



Bhutan

Thakur S. Powdyel
Minister of Education



Loynpo Thakur S Powdyel was born in Dorokha under Samtse Dzongkhag and attended the village school nearby. He studied in Bhutan and India and took a Postgraduate Certificate in Education from the Institute of Education, University of London, U K. He served as a school teacher, teacher educator, college lecturer and vice principal before moving to Paro as the founder-director of the Centre for Educational Research & Development, Royal University of Bhutan. Thakur S Powdyel was Visiting Professor at the Asian and African Area Studies in Kyoto University, Japan. Thakur S Powdyel received Dakyen from His Majesty the King and became the first democratically elected Minister of Education on April 11, 2008. Minister Powdyel is also the Chairman of the National Commission of Women and Children and the Chairman of the National Commission of UNESCO, Bhutan.

The Vital Covenant

As an educator, I see the child in front of me as an entire being – vital, whole, sacred. I receive this being in faith, in hope, without conditions, just as he or she is, such as he or she can be. It is enough for me that the child is a member of our big family of human beings. I discover my child-self again and mark the progress I have made. In the child, I rediscover my own need for care, for love, for growth. The child and I share a common space. We are one.

As a family person, I am a son, a brother, a nephew, a cousin, and know that every other person who I meet is also a son, or a daughter, a nephew or niece, a grandson or great grand niece. We may carry different names or play different games just as the texture of our hair differs. But, we have the same desires and drives, hopes and dreams, the same need to belong and the love of home. Wherever we go, we carry our common bundle of human faith and trait.

As an education minister, I wonder if we can at all have education worth the name if it is not inclusive which is its true nature and character. I worry about how we can give life to the sublime ideals of our Constitution in our educational services. I am concerned about how quickly we can reach out to the last child of our furthest hamlet and bring to him or her the light of learning. I worry about how we can make our schools veritable extensions of our homes for all our children.

The good news though is that I have the solid support of my government that is founded on the principle of equity and justice which forms the bedrock of our development goal of Gross National Happiness. It is my wish that education is able to reclaim its original mission and redeem itself as our light to the future.