



Celebration of the Wangduechhoeling Palace Consecration

October 30, 2024 Bumthang, Bhutan



དང་དྭ་ WANG
འདྲུ་ DUE
ཆུ་ CHHOE
ལིང་ LING
པོ་ PALACE



Official Unveiling of the Palace Museum and Cultural Centre by the Gyalseys (Princes) of Bhutan

In a momentous ceremony, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen graced the consecration and the establishment of the Wangduechoeling Palace Museum and Cultural Centre in Bumthang, as the Royal Patron, on October 30, 2023. The ceremony was attended by Their Majesties the Queen Mothers, including Bhutan Foundation's co-chair Gyalyum Tseyring Pem Wangchuck, and members of the Royal Family, the Prime Minister, senior government officials and dignitaries, and was presided over by the Venerable Dorji Lopen from the monastic body.



The Wangduechoeling Palace, an enduring symbol of Bhutan's royal history and cultural heritage, was meticulously restored and reimagined as a museum and cultural centre. Originally built in 1858 by Trongsa Penlop Jigme Namgyel in the Bumthang valley, the Palace once served as the royal residence for Bhutan's first three kings, bearing witness to some of the most defining moments in the nation's history. The Palace is unique in its residential palatial design, distinct from the fortress-like dzong architecture.



After a decade-long restoration and adaptive re-use process, the Palace has been transformed into a space that honors Bhutan's unique architecture and cultural heritage while embracing change. The restoration project began in 2012 upon the command of Her Majesty Gyalum Tseyring Pem Wangchuck to the Bhutan Foundation. It was then implemented in collaboration with the Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

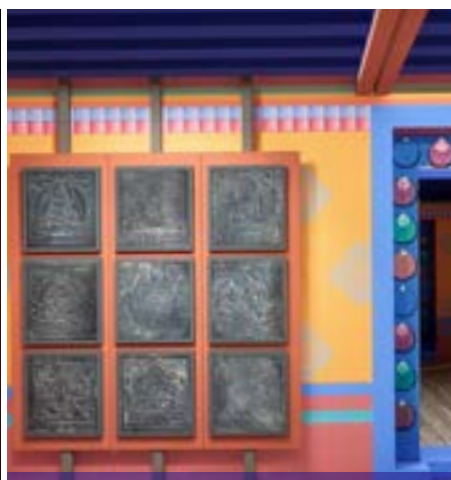


Dorji Lopen presiding over the religious ceremony

The project not only focused on restoring the Palace, but also retaining its authentic architectural style by employing traditional construction methods involving local artisans. This ensured that the Palace remains steeped in its past while being made relevant for current and future generations. Through this project, many artifacts that originated in Bhutan but remained in private collections outside Bhutan have been gifted back. Of particular mention is the largest collection of artifacts donated by the Hoch Family. Their contribution includes a Tashi Gomang and several personal gift items received from the Royal Family during their many visits to Bhutan decades earlier. A set of 9 slate carvings depicting Guru Tshen Gyed (Guru Rinpoche and his eight manifestations) were also donated by the Hoch and Oltramare families (Swiss descendants of the von Schulthess family). Additional donors contributed other artifacts to the museum collection such as textiles. It is hoped that as more Bhutanese learn about the significance of the Palace Museum and Cultural Centre they will also see this opportunity to make such contributions of rare artifacts that could be donated or loaned to the Museum.



Exhibition of King's chamber



Exhibition of Slates of Guru Tshengye (8 manifestations)



Exhibition of Guru Rinpoche found in Palace



This project involved bringing in museum professionals and external experts while building local professional capacity. Funding was largely contributed by board members and donors within the Bhutan Foundation network. The Utse restoration was funded by the Royal Government of Bhutan. Initial restoration work was also funded by the U.S. Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation.



The Wangduechoeling Palace Museum and Cultural Centre was established under a Royal Kasho (Command) from His Majesty The King, granted on April 25, 2024. It will be governed under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen, Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck, and a Board of Directors. It is envisioned as a dynamic cultural hub, more than just a museum, to promote Bhutanese history and culture as evolving traditions. Through educational programs, research initiatives, and immersive exhibitions, the Palace will celebrate Bhutanese art, culture, and history as living, evolving forms. The museum and cultural centre will not only welcome international visitors but encourage active engagement from local Bhutanese communities, fostering a shared appreciation of heritage and serving as a platform for cultural exchange.

This consecration marked the beginning of a new chapter for Wangduechoeling Palace, as it stands poised to become a vibrant centre for cultural learning and artistic expression in Bhutan. The consecration welcomed visitors from abroad and over 200 local visitors. After the consecration during the day, a formal dinner in the courtyards was hosted by Her Majesty Gyalum Tseyring Pem Wangchuck for the guests and partners. This was a momentous occasion for the Bhutan Foundation team to see our legacy project come to life.



Guests in the Royal Photo Gallery



We are truly grateful for our donors who have supported this project and given the Foundation an opportunity to complete a project that will have a lasting impact in Bhutan.

Click [HERE](#) to view a video from the consecration.



Guests in the Manuscripts Gallery



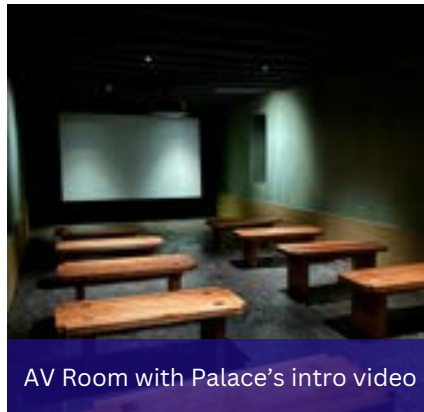
Hon. Prime Minister arrives at the consecration



Altar exhibition in the King's chamber



Temporary Exhibition space showcasing Bhutanese contemporary artworks



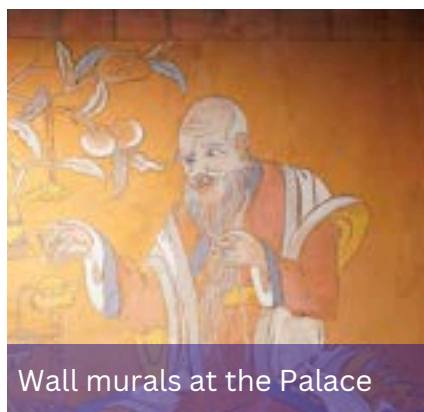
AV Room with Palace's intro video



Interactive Display of Bhutan's history



Ante-chamber to the King's chamber where the attendants received guests, collected taxes, and much more



Wall murals at the Palace





Religious Artifacts Exhibition



Dinner in the Courtyard



Bhutan Foundation Staff



Chhokhor Manis (Prayer Wheels)



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