

# 7 Days 6 Nights Spectacular Bhutan

## 5 Nights Stay in Bhutan

*Depart from Kuala Lumpur / Penang via Bangkok itinerary*

由吉隆坡或檳城出發，途經曼谷

 **XPEDITION TRAVEL**  
Boutique Travel



*Bhutan is that those special memories you have from your journey live on long after the pictures have faded.*

不丹處於中國和印度之間，喜馬拉雅山脈下。它的土地不肥沃，礦產不豐富，國民所得不高，卻是世界上最快樂的國家。



Welcome. You are a very lucky person, because if you decide to visit the Land of the Thunder Dragon it will be an adventure you will always remember an experience you will never forget. Why? Because Bhutan will leave few of your certainties intact.

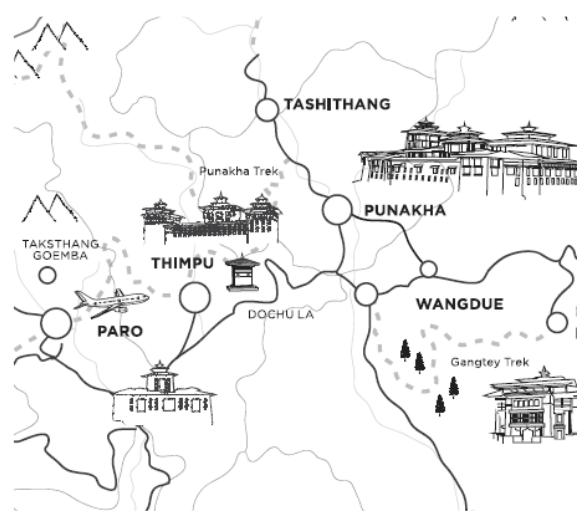
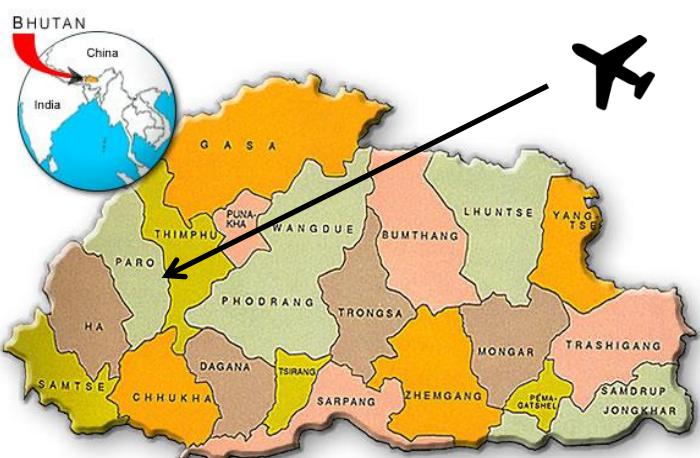
Bhutan is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. It has about 11 major valleys and rivers and streams flowing with crystal clear water and fertile paddy fields in the valley. High mountain ranges with perching monasteries and houses make the scene enthralling.

If you didn't know better, you could easily believe that the visual splendor of Bhutan is its justification. And you will soon discover that the Bhutanese are a humorous, laid back and marvelous people to whom manners are a gift and hospitality a law. It is a society that retains courtesy, respect for elders, and the rhythm of a less complicated life. There is a lightness of being, a warm pride in their kingdom and a genuine curiosity of the outside world.

您是一個很幸運的人。因為當您決定到雷龍之地旅行，這將是您一個無法忘記的冒險經驗。為什麼呢？因為不丹將確認您離開時難以忘懷。

不丹是世界上最美麗的國家之一。它有大約 11 个主要的山谷。河流和溪流流動在山谷和肥沃的稻田中。棲息的寺廟和老房子更使風景迷人。

如果你不了解，你可能認為，不丹的景是它輝煌的理由。但你很快發現，不丹是一個幽默，悠閒和奇妙的國度。這社會保持禮貌和尊敬，還有並不太複雜的生活節奏。除此之外，就是在不丹的溫暖和驕傲還有外界對他們的好奇。



## Your Sample Itinerary 行程內容

### Day 1 KUALA LUMPUR/ PENANG - BANGKOK 第1天 檳城/ 吉隆坡- 曼谷

Travel from Kuala Lumpur/ Penang by flight to Bangkok for one night stay. Enjoy free time to explore Bangkok. 今日，群集於檳城或吉隆坡國際機場，飛往泰國首府-曼谷。抵達曼谷機場後，入住當地酒店。全天自由活動。

**Hotel 酒店** On your own expense in Bangkok 曼谷自費

**Flight 航班** Exclude return flight 不包括回程航班。

### Day 2 BANGKOK- PARO [Elevation 2,250 m]- THIMPHU [Elevation 2,320 m] 第2天 曼谷- 帕羅 PARO 【海拔 2,250 米】 - 廷布海拔 【2,320 米】 Distance 60 km | Driving Approximately 1 hour 距離 60 公里 | 車程約 1 小時

Depart Bangkok on an early morning flight. Arrive at Paro International Airport. Upon arrival at Paro, Visit historic **Kyichu Lhakhang**, this is the first and oldest temple, as believed built in early 7th century and the first outposts of Buddhism in Bhutan. Houses one of the oldest temples in Bhutan called Jowo Temple, originally built in the 7th century by the Tibetan ruler Songsten Gyambo. It is believed that in the 8th century, the temple was visited by Guru Rimpoche and concealed many spiritual treasures. Recently, this temple was so famous by the marriage of Tony Leong and Carina Lau (Hong Kong celebrity).

清晨的航班从曼谷出发。抵达帕罗国际机场。抵达帕罗后，参观历史悠久的吉曲寺，这是第一个和最古老的寺庙，因为相信建于 7 世纪初和佛教在不丹的第一个前哨基地。房子是不丹最古老的寺庙之一，被称为觉窝寺，最初由西藏统治者 Songsten Gyambo 建于公元 7 世纪。据认为，在公元 8 世纪，大师仁波切参观了寺庙和寺庙内也隐蔽许多精神财富。最近，这座寺庙是著名梁朝伟和刘嘉玲（香港名人）的结婚地点。



Later, visit to **Tamchhu Lhakhang** built by Thangtong Gyalpo, the so-called Iron Bridge Builder. This former saint from 14th century introduced the art of building suspension bridges with iron chains and the only way to reach his temple is by one of these bridges.

游览汤东杰布的 寺庙。这个从 14 世纪前圣人引进建设悬索桥用铁链。只有这样，才能达到他的寺庙。而这个建造桥梁的艺术仍然延用至今

**Hotel 酒店** Ariya Hotel, Thimphu or similar

**Meal 膳食** Meal on Board | Lunch | Dinner 機上用餐 | 午餐 | 晚餐

## Your Sample Itinerary 行程內容

### Day 3 THIMPHU [Elevation 2,320 m] 第3天 廷布【海拔2,320米】

This morning, visit to **National Memorial Chorten** which located on Doeboom Lam in the southern-central part of the city near the main roundabout and Indian military hospital. The chorten, built in 1974 to honour the 3rd King of Bhutan, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1928–1972), is a prominent landmark in the city with its golden spires and bells. Later, proceed to **Gagyal Lhundup Weaving Centre** for Bhutanese Costume and **Kunzang Phodrang Buddha Point**. The 169 feet bronze statue of Buddha Dordenma, Vajra Throne Buddha symbolising indestructibility. View the tallest statue of Lord Buddha. The view of Thimphu valley from the Buddha point is spectacular and beautiful.

作为廷布的标志性建筑，**不丹国家纪念碑**是按不丹三世国王晋美·多吉·旺楚克陛下(现代不丹之父)的设想而建的。1974年佛塔完成后，他却不幸逝世。这是一个既为纪念已故国王，同时为世界和平而建的纪念碑，也是廷布人每日转塔最集中的地方。当地人认为转塔可以洗清先前犯下的罪孽。国家纪念碑同时也是一座佛塔，内部珍藏许多神圣的宗教绘画和密宗佛像。接下来前往**不丹传统纺织中心及大佛观景点参观**。大佛观景点- 金刚座佛，169 英尺金刚座佛铜像象征着不灭的佛法。

**Chang Gangkha Lhakhang**. Built in the 12th century, Changangkha Lhakhang is the oldest temple in Thimphu. It is hovering over a ridge above Thimphu, near Motithang. Lama Phajo Drukgom Zhigpo who came to Bhutan from Ralung in Tibet chose this site to build this lhakhang. The Lhakhang houses Chenrizig: an 11-headed, thousand-armed manifestation of Avolokitesawara as the central statue.

The prayer books in this Lhakhang are larger than the usual Buddhist texts. There are large prayers inside the Lhakhang and small on the walls outside the lhakhang. The Lhakhang was last renovated in 1998. .

**章崗拉康【Changangkha Lhakhang】**又稱章西卡宗堡、昌崗卡寺，是不丹最老的藏传佛教寺庙之一。它的歷史可以追溯到12世紀，寺廟于1998年被修復。這裡一直香火旺盛，在不丹人民的心裡，這是一座保佑小孩的寺廟。所有廷布出生的孩子都到這裡祈願佑護，剛出生的嬰兒會被父母抱來寺廟讓師傅起名。

Later, visit to **Folk Heritage Museum**, **Jungshi Handmade Paper Factory**, **Takin Zoo** and **Farmers Centenary Market**, largest domestic market for the farmers in Bhutan.

参观**民间遗产博物馆**，内有一个非常古老的传统民房，收集着来自王室或民间的稀有古董。**造纸中心及百年农夫市场**，一个满是当地农产品和手工艺品的多彩市场。

**Hotel 酒店** Ariya Hotel, Thimphu or similar

**Meal 膳食** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner 早餐 | 午餐 | 晚餐

Kunzang Phodrang Buddha Point 大佛像



Folk Heritage Museum 不丹民俗博物馆



Jungshi Handmade Paper Factory



National Memorial Chorten 不丹国家纪念碑



## Your Sample Itinerary 行程內容

### Day 4 THIMPHU- PUNAKHA [Elevation 1,300 m] 廷布- 普那卡【海拔 1,300 米】 第 4 天 Distance 87 km | Driving Approximately 3.5-hour 距離 87 公里 | 車程約 3 ½ 小時

Travel from Thimphu to Punakha via **Dochula Pass**. The most well-known pass in Bhutan, Dochula Pass is located about 30 km away from the capital of Bhutan, Thimphu. The 108 chortens were built by Queen Mother to honor the Bhutanese soldiers who were killed when fighting the Indian rebels in 2003. Bhutan was forced to repel the rebels as failing to do so, India threatened to enter the country to do so themselves.

Visit famous **Chimi Lhakhang**, also known as Chime Lhakhang or Monastery or temple, is a Buddhist monastery in Punakha District, Bhutan. Located near Lobesa, it stands on a round hillock and was built in 1499 by the 14th Drukpa hierarch, Ngawang Choegyel, after the site was blessed by the "Divine Madman" the maverick saint Drukpa Kinley who built a chorten on the site.

The **Punakha Dzong**, also known as Pungtang Dechen Phothrang Dzong (meaning "the palace of great happiness or bliss") is the administrative centre of Punakha dzongkhag in Punakha, Bhutan. Constructed by Zhabdrung (Shabdrung) Ngawang Namgyal in 1637–38, it is the second oldest and second largest dzong in Bhutan and one of its most majestic structures. The Dzong houses the sacred relics of the southern Drukpa Kagyu school including the Rangjung Kasarpani, and the sacred remains of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and Terton Padma Lingpa. Punakha Dzong was the administrative centre and the seat of the Government of Bhutan until 1955, when the capital was moved to Thimphu.

繼續向東行前往普那卡，不丹的古都。途中穿過多雄拉山口 **Dochula Pass**。在這裡，不僅可以欣賞到喜馬拉雅山脈的壯麗景色，還可以看到"108 座佛塔"。佛塔是不丹政府為了紀念在剿滅不丹南部阿薩姆反政府武裝中喪生的人，同時也為世界和平祈禱而於 2005 所建立的。

在普那卡，參觀切米拉康 **Chimi Lakhang** - 位於 Puna Tsang Chhu 河邊的高崗上，是喇嘛朱卡庫拉的堂兄為紀念他降伏惡魔而建的寺廟。此地為求子聖地，有多年無子信徒在此地得喇嘛賜福後，回去即有身孕。

普那卡宗 **Punakha Dzong** 古時被稱為快樂宮殿，坐落於父親河和母親河的匯合處。於公元 1637 年開始修建。中央塔樓長近 183 米、寬 7 米多，高 6 層，呈長方形。這裡還收藏了大批的不丹佛教手、神聖的佛教名人名冊、規格各異的宗教畫和逼真的宗教名人肖像。在顏色瑰麗的高塔裡，保存着古代不丹沙布隆的真身遺體，遺體以香料防腐。安放遺體的房间，除了國王和某些高級喇嘛外，誰都不能進去。在 1950 年以前，普納卡城堡是不丹最高統治者的住所和舉行重要國家儀式的場所，現在是基堪布大主教喇嘛（即法王）的冬宮。在每年的 10 月 1 日至翌年的 4 月 1 日（不丹曆），基堪布喇嘛都要從廷布扎西却城堡夏宮搬遷到普納卡堡過冬。所以，這個城堡在不丹的民族事務和宗教事務方面都佔有顯著的位置。

**Hotel 酒店** Boutique Hotel, Punakha or similar

**Meal 膳食** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner 早餐 | 午餐 | 晚餐

多雄拉山口 **Dochula Pass**



## Your Sample Itinerary 行程內容

**Day 5 PUNAKHA- THIMPHU- PARO [Elevation 2,250 m]**

**普那卡 - 廷布- 帕羅【海拔 2,250 米】**

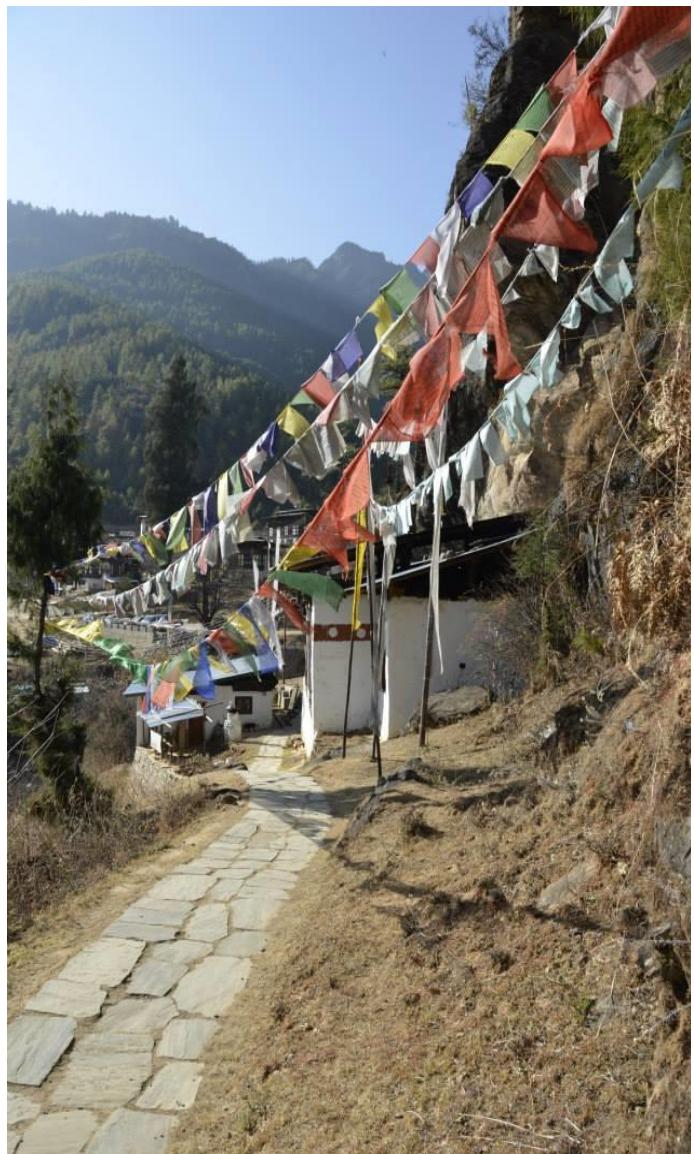
**Distance 134 km | Driving Approximately 4-hour 距離 134 公里 | 車程約 4 小時**

Travel back to Paro via Thimphu. Visit **Drukgyel Dzong Fortress** (in ruins) (Fortress of the Victorians Drukpas), a victory over the invading Tibetans in 1644. Once the invasions ceased, this was the route used for trade from Tibet and Bhutan.

驅車返回廷布。遊覽杜克耶堡【Drukgyel Dzong】遺址距離帕羅 (Paro) 14 公里，豎立矗立在一個叫 Drukgyel 村上面的一塊大岩石上，被四周的梯田包圍着。它是由 Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel 為了紀念不丹戰勝西藏入侵者而於 1649 年所建立的。之後 Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel 的後裔就一直居住於此直到 1951 年。據說是由於當地人用火失誤引起的火災而被毀。現在被不丹政府列為國家遺址，減少人們對它進一步的破壞。

**Hotel 酒店** Taksang Camp, Paro or similar

**Meal 膳食** Breakfast | Lunch | Dinner 早餐 | 午餐 | 晚餐



## Your Sample Itinerary 行程內容

### Day 6 帕羅 PARO 第 6 天

After breakfast, visit to **Paro Taktsang** (also known as Tiger's Nest), a prominent Himalayan Buddhist sacred site and temple complex, located in the cliffside of the upper Paro valley, in Bhutan. A temple complex was first built in 1692, around the Taktsang Senge Samdup cave where Guru Padmasambhava is said to have meditated for three years, three months, three weeks, three days, and three hours in the 8th century. Padmasambhava is credited with introducing Buddhism to Bhutan and is the tutelary deity of the country. Today, Paro Taktsang is the best known of the thirteen taktsang or "tiger lair" caves in which he meditated.

虎穴寺 【Taktshang Goemba or Tiger's Nest Monastery】，扶搖凌駕于高出帕羅峽谷 900 多米的懸崖峭壁上，是不丹王國最著名的佛教聖寺。這裡是傳說中 8 世紀時，印度高僧蓮花生大師在不丹冥想的地方。虎穴寺也因此成為了受到全不丹信徒頂禮膜拜的聖地，并被譽為世界十大寺廟之一。虎穴寺始建於 1692 年，在 1998 年的晚上遭遇了一場來歷不明的毀滅性火災。之後，虎穴寺一度曾嚴禁普通游客進入，即使是教徒的進入也被嚴格限制。經過不丹全國人民的共同努力，虎穴寺於 2005 年重建完成并重新向世界展示。虎穴寺是一個集風光與藝術於一體的寺廟。寺內每個建築都有一个陽台，可欣賞到優美的帕羅河谷風景。整個院落建築群由四個主殿堂和居住區域組成，它們大多依山據地而不規則地修建。遠望去，虎穴寺如同攀附在峭壁上的一只壁虎。要進入供奉蓮花生大師和千手觀音佛像的主洞穴，需要通過一個狹窄的通道。在黑暗的洞穴中，閃爍着酥油燈，你可以看到踏在雌虎之上的蓮花生大師怒型化身多吉卓洛，這便是當年蓮花生大師來此修行的描述。此外，這間佛堂中還藏有一幅優雅的千手觀音圖像以及數十個菩薩像。

**Hotel** 酒店 Taksang Camp, Paro or similar

**Meal** 膳食 Breakfast | Vegetarian Lunch | Dinner 早餐 | 素午餐 | 晚餐



## Your Sample Itinerary 行程內容

### Day 7 PARO- BANGKOK- KUALA LUMPUR/ PENANG 第 7 天 帕羅- 曼谷- 槟城/吉隆坡

Drive to Paro International Airport for home departure. Your flight will arrive at 4pm, kindly ensure your onward connecting flight is at least 3 hours or more. Bangkok flight to Kuala Lumpur/ Penang is not inclusive. If you wish to extend an additional night in Bangkok; you may do so on your own arrangement.

早餐后乘机返回国内，结束愉快的行程。您的航班将于下午 4 点抵达，请确保您的后续转机航班至少有 3 小时或更长时间。不包括从曼谷飞往吉隆坡/槟城的航班。如果您想在曼谷多住一晚，您可以自行承担费用。

**Meal** 膳食 Breakfast | Meal on Board 早餐 | 機上用餐

## Your Sample Flight Details 航班內容



Flight operated by **Bhutan Airlines**:

FLIGHT NUMBER	FLIGHT SECTOR	FLIGHT TIMING
<b>B3701</b> <i>*Do not fly on Thursdays*</i>	<b>Bangkok-Kolkata-Paro</b> <i>*Transit in Kolkata for fuel stop, not leaving aircraft*</i>	<b>0630-0955</b>
<b>B3700</b> <i>*Do not fly on Wednesdays*</i>	<b>Paro-Kolkata-Bangkok</b> <i>*Transit in Kolkata for fuel stop, not leaving aircraft*</i>	<b>1035-1605</b>

*\*Kindly note that Bhutan is 2 hours behind; Bangkok is 1 hour behind local time\**

Base on per person basis in MYR/ USD – (Private Group 5 pax)	Local Bhutan 4 Star Hotel (Lean Season)	Local Bhutan 4 Star Hotel (Peak Season)
Include Airfares: Bangkok – Paro – Bangkok Return Economy Class	MYR 15,888.00 per person/ USD 3,242.00 per person	MYR 16,366.00 per person/ USD 3,340.00 per person
Twin Sharing Occupancy (Minimum 2 paxs)		
Single Room Occupancy – 5 Nights	MYR 18,288.00 per person/ USD 3,732.00 per person	MYR 18,788.00 per person/ USD 3,834.00 per person

### The booking and reservation process: -

1. We will be booking your return flight (Bangkok to Paro) confirmation of tour with a full flight fare of MYR5000 inclusive of issuance of non-refundable air tickets.
2. Balance Full Payment 60 days prior to tour departure, for visa and SDF application.
3. We recommend you to obtain travel insurance for your travel upon the issuance of air ticket.
4. Any single room will be charged a single supplement fee as stated above on the tour fares.

### Payment Terms: Online to our bank account or by cheque payable to: -

Xpedition Travel Sdn Bhd

CIMB Bank BHD

Account no: 8010157599

Beneficiary Name: Xpedition Travel Sdn Bhd

Beneficiary Contact: 6012 4740704

Beneficiary Email: chanetham@xpdtravel.com

Swift Code - CIBBMYKL

Bank Address: MENARA BHL

NO 51, JLN SULTAN AHMAD SHAH

10050 Penang. Malaysia.

## HISTORY

### Ancient Ruin of Drukgyel Dzong

The ancient ruin of Drukgyel Dzong, considered as the most beautiful and famous archaeological sites in Bhutan, is situated on a ridge in the upper Paro valley. Since its construction in 1649, Drukgyel Dzong had been served as an important base for defense in the region until 1951 when it was destroyed by fire. Even after the destruction, the ruins of the Dzong continued to be protected as an important monument linking people of Bhutan with the great events that contributed in maintaining sovereignty of the country. Drukgyel Dzong is one of the Dzongs built by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the lineage holder of Drukpa-Kagyud Buddhist School and the unifier of Bhutan who came to Bhutan in 1616 escaping the conflict over recognition of the principal abbot of the Drukpa-Kagyud School in Ralung, Tibet. Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and his successors constructed several fortresses called Dzong in the process of gaining control over different regions of the country, which were dominated by clergies and leaders of different Buddhist schools. These Dzongs were designed as fortress at the time of power struggles as well as a court of clergies and administrators after Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal established the unique dual government system headed by Je Kenpo (the Head of religious affairs) and Desi (the Head of temporal affairs).

Unlike other Dzongs built by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and his successors, Drukgyel Dzong was served solely for defensive purpose without administrative and religious functions, especially against external threats from the border. The Dzong had housed the best armoury in the country at the time. As the name of the Dzong indicates (Druk is the local name for Bhutan, while Gyal means victory), it is said that it was built to commemorate Bhutanese victory over the combined forces of Tibetan and Mongolian army, which attempted several invasions to the country. Thus, the Dzong was built at the strategic site near the border with Tibet for strengthening defense against future invasions.

The existing ruins of the Dzong are comparatively well preserved. One can without much difficulty understand or distinguish features of the complex. Although most of timber components of the Dzong such as roof truss, door and window frames, and floors and ceilings are almost totally absent, major portion of stone and rammed earth wall structures are still standing. They provide visitors in understanding ideas and practices for defense in the olden times.

The Dzong consists of Utse, the central tower building, which housed a shrine of guardian deities, and Shabkhor, rectangular buildings surrounding the courtyards. It was built adapting to the geographical condition of the hill and formed a distinct design. The high and massive stone masonry walls of Shabkhor buildings stood on the steep slope of the hill entirely enclosing the inner space of the Dzong, making approach to Dzong possible only from the single entrance, which is heavily guarded by several ta-dzongs (watching forts) cylindrical in shape situated between the entrance and foot of the hill. Secret tunnels providing protected passages to fetch water from the river below the hill as well as to send troops during the time of war are said to have existed. Presently, cylindrical tower buildings called chu-dzong (water fort) can be seen connected with each other with paths enclosed by defensive walls.



## HISTORY

### Kyichu Lhakhang



The Jowo Temple of Kyichu is one of the oldest temples in Bhutan, originally built in the 7th century by the Tibetan Emperor Songtsän Gampo. It is considered to be one of the 108 border taming temples he built.

In the 8th century the temple was visited by Padmasambhava and it is believed he concealed many spiritual treasures here.

Je Khenpo Sherab Gyaltshen wrote that during the 12th century the temple was looked after by the Lhapa Kagyu tradition and that during the 13th century it was handed over to a descendant of Phajo Drugom Zhigpo's son Nyima.

In his *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History*, Jigdral Yeshe Dorje (2nd Dudjom Rinpoche) records that the Jowo Temple of Kyichu could not be seen and that Pema Lingpa (1450-1521) uncovered the temple and restored it as it was before. In 1644 the temple was taken over by Ngawang Namgyal. From 1836 to 1838 the temple was restored and re-consecrated by the 25th Je Khenpo Sherab Gyaltshen.

In 1971, Kesang Choden Wangchuck, the queen of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck built a Guru Temple next to the old Jowo Temple which was consecrated by Dilgo Khyentse. Ever since then the annual rites of great accomplishment for the deities Vajrasattva, Palchen Heruka, and Vajrakilaya have been held in this temple for the well-being of the country under the patronage of Kesang Choden Wangchuck.

There is a belief that the two orange trees in the courtyard of Kyichu Lhakhang bear fruit throughout the year.

### National Memorial Chorten

It is a monument to the Third Druk Gyalpo and to World Peace

You will find elderly Bhutanese people circumambulating the Chorten throughout the day. Chorten literally means 'Seat of Faith' and Buddhists often call such monuments, the 'Mind of Buddha'. The chorten is an extraordinary example of Buddhist architecture and artwork with its gorgeous paintings and intricate sculptures.

The chorten is a large white structure crowned with a golden spire. It is located close to the center of Thimphu city and is one of its most iconic monuments.



## HISTORY

### Chimi Lhakhang

Chimi Lhakhang, also known as Chime Lhakhang or Monastery or temple, is a Buddhist monastery in Punakha District, Bhutan. Located near Lobesa, it stands on a round hillock and was built in 1499 by the 14th Drukpa hierarch, Ngawang Choegyel, after the site was blessed by the "Divine Madman" the maverick saint Drukpa Kunley (1455–1529) who built a chorten on the site.

In finding the site it is said that Lama Kunley subdued a demon of Dochu La with his "magic thunderbolt of wisdom" and trapped it in a rock at the location close to where the chorten now stands. He was known as the "Mad Saint" or "Divine Madman" for his unorthodox ways of teaching Buddhism by singing, humour and outrageous behaviour, which amounted to being bizarre, shocking and with sexual overtones. He is also the saint who advocated the use of phallus symbols as paintings on walls and as flying carved wooden phalluses on house tops at four corners of the eves. The monastery is the repository of the original wooden symbol of phallus that Kunley brought from Tibet. This wooden phallus is decorated with a silver handle and is used to bless people who visit the monastery on pilgrimage, particularly women seeking blessings to beget children. The tradition at the monastery is to strike pilgrims on the head with a 10 inch (25 cm) wooden phallus (erect penis). Traditionally symbols of an erect penis in Bhutan have been intended to drive away the evil eye and malicious gossip



## HISTORY

### Punakha Dzong

The Punakha Dzong, also known as Pungtang Dechen Photrang Dzong (meaning "the palace of great happiness or bliss", is the administrative centre of Punakha District in Punakha, Bhutan. Constructed by Ngawang Namgyal, 1st Zhabdrung Rinpoche, in 1637–38, it is the second oldest and second largest dzong in Bhutan and one of its most majestic structures. The dzong houses the sacred relics of the southern Drukpa Lineage of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism, including the Rangjung Kasarpani and the sacred remains of Ngawang Namgyal and the tertön Pema Lingpa.

Punakha Dzong was the administrative centre and the seat of the Government of Bhutan until 1955, when the capital was moved to Thimphu.

The Dzong is located at the confluence of the Pho Chhu (father) and Mo Chhu (mother) rivers in the Punakha–Wangdue valley. The source of the Mo chu river is in the northern hills of Lighsi and Laya in Bhutan, and in Tibet. The Po Chu River is fed by glaciers in the Lunana region of the Punakha valley. After the confluence of these two rivers, the main river is known as Puna Tsang chu or Sankosh River and flows down through Wangdue Phodrang, crosses the Bhutan–India border at Kalikhola and eventually meets the Brahmaputra River.

In view of the healthy climate in the region, Punakha is the winter capital of Bhutan. The head of the clergy of Bhutan with his entourage of monks spend the winter in this dzong. Jacaranda trees grow around the dzong, blooming with mauve flowers in the spring.



## HISTORY

### Paro Taktsang

Paro Taktsang is the popular name of Taktsang Palphug Monastery (also known as Tiger's Nest), a prominent Himalayan Buddhist sacred site and temple complex, located in the cliffside of the upper Paro valley, in Bhutan. A temple complex was first built in 1692, around the Taktsang Senge Samdup cave where Guru Padmasambhava is said to have meditated for three years, three months, three weeks, three days and three hours in the 8th century. Padmasambhava is credited with introducing Buddhism to Bhutan and is the tutelary deity of the country. Today, Paro Taktsang is the best known of the thirteen taktsang or "tiger lair" caves in which he meditated.

The Guru mTshan-brgyad Lhakhang, the temple devoted to Padmasambhava (also known as Gu-ru mTshan-brgyad Lhakhang, "the Temple of the Guru with Eight Names") is an elegant structure built around the cave in 1692 by Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye; and has become the cultural icon of Bhutan.

According to the legend related to this Taktsang (which in Tibetan language is spelt (stag tshang) which literally means "Tiger's lair", it is believed that Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) flew to this location from Tibet on the back of a tigress from Khenpajong. This place was consecrated to tame the Tiger demon.

An alternative legend holds that a former wife of an emperor, known as Yeshe Tsogyal, willingly became a disciple of Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) in Tibet. She transformed herself into a tigress and carried the Guru on her back from Tibet to the present location of the Taktsang in Bhutan. In one of the caves here, the Guru then performed meditation and emerged in eight incarnated forms (manifestations) and the place became holy. Subsequently, the place came to be known as the "Tiger's Nest"

The popular legend of the Taktsang monastery is further embellished with the story of Tenzin Rabgye, who built the temple here in 1692. It has been mentioned by authors that the 8th century guru Padmasambhava had reincarnated again in the form of Tenzin Rabgye. The corroborative proofs mooted are: that Tenzin Rabgye was seen (by his friends) concurrently inside and outside his cave; even a small quantity of food was adequate to feed all visitors; no one was injured during worship (in spite of the approach track to the monastery being dangerous and slippery); and the people of the Paro valley saw in the sky various animal forms and religious symbols including a shower of flowers that appeared and also vanished in the air without touching the earth.

The monastery is located 10 kilometres to the north of Paro and hangs on a precipitous cliff at 3,120 metres, about 900 metres (3,000 ft) above the Paro valley, on the right side of the Paro Chu ('chu' Bhutanese means "river or water").