

***“An Inconvenient Truth”
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by

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An Inconvenient Truth is an award-winning documentary film about climate change, presented by former US Vice President Al Gore. For his work in waking up the world to dangers of global warming, Mr. Gore won the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize.

The film is about consequences of our being selfish. And, it is about leadership and their values that inspire us to stop being selfish and connect our daily behavior to a higher public interest. It is too easy to ignore the *inconvenient truth* – “I manufacture plastics because it is profitable, and what it does to the environment is none of my business.”

Exactly the same *inconvenient truth* plagues Bhutan, especially today. I am not talking about global warming, although it is just as relevant for Bhutan. I am talking about Bhutan’s two aspirations: to succeed as the world’s first Gross National Happiness (GNH) economy; and to create a vibrant democracy that serves the people.

These aspirations are interlinked. One without the other is impossible. And, they are both threatened by one *inconvenient truth*: the human tendency to be selfish at the expense of the society. At risk are not just the two aspirations, but the nation itself – its peace, security, and prosperity, ultimately.

Bhutan is not the first nation that gave priority to people’s happiness. Constitutions of many countries do precisely that, including mine, which says: “Citizens’ rights to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness is accorded the highest respect in legislative and all other aspects of governance, as long as such rights do not contravene the public welfare.” (Article 3, Section 13, the Constitution of Japan)

Japan’s economic success is considered miraculous. “Made in Japan”, once synonymous with cheap stuff that break, became a label for excellence. I am proud of my people’s hard work and determination to succeed. But, I am not proud of how we got there.

The Japanese today is not a happy people. Their lives are materially comfortable, but the social fabric of family and community are breaking down. Top policy issues of today’s Japan include: rising crime and suicide rates; “voluntary” unemployment among the youth, who lost the will or social skills to hold jobs; and Civil servants stealing people’s money, even the national pension

due to the elderly. Business leaders who made the “miracle” happen are also cheating customers and shareholders, when they should be working at the cutting edge of excellence, and finding win-win ways between what’s good for business and what’s good for the society.

GNH is about values a society share deeply. Honesty, integrity, compassion, team spirit ... such ethical values that make a GNH-driven economy were once the hallmark of the Japanese culture. They are being lost, and the hard-earned economic success eroding along with it.

Why? A total lack of attention to nurturing leadership and values, by the meritocracy focused excessively on skills and efficiency. It takes centuries to build a society governed by noble values. It takes no time to destroy it, when wrong leaders govern public and private institutions, including business, schools, community, and family too.

Values are best demonstrated by the leadership everywhere, be they parents, teachers, school captains, civil servants, politicians, or business leaders. Wrong values in leaders easily infect the rest. Right ones, demonstrated through their “body, mind & speech” conviction, make the impossible possible, through the magical motivational power of inspiration. That is precisely the joy, and the responsibility, of leadership – no matter what we do, at home, at school, or at work.

Of particular import for Bhutan today is the values demonstrated by political leaders preparing for the forthcoming elections.

Bhutan is in the final leg of a long journey that started 100 years ago – from a land ruled by men to one ruled by law. To a land where politics are transparent, where differences of views are honored as such, and where abuse of power and corruption are brought to justice as citizens’ right. To a land where leaders do not derive power from the above implicitly or explicitly, but earn it from the very people they serve.

For this journey to succeed, values consistent with GNH and leaders who embody such values must dominate. Meritocracy in schools, government and business alike must include – explicitly and practicably – GNH-driven values, and leadership talent driven to serve the people.

Bhutan has set for herself a high ambition. Building a nation of her aspirations will be a real hard work. Yet, I believe Bhutan can succeed, because the people have their role models – in the five *Druk Gyalpo* (Thunder Dragon Kings), who have truly served the people, according to the needs of the time and with the foresight to stay ahead of the time.

I am convinced that Their Majesties have done so, not by some happenstance of the right leadership DNA. I am convinced that one historical fact have never been an “*inconvenient truth*” to Their Majesties – that, unlike elsewhere where monarchs invoked a divine authority, it was the people of *Drukgyul* (Land of the Thunder Dragon, Bhutan) who accorded the Druk Gyalpo the power to rule 100 years ago.

If such leaders cannot inspire, I do not know who can...

An Inconvenient Truth won two 2006 Academy Awards (popularly known as the Oscars) – the best documentary film, and the best original title song “I Need to Wake Up” (by Melissa Etheridge). The lyrics of this beautiful song will help you listen to your *inconvenient truth*, and search deep within yourself what **YOU** can do to create the Drukyul of **YOUR** dream...

*Have I been sleeping?
I've been so still
Afraid of crumbling
Have I been careless?
Dismissing all the distant rumblings
Take me where I am supposed to be
To comprehend the things that I can't see*

*Cause I need to move
I need to wake up
I need to change
I need to shake up
I need to speak out
Something's got to break up
I've been asleep
And I need to wake up
Now*

*And as a child
I danced like it was 1999
My dreams were wild
The promise of this new world
Would be mine
Now I am throwing off the carelessness of youth
To listen to an inconvenient truth*

*That I need to move
I need to wake up
I need to change
I need to shake up
I need to speak out
Something's got to break up
I've been asleep
And I need to wake up
Now*

*I am not an island
I am not alone
I am my intentions
Trapped here in this flesh and bone*

*And I need to move
I need to wake up
I need to change
I need to shake up
I need to speak out
Something's got to break up
I've been asleep
And I need to wake up
Now*

*I want to change
I need to shake up
I need to speak out
Oh, Something's got to break up
I've been asleep
And I need to wake up
Now*