

FARMING IN SOUTHERN BHUTAN

Narad Bastola



January

February

March

April

May

June

Aug

Sept

Oct

Nov

Dec

Last month was...

This month is...



china

Bhutan

Nepal

India

INDIAN OCEAN

0 mi 500 1000
0 km



Growing up in Bhutan

- Born in Bhutan, 1945
- In Southern Bhutan, everyone farmed
- Once parents were older, land was divided up amongst the sons
- I was given part of the farm and later bought more land to expand

Fleeing Bhutan

- Conflict with Northern Bhutan
 - ✧ Lhotsampa people group
- At age 42, I fled as a refugee to Nepal
 - ✧ Spent 19 years in refugee camp before coming to United States
- Leaving behind the farm



Agriculture in Bhutan

- We grew everything we ate except some of our oil, sugar and salt
 - ✧ These we bought from India
- Cash Crops Include:
 - ✧ Ginger
 - ✧ Corn
 - ✧ Rice
 - ✧ Millet



Cash Crops Cont.

- ✧ Betel nut
- ✧ Cardamom
- ✧ Oranges
- ✧ Lemons



Livestock

- Goats
- Cows
- Chickens
- Pigs
- Ducks



Narad's farm

18 acre farm

- .. 6 acres of ginger
- .. 4 acres of millet and corn
- .. 3.9 acres of oranges
- .. 3 acres of rice
- .. .5 Acres Betel nut
- .. Rest of land for livestock



Crop Rotations

- Rotated livestock land with ginger
- Alternated millet and corn
- Betel nut and Oranges
 - ✧ No rotation
- Also grew thatch and bamboo for the house



Seasons in Bhutan

- 4 seasons
- No snow
 - ✧ Chilly and windy in winter
 - ✧ Only able to grow a few types of vegetables





Tilling

- Use oxen for tilling
 - Wooden yoke with a hoe
- I am able to build the tiller and also made them for others in the village

Water

- Make a channel from the nearby river
- Water used mainly for rice



Community Harvesting

- Harvesting was a system of helping each other
 - ⊗ Tell all friends that ginger is ready – everyone comes to help
 - ⊗ Then when others needed to harvest I would go to help them
 - ⊗ No one pays money
 - ⊗ Enjoyed singing together in the field



Market

- Main market is to India
 - ⊗ Sometimes a broker from India came to get the items
 - ⊗ Sometimes a friend helped transport to India with a horse (about two hours walking)
- Main crop: Ginger, 6 month season
 - ⊗ Daily to weekly harvest





Local and Exported Markets

- Sold livestock to both the village and India
- Oranges, ginger and betel nut all exported
 - ⊗ more profit to sell to India
- Sold rice, millet and corn within the village
 - ⊗ Farmer's Market
 - ⊗ Vendors would also walk through the village carrying a basket on their head



Growing in Iowa

- Finished 2 seasons in a City of Des Moines community garden plot, 10x15 ft.
 - eggplant, tomatoes, potatoes, chilies, okra
- Very interested in market farming and learning more about the environment here in Iowa



Questions?

