

Background

KHEDRUP FOUNDATION

Khedrup Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Bhutan dedicated to supporting the propagation of Buddha Dharma and ensuring the continuity of the Longchen Nyingthig lineage. Through a range of projects and initiatives, the foundation works to preserve the heritage of monasteries, while also carrying out humanitarian efforts that benefit local communities—particularly senior citizens, women, and children.



The foundation was established under the leadership of **Khedrup Rinpoche**, its Founder and President. In 2016, Rinpoche created *Siddhartha's Wisdom Club* to impart Buddhist values to youth in the community, followed by the *Ami-Deva Association* in 2017 to support elderly citizens in deepening their meditation practice. Alongside these initiatives, he has spearheaded humanitarian activities nationwide and engages globally with scholars and practitioners to develop innovative methods for teaching Buddha Dharma and preserving Buddhist traditions.



THE RESTORATION OF SANGCHEN OGYEN TSUKLAG MONASTERY

A Sacred Legacy



Sangchen Ogyen Tsuklag Monastery, founded in the 8th century by Monmo Tashi Khyidren—the Bhutanese consort of Guru Padmasambhava—stands as a testament to Bhutan’s profound spiritual history. Consecrated by Guru Rinpoche himself, the monastery rests in the tranquil village of Samcholing, Trongsa, in Central Bhutan.

Monmo Tashi Khyidren, a revered figure in Bhutanese history, is closely associated with many sacred sites, including the famous Paro Taktsang (Tiger’s Nest), where she accompanied Guru Dorji Drolo. Legend tells that she transformed into the tigress that Guru Rinpoche rode to reach Tiger’s Nest. Among these sacred places, she chose Samcholing as her retreat site, where she established the main temple. The surrounding area holds relics such as holy water revealed by Guru Rinpoche and a footprint left by their horse. Over the centuries, Sangchen Ogyen Tsuklag has served as a spiritual seat for revered Buddhist masters.

Within its walls, the monastery houses treasured relics such as the “*spoken Buddha*” statue, crafted by Trulku Chogden Gampo (a reincarnation of Terton Dorji Lingpa), and the treasure bell of Terton Sherab Mebar. These sacred objects, along with its rich history, make the monastery a vital center of worship and cultural heritage for Bhutanese communities.

Nearby, the great Dzogchen master **Longchenpa** is said to have meditated in a sacred cave, further deepening the monastery’s significance. As a result, Sangchen Ogyen Tsuklag has

become a living center for the study and preservation of the esteemed **Longchen Nyingthik lineage**, a Dzogchen tradition tracing back to Guru Padmasambhava.

A Thriving Spiritual and Cultural Hub

Today, the monastery is home to a vibrant community of 50 monks, 7 teachers, 3 yogis in lifelong retreat, and several elderly residents. It also plays an essential role in serving the local community by offering prayers and rituals for significant life events such as births, marriages, and funerals.

In 2009, the monastery was offered to the 5th Khedrup Rinpoche, fulfilling a prophecy of the 10th Lhalung Thuksey Thekchog, Tenpai Gyeltsen. Since then, Rinpoche has revitalized the monastery with a vision to restore and expand its role, with plans to establish an **International Buddhist Academy**—a place where practitioners and learners from all backgrounds can study, practice, and cultivate compassion and humanity.

An Ecological Sanctuary



The monastery's cultural and spiritual significance is deeply intertwined with its ecological landscape.

According to the *National Tiger Survey Report 2021–2022* by the Department of Forests and Park Services, Royal Government of Bhutan, this region holds the highest density of tigers per

area in the country—resonating profoundly with the legends of Monmo Tashi Khyidren and her connection to the tiger.

In Tibetan Buddhism, the tiger is one of the *Four Dignities* (Tiger, Snow Lion, Garuda, and Dragon). Unlike the other three, which are mythical creatures, the tiger is a living embodiment of these sacred qualities. The Bodhisattva Vajrapani is also depicted wearing a tiger skin, symbolizing yogic power alongside compassion and generosity. Tigers are frequently represented in Bhutanese art and culture—painted on temple walls, depicted on prayer flags, and revered as symbols of power, strength, and grace that inspire both fear and respect.

Given that the tiger is endangered, the Samcholing region is of exceptional importance for future tiger conservation efforts in Bhutan. The monastery thus stands not only as a guardian of Bhutan's spiritual heritage but also as a natural sanctuary aligned with Bhutan's deep-rooted traditions of harmony between culture, spirituality, and ecology.

Current Restoration Efforts



After centuries of enduring Bhutan's climate, the monastery had seen no major renovation for more than 200 years. The main temple, built with traditional Bhutanese materials such as stone, mud, and wood, now faces severe structural

challenges, including collapsing walls, termite-damaged wood, and a fragile roof.

In 2023, restoration began with the repair of the main Buddha statue, the conservation of sacred relics, and the rebuilding of the monastery's fencing wall. By 2024, **Phase I** of the restoration project was launched, focusing on the outer structural renovation of the two-story main temple using local materials and reconstruction of the monastery courtyard.



Phase II will prioritize the conservation of the monastery's intricate wall paintings and frescos, sacred art forms that are both spiritually and culturally invaluable. Collaborating with art

conservation experts will be needed to ensure that these treasures are preserved for future generations. These rare frescos will require immense specialty and



The restoration of Sangchen Ogyen Tsuklag Monastery is more than a physical renewal—it is a commitment to safeguarding Bhutan’s spiritual heritage, cultural identity, and historical legacy for centuries to come.