open-air market, a big shopping mall, or a small stall in an alley. This is represented by the rational worldview in the Lower Left quadrant. One of Wilber's continual points is that while each phenomena has at least these four correlates (as represented by the quadrants) it is violence to reduce any of the dimensions to its correlates in one or more of the other quadrants. In other words, to have a full understanding and appreciation for the occurrence of the thought, 'I'm going to the grocery store' you can't just explain it in terms of either psychology, or neurobiology, or economic forces, or cultural meaning. In fact, you have to take into consideration all of these domains (and their respective levels).

In order to further illustrate the relevance of Wilber's model to Bhutan's distinctive approach to development, I will turn our attention to the analysis of UNICEF provided by iSchaik Development Associates (iSDA), which also points to the importance of interiority when approaching development.<sup>24</sup>

*UNICEF's Adoption of an Integral Analysis*

Recently, UNICEF has incorporated the analysis of iSDA into their understanding of development.<sup>25</sup> iSDA is a consulting group that specializes in such things as strategic management, organization and planning, change management, sector development programs, and NGO design.<sup>26</sup> Their clients include UNICEF, the World Bank, GTZ (a German NGO), and the Australian Government. They have been involved in a number of projects worldwide that have been informed by their use and understanding of an integral approach to development. For the last several years they have been using Wilber's 'all-quadrant, all-level' model as an analytical tool for redressing development.

In their approach to development they outline Wilber's four quadrants (figure 2), giving examples of each quadrant, as well as describing the major waves of consciousness and the many developmental lines that progress through each wave.<sup>27</sup> They explain that our understanding of the complex, interconnected nature of our world is dependent on a mapping of consciousness as it is related to social and cultural evolution. Thus an integral approach to development is needed in order to understand how the 'state of children, humanity, culture and society, returns to a state of sustainable process' (Schaik; p. 1). What this integral approach reveals is that we need to go beyond an exterior systems analysis of interconnectedness (e.g., the global economy or the web of life), and past the single solution of a multicultural embrace (e.g., claiming that everyone *needs* to adopt a multicultural perspective). In their analysis they explain that:

Clearly the process of development must address all four of these quadrants in an integrative fashion if it is to maintain a sustainable direction. But it is equally clear when we look at the evolution of UNICEF's involvement in this process, together with the broader process of human development and how they affect each other, that progress made so far has largely not produced sustainable

change. Attempts to understand the process of change, transformation, or development without an understanding of the nature of the evolution or unfolding of (human) consciousness have little prospect for success. (Schaik, p. 2)

With this said, they zero-in on the main reason that UNICEF's projects have been met with little success. They argue that UNICEF's activities have mostly been concerned with the Right-Hand quadrants (i.e., behavior and social systems) and have for the most part ignored the Left-Hand quadrants (i.e., individual interior and cultural worldspace). Thus, it is put forward by iSDA that UNICEF has failed to place their projects into the larger context of human development in which they were inadvertently involved. They suggest that for approaches to development to be successful, they will need to be post-rational, in that they incorporate the positive aspects of rational consciousness, without losing sight of the valuable aspects of other waves of consciousness. What they are calling for is Gebser's (1985) 'aperspectival thinking,' Wilber's (1995) 'vision-logic,' Morin's (1992) 'complex thinking,' Piaget's (1977) 'polyvalent logic,' and Kegan's (1994) 'postformal-interindividual.'<sup>28</sup>

A survey of UNICEF's history, as presented by iSDA is very revealing. They explain how the 1950's Era of Disease Campaigns, was concerned with that which was quantifiable within individuals (e.g., behaviors like washing hands) which is the Upper Right quadrant; The 1960's Decade of Development placed its emphasis on 'functional fit' (e.g., economic dynamics) which is the Lower Right quadrant; The 1970's Era of Alternatives mostly proposed alternatives that were in the Right-Hand quadrants; The 1980's Era of Child Survival sought to increase the health of infants and children but had no mention of how children's interiors or interior development related to their survival; The 1990's Decade of Children's Rights presented rights that were strictly defined in behaviorist terms or social systems, not to mention an exclusive focus on rights neglect jurisprudence (i.e.,

responsibility; LL). Surveying this historical progression of UNICEF's developmental programs, iSDA argues that:

All ideas during these five decades stemming from consciousness levels described by development psychologist as rational, were monological to a degree that excluded an understanding of the needs for interior/subjective development in individuals and societies in order to make the process of change and especially transformation sustainable. (Schaik, p. 3)

Thus, iSDA concludes that the way forward for an integral approach to development is to understand the process of internal transformation, the difference between transformation from one level to the next, and transformation within levels. With that distinction in place, it is important to then understand each situation from the perspective of the four-quadrants. Only then can solutions that meet the level of complexity and diversity required for that particular situation be obtained. iSDA propose that the 2000's be known as the 'Era of the Integral Approach' where all views are treated as having something to offer the larger picture and the perspectives that incorporate the interior domains of individuals and cultures shall be honored as equally as the exterior dimensions of development.

Wilber and iSDA are cautionary that an 'all-quadrant, all-level' approach to development needs to be uniquely sculpted to each specific situation as a way of making sure that 'programs/ideas/metaphors' that are proposed have the best chance of facilitating a process of sustainable, directional, transformative change. Both Wilber and iSDA warn that an integral approach to development needs to be 'implemented with the utmost care, concern and compassion.'<sup>29</sup> Importantly then, none of the levels, quadrants, or lines are to be seen in a rigid conceptual straight jacket. The four-quadrant approach should not be used to pigeonhole individuals or cultures as inferior or superior. To do that is to lose sight of the very intention of an integral approach.

Rather, an integral approach provides a context for creating guidelines that serve to highlight 'possible potentials that are not being utilized.'<sup>30</sup> This larger context is capable of addressing problems that have not been satisfactorily met with non-integral approaches.

Wilber proposes a modern version of the Mahayana bodhisattva vow in the form of what he calls the Basic Moral Intuition (BMI) and its derivative the Prime Directive (PD). The BMI is defined as, 'Protect and promote the greatest depth [levels of being] for the greatest span [variety of organization]' while the PD is defined as, 'Protect and promote the entire health of the spiral [the spectrum of being], without privileging one level over another.' Both of the BMI and PD are absolutely necessary to an integral vision. The BMI claims that we all intuit Spirit (Buddha nature) and thus extend rights to those whom we identify with as 'self' based on the wave of consciousness we are operating out of (e.g., ethnocentric, socialcentric, worldcentric, Kosmoscentric).<sup>31</sup> Thus, as you develop into higher waves of consciousness you will afford rights and responsibilities to a larger sphere of people.<sup>32</sup> The PD emerges out of post-rational thought (Wilber's 'vision-logic') and is the ability to see the value of each wave of consciousness as an essential ingredient to the diversity of the entire culture.<sup>33</sup> Thus, under the PD you honor all the modes of existence without demanding that one mode transform into another one, you just want to ensure a healthy expression of each wave of consciousness.<sup>34</sup> The BMI and PD are key elements in integral development for it is only in the ability to honor the entire range of people's situations (both their exteriors and interiors) that appropriate, pragmatic decisions can be made about the complex issues involved in development. Both the BMI and PD are in alignment with Bhutan's Buddhist philosophy.

Clearly, Wilber's integral model has much to offer any approach to development, in particular one such as Bhutan's that places a premium on individual spiritual development and community happiness. Now that Wilber's model has been outlined and Gross National Happiness has been shown to not only be compatible with, but actually to benefit from the

framework of this model, we can turn our attention the second part of this article, which focuses on examples of taking The Middle Path to arrive at Gross National Happiness.

## **Part II: Bhutan's Integral Ecology: Cranes, Nature Spirits, and *Terma***

### *Taking The (Environmental) Middle Path*

While the central concept to Bhutan's approach to development is the maximization of Gross National Happiness, the route that Bhutan has chosen to get to this lofty destination is appropriately entitled 'The Middle Path.' Bhutan's road to development was christened as such in 1990 by a group of senior government officials gathered together to begin the process of formulating the broad criteria of Bhutan's developmental agenda.<sup>35</sup> The Royal Government of Bhutan has explicitly stated that it wants to find a balance between the spiritual and material aspects of life, between *gakid* (happiness and peace) and *pejor gongphel* (economic development).<sup>36</sup> Thus as Françoise Pommaret (1998) summarizes Bhutan's path towards sustainable development: 'Development will not be material development alone but will incorporate cultural and spiritual enhancement' (p. 69). Once again, as in the opening quote by Lyonpo Jigmi Y. Thinley, there is an equal emphasis on the three value spheres recognized by Wilber's model: the material (objective), the cultural (the intersubjective), and the spiritual (the subjective).

Due to the rich biodiversity found in Bhutan, the large amounts of protected areas within the nation, the rich forest cover sprawling over most of the country, the strong connection between Bhutanese culture and nature, and the religious (Bon and Buddhist) values of Bhutan, which promote the value of ecological niches and compassion towards all sentient beings, it is no surprise that the environment takes a prominent role in the course of The Middle Path.<sup>37</sup> Even the Biodiversity Action Plan, a living document that guides all biodiversity related activities in the country, recognizes the inseparability of culture and nature: 'in Bhutan, the ethical [intersubjective] and aesthetic

[subjective] roles of biodiversity [objectivity] are integral components of the culture' (p. 9). In fact, studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between areas of high biodiversity and areas of high cultural diversity.<sup>38</sup> Phuntsho (2001), the Head of Policy & Planning Division (National Commission for Cultural Affairs) also notes this in his *Environment Action Plan: Sites and their Surroundings*. After exploring the connection between diversity in culture and nature he summarizes, 'In short, the loss of cultural diversity, and of biodiversity, are two aspects of the same event, or if you will, two sides of the same coin' (p. 5). Thus, Bhutan's rich culture spurred forth by the isolated valleys of Bhutan's mountainous terrain can be seen to be directly related to its rich biodiversity, also a result of secluded pockets.<sup>39</sup> After all, where else in the world can you find over 500 varieties of rice: a symbol of the diversity of culture and nature being synonymous.<sup>40</sup> In effect, by protecting its natural environment, Bhutan is simultaneously preserving its cultural heritage and its spiritual roots. Given this intimate relationship between Bhutan's biodiversity, its culture, and its spirituality, it only makes sense that The Middle Path would recognize the importance of honoring all three value spheres.

Bhutan's unique philosophical approach to the environment is unparalleled by the myriad eco-approaches popular today. While each approach highlights an essential component (often associated with only one of the value spheres) for an environmental philosophy, they remain partial due to their silence concerning the other important dimensions of reality. To overcome the fragmentation within current environmental philosophies (which results in ideological camp wars) Wilber's model has been used to articulate an all-inclusive environmental philosophy: Integral Ecology.<sup>41</sup> Integral Ecology not only provides an understanding of how the myriad eco-philosophies can be brought together into a unified front (informing and complementing each other) but it also highlights the pitfalls that have assailed contemporary, partial approaches. One of the guiding principles of Integral Ecology is the recognition that all three value spheres need to be incorporated into any comprehensive approach to the



environment. Consequently, Integral Ecology and The Middle Path are practically synonymous. In fact, The Middle Path can be seen as an expression of Integral Ecology, since the former is a specific example of the later (an example that is tailor-made to fit Bhutan). Given the kinship between these two approaches to the environment, let me further introduce Integral Ecology drawing in part on a clarifying example.

*A New Approach to Environmental Issues*<sup>42</sup>

Integral Ecology (IE) offers a comprehensive approach to environmental issues which takes into account, not just a few, but all of the known dimensions of human beings in their complex interactions with wild nature and the environment in general. That is, IE attempts to integrate the levels of body, mind, and spirit as they appear in the spheres of self (subjective), culture (intersubjective), and nature (objective). As we have seen, these spheres can be represented by Wilber's four-quadrants.

Because this integral approach is based on a more accurate and comprehensive map of reality (by honoring all three spheres and their respective levels) it allows for a more effective response than current approaches to environmental problems. This is achieved by avoiding the reductionistic or privileging tendencies that characterize many proposed environmental solutions, which often only focus on the exterior dimensions and/or over-value rationality. Or when they value interiors they often do it at the expense of exteriors and/or rationality.

As an example of an integral approach, IE would incorporate *at least* the following dimensions in exploring the problem of toxic emissions:

*Upper Right quadrant (individual behavior)*

Toxic chemicals can cause (or trigger) various deleterious effects in individual cells, organs, and organisms (plants, animals, and humans). These causes, triggers, and effects need to be studied, measured, and described so that grounded recommendations can be made about limiting their

release into the environment. In other words, it is important to both 1.) understand how individual functioning is effected by toxins at all levels of ecological organization (e.g., cells, plants, insects, reptiles, mammals), and 2.) look closely at how human behavior patterns in our daily activities contributes to and sustains environmental toxicity.

*Lower Right quadrant (collective systems)*

Here, IE directs attention to two different, but related domains: ecosystemic and socio-political. First, IE examines how toxic chemicals affect ecosystemic processes (e.g., watersheds, food chains, nutrient cycles), in addition to individual (cellular/organic/organismic) processes. Second, IE studies the various social, economic, and political factors involved both in the production and release of toxic chemicals into the environment. Insight into such factors can be drawn from a number of different levels and/or perspectives, including liberal, socialist, green and so on. It is important to develop an understanding of how socio-political institutions are contributing to and maintaining widespread toxic emissions into the ecosystem. By uncovering these dynamics, an appreciation of the role that such institutions can play in ecological recovery will be achieved. IE's specific contribution here, is being open to and integrating insights about toxic emissions from all the levels of collective institutions (e.g., local water boards, county commissions, state agencies, and federal committees) and applying those insights towards a deeper understanding of how those collective systems effect (negatively and positively) ecosystemic processes.

*Lower Left quadrant (collective worldspace)*

IE also examines how ideologies, worldviews, religious systems, value systems, and other such interpretative domains disclose humankind, nature, and the humankind-nature relation in ways that encourage, discourage, or are neutral with regard to release of toxic chemicals that may harm organisms and ecosystems. Insights and recommendations for corrective action drawn from each level must be taken seriously. Efforts must be made to find 'common ground' for such recommendations. IE encourages

the process of occupying multiple perspectives, in order to experience how the problem/solutions 'show up' within the outlooks provided by such perspectives. In addition to honoring numerous ideologies (worldviews), IE recognizes that some will service an integral approach towards dealing with toxic emissions more successfully than others will. IE recognizes that the process of working towards mutual understanding between individuals and different worldviews is a critical component of mobilizing action that will minimize the level of toxicity within the environment and its members. As a result, IE is committed to exploring the role of intersubjectivity, in its many dimensions (e.g., proximity, emotional, linguistic, contextual) within and between both the human sphere and the collective worldspaces of other organisms, in addressing the issue of toxic emissions.

*Upper Left quadrant (individual interiority)*

In addition, IE affirms that psychological levels, states, beliefs, conditioning, and pathologies shape individual attitudes with regard both to the fact of toxic chemical releases, and to the production of such chemicals. The same person who fears that toxic chemicals may harm his/her well-being and that of others may also be guided by beliefs/attitudes (greed, hate, delusion) that arise from, and sustain, a consumerist society for which producing huge amounts of complex goods 'justifies' the production/release of toxic chemicals into the environment. IE also holds that transformative practices (e.g., meditation, therapy, community service, wilderness solo's) help individuals to discover the deep roots of the attitudes, beliefs, and emotions, that give rise to personal, cultural, socio-political, and scientific-technological practices that are environmentally harmful.

As outlined above, a unique environmental framework emerges when all four-quadrants (and their levels) are incorporated into a single fabric. This approach honors the holonic (i.e., whole/part complexification) nature of the cosmos and provides a systematic way to ensure the myriad contexts that give rise to environmental issues are explored with adequate depth and breadth. In addition, IE assumes

that its adherents take seriously the importance of individual (UR) and collective (LR) transformative practices (at various levels) for generating individual transformation and development (UL), which in turn can affect collective attitudes and practices (LL), leading to new institutions (LR) which in turn support interior development (UL). All the quadrants are mutually dependent and co-arising. However, IE recognizes that most of the environmental movement—whether green, postmodern, liberal, socialist, etc., has ignored interior development (UL) which is the crucial ingredient in moving humankind toward different kinds of (and more eco-friendly) attitudes, practices, beliefs, institutions, politics, and economics. IE recognizes that until we as a collective move towards worldcentric modes of awareness and compassion, Gaia will continue to be despoiled. It is only upon transforming to and stabilizing worldcentric consciousness that a deep and natural concern for the environment emerges.

A keystone for Integral Ecology is the recognition that the cultivation of intersubjectivity-as-difference (i.e., mutual understanding) is an essential component in addressing our environmental problems. The core assumption here is that anything less than a worldcentric capacity for intersubjectivity will not suffice as a solution to environmental degradation. We live in a global community and have global problems, which demand global solutions. Thus, the solution to our environmental crisis is to be found in our increasing capacity to see through and beyond our ideological, cultural, racial, and gender differences.

In other words, a major source for addressing the ecological crises is *thought transformation*. It is well worth noting that people have been bombarded with LOTS of information drawn from all the quadrants, without having dramatically altered the practices that generate serious eco-problems. Progress has been made, to be sure, but clearly such information is not in and of itself enough to alter practices that are grounded in the developmental level of individuals. Changing social, economic, and ideological positions will not make this transformation possible! Individual transformation, growth,

and development - these are major factors in altering our current treatment of the biosphere, including our own bodies.

It is obvious that there are many points of contact between Integral Ecology and the kind of approach Bhutan envisions with The Middle Path. As a way of becoming more familiar with these points of contact, I will present three case studies drawn from Bhutan's rich eco-spiritual culture. Each of the case studies is more closely affiliated with one of the value spheres. For example, the Black Necked Cranes with the objective realm, nature spirits with the intersubjective realm, and the *Terma* tradition with the subjective realm. By taking a representative example from each sphere, it will further convey the relevance of the four-quadrant approach for all realms of truth and experience. Of course the analysis of each example could be expanded to be an entire article in itself. My aim here is just to give a flavor of the advantage and comprehensive nature of using Wilber's model to clarify The Middle Path. I will introduce each example on its own terms and then provide a four-quadrant diagram and analysis of the ecological and development issues relevant to it, followed by some possible ways The Middle Path could make use of such a conceptual framework (i.e., Wilber's model) in guaranteeing 'happiness' a place in Bhutanese culture.

### **Case Study 1: The Black Necked Crane Festival**

This year's Black Necked Crane Festival got off to an early start when sixteen keen bird observers rolled out of bed at 4:30 am. These enthusiasts were led by a local guide to the wooden blind strategically located in the center of the Phobjikha Valley near the Crane's roosting area. Standing in the dark with the early morning frost and a nippy wind the only sign of the infamous birds was the sound of their trumpeting call piercing the grayness. As the sun began its climb over the encircling mountains the cranes started to become visible. Equipped with binoculars and telescopes, several people counted over 150 Black Necked Cranes (*Grus nigricollis*), which is quite good given that this is still early in the season (the birds will stay until mid-April). Last year the high count was around 250 cranes. With day break the birds left their roosting area and the security of numbers to fly in

small groups to other parts of the valley to spend the day feeding.

This marked the beginning of the fourth annual Black Necked Crane Festival, held every year on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November in conjunction with the celebration of His Majesty's Birthday. The festival is sponsored by The Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN) and the Phobjikha Conservation Area Program (PCAP). This year PCAP took an even more active role than in years past in the organization of the festival. Thus demonstrating the continuing success of sustainability as local communities take more and more responsibility for the conservation of their natural resources. PCAP is part of RSPN's Integrated Conservation Development Program (ICDP) and is made up of local residents of the Phobjikha valley.

After the majority of the cranes had left the roosting area the early morning bird watchers made their way to the Phobjikha Primary School grounds: the venue for the rest of the festival. The school grounds were decorated with flags, tents, stalls, and several thousand people. A number of cranes could be seen near-by, looking as if they too were interested in the festival. The official ceremony began at 9:30 am with the honoring of distinguished guests, the National Flag Hoisting Ceremony, a Marchhang ceremony (to appease the local guardian deities), a welcome address by the PCAP chairman, and a marching ceremony performed by Phobjikha students and the scouts of Trongsa High School.

Around 10:00 am the dancing began. The first dance was the beautiful Black Necked Crane Dance, specifically designed to honor the Thrung thrungs (as the birds are locally known). This dance was preformed by older students of Phobjikha and was followed by a number of folk dances preformed by individuals of all ages from different gewog (blocks). Soon after the dancing had commenced the Inter-gewog archery match was underway with the typical taunting of one team by another, a benchmark of Bhutan's national sport. All the while individuals perused the stalls: playing games, viewing local handicrafts, eating and drinking among friends. One of

the stalls hosted an art competition that promised prizes for the top 5 posters exhibiting conservation themes. The winners' posters will be sent to a sister school in Japan that also participates in crane conservation in their local area. On display one could see the posters that had been sent by the Japanese school to Phobjikha.

After lunch, interested people were taken on a nature walk along the trails around the valley. The ICDP Field Officer guided this walk. Upon return to the main festival, the Tashi Lebay dance had begun and a number of locals, tourists, and foreigners joined in the celebration.

As the sun set on the winter home of the Black Necked Cranes, locals watched a Bhutanese film projected on the white wall of the school building. At the same time, visitors gathered at the Crane Observation Center for a presentation by RSPN/ICDP on the conservation activities in the valley. This presentation was followed by a feedback session where the visitors were able to make recommendations on how to further improve upon the success of the Black Necked Crane Festival and conservation in general. Many good ideas were presented and discussed.

Thus came to an end another successful and enlivening Black Necked Crane Festival: weaving together celebration and environmental awareness in a way that has become a hallmark of Bhutan's Middle Path to environmental and cultural preservation. Throng Throng's have long been part of Bhutan's cultural heritage, appearing in folk tales, songs, dances, and historical references. Their eloquent flight and beautiful foliage has become a religious symbol of a heavenly bird (*lhab-bja*). It is even reported that the cranes circumnavigate the Gangte Goemba, which overlooks their winter home, three times as they are leaving the valley in the spring to return to Tibet. Each year since 1991 there has been a steady increase in the number of cranes wintering in Phobjikha Valley: a testimony to the success of conservation efforts here and the importance of the annual festival that honors these magnificent birds. Consequently, the Black Necked Crane is an example of Integral Ecology, where the

realms of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and objectivity come together in a balanced display of spiritual inspiration, cultural heritage, and ecological health. By taking this middle path the efforts of the Phobjikha residents are sure to continue preserving these rare and endangered birds, endemic to the Himalayan region. With a total population of around 5000-6000 birds, the success of the Phobjikha Valley and their annual Black Necked Crane Festival is an example to communities the world over. Not just as an example of environmental conservation, but of the need to bring environmental conservation into relationship with local cultural and spiritual resources.

In order to draw out the Integral Ecology components to this example of Bhutan's Middle Path, let me provide a four-quadrant analysis of conservation of the Black Necked Crane (see Figure 3).<sup>43</sup> This analysis, as well as the other that follow, will not be exhaustive but rather is meant to serve as an orientation to an Integral Ecology approach. To begin with we can start in the Upper Left quadrant and go clockwise to the other quadrants. However, keep in mind that each quadrant is just as important as the others and in fact you need all of them. The Upper Right quadrant highlights studying the behavior of the individuals involved, including the cranes themselves, the other species in the area, as well as the humans living nearby. The Lower Right quadrant brings into the picture the system dynamics involved, be they ecological, economic, political, legal, or institutional. These two exterior (i.e., measurable in quantitative terms) quadrants comprise what most approaches to the environment focus on. What sets The Middle Path of Bhutan apart from other countries is that it also includes the other two quadrants, the interior quadrants (which draw on qualitative means). The Lower Left quadrant adds the cultural and religious dimensions of the cranes that exist in the shared space of meaning within the community. The Upper Left quadrant includes the individual psychological and spiritual states that are related to the cranes. A lot can be said about each of the items mentioned in the quadrants but I think it quickly becomes apparent how this kind of framework ensures a holistic approach.



**Figure 3. Four-Quadrant Analysis of Black Necked Crane Conservation**

<b>Interior-Individual</b>	<b>Exterior-Individual</b>
<p><b>Psychological</b> Pride over protecting the cranes.  Frustration over not having ready access to electricity due to wire regulations to protect birds.</p> <p><b>Spiritual</b> Inspiration provided by the birds.  Identification with the cranes.</p>	<p><b>Behavioral</b> Observations of the cranes (e.g., diet, roosting, numbers of birds, interactions of birds).  Observations of other plants &amp; animals (e.g., species in area, predators, dogs).  Human activities in the valley (e.g., grazing of cows, location of the school, walking through sensitive areas, power lines).</p>
<p><b>Cultural</b> The annual BNC festival.  Folk songs that praise the cranes.  Shared commitment to the birds.</p> <p><b>Religious</b> Symbol of Enlightenment.  Gangte Goemba's relationship to the valley.</p>	<p><b>Ecological</b> Wetlands ecology  Himalayan ecology</p> <p><b>Sociological</b> Economic factors (e.g., tourism).  Institutions like RSPN, local committees.  Policies and regulations protecting cranes.</p>
<b>Interior-Collective</b>	<b>Exterior-Collective</b>

Now to explore how this integral framework can serve The Middle Path we can take the example of environmental education.<sup>44</sup> Currently, the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN), World Wildlife Fund-Bhutan (WWF-Bhutan), and National Environmental Commission (NEC) are working on an environmental education strategy. They could use the four-quadrants in drawing up a balanced curriculum that takes environmental issues from all over Bhutan and presents them as cases studies. One of the case studies could be on the Black Necked Cranes in Bhutan. The case study could then be divided into a number of sections (e.g., the three value spheres, the quadrants, or the categories in each quadrant) presenting such things as ecological and historical information, excerpts of folk songs, cultural tales about the birds, relevant discussions from Buddhism, descriptions of tourist policies, and self-reports from local residents. In this way the student gets a complete picture and sees how cultural and spiritual dimensions are just as valuable as scientific ones. Also, this kind of approach would contribute to the intergenerational transmission of values (Wangyal, 2001) and honor both the traditional and modern approaches to education in Bhutan (Phuntsho, 2000).

Approaching crane conservation and environmental education from an Integral Ecology perspective contributes to Gross National Happiness in at least three ways. First, by simply acknowledging the intersubjective and subjective dimensions that are related to the cranes, you validate 'happiness.' Second, by incorporating these dimensions into an education curriculum you honor 'happiness' in a way hitherto overlooked. Third, by increasing the awareness of the importance of these dimensions, you secure a place for 'happiness' in the institutional frameworks established.

### **Case Study 2: The Citadels of Nature Spirits**

One cannot help but be spell-bound by the beauty of Bhutan's countryside: its majestic trees, steep valleys, flashy birds, snow covered mountains and craggy outcrops, and its variety of grasses and flowers. You almost get the sense that there is another layer to this natural beauty – a layer you can't quite see but yet it has a palpable felt-presence. You

might even go so far as to say what you're experiencing are the deities of the natural world. Actually, this pantheon of beings is exactly what it is you are sensing.<sup>45</sup>

Unlike many of the cultures that have entered the modern rational scientific worldview (either by choice or necessity), Bhutan is one of the few modern societies that still holds a prominent place for nature spirits. Even the Bible of biodiversity, the Biodiversity Action Plan, is quick to point out that:

In the day to day life of the Bhutanese, certain deities such as *lha* (deities of the heaven above), *tsen* (deities of the mountains), *kLu* (beings of the underneath world) and *Sadag* (deities of the land) are worshipped and evoked. The practice comes from our society's deep respect for nature and its environment. There is a fervent belief that if we pollute the heaven above, the mountain in-between and the land below, we are bound to suffer the wrath of their respective deities. So concern for the environment is found deeply embedded in our beliefs and day-to-day activities. (p.19)

Thus, Bhutanese life, especially in the rural areas (over 80% of the country), is permeated with the intersubjective reality of nature spirits.

One of the main reasons that these deities have continued to be acknowledged by the Bhutanese can be attributed to the Drukpa Kagyu religion of Bhutan. Drukpa Kagyu is a unique strand of Tantric Buddhism that absorbed pre-Buddhist practices and the shamanic Bon tradition of the Bhutan valleys as it slowly spread across the country in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Many of Bhutan's great saints and sages are well known for their stories of subduing these at times malevolent spirits, and placing them in service, as guardians, of the Dharma. In particular, Guru Rinpoche is credited with paving the way for Buddhism in Bhutan, after defeating a number of obstructing deities. His victory over Shelging

Karpo, the chief deity in Bumthang, transforming him into the protector of Kurjey Lhakhang is celebrated throughout Bhutan. In this fashion, the nature spirits of Bhutan were not pitted against Buddhism but rather brought into the fold and honored as essential extensions of *Chös* (the Dharma).

Karma Ura, a cultural historian from the Centre of Bhutan Studies, has done the most work of anyone in documenting the role these deities have in Bhutan.<sup>46</sup> As a result of extensive fieldwork, Ura has produced two articles, which recently served as the basis of a four-part series ran in Kuensel on 'Deities and Environment.'<sup>47</sup> Through his research, Ura has catalogued the types of deities found in Bhutan, their habitats, how they are celebrated, stories associated with them and a whole host of other interesting details. I will provide a brief synopsis of Ura's findings.<sup>48</sup> However, anyone interested in this area, should directly consult Ura's much richer accounts.

Ura explains that the sacred order of the landscape is often divided into the domains of heaven (*lha*), sky (*nyan*), and the underworld (*klu*). These divisions are often loosely affiliated with various deities. For example, *lha* are found in white mountains; *gNyan* inhabit the space between the sky and earth, such as mountain ridges, trees, and glaciers; *btsan* live in red rocky mountains; *gzhi dag* occupy mountain passes; *klu* dwell in ponds and boulders under huge trees; *bdud* and *klu bdud* take residence in the confluence of streams and rivers; *mtsho sman* (a.k.a. *sman mo*) exist in the deep pools of rivers or calm lakes. In addition, each of these categories of deities have specific colors, genders, and physical descriptions associated with them. The deities mentioned here contain just a fraction of the pantheon in Bhutan represented by the pre-Buddhist, Bon, and Drukpa Kagyu religious traditions.

Some of the deities are considered to be fully enlightened while others are still caught in *khorma* (the cycle of existence). It is these later ones who speak through shamans (*pawos*, *pamos*, and *nejoms*) and who also have a larger role in the environment by mediating the relationship between people and local resources. In addition, there are those deities that

are represented in rites by dough images and those who are invoked only through the spontaneous utterances of shamans. Some deities are affiliated with specific families or with particular religious schools. There are also deities that protect great saints and the Royal family (and the country in general).

Deities are either invoked by *chosung* rituals performed by priests or monks making offerings of dough images, food and drink, or invocation occurs by shamans who in addition to the kinds of offering associated with the *chosung* rituals, provide meat and blood offerings (e.g., sacrificed poultry, goats, ox). Also, the shamans will go into trance serving as a mouthpiece for certain deities, making prophetic utterances and poetic recitations. Throughout the country there are a variety of specific days set aside for ritual observation of various deities. Also, villagers often consider crop loss, due to wild animals, to be a form of offerings for the appeasement of the local deities.<sup>49</sup> Along these lines, Allison (2001) quotes a former army officer explaining this position: 'We need to make offerings and keep our contract with the deities to preserve nature and keep things in balance,' (p. 28).

Of particular interest for The Middle Path is the relationship these nature spirits have to the natural environment. Ura provides a number of stories, which highlight the influence these beings have on human relations with the natural world.<sup>50</sup> Human activities such as killing animals, polluting (*drib*) water sources, encroaching on the deities' area, general disrespect for the environment (e.g., littering) or the deity, can result in natural disasters such as land slides, hailstorms, floods, drought, and diseases (e.g., abscesses, itching, sores, paralysis, thinning limbs, and even insanity). On the contrary, appropriate relationships with the deities and their domains are rewarded through good harvests, discovery of precious gems like turquoise, and with health and well-being. Consequently, the deities are worshipped as a means of avoiding natural disasters, ensuring favorable agricultural conditions, and maintaining human health.<sup>51</sup> As testimony to this, Kinga (2001) points out that folk songs have served as a medium for describing human-deity relations. He explains:

In most songs, the sky, streams and rivers, mountains and cliffs, forest groves and even the subterranean have been portrayed as citadels or abodes of local gods and deities. The songs constantly emphasize the need to appease them and respect their citadels so that they reciprocate by blessing communities and villages with abundant rainfall and harvest, protect them from diseases and misfortune. On the other hand, if humans encroach upon their abodes, their wrath is believed to be expressed in the form of hailstorms, gales, landslides and floods that destroy crops, cattle, lives, and property. (p. 157)

Kinga goes on to conclude that as a result of folk songs portraying a living landscape they '[have] been one of the strongest indigenous social force[s] in nature conservation' (p.158).<sup>52</sup>

In many parts of Bhutan there is a practice called *la dam* or *ridam*, where during the summer months large areas of land, where deities are located, are considered 'off-limits' to humans. In fact, Elizabeth Allison explains that, 'In the Aja area, adjacent to the Bumdeling Wildlife Sanctuary, villagers insist on this practice and have actually kept BWS staff who wanted to do wildlife surveys out of the area during the protected time – a case of local mores being stronger than state policy.'<sup>53</sup>

Because the citadels of deities are not to be trespassed upon by human activity, there are important biodiversity implications associated with them. After all, these citadels occupy important ecological niches: biotic rich river confluences; sensitive alpine meadows with fragile plants; delicate marshy areas serving as home to a variety of fish, amphibians, and insects; important rocky areas that provide roosting areas for rare birds and harbor unique fungi, moss, and lichens; groves of trees, which guard rich loam soils and

intricate watershed systems. In fact, Ura points out that the realms of deities correspond roughly to general 'schemes of segregation for each altitude zone.'<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, with sadness Ura notes that the ecological abodes of nature spirits have not been able to avoid the groping hand of development, as new roads have been punched through pristine areas, population pressures have pushed families into previously uninhabited regions, fuel wood gathering has penetrated deeper into sacred groves etc. With urbanization (and modernization) on the rise, 'places are not known in association with local divinities, but merely in terms of agro-ecological and cartographic characteristics.'<sup>55</sup>

So while the citadels of nature spirits have served as ecological sanctuaries guarded by their respective deities for centuries they are now under a new pressure as Bhutan continues to join the ranks of the developed nations of the world. Nevertheless, Integral Ecology can offer sign posts for The Middle Path to ensure that these citadels are protected, safeguarding not only the cultural texture these deities provide Bhutan but also the sense of the sacredness of nature that resides in the hearts and minds of so many Bhutanese.

A four-quadrant analysis of the ecological value of these spirits reveals a number of things (see Figure 4). In the Upper Right quadrant we see that the deities themselves have specific characteristics and behaviors, such as causing floods, hailstorms, diseases. More importantly, the belief in these spirits regulates the behavior of humans, making them aware of how their activities effect the natural environment. The Lower Right quadrant reveals that in addition to the service provided by the deities through their association with specific ecological niches, there is also an important sociological role provided by the local shamans in their communities. With the Lower Left quadrant we become aware of the huge cultural significance of these deities, which live through folklore and local songs, but also are observed through holidays, community gatherings, ethics, and rituals. The Upper Left quadrant highlights the subjective importance of these deities, not just in the fear or comfort that they can instill in an individual but also through the spiritual states of

shamans and the sense of sacredness towards nature they invoke. Only by looking at each quadrant do we start to get the full picture of the ecological importance that nature spirits have for Bhutan.

**Figure 4. Four-Quadrant Analysis of the Ecological Value of Nature Spirits**

<b>Interior-Individual</b>	<b>Exterior-Individual</b>
<p><b>Psychological</b> Fear about displeasing deities. Comfort in knowing they are guarding us.</p> <p><b>Spiritual</b> Trance states of shamans. Sense of connection to natural world.</p>	<p><b>Behavioral</b> They have specific ecological characteristics. They perform various duties (benign, rewarding, and wrathful). They regulate human impact on the natural world.</p>
<p><b>Cultural</b> Folklore surrounding spirits. Folk songs. Ethical guidelines.</p> <p><b>Religious</b> Rituals performed to appease deities.</p> <p>Annual holidays and ceremonies.</p>	<p><b>Ecological</b> They are associated with various ecological niches and guard the biodiversity contained therein.</p> <p><b>Sociological</b> Shamans as a bridge and guide to local spirits, as well as a mediator of natural resources.</p> <p>Laws could be used to protect citadels.</p>
<b>Interior-Collective</b>	<b>Exterior-Collective</b>

Having outlined some of the main components of a four-quadrant analysis, regarding nature spirits and their abodes, we can now turn to a more concrete example in order to illustrate the relationship between the above presentation and The Middle Path. Let us focus on policy formation. As we've seen, not only are the deities in danger of falling into obscurity due to the scientific-rational worldview encroaching into Bhutan's rural communities but also their ecological



homes are vulnerable to violation due to the forces of economic and industrial globalization. One way to curb this tide of change would be to develop a series of policies that designate specific citadels as eco-cultural protected areas. So far the RGoB has done a lot to protect natural areas in Bhutan, but it could use this as an opportunity to protect important cultural areas as well. A group of people designated to establish citadel sanctuaries could work with individuals like Karma Ura (who also advocates their legal protection) to identify a number of cultural sites with ecological value worthy of protection. After all, if Bhutan is serious about a balance between ecological sustainability and cultural preservation then this is clearly an important step that is long overdue. These eco-cultural 'deity parks' won't necessarily be very large, compared to the protected areas associated with the Nature Conservation Department (NCD), rather they will be like mini-parks scattered all over the country, which would compliment the larger parks and biological corridors network found in Bhutan.<sup>56</sup>

Approaching nature spirits and policy formation from an Integral Ecology perspective promotes Gross National Happiness in at least three ways. First, by establishing citadel sanctuaries you help preserve cultural and religious traditions that are important to the Bhutanese. Second, the inclusion of subjective and intersubjective realities in the development of policies provides 'happiness' a place at the policy table – a table it is rarely invited to. Third, by creating policies that honor the cultural and spiritual truths of Bhutan you further institutionalize a valued space for 'happiness.'

### **Case Study 3: The *Terma* Tradition**

I was taking a brisk walk along the Bumthang Chhu (river) with Sonam my local friend and around a certain bend we encountered a very large and curious looking rock. I made the comment 'Wow, that rock is very interesting!' and my friend casually said, 'Oh yeah, it probably contains an important religious text.' Now, I've heard of nature being 'the greatest of all teachers' but this kind of instruction, scripture coming out of solid granite, is a level of instruction far greater than I usually envision. I had just been intimately introduced

to the tradition of *Terma*, of which I had only read about. *Terma* are one of the things that sets Bhutan apart from all other countries.

Now *Terma* have been discovered in regions outside of Bhutan (especially in Tibet) but Bhutan has a particularly rich and fascinating history of *Terma* and *Tertön*.<sup>57</sup> This textured association between Bhutan and *Terma* is in part due to Bhutan's patron saint, Guru Rinpoche, who is responsible for establishing the *Terma* tradition. *Terma* are also known as 'Hidden Treasures' and they are discovered by *Tertön* or 'Treasure Hunters.' According to the tradition there will be 1000 minor *Tertön*, 100 major *Tertön*, and only five 'Sovereign' *Tertön*. While Bhutan has been the home of many *Tertön*, it is Ugyen Pemalingpa, the fourth 'Sovereign' *Tertön* who is the most famous in the land of Druk.<sup>58</sup> Because Pemalingpa started out his life as a simple blacksmith he is a symbol to all Bhutanese that the spiritual heights can be reached from the most mundane of circumstances.

Even though all five of the 'Sovereign' *Tertön* have been identified, the last being Dongak Lingpa (1820-92), and around 400 other *Tertön* have been recognized, there continue to be minor and major *Tertön* who reveal *Terma* to this day. For example, in 1990 Sogyal Rinpoche discovered a *Terma* in Paro's Taktsang Lhakhang. The treasure consisted of twelve stanzas, which Rinpoche said would fill-up nine volumes when translated. Also in the last decade a group of foreigners witnessed a female *Tertön* extract a *Terma* from a rock in Tibet.<sup>59</sup> Thus, *Terma* is a living tradition that continues to inform the Buddhist religion particularly the Nyingma school. The Nyingma school is known for its distinguished esoteric doctrines and techniques, the heights of which are expressed as Dzogchen or 'The Great Perfection.'

The roots of the *Terma* tradition can be found in passages spoken by the Buddha.<sup>60</sup> Other influences can be found throughout other Buddhist countries and in the Bon religion, which has a number of treasure revealers. It is claimed that Guru Rinpoche foresaw a period of religious suppression

and took it upon himself to conceal thousands of spiritual texts and objects all over the Tibetan world. These hidden treasures were to remain hidden until the appropriate time, at which point he would aid the *Tertön* in their recovery through divine guidance. The written text is often coded in a special language (e.g., 'dakini script') that can only be deciphered by the *Tertön*. It's no surprise that the *Terma* tradition has been controversial and likely abused in some cases. However, the issue of legitimacy and 'proof' has a long history and there are well-established criteria for validating *Terma*.<sup>61</sup>

*Terma* usually take the form of objects (e.g., bells, statues, ritual daggers), religious texts, or medicinal substances. Almost all *Terma* were hidden in the eighth century by Guru Rinpoche with the help of his disciples and Dakinis (a.k.a. skywalkers or female deities). *Terma* do not have a physical form, rather they are stored in the 'Universal Mind'. When a physical object or actual scripture is discovered in conjunction with a *Terma*, it only serves as a key to that which resides in the non-physical realm. In a sense, *Terma* can be thought of as being the result of a mind transmission from Guru Rinpoche to the respective *Tertön*. There are between eight and eighteen classifications of *Terma*, depending on the source consulted. They are often organized according to such categories as where they are found, their nature, and if they are revealed in public. Various *Tertön* will have a disposition to discover particular kinds of *Terma*. For example, Pemalingpa was known to reveal primarily Earth, Rock, and Lake *Terma*. Thus, he has a particular connection to the natural world. *Terma* are often associated with extraordinary features of the landscape, which the *Tertön* is led to through visions and dreams.

Once a *Terma* is located, there is a complex set of 'rules' that accompany its extraction: local deities have to be acknowledged, specific rites have to be performed etc. It is very common that when the proper preparation hasn't occurred the *Tertön* can be harmed in the process or the *Terma* can even be lost or damaged. By no means is the task of 'treasure hunting' without its pitfalls.

The content of *Terma* can range from secular to religious and philosophical themes. For example, they can discuss architecture, provide meditation instruction, describe rituals, or deliver prophecy. Many of the mask dances of Bhutan's tsechus are from or about *Terma* and *Tertön*. In fact, the Raksha Mangcham, (developed by the 4<sup>th</sup> century *Tertön*, Karma Lingpa) arguably one of the most sacred dances in Bhutan, is based on the Bardo Thötröl (itself a *Terma* text discovered by Karma Lingpa). This dance highlights the need to respect the environment by counting among the sins of Nyalbum his role in killing animals in the jungle, taking many fish from the river, setting the forests on fire and polluting the river.<sup>62</sup> Bunting & Wangchuk (1993) point out that the mask dances and dramas have an ecological nature by reinforcing the cyclical and interconnected nature of existence.<sup>63</sup>

Thus the *Terma* tradition brings reverence for the natural world. Not just in associating the landscape with hidden scripture, but in delivering teachings that reinforce the need to live in harmony with one's environment. As a result of the *Terma* tradition in Bhutan, 'the entire landscape bears marks and memories; the *Terma* could also be seen more generally as specific manifestations of the living landscape itself, of the forces available to those whose attitude to their environment is one of constant mindfulness and deep reverence.'<sup>64</sup> There is no doubt that this unique tradition fosters both compassion and mindfulness towards nature. Sigmund Saetreng, an environmental philosopher observes that, 'The *Terma* tradition stresses this: the 'treasures' in rocks, hills, lakes and streams - or the minds of persons meditating in nature - imbue nature with value.'<sup>65</sup> Just as Pemalingpa, an unlearned man, is a reminder to all of us that Buddha nature resides in the most ordinary people, so too the *Terma* tradition illustrates that even common-place rocks, lakes, and trees can contain the highest spiritual truths. Indeed the Bhutanese landscape comes alive through the *Terma* and their beloved revealers.

This tradition and its relationship to the 'living landscape' is revealed most comprehensively through a four-quadrant analysis (see Figure 5).<sup>66</sup> The Upper Right quadrant

underscores that ecological sound behavior is encouraged by the tradition both explicitly and implicitly. The Lower Right quadrant emphasizes that *Terma* have often been found in nature and sociological factors are and can be used to help preserve these areas. The Lower Left exposes the importance this tradition has played in cultivating the harmonious relationship Bhutanese culture has with its natural environment. Likewise, the Upper Left calls attention to how the *Terma* tradition nurtures an ecological consciousness within individuals. Clearly, much more can be said. Nevertheless, we begin to see how using the framework associated with Integral Ecology can highlight the relationships between nature, culture, and spirituality within one of the most distinctive features of Bhutan: *Terma* and their *Tertön*.

**Figure 5. Four-Quadrant Analysis of Ecological Dimension of the *Terma* Tradition**

<b>Interior-Individual</b>	<b>Exterior-Individual</b>
<p><b>Psychological</b> Respect for the natural world</p> <p><b>Spiritual</b> Compassion and Wisdom serving the environment.</p> <p>The natural world as sacred (abode of scripture).</p>	<p><b>Behavioral</b> Human activity is guided by the messages of revealed <i>Terma</i>.</p> <p>The existence of undiscovered <i>Terma</i> encourages ecologically sensitive behavior.</p>
<p><b>Cultural</b> Tsechu dances as ecological messages (explicit and implicit)</p> <p>Historical sites and surrounding areas are considered sacred</p> <p><b>Religious</b> <i>Tertön</i> are eco-friendly role models</p> <p><i>Terma</i> promote the environment</p>	<p><b>Ecological</b> <i>Terma</i> are usually found in the natural world</p> <p><b>Sociological</b> Historical sites and surrounding areas could be protected.</p> <p>Cultural Eco-Tours could also promote and protect these areas.</p>
<b>Interior-Collective</b>	<b>Exterior-Collective</b>

As a way of showing how looking at the *Terma* tradition from the four-quadrants can help The Middle Path, we can explore the example of cultural tourism. After all, tourism is one of the largest sources of revenue for the country and has the potential for the most impact on the culture and its environment. Most tourists come to Bhutan, not to go trekking but to participate in cultural tours.<sup>67</sup> Since much of Bhutan's culture is infused with the *Terma* tradition (e.g., its

leading religious figures, the historical sites where *Terma* were revealed, many of the mask-dances) more effort could be placed in developing tour packages that educate tourists on the *Terma* tradition. At the same time, historical sites of *Terma* and *Tertöns* could be designated as protected areas, restricting the number of tourists who visit them and determining which sites are off-limits to tourists. Given that many tourists are already visiting many of these sites, it seems advisable to put in place policies that protect these sacred areas from foreign impact. In short, a number of policies and regulations could be put in place that guard the history of local communities while at the same time educating more foreigners about this fascinating tradition. The National Commission for Cultural Affairs (NCCA) would be an ideal organization to be consulted in this designation of eco-cultural spiritual sites.<sup>68</sup>

Interestingly, Phuntsho (2001) in his discussion of the value of cultural, religious, historical, and archaeological sites, presents three categories of value: emotional (i.e., 'Wonder, identity, continuity, spiritual, affinity, inspiration.');

cultural (i.e., 'Documentary, historic, archeological, aesthetic, architectural, landscape and ecological, scientific and technological.');

and use (i.e., 'Functional, economic, social, political.').<sup>69</sup> Once again we have the three spheres of objective, intersubjective, and subjective being recognized as essential components of an integrated whole.

Approaching the *Terma* tradition and cultural tourism from an Integral Ecology perspective facilitates Gross National Happiness in a number of ways. First, it can promote 'happiness' by protecting areas valued by Bhutanese for their religious significance, for generations to come. Second, by regulating when tourists can visit *Terma* sites and which ones they can go to etc. you help minimize the impact foreigners have on local 'happiness.' Third, by highlighting how their valued tradition of *Terma* has helped create their pristine environment, Bhutanese can be filled with pride over their accomplishment, internalizing a sense of ownership over respecting nature.

## **Conclusion**

The goal of this article has been to further substantiate Bhutan's unique approach to development, which includes the appealing concepts of Gross National Happiness and The Middle Path, by drawing on the integral theory developed by Ken Wilber. I divided this task into two parts. In Part I, I began by looking at a variety of alternative index systems used in lieu of the Gross National Product. It became obvious that even these expanded formulas of a nation's 'development' status remained tied to a framework only concerned with quantifiable information. Any other type of information was considered to be 'un-measurable.' At this point I introduced Bhutan's idea of Gross National Happiness, which quickly raised the issue of how do we go about measuring an interior state like 'happiness?' Consequently, drawing on my knowledge of Wilber's model, I proposed a three sphere approach to measuring Gross National Happiness using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. I discussed the importance of issuing a *GNH Report* that included information on objective, intersubjective, and subjective dimensions of our human situation. Throughout our journey in this article we have seen that over a half-dozen independent thinkers have all identified the importance of honoring all three spheres of truth. Then I formally introduced Wilber's model, albeit a very brief introduction to a very complex and comprehensive model. In order to show the relevance of Wilber's model to development, in particular Bhutan's notion of GNH, I provided an analysis of UNICEF's development programs as provided by iSchaik Development Associates. Their four-quadrant analysis demonstrates that UNICEF's approach to development over the last 40 years has largely ignored the interiority of both individuals and communities. In short, iSDA shows how UNICEF has, in spite of its best intentions, ignored 'happiness' in its approach to development.

In Part II I turned my attention to The Middle Path, Bhutan's developmental strategy to obtain Gross National Happiness. After introducing this concept I demonstrated how it is an expression of Integral Ecology, an approach to environmental issues based on Wilber's model. This wasn't surprising given how compatible the concept of Gross National Happiness is



with Wilber's model. Once Integral Ecology had been elaborated through an example unrelated to Bhutan, I provided three brief case studies from Bhutan. Each case study represented a unique part of Bhutan where the three spheres (ecology, culture, and spirituality) came together in a complex meshwork. Each case study was more closely affiliated with one of the spheres. For example, Black Necked cranes are usually understood from an ecological perspective, nature spirits are generally discussed from a cultural perspective (not to mention the intersubjective relationships between people and the deities), and the *Terma* tradition is generally seen as spiritual. By choosing case studies from each sphere I wanted to demonstrate how a four-quadrant analysis works equally well for any of them. In each case study I introduced the subject, then I provided a four-quadrant analysis (accompanied by a chart) followed by a relevant example (i.e., environmental education, policy formulation, and cultural tourism) connecting the analysis to some general pragmatic steps The Middle Path could take in promoting 'happiness' across the country.

Each case study was intended to familiarize the reader with the potential of using Integral Ecology, in particular Wilber's model, to guide The Middle Path towards Gross National Happiness. Consequently, none of the case studies provides an exhaustive analysis of any quadrant. Nevertheless, I think what is left unsaid or remains implicit serves as a call for the Royal Government of Bhutan, and Bhutan in general, to show the world it is serious when it proclaims that Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product. I propose the RGoB does this in two ways. One, it begins issuing a *GNH Report* every five years based on the kind of format outline above. Two, it begins to use a framework like Wilber's quadrants to help guide specific Middle Path projects that honor the three spheres as represented by ecology, culture, and spirituality.

Integral development requires an understanding of not only the exteriors of individual behaviors or systemic dynamics (e.g., ecology, economics, politics) but also an understanding of the interiors of individuals and their cultures. It also

places a premium of individual human development be it psychological or spiritual. For as Integral Ecology emphasizes it is only when we nurture and develop the capacities for us to take on the role of others, do we have compassion for them. This kind of compassion is desperately needed in our world, which is torn apart by ideological, cultural, racial, class, and gender differences. This is yet another reason why Wilber's model and Bhutan's Buddhist disposition are simpatico: they both value the spiritual cultivation of wisdom and compassion.

Thus, an integral approach to development will be one that strives to honor both exterior and interior dimensions of individuals, communities, and cultures. Much work remains to be done to flesh out what advantages and pitfalls await an integral approach to development. However, the door has been opened and a number of individuals, communities, organizations, and countries are walking through that door with integrity and an openness to the complexity of the human situation. It remains to be seen if Bhutan will live up to its approach to integral development, characterized by The Middle Path and Gross National Happiness. If any nation can pave the way and serve as a beacon for the global community, placing 'happiness' back on top - I think it *is* Bhutan. Nevertheless, to prevent us from getting too stuck on the idea of 'development,' it is important to recall Lao Tzu's words, which echoes Bhutan's own Dzogchen perspective, and are also part of an integral approach to development:

Do you want to improve the world?  
I don't think it can be done.  
The world is sacred.  
It can't be improved.  
If you tamper with it, you'll ruin it.  
If you treat it like an object, you'll lose it.

From *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 29

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Kinga et al (1999, p. 17).

<sup>2</sup> For an insightful discussion of the use of the historical use of the term 'development' and its contrast with the idea of 'underdevelopment' consult Esteva (1997).

<sup>3</sup> For example, Shiva (1989) cites a collective document by women activists, organizers and researchers, which stated at the end of the UN Decade for Women that: 'The almost uniform conclusion of the Decade's research is that with a few exceptions, women's relative access to economic resources, incomes and employment has worsened, their burden of work has increased, and their relative and even absolute health, nutritional and educational status has declined' (p. 3).

<sup>4</sup> Morin (1999) provides a great illustration (p. 18) of the globalization of our lives by describing the typical day of a European man and then contrasting it with a typical day of an African woman. Also, Morin (1999) has a strong critique of the idea of development and sets up a framework that honors what, in this paper, is referred to as 'interiority.'

<sup>5</sup> Also referred to as the Gross Domestic Product.

<sup>6</sup> In addition to the alternative indicators of progress, there are a number of thinkers who have remained within the field of economics but have situated it in a larger ecological context. See John B. Cobb, Jr.'s (1990, 1993) postmodern theory of economics; Paul Hawken's (et al) (1993, 1999) formulation of sustainable economics; and Michael Jacobs (1991) discussion of limits of neoliberalism in relation to the environment and social justice.

<sup>7</sup> One of the more noteworthy alternatives is the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI). Also, noteworthy is the Environmental Sustainability Index established at Yale by Dan Esty and colleagues. In addition, consult Spretnak (1999, p. 98) for a listing and discussion of other examples of alternative indicators.

<sup>8</sup> Not surprising, given their emphasis on interiority, many Buddhist communities and countries have expressed the need to approach development from a more integral perspective. See the articles in section three of *Dharma Rain*: Kaza & Kraft (2000, pp. 161-236) and the work done by Helena Norberg-Hodge (1991; 1994) in Ladakh to preserve 'interiority' in the face of the heavy pressures of modernization. Also for a general exploration of Buddhism and ecology, with developmental cases studies of Japan and Thailand see Tucker & Williams (1997).

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<sup>9</sup> For a discussion on more recent set backs the movement has faced see Jones (1989, pp. 246-254). Jones (1989, pp. 227-282) also discusses development in a number of Buddhist countries including Thailand, Vietnam, and Japan. This book is essential reading for any attempt to further develop a Buddhist approach to GNH.

<sup>10</sup> Ura (1997) for a discussion of GNH's relationship to tradition and development.

<sup>11</sup> This speech can also be found in Kinga et al (1999, pp. 12-23).

<sup>12</sup> Also of interest is the Dutch published *Journal of Happiness*.

<sup>13</sup> For an enlivening look at various perspectives on GNH see Kinga et al (1999).

<sup>14</sup> For an additional framework proposed for measuring GNH see Namgyal (2001, p. 81).

<sup>15</sup> For example in the West, Plato's the True, Good, and Beautiful; and Kant's three critiques (i.e., of reason, judgment, and aesthetics) both represent these three spheres. Also see Habermas (1984, 1987a, 1987b) for an extended historical discussion of these three spheres, their unique validity claims and forms of rationality (i.e., instrumental-technical [objective], moral pragmatic [intersubjective], and aesthetic-expressive [subjective]). Regarding this division of value spheres in the East, Wilber (1995, 1997) points, as an example, to the Triple Gem of Buddhism: where Dharma (*chös*) represents the objective realm, Sangha (*dge 'dun*) represents the intersubjective realm, and Buddha (*sangs rgyas*) represents the perfected subjective realm. Wilber (1995, 1997) also points out that this triadic structure is also represented in the Buddhist esoteric realm by the Three Kayas: Nirmanakaya (*sprul sku*) represents the manifest [objective] realm, Sambhogakaya (*longs sku*) represents the intersubjective realm of Tantric deities, and Dharmakaya (*chos sku*) represents the final realization on the spiritual [subjective] path. Obviously it is an injustice to reduce either the Three Kayas or the Triple Gem to the three value spheres, but my point is simply that both the Three Kayas and the Triple Gem can be seen as spiritual manifestations of the objective, intersubjective, and subjective realms. By pointing out these important connections the proposed triadic structure of Bhutan's approach to measuring *Gross National Happiness* by honoring the three value spheres becomes even more appropriate to this Buddhist Nation.

<sup>16</sup> See Sharrock (1999) for a discussion of the relationship between environmental economics and GNH.

<sup>17</sup> Current approaches maintain Modernity's colonization of the intersubjective and subjective realms of truth through the objective realm.

<sup>18</sup> Philosophical hermeneutics represents a broader field of scholarship than the more commonly known field of hermeneutics used for interpretation of religious scriptures. See Grodin (1994; 1995). Also, See Buren (1995) for an exploration of 'environmental hermeneutics.'

<sup>19</sup> See Butters' two chapters in Tshewang et al (1995), which discuss the issue of 'truth' in the Buddhist tradition.

<sup>20</sup> There is a growing field of 'environmental phenomenology,' drawing on such figures as Merleau-Ponty and Goethe. See Abrams (1996), Seamon (1993), Seamon & Zajonc (1998), Keller & Freeman (1993), and Bortoft (1996).

<sup>21</sup> For a relevant discussion exploring the connection between phenomenology and Buddhism in Bhutan see Kowalewski (1993).

<sup>22</sup> The very fact that Wilber is a Dzogchen practitioner already brings his model, which emerged in part out of his practice, into relationship with GNH, which emerged out of culture also informed by the Dzogchen tradition.

<sup>23</sup> See *The Collected Works Volumes 1-8*; Wilber (1999-2000).

<sup>24</sup> For another example and an extended analysis of the necessity of incorporating interiority into a developmental approach see Beck & Linscott (1991), who used an understanding of levels of consciousness to make important progress by overcoming a deadlock within South Africa's apartheid. For individuals who are applying Wilber's four-quadrant model to development see Eddy (2001) who focus on environmental issues and Silos (forthcoming) who focus on politics in 'third-world' nations.

<sup>25</sup> Wilber (2001) discusses this, as does Schaik (n.d.)

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed listing of information about iSDA see their website: <http://www.vanschaik.demon.co.uk/>

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of individual waves of consciousness see Wilber (1996) and Beck & Cowan (1996). For a discussion of collective waves of development see Wilber (1986) and Gebser (1985).

<sup>28</sup> Though there is a different emphasis within each of these modes of consciousness, as described by their respective authors, a close examination of their descriptions reveals that they are speaking about the same wave of consciousness, namely the ability to hold contradiction and work with systems of systems. This is also the wave of consciousness where a worldcentric perspective emerges, which facilitates both multicultural and ecological awareness.

<sup>29</sup> See chapter 5 in Wilber (2001).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> For a more extensive discussion of the Basic Moral Intuition consult Wilber (1995, p. 613-14, 624-25, and 734-739).

<sup>32</sup> Once the entire sphere of people are included in one's concept of self, then rights are extended to all sentient beings, non-living aspects of nature, and to entire ecological processes - as a person's concept of self enlarges to include those aspects of nature. In other words, the BMI and PD serve an environmental ethic as well as a humanitarian position.

<sup>33</sup> For a more extensive discussion of the Prime Directive consult Wilber (2001).

<sup>34</sup> For example, a person does not have to believe (interiority) in a policy of 'no stealing' but they cannot just take (exteriority) things they want without buying them or asking for them. The Constitution of the United States is an example of a document from one wave of consciousness (rational), ensuring the existence of other waves of consciousness (fundamental, authoritarian, enterprising etc.) by regulating behavior (exterior) through laws, but not thoughts (interiority).

<sup>35</sup> National Environment Commission (1998, p. 21).

<sup>36</sup> Planning Commission (1999, p. 21).

<sup>37</sup> For additional explorations of how Bhutan is incorporating the environment into its development see Karan (1990) and Tshering (1999).

<sup>38</sup> See WWF International & Terralingua (2000).

<sup>39</sup> Also see Wangchuck's (2000) use of the concept 'landscape ecology' to explore the recursive relationship between Bhutan's culture and environment.

<sup>40</sup> Bhutan 2020 p. 59.

<sup>41</sup> One of the branches of the Integral Institute (in Boulder, Colorado, USA) is Integral Ecology, which consists of a variety of leaders from numerous fields (e.g., philosophy, activism, economics, law) who are working together to further develop an environmental philosophy of action.

<sup>42</sup> This section is adapted from the Integral Ecology mission statement prepared by Michael Zimmerman (an environmental philosopher), Gus diZerega (a political scientist), Chris Desser (an environmental lawyer), Darcy Riddell (an environmental activist) and myself.

<sup>43</sup> For another version of the four-quadrants, which highlights similar categories (i.e., social, economic, political, moral, cultural,

and spiritual) in relation to a Buddhist approach to development, see Macy (1983, p. 35). Also of interest are the charts on the Four Noble Truths in the context of community development (*ibid*, p. 34). In fact, all of the diagrams (Macy, 1983, pp. 34-35) are further elaborations of what an integral approach consists of.

<sup>44</sup> For more information on the components of an integral approach to environmental education see Orr (1994).

<sup>45</sup> My concern here isn't about the objective reality of these beings – though I do think they exist, but not in the sensory-motor world of objectivity. Rather, what I want to highlight here is the intersubjective reality of them, their lived reality in the felt-experience and shared meaning of Bhutan's culture. Due to lack of space I will not be exploring the interesting and important discrepancy between this intersubjective reality as it manifests in the magic and psychic worldview (as described by Wilber, 1986; 1995; 1997; 2000). Instead I will just talk about the general reality of nature spirits in the intersubjective realm.

<sup>46</sup> For another exploration that discusses deities in Bhutan see Schicklgruber (1997). In addition, Elizabeth Allison (2001), a Yale researcher is exploring the intersection of Buddhism and environmental consciousness in Bhutan. Her findings (gathered through 92 structured interviews conducted over a three-month period) highlight the importance of nature deities for Bhutan's environmental ethic. For explorations of nature deities in Tibet see Wojkowitz (1959; 1993); in Nepal see Mumford (1989) and Ortner (1989); and in Thailand see Tambiah (1970).

<sup>47</sup> See in particular Ura (2001a; 2000b).

<sup>48</sup> The information contained in this section is drawn largely from Ura (2000b).

<sup>49</sup> Allison (2001, p. 24).

<sup>50</sup> In particular see Ura (2001, pp. 25-31)

<sup>51</sup> For a closer look at how these kinds of beliefs and practices have manifested in a particular community, see the discussion of the Lhop in Dorji. J (2001, esp. pp. 284-291, 306-310). Also, Ura (2001a, December 8<sup>th</sup>, p. 6) highlights how in addition to regulating human interactions with the environment, some of the practices associated with appeasing the nature spirits could have increased the genetic diversity of poultry and livestock.

<sup>52</sup> Allison (2001) provides many examples that also support this position.

<sup>53</sup> Personal communication (January 3, 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Ura (2001, p. 33).

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<sup>55</sup> Ura (2001, p. 35).

<sup>56</sup> While proponents of the theory of island biogeography, such as E. O. Wilson, raise important points concerning the establishment of isolated nature parks, Ricklefs (1993) notes, 'faced with choosing between a single large area of uniform habitat and several smaller areas each in a different habitat, planners should remember that the smaller areas will often contain a greater total number of species among them because of endemic species found in one habitat but not the other,' (p. 509).

<sup>57</sup> See Padma Tshewang et al's (1995) excellent 'The Treasure Revealer of Bhutan,' the introduction (pp. 1-20) of which serves as the basis for this section.

<sup>58</sup> See Karmay (2000) for an excellent article on the third 'Sovereign' *Tertön* (Dorje Lingpa) and his travels in Bhutan.

<sup>59</sup> Tshewang et al (1995, p. 12).

<sup>60</sup> Tshewang et al (1995, p. 3).

<sup>61</sup> As discussed above in Part I, there are three realms of truth, each with its own logic and coherence. The kind of truth involved with *Terma* is largely a combination of intersubjective truth (e.g., how the religious community interprets and assigns meaning to the *Terma*) and subjective truth (e.g., the spiritual states that the Tertön enters to retrieve and decipher the *Terma*). Chris Butters provides a detailed look at these issues in the introduction ('The Validity of the *Terma*' and 'The Issue of Proof in Buddhism') and in his chapter: '*Terma* and its Critics,' both of which appear in Tshewang et al (1995, pp. 14 -20 and 125-138 respectively).

<sup>62</sup> Dorji, S. (2001, p. 25).

<sup>63</sup> This point is also noted by Saetreng in Tshewang et al (1995, p.148).

<sup>64</sup> Tshewang et al (1995, p. 13).

<sup>65</sup> For a detailed examination of the *Terma* tradition and its relationship to environmental consciousness ('eco-tantrism') see Saetreng's chapter: 'Mother Earth's Treasures and their Revealers: An Ecophilosophical Perspective' in Tshewang et al (1995, pp. 139-158). In this chapter, Saetreng proposes a 'model of ecophilosophical implications of the Tantra/*Terma* tradition.' (ibid, p. 147).

<sup>66</sup> Saetreng refers to the landscape as a 'doubly living landscape' whereby the ecosystem is seen 'as a Tantric materio-spiritual web of life' (Tshewang et al, 1995, p. 142).



<sup>67</sup> Also see Dorji, T. (2001) for a discussion of tourism in Bhutan, though he focus more on eco-tourism, opposed to cultural tourism, his article raises many issues relevant to the latter.

<sup>68</sup> See Dorji, S. (1999) and Namgyel (1998).

<sup>69</sup> Phuntsho (2001, p. 2).

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