

Buddhism, Bhutan and Me, a BYkids film, directed by Rinzin Jurmey

Rationale: [Insert]

Buddhism, Bhutan and Me

Eighteen-year-old Rinzin Jurmey from Bhutan decided to become a monk and student of Buddhist cosmology when he was eleven years old. Unlike many of his peers who attend modern schools and are more materialistic, Rinzin enjoys a contemplative lifestyle.

The small nation of Bhutan was cut off from the rest of the world until only a few decades ago. Rather than gross domestic product, the country uses a Gross National Happiness Index to measure economic and moral progress and promote Buddhist spiritual values. But tourism, technology, and globalization have had a major impact on Bhutan. As Rinzin travels between his monastery, mountain village, and the city, he meets with hip hop dancers, video game enthusiasts, and sports fans, seeking to understand the intersection of tradition and pop culture.

With guidance from cinematographer Cat Papadimitriou, Rinzin documents the ways in which he – and his country – are striving to preserve ancient practices while embracing modernity.

Featured Individuals

- Rinzin Jurmey, a monk studying at Lhodrak Kharchu Dratshang monastery
- Siok Sian Pek-Dorji, Executive Director, Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy
- Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk, Former Minister of Education

Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about the director's use of these elements in the film?
 - a. Straight Lines
 - b. Wind
 - c. The Color Red
2. Why, how, and when did Rinzin become a monk? What does he enjoy about this lifestyle?
3. If Rinzin hadn't left his family to become a monk, what would he have become instead?
4. Why might Rinzin have filmed his friend waking him up on the bus? What might the significance of this moment be?

5. Siok Sian Pek-Dorji stresses the importance of storytelling. In this film, who tells their story, and through what medium? List the storytellers.
6. According to Lyonpo Norbu Wangchuk, what is the goal of education in Bhutan? What are some of the practices they instill in their students that move towards reaching this goal?
7. What does Siok Sian Pek-Dorji suggest would be the impact of Bhutan losing its traditional culture? Why is it so important that its preservation is codified into the country's constitution?
8. Do you think that Bhutan is falling too far behind from the rest of the world and that they should fully embrace globalization? Why or why not?

	How are young people in Bhutan missing out in living this way?	How are young people in Bhutan benefiting from this lifestyle?
Tradition (young monks)		
Modernity (the Dance Crew, Bhutanese who live in cities)		