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Abstract

Historical origin and significance of Jadrung Lhakhang in Kholdung Chewog under Khaling gewog is an important site for the local community as it shares a mutual bond between the community and its people. This paper examines that in face of modernization, many people including youth lacks the knowledge about scared Lhakhang; so in future collected information can be utilized to acquire background history, significance and knowledge about that Lhakhang. This paper will be historical research and the interview technique will be used as a tool to collect data.

Bokha Lhakhang is known for its ancient as well as religious importance in the community. The study assumes that one of the factors leading to lack of information is mainly due to less written documents about that temple; in which people hardly appreciates the sacredness of holy temple. Therefore, it is vital to understand about the past for preservation of culture and know about what was the condition or the situation in the past.

Key words: Jadrung Lhakhang, origin, significance, Khaling.

Introduction

Cultural identity is essential for the peaceful cooperation of civilizations. If people have a strong sense of self-identity through culture, they are more likely to interact peacefully with other cultures, with respect for the diversity of value systems and religious beliefs as well as the tangible aspects of culture. As different cultures become more intertwined, these cultural identities may change. The fluid nature of culture can be positive, leading to stronger societal structures and values, but also can destroy minority or less-powerful cultures, leading to the disintegration of fundamental human values. As a result, adequate community participation in religious activities, traditional labor exchange, and reciprocity are waning and finding their last breath, which means those good and lively inherent socio-religious and cultural values are imperiled strongly.

Protecting and preserving culture includes aspects of human rights, tolerance, development and protecting cultural sites and artifacts, as well as intellectual property rights for culturally specific language and art. The protection and preservation of the diverse cultures of the world are

one of the foundations on which the United Nations was built. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is the primary body of the UN to protect and preserve culture. The prominent temple Jadrung Dzong is nested at the heart of Bremang village under Kholdung Chewog and according to the oral history it was built around the 14th century. It is 30 minutes' walk down from the Khaling town. Diplomatically, Jadrung Dzong is significant. In fact, it is the popular medieval battleground during the reign of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, the founding father of Bhutan in the 16th century. Politically, before the arrival of the founder of Bhutan in 1616 AD.

Historical Background

Khaling Gewog lies on the lateral highway route of Trashigang-Sumdrup Jongkhar highway. It is 54 kilometers away from Trashigang and within a day's reach from the other eastern Dzongkhags. Owing to its close proximity to Yongphula which is only 25 kilometers away, the connectivity has been further enhanced with the Yongphula Airport becoming fully operational. Khaling is now connected directly with Paro, Bumthang, and Gelephu by air. The town is also in close proximity to the Khaling and Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuaries. The town falls under the Wamrong Drungkhag¹ administration located 25 kilometers away from Khaling town. With an altitude ranging from 1,240 m to 3,800 meters above the sea level and cool temperate climatic conditions, Khaling experiences annual rainfall ranging from 1000 to 2000 mm. The Gewog has a total area of 154.50 km². It is bounded by Kanglung and Uzonong in the west, Merak in the north and Thrimshing and Kangpara in the east, and Lumang in the south.

Moreover, the Gewog adores a temperate climate with warm summer and cold winter. The Gewog comprises 46 villages and 603 households out of which 106 gungtong with a population of 6,057 of which 3,126 are males and 2,931 female (GAO, Khaling, 2020). The study assumes that one of the contributing factors for leaving villages is that the people hardly know and appreciate the richness of the local history. The responsibility of preserving and knowing about the Jadrung Lhakhang could be crucial as the information about the Lhakhang could be lost in the future. It is significant to document and share about the living heritages in Bhutan as people who know about

¹ Sub district of Dzongkhag. The head of Drungkhag is Drungpa

Lhakhang are old and on the verge of perishing, losing the data with them. Therefore, the study attempts to record and document the oral history of the Jadrung Lhakhang to fascinate the people and motivate those who already abandoned and those who have a plan to abandon the sacred religious site.

Significance of Research Problem and Statement

Social sayings are the prevailing common and basic beliefs that supposedly guide behavior in culture. Lack of accurate knowledge about them may interfere with adaptation to a culture; knowing the true culture and traditions that have been passed from our ancestors must be preserved and it is the responsibility of all citizens to pass those undead cultural heritages to upcoming nation builders. Bhutan is a Buddhist country it has many sacred temples that are reserved for religious activities. The main concern in this era is due to modernization many people including youth lacks familiarity with sacred temples. This paper will be focusing on scared Jadrung Lhakhang of Khaling under Kholdung Chewog. The main reason behind choosing this topic is to acquire the background history, importance, and data of Jadrung Lhakhang. Jadrung Lhakhang is one of the tangible cultures in the locality and it is unknown to the numbers of people. The duty to preserve and research the Jadrung Lhakhang could be essential as the information about the Lhakhang could be lost in the future. Thus, that research information can be utilized by upcoming youths and unknown information will be known; which literally helps in keeping the essence of sacredness alive.

Research aims and objectives.

The main aim of this research paper is to find the origin, significance, and historical background of Jadrung Lhakhang which is one of the sacred sites in Khaling locality. Moreover, it aims to find the authentic information of that temple; which can fill up the gap between past, present, and future. As being a Buddhist and citizen, not knowing about holly site it will be shameful to embrace our own culture. Thus, the above-mentioned aims will be achieved through interviews with aged participants in the locality.

Problem Statement

A temple is a building reserved for religious or spiritual ritual activities. In fact, in the face of modernization, many people including youth lacks the knowledge about scared temples. This paper basically will be focusing on scared Jadrung² Lhakhang³ of Khaling under Kholdung Chewog⁴. The main reason behind choosing this topic is because it has rich history; Moreover, to acquire background history, significance and knowledge of Jadrung Lhakhang. It is one of the tangible culture in Bhutan which shares secrets and significance and it is unknown to the numbers of people who are origin of Khaling. Royal Government of Bhutan and Department of Culture has failed to take notice of the tangible culture which are located in the rural areas while focusing on the cultural heritages which are developed and are opened to the tourism. The responsibility of preserving and knowing about the Bokha⁵ Lhakhang could be crucial as the information about the Lhakhang could be lost in the future. It is significant to document and share about the living heritages in Bhutan as people who knows about Lhakhang are old and in the verge of perishing, losing the data with them. In fact, preservation of Lhakhang and its significance can be done in same time which was orally told by the ancestors.

As a result, adequate community participation in religious activities, traditional labor exchange and reciprocity are weakening and finding its last extent, which means those good and lively essential socio-religious and cultural values are imperiled strongly. These *lhakhang* is known for its historical as well religious significance to elaborate separately later. The study assumes that one of the contributing factors for lacking knowledge is mainly due to less written documents on scared temple; in which people hardly know and appreciate the richness of the local holy temple. Therefore, the study attempts to record the oral history of the Jadrung Lhakhang to fascinate the people and motivate those who already abandoned the importance of temples in locality.

Research Questions and Sub-Questions

Interview Questionnaire

² Chieftain responsible for collecting taxes from Assam

³ Temple locally known as *Lhakhang*. Religious site

⁴ Smaller community or villages in a Gewog

⁵ Alternative name for *Jadrung Lhakhang*

Background history of Jadrung Lhakhang

- Origin of Lhakhang.

Significance of Jadrung Lhakhang.

- What makes Jadrung Lhakhang a divine place to visit?
- Political significances.
- Religious significances.

Art and Architecture of Jadrung Lhakhang.

- Description about the paintings.

Literature Review

Bhutan has a rich cultural heritage that is visible and living in the present era. There are various measures and methods of preserving the cultural heritage as to have sovereignty and independence of a country, however, there are factors that restrict to preserve and conserve this heritage.

Preservation of cultural heritage is one of the important factors that help in knowing the traditions and history of the past. It continues to enchant the rest of the world with the policy of Gross National Happiness (GNH) has become a very popular destination for travel; but despite its growing popularity and the rising interest in the country, Bhutan remains one of the most poorly studied places on earth (Phuntsho, 2013). In my perspective, Bhutanese needs to maintain its traditions as it tells us relevant values and meanings behind to be appreciated by our people. However, there are challenges faced by people in maintaining the cultural and historical heritages of Bhutan because there has been an influence of culture from the neighboring countries.

The problems of rural-urban migration hinder community participation in religious activities and traditional labor exchange. The study found that the trend of rural-urban migration increases with the assumption that people lack historical and religious knowledge moreover, it has found that rural-urban migration and influence of culture from neighboring countries are the challenges faced in preserving cultural and historical practices. (Tshering, 2012). The data were collected focusing on unstructured topic guides that include in-depth interviews with the village elderly. It could be said that knowledge and tangible heritages of the past are fading away as the people are moving from the village into urban areas with the change in time as people are not taking intense interests in knowing the significance of historical and cultural values. Rural-urban migration is one of the factors which hinder people to be moving into urban areas making it difficult for future generations to trace the history of Khaling JadrungLhakhang.

Cultural diversity and resilience focusing to assess the strength and relevance of various aspects of culture in Bhutan such as beliefs, norms, and participation in various cultural activities, such as festivals, sports, and songs (Pommaret, 2003). This book mainly talks about the existing cultural practices, values, and norms as traditionally laid out in Bhutan. A study examines evaluating an opportunity for foreign exchange, space for Cultural Revolution, and prevention of cultural pollution. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

states that culture is “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features that characterize a society. It was found that in the cultural global framework cultural interaction inhibits the opportunity for cultural exchange and instead gives rise to cultural domination. The need for tourism policies is recognized by governments and international agencies that allow countries to take advantage of foreign exchange earnings while sustaining their cultural identity.

Preserving cultural heritages has got several benefits as it helps in maintaining traditions and developing tourism industries that provide economic and exchange of knowledge (Kinga, 2002). Therefore, it is crucial to know and document the past as the information about the past may be lost forever. Understanding and learning of the past from the elderly people would also be crucial as people will be able to know the traditions and history which will be discussed in this research. This research will explore the history and festivals related to Bokha Lhakhang, the tangible cultural heritage of Khaling which remains unknown to several people, and make aware of the significance of understanding history.

To reinforce the elements of social development social vitality is very significant; moreover, social capital strengthens communities and specifically necessary for a sustainable community. A sense of sustainable community is also important to define a desirable place to live. Moreover, access to green space and wildlife provides space for reflection and connectivity to diverse groups of people coming together. The place in which one lives is also very important in ranking the factors which contribute to wellbeing or life satisfaction (Rasoul, 2009). The study shows that the well-being of people living in the tribe’s community is critical to encourage community vitality and it was found that during the study there is the influence of Bhutanese culture from the neighboring countries as Bhutanese youth are looking forward toward modern development rather than preserving its unique and rich cultural heritages besides preservation of cultural heritage and values develop tourism industries which provide economically and exchange of knowledge.

Bhutan represents a unique combination where culture and values are widely used to represent its richness in traditions. On top of that Bhutan’s culture and tradition differ very significantly from many Asian neighbors and western countries; a fundamental aim of Bhutanese development policy is to maintain a balance between modernization on one side and culture and

tradition (Valliere, 2014). More often learners need to know the development policy of culture and tradition that is prevalent in the society; and as a youth one must be culturally aware. In fact, old age culture and tradition act as a barrier to the nation's independence. Furthermore, shrines that are rarely recognized in the community or in some cases which are near to be extinct should be preserved.

Tourism generates tremendous revenue for developing countries but also serves as an instrument for the spread of Western cultural homogeneity (Reinfeld, 2003). In our country having multiple tangible sacred sites has experienced some success in its synthesis of tradition and modernity; so it is likely to face significant challenges in the future. Cultural pollution is characterized by the abandonment of local traditions and values. Therefore, it is an important task as a learner to know more and do research on the unknown origin and significance of sacred temples.

Research Methodology

Preservation of cultural heritage has become one of the important issues in protecting the country's sovereignty and identity. Bhutan has a rich heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation. This paper will focus on knowing and exploring one of the tangible cultural heritage, Jadrung Lhakhang at Khaling gewog. This paper has used historical research which is one of the features of qualitative research. The purpose of using historical research is to understand the history of Jadrung Lhakhang and festivals or events. The paper will look over the reports made by the perception of one and seek an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within the natural setting.

Techniques

Critical case sampling was employed to collect the data as it allows us to develop an indepth understanding of the evidence while studying the case. Due to limited resources, it is mandatory to have sample respondents for any investigation (Saunders, 2007). It is not applicable to use the whole population of Khaling Gewog to conduct interviews since the higher the number of participants there will be more consumption of time. Knowledge about the past was explored to make people aware of the Khaling Jadrung Lhakhang and how the evolution of Lhakhang in the coming years.

Setting

The setting of the research was Khaling gewog, and Bremang village will be the main set during the study as Bokha Lhakhang is located at Bremang village.

Participants

The aged person who resides in the place and who bears knowledge about the past was used as a participant during the study.

Tools/Instruments

The Interview technique was used as a tool to research to gather the information. The purpose of using interview techniques was to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings about the past.

Data collection procedure

The data is collected through interviews with one of the age people from Khaling village who knows the history and festival-related with Bokha Lhakhang.

Validity and Reliability

The research tools are valid and reliable because the interview questionnaires will be simple which can be understood by the participants. To both the participants, the questions will be the same in which the participants can provide the information that is required. Moreover, the question that will be asked to the participants will be the same because it is more consistent. According to (Oliver, 2010) considers validity to be a compulsory requirement for all types of studies. Although the threats to research reliability and validity while collecting the data can never be eliminated, however, the tools that are used are simple which can strive to minimize these threats as far as possible.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of cleaning, transforming, and modeling data to get useful information for the study. The purpose of data analysis is to extract useful information from data (Guru, 2020). So, analysis of the interview questionnaire result will be analyzed firstly transcribing the recordings audio. The qualitative data from interviews and observations will be analyzed applying content analysis techniques. Content analysis is a technique by which peoples' behavior can be studied by analyzing their communication (Franenkel, 2012). Qualitative data analysis involves "organizing, accounting for and explaining the data, in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities"

Ethical Consideration

There are several types of ethical issues, which the researcher has to take into consideration. The most important one is related with the informing consent of the participants. The participants will be informed in advance about the purpose of the study. Moreover, the identity of the participants will be kept confidential. If any information provided by the participants are harmful or which can create disharmony more than one individual or a community, it will be kept confidential. While interviewing the participants, it will be conducted without any bias; mainly to acquire authentic information and it can be used as a reliable source for the learners. Thus, meeting the requirements of the code of principles of the module and law.

Research Finding and Discussion

In earlier days it was famously called ‘Bokha Dzong’ and now a day commonly known as ‘Jadrung Lhakhang’ which is approximately 25 minutes’ walk from the Khaling town. According to Kinga Sonam,⁸⁰ Jadrung Lhakhang was one of the *Naktsang*⁶ of local Chieftain. Jadrung is a title given to the chieftain referring to a tax collector; in the olden days, the chieftain of Khaling locality use to collect taxes from India, particularly from Assam valleys. The chieftain had built Jadrung Lhakhang in the 14th century mainly as a residence and a place for worshipping in the locality. It is said that Jadrung was from Tibet, Tsang who was sent by Tsang Desi⁷. Tsang Desi in the later part had sent armies to fight against Zhabdrung at Paro where Drugyel Dzong⁸ stands in the present period.

The taxes collected from Assam by Jadrung was given to Tsang Desi of Tibet. Jadrung had a daughter and a son in which the daughter went to Pemagatshel as a wife and the son went to Bartsham, Nangkhar. During the reign of Jadrung, the residence was two-storied; later it was reduced to one-storied in 1933 in which *gyenkhang*⁹, Lhakhang, and residence were all clustered together. To reduce the storied of Jadrung Lhakhang in 1933, the command was from Trashigang Dzongpoen¹⁰ Sey Dopola. The works were overall coordinated by Nechendrep who was from Rashkhar. All the construction work was done by people of Khaling locality which includes people of Brekha, Barshong, Jeri-lemi, and Khaling as *woola*¹⁰. After that Lopen Kuenzang, one of the scholars who came to Khaling as the religious head of abbot increased the Lhakhang from one storied to two-storied in 1944. The people from different locality use to take relics (Bum) from Jadrung Lhakhang mainly to have the prosperous blessing in the community in the olden days but in the current situation, all the community has one Lhakhang.

Jadrung Lhakhang is significant in terms of political and religious. Politically, before the arrival of the founder of Bhutan Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in 1616 AD, every nook of the

⁶ The residential place for feudal lords

⁷ A title was given to the leader

⁸ The distinctive type of fortress

⁹ The house of the protector deities: *gyen* stands for the guardian/protector and *khang* for a house 10 Governor or Dzong lord

¹⁰ Work that includes the whole community

country was dominated and handled by regional chieftains and local feudal lords. Although the rest of the powers were brought under the political rule of Zhabdrung, yet the resistance was not easily extinguished. A chieftain named Lam Nagseng, from Merak Sakteng, refused to surrender to the Trongsa Penlop's forces. Therefore, as ordered by Trongsa Penlop Chogyal Minjur Tempa, Lam Namsey and Umze Damchoe Rabgay had defeated and completed the consolidation of local chieftains in Trashigang including the Khaling Bremang area. To mark the vehement victory over the regional chieftains, thus commenced the construction of Bjiri Dzong in 1659.

Religiously, Jadrung Lhakhang is an ancient sacred place in the community where the locality uses it as a place of worship to triple gems and local deities. According to Tandin Gyeltshen, 62, some of the relics (*kuten*, *sungten*, *thukten*) was been contributed by the chieftain during his reign. The *kuten* (statues) relics inside the temple are the statues of Buddha, Guru Rinpoche, Zhabdrung Rinpoche¹¹, and Chagtong Chentong. The *sungten* (holly books) which are made of Daphne plant are *Bum* which contains twelve volumes of Buddha's teaching, *Ngyelthri*, *Domang*, *manikabum*, *sangaytsenbum* which contains thousand names of Buddha, and *dodangling*. The *thukten* (stupa) relics contain *Chortens* which are made of sandalwood. The above-mentioned relics were brought from Tibet by Jadrung and sandalwood used for making *chorten* was brought from India.

Moreover, Jadrung Lhakhang is associated with Meme Dangling and Abi Jomo the local deity of Khaling. According to Dorji, 84, the site was visited by the deities and entourage. Currently, the artifacts of the local deity are stored in Jadrung Lhakhang. In one of the rooms in the temple, there is a sacred *goenkhang* of the deity. In the sacred chamber of the local deity, one would find the *Thro* the Urn, a *Drali*, the Shield worn by Bhutanese armed forces during the medieval century. Moreover, there are few *Mendas* the guns and *tsendar*, a colorful flag, and a hanging red colored hat for *Aku tsen*. Local people say that these armors belonged to the deities. According to the care taker of the temple, except the local shaman, one must not touch the things as it invites the displeasure of the deity including instant death. For instance, the local deities of Khaling, and they were mainly kept to protect and bless the people as a guardian deity. The locality

¹¹ It is said that the statue of Zhabrung Rinpoche had spoken, so it is a special relic

of Khaling worships their local deity mainly because they have faith, devotion, and believe in them. People of Khaling worship their guardian deity by revealing a ceremony twice a year. The first one is held during summer which falls on the 14th day of the 4th month while the other is held during winters which are on the 14th day of the 10th month. Every 14th day of the 9th month the caretaker of *Jadrung Lhakhang* use to brew *tsaychang* (alcohol). The artifacts of Khaling local deities are such as *Thro* which means urn used to brew alcohol and to boil water. The belongings of *Meme Dangling* and *Abi Jomo* can be seen nowadays during the celebration. Some of the clothes of *Dangling* and *Jomo* are kept inside the '*Goenkhang*' a place where local deities recite. it is said that if we want to visit *Dangling tsho* it is mandatory to prohibit eating meats and garlic.

Almost all the Bhutanese art is symbolic, non-secular, and rare blending. It derives its inspiration from Buddhist doctrinal and tantric mythology, is highly decorative and ornamental, and is principally located in monastic centers. The painting illustrates its manuscripts which have a distinctive pattern of their own. The paintings of *Jadrung Lhakhang* were painted by *Lopen Serpay*, *Geyshey Kezang*, and *Lopen Sherub Dorji*. They had painted the walls of *Lhakhang* and *debre*, a sculpture which contains *Zeypachuni* the twelve deeds of Buddha; starting from birth till death. The painters had come from Tibet and they settled at *Merak*, *Sakteng*, and *Khaling*. The *Kachens* (pillars) with a mandala, *Kilkhon* were crafted by *Tshewang Tobgay* and *Gomtu* who were from *Bremang*, *Dawzor* village respectively. During the olden days, there were few skilled individuals due to no developmental activities and facilities, unlike today. The description of pillars are as follows: *Gyelpo thri la zhukpa dra*, *Loenpo kala ngyenpa dra*, *Tsemo Zhi la thri selwa dra*, *Lamchen Gayla zake pa dra*, *dhuk drel tsangla drel wa dra*, *Ganglay chu chen bapa dra*; which depicts the post and their responsibilities.

The relics in the *Lhakhang* were recorded only after the command of *Trashigang Dzongpoen* mainly for security and preservation; before there was no record or documentation of those relics. The drafted list which contains names of relics is with the Ministry of Culture and Affairs. The *Koenyer*, caretaker of *Jadrung Lhakhang* is changed after serving for a year. The responsibility of the caretaker is to offer water, led butter lamps every morning, offer rituals to local deities. The caretaker is also responsible for the security of the properties in the temple.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study found the unique and cultural practices of people of Khaling and its significance. The community work together taking responsibility as their own with great enthusiasm. The data about the past and festivals that is related with the local deities is explored and the unexplored facts about the past which remain unknown to numbers of people are reflected in the paper which can help to fascinate the people and motivate those who already abandoned the importance of temples in locality. The purpose of building Jadrung Lhakhang was also found and the reason for conducting particular festival is also examined. The facts about the past should not be left in the past as there will be lost of data as known individuals about the past histories are old and in the verge of perishing, losing the data with them. If people are not taking part in documentation of the past; in future, there are high chances of losing the precious culture and tradition of particular place. Therefore, the study has found the uniqueness of past and how it has evolved in the coming years. Thus, that collected data can be utilized by upcoming youths, which can have immense benefit in keeping the essence of sacredness alive.

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