

## Overview

It was in mid 8th Century, the Buddhist sage, Padmasambhava, popularly revered in Bhutan as Guru Rinpoche or the Precious Master, visited the country and introduced Buddhism. Since then, Buddhism has occupied a predominant role in shaping the social, political, economic, and cultural evolution of the country. In the centuries that followed, Lamas or Buddhist teachers and local nobility established their own separate domains throughout the country.

In the 17th century, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1652), a leader of the Drukpa Kagyu School of Buddhism consolidated the country under a unified power and established the Chhoesi system of governance, whereby both the temporal and religious authority were separated and vested in the Druk Desi (Temporal Head) and Je Khenpo (Spiritual Head) respectively. By the end of the 17th century, the country emerged with a distinct national and cultural identity, as well as, an unprecedented degree of political stability.

During the second half of the 18th century, the country witnessed a resurgence of political instability. The unity of the country was affected by internal dissent. External threats in the latter half of the 19th century added a new dimension to the political quandary. It was against this background that the need for strong leadership emerged.

Peace and stability were restored with the enthronement of His Majesty King Ugyen Wangchuk (1907-1926). On December 17, 1907, with the signing and sealing of the Oath of Allegiance in a grand ceremony in Punakha Dzong, Ugyen Wangchuk became the first hereditary monarch of the Kingdom of Bhutan. The monarchy has thrived ever since and the present King, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, commands the overwhelming support of his people. The Fourth King of Bhutan, ever since his coronation in 1974, the present King has dedicated himself to defining and realizing a long-term vision and direction for the country.

He set up a system of Government, which is responsive to the political, social, and development needs of the country. He also pursued a process of democratization and involvement of the people in their own affairs from the national to the community level. His Majesty's philosophy and approach have been clearly established and recognized, enhancing the country's identity and role in the international community.

Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck became the world's youngest reigning monarch when he was handed the Raven Crown by his father, the former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, in an elaborate ceremony in Thimphu, the capital. The former King, who is 52, abdicated two years ago as part of a plan to reform the hermit-like Buddhist nation of 635,000 people, which had no roads until the 1960s and allowed television only in 1999.

The "Land of the Thunder Dragon" held its first democratic elections in March in an effort to avoid the kind of political trauma that led to the abolition of the world's last Hindu

monarchy in nearby Nepal this year. Court astrologers told the Wangchuk dynasty, which has ruled Bhutan for a century that it had to wait until yesterday for an auspicious date for the coronation of the fifth Druk Gyalpo, or Dragon King

## **Itinerary Details**

### **Day 01 : KATHMANDU - PARO - THIMPHU**

Arrival at Paro Airport (7,000ft) and visit the National Museum housed in an ancient watchtower, which has a fine collection of ancient Thangka painting, textiles, weapons and artefacts. Later drive you through the valley of Paro to Thimphu the capital city. Check in the Hotel. Afternoon visit memorial Chorten built in the memory of Lt. His Majesty the King by Royal Queen Mother, then after visit Budha view point. Evening Free. O/N stay Hotel

### **Day 02 : THIMPHU SIGHTSEEING**

Morning drive to Dochula pass (10,000ft) from where you can see the beautiful view of Eastern Himalayan range in the clear sunny day. Afternoon Changangkha Lhakhang, Motithang mini Zoo to see the National animal The Takin. Drive down to viewpoint from where you have magnificent view of Thimphu valley. Evening if possible you can visit Tashichodzung, the parliament house of the country. O/N stay at Hotel.

### **Day 03 : THIMPHU – PUNAKHA/WANGDI**

Morning visit transfer to Punakha through Dochula Pass from where one can see beautiful view of Eastern Himalayan Range on the clear sunny day. Visit Punakha town and visit the Punakha Dzong, which is the summer residence of Central Monastic body. Later visit Wangdi town. O/N stay at Hotel

### **Day 04 : WAMGDI/PUNAKHA – PARO**

Morning transfer to Paro, on the way visit Chimi Lhakhang at Lobesa Stop in Thimphu for Lunch and proceed to Paro. O/N stay at Hotel

### **Day 05 : PARO SIGHTSEEING**

Early morning hike to Taktsang Monastery, on the way back visit Kyichu Lhakhang and later visit “Ta Dzong” the National Museum housed in an ancient watchtower, which has a fine collection of ancient Thangka painting, textiles, weapons and artifacts. In the evening walk visit Duntse Lhakhang and walk around the Ugyen Pelri Palace and the traditional wooden bridge. O/N stay at Hotel

### **Day 06 : Departure on your destination.**

After breakfast, drive to Airport for your onward destination to Kathmandu or New Delhi.