

# Bhutan King, 18, Crowned Amid Pageantry

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THIMBU, Bhutan, June 2 —

The King of Bhutan, Jigme Singhi Wangchuk, was crowned today in a ceremony that sought to merge the traditions of Buddhism with the awakening of this remote Himalayan nation.

The 18-year-old monarch, called the Druk Gyalpo or Dragon King, was crowned and honored in a one-hour ceremony in his throne room overlooking the exquisite Thimbu Valley. The day, and the moment of coronation, 9:10 A.M., were selected by court astrologers as auspicious for the King, whose father, King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, died in 1970.

Rays of sun slipped through the small windows of the room. The King wore a silver-handled sword inlaid with turquoise and coral attached to a belt woven around his bakhu, the traditional men's wrap-around garment that reaches to the knee like a kilt. His ancient crown was topped by a raven's head, a symbol of protection.

## Diplomats Watch Ceremony

The start of a new reign—King Jigme is the fourth Druk Gyalpo of his line — and the gradual erosion of Bhutan's isolation were intertwined in today's pageant. More than 150 foreigners were invited to Bhutan for the coronation, the first time that this once-forbidden nation has opened its doors to so many outsiders.

More than a dozen foreign diplomats sat on low sofas, covered with tiger skins, and witnessed the coronation of the King, one of the world's last absolute monarchs. Bud-

hist monks chanted prayers for wisdom. The lithe, dark-haired monarch sat elevated in the center of the room on the carved, heavily gilded wood throne embellished with lions and thunderbolts.

Facing the King was a covered table with the seven royal gems. These eight-inch-long figurines are deemed sacred for a Bhutanese monarch and are in his possession for his strength and health and benevolence.

At the auspicious moment King Jigme moved to an altar where he removed a five-color scarf and placed it over his shoulders. He was assisted by the Je Khempo, the solemn, saffron-robed chief lama.

No hand, other than those of the King or the Je Khempo, may touch the royal scarf. The colors of the scarf — red, blue, white, yellow and green — symbolize purity.

Moments later the King and his guests performed an "auspicious tea ceremony," designed, according to lore, to satisfy the five senses. They drank a brew made from sweet potatoes, honey, milk and sugar to satisfy the sense of taste. There were also teas to please the sense of sight—a strong black tea—and the senses of scent, sound and touch.

The ceremony was held in Thimbu's dzong resembling a medieval castle and pagoda, a massive rectangular building that serves as a monastery, administrative center and government headquarters.

## 31-Gun Salute to King

As the sun burned through the mist this morning, and a chilly wind swept over the flag-draped capital, the King inspected a guard of honor outside the dzong, received a 31-

gun salute, then walked into the courtyard for a brief wine ceremony.

King Jigme offered several drops of wine to the dieties and then the wine was symbolically tasted by the servers as a precaution against poisoning. Then the young King touched a national flag that was offered to him, a gesture of humility.

The offerings, the chants and his acceptance of the five-color scarf were followed by the final presentation to the King. The guests, in morning coats and formal wear, moved toward him in a line. Each bowed to the monarch and presented him with a white scarf, a symbol of respect.

The King, who speaks English with a trace of a British accent, studied in Darjeeling, India, as well as at a boys' school in Ascot, England. He appeared uneasy and tense during the pageant in the dzong's sprawling courtyard that preceded the coronation.

Hundreds of costumed dancers and musicians pounding drums and gongs, masked performers, monks wearing scarlet miters and chanting women merged in the courtyard, presenting a colorful spectacle and a cacophony of sounds.

## India's President Attends

The event was witnessed by hundreds of Bhutanese and foreign guests. These included the President of India, V. V. Giri, the President of Bangladesh, Mohammadullah, and the Chogyal, or ruler, of Sikkim, who is related to the Queen Mother here.

Most of the invited foreign diplomats came from New Delhi. These included the United States Ambassador, Daniel P. Moynihan, who gave the

King several gifts, among them a telescope and some pieces of rock from the moon. There were also representatives of Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union as well as diplomats from Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Switzerland, nations that have assisted Bhutan in recent years.

For Bhutan, a nation of 1.3 million wedged between China and India, the coronation was an important step into the 20th century. Less than a dozen years ago there were no roads, no vehicles, no telephones, scant electricity and no communication between villages except by horse or mule.

The man who sparked the transformation of Bhutan was the current King's father, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, who was responsible for construction of the 127-mile road from Phunts-holing, on the Indian border, to Thimbu, the capital, thus effectively opening Bhutan to the outside world. Most of Bhutan's development is supported by the Indian Government.

With the death of King Jigme of a heart ailment, his son has promised to accelerate the nation's development. The start of tourism, school and hospital construction and a gradual inflow of assistance from the United Nations and foreign countries are now planned.

"In Bhutan, we are lucky in some ways," the King said several months ago. "We have no population problem. We don't have the gap between rich and poor that you find in other countries. We have no beggars. We are a united people, a very proud people. This unity and pride must remain."

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