

On the Tiger Trail...



This past month, three of us from the Bhutan Foundation--Bruce Bunting, Dawa Sherpa, and Phuntsho Namgay--went on an adventure into the forgotten trail from Shingkhar, Bumthang, to Autsho, Lhuntse. As much as the tough terrain beat us down, mostly because it was not maintained and rarely used, we



couldn't be happier to have experienced the rich biodiversity of Thrumshingla National Park and to serendipitously come across numerous tiger tracks along the trail. This was a reminder to us of how Bhutan's unique tiger habitat extends from lowland subtropical jungles all the way to subalpine forests. Furthermore, it is a testament to Bhutan's conservation policies that have allowed tigers to thrive in its wilderness.

Restoration of Lingka Lhakhang

Before we began our trek, we accompanied board members of the Bhutan Foundation to the newly restored Lingka Lhakhang at the **Wangduechoeling Palace** grounds in

Bumthang. We are glad to share that the Lingka Lhakhang is now restored to its original beauty. Over the next few days, Foundation staff, board members, the Bumthang Dzongda, community members, and the Wangduechoeling Palace project manager engaged in a meaningful discussion on the overall restoration of the palace. This re-emphasized for all present the historical importance of the palace--how Bhutan's monarchy, architecture, and art were in the past and the importance of preserving this cultural heritage site in ways that speak to future generations.

Jungle Camp by the River Guides of Panbang

Meanwhile, our colleagues and other board members traveled down south to Royal Manas National Park. They were the first guests to experience the newly established Jungle Camp set up by the River Guides of Panbang. The Jungle Camp is a mix of a "Kheng style," traditional design, thatched-roof structure with modern amenities. With modernization creeping in, traditional Kheng houses are rarely built, and the community is losing this practice. However, we were inspired to learn that the elderly community members volunteered to give the traditional touch to the camp to keep this tradition alive. In addition to the existing rafting services, the Jungle Camp provides a whole different experience of Panbang and its rich, local Kheng culture. This initiative was started by the Bhutan Foundation to encourage tourism in the Kheng region and improve livelihoods for youth so they can stay in their villages.

Meeting with Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative

The tiger trail ended in Lhuentse, where we found ourselves fortunate to be able to spend two days at Takila, where Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche is conducting six-month-long empowerment prayers. While at Takila, we also met with our partners at the **Samdrup Jongkhar Initiative**. They talked about the impact that our small grant for weeders had made on farmers there and how they were able to increase their yield production by two to three times using the weeders for systemic root intensification methods. Furthermore, we talked about our shared interests in promoting traditional agricultural practices to support rural farmers, as well as to encourage healthier diets.

We then returned to Thimphu, rejuvenated and inspired by a month filled with field visits to our project sites along with our board members and partners and a renewed enthusiasm to contribute to Bhutan's development with values.

Thank you for your support,

Bruce, Dawa, and Phuntsho

Read our latest Spring Update 2016!

Spring Update

2016



CONNECT
WITH US:



SEND TO A FRIEND:



Bhutan Foundation (Washington, DC)

3121 South Street, NW

Washington, DC 20007

+1 (202) 609 7363

info@bhutanfound.org

Bhutan Foundation (Thimphu)

Nazhoen Pelri, Post Box 255

Thimphu, Bhutan

+975 (2) 32275

info@bhutanfound.org