



BHUTAN FOUNDATION 2017 UPDATE

Introducing Gangzi, our new Snow Leopard Conservation Program mascot!

Spring time in Bhutan is, perhaps, the most beautiful and rejuvenating season, giving us a glimpse of nature's beauty. The sound of birds chirping and the carnival of sweet fragrance floating in the spring air fills the valley. The picture-perfect blossoming of peach, cherry, and many other flowers in all corners brings smiles on the faces of people everywhere. This is a much-awaited time after a cold winter.

Spring promises that what we sow is what we shall reap. The Bhutan Foundation celebrates the arrival of spring and with it the hope of fulfilling our vision—Bhutan as a progressive society enriched by Gross National Happiness values. This month, we are happy to present our latest publication, *Bhutan Foundation 2017 Update*, which gives you an overview of our projects and the impact we have had in Bhutan's communities. You can download a copy [here](#). Today, we are happy to share updates from various activities in the past month and spotlight one of our local partners, the Music of Bhutan Research Centre.

Hundreds Attend International Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development and Design Conference in Thimphu



The organizers from College of Science and Technology take a moment for a photograph with representative from the Karuna Foundation and the Bhutan Foundation.

A three-day international conference on Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development and Design, successfully concluded on April 5. The conference saw a wide range of presentations and discussions covering renewable and sustainable energy education, energy-efficient construction and design, building and solar thermal systems, hydropower and transmission networks, biogas technology, and biomass and indoor air quality. You can read a newspaper article on one of the research papers from the conference on switching to modern, clean and efficient cooking technologies [here](#).

As part of the conference, the Bhutan Foundation organized a book event for Jonathan F.P. Rose, author of the book, *The Well Tempered City*. Jonathan is also the founder and president of Jonathan Rose Companies, a leading green urban solutions provider. Click [here](#) to see newspaper coverage. The conference, which attracted over 400 participants, including 29 international speakers, 15 national speakers, and over 200 engineering and environmental science students from the College of Science and Technology and the Royal Thimphu College, was supported by the Bhutan Foundation in partnership with the [Karuna Foundation](#).

A Vision for the Wangduechhoeling Palace



An aerial view of the Wangduechhoeling Palace in Bumthang Valley.

Exciting plans are evolving as the Bhutan Foundation and the [Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites \(DCHS\)](#) collaborate to restore and conserve the Wangduechhoeling Palace as a museum and a center for learning to ensure its sustainability and, as a byproduct, provide employment opportunities to the local people. With physical restoration of the palace underway, a two-day visioning exercise was conducted in

Thimphu in March to chart out the way forward for the proposed museum. Once completed, the Wangduechhoeling Palace museum will have rooms allocated for exhibitions of arts and crafts portraying the life led by Bhutan's monarchs.

[Read more about this on our website under project updates](#)

Supporting the Bumthang Community through its Hospital



The Bumthang hospital team with their new vehicle.

Expanding its support to the local community in Bumthang, the Bhutan Foundation has been supporting the Bumthang Hospital to enhance its capacity to provide better services and care to the local community. The 40-bed hospital in Bumthang provides integrated primary health care facilities to the local community and has a traditional medicine services unit with the Out-Patient Department (OPD) unit. Through a grant provided by the Bhutan Foundation, the Bumthang Hospital procured equipment and consumables, and a mobile clinic that would substantially improve the service delivery of the hospital. The mobile clinic will be used to deliver medical supplies and equipment to the hospital and will also be a mode of transportation for the medical staff.

A Short Film to Observe International Autism Day



A popular freelance blogger and youth counselor with Department of Youth and Sports, Amrit recollects his life journey at one of the locations in Thimphu.

Celebrating this year's theme "Toward Autonomy and Self-Determination" for World Autism Awareness Day, on April 2, 2017, the Bhutan Foundation launched a 16-minute film, "Amrit: The Story of His Inner Vision." Click [here](#) to watch the film. The film raises public awareness about the needs and rights of persons with disabilities in Bhutan. The story features five individuals, each living with a different disability. The main character, Amrith, is a popular freelance blogger, who currently works for the Department of Youth and Sports under the Ministry of Education as a youth counselor. Amrith, who is visually impaired, shares his

perspective on the challenges and opportunities of persons with disabilities and their families. As he interacts with these individuals from different age groups, we learn about five different types of disabilities, and how each individual faces their own set of challenges.

[Read more about this on our website under project updates](#)

Partner Spotlight: The Music of Bhutan Research Centre (MBRC)

In Kheng, a cluster of villages in the southern part of Zhemgang, Bhutan, most people grow their own vegetables and grains. Subsistence farming is widely practiced in these communities and has been part of their culture for centuries. While growing your own crop and rearing your own cattle can be a healthy practice, it can also be quite a tedious job.



One thing that helps inspire the farmers to go on with their daily chores is music. Over time the people of Kheng have developed a unique repertoire of songs to accompany their daily lives. A group of men and women (pictured) come together to sing a song, *Bomila Karmoi Wangzom* ("Oh daughter Karmoi Wangzom"), that dates back to the 1930s. The narrator in the song describes the step-by-step process for cotton cultivation to a daughter, Karmoi Wangzom, including preparing the field, cutting trees, fire-drying the grove and sowing the seed. Like their ancestors before them, the group hopes that by singing a song that honors their hard labor and the bounty of nature's gifts, they will be blessed by a good harvest. Sung in the Kheng language, the song is usually accompanied by Yang-kali (a traditional rhythmic instrument).

It is believed locally that singing songs lifts the spirits of villagers and makes it easier to work in the fields. The practice is deeply rooted in their culture. *Bomila Karmoi Wangzom* is just one song in the Kheng region among many others associated with various chores, the celebration of the pristine environment, and other aspects of local life.

All across Bhutan, such types of local songs and traditional cultural practices are still widely appreciated and practiced. However, with modernization, these traditions are at risk of disappearing. The Bhutan Foundation is working with a civil society organization, the Music of Bhutan Research Centre (MBRC), on a three-year project to document, preserve, and promote age-old songs and endangered traditions and practices. Over the course of three years, MBRC will travel to 14 dzongkhags (districts) all across Bhutan, reaching out to several villages and documenting traditional songs and dances.

MBRC was founded in 2008 by renowned local musician, Kheng Sonam Dorji, to research, document, preserve, and promote the traditional music of Bhutan. MBRC aims to break new ground by professionally researching, recording, and archiving the full geographic, historic, linguistic, and ethnic range of musical traditions in the country. The organization also documents the finest living master musicians in performance and interviews. Since November 2016, the Bhutan Foundation has been supporting MBRC to conduct fieldwork on as many music traditions throughout the country as possible.

[Learn more about MBRC](#)

Upcoming Events



Screening of *Power of the River*
International Wildlife Film Festival

April 18, 2017

3:00 PM

University Center (UC) Theater
University of Montana
Missoula, Montana

Free Admission—Reserve your seat now on Eventbrite [here!](#)

TAKE ACTION, DONATE TODAY!

CONNECT WITH
US:



SEND TO A COLLEAGUE:



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