



དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་། རྫོང་ཁག་བདག་སྐྱོང་། མོང་རྩ་རྫོང་།

Royal Government of Bhutan
Dzongkhag Administration, Mongar



Project Report on Phurjurlaptsa to Jaiphu Eco-Trail

Background:

The eco-trail extending from Phurjurlaptsa to Jaiphu spans a distance of 2.88 kilometers and requires approximately 2 hours of walking. It was implemented by the Mongar Dzongkhag Administration in partnership with the Department of Tourism through funding support from UNDP-GEF. The work was awarded to the community contractor.

The pristine natural resources are currently facing threats from illegal hunting and deforestation, putting wildlife and ecosystems at risk. The area along Phurjurlaptsa to Jaiphu is rich in cool broadleaf forest, historical sites, and biodiversity offering a very stunning sight-seeing opportunity throughout the trail span. The eco-trail aims to attract trekkers and visitors to explore the area's natural beauty and historical sites, along with engaging the local community in providing markets for their products.

This eco-trail project ensures the conservation of biodiversity, enhances community livelihoods and promotes sustainable eco-tourism. It aligns with national goals of economic development, generation, and rural-urban migration reduction. The project's focus on biodiversity conservation, community engagement, and women's empowerment makes it a valuable initiative for the region.

The trail meanders through lush forest, offering scenic views of diverse tree species such as oak, rhododendron, paper daphne, and angeri. Notably, there are two designated resting points along the trail accompanied by wooden bridges placed over marshy terrain. Upon reaching Shamey, visitors are treated to breathtaking panoramas encompassing Drepong Gewog, Kidheykhar, and Yakpugang Chiwogs. Moreover, amenities including a two-unit toilet and a sheltered canopy are available at the Shamey. Concluding at Jaiphu Pam, the termination point of the trail boasts a canopy, swings, and a captivating panorama of Drepong Gewog. Furthermore, there is an ongoing plan to extend the trail connectivity to Ponchula, spanning an approximate distance of 3 kilometers. The project implementation involved close collaboration between the Dzongkhag Administration, Divisional Forest Office, Gewog Administration, and local communities.



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Google map of eco-trail from Phurjurlaptsa to Jaiphupam

Project Details:

Name of the trail	:	Phurjurlaptsa to Jaiphu Pam Eco-Trail
Length of the trail	:	2.88 km
Elevation	:	2288m-2401m
Funding source	:	UNDP-GEF (United Nations Development Programme-Global Environment Facility)
Funding Amount	:	Nu. 1.60 million
Facilities available	:	2-unit toilet, canopies and swing
Type of structure	:	Non-load-bearing structures
Location	:	Phurjurlaptsa to Jaiphu Pam
Start Date	:	15/09/2023
Completion Date	:	15/01/2024



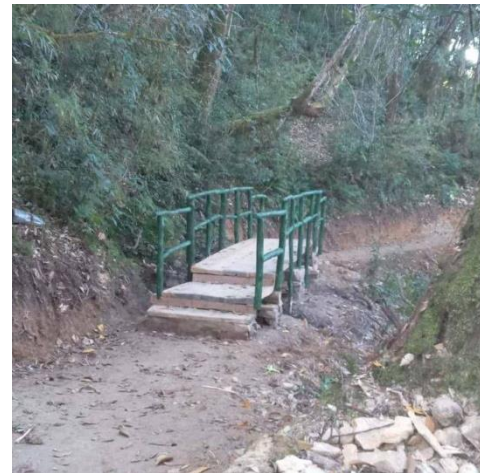
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Starting Point

The trail is located at 17km from Mongar town to Phurjurlaptsa (starting point of the trail), and construction was carried out the Community Contract Group of Kidheykhar Chiwog.



Sacred Sites:

1. Mithun Head



According to the legends, it is believed that the people of Drepong Gewog were blessed with an abundance of Mithun in their land. As the centuries unfolded, the Mithun while reaching the place where it currently exists, succumbed to an ethereal force, transforming it into a rock that now stands as a silent witness to the enduring pact.

In the shadow of the sacred rock, it is whispered that the people of Kidheykhar shall not reveal the same profusion of Mithun bestowed upon Drepong Gewog.

2. Three Cooking Stones

Legends say that the hunters embarked on a pursuit, intended to capture and slaughter a herd of yak that had traversed from Yakgang. Upon reaching the place below Shamey Lhakhang,



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the targeted group of yak was lost and nowhere to be seen. The hunters, regrettably left with only the head of a yak, discovered the remainder of the carcass to be absent. Undeterred by the partial acquisition, the hunters roasted the severed head of the yak upon three cooking stones, subsequently partaking in the consumption of the limited bounty. The name "Shamey" originates from the local colloquialism denoting the event where the yak went astray, resulting in the absence of yak meat.

3. Ladam Phodrang

The restriction point, locally known as 'Ladam Phodrang' serves as a definitive boundary that locals are prohibited from crossing. This boundary holds significance for the residents of Kidheykhar, Wengkhar, and Yakpugang, encompassing around 400 households. Its relevance lies in the celebration of the local festival known as 'Dueza,' a biennial event occurring on the 30th day of the third month of the Bhutanese calendar.



On the eve of Dueza, specifically the 29th day of the third month of the Bhutanese Calander, a group of people from Kidheykhar led by their esteemed leader 'Phramey,' goes to the restriction point and perform elaborate offerings to appease the deities and spirits residing there.

Following these rituals, spear-like implements crafted from the *Lyonia* spps tree are erected around the phodrang, symbolizing the commencement of the restricted period. The group then descends back to Kidheykhar, and they gather at Tadampa Chorten where they assemble to celebrate the imposition of the restriction.

The restriction, known as 'Ladam,' remains in force for five months, spanning from the 29th day of the third month to the 29th day of the eighth month in the Bhutanese calendar. Any





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Monastery:

1. Shamey Lhakhang



There lived a respected monk named Lama Choejey Wangpo in Tibet. The people of Mongar, a neighboring region, sought his guidance and brought him to the enchanting locale of Shamey

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Dzongkhag website: <http://www.mongar.gov.bt>



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Lhakhang. Entrusting him with the responsibility, he was appointed as the caretaker of this sacred Lhakhang. The name "Shamey" originates from the local colloquialism denoting the event where the yak went astray, resulting in the absence of yak meat. Despite its humble origin, Shamey Lhakhang gained prominence and was recognized as a significant spiritual center by a Minister from the distinguished Yakgang Choeji (lineage).

Moved by a deep sense of reverence, the Home and Culture Minister embarked on a barefoot pilgrimage to the Lhakhang and he surrendered the sacred space to the Dratshang, signifying its profound spiritual importance. Although officially under the Dratshang, the Lhakhang retained a private caretaker, ensuring its day-to-day upkeep and spiritual vibrancy. As time unfolded, during the 2nd Local Government period, the Lhakhang was formally surrendered to the care of the Mongar Dratshang, solidifying its place as a spiritual beacon within the community's heritage.



Canopy and 2 units Toilet at Shamey Lhakhang



Facilities along the trail route



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2. Jaiphu Pam & Jaiphu Lhakhangs

The inhabitants of Phosorong once regarded Gyelphu, now known as Jaiphu, as Gonpa-a secluded sanctuary. It served as a place of meditation for the monks of the revered Yakgang Choeji (lineage), who were responsible for founding the Lhakhang. Over time, the spiritual significance of Jaiphu was evident, as the people of Phosorong conducted important ceremonies there. However, the passage of time took a toll on Jaiphu Lhakhang. Despite its once-vibrant role in spiritual activities, a gap in its care emerged. No one inclined to its upkeep, and the Lhakhang fell into a state of disrepair. Recognizing the need for preservation, the decision was made to surrender the Lhakhang to Zhung Dratshang.

A key figure in the spiritual narrative of Jaiphu is Dorji Gyeltshen, the protective deity known for safeguarding the children born in Mongar. Parents whose children were born at the Mongar hospital seek the deity's blessings at Jaiphu, invoking protection for their newborns. The Lhakhang, once decrepit, now holds renewed significance as a place where the divine intersects with the human. Under the care of Gyeltshen Truelku of Kuri Zampa, Jaiphu has found a guardian within the spiritual community. Additionally, the local community in Mongar takes an active role in caring for this sacred site, demonstrating their collective reverence and commitment to its heritage.





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Canopy and Swing at Jaiphu Pam



Eco-trail