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Royal Bhutan Airlines

TASHI DELEK

VOL. XXVII | ISSUE III | MAY-JUNE 2026

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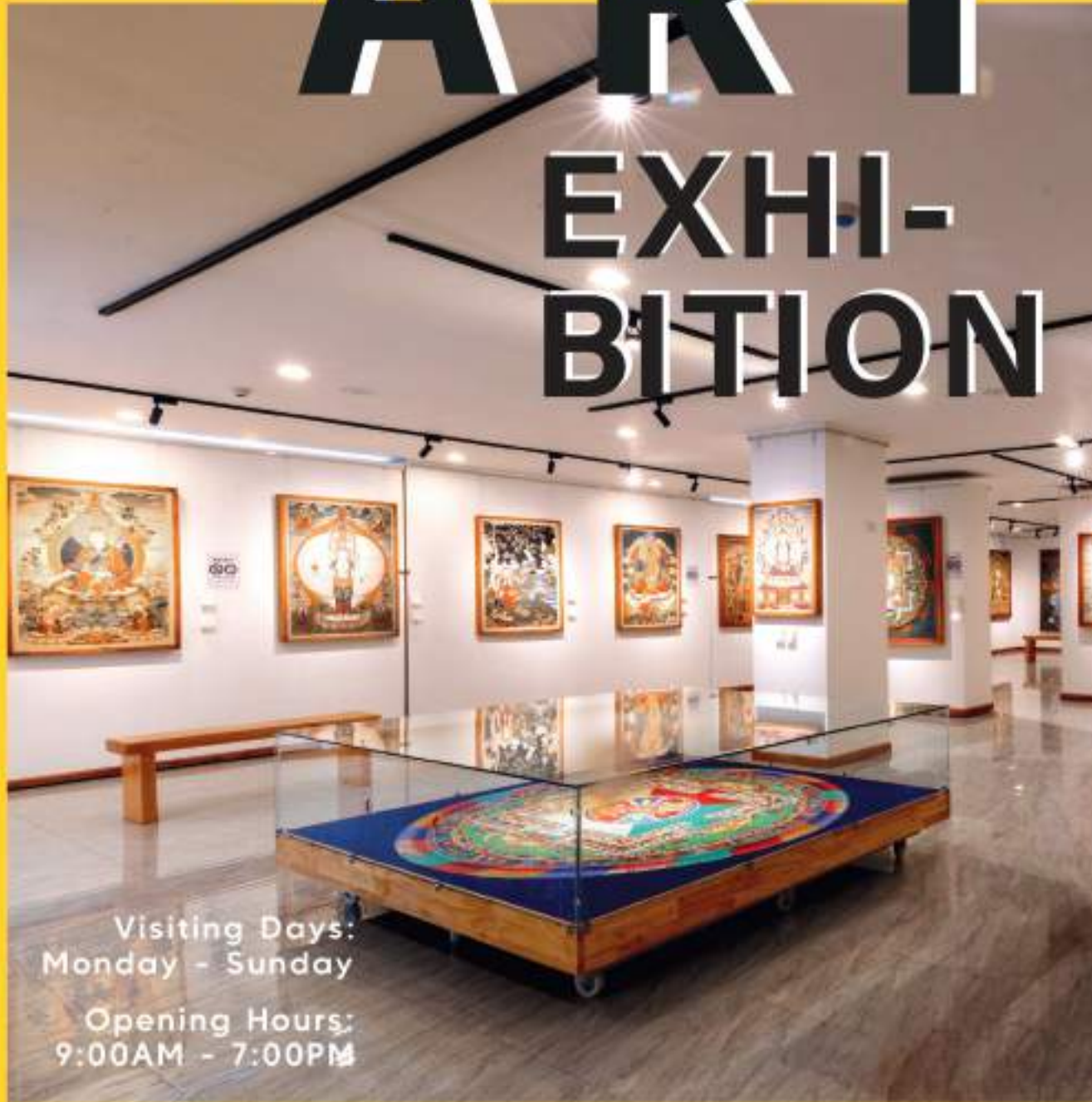
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CDK GYENCHA

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Weaving a Contemporary Bhutanese Narrative

In the quiet intersection of heritage and innovation stands CDK Gyencha, a Bhutanese fashion label redefining what it means to create with purpose. Founded by self-taught Designer Chandrika Tamang and Social Entrepreneur, the brand has emerged as a thoughtful voice in contemporary fashion—one that honors tradition while shaping a distinctly modern identity.

The brand's journey from a small home-based initiative to an internationally recognized name reflects a rare combination of vision and resilience. Since its inception in 2016, CDK Gyencha has continuously challenged the conventions of fashion by placing ethics, craftsmanship, and community at its core.



One of the brand's earliest milestones came in 2017, when Chandrika Tamang was awarded the prestigious National Woman Entrepreneur of the Year by Bhutan's Department of Cottage and Small Industry—marking a significant moment not only for the designer, but for the fashion industry in Bhutan, where such recognition remains rare. On the global stage, CDK Gyencha has steadily expanded its presence, with showcases across Australia, South Asia, Spain, and Italy. A defining moment in this journey was its presentation at Milan Fashion Week, one of the most prestigious platforms in international fashion in collaboration with Italian fashion designers initiated by UN FAO.

At its core, CDK Gyencha is more than a fashion label; it is a social enterprise. Working closely with rural weavers across Bhutan, the brand champions sustainable practices, women's employment, and the preservation of indigenous weaving techniques—many of which are at risk of fading into obscurity. Each textile carries not only the rhythm of the loom but also the story of a community, a lineage, and a way of life.

"Weaving the Future of Bhutan."

CDK Gyencha's return to Bhutan is both a reaffirmation and a new beginning. It signals a commitment to building from within—strengthening local ecosystems while positioning Bhutanese textiles within a global, contemporary context. In an industry often driven by trends, CDK Gyencha offers something far more enduring: a sense of place, purpose, and pride.



After a period of growth and exploration beyond Bhutan, CDK Gyencha's recent return marks a significant moment—both for the brand and for the local fashion landscape. Titled "Home Coming," the latest collection is not just a showcase of garments, but a deeply personal narrative. It reflects a return to origin, to identity, and to the emotional landscapes that shape belonging. The show was graced by HRH Ashi Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck and HRH Ashi Sonam Dechan Wangchuck.

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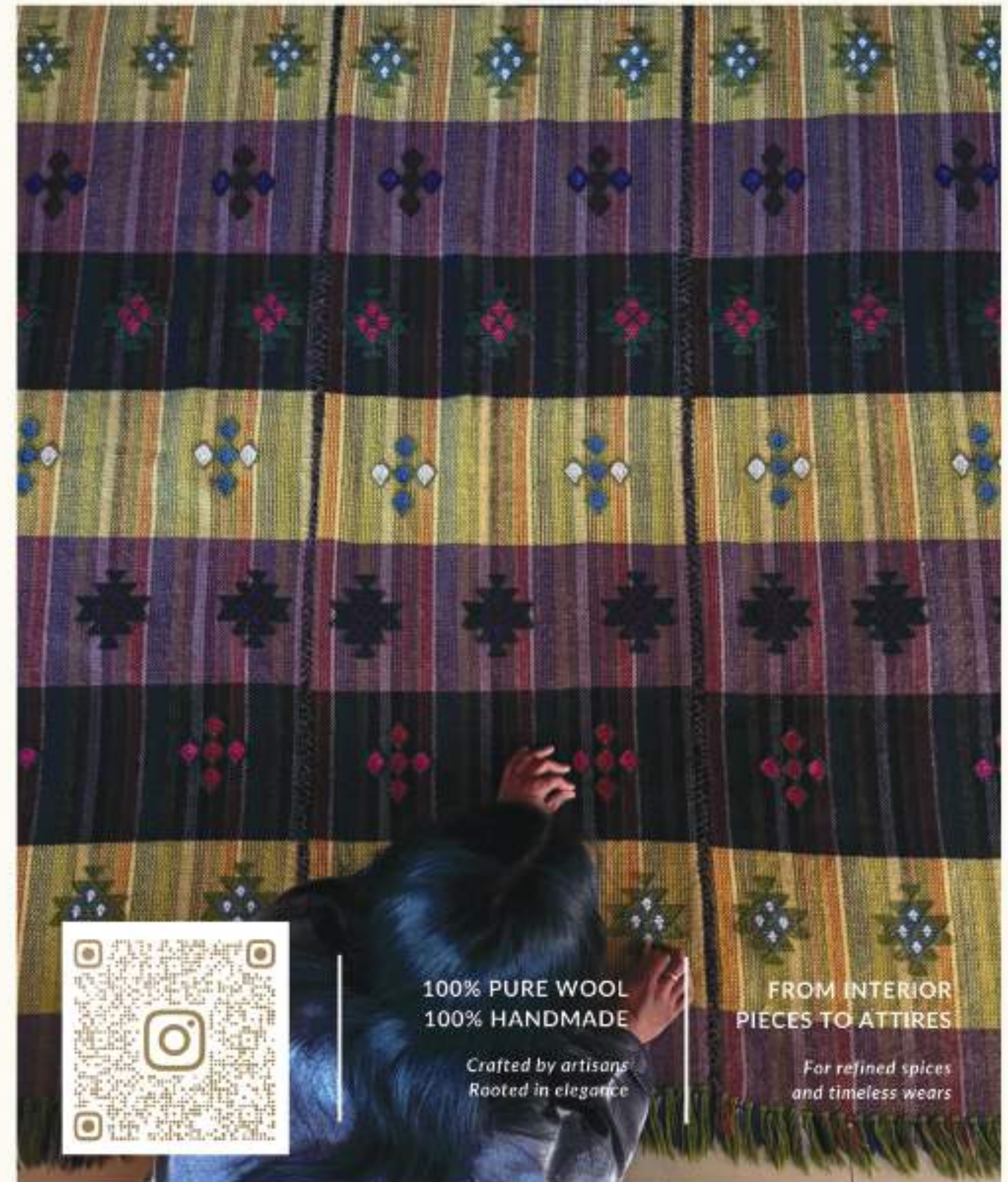
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Dear Passengers,

As we step into the vibrant months of May and June, we are reminded of the energy and renewal that this time of year brings. It is a season of growth, connection, and new opportunities - values that continue to guide our journey and inspire our commitments. This year, we proudly mark 45 years of Drukair, flying on the wings of the dragon, and continuing our commitment to delivering safe, reliable, and excellent services both on the ground and in the sky.

Over the past months, we have witnessed encouraging progress across our initiatives, driven by dedication, collaboration, and a shared vision for excellence. We are pleased to strengthen our regional connectivity with the reintroduction of Bangkok services via Guwahati from April 02, 2026, and the addition of a third weekly frequency to Singapore via Guwahati starting April 07, 2026.

These developments represent a significant step in Drukair's ongoing network expansion strategy. They align with our southern neighbour's Act East Policy and support the growing travel needs linked to the Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) in southern Bhutan, adjacent to Assam. By enhancing connectivity to key regional and global hubs, we aim to support tourism growth, facilitate business and educational exchanges, and strengthen Bhutan's engagement with international markets.

We are also proud to share that Drukair is now live on the Amadeus Global Distribution System, making Bhutan more accessible than ever. Travelers can now easily access our schedules, check availability, and book flights seamlessly. This expanded reach enables streamlined bookings and creates greater opportunities to serve travellers worldwide.

Further enhancing the travel experience, our partnerships with leading global airlines such as Turkish Airlines and Thai Airways International enable us to offer smoother, more connected journeys across our network and beyond. Through these collaborations,



Tandi Wangchuk
Chief Executive Officer
Drukair Corporation Ltd.

passengers can travel on a single itinerary with coordinated connections, enjoy simplified check-in processes, and have their baggage checked through to their final destination. We are actively working to expand such partnerships to further improve connectivity, elevate customer convenience, and provide a more seamless travel experience.

Whether in strengthening partnerships, enhancing service delivery, or exploring new avenues for growth, our focus remains firmly on creating meaningful value for our stakeholders and the communities we serve.

This period also marks a time of increased movement and engagement. As travel, trade, and interactions gain momentum, we remain committed to ensuring that every journey reflects our core values of reliability, innovation, and care. Our teams continue to work diligently behind the scenes to provide seamless and enriching experiences for all.

As always, we remain deeply grateful for the trust and support of our partners, customers, and colleagues. Your continued confidence inspires us to push boundaries and strive for greater achievements.

Let us embrace the opportunities of the season with renewed enthusiasm and a shared sense of purpose.

Wishing you all a productive and fulfilling season ahead.

Tashi Delek!

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TASHI DELEK

Tashi Delek is an auspicious and versatile Bhutanese expression. It is a word or an expression encompassing a number of meanings such as wishing you well, good wishes, congratulations, may many good things come to you, cheers, and good luck.

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TASHI DELEK

FACTS ABOUT BHUTAN



NATIONAL DRESS

Men wear the Gho, a knee-length robe that is tied at the waist by a traditional belt known as Kera. Women wear the Kira, a long, ankle-length dress accompanied by a light outer jacket known as a Tego with an inner layer known as a Wonju.



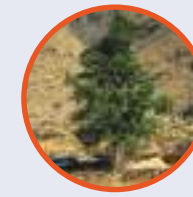
NATIONAL GAME

Archery was declared as the national game in 1971 when Bhutan became a member of the United Nations. Bhutan also maintains an Olympic archery team. Archery is played during public holidays in Bhutan and local festivals.



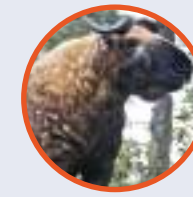
NATIONAL BIRD

The National Bird is the Raven (*Corvus corax*). The Raven adorns the Royal Crown. The raven represents the deity Gonpo Jarodongchen (raven headed Mahakala), one of the chief guardian deities of Bhutan.



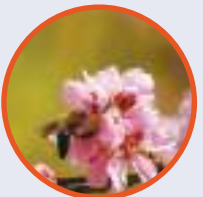
NATIONAL TREE

The National Tree is the Cypress (*Cupressus torolusa*). Cypresses are found in abundance and one may notice large cypresses near temples and monasteries. This tree is found in temperate climate zone, between 1800 and 3500 meters.



NATIONAL ANIMAL

The National Animal is the Takin (*Burdorcas taxicolor*) and is associated with religious history and mythology. It is a rare mammal with a thick neck and short muscular legs. It lives in groups and is found above 4000 meters on the north-western and far north eastern parts of the country.



CLIMATE SEASON

Bhutan has four seasons. Spring from March until April followed by Summer with occasional showers until late September. Autumn follows until late November, characterized by sunny days. Winter until March, with snowfall in regions above 3,000 meters.



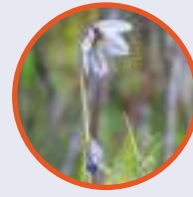
NATIONAL FLAG

The National Flag is divided diagonally into two equal halves. The upper yellow half signifies the secular power and authority of the King while the lower saffron-orange symbolizes the practice of religion and the power of Buddhism, manifested in the tradition of Drukpa Kagyu. The dragon signifies the name and the purity of the country while the jewels in its claws stand for wealth and perfection of the country.



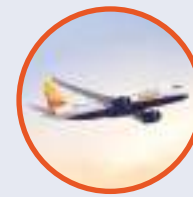
NATIONAL EMBLEM

The National Emblem of Bhutan is a circle that projects a double diamond thunderbolt placed above the lotus. There is a jewel on all sides with two dragons on vertical sides. The thunderbolts represent the harmony between secular and religious power while the lotus symbolizes purity. The jewel signifies the sovereign power while the two dragons (male and female) represent the name of the country Drukyl or the Land of the Dragon.



NATIONAL FLOWER

The National Flower is the Blue Poppy (*Meconopsis Gakyidiana*). It is a delicate purple or blue tinged with purple blossom with distinctly concave petals. This species grows at an elevation of 3700-4300 meters above sea level. *Gakyidiana* is an epithet based on the Dzongkha word for happiness, *gakyid*, to reflect Bhutan's important cultural aspiration of 'Gross National Happiness' and *diana* is nomenclature term for the flower.



NATIONAL AIRLINE

Drukair, the Royal Bhutan Airlines, is the National flag carrier of Bhutan. Drukair was founded on April 5, 1981 under the Royal Charter by His Majesty the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. Drukair plays a vital role in promoting Bhutan as a tourist destination and plays an important role in connecting Bhutan to the world.



CARBON STATUS

Bhutan is the first carbon negative country in the world, absorbing six million tons of carbon every year. The Constitution of Bhutan places a high premium on conservation of its natural environment, mandating the country to maintain at least 60 percent of its land under forest cover for all times to come.



DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

Promulgated by His Majesty the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, Gross National Happiness guides all development process in Bhutan. The central objective of GNH is to ensure a holistic and sustainable development by balancing the material and the non-material values.

Prayer Flags of Bhutan

Spirituality and Meaning

Travelers often ask what makes the small Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan special or different to other mountainous countries around the world. There is so much to describe, and so much to recount. There are many reasons that make Bhutan an exceptional travel destination: from its unique cultural and spiritual practices, to its pathbreaking social, environmental, and political-economic policies, and of course, its geography, geology, biodiversity, flora, fauna, and magnificent white snow-capped peaks.

Bhutan is a landlocked Himalayan country, made entirely of mountains. This itself is one alluring reason for visiting its stunning landscapes. But as many ask, how does the country compare to other countries, also made up of majestic mountain ranges across the planet, of which there are many – such as Chile located in the Andes of South America, Switzerland located in the Alps in Europe, Mount Cook located in the Southern Alps of New Zealand, or Mount Kenya located in the East Rift range of Kenya. If one were to place photographs of the majestic mountain landscapes of Bhutan next to say, photographs of the stunning mountains in Tanzania, Canada

or Nepal, there is something that stands out, making the country unique in terms of its mountains.

One might argue that makes Bhutan truly special is its scenic landscapes found nowhere else in the world. Bhutan is made up of one stunning landscape after another. There seems to be something picturesque awaiting around every corner, no matter which direction you turn.

Another important reason is because Bhutan is entirely nestled in the Himalayas, which itself occupies a very special place on the planet. The Himalayas are, after all, amongst the tallest mountains in the world. They are sometimes described as the Third Pole of the world, because their sheer mass affects the gravitational rotation of planet earth. However, Bhutan shares this special accolade with other countries in the Himalayan region, and so, there is still more to unpack and describe in terms of what makes Bhutan truly unique.

I would argue, there are perhaps five unique features of the Bhutanese mountain landscape, that when combined, make it extraordinarily striking and unique. The first are its formidable *dzongs* (fortress monasteries) that have been miraculously built into its high mountainsides and



mountain tops. The second are its lhakhangs (Buddhist temples) and chortens (stupas) that dot its mountain tops and slopes. The third are the millions of colorful prayer flags that seem to be strung everywhere across its mountainous landscapes. The fourth and fifth respectively relate to unique collective national cultural values, and the generous and welcoming people of Bhutan. This article, about the prayer flags of Bhutan, is the first of a series of five articles that explores the unique cultural features of Bhutan's landscape.

A Brief History of Prayer Flags

Where there are Bhutanese people, there are prayer flags. As soon as one lands in Paro International Airport, the mountain and valley vistas abound by colorful displays of prayer flags. They are preciously adorned on ropes across trees or mounted on poles across its mountainsides, forests, riversides, lakeshores and auspicious locales and sacred sites. They can also be found next to lhakhangs, chortens, houses, and clinging to roadsides, railings of bridges, high mountain passes and near the summits of its awesome snowcapped peaks.

Prayer flags are not merely decorative. They hold profound spiritual significance and cultural meaning to the people of Bhutan, and beyond in the Himalayan region. They are a symbolic expression of spiritual beliefs and sacred teachings rooted in centuries of Buddhist philosophy and practices. Seamlessly intertwined with cultural practices and socio-cultural identities across the country, some meanings and ceremonial practices also vary sub-regionally.

If you have never seen one before, or pondered their deeper meaning or history, there is more to prayer flags than meets the eye. The historical roots of prayer flags trace back hundreds of years to Bon spiritual tradition of pre-Buddhist Bhutan, and inter-connectedly, to their originating history dating back thousands of years ago in Tibet. Today, they are deeply associated with the spiritual and cultural practices of Vajrayana Buddhism, the predominant religion of Bhutan. It is said that they invoke symbolic meaning of the connection between the physical and spiritual realms, thereby reminding of the ultimate truth, and the impermanence and interdependence of all things.

The Symbolic Meaning of Prayer Flags

There is something peaceful, almost existential, about seeing these colorful pieces of cloth strung together fluttering in the wind. Many people recount how prayer flags have the ability to raise their awareness and mindfulness, to help to center them, and open a pathways towards

healing, peace and wisdom. They are regarded as powerful channels for positive energy, blessing and wellbeing.

Each prayer flag has inscribed on it sacred Buddhist mantras, prayers or sutras accompanied by auspicious Buddhist emblems and symbols, which vary depending on the purpose of the prayer flag. Together, they invoke blessings and prayers for peace, wellbeing, happiness, long life, good fortune, luck, health, strength, harmony, compassion, wisdom, protection from harm, fulfillment of wishes, and good merit.

It is believed that as the breeze lifts the prayer flags in the wind, they carry the sacred mantras and blessings to the skies, the cosmos and everything they touch. As the prayers and blessings are carried away, they come to life. The spiritual vibrations generated through their journey, and in touching everything they encounter, all sentient beings are blessed from the prayers and mantras carried by the wind.

Prayer flags powerfully symbolize the five Buddhist elements of space, air, fire, water, and earth, each represented by the three primary colors of blue, yellow and red, in addition to white and green.

Prayer flags are made of vibrant colors of rectangular cloth that are block-printed using traditional hand-printing techniques. The making of flags follows rich artistic, artisanal and cultural practices that imbue Buddhist significance and knowledge handed down across generations.

Artisans meticulously plan the layout and content of

each flag according to the message of the prayer, and the corresponding mantras and symbols that will be brought to life when they meet the wind. The fabric, dimensions, and shape follow established artisanal knowledge practices that are acquired through rigorous learning and training. It is intended that the block-printing process use eco-friendly ink, in honor of the traditional wisdom of its design as well as to protect the natural environment where the flags are erected.

The intentionality in crafting of flags considers their durability in order to withstand the natural elements. They are often made from silk or cotton to ensure that they serve as a conduit for carrying prayers, blessings and sacred mantras for as long as possible.

The Colors of Prayer Flags

Prayer flags are often strung up in sequence of color, from blue, white, red, green and yellow. Each color represents aspects of cosmos, such as space, air, fire, water and earth. It is also said that on a spiritual level, the five colors represent the five emotions, the five wisdoms of the Buddha, the five meditating Buddhas, and the five directions. When they come together, they generate powerful spiritual energy as well good intentions, blessings and prayers, as described above. Each color, on its own, signifies something special and poignant.

Blue (Space or Sky) – signifies the element of space or sky in prayer flags. It symbolizes peace and tranquility, and is meant to bring about health and longevity.

White (Air) – in prayer flags, is the element of air. It symbolizes purity and wisdom, and carries a special meaning in terms of purification of karma by getting rid of negativity, as well as embodying clarity of mind and pursuit of enlightenment.

Red (Fire) – the vibrant color represents fire, and symbolizes life force, energy, warmth and compassion. It is intended for wish fulfillment and meant to cultivate strength, passion vibrancy in order to build resilience in navigating life's challenges.

Green (Water) – is the element of water in prayer flags, and symbolizes compassion and loving-kindness. It is meant to signify balance, harmony, healing and sense of unity and interconnectedness between nature and all living things.

Yellow (Earth) – represents earth, and symbolizes abundance, nourishment, growth and prosperity. It signifies hopes for personal wellbeing, as well that of others and all sentient beings, while also sustaining life and overcoming obstacles.

Different Types and Purposes of Prayer Flags

Lung Dar or Lungta Flags – are horizontal prayer flags, strung up with all five colors and normally hung on ropes or mounted on poles. In the center of the flag, the powerful symbol of the wind horse (lungta) appears, which carries on its back many types of wish-fulfilling aspirations, including the ultimate hope of becoming enlightened.

Darchor lags – are vertical flags attached to a pole that

is planted in the ground. Each flag also similarly features the wind horse. They are often clustered together on mountainsides, mountain ridges and forest trails. They are typically erected during community gatherings and festivals, used during ceremonies and rituals, and serve as offerings to the spirits and deities.

Manidhar Flags – are very tall vertical flags mounted to long poles, and be seen fluttering together on the mountain sides. They are mounted together in batches of 108, which is an auspicious number in Buddhism. Raised in commemoration in honor of a deceased person, they help to guide the deceased towards a favorable rebirth in the next life, as per the tenets of reincarnation. Even hoisting one single flag is considered an act of compassion and remembrance towards the deceased, as well generate good merit and karma for them and those who offer them.

Lhadhar Flags – are the largest vertical flags attached to very large and tall poles, and are all white in color. They are often adorned with ribbons of red, yellow and blue, and placed in front of important places, such as monasteries, dzongs, lachhangs, and Royal Palaces across Bhutan, and where people are expected to dress formally. They symbolize spiritual strength and sovereignty. They typically do not have any text on them, but feature images of the Four Dignities, mythical creatures that represent fearlessness, joy, power and wisdom: the tiger, snow lion, dragon and Garuda.

Goendhar Flags – are small prayer flags, mounted





in the apex of a rooftop of traditional Bhutanese houses. They are rectangular in shape, with ribbons of green, red, yellow and blue stitched along their edges. They are hoisted as blessings of peace, protection, welfare, prosperity and harmony within families.

Gyeltshen Tsemo Flag – is a tall and cylindrical shaped that brings together five colours in intricate strip of brocade cloth, printed with sacred mantras. It is often used in Buddhist monastic rituals, public ceremonies, and ceremonial processions. It symbolizes sacredness, reverence and cultural celebration, and represents blessings, prayers, and triumph over negativity and harmful forces.

An important concept in Buddhism conveys the idea that the greater the effort towards enacting a good deed, the greater the merit or good karma generated. Travelers and pilgrims visiting Bhutan will be delighted to know that they too can purchase prayers flags in almost every market in the country. This is because prayer flags form an integral part of Bhutanese life, as they are used in ceremonies, rituals, festivals and special or auspicious events across the land. As noted above, the act of making prayer flags use traditional knowledge and cultural practices that entail using natural materials and dyes, to ensure their purposes align with the meaning of the blessings intended. As such, they not only require careful thought and artisanry in making them, but also in using them.

In Bhutan, prayer flags are considered holy, and need to be treated with utmost respect.

However, over time, prayer flags have been unfortunately commercialized, with some processes becoming overly mechanized, and using synthetic materials that are adverse for the natural environment and to sentient beings. For instance, as prayer flags decay, non-natural synthetic materials breakdown and enter into the natural environment and the food chain, causing negative consequences to all sentient beings, including human beings. It is unfortunate that short-term thinking centered on individual capitalist gain has co-opted such a thoughtful and sacred process, thereby emptying it of its deeper meaning and good intention. As such, they tend not to align with the spiritual, environmental or deeper intent underlying prayer flags. It is therefore advisable to consider the origins of the prayer flags, that they are made in Bhutan, and use natural materials and dyes. This will also contribute to ensuring that traditional arts continue to thrive in the Himalayan Kingdom, while also supporting local artists, and small craft-oriented enterprises.

Towards Mindful Travel

To travel to the wonder of spiritually and culturally rich Bhutan is a unique experience. It allows travelers to experience a country that places central importance on wellbeing and culture, and the practice of peace and com-

passion. The country is a rich haven for all sentient beings that also include wildlife, birdlife, and rich biodiversity, as well as spiritually rich Buddhist practices that promote harmony, balance, and mindfulness. The majestic and auspicious mountains of Bhutan remain amazingly protected against the forces of modernity, as they should be. Foreign travelers too have a responsibility as visitors, pilgrims and tourists. We must tread carefully and gently, with great respect and compassion to the rich local environments, and its inhabitants, big and small, and its local cultural and spiritual practices steeped deep in philosophical meaning and mindfulness. These spiritually and culturally important sites are not just “tourist destinations” but are central ways of life for people and other sentient beings that inhabit these precious spaces. We are mere visitors passing by, but also have the potential of being transformed by our travels and taking and disseminating our learnings when we go back home, while being careful not to impact or harm such fragile locales we visit in turn. As the famous saying goes, *take only memories, leave only footprints*. Bhutan provides both the traveler an unprecedented experience in a pristine environmental and culturally rich spiritual setting providing an important haven for humans and all other sentient beings – a gentle yet powerful reminder that we are all interconnected with one another, to nature and this amazing planet we share with all other sentient beings.



DR RITU VERMA

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THE INTERNATIONAL YETI GATHERING: BHUTAN

Science says it's easier to breathe at high elevation near the equator than over the poles, thanks to the atmosphere bulging outward and thinning less at lower latitudes. For the closet geeks, that's the explanation. Right now, though, I say screw the geeks. At a mere 27 degrees north, this quirky fact isn't cutting me any slack—I'm still panting like an Iditarod husky on the finish line.

The problem is, I'm nowhere near the finish line. I've still got 900 vertical feet to go. Grinding up a long, slithering ribbon of singletrack tunneled through thick jungle at 11,000 feet, I cling to the hope of keeping the string of Yeti riders just ahead in sight. They're setting a pace that likely speaks to their altitude-hugging Colorado lifestyles—or at least that's what I tell my sea-level-dwelling, beer-loving self as I begin to slip off the back.

"It's all about being in the present," says Pelden Dorji, our local guide and the force behind Bhutan Rides, urging us to embrace the climb with mindfulness. It's clear this journey has been thoughtfully designed—a mindful ride, more a pilgrimage—allowing Bhutan to reveal itself slowly, meaningfully, to those who came for the annual International Yeti Gathering tour of Bhutan. I pedal, puff, and wheeze, watching their silhouettes dissolve into the moss-draped trees. Somewhere up ahead, we'll regroup for the descent. That's when the real fun starts or did Pelden mean the reward that awaits at the top when he was talking about present? He loves a wordplay every now and then, but for now—how long is this damn climb?

To be fair—wheezing aside—this ascent is as good as it gets in Bhutan: a long, mostly pedalable ribbon of



singletrack winding through old-growth forest alive with birdsong and home to the elusive red panda. After about an hour of steady climbing, we crest at the Lungchutse Monastery at 12,000 feet, and every lung-burning turn of the cranks feels worth it.

We drop into the ‘Mega Madman Trail’—a name coined by Pelden, who added “Mega” to the existing Madman Trail, itself linked to a 14th-century monk by the name Drukpa Kuenley, infamous for his philandering lifestyle. Wanting something suitably epic for the annual Yeti Gathering tour, Pelden had approached the Department of Tourism to help fund some trail maintenance, aiming to deliver a world-class mountain biking experience while using the reach of Yeti Cycles to promote mountain bike tourism in Bhutan.

I’ve ridden with Pelden in Africa and Europe, but nothing, he says, comes close to his home trail—where one day he hopes his ashes will be made into *tsa-tsas*, the small earthen stupas formed from cremation remains, and be placed along the trail so he can rest where he feels most at home. “After all, I love dirt life, and the sounds of an approaching freehub would make me feel alive again” he laughs.



The trail is an energetic, writhing snake of dirt that spits endless surprises and tests of reaction at anyone ‘crazy’ enough to point a bike down it. Roots, rock drops and tight corners obscured by thick rhododendron punctuate its ten miles and 65-hundred vertical feet of downhill into big smiles.

The whole Madman Trail endeavor is typical of the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, a place where it seems rewards aren’t won easily, and this pattern is set right out of the gate. Our inbound Airbus skims Himalayan peaks before free-falling between towering giants to touch down on a short runway that’s been squeezed into a narrow valley.

And once on the bike, our very first ride out of Thimphu, the country’s capital, has us meander between polished glass facades intricately infused with traditional architecture, and the morning rush-hour quickly give way to a steep, four-mile climb up the valley side — to the towering Dordenma Buddha. A 177-foot-high golden statue, beaming a beguiling, omnipresent smile out over the valley. Asphalt turns to dirt as we pull away from the Buddha and the climb continues on the KC trail, a

rollercoaster ribbon of undulating trail that cuts a four-mile traverse above Thimphu's office blocks. Littered with steep roll-downs and punchy up-ramps, its buff, swooping curves are the handiwork of the small but dedicated local riding community.

All of it unfolds against a backdrop of distant, snow-capped peaks, and the lush valley below. Thankfully, the views offer a convenient excuse to pause and refill our lungs before the next interval of effort begins. Eventually, the trail spills into a long sequence of flowing S-bends that fire us back down to the valley floor.

At the bottom I pull to a stop and look around at the sweaty, dusty cluster of 25 Yeti freaks — many of the Gathering's usual suspects, a few new faces, and Conroy and Hoog, who've made Yeti Cycles into a global brand with almost a cult following of riders who love their bikes. Around me, I notice everyone sporting a big smile. It's a smile we'll see a lot in Bhutan during the ten-day trip. Smiling is something the Bhutanese aim to do well; Their constitution uses a 'Gross National Happiness Index' rather than GDP to measure the prosperity of this largely Buddhist country whose population is smaller than Danny Mac's Insta following.

Over the next few days, we pedal between paddy fields, orchards, and terraces of barley, all worked by hand. During the many shuttles we use to take the sting from otherwise huge, all-day climbs, we tailgate wheezing trucks slowly grinding their way south, loaded high with sacks of potatoes for export to India. Many of them sport novel bumper stickers. "Test your brakes here!" teases one, and "Speed thrills, but Kills!" says another. A third suggests, "Check for Dogs lying underneath". It seems

Buddhist compassion extends even to the countless stray dogs that like to spend their days sleeping in the shade beneath parked vehicles so that they can noisily bark most of the night. Earplugs are perhaps an incongruous item on a packing list to visit a country so peaceful.

"It'd be ironic to be decapitated by prayer flags," laughs Euan as we duck beneath yet another line of colourful flags strung across our descent. It's not a 'trail hazard' typical to most of our chain-gang, and speaks to the fact that we're following not bike trails but old access paths that thread between villages and monasteries. You could just as easily turn a corner and run into a yak too, so reflexes have to be on-point. But this factor, like the piles of steamed momo's for lunch and the post-ride rice beers, just heighten the experience of being somewhere alien, somewhere different.

As far as riding natural Himalayan trails go, you couldn't ask for better ride than in Bhutan, and each trail has its own character. Stout pines mottle the hot sunshine on one long traverse, while tall golden grasses boombox a tinnitus soundtrack of crickets on another. Above Gangtey, Bhutan's famous black-crane valley, a vast open whale-back ridgetop launches a fast and furious descent that's been earned by a thirty minute hike-a-bike, or "Bhutanese shuttle", as Pelden calls it. At the bottom, pedaling through a wide dusty valley, we'll pass the remains of a horse, predated by a leopard. And punctuating each unique day of riding is a lunch served picnic-style by an enthusiastic support team. We spoon curries onto plates and sip scalding hot tea, all served by smiling cooks dressed in traditional Gho and Kira, the Bhutanese colourful costumes.

Averse to losing its cultural heritage, Bhutan didn't



open its doors to foreigners until 1974, and to television in 1999. Even today, foreign visitor numbers — most arriving for cultural tours rather than mountain biking — are miniscule compared to those boasted by nearby Nepal.

Between rides we wander the stone-paved alleyways of myriad monasteries, rubbing shoulders with some of the cultural tourists and marvelling at the intricate artwork covering the temple walls, each relaying a part of Bhutan's rich cultural history. Even on wild, high mountainsides, Bhutan's colourful culture is prevalent, and becomes part of the very language of riding here.

This International Yeti Gathering quickly becomes less a mountain bike session and more of a multi-sensory im-

mersion into a world few people are privileged to see. We slide past ridgetop Gompas, and enormous, ornate prayer wheels turned 24/7 by stream-driven water wheels. We scoot beneath fluttering Manidhar — stands of 108 tall, white prayer flags on poles — and duck to avoid garrotting by the tangles of red, white, blue, green and yellow Lunghdar prayer flags that seem to adorn every hillside and litter every other trail. And inevitably we all stop and gawp at a hundred or more painted or carved phallus that decorate buildings to ward off evil spirits in the Madman's Sopsokha village. Slowly, we all sink into a slower way of life, swearing that we'll each take a little of Bhutan's slower and mindful pace home with us. So for now, I'll settle for slowing down—at least on the climbs.



DAN MILNER

Dan Milner is a well-known figure in the world of bike journalism with more than three decades of editorial and commercial photography. Bhutan Rides is a bike-specialist tour company that rents Yeti Bikes.

PHOTOS DAN MILNER

Punakha's five essential stops for every traveler



CHENCHO DEMA

She is an award-winning journalist currently based in Punakha, Bhutan, who has been writing about crime, politics, and environment for the past 17 years. She currently works as a senior journalist at Kuensel.

Punakha is a sun-kissed valley that once held the distinction of being the nation's capital until 1955. Just a two-hour drive from Thimphu, this mesmerising district is a magnet for travelers, drawing visitors with its serene rivers, lush rice fields, and towering mountain backdrops. Beyond its natural beauty, Punakha captivates with its rich cultural embroidery, from the majestic Punakha Dzong standing at the confluence of two rivers to its centuries-old monasteries and vibrant local traditions, making it one of Bhutan's most unforgettable destinations.

1. Punakha Dzong: The palace of great happiness

Located at the confluence of the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers, Punakha Dzong or Pungthang Dechen Phodrang Dzong, often hailed as the *Palace of Great Happiness*, stands as a majestic testament to Bhutan's spiritual and architectural heritage. Constructed between 1637 and 1638 by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the visionary founder of Bhutan, it is the country's second oldest and one of its largest dzongs.

The dzong serves as the winter residence for the Je Khenpo, Bhutan's chief abbot and central monastic body. Within its sacred halls, the dzong preserves the treasured relics of *Rangjung Karsapani*, the embalmed remains of Zhabdrung and Tertön Pema Lingpa.

Adding a splash of colour to its solemn grandeur, jacaranda trees surround the dzong, their mauve blossoms painting the grounds in spring and creating a mesmerizing contrast against the fortress's sturdy walls. A visit to the dzong is not just a glimpse into Bhutan's past but it is an invitation to experience the harmony of spirituality, history, and natural beauty in one breathtaking frame.



2. Chimi Lhakhang: The fertility temple

Chimi Lhakhang, widely known as the Fertility Temple, is modest in scale especially when compared to Bhutan's grand dzongs and monasteries. Yet it remains one of Punakha's most visited sites, drawing pilgrims with its enduring belief in fertility blessings and its distinctive phallus rituals. The phallus carrying ritual around the temple is popular among the visitors. At the heart of this tradition is the legacy of Drukpa Kuenley, a Tibetan lama (1455 - 1529), whose crazy wisdom earned him the name "Divine Madman". A powerful 10-inch phallus totem, crafted from wood and ivory, is preserved at Lhakhang alongside Drukpa Kuenley's bow and arrow. This sacred relic continues to be used in fertility blessings for visiting pilgrims.

Chimi Lhakhang is located about 11km from Punakha and roughly 61km from Thimphu in the quiet village of Lobesa under Barp Gewog. A short 1.5km farm road branches off the Thimphu-Punakha highway, leading visitors to this iconic site. One can opt for the more immersive route, walking through the village. The trail winds past traditional Bhutanese houses, many adorned with bold phallic motifs believed to ward off evil spirits. Along the way, small handicraft shops offer quirky souvenirs in every imaginable shape and color.



3. Longest suspension bridge in Bhutan: A walk above Pho Chhu

Punakha is home to Bhutan's longest suspension bridge that has become a favorite for both locals and visitors. Built in 1997, the 230-metre-long bridge stretches across the Pho Chhu River, linking the gewogs of Chubu and Dzomi. Its sturdy cables, anchored into cement blocks, have withstood time and the elements for nearly three decades. Originally constructed to connect Punakha Dzong with the villages on the opposite bank, the bridge continues to serve both practical and cultural significance.

Walking across the bridge is as much about sensation as it is about scenery. With each step, there's a gentle sway beneath your feet, a reminder of the river rushing below. The reward is panoramic: lush valleys and distant hills. In spring, the experience becomes even more enchanting, as the valley bursts into colour with blooming flowers, framing the bridge in a vivid natural palette. Easily accessible from the dzong, the suspension bridge offers a perfect extension to any visit where a simple crossing turns into a memorable encounter with Punakha's landscape and spirit.

4. A landmark on the ridge: Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten

Rising like a jewel above the valley, the Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten in Nyizergang, about 7km from Punakha, commands attention long before you arrive. Rested on a forested ridge overlooking the winding Mo Chhu River, the four-storey, gold-spired temple appears almost suspended between sky and earth—its whitewashed walls and gilded pinnacle catching the light from afar. From the valley floor in Punakha, the chorten stands prominently against a backdrop of layered hills, visible from across emerald rice fields.

The hike, which takes about 45 to 60 minutes, draws visitors closer to the chorten's intricate details, but it is from afar that its presence feels most dramatic. From this ridge-top perch above the Mo Chhu, the chorten not only offers sweeping panoramic views—it is part of the panorama, an enduring symbol of peace, harmony, and stability envisioned by Her Majesty Queen Mother Tshering Yangdoen Wangchuck.

Its name, Khamsum Yulley Namgyal, holds deep spiritual significance: Khamsum refers to the three realms of existence (desire, form, and formlessness), Yulley signifies the land of the deity, and Namgyal symbolises victory and triumph.



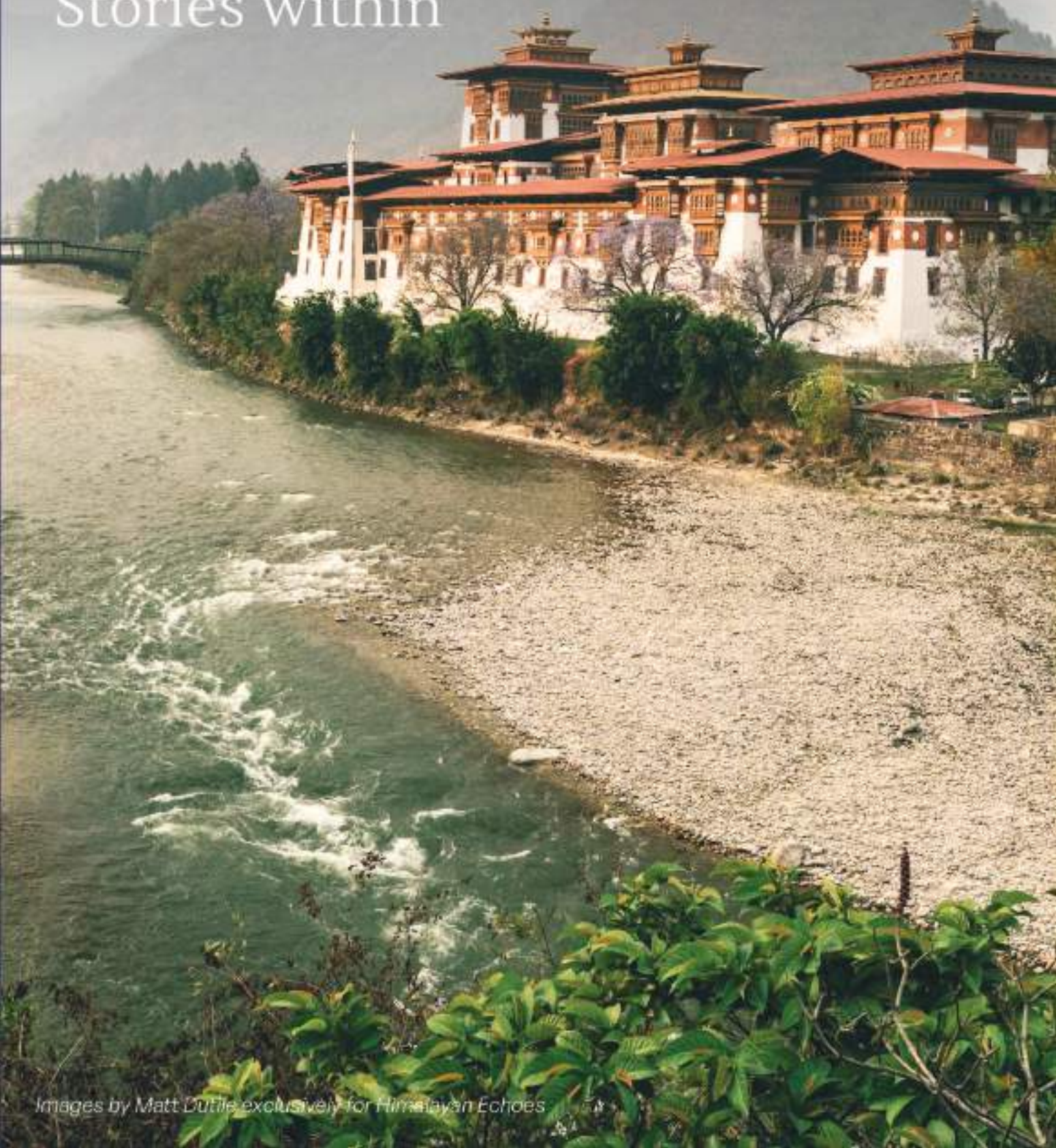
5. A peaceful escape: Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Nunnery

Located on a hilltop opposite the famed 15th-century Chimi Lhakhang, Sangchhen Dorji Lhuendrup Nunnery beautifully combines traditional Bhutanese architecture with deep spiritual roots in Wolakha. It offers sweeping views of the surrounding valley, a favorite spot for photography and quiet contemplation for visitors. Although the nunnery itself was built in 2010, the site has long been sacred, visited by revered Buddhist masters like Guru Rinpoche in the 8th century and Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in the 17th century.

The nunnery showcases exquisite traditional Bhutanese craftsmanship, with intricate woodwork, murals, and a striking eleven-faced Avalokiteshvara statue as its centerpiece. In the late 2000s, late Yab Dasho Ugyen Dorji and Yum Thuiji Zam, maternal grandparents of His Majesty the King, envisioned the nunnery as a major spiritual centre for women in the region. Construction began on September 11, 2008. The white-washed stupa, modeled after Nepal's famed Boudanath Stupa, adds a unique cross-cultural architectural element that intrigues many travellers.

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Our guests are invited into a working studio, where craft continues as it always has. An artisan turns a block of timber on the lathe, shaping it slowly and deliberately through Shagzo — the traditional art of woodturning and one of the thirteen traditional arts and crafts in Bhutan. Wood shavings gather at his feet. The movements are precise, unspoken — learned through years of practice rather than instruction.

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MONGOLIA

WHERE THE
HORIZON AND THE
SKY HAVE NO LIMIT



Mongolia! For most of the older Bhutanese, this word would evoke invasion and fear: the Sogpo of the historical texts who tried to invade Bhutan with the Tibetans in the 17th century, who created havoc and destruction in Tibet but also the Hor which are placated in rituals.

For the younger generations, Mongolia evokes the visit of Their Majesties in the summer 2024, the fantastic traditional singers and the folk metal rock group of the Hu with their impressive performance.

Mongolia is a huge country, 40 times Bhutan's size with only three millions inhabitants, half of them living

in the capital Ulan Bator, high rise buildings surrounded by a belt of yurts "gers" villages and paralysed by endless traffic jams. The rest of the country appears empty with landscapes where the horizon and the sky have no limit, and occasional white yurts dotting the rolling plateau. If people are hard to come by, it is not the same for the animals: yaks, cows, sheep, goats, camels, and above all, horses. 57 millions of them...without counting the reindeers in the forests of the North-west. Doting the vastness, herds are left to fend for themselves and rounded in the evening by herders on horse, bikes or trucks. Near the yurts, a mastiff may be chained and

typically horses, bikes, and cars are parked.

Coming from Bhutan where our horizon is always finite, limited by a mountain or a cliff, the immensity of Mongolia is almost dizzying, just rough roads cutting straight through the undulating prairies or the stony desert with occasional rocky outcrops and dunes. With seemingly no end, no beginning, it is an illustration of a Buddhist concept.

The round felt yurts are like a cocoon with the hearth in the middle, and seats on the side. Left for men, right for women and the master of the house sitting at the top, on the north side. A small altar with statues and thankas is also on the north side while Ongon, figures associated with shamanism hang from pillars. Years of persecution in the 1930s-1950s and then communist regime caused religious life to be erased, shamans killed, monasteries destroyed. Since the democratization of the 1990s, Vajrayana Buddhism introduced from Tibet to Mongolia first in the 13th century and then in the 16th century, has been revived and coexisted peacefully with the ancient beliefs of shamanism. The landscape is inhabited by local deities which have to be appeased and cairns

(ovos) along the roads get enlarged by the stones that people have to place in order to get protected.

And this is where Mongolia and Bhutan have so much in common, both part of the large High Asia culture. While the landscape could not be more different, the culture and the people present great similarities and Bhutanese feel a sense of familiarity which is reassuring. The rituals, iconography, the auspicious designs, and the architecture all have characteristics which are acquainted with the Bhutanese. The upturned heavy boots, the love of archery, the fighting bouts which end in a dance with both arms raised to the sky, the saddle ornaments and carpets, the katas, although mostly blue. The etiquette also has the same requisites: not walking on the threshold, offering drinks three times to the guests, the circumambulations, placing a stone onto a cairn, avoiding to pollute water, respect for trees when they exist and in general a great respect for nature, knowing that men have to protect and revere it.

Nature in Mongolia is violent with long winters and frigid temperatures (-30° or -40°), short warm summers with storms and people have to work and live



around these extremes. They are resilient and strong in a country where the land hardly gives anything and extreme weather phenomena called "Dzud" can wipe out millions of animals and kill people who cannot come out of their yurts because of the snow cover and lack of rescue facilities.

The government created what could be compared to a gewog covering an enormous area and the centres are the only place where houses can be found. A gewog centre has an animal husbandry office, an administrative building, a boarding school, a health unit, a supermarket, a petrol pump and sometimes a small open air market where meat and milk products are sold as well as rare vegetables and fruits. The cuisine is simple with no chillies: the equivalent of momos, and meat stews. Mongols are frugal and eat all kinds of meat, with preference for beef and mutton but goats are mostly raised for their coat which produces cashmere wool and of which 70% is exported to China. Milk from cow, mare and camel is transformed into dry cheese, butter, and alcohol. The home-made alcohol is complemented by vodka, a Russian heritage, which is cheap, and beer. Salted milky tea is traditional but coffee is really making inroads. Like in Bhutan, sweets and cakes, besides the Mongol equivalent of *kabze*, were not eaten but people seem to have developed a taste for chocolate. I even had dry cheese stuffed with chocolate.

Of course in Ulan-Bator, Korean food is the rage, as well as all things Korean and around 30,000 Mongols work in South Korea. Both languages belong to the same linguistic family and Mongols learn Korean with ease. South Korean tourists are really the bulk of the tourists and tourist camps are serving food influenced by Korean food — noodles and spices.

Young Korean women poses for their Instagram pages and spend a great amount of time in the camp's common bathrooms to get ready for the day.

This is one particularity of tourism in Mongolia. As there are no towns, besides the capital and one or two places, there are no hotels. Tourists are accommodated in camps in the middle of nowhere with yurts which can accommodate up to four people, a common building serving as kitchen and restaurants and barracks for common bathrooms and showers. It seems there is now a move to have more yurts fitted with private bathrooms but they are still rare.

The common bathrooms and showers are very clean and hygiene has truly improved since I was last there in 2012. Electricity and WiFi can be spotty so the best is to buy a Mongol SIM card with data at the airport as the network is very good.

Camps are mostly privately owned, and some with foreign partners. There are eco-camps with dry toilets and no shower facilities but offer hot towels in the



morning and evening — a wonderful substitute. Water is scarce and there is a real effort to conserve it.

Because of the lack of public transports and accommodation in the country and the fact that English is not widely spoken (Russian is more common), it would be quite difficult to travel alone in Mongolia. Packaged tours are the only solution.

This year most of the tourists were Chinese, Koreans and Europeans. In 2024, they had about 450,000 tourists, and it is expanding. However, tourism season is really short, possible only from mid-June to mid-September. While Mongols are reconstructing monasteries and improving and expanding their museums, the blue sky meeting the horizon should still be there.

Bhutan and Mongolia are far and different but still culturally so close and complement each other. Mongols feel that Bhutanese would understand them, as both are landlocked countries between two giant neighbours. Tourism, both ways, have a great chance to grow provided there is a willingness. Their Majesties's visit last summer has immensely increased awareness about Bhutan in Mongolia.



FRANCOISE POMMARET

She is a cultural anthropologist, Director of Research emerita at the National Centre for Scientific Research, France and Associate Professor at CLCS, Royal University of Bhutan. She is a writer and has traveled all over Asia.



Sonam and Solé, Bebena



Drive north out of Thimphu past Tashichhodzong, and keep going; past the roundabout, past the new buildings going up so fast they seem to sprout overnight like mushrooms after August rain. You're headed to the little suburb of Bebena, but first you'll pass through Hejo, where the embassies are coming in: Bangladesh, India, Kuwait.

Just past Embassy Row, the road rises and curves and you arrive at a little restaurant called Solé, a place that feels like how the best places in Bhutan always feel, like it was always there, waiting for you to find it.

The owner, Sonam Dema, holds court Tuesdays through Saturdays. She is also the chef, the creative energy, the hostess, and the warm voice and beautiful face greeting you as you enter, bringing you more water, more hummus, a little sampling of fresh baked focaccia or meatball or more of the fresh pasta she made herself this morning. She is tall and magnetic, floating constantly through the little restaurant. There is something in her manner that is deeply Bhutanese, of being the most gracious being imaginable. And there's something else: a quality picked up over eighteen years of being elsewhere and paying close attention.

She grew up in Bebena in a Bhutanese traditional house you can see from her restaurant. "Until I was fourteen there were no roads," she says, matter-of-factly. "We had to cross the river on foot to get to Thimphu to get groceries." The rice paddies she played in as a girl are apartment buildings and shops now. She plates her tiramisu anyway.

She left Bhutan at eighteen for Sydney, where she spent five years studying hotel management. Then she took a year and backpacked through Australia and Southeast Asia and eventually made her way to Europe. She went to Italy on what was meant to be a holiday. Italy kept her.

She enrolled in a culinary school in Costigliole d'Asti, a small town in Piedmont in the rolling wine country of the Langhe. There's great chocolate there, too. Six months of learning cuisine changed what she thought food could be. She went to work in the Veneto at a Michelin-starred restaurant, and then worked as a sous chef in Milan for six

years. "I learned so much about the mountain cuisine of Italy," she says. "I wanted to learn about it because Bhutan also has a mountain cuisine and is also landlocked. I wanted to learn everything I could about food and how I could create my own version of Bhutanese cuisine."

She understood the connection between the Italian Alps and the Himalayas. She ran with it.

A few months ago, after eighteen years away, she came home and opened Solé.

"I'd been away so long," she says. "One of the main reasons I came back was that I was missing those moments we share with family."

She knew she had things to offer, so she came back and got to work.

"This is by far the greatest adventure I've ever had," she says. You can tell she means it.

The menu at Solé is small and it is aggressively, almost unreasonably delicious. A few of her offerings: fresh pasta made every morning, yak ragù slow-cooked into something that would make a Milanese weep with recognition and surprise, mini burgers, tripe (which takes courage to put on a menu anywhere and particular courage in Thimphu), and ema datsi, because you are still in Bhutan and Sonam is still Bhutanese and some things are simply non-negotiable. I'm from Tennessee. I know fried chicken. Sonam's is the best I've ever eaten.

"People love the pasta, the burgers, the desserts," Sonam says. "Many Bhutanese have traveled the world and although they love their rice, they also want a more diverse offering. What I'm doing in Bhutan is not unique in other countries, but I'm bringing Italian cooking techniques to Bhutan and molding them to Bhutanese tastes. And sourcing our regional ingredients."

Nearly everything on the menu is local, because Sonam believes where food comes from and how it tastes are close to the same thing.

She likes to take visitors to the vegetable market and walk them through it, showing them local delicacies and what grows here, what is in season, and how she likes

to cook them. She talks about and uses ingredients the restaurant industry in Bhutan has largely ignored. "We have a fermented soybean here. The Nepali name is kinema and it's made in southern Bhutan. It's very similar to Japanese natto," she says.

She talks about honey. About mushrooms. "The varieties of mushrooms in early fall are spectacular. We are the center of the universe for mushrooms." She says this with the quiet authority of someone who has eaten in a lot of the world's restaurants and knows whereof she speaks.

"I think it's so important for young people to go out of Bhutan and learn about different cultures and traditions," she says. "That's how we break stereotypes. Otherwise we're always in a shell. But if they can, they should come back and give back to the community and teach skills

to the younger generation and empower them. "The sun is shining in Bebena. It is almost always shining in Bebena, here north of the city where the air is a little more sparkling and the pace just a bit slower. Inside Solé, Tenzin Gyeltshen, the cute one, and Dawa Penjor, the tall cute one, move with precision in the kitchen, visible from the dining area. Tara Devi Monger rounds out the small back-of-house team that Sonam has built with the same careful attention she brings to her pasta dough.

You could drop this restaurant anywhere in the world: Milan, Sydney, some hip neighborhood in Brooklyn, and it would hold its own. The food is that good. The welcome is that genuine. "It's not just about the food. It's about the whole experience," says Sonam. "You treat others how you want to be treated. Not just in the service industry. In life in general."

Solé is open Tuesday through Saturday for lunch (12–3pm) and dinner (6–10pm). Reservations are recommended — call ahead at +975 77467136



LINDA LEAMING

She is the author of the best sellers, *MARRIED TO BHUTAN* and *A FIELD GUIDE TO HAPPINESS*. Her third book about Bhutan, *NO RIGHT ANGLES*, is forthcoming. She lives in Thimphu with her husband, Phurba Namgay, a painter.

Russian Café and Bakery Brusnika



Brusnika, a charming café with a beautiful menu, is a testament to the passion of its owners, Tashi and Natalia.

Inspired by the wonderful bakeries and cuisines of their homelands, Bhutan and Russia, Tashi and Natalia realized the need for organic Artisan type breads in Bhutan.

The café had humble beginnings, with Natalia practicing a fusion of Russian style pastries using local grains, including Bhutan's favourite grain, rice! She started to bake for family and friends, and soon dreamed of opening her own bakery.

When Natalia and Tashi found a beautiful place with the most amazing view in town, Russian Cafe and Bakery Brusnika was born. Natalia trained Bhutanese ladies how to bake bread, cakes, and pastries. Now, the cafe and bakery serves a charming menu of continental cuisine infused with Russian flavors.


The bread and pastries are a mix of Russian and German, a simple homage to the Bhutanese-Russian family's personal history. Natalia was born and brought up in Russia, and the couple spent 10 years in Germany.

The concept of food at Brusnika is simple: eat local, eat healthy. The café uses local milk and butter, homemade cheese, jams by Brusnika, organic vegetables and fruits, and avoids processed food as much as possible.

Brusnika is more than just a café; it is a place where people can come together to enjoy delicious food, stunning views, and the warmth of Russian-Bhutanese hospitality.

Come and enjoy healthy, homemade food and incredible views at Brusnika!

Scan for Directions!

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 +97517714797

Open hours: 8AM to 7PM
Closed on Mondays

Average bill for coffee and cakes: \$5
Average bill for Breakfast: \$8
Average bill for lunch: \$15

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Russian Café





KARMA YESHEY

He is a wall painting conservator based in Bhutan. He continues to build a visual language rooted in memory, atmosphere, and the lived experience of Bhutan. His photographs are drawn to shifting light, shadow, and fleeting moments. His work lingers in ambiguity, often revealing the unseen within the everyday.

Email: karmagho@gmail.com
Instagram: [@karma_50mm](https://www.instagram.com/karma_50mm)

Revealing the unseen

I pursue a long-term photographic practice focused on cultural life, ritual, and everyday spaces in Bhutan, alongside my professional work as a wall painting conservator with the Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development.

These photographs were made during repeated visits to tsechus and ordinary settings. My approach is observational, shaped by time spent within these environments and an attention to colour, movement, and human presence.

The images reflect an ongoing engagement with these spaces rather than a single event or assignment.













MARRYING A BLUE STATUE

Between Tradition and Observation

Bhutan's contemporary art landscape is gradually expanding beyond its traditional frameworks, as artists begin to engage more directly with personal experience and evolving cultural realities. *Marrying a Blue Statue*, the debut solo exhibition by Bhutanese artist Yeshey Tsogyal, reflects this shift through a body of work that brings together inherited techniques and a more introspective visual language.

Working primarily with mineral pigments, Tsogyal uses materials long associated with religious painting in Bhutan.

Rather than moving away from this tradition, the artist works within it, using its discipline and material qualities to develop quieter, more open-ended images. The surfaces of the paintings are built through layering and repetition, resulting in compositions that are both restrained and luminous.

Across the exhibition, a recurring presence emerges in the form of a "blue statue." The figure remains deliberately unresolved, resisting fixed interpretation or symbolic clarity. It appears not as a central subject to be understood, but as a point of continuity, something that exists alongside the unfolding of everyday life. Surrounding it are gestures that are understated yet carefully observed: walking without urgency, gathering fruit, sitting in stillness, watching television. These scenes are neither dramatized nor diminished; instead, they are given equal attention, allowing significance to arise from within the ordinary.

Through this approach, Tsogyal's work shifts emphasis away from prescribed meaning toward sustained observation. The compositions do not instruct the viewer; they create space for looking, for pause, and for uncertainty. This sensibility reflects a broader movement within Bhutanese contemporary art, where artists are beginning to explore how inherited visual languages can remain active without becoming fixed, how tradition can be inhabited rather than simply preserved.

At a time when Bhutan is negotiating the balance between continuity and change, *Marrying a Blue Statue* offers a subtle reflection of that condition. The work does not attempt to resolve these tensions, but instead allows them to coexist: stillness alongside motion, familiarity alongside distance, the known alongside the unarticulated. In doing so, it proposes a quieter, more sustained way of engaging with both image and experience.

The exhibition was opened by HRH Ashi Dechen Yangzom Wangchuck, reflecting a growing recognition of contemporary artistic practice within Bhutan's cultural landscape.

Marrying a Blue Statue marks an important step in Tsogyal's practice, positioning the artist within a generation navigating the relationship between inheritance and individual expression. The work contributes to an evolving conversation around what Bhutanese art can be today, grounded in tradition, yet responsive to the present.

LOTEY OM

Freelance Writer and Teacher





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 - Bhutan Kidney Foundation
 - Monks at the Dobji Monastic School, Paro
 - Nunnery
 - The Happiness Farm
- or make a donation of your choice
- Harvest and enjoy fruits



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Fee Structure

5 years	10 years	20 years
@USD \$ 599	@USD \$ 999	@USD \$ 1799

As an environmentalist at heart, the proceeds from this initiative will be reinvested in the further development of The Happiness Farm 1 and citizen initiatives focused on environmental conservation in the locality. By participating in this project, you will not only enjoy the fruits of your tree but also contribute to the growth and sustainability of the farm and its valuable community and environmental initiatives.

We invite our valued participants to embark on this journey with us in this First-of-its-Kind Fruit Tree Membership Project. We look forward to your kind support in creating a flourishing and environmentally-conscious community.

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Local people enjoying the celebrations

Pujas, Play, and Impermanence – Chunipa Losar in Dewathang

A chance meeting at Paro Airport with two of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche’s monks reveals that Rinpoche might attend the Chunipa Losar celebrations at his monastic institute in Dewathang, eastern Bhutan. Before my luggage even hits the carousel, I have already WhatsApped the institute head, asking for a room, or at least a corner to curl up in. The reply comes instantly: “Rinpoche’s plans aren’t confirmed, but come anyway.”

Chunipa Losar, known in western Bhutan as the Day of Offerings, is the Shar chop (people from eastern Bhutan) lunar new year, a festival of renewal marked by offerings, prayers, and community gatherings. After just

enough time in Thimphu to wash and dry my clothes, I set off east with a friend, traveling via Phuentsholing and Assam, India.

Thimphu is bitterly cold, and the steady rise in temperature as we approach the Indian border feels like a personal blessing, my smile widening with each rising degree.

After two days, we roll through the institute gates and are shown our room. News follows soon after: Rinpoche will arrive the next day, and before the celebrations begin, he will conduct a three-day *todhok* ceremony to create the conditions for clearing negative outcomes —

a common end-of-year ritual.

So, what’s the purpose of such pujas? Many wonder if they are simply a cop out, a way to outsource practice, or even a kind of magic spell. They are neither, but instead a skillful means for clearing obstacles by creating supportive conditions.

Through chants, mudras, and offerings, body, speech, and mind are gently aligned with awakened qualities, inviting a shift in perspective — one that supports purification, generates merit, and opens space for clarity. A puja does not erase karma or replace personal effort; rather, it prepares the ground so that the results of practice can take root and flourish.

Think of it like gardening: practice is the seed, puja is the watering, sunlight, and weeding. It doesn’t replace the seed. It helps it thrive.

Still, ritual has never been my natural home. I’m more drawn to solitary practice, wandering backstreets in large Asian cities, watching my mind, applying teachings in

everyday grit. I’d rather sit with addicts or the homeless than in a ceremony hall.

Because of that, I’ve long admired hidden yogis — those who move unnoticed among us — as well as the mahasiddhas, whose raw, unconventional actions awaken others. They don’t fit the typical image of a practitioner with a shaven head and maroon robes, or dreadlocks in a loincloth, though they can. In truth, they could be anyone: an auto driver in Siliguri, someone offering “special” massage in Pattaya, or a CEO of a multinational tech company in Taipei.

And yet, shaped by enlightened minds, I also recognize that such group practices possess a power of their own, amplifying benefit in ways solitary effort cannot. Even hidden yogis and mahasiddhas do not shun collective ritual; they actively participate in it, often discreetly, in sacred places or charnel grounds. With this in mind, I always make the effort to attend these pujas.

The daily routine starts early. I intend to be there, but laziness kicks in, and I arrive after breakfast. When I finally step into the ceremony hall, I’m met by waves of chant and ritual instruments, rising and falling in a rhythm that feels ancient yet alive. I’m glad I came. Even if I’m not naturally drawn to ritual, anyone with a heart can sense that these gatherings are authentic and steeped in sacred wisdom. They are a fitting way to close one chapter and open another.

The days pass quickly, and soon we arrive at the final ritual: burning the ceremonial offerings outside the gate of the institute, a symbolic act of releasing and transforming negative energy. Flames rise, smoke curls into the sky, and chants resound in rhythm. All of this unfolds beneath a canopy of colorful prayer flags, creating a scene that feels both enchanting and deeply meaningful. The sights and sounds stir some latent creativity, and I click off a flurry of shots on my phone, trying to catch what cannot really be held.

With the puja completed, celebrations follow: three days of games and dance, interspersed with food, to welcome the new year. Traditional Bhutanese games mix easily with familiar sports, and in an era when fun is often confined to a screen, it is heartwarming to see children running freely on the grass, laughing hysterically as a parent stumbles in a three-legged race or schoolteachers cheerfully make fools of themselves in silly dances and foolish skits. It is all simple, good-hearted fun, the kind that feels increasingly rare in a complex age shaped by social media and manicured images.



Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche at the Todhok puja



View from Chokyi Gyatso Institute at sunset



Entertaining Rinpoche and participants



Local children enjoying lunch on banana leaf plates

I watch the elderly who have come with their families. Born in a time before cars, television, or even electricity, they seem entirely at ease in this setting. An old woman nearby laughs loudly at almost everything, but she is especially delighted by the bull event, in which two men, on all fours, try to knock each other over by pushing and shoving. When one finally falls, she slaps her thighs in excitement, bringing a smile to the faces of those around her.

I find myself wondering about her life. Was she born here in this neighborhood? What does she make of her grandchildren, glued to their phones and dreaming of studying in places she may never have even heard of?

In Bhutan, the elderly are still cared for within the family; the idea of sending a parent to a nursing home or letting them live alone remains largely alien. Elders stay rooted in village life, surrounded by familiar faces, their presence and laughter woven into everyday moments. In its rush toward material gain, much of the West has traded these threads of human connection for convenience. The elderly may have modern stoves and sleek kitchens, but often they have no-one to share the

meals they cook.

Rinpoche watches over the festivities, sharing in the humour and accepting offerings of homegrown vegetables, fruit, and locally made rice wine, arranged before him in bands of colour — red, white, and crystal clear — each drop offered with love and devotion. He also presents the prizes for the games: a watermelon or a small monetary gift tucked into an envelope. Yet for the winners, the real reward is the brief, radiant moment of greeting Rinpoche in person, a superstar beloved across Bhutan.

The event is entirely plastic-free. Meals are served on square-cut banana leaves, and tea is poured into reusable bowls. Thanks to these small but thoughtful details, the ground remains spotless as the day draws to a close. When people disperse, nothing is left behind but the fading echoes of laughter and song.

The final day arrives all too quickly, but parting feels gentle rather than abrupt. As people shoulder their bags and drift back toward their villages, there is no rush, no sense of loss — only the quiet assurance that something meaningful has been renewed. Just as the prayer flags



A teacher doing a silly dance

overhead continue to carry their blessings on the wind, the benefits of these days will prevail long after the gathering is over.

As we enter the year of the Fire Horse, I am certain that my prayers will echo those with whom I celebrated Chunipa Losar: may all sentient beings cultivate the causes and conditions for liberation. May Rinpoche and Their Majesties enjoy good health and fulfill their aspirations, and in an increasingly turbulent world, may the kingdom remain peaceful, blessed with harmony and prosperity.



SHENPHEN ZANGPO

He was born in Swansea, UK, but spent more than 28 years practicing and studying Buddhism in Taiwan and Japan, and around 15 years working with substance abusers in Bhutan, teaching meditation and organizing drug outreach programmes. Currently, he is engaged in activities that present the traditional wisdom of the Dharma to the youth of Bhutan in a modern and relevant way.

Bhutan: Portrait of a Kingdom



From left: HRH Princess Euphelma Choden Wangchuck, HRH Princess Dechen Yangzom Wangchuck, HRH Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, Her Majesty The Queen Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, HRH Princess Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck, HRH Princess Kesang Choden Wangchuck, HRH Gyaltsab Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, HRH Prince Ugyen Jigme Wangchuck, HRH Prince Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck.

On November 13, 2024, *Bhutan: Portrait of a Kingdom* was launched under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen, Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, Queen of Bhutan. The coffee table book documents the kingdom through the work of eleven international photographers, each visiting across different seasons between October 2024 and May 2025.

The project features rare contributions from His Majesty The King, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who shared photographs from His personal collection — His Majesty's lifelong passion for photography provides an intimate portrait of the kingdom. The book also includes reflections by Matthieu Ricard, the French monk, writer, and photographer celebrated for his decades of work in the Himalayas.



© Stephan Gladieu

A Tribute to a King

The book is dedicated as a tribute to His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, commemorating His 70th Birth Anniversary. The tribute honors His Majesty's vision in establishing the philosophical and policy foundations of modern Bhutan.



Royal Manas National Park — Hidden within the thicket, a Bengal tiger strikes a wild water buffalo in a rare display of raw, untamed power. Bhutan's 2023 National Tiger Survey estimates just 131 individuals remain in the wild.

Bhutan at a Transformative Moment

Among its most striking sections are images devoted to the Gelephu Mindfulness City - the visionary new development that seeks to harmonise economic ambition with Bhutan's deepest values and the Gyalsung National Service Programme, which is shaping a new generation of engaged citizens.



Photographers

Olivia Arthur
Chien-Chi Chang
Karma T. Dorji
Stéphan Gladieu
Steve McCurry
Vincent Munier
Gueorgui Pinkhassov
Raghu Rai
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with the special contribution of
His Majesty King Jigme

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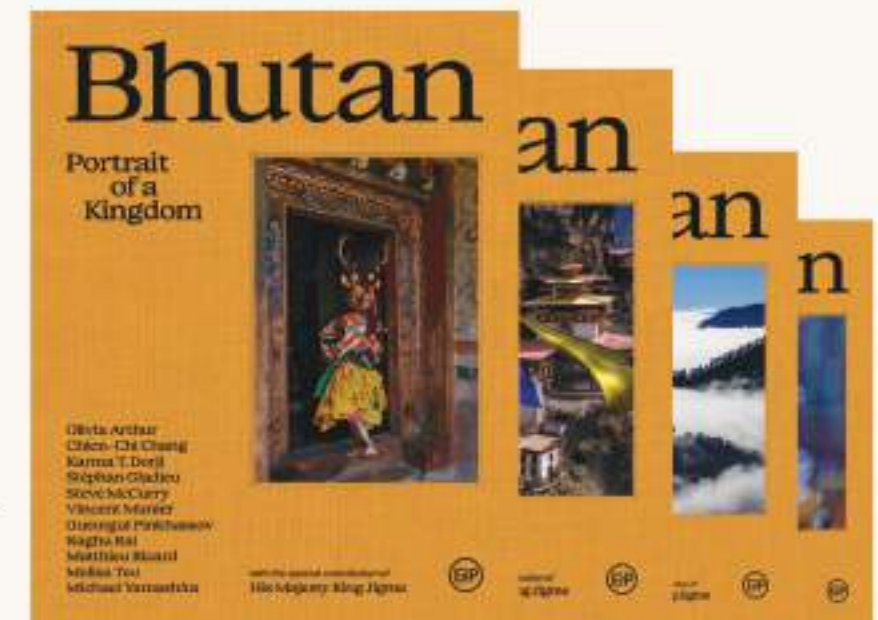
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“This book began with a simple wish: to share Bhutan with the world. To open a window onto its mountains and valleys, its people and rituals, its hopes and joys. Along the way, it became something more: a gift for ourselves, to see our home through new eyes.” - Her Majesty the Queen of Bhutan, Jetsun Pema Wangchuck

Book Details

Title: Bhutan: Portrait of a Kingdom
Size: 230 x 290mm
Pages: 312
Weight: 2.8kg
Languages: ENG and FR editions

A high-end clothbound cover featuring 12 different images for an exclusive touch.



For more information about the book, please contact : +975 17591021

ARTWORK TITLE: JOY UNBRIDLED
ARTIST: RANU SUBBA
MEDIUM: ACRYLIC ON CANVAS
SIZE: 20 × 20 CM



May-June 2026 | LAF Festival Highlights

May 2, 2026 - Solo Exhibition by Artist Karma Jurmi

May 4-8, 2026 - Design, Development and Production of Bio-Degradable Lungta Prayer Flags

June 4-July 4, 2026 - HER Expression Exhibition

June 6-7, 2026 - Untangling and Collection of Old, Soiled and Powerless Prayer Flags at Lungchutse

To explore the full festival journey and upcoming activities, visit www.lungta.vastbhutan.org.bt or contact: **Ms. Sonam Deki, Mobile No. +975 77752813**

Her Expression Vol. IX

At 67, Ranu Subba, a former school teacher, steps into the exhibition space for the first time. Her practice is shaped not by formal training, but by lived experience - by observation, feeling, and a quiet, persistent joy in creating. In this artwork, “Joy Unbridled”, a horse moves forward with vitality and ease. Bold colours and fluid lines convey motion and release, carrying a sense of freedom that feels both instinctive and assured.

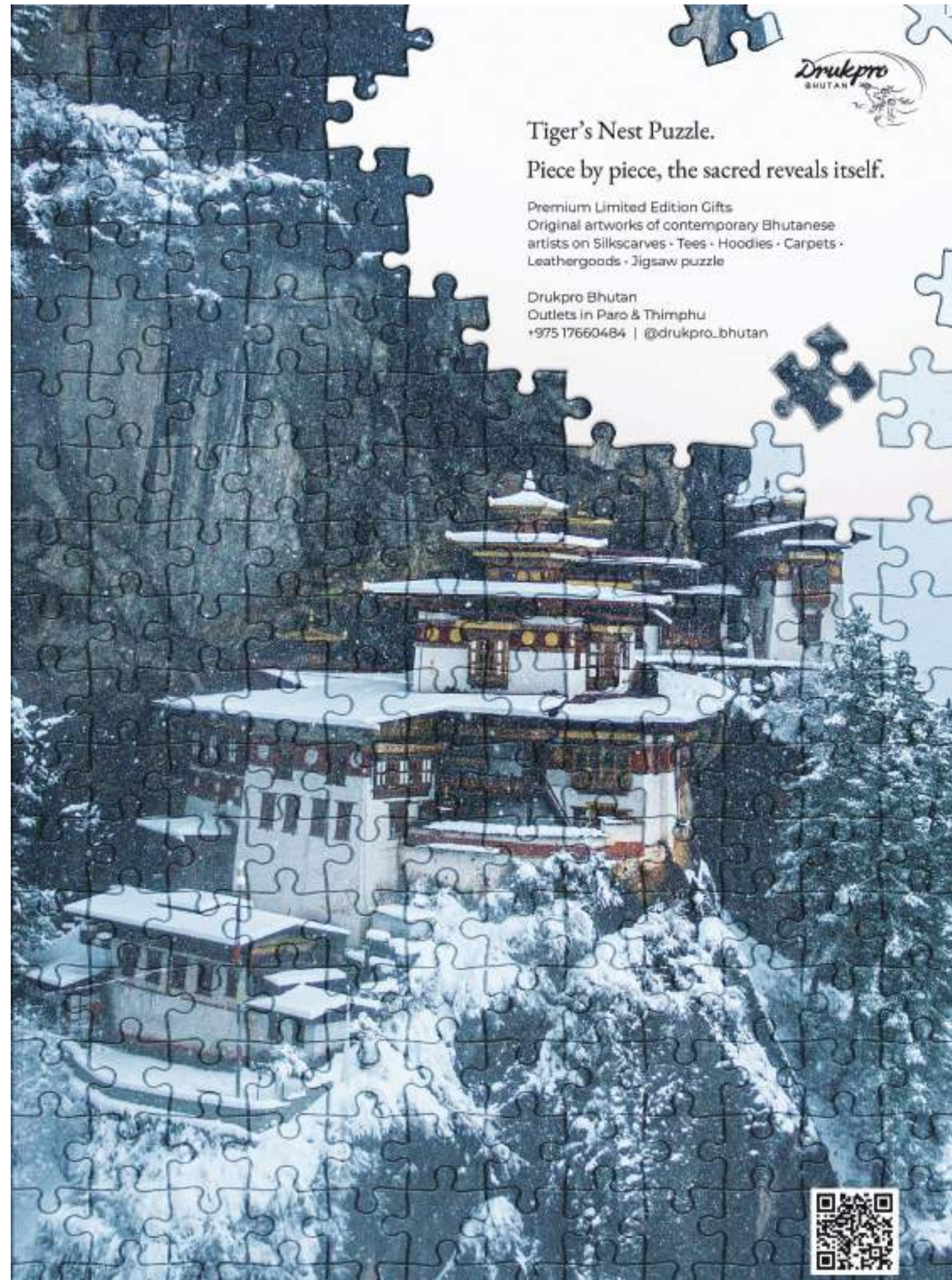
HER EXPRESSION (Volume IX), presented as part of the Lungta Art Festival 2026, is an annual celebration of women artists and their diverse voices. Dedicated to Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen, Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, it honours her enduring grace, wisdom, and the deep love she brings to the nation.

Opening in celebration of her birth year, this edition titled, “Untangle the Lungta”, explores strength, hope, and the uplifting spirit within us.



This review is brought to you by VAST Bhutan, a registered civil society organization. VAST Bhutan over 25 years of existence has helped nurture several young artists and supported their endeavors.

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About the Airline

Drukair Corporation Limited, the national flag carrier of Bhutan, was established in 1981. Operating from its hub at Paro International Airport, Drukair serves 10 international destinations across South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, including India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates.

In addition to its international routes, Drukair services three domestic destinations within Bhutan. The airline also operates twice-weekly flights from Gelephu International Airport to Kolkata and offers helicopter services to extend its connectivity beyond fixed-wing operations.

Our Fleet

Business Class: 20 Seats
Economy Class: 120 Seats

1 Airbus A320neo



Business Class: 16 Seats
Economy Class: 102 Seats

3 Airbus A319



Business Class: 8 Seats
Economy Class: 32 Seats

1 ATR 42-600



8-seater twin-engine

1 Pilatus PC-24



1 Pilot and 6 Passengers, or
2 Pilots and 5 Passengers

3 Airbus H130



Domestic Route Map

— Operational



International Route Map

— Operational
..... Seasonal

Expanding Horizons, Simplifying Journeys



Simplified Booking Process



One Itinerary to Final Destination



Baggage checked through to Final Destination



Expanded Destination Options



Convenience and Time saving



Bookings are Open

Visit Drukair counters in Paro or Thimphu

Expanding Horizons, Simplifying Journeys



Simplified Booking Process



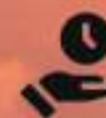
One Itinerary to Final Destination



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Expanded Destination Options



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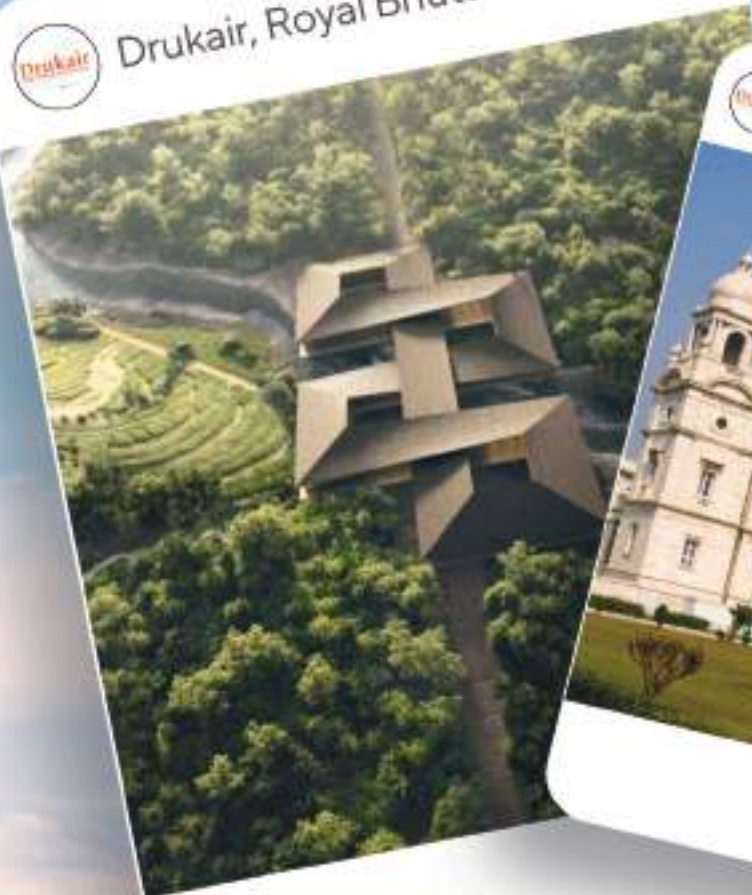
Gelephu

Drukair

Kolkata



Drukair, Royal Bhutan Airlines



Drukair, Royal Bhutan Airlines



DAY

FLT NO

SECTOR

DEP

ARR

MON & FRI

KB210

PARO-GELEPHU

0700

0730

GELEPHU-KOLKATA

0750

0840

KB211

KOLKATA-GELEPHU

0910

1100

GELEPHU-PARO

1120

1155

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- 3 Enter your 'PNR' and 'Surname,' then click 'Check-in'
- 4 Fill in your details and click Continue to 'Seat Selection'
- 5 Choose your preferred window seat and a payment summary will appear
- 6 Click Continue to Payment and complete the payment

Your preferred seat will be confirmed

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DAY	FLT NO	SECTOR	DEP	ARR
SUNDAY & THURSDAY	KB140	Paro-Guwahati	1150	1215
		Guwahati-Bangkok	1255	1725
FRIDAY & MONDAY	KB141	Bangkok-Guwahati	0705	0830
		Guwahati-Paro	0910	1035

For latest schedule updates, please visit www.drukair.com.bt

PARO ✈️ GUWAHATI ✈️ SINGAPORE

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PARO - GUWAHATI

KB540 TUESDAY 0830 0855

GUWAHATI - SINGAPORE

KB540 TUESDAY 0935 1625

SINGAPORE - GUWAHATI

KB541 WEDNESDAY 0600 0810

GUWAHATI - PARO

KB541 WEDNESDAY 0850 1015

For latest schedule updates, please visit www.drukair.com.bt



IN THE PRESS

Drukair Hosts Pre-Launch Event in Guwahati to Expand Regional Connectivity via Northeast India



Drukair, Royal Bhutan Airlines, in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Bhutan, Changi Airport, and Global Aviation Services Pvt Ltd hosted a pre-launch event in Guwahati to mark the upcoming expansion of its regional network via Guwahati, with the reintroduction of twice-weekly Bangkok flights via Guwahati and the addition of a third weekly frequency to Singapore via Guwahati.

The event highlighted the airline's plans to strengthen connectivity between Bhutan, Northeast India, and key Southeast Asian destinations.

The ceremony was graced by Yab Dasho Dhondup Gyaltsen

and Yum Sonam Chuki. The Honourable Member of Parliament Shri Bhubaneswar Kalita attended as the Guest of Honour from the Government of Assam. Also present were Shri Diganta Borah, Commissioner & Secretary to the Government of Assam, and Shri Kailash, Additional Chief Secretary, along with the Secretary of Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, the DHI CEO, the Director General of BCAA, and members of the Drukair Board of Directors.

Representatives from Bhutanese delegations including the Association of Bhutanese Tour Operators (ABTO), Hotel and Restaurant Association of Bhutan (HRAB), and the Guide Association of Bhutan (GAB) were also in attendance. The event further welcomed members of the Assam travel trade industry and media, reflecting the growing collaboration between Bhutan and Northeast India in tourism and aviation.

The event commenced with a ceremonial cake-cutting, and lighting of lamp, symbolising the strengthening of regional air connectivity and the upcoming launch of the expanded services through Guwahati. This was followed by presentations highlighting the significance of the connectivity, tourism opportunities, and the growing role of Guwahati as a strategic transit hub linking Bhutan with Southeast Asia.

The event concluded with a raffle draw and networking lunch, bringing together stakeholders from aviation, tourism, and government sectors to celebrate the growing partnership and future travel opportunities between Bhutan, Assam, and the wider region.



Guwahati, 2 April 2026: Drukair Marks the Reintroduction of Paro-Guwahati-Bangkok Route

Drukair, Royal Bhutan Airlines, marked the reintroduction of the Paro-Guwahati-Bangkok route with the launch of its first flight on 2 April 2026. The service, operating twice weekly, reconnects the two destinations and strengthens regional connectivity.

To commemorate the occasion, a small cake-cutting ceremony was held at Guwahati Airport, accompanied by the distribution of sweets among stakeholders. The event was attended by the Deputy Commandant of CISF, the Chief Immigration Officer, the Terminal Head of Adani, and station managers of various airlines.

Passengers departing from Guwahati were warmly welcomed and presented with khadars as a gesture of hospitality. They also received postcards and curated goody bags containing badges, cookies, and souvenirs, adding a celebratory touch to the journey.

The occasion reflected Drukair's continued commitment to enhancing connectivity and delivering a warm Bhutanese travel experience.



Drukair marks its 45th Drukair Day

Drukair, Royal Bhutan Airlines, marked its 45th Drukair Day on 5 April 2026, flying on the wings of the dragon and celebrating its remarkable journey, achievements, and the milestones that have shaped the airline over the years. A small commemorative ceremony was held to mark the occasion, bringing together staff to reflect on the airline's progress and continued commitment to excellence.

Drukair Welcomes New GM for Engineering & Maintenance Division

Drukair officially welcomed Mr. Sonam Tobgay as the new General Manager for the Engineering and Maintenance Division, marked by traditional ceremonies including Lhasa Thruesel, Marchang, and Zhudrel. The occasion symbolized auspicious beginnings and unity within the organization.



Drukair celebrates Launch of Third Weekly Flight to and from Singapore



Drukair, Royal Bhutan Airlines proudly marked a significant milestone with the successful launch of its third weekly frequency to Singapore on 07 April 2026. This enhanced connectivity reflects Drukair's continued commitment to strengthening international access and offering greater flexibility for passengers traveling between Bhutan, Guwahati and Singapore.

The inaugural flight was commemorated with a small yet meaningful celebration in collaboration with Changi Airport Group and Druk Asia Private Limited, the GSA for Drukair in Singapore. To celebrate the occasion, a mini welcome event was organized at the arrival gate at Singapore Changi Airport. Passengers arriving on the flight were warmly received and presented with small commemorative gifts, including specially curated luggage tags, as a token of appreciation.

Drukair extends its sincere gratitude to Changi Airport Group for their support and collaboration in organizing the celebration and enhancing the arrival experience for passengers. With this milestone, Drukair continues to strengthen its international network and reaffirm its role as a key bridge connecting Bhutan to the world.

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DRUKAIR OFFICES

BHUTAN

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WhatsApp: +975 17131300
Email: enquiry@drukair.com.bt

Cargo & Mail Services

Paro International Airport Cargo Section
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Email: cargo@drukair.com.bt

THIMPHU

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Thori Lam, behind BBS building,
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Email: qjo@drukair.com.bt

PARO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

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BANGLADESH

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Email: dackk@drukair.com.bt

GSA - Passenger & Cargo

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Tel: +880 2 9632775
Mob: +880 1749177643
Email: dhaka@drukair.com.bt/daccargo@drukair.com.bt

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BAGDOGRA - CITY OFFICE

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kolkatacargo@drukair.com.bt

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GUWAHATI - AIRPORT OFFICE

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Email: guakk@drukair.com.bt

GUWAHATI - CITY OFFICE

GSA - Global Aviation Services Pvt. Ltd.
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G S Road, Christian Basti, Guwahati - 781005.
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Email: guwahati@drukair.com.bt /
guwahaticargo@drukair.com.bt

NEW DELHI AIRPORT OFFICE

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Room No. 46, Level IV,
Indira Gandhi International Airport,
Terminal 3, New Delhi.
Tel: +91 11 49638010/16/19
Email: delkk@drukair.com.bt

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GF-16, Prakash Deep Building 7 Tolstoy Marg,
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Tel: +91 11 47125100
Email: delhi@drukair.com.bt /
delhicargo@drukair.com.bt

U.A.E

DUBAI (GSA - Passenger)

Sharaf Travels LLC.
Sharaf Building, Khalid Bin Walid Road,
P.O. Box - 21593, Bur Dubai,
Dubai - United Arab Emirates.
Tel: +971 3976161
Email: dubai@drukair.com.bt

DUBAI (GSA - Cargo)

Sharaf Cargo LLC.
Sharaf Building, 06th Floor,
Mankhool Road, Bur Dubai
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| GSA - General Sales Agent

| PSA - Passenger Sales Agent

| CSA - Cargo Sales Agent

DRUKAIR OFFICES

THAILAND

BANGKOK - AIRPORT OFFICE

Drukair Corporation Ltd.
23-010, 3rd Floor, 999 Moo 1, Airlines office (AOB)
Suvarnabhumi International Airport,
Bangkok, Thailand.
Tel: +66 21343040
Email: bkkkk@drukair.com.bt

GSA - Passenger & Cargo

Oriole Travels & Tours Co Limited.
5th Floor Suite No 141/4, Skulthai Surawong Tower,
Surawong Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand.
Tel: +662 237 92013
Email: bangkok@drukair.com.bt /
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PSA

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10V12-13 Convent Road, Near Sala Daeng BTS,
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Bangkok 10500, Thailand.
Tel: +6626304600; +66246608854
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Starlight Express Private Limited
Starlight Building, Sahayogi Nagar, Janata Sadak,
KTM32, 44600 G.P.O Box 12713, Kathmandu, Nepal.
Tel: +977-1-4155451
Email: kathmanducargo@drukair.com.bt

CSA

Zenith Nepal Cargo Service Pvt. Ltd.
P.O Box: 7237, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal.
Tel: +977 9841579173; +977 9851022305
Email: zenith305@gmail.com
Website: www.zenithcargo.com

GSA - Passenger

Danfere Travel Centre
P.O Box: 4429, Kamalpokhari, Behind Marcopolo
Business Hotel Kathmandu, Nepal.
Tel: +977 01 4528667
Email: kathmandu@drukair.com.bt

CSA

M/s Sunrise International Private Limited
Pulchowk Na tole 19 Lalitpur
Kathmandu, Nepal.
Tel: +977-9849765848/ 77251477/ 17661618
Email: international.sunrise2022@gmail.com

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60, Albert Street, #12-03, OG Albert Complex,
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Tel: +65 8767 9939
Email: singapore@drukair.com.bt

CSA

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60, Albert Street, # 12-05,
OG Albert Complex, Singapore - 189969.
Tel: +65 94238188
Email: info@drukaircargo.com

GSA - Cargo & PSA

Chariot Travels Pte Ltd.
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Singapore - 208511.
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90042659
Email: drukair@chariot.com.sg / singaporecargo@
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JAPAN

TOKYO (GSA - Passenger)

White Bear Family Co. Ltd.
UMAX Bldg 3F 6-21-3 Shimobashi Minato-Ku
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Email: tokyo@drukair.com.bt

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SHANGHAI (GSA - Passenger)

WorldAir Travel Co. Ltd.
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Minhang District, Shanghai.
Tel: +861 3501919559
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KUZU Co., Ltd.
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HONGKONG

HONG KONG (GSA - Passenger)

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2 Ben Gurion Road, Ramat Gan,
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SOUTH KOREA

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Website: www.talaviation.com

enquiry@drukair.com.bt

>> for general enquiry (During weekdays - Working Hrs: 9AM-5PM BST)

reservation@drukair.com.bt

>> for ticket booking and date change before 4 days of departure. (Within Bhutan only)

wearelistening@drukair.com.bt

>> for any complaints and feedback. (During weekdays - Working Hrs: 9AM-5PM BST)

happiness@drukair.com.bt

>> for queries related to HappinessMiles Program

card_refund@drukair.com.bt

>> for any assistance related to ticket purchased from website (During weekdays - Working Hrs: 9AM-5PM BST)

| GSA - General Sales Agent

| PSA - Passenger Sales Agent

| CSA - Cargo Sales Agent

INFO & TIPS



DRUKAIR FLIGHT TIMING

As Bhutan's National Flag carrier operating in and out of Paro, Drukair requests every passenger to refer Conditions of Carriage and the foot note on ticket itinerary. Due to operational challenges out of Paro International Airport in Bhutan that is severely dependent on weather conditions, Drukair makes every effort to maintain the schedule integrity. However due to circumstances beyond our control, schedule timings are subject to change without prior notice. Therefore, we request travelers to check with Drukair offices or its agents for the latest information.



RESERVATION

For any travel requirements, please contact reservation@drukair.com.bt or call our toll free number 1300 (in-country) / +975 8276430 (International) / WhatsApp number +975 17131300 for any assistance required. International airties, tour promoters and travel agents abroad are invited to communicate their reservation requirements with the space control of Drukair.

RECONFIRMATION

Request all passengers to reconfirm their reservations 72 hours prior to departure. For passengers in Bhutan, reconfirmation can be either done at any Drukair offices or you can contact reservation@drukair.com.bt or call Drukair's toll free no: 1300 / WhatsApp number +975 17131300 during office hours 07:00 - 21:00 (GMT+6).

VALIDITY

Tickets issued against full fare are valid for a period of one year from the date of travel, except as otherwise specified in the ticket conditions.



CHANGE IN FARE AND TAXES

Fares and taxes are subject to change without notice. In the event of a passenger commencing journey after a revised tariff becomes effective, the differences between the fare paid and the fare applicable will be collected from the passenger before embarkation.

REFUND AND CANCELLATION

Refund of ticket can be made at the issuing office. For the conditions of refund and cancellation, please check with any Drukair Office.



BAGGAGE

A checked baggage allowance of 40kg in business class and 30kg in economy on international flights and 20kg for economy and 30kg for business class for domestic flights is permissible. An infant under two years of age is not entitled to baggage allowance.

HAND BAGGAGE

For security reasons and your own safety, passengers are allowed to carry only one piece of hand baggage. The total of its three dimensions must not exceed 100 cm, and the weight must not exceed 5 kg in Economy Class and 7 kg in Business Class.



SECURITY

All passengers and their baggage are subject to check before boarding a flight. Transit passengers are therefore requested to remain on board at transit stations as otherwise, they will be again subject to security checks.

According to the Security Regulations, passengers are advised:

Not to accept any baggage/package from unknown person. Not to leave baggage unobserved at anytime especially within airport area. Unattended baggage may be removed by the Airport Security Staff as object of suspicion.

If passengers are carrying any arms or explosive substance, it must be declared before check-in. Concealment is an offense under Aircrafts Act & Rules.

To remove battery/dry cells from radio, transistor sets, two-in-one and other such electrical/electronic items and hand them over to the airline staff before security check or carry them in registered baggage.



CUSTOMS: TOURIST ALLOWANCE

A tourist is allowed to bring any quantity of tobacco products. However, it must be declared at the customs. The import of tobacco products is subjected to 100% Customs Duty.

A tourist shall be allowed to import temporarily free customs duty for his/her personal effects and articles required for the visit, provided that the items imported are for personal use only. A tourist is allowed to bring in one liter of alcohol.

All information mentioned above are based on those valid at the time of print and are, therefore, subject to change. For further information, contact any Drukair Office or its agents in your area or visit our website: www.drukair.com.bt



VISA REQUIREMENTS TO ENTER BHUTAN

Visitors of all nationalities, except those from India, require a visa before entering Bhutan. For all visitors, except those from Bangladesh and the Maldives, this visa must be applied for and approved in advance of travel. Visitors from Bangladesh and the Maldives also require a visa, but this can be applied for and approved either in advance of travel or upon arrival in Bhutan.

Visitors from India are able to apply for a permit but are required to hold an Indian passport or an Indian voter ID card. For Indian nationals under the age of 18, a passport or a birth certificate can be used to enter and they must be accompanied by a legal guardian. Nationals from Switzerland and Thailand holding diplomatic or government-official passports are eligible for a visa at their port of entry.

Before travelling, visitors from India, Bangladesh and the Maldives can apply for a permit (Indian nationals) or visa (Bangladeshi or Maldivian nationals) online. You may also apply at the point of entry, but please be aware that there may be a long wait depending on the number of applicants at the time. We recommend arranging your permit/visa beforehand.

Note to all passengers: All passengers are advised to check their travel document validity. For passengers traveling with their passport, validity of their passport should not be less than six months from the date of departure from Bhutan. Drukair will not be liable and will refuse check-in of those passengers whose passport does not meet the validity requirement.



IMPORTANT INSTRUCTION

For safety, passengers are required to fasten seat belts during take off and landing. However, they are advised to keep the seat belts fastened during the entire flight.

Smoking and chewing "doma" (areca nut and betel leaf) in the aircraft are strictly prohibited.



SPECIAL LOUNGES

Executive/Business Class passengers, including counter upgrades/ FFP entitlements as per FFP policy document can avail the comfort of our special lounges. They offer a buffet service, internet access points and washroom facilities.



TRAVEL TIPS

Transit time should not exceed 24 hours to connect on your onward carrier and to avoid any misconnections. Please note that unfortunately we are unable to offer advice or guidance on frequently changing restrictions in individual countries, therefore all passengers are advised to check related government websites for further travel advice.

As per the notice circulated by Thai Immigration Office to all airlines, visa on arrival for passengers holding one-way or open ticket will not be extended. Therefore, such passengers are advised to obtain necessary visa prior from the concerned diplomatic representations abroad to avoid being inconvenienced and deported. All transit passengers are requested to observe the following procedures pertaining to transit check-in.

Passengers can check-in on Drukair flights on transit at Bangkok without having to go through immigrations. The process is as follows:

Outbound Flights - Out of Paro

To kindly inform the check-in counter at Paro on details of the onward flight

Baggage will then be tagged as transit showing final destination of the passenger on the onward carrier

At the transit check-in at Bangkok passengers are requested to present their baggage tag to the transit desk

The boarding pass is issued on the onward carrier and the baggage transferred

For any special assistance required for groups on transit you may please email enquiry@drukair.com.bt



MEALS & REFRESHMENTS

Drukair offers multi-cuisine menu on board. Bangkok Airways Catering, Paro Catering, Taj Group and SATS provide most of our in-flight catering. Meals are served after a flight is airborne for reasonable duration. The timings are:

Breakfast: 0730 - 1030

Lunch: 1030 - 1430

Dinner: 1830 - 2130

On one-hour sector flight, snacks are served. Refreshment and drinks are served throughout the duration of the flight.

Customs Information

CUSTOMS DECLARATION

Passengers entering Bhutan have to pass through the customs checks. All passengers carrying baggage in excess of allowable limit (which is goods worth US \$1000), or, dutiable goods, or, restricted items, must make declaration in the prescribed form.

Should the passengers fail to make the declaration in whole, or, file incomplete declaration, as against the mandate of Section 96, Ch. 13 of the Customs Act of Bhutan, 2017 (CAB), it shall lead to invocation of Section 143 & 146, Ch. 19 of the CAB.

Note: Baggage or goods in commercial nature shall not be considered as free baggage allowance even if the value of the goods is less than US\$ 1000 or equivalent Ngultrum.

FREE BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE FOR AIR PASSENGERS

Personal effects up to the assessed value of US\$ 1,000 or equivalent

in Ngultrum subject to the ceiling prescribed below:

- Alcohol/Spirits – 2 bottles, each bottle not larger than one liter
- Perfume: 1 bottle, not larger than 2 ounces
- Gold (including jewellery) – 50 grams
- Silver (including jewellery) – 1 kilogram
- Clothing items: Maximum of 10 pieces each of type of clothing whether stitched or unstitched
- Other household or personal goods including electronics and bedding shall be limited to one piece each.
- Items of gifts and presents shall be included in the above free allowance.

Note: Baggage or goods in commercial nature shall not be considered as free baggage allowance even if the value of the goods is less than US\$ 1000 or equivalent Ngultrum.

FREE BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE FOR FOREIGN TOURIST

- Used personal effects and articles reasonably required for the visit provided items imported are for personal use and shall be re-exported upon leaving Bhutan.
- Import free of Customs duty, articles up to Ngultrum 10,000/- or equivalent, for personal use or as gifts and travel souvenirs if carried on the person or in the accompanied baggage, including spirit of not more than two liters and perfume of not more than 100 ml.
- High value articles and sports items as approved and imported in reasonable quantities shall be considered under temporary admission considering that the articles or items are re-exported on leaving Bhutan.

LIST OF RESTRICTED GOODS:

- Arms and Ammunitions
- Gold and Silver in excess of free baggage allowance
- Explosives and explosives devices
- Medicinal products including narcotics and psychotropic substance for medical use
- Other narcotics and psychotropic substances and precursor
- Animal and their parts and products including food
- Plants, their parts (seeds/fruits/flowers/shoots/roots/ tissues) and products
- Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and their products
- Industrial and toxic wastes and residues
- Wireless and remote sensing telecommunication and broadcasting equipment
- Scraps
- Used or second hand goods, vehicles, machinery and equipment
- Chemical and Fertilizers
- Plastic packing materials
- Valuable cultural properties
- Ozone Depleting substances
- Intellectual property rights
- Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS)/Drones

Note: A tourist can bring US\$10,000 or equivalent without declaring. If the amount exceeds US\$10,000, it must be declared at the customs.

LIST OF PROHIBITED GOODS:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

- Narcotics and psychotropic drugs and substances
- Pornographic materials
- Animals and plants classified as endangered species and their parts and products



Department of Revenue and Customs
Ministry of Finance



TONGSA PENLOP
INSPIRE PROGRAM

Powered by Drukair

Wings of Inspiration: Drukair's Tongsa Penlop Inspire Program 2025

The Journey Begins

On a winter morning at Paro International Airport, 47 students from across Bhutan stood ready to embark on a journey that would change their lives. For many, it was their first time seeing an airport, let alone boarding an aircraft. Selected from 20 dzongkhags, the group comprised academically outstanding students from underprivileged backgrounds, including those with special needs. They were part of Drukair's Tongsa Penlop Inspire Program (TPIP), an initiative designed to expand horizons through meaningful exposure.

Before travelling abroad, the students underwent orientation at the Druk Gyalpo's Institute, where they were introduced to travel etiquette, self-grooming, and other essential preparatory sessions. Students were also provided with a full set of travel merchandise to ensure they lacked nothing on the trip.

Learning Across Borders

In Thailand, a new world revealed itself. The scale of Bangkok, the energy of city life, and the experience of staying in a five-star hotel offered perspectives far beyond what many had known. The students interacted with peers at a local school in Bangkok, discovering different approaches to education and new possibilities for their own futures. Visits to Pattaya Beach, Dream World, and Ocean World added moments of joy and wonder, many seeing the ocean for the very first time. These experiences were not just memorable, they were transformative.

Beyond the Journey

At its heart, TPIP addresses a deeper challenge: the inequality of exposure. While infrastructure and resources are vital, the ability to see, experience, and imagine is equally important. By bridging this gap, the program empowers students to think beyond their circumstances and believe in their potential. When the students returned home, they carried more than memories. They brought back confidence, curiosity, and dreams that now stretch far beyond the mountains they once knew.

For Drukair, the mission goes beyond connecting destinations, it is about connecting people to possibility.

Join Us in Inspiring Future Generations

TPIP 2025 represents the third edition of the program, building on the success of its earlier editions in 2018 and 2019. TPIP thrives on community spirit, and Drukair extends a heartfelt invitation for individuals to become a vital part of this transformative endeavor. Your contribution can play a pivotal role in shaping the lives of less privileged students, fostering a brighter future for them. To amplify your generosity, Drukair is committed to matching every contribution on a one-to-one basis, effectively doubling the impact of your support. We believe that by working together, we can create "ripples of positive change that will resonate through generations". For further details on how you can help or to make a contribution, please contact us at:

tpip@drukair.com.bt



Key Information



Trans Bhutan Trail Trek: The Trans Bhutan Trail is a 403km route, spanning from Haa in the West of Bhutan to Trashigang in the East. It is considered one of the world's greatest walks and one of the best hiking routes in Asia. The trail traverses through remote villages, ancient monasteries, terraced fields, dense forests, and pristine alpine meadows, providing a comprehensive glimpse into the country's natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Bumthang Cultural Trek: This trek combines nature and culture, taking you through the beautiful Bumthang Valley, known as the cultural heartland of Bhutan. You can visit ancient temples, monasteries, and remote villages, while enjoying the scenic landscapes of green valleys, pristine forests, and farmlands.

Dagala Thousand Lakes Trek: Offering breathtaking views of high mountain passes and numerous glacial lakes, the Dagala Thousand Lakes Trek is a moderate trek suitable for all fitness levels. The trek takes you through alpine meadows, yak herders' camps, and serene lakes, providing ample opportunities for photography and nature exploration.

Before embarking on any trek in Bhutan, it is essential to obtain the necessary permits and hire a licensed guide. The best time for trekking in Bhutan is during spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) seasons when the weather is favorable and the landscapes are at their most vibrant.

Trekking in Bhutan

Bhutan's breathtaking landscapes and diverse terrains make it a paradise for trekking enthusiasts. From challenging high-altitude treks to scenic and moderate trails, there are various trekking options to explore the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Bhutan. Here are some popular trekking routes to consider:

Druk Path Trek: This trek is a great introduction to Bhutan's natural and cultural wonders. It takes you from Paro to Thimphu, passing through stunning alpine meadows, rhododendron forests, and serene mountain lakes. Along the way, you can also visit ancient monasteries and enjoy panoramic views of the Himalayas.

Jomolhari Trek: Considered one of the most beautiful treks in Bhutan, the Jomolhari Trek offers a challenging yet rewarding experience. It takes you to the base camp of Mount Jomolhari, the second highest peak in Bhutan. The trail passes through remote villages, pristine valleys, and high mountain passes, offering stunning views of snow-capped peaks.

Snowman Trek: For experienced trekkers seeking an ultimate adventure, the Snowman Trek is an epic journey that traverses through Bhutan's remote and untouched wilderness. It is one of the most challenging treks in the world, taking about 27 days to complete. The trail leads through high mountain passes, pristine lakes, and remote villages, showcasing Bhutan's pristine beauty.

Other Treks in Bhutan

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bumdra Trek Bumthang Owl Trek Gangtey Trek Laya Gasa Trek Merak Sakteng Trek Nabji Korphu Trek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rodung La Trek Samtengang Winter Trek Soi Yaktsa Trek Salt Route Trek Sinchula Trek
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Average Temperature

Month	Figures in Centigrade	Paro	Thimphu	Punakha	Wangdue	Trongsa	Bumthang	Mongar	Trashigang	Gelephu
JAN	MAX	9.4	-3	16.1	17.0	13.0	10.8	15.5	20.4	24
	MIN	-5.8	-2.6	4.2	4.3	-0.2	-5.1	8.2	10.5	13
FEB	MAX	13.4	14.4	19.6	19.0	13.9	10.0	15.9	21.7	27
	MIN	1.5	0.6	5.3	7.8	0.4	-1.4	8.3	11.5	15
MAR	MAX	14.5	16.4	21.12	22.8	16.7	16.2	20.0	24.8	32
	MIN	0.6	3.9	9.2	10.4	4.4	3.5	11.6	14.4	22
APR	MAX	17.6	20.0	24.4	26.2	20.1	18.7	2.8	28.3	32
	MIN	4.6	7.1	11.2	12.9	6.6	3.9	14.0	17.0	23
MAY	MAX	23.5	22.5	27.2	29.1	21.0	21.3	25.1	30.0	31
	MIN	10.6	13.1	14.2	17.7	11.6	9.5	17.4	20.6	25
JUN	MAX	25.4	24.4	31.2	29.2	22.2	22.5	26.1	30.7	31
	MIN	14.1	15.2	19.5	20.1	13.6	3.5	19.5	22.6	26
JUL	MAX	26.8	18.9	32.0	18.4	25.3	14.1	16.1	30.5	31
	MIN	14.9	13.4	21.6	16.2	15.3	10.9	15.8	23.1	26
AUG	MAX	25.3	25.0	31.4	29.1	23.8	23.0	25.4	30.2	32
	MIN	14.7	15.8	19.8	20.0	15.0	13.7	19.6	22.7	26
SEPT	MAX	23.4	23.1	29.9	27.5	22.6	21.6	24.7	30.0	31
	MIN	11.7	15.0	20.4	19.1	14.2	12.1	19.4	23.9	25
OCT	MAX	18.7	21.9	27.8	26.1	21.8	19.5	22.7	29.1	30
	MIN	7.4	12.4	18.9	14.7	11.7	5.9	15.8	17.7	22
NOV	MAX	13.9	17.9	22.3	22.6	19.8	16.1	19.9	26.1	28
	MIN	1.4	5.0	13.0	9.6	6.4	-0.5	11.2	13.6	17
DEC	MAX	11.2	14.5	15.0	19.1	18.2	12.3	15.7	23.0	25
	MIN	-1.7	-1.1	7.9	6.3	2.5	-2.3	9.5	11.6	14

Driving Time Between Various Places in Bhutan (For tourists)

FROM	TO	DISTANCE (KM)	DRIVING TIME (APPROX)
Thimphu	Paro	49.9	1 hr
Thimphu	Phuentsholing	146.2	4 hrs
Phuentsholing	Bagdora	154.7	4 hrs
Thimphu	Wangduephodrang	70	3 hrs
Thimphu	Punakha	77	3 hrs
Punakha	Wangduephodrang	13	45 min
Wangduephodrang	Trongsa	129	4 hrs 30 min
Trongsa	Bumthang	68	2 hrs
Bumthang	Mongar	193	7 hrs
Mongar	Lhuentse	75	3 hrs
Mongar	Trashigang	91	3 hrs 30 min
Trashigang	Chorten Kora	51	2 hrs
Trashigang	Samdrup Jongkhar	180	7 hrs
Samdrup Jongkhar	Guwahati	110	3 hrs
Samdrup Jongkhar	Phuentsholing	400	10 hrs
Thimphu	Gelephu	243	6 hrs 30 min
Phuentsholing	Gelephu	196.6	4 hrs 45 min

Festival Dates for 2026

FESTIVAL NAME	FESTIVAL LOCATION	FESTIVAL DATE
Lhamoi Dromchhen	Trongsa Dzong, Trongsa	22nd – 24th February
Punakha Dromchoe	Punakha Dzong, Punakha	24th – 26th February
Punakha Tshechu	Punakha Dzong, Punakha	27th, 28th February – 1st March
Tharpaling Thongdrol	Tharpaling Lhakhang, Chumi, Bumthang	3rd March
Tangsibi Mani	Tangsibi Lhakhang, Ura Bumthang	4th – 6th March
Chhorten Kora	Chorten Kora, Trashiyangtse	3rd March & 19th March
Gomphukora	Gom Kora Lhakhang, Trashiyangtse	26th – 28th March
Talo Tshechu	Talo Gonpa, Punakha	26th – 28th March
Gasa Tshechu	Gasa Dzong, Gasa	26th – 28th March
Zhemgang Tshechu	Zhemgang Dzong, Zhemgang	26th – 28th March
Paro Tshechu	Rinpung Dzong, Paro	29th March – 2nd April (Thongdral on last day)
Rhododendron Festival	Lamperi Botanical Park, Thimphu	13th – 14th April
Domkhar Tshechu	Domkhar, Chumi, Bumthang	26th – 28th April
Ura Yakchoe	Ura Lhakhang, Bumthang	28th April – 2nd May
Nimalung Tshechu	Nimalung Dratshang, Chumi, Bumthang	22nd – 24th June
Kurjey Tshechu	Kurjey Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang	24th June
Tour of the Dragon (Mountain Bike Race)	Bumthang to Thimphu	5th September
Thimphu Drubchen	Tashi Chhodzong, Thimphu	17th September
Haa Tshechu	Lhakhang Karpo, Haa	19th – 21st September
Wangdue Tshechu	Wangduephodrang	19th – 21st September
Tamshing Phala Chhoepa	Tamshing Lhakhang, Bumthang	21st – 23rd September
Thimphu Tshechu	Tashi Chhodzong, Thimphu	21st – 23rd September
Gangtey Tshechu	Gangtey Gonpa, Wangduephodrang	24th – 26th September (Thongdral on last day)
Thangbi Mewang	Thangbi Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang	26th – 27th September
Pemagatshel Tshechu	Pemagatshel Dzong, Pemagatshel	18th – 21st October (Thongdral on last day)
Jhomolhari Mountain Festival	Dangochong, Thimphu	14th – 15th October
Chhukha Tshechu	Chhukha Dzong, Chhukha	19th – 21st October
Dechenphu Tshechu	Dechenphu Lhakhang, Thimphu	21st October
Jakar Tshechu	Jakar Dzong, Choekhor, Bumthang	18th – 21st October
Jambay Lhakhang Drup	Jambay Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang	26th – 29th October
Traakar Duchhoed	Traakar Khakhang, Chummi, Bumthang	27th – 29th October
Black Necked Crane Festival	Gangtey Gonpa, Phobjikha, Wangduephodrang	11th November
Goenpai Drupchen	Trongsa Dzong, Trongsa	14th – 16th November
Mongar Tshechu	Mongar Dzong, Mongar	17th – 19th November
Trashigang Tshechu	Trashigang Dzong, Trashigang	18th th – 20th November
Phuntsholing Tshechu	Phuntsholing, Chhukha	17th – 19th November
Jambay Lhakhang Singye Cham	Jambay Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang	24th November
Nalakar Tshechu	Ngaa Lhakhang, Choekhor, Bumthang	24th – 26th November
Druk Wangyel Tshechu	Douchula, Thimphu	13th December
Trongsa Tshechu	Trongsa Dzong, Trongsa	17th – 21st December (Thongdral on last day)
Lhuentse Tshechu	Lhuentse Dzong, Lhuentse	17th – 21st December (Thongdral on last day)
Samdrupjongkhar Tshechu	Samdrupjongkhar	22nd – 24th December
Nabji Lhakhang Drup	Nabji Lhakhang, Nabji, Trongsa	24th – 26th December

National Holidays 2026

Jan 2	Winter Solstice (Nyilo)
Jan 19	Traditional Day of Offerings
Feb 18–19	Losar (Fire Male Horse Year)
Feb 21–23	Birth Anniversary of His Majesty the King
May 2	Birth Anniversary of Third Druk Gyalpo
June 24	Birth Anniversary of Guru Rinpoche
July 18	Buddha's First Sermon
Sept 17	Thimphu Drubchoe
Sept 21–23	Thimphu Tshechu
Sept 23	Blessed Rainy Day
Oct 26	Dashain
Nov 1	Coronation Day of His Majesty the King
Nov 7	Descending Day of Lord Buddha
Nov 11	Birth Anniversary of 4th Druk Gyalpo/Constitution Day
Dec 17	National Day

Negative list on movement of tourist within Bhutan

Prohibited Areas

Place	Dzongkhag
Chekha	Paro
Changju	Samtse
Singye Dzong	Lhuentse
Tobrang	Trashiyangtse
Takpang	Lhuentse
Singphey	Trashiyangtse
Tshampa	Bumthang
Beyond Haa Damthang	Haa

Restricted Areas

Place	Dzongkhag
Gunitsawa	Paro
Soi	Thimphu
Khatang	Bumthang
Lingzhi	Thimphu
Beyond Bumdeling	Trashiyangtse

Note: However, tourist will be allowed to visit restricted areas identified as trekking route by the Department of Tourism if accompanied by trekking guide.



Basic Dzongkha

INTRODUCTIONS

Greetings and well wishes

Kuzuzangpola

What is your name?

(for elders or with respect)

Na gi Tshen Ga Chi Mo?

What is your name?

(for friends)

Chhoey gi Ming Ga Chi Mo?

My name is

Ngegi Ming.....Ein

Where are you from?

Chhoey ga te lay mo?

How old are you?

Kay Lo gadem chi Ya si?



Good bye: Log Jay Gay.
(Meaning we will meet again)

TRAVEL TALK

Where does this road lead to?

Lam di ga thay jow mo?

Is it far?

Tha ring sa in-na?

Here : Na/ Nalu

There : Pha/ Phalu

Where? : Ga Tey?

Which? : Gadee?

In front of : Dongkha

Next to : Bolokha

Behind : Japkha



SHOPPING CONVERSATION

What time does it open?

Chutsho gademchi lu go pchuu mo?

What time does it close?

Chutsho gademchi lu go dam mo?

What is this? : Ani ga chi mo?

How much is it? : Dilu gadem chi mo?

That's too much : Gong bom may



Waiter! : Wai Chharo!
(literally meaning friend)

Waitress : Wai Bumo!
(literally meaning girl)

Please Have/ Eat : Zhey

Water : Chhu

Hot Water : Chhu Tshe

Milk Tea : Na Ja

Butter Tea : Su Ja

Get me : ...Nang



TELEPHONE TETE-A TETE

Hello : Kuzoozangpo La

Who is speaking : Ga Sung Mo La?

I'm....Speaking : NgaZhu Do La

Yes, Yes : Ong, Ong

Yes in Affirmative : Ein Ein La

Roger/ Signing off : Las La. Laso La

It was tasty

Zhim bay (While making a gesture of moving one's forefinger in front of the cheek)



No more, thanks

Me Zhu (while making a gesture of moving one's hand in front of the mouth)



Thank you
Kardrinchhey

EMERGENCY ESSENTIALS

I'm ill : Nga nau may

Where is the hospital?

Menkhang ga tey in na?

Where is the toilet?

Chhapsa ga tey in-na?



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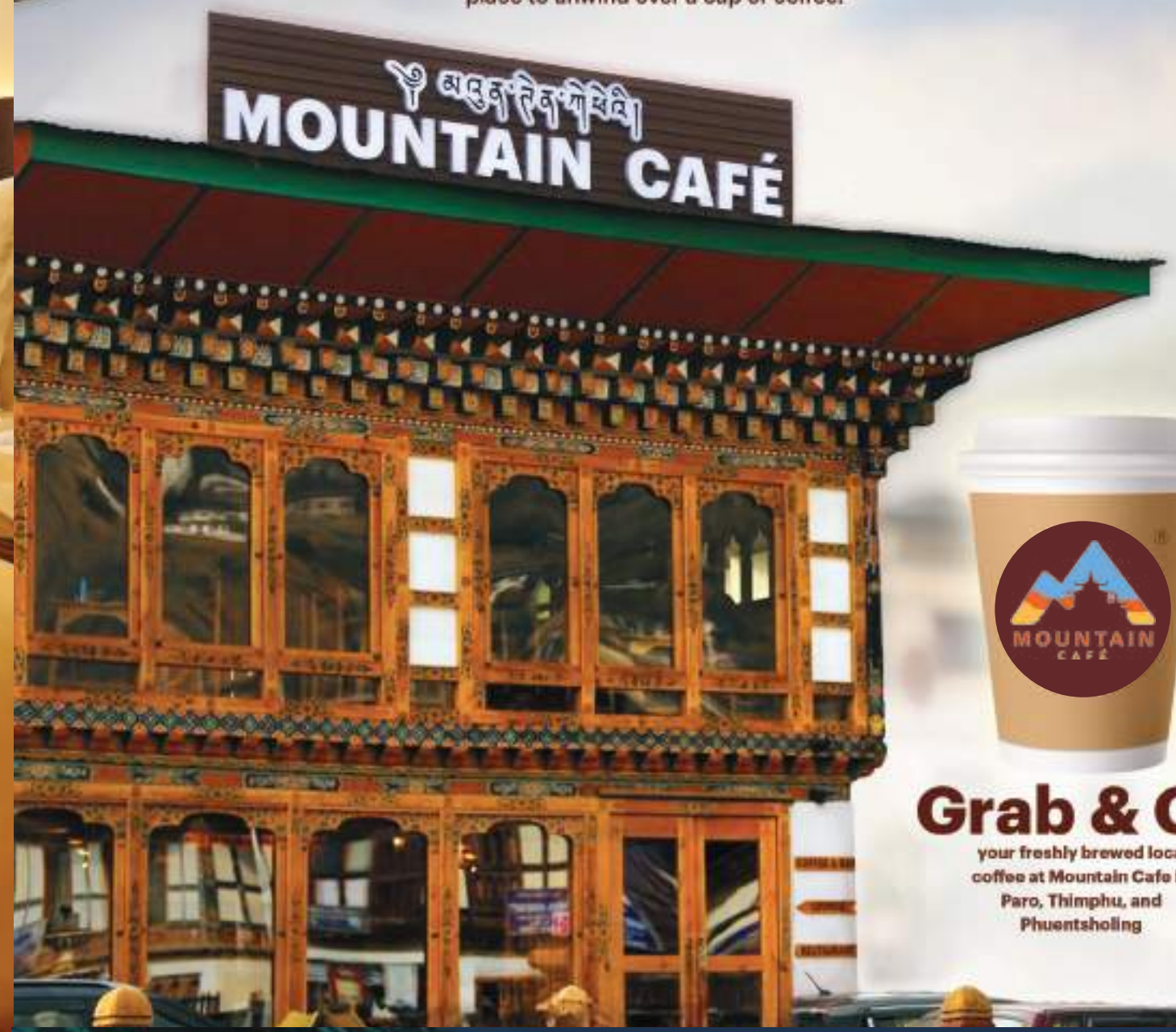
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