

Drukpa Kagyü School (Bhutan)

also known as “lho 'brug”

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Entry tags: Tantric Buddhism, Himalayan Buddhism, Drukpa Kagyü ('brug pa bka' brgyud), Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü (lho 'brug), Buddhist Traditions, Tibetan Buddhist Traditions, Kagyü sect (bka' brgyud), Religious Group

The Drukpa Kagyü school belongs to the Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism. Standard Tibetan religious historiographies divide the Kagyü school into four main lineages: (1) the Phagdrü Kagyü school with eight minor lineages founded by students of Phagmodrupa Dorje Gyelpo (1110-70), (2) the Karma Kagyü school, (3) the Barom Kagyü school, and (4) the Tshelpa Kagyü school. The Drukpa Kagyü school is counted among the minor lineages of (1) the Phagdrü Kagyü school. However, the Drukpa Kagyü school is also heterogeneous with different sub-branches, such as the Bhutanese branch (lho 'brug) with which this entry deals. In detail, the Drukpa Kagyü school goes back to the Buddhist master Tsangpa Gyaré Yeshe Dorje (1161-1211). In its beginnings, this school was associated with a strong emphasis on meditation and the simple lifestyle of mendicants. The Drukpa Kagyü school further split into three sub-branches, each established by another disciple of Tsangpa Gyaré Yeshe Dorje: (1) the middle Drukpa, (2) the upper Drukpa, and (3) the lower Drukpa. In fact, in reality, interactions between the sub-branches of the Drukpa Kagyü schools have been much more complex. Before the seventeenth century, Buddhist masters of all three sub-branches of the Drukpa Kagyü school were active and established religious institutions in Bhutan, such as Phajo Drukgom Zhikpo (1184-1251) or the famous “Madman of the Drukpa,” Drukpa Künlé (1455-1529). The Bhutanese branch of the Drukpa Kagyü school (Tib. lho 'brug) was newly established after the seventeenth century resulting from an additional split of the middle Drukpa Kagyü school into a “Northern,” i. e. Tibetan/Ladakhi, and “Southern,” i. e. Bhutanese branch. This split was caused by a dispute over Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (1594-ca. 1651) as the rightful incarnation of the earlier eminent lineage master, the 4th Drukchen Künkhyen Pema Karpo (1527-92). This subsequently led to Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel's flight to Bhutan and the foundation of the State of Bhutan in 1625/26. In Bhutan, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel successfully institutionalized a system of governance that united religious and political authority, the “Joint Twofold System of Governance” (Tib. srid chos gnyis ldan). Under him, a regent exercised political power while the “Chief Abbot of Bhutan” oversaw the religious institutions and was the head of the new Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school-starting with the 1st Chief Abbot Pekar Jungné (1604-72). This “Joint Twofold System of Governance” was renewed in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan from 2008. As of today, the 70th Chief Abbot Tulku Jigmé Chödra (b. 1955) is in office. In particular, regarding the Drukpa Kagyü school as a religious group, the relationship between the societal spheres of religion and politics is complex and very interesting. As in the other Kagyü schools, the central doctrine and meditative system in the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school is Mahāmudrā (Tib. phyag rgya chen po). Other essential teachings are the “Six Yogas of Nāropa,” called in this school the teachings of “Merging and Transference” (Tib. bsre 'pho), and the “Six Cycles of Equal Taste” (Tib. ro snyoms skor drug). In particular, since the seventeenth century, important doctrinal and ritualistic innovations and new teaching cycles by their founder Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel were introduced. This entry covers the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school (Tib. lho 'brug), but it does not include religious groups of the Drukpa Kagyü schools outside of Bhutan on a global scale, primarily associated with branches and monasteries of the Drukpa Kagyü school from Ladakh, Darjeeling, or Tibet. Technical note: Tibetan and Bhutanese proper names, place names, and terms are spelled phonetically roughly according to the THL Simplified Phonetic Transcription of Standard Tibetan by David Germano and Nicolas Tournadre. Crucial Tibetan or Sanskrit terms are transliterated and preceded by an abbreviation denoting the respective language and set in brackets, i. e. (Tib.) or (Skt.). The transliteration of Tibetan characters follows the system of Turrell W. Wylie. Sanskrit

characters are transliterated according to the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST). Birth-and-death dates follow the reference works used here or otherwise the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC). For convenience and further research, in the bibliographical references for Tibetan primary sources, the author's name and the title are given in Wylie transliteration. If available, a Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC) catalog number is provided in square brackets.



Date Range: 1625 CE - 2021 CE

Region: Drukpa Kagyü School in Bhutan

Region tags: Asia, Himalayas, Bhutan

In this map, the territory of the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school is roughly equated with today's nation-state borders of Bhutan (Tib. 'brug yul). Drukpa Kagyü monasteries are prominently situated in Western and Central Bhutan, while Eastern Bhutan has traditionally been dominated by monasteries of the Nyingma school and partially the Drikung Kagyü school. Since the foundation of the State of Bhutan in 1625/26, fortresses (Tib. rdzong) have been the seat of the religious branch, i. e. Drukpa Kagyü, and the political branch of government and are found throughout Bhutan.

Status of Participants:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources

Print sources for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: 10th Chief Abbot bsTan-'dzin Chos-rgyal, dPal 'brug pa rin po che mthu chen ngag gi dbang po'i bka' khrims phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal ba'i gnam in lHo'i chos 'byung bstan pa rin po che'i 'phro mthud 'jam dgon smon mtha' 'phreng ba, fols. 100b4–115a3. Block print. N. p.: n. n., n. d. [BDRC: WIKG9413]. Standardized Civil Legal Code of Bhutan from 1729 embedded in the first religious history of Bhutan.
- Source 2: 69th Chief Abbot dGe-'dun-rin-chen. 1972. lHo 'brug chos 'byung. Reprint. Thimphu: KMT Publishers, 2005. Second religious history of Bhutan
- Source 3: Slob dpon padma tshe dbang. 1994/2004. 'Brug gi rgyal rabs: 'Brug gsal ba'i sgron me. Thimphu: Jamyang Lhundrub. Third history of Bhutan.

Notes: Additional important works: 1. Aris, Michael V. 1986. Sources for the History of Bhutan. Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 14. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universität Wien, Universität Wien. Important Tibetan primary sources for the religious and political history of Bhutan in English translation. 2. Phuntsho, Karma. 2013. History of Bhutan. Noida: Random House, India. A detailed and comprehensive introduction to the religious and political history of Bhutan. 3. Aris, Michael V. 1979. Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom. Warminster, Wiltshire: Aris & Phillips Ltd. A detailed and comprehensive introduction to the religious and political history of Bhutan. 4. Ardussi, John A. 1977. "Bhutan Before the British: A Historical Study." PhD diss., Australian National University, 1977. A detailed and comprehensive introduction to the religious and political history of Bhutan.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Online sources for understanding this subject:

– Source 1 URL: <https://www.thlib.org/collections/texts/jiats/>

– Source 1 Description: The Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies (JIATS) is an online, scholarly, peer-reviewed journal with numerous articles on Buddhism in Bhutan.

– Source 2 URL: <http://zhungdratshang.org/>

– Source 2 Description: Webpage of the Zhung Dratshang (Central Monastic Body) of Bhutan.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

– Source 1 URL: <https://treasuryoflives.org/>

– Source 1 Description: The Treasury of Lives is a biographical (partially peer-reviewed) encyclopedia of Tibet, Inner Asia, and the Himalayan region with many entries related to the Drukpa Kagyü school in Bhutan.

– Source 2 URL: <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol36/iss1/>

– Source 2 Description: The HIMALAYA is a biannual, peer-reviewed journal published by the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies (ANHS) with articles related to religion in Bhutan.

– Source 3 URL: <https://www.colorado.edu/tibethimalayainitiative/2020/12/07/new-journal-bhutan-himalayan-research-launched-cu-alum-sonam-nyenda>

– Source 3 Description: The Journal of Bhutan & Himalayan Research is published by the Bhutan & Himalaya Research Centre at the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). The journal focuses on Bhutanese literature in Dzongkha and English partially including religious topics.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

– Source 1 URL: <https://www.bhutanstudies.org.bt/category/journal-of-bhutan-studies/>

– Source 1 Description: The Journal of Bhutan Studies is published by the Zhichenkhar Library of Mind, Body & Sound/Centre for Bhutan Studies & GNH with a great amount of articles about religion in Bhutan (past and present).

– Source 2 URL: <http://drukjournal.bt/about/>

– Source 2 Description: The Druk Journal is an innovative new journal edited by some of Bhutan's prominent scholars and journalists, covering partially also religious topics.

– Source 3 URL: https://www.rtc.bt/index.php/academics/research/riqtshoel?fbclid=IwAR1rHJt6iskyqAVsk66rOPaatN7C0lpeknzs_AGDU2yqP41VGci-AcbIZLO

– Source 3 Description: The Rig Tshoel - Research Journal of the Royal Thimphu College covers a broad range of topics including religion in Bhutan and beyond.

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Relevant online primary textual corpora (original languages and/or translations):

– Source 1 URL: <https://www.tbrc.org/#!/footer/about/newhome>

– Source 1 Description: Over 15,000,000 scanned pages, catalogs, and etexts from across the Buddhist world. A great amount of scriptures from all important religious lineage holders of the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school.

– Source 2 URL: https://ext.kb.dk/F/?func=file&file_name=find-b&local_base=bhu01&con_lng=ENG

– Source 2 Description: Online catalog of the National Library and Archives of Bhutan (no scans, but many works are found scanned in BDRC).

– Source 3 URL: <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP570/search>

– Source 3 Description: British Library Endangered Archives Programme: Archival records from digital documentation of Dongkala, Chizing, Dodedra, and Phajoding temple archives (EAP570). Many important works not listed or available elsewhere, high scan quality.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

– Source 1 URL: <https://library.bdrc.io/show/bdr:W3CN2232>

– Source 1 Description: Important collection of Drukpa Kagyü texts in 116 volumes.

– Source 2 URL: <https://library.bdrc.io/show/bdr:MW23779>

– Source 2 Description: Important collection of Drukpa Kagyü text in 101 volumes.

– Source 3 URL: http://dharmadownload.net/pages/english/Sungbum/E_Download_Sungbum.htm

– Source 3 Description: Electronic input (unknown origin) of the 69th Chief Abbot Geshe Drapuk Gendün Rinchen's and the 4th Drukchen Künkhyen Pema Karpo's Collected Works.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

General Variables

Membership/Group Interactions

Are other religious groups in cultural contact with target religion:

– Yes

Notes: Contact with other branches of the Drukpa Kagyü school (Ladakh/Tibet), the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, the Drikung Kagyü school in Eastern Bhutan, and Hindu religious groups mostly in Southern and Western Bhutan.

Specific to this answer:

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Is the cultural contact competitive:

– Yes



Is the cultural contact accommodating/pluralistic:

– Yes

Notes: Only partially.

↳ Is the cultural contact neutral:

– Yes

↳ Is there violent conflict (within sample region):

– No

Notes: Currently, there is no violent conflict. However, there has been violent conflict in the past, for example, in the 1980ies with Nepalese Hindu minorities in Bhutan.

↳ Is there violent conflict (with groups outside the sample region):

– No

Does the religious group have a general process/system for assigning religious affiliation:

– Yes

Notes: Religious affiliation is traditionally assigned at birth. The newborn child is usually brought by the Buddhist parents to a Buddhist teacher/Lama (Tib. bla ma). From the Lama it receives a Buddhist refuge name, a little hair is cut, and the newborn is granted refuge to the Three Jewels (Skt. Buddha, Dharma, Sangha). This marks the entry into the Buddhist path.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Assigned at birth (membership is default for this society):

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

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↳ Assigned by personal choice:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Assigned by class:

– No

↳ Assigned at a specific age:

– No

Notes: Different monastic vows are traditionally given at a standardized age, such as novice or

full ordination. Tantric vows may be given depending on the individual spiritual development of the religious practitioner by a qualified Tantric teacher.

↳ Assigned by gender:

– No

Notes: However, nuns have traditionally not been able to study in the higher monastic Buddhist colleges or have a monastic career path as they were not able to receive full ordination in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition which is necessary to proceed to certain higher monastic studies. Although some positive progress has been made, the issue of the full ordination of nuns in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition is still not resolved.

↳ Assigned by participation in a particular ritual:

– Yes

Notes: See the aforementioned refuge ceremony. Furthermore, three different sets of vows can theoretically be taken: Pratimokṣa for nuns/monks, vows for lay practitioners (refuge plus lay precepts), Bodhisattva vows (can be taken by monastic or lay practitioners), Tantric vows (can be taken by monastic or lay practitioners).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Assigned by some other factor:

– No

Does the religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does the religion have official political support

– Yes

Notes: The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan from 2008, art. 3 (Spiritual Heritage) regulates the religious institutions, the procedures of appointment, and duties of the monastic members of the Drukpa Kagyü school as they constitute one of the two branches in the "Joint Twofold System of Governance in Bhutan."

Reference: Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan (Engl.)

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists

↳ Are the priests paid by polity:

– No

↳ Is religious infrastructure paid for by the polity:

– Yes

↳ Are the head of the polity and the head of the religion the same figure:

– No

Notes: Today Bhutan is a constitutional monarchy. The head of state is the king of Bhutan, the head of the political branch of the government the prime minister, and the head of the religious branch of the government and the Drukpa Kagyü school the Chief Abbott of Bhutan. This is regulated in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan from 2008. Bhutan is unique in how the relationship between the societal spheres of religion, i. e. Drukpa Kagyü school, was institutionalized and the "Joint Twofold System of Governance (Tib. srid chos gnyis ldan) renewed.

↳ Are political officials equivalent to religious officials:

– No

↳ Is religious observance enforced by the polity:

– No

↳ Polity legal code is roughly coterminous with religious code:

– No

↳ Polity provides preferential economic treatment (e.g. tax, exemption)

– Yes

Is there a conception of apostasy in the religious group:

– No

Notes: In monastic settings, nuns and monks can be expelled from the monastery for certain reasons, such as breaking important rules or some also leave the monastery voluntarily. That does not entail that they are not Buddhist anymore. Furthermore, in Tibetan Buddhism one often finds a religious self-ascription to different religious lineages and religious groups. In Bhutan, religious practitioners can consider themselves adherents of the Drukpa Kagyü and the Nyingma school at the same time without any problem.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Size and Structure

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (estimated population, numerical):

– Field doesn't know

Notes: As of today, the Zhung Dratshang (Central Monastic Body) lists 7127 monks, 418 nuns, and 4 affiliated monastic institutions on its webpage. Those are officially registered under the Dratshang Lhentshog (Council for Religious Affairs). However, this only counts the official monastic institutions and members and does not include lay or non-affiliated practitioners of the Drukpa Kagyü school. As a result, an informed estimation about the number of adherents of this religious group is not possible. In addition, Bhutan does not include religious affiliation in its census. According to the 2017 Population and Housing Census, 735,553 persons were counted. The Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project estimates that there are 74.4 % Buddhists in Bhutan. However, that would include all Buddhist schools in Bhutan and not only the Drukpa Kagyü school.

Reference: The Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project - Bhutan

Reference: Zhung Dratshang

Reference: Population and Housing and Census 2017 (National Report)

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Number of adherents of religious group within sample region (% of sample region population, numerical):

– Field doesn't know

Notes: See above.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Nature of religious group [please select one]:

– Large official religious group with smaller religious groups also openly allowed

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are there recognized leaders in the religious group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Scripture

Does the religious group have scriptures:

Scripture is a generic term used to designate revered texts that are considered particularly authoritative

and sacred relative to other texts. Strictly speaking, it refers to written texts, but there are also “oral scriptures” (e.g. the Vedas of India).

– Yes

Notes: In general, one can differentiate into: (1) Canonical scriptures considered as the authentic “Word of the Buddha”; (2) canonical scriptures by highly accomplished Indian Buddhist masters; (3) non-canonical scriptures by important lineage masters of the Drukpa Kagyü school. Figuring prominently in the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school, are works about the central doctrines and practices: Mahāmudrā (Tib. phyag rgya chen po); the “Six Yogas of Nāropa,” called in this school the teachings of “Merging and Transference” (Tib. bsre ’pho); the “Six Cycles of Equal Taste” (Tib. ro snyoms skor drug); and the Madhyamaka philosophy. In particular, since the seventeenth century, important doctrinal and ritualistic innovations and new teaching cycles ascribed to Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel were introduced and, subsequently, put down in writing. Both the works from earlier eminent Tibetan masters of the Kagyü and Drukpa Kagyü schools and later Bhutanese masters of the Drukpa Kagyü school are considered essential in the exegesis and religious education. Those masters are, for example, the 2nd Drukchen Kunga Peljor (1428-76), the 4th Drukchen Künkhyen Pema Karpo (1527-92), the 9th Chief Abbot Shākya Rinchen (1710-59), the 13th Chief Abbot Yönten Thayé (1724-84), the 68th Chief Abbot Trisur Tenzin Döndrup (1925-2020), the 69th Chief Abbot Geshe Drapuk Gendün Rinchen (1926-97), and the 70th Chief Abbot Tulku Jigmé Chödra (b. 1955). In particular, during the modernization process of the religious institutions in the second half of the twentieth century, many newly composed scriptures were integrated. For example, the 69th Chief Abbot Geshe Drapuk Gendün Rinchen composed many of his works for the direct use in either religious-ceremonial or religious-educational contexts. As a result of these efforts, his commentaries and explanatory summaries of important Indian canonical works found their permanent place in the religious educational institutions in Bhutan. They are nowadays used as ancillary texts in the curriculum for further clarification, elucidation, and memorization. Furthermore, his ritual manuals and liturgical arrangements are part of the regular religious practices performed in Bhutan. For a detailed overview and analysis of the 69th Chief Abbot Geshe Drapuk Gendün Rinchen's works, see my recent monograph (see reference). In addition, one can access many of those Buddhist masters' works via the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC).

Reference: Dagmar Schwerk. A Timely Message from the Cave. isbn: 9783945151105.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan



Are they written:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan



Are they oral:

– Yes

Notes: Transmission of scriptures/knowledge/practices follows a complex set of rules, particularly, when esoteric Tantric scriptures are concerned. Usually, besides the written text, a reading transmission (Tib. lung), exposition (Tib. bshad), and practical instructions (Tib. khrid) must be given to the disciple by a qualified Buddhist master/Lama (Tib. bla ma) to ensure the authentic transmission. In addition, in the Drukpa Kagyü school, certain scriptures have been first orally received and transmitted, for example, in the form of pure visions (Tib. dag snang) or

"treasures" (Tib. gter ma).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is there a story (or a set of stories) associated with the origin of scripture:

– Yes

Notes: The history of the origin of different scriptures/practices is very important and often recited when they are transmitted. As aforementioned, one can differentiate into: (1) Canonical scriptures considered as the authentic "Word of the Buddha"; (2) canonical scriptures by highly accomplished Indian Buddhist masters; (3) non-canonical scriptures by important lineage masters of the Drukpa Kagyü school.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Revealed by a high god:

– No

↳ Revealed by other supernatural being:

– Yes

Notes: Some scriptures are believed to be hidden or kept by Nāgas, Ḍākinīs, or by Buddhist deities.

↳ Inspired by high god:

– No

↳ Inspired by other supernatural being:

– Yes

Notes: See above.

↳ Originated from divine or semi-divine human beings:

– Yes

↳ Originated from non-divine human being:

– Yes

Notes: There is no separate category here, but "humans with supernatural powers" (Skt. siddha) need to be added. Those supernatural powers are naturally gained as part of progressing on the spiritual path toward enlightenment. Revelations of scriptures are commonly accepted in the case of important and highly realized lineage holders in the Drukpa Kagyü school.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Are the scriptures alterable:

– No

Notes: Scriptures that are attributed to the Buddha should not be altered, and masters in the Drukpa Kagyü school consider it important to stay truthful to them. However, through translation and editing, scriptures attributed to the Buddha have factually considerably changed over centuries and often exist in different versions.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Are there formal institutions (i.e. institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders) for interpreting the scriptures:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is there a select group of people trained in transmitting the scriptures:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is there a codified canon of scriptures:

– Yes

Notes: The Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school follows the Tibetan Buddhist canon of the "new schools." It consists of two big sections: The words of the Buddha and commentaries by mostly earlier Indian masters. However, also non-canonical scriptures, such as commentaries and compositions by important lineage masters have gained canon-like status. The Tibetan Buddhist canon can best be described as "open but stabilized" (Stanley 2014, 383).

Reference: Phillip Stanley. The Tibetan Buddhist Canon. (Mario Poceski), The Wiley Blackwell Companion to East and Inner Asian Buddhism, First Edition. John Wiley & Sons., Ltd..

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Architecture, Geography

Is monumental religious architecture present:

– Yes

Notes: Important sites with monumental religious architecture for the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school are generally the fortresses (Tib. rdzong). Furthermore, there are numerous monasteries, monastic colleges, and temples of its lineage holders, such as Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel and the Chief Abbots of Bhutan. These are, for example, Cheri, Tango, Phajoding, and Shrī Nālandā.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ In the average settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: This would depend on the period in question, and I am not aware of studies that systematically have measured Drukpa Kagyü religious architecture in the entire country. In general, in pre-modern Bhutan (and also partially still today) settlements/cities/villages are centered/built around the fortresses (Tib. rdzong), the seat of federal/provincial governments with its two branches (religious/political). Partially monasteries were at the center of settlements. But they also are often very secluded without settlements surrounding them.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Size of largest single religious monument, square meters:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: See note above.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Height of largest single religious monument, meters:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: See note above.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Size of average monument, square meters:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: There is no average size of monuments as they are very diverse.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Height of average monument, meters:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: There is no average height of monuments as they are very diverse.

↳ In the largest settlement, what percentage of area is taken up by all religious monuments:

– Field doesn't know

Notes: Thimphu, the capital, is the largest city in Bhutan. I estimate, based on my visit in 2014, that 10 % of the capital is taken up by religious monuments or buildings. However, one needs to additionally consider that also private houses are built following traditional religious architecture.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are there different types of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Tombs:

– Yes

↳ Cemeteries:

– Yes

↳ Temples:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Altars:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Devotional markers:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Mass gathering point [plazas, courtyard, square. Places permanently demarcated using visible objects or structures]:

– Yes

Notes: (1) Monasteries/temples; (2) reliquary shrines in many different sizes, such as Stūpas; (3) fortresses (Tib. rdzong) as the seat of religious and political power in Bhutan. Important religious state ceremonies and festivals take place in their courtyard.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Other type of religious monumental architecture:

– Yes [specify]: For example, Maṇi walls and stones with the Mantra of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, murals depicting Guru Rinpoche/Padmasambhāva who is accredited with bringing Buddhism to Bhutan and Tibet in the seventh century, sacred caves of important religious masters, sacred wells in rocks, sacred natural landscapes.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is iconography present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Where is iconography present [select all that apply]:

– On persons

– At home

– Only religious public space

– Some public spaces

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Are there distinct features in the religious group's iconography:

– Yes

Notes: For the distinct features of the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school's iconography, see the extensive research of Ariana Maki. The reference below links to her photo collection on the Himalayan Art Resources webpage.

Reference: Ariana Maki Himalayan Art Resources Collection of Ariana Maki Photo Archive (Bhutan)

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Eyes (stylized or not):

– No

↳ Supernatural beings (zoomorphic):

– No

↳ Supernatural beings (geomorphic):

– No

↳ Supernatural beings (anthropomorphic):

– No

↳ Supernatural beings (abstract symbol):

– No

↳ Portrayals of afterlife:

– No

↳ Aspects of doctrine (e.g. cross, trinity, Mithraic symbols):

– No

↳ Humans:

– No

↳ Other features of iconography:

– Yes

Notes: The Drukpa Kagyü school in Bhutan shares many of its iconographic features with other Tibetan and Bhutanese Buddhist religious groups. However, one of several distinct iconographic features is a phallus. This goes back to one of the most popular masters of the Drukpa Kagyü school, Drukpa Künlé (1455–1529), also called the "Madman of the Drukpa." In Bhutan, he is, in particular, associated with rituals of fertility and warding off of malicious spirits often symbolized by a phallus. The phallus is very visible in Bhutanese material culture, such as beautifully painted on the walls of many houses in Bhutan. The religious site usually associated with these rituals of fertility is the Chimé temple near Punakha. Here, the attached photo depicts a phallus painted on the exterior of a house. The database "Oral Cultures of Bhutan" on the Mandala Collections webpage presents scholarly content from diverse academic disciplines and media types. It includes numerous pictures of the phallus in its ritualistic and architectural context.

Reference: Chimi Lhakhang

Are there specific sites dedicated to sacred practice or considered sacred:

– Yes



Are sacred site oriented to environmental features:

"Environmental features" refers to features in the landscape, mountains, rivers, cardinal directions etc...

– Yes

Are pilgrimages present:

– Yes



How strict is pilgrimage:

– Optional (common)

Beliefs

Burial and Afterlife

Is a spirit-body distinction present:

Answer "no" only if personhood (or consciousness) is extinguished with death of the physical body. Answering yes does not necessarily imply the existence of Cartesian mind/body dualism, merely that some element of personhood (or consciousness) survives the death of the body.

– Yes

Notes: The five aggregates (Skt. Skandhas) are understood to be constituting the emotional-mental-physical entity of a human being: form, sensations (or feelings), perceptions, mental activity/formations, and consciousness.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan



Spirit-mind is conceived of as having qualitatively different powers or properties than other body parts:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan



Spirit-mind is conceived of as non-material, ontologically distinct from body:

– No



Other spirit-body relationship:

– No

Notes: See above.

Belief in afterlife:

– Yes

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in specified realm of space beyond this world:

– Yes

Notes: Although, with regard to Buddhism, there is no real "afterlife" in the Abrahamic-religious sense, there are different celestial realms of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas such as Amitābha and Guru Rinpoche in which rebirth is possible.

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Afterlife in specified realm of space beyond this world:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "above" space:

– No

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "below" space:

– No

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined horizontal space:

– No

↳ Afterlife located in "other" space:

– No

Reincarnation in this world:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ In a human form:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ In animal/plant form:

– Yes

Notes: Rebirth as an animal is possible but not as a plant. However, whether plants can be counted as "sentient beings" based on scriptures of earlier Buddhism is debated among scholars (see, for example, the work by Lambert Schmithausen). To my knowledge, today, adherents of the Drukpa Kaggyü school do not believe plants to be sentient.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ In form of an inanimate object(s):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ In non-individual form (i.e. some form of corporate rebirth, tribe, lineage. etc.):

– No

Notes: The deliberate rebirth as a "Tulku" in the succession of rebirths in a religious lineage in the Drukpa Kaggyü school is in an individual form, but equally, they are considered to be inseparable from the lineage of the previous masters of that lineage.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reincarnation linked to notion of life-transcending causality (e.g. karma):

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Other form of reincarnation in this world:

– Yes [specify]: According to Buddhist cosmology, rebirth is possible in six realms: (1) gods, (2) demi-gods, (3) humans, (4) animals, (5) hungry ghosts, and (6) hells.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Cremation:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Mummification:

– Yes

Notes: Mummification occurs when Buddhist masters of high status have stayed in "postmortem meditative absorption" (Tib. thugs dam). This is a state said to only be actualized by realized Buddhist practitioners. If the body of the deceased master does not show any signs of decay and only shrinks, it is perceived to hold strong blessings that are beneficial for the adherents and community. In that case, the body is not cremated but often subsequently mummified and enshrined in often very exquisite reliquary shrines (Tib. sku gdung mchod rten). Nowadays, there is great interest in research on this death and postmortem meditative state. For current research from the field of visual and medical anthropology, see Donagh Coleman (dir.), *Tukdam: A Question of Life and Death*. Finland, Kaarle Aho, Producer Making Movies Oy (forthcoming: 2021). HD, 90 mins.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Interment:

– No

Notes: In rare cases (water/earth).

↳ Cannibalism:

– No

↳ Exposure to elements (e.g. air drying):

– No

↳ Feeding to animals:

– No

Notes: However, traditionally, sky burials took place in Bhutan on specific burial grounds where the human corpse was cut up in pieces and offered to vultures/animals. Besides the person cutting up the corpse, religious specialists carried out the respective death rituals and prayers. In Eastern Bhutan, the semi-nomadic ethnic group of the Drogpa carries out similar practices still today. Bumdrag in Western Bhutan was also a traditional sky burial ground (associated with a monastery of the Nyingma school though). I have not come across Bhutanese adherents of the Drukpa Kagyü school practicing this form of funeral rites.

Reference: Par Admin Web Bumdrag

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Secondary burial:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Re-treatment of corpse:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Other intensive (in terms of time or resources expended) treatment of corpse :

– Yes [specify]: See above the question about "mummification." Mummification and enshrinement are work- and resource-intensive processes. The enshrinement of the deceased Buddhist master in the reliquary shrine often is completed only several years later. For example, the 69th Chief Abbot of Bhutan Geshe Drapuk Gendün Rinchen was only enshrined in 1999, two years after his death in 1997. However, I have no knowledge about what exact steps are carried out in this process and whether ethnographic studies about this topic exist.

Reference: Rinzin Wangchuk Kudung Chorten of Geshey Geduen Rinchen consecrated

Reference: Dagmar Schwerk. A Timely Message from the Cave. isbn: 9783945151105.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists

Are co-sacrifices present in tomb/burial:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are grave goods present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Personal effects:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists

↳ Valuable items:

– Yes

Notes: In case of the mummification and enshrinement of an eminent Buddhist master, a significant number of grave goods, such as jewels and precious stones, gold, and Buddhist scriptures are put into the reliquary shrine. The reliquary shrine itself is often very exquisite. Offering those valuable items enables adherents to accumulate a great amount of positive Karma.

↳ Significant wealth (e.g. gold, jade, intensely worked objects):

– Yes

↳ Some wealth (some valuable or useful objects interred):

– Yes

↳ Other valuable/precious items interred:

– Yes [specify]: Scriptures, Mantras.

↳ Other grave goods:

– No

Are formal burials present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ As cenotaphs:

– No

↳ In cemetery:

– Yes

↳ Family tomb-crypt:

– No

↳ Domestic (individuals interred beneath house, or in areas used for normal domestic activities):

– I don't know

Notes: I have not come across such examples in the academic literature about the Drukpa Kagyü school, but it is possible that those practices exist. I assume that such research would require ethnographic research.

↳ Other formal burial type:

– Yes [specify]: Cremations of eminent Buddhist masters are very important events for the religious adherents and the religious community. In numerous cases, they are reported to be accompanied by wondrous events and the creation of relics from the ashes.

Supernatural Beings

Are supernatural beings present:

– Yes

Notes: Supernatural beings are present in the conceptualizations of this religious group in great numbers. Many of them are also at the same time found in other Tibetan Buddhist religious groups or Indian cosmologies. However, a general categorization into supernatural beings as "human"/"non-human"/"mixed human-divine" is not entirely sensible for the Drukpa Kagyü school (or Tibetan Buddhism more generally). The exact correlation between those Western etic categories and Buddhist Tibetan/Bhutanese cosmology, soteriology, and related emic terminology has to be analyzed in depths in the respective local and temporal context. It is also important to note that the immanence/transcendence division in Buddhism (relative/absolute truth) is very differently conceptualized as in the Abrahamic religions and makes such correlations per se tricky. An additional challenge is how to generally distinguish between "Buddhist" and "non-Buddhist" (often local) supernatural beings and whether such a distinction makes sense as those distinctions are often in oral/written narratives/sources blurred. Here, in a simplified manner, I differentiate the following

groups/aspects of supernatural beings, and my answers are to be understood within this limited framework: 1. "Buddhist" supernatural beings, such as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, meditational deities, Dharma protectors, and Ḍākinīs can be considered supernatural beings. They possess supernatural powers, and adherents/practitioners communicate in diverse ways with them. Their actions towards humans (and all other sentient beings) are generally considered to be benevolent and often soteriologically beneficial. However, humans (and other sentient beings) are not ultimately different from these supernatural beings as according to Buddhist soteriology and cosmology, adherents can "transform" into them when they progress on the spiritual path. 2. "Non-Buddhist" non-human/mixed human-divine supernatural beings are numerous. In general, the imminent world is divided into three parts: the sky and heavens, earth, and the lower regions. Those are imagined to be populated by, for example, local gods/goddesses, demons/demonesses, and spirits residing in trees, the earth, water, stones, and mountains. As pointed out by Sam van Schaik, how to translate the emic Tibetan terminologies of those supernatural beings into English is, challenging. Furthermore, the religious literature of the Drukpa Kagyü school reports numerous incidents in which those spirits were brought under the oath of Buddhism and consequently transformed into Buddhist protectors/Buddhist deities by important lineages holders of the Drukpa Kagyü school. Guru Rinpoche/Padmasambhāva, as the most prominent example of such "subjugator," also plays a vital role in the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school, much more than in the other Tibetan branches of this school. Human interaction, negotiation, and fight with those supernatural beings is naturally part of everyday life. 3. Existence between rebirths in the six realms and several of those realms themselves, such as hungry ghosts or hell realms, could fall into the category of what is called here "supernatural."

Reference: Karma Phuntsho. *The History of Bhutan*. Random House India. isbn: 9788184004113.

Reference: Sam van Schaik. *Buddhist Magic*. Shambhala Publications. isbn: 9780834842816.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ A supreme high god is present:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Previously human spirits are present:

– Yes

Notes: In the following subset of questions, I merely refer to the case when a previously human being after their death is "stuck" in the Bardo between rebirths. This is usually considered to be temporary.

Reference: Graham Coleman, Thupten Jinpa. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Penguin UK. isbn: 9780141903316.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits can be seen:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits can be physically felt:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Previously human spirits have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits' knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits' knowledge restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

– No

Notes: N/A: The human spirit's knowledge in the Bardo between rebirths would be restricted by their past Karma (not geographically).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits' knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

– No

Notes: See above. N/A: The human spirit's knowledge in the Bardo between rebirths would be restricted by their past Karma (not geographically).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits' knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

– No

Notes: See above: N/A: The human spirit's knowledge in the Bardo between rebirths would be restricted by their past Karma (not geographically).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

– Yes

Notes: Depending on their precious Karmic connections, they would be able to see the persons connected to them.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirit's can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

– Yes

Notes: Depending on their precious Karmic connections, they would be able to see inside the mind of the persons connected to them.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits know your basic character (personal essence):

– Yes

Notes: See above.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits have other form(s) of knowledge regarding this world:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits have memory of life:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits exhibit positive emotion:

– No

Notes: But human spirits have positive emotions.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits exhibit negative emotion:

– No

Notes: But human spirits have negative emotions.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Human spirits possess hunger:

– No

Notes: However, they are able to receive ("eat") smoke offerings.

↳ Human spirits possess/exhibit some other feature:

– No

↳ Human spirits communicate with the living:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ In waking, everyday life:

– Yes

↳ In dreams:

– Yes

↳ In trance possession:

– I don't know

↳ Through divination processes:

– Yes

↳ Only through specialists:

– No

↳ Only through monarch:

– No

↳ Communicate with living through other means:

– I don't know

↳ Non-human supernatural beings are present:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings can be seen:

– Yes

Notes: Depending on the spiritual realization of the adherent, different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas can be perceived. Regarding gods/goddesses, demons/demonesses, and spirits, they might be visible as well (not always though, depending on the class of supernatural beings). For example, the Chimé temple in Bhutan (near Punakha) was

built in a place where a demoness was subdued by the Drukpa Kagyü master Drukpa Künlé and ran away in the form of a dog (which is represented in the name of the temple).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings can be physically felt:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge of this world:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to particular domain of human affairs:

– Yes

Notes: Usually, local non-Buddhist supernatural beings would be restricted in their knowledge. But this also can vary significantly.

– No

Notes: This answer refers to Buddhist supernatural beings such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge restricted to (a) specific area(s) within the sample region:

– No

Notes: This answer refers to Buddhist supernatural beings such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

– Yes

Notes: Usually, local non-Buddhist supernatural beings would be restricted in their knowledge to the area they inhabit: sky and heavens, earth, or the lower regions.

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted within the sample region:

— Yes

Notes: This answer refers to Buddhist supernatural beings such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have knowledge unrestricted outside of sample region:

— Yes

Notes: This answer refers to Buddhist supernatural beings such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere normally visible (in public):

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see you everywhere (in the dark, at home):

— Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings can see inside heart/mind (hidden motives):

— Yes

Notes: This answer refers to Buddhist supernatural beings such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as they are considered to possess such insights into human beings.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings knows your basic character (personal essence):

– Yes

Notes: Notes: This answer refers to Buddhist supernatural beings such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as they are considered to possess such insights into human beings.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings know what will happen to you, what you will do (future sight):

– Yes

Notes: Some do, such as highly realized Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have other knowledge of this world:

– Yes [specify]: This depends on the degree of realization on the Buddhist path. Knowledge about the world increases until enlightenment which would entail omniscience. However, this is equally possible for humans (and other sentient beings).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Non-human supernatural beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Notes: Non-Buddhist supernatural beings can (with different degrees of power) reward or punish. Buddhist supernatural beings, such as Buddhas or Bodhisattvas do not really "reward" or "punish" humans (or other sentient beings). Their actions are motivated by compassion and are the impersonal result of the workings of Karma (interdependence/emptiness).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings can reward:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings can punish:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit positive emotion:

– Yes

Notes: In particular, non-Buddhist local gods/goddesses, demons/demonesses, and spirits can express strong emotions in their interactions with humans, which then leads to punishment or reward. Buddhas are "beyond" those mundane feelings, and Bodhisattvas are in the process of gradually freeing themselves from being attached to such feelings.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings exhibit negative emotion:

– Yes

Notes: See notes in the previous question.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings possess hunger:

– Yes

Notes: Only hungry ghosts in their realm of rebirth suffer from hunger/thirst. I am not aware of other classes of supernatural beings suffering from hunger.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These supernatural beings possess/exhibit some other feature:

– No

Notes: See introductory note to the section on "Supernatural Beings." It is possible that I am not aware of classes of beings with other features that may be local and not recorded as of yet in academic research.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Mixed human-divine beings are present:

– Yes

Notes: For example, demi-gods in one of the six realms of rebirth.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ These mixed human-divine beings can be seen:

– No

Notes: However, they can be perceived in their respective realm (the realm of the demi-gods) and the realm of the gods.

↳ These mixed human-divine beings can be physically felt:

– No

↳ Mixed human-divine beings have knowledge of this world:

– No

↳ These mixed human-divine beings have deliberate causal efficacy in the world:

– No

↳ These mixed human-divine beings have indirect causal efficacy in the world:

– No

↳ These mixed human-divine beings exhibit positive emotion:

– Yes

↳ These mixed human-divine beings exhibit negative emotion:

– Yes

Notes: Their strongest negative emotion is jealousy.

↳ These mixed human-divine beings possess hunger:

– No

↳ These mixed human-divine beings possess/exhibit some other feature:

– No

↳ Mixed human-divine beings communicate with the living:

– No

↳ Does the religious group possess a variety of supernatural beings:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Organized hierarchically:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Power of beings is domain specific:

– Yes

Notes: As explained above, some non-Buddhist supernatural beings are only found in a specific local area. Others, such as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, are omnipresent.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Other organization for pantheon:

– No

Notes: Please note that there are many different "pantheons" and with that also very different organizational principles within the groups of different kinds of supernatural beings (as explained at the beginning of the section "Supernatural Beings").

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present:

This refers to surveillance by supernatural beings of humans' behaviour and/or thought particularly as it relates to social norms or potential norm violations.

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

- ↳ There is supernatural monitoring of prosocial norm adherence in particular:
Prosocial norms are norms that enhance cooperation among members of the group, including obviously “moral” or “ethical” norms, but also extending to norms concerning honouring contracts and oaths, providing hospitality, coming to mutual aid in emergencies, etc.
– Yes
- ↳ Supernatural beings care about taboos:
– Yes
Notes: Many non-Buddhist supernatural beings, such as local gods/goddesses, demons/demonesses, and spirits care about the adherence to their rules on their territory. If humans disrespect them and transgress those rules they are punished.
 - ↳ Food:
– Yes
 - ↳ Sacred space(s):
– Yes
 - ↳ Sacred object(s):
– Yes
 - ↳ Supernatural beings care about other:
– No
- ↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of coreligionists:
– Yes
Notes: Buddhist supernatural beings such as Bodhisattvas would care about the negative Karma of sentient beings who commit such actions. Many non-Buddhist supernatural beings, such as local gods/goddesses, demons/demonesses, and spirits would only care if such actions would disturb them on their own territory.
- ↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other religions:
– Yes
Notes: See note above.
- ↳ Supernatural beings care about murder of members of other polities:

– Yes

Notes: See note above.

↳ Supernatural beings care about sex:

– No

Notes: Not per se about sex but certain areas/spaces may be considered inappropriate and considered taboo.

↳ Supernatural beings care about lying:

– Yes

Notes: Buddhist supernatural beings such as Bodhisattvas would care out of compassion about the Karma of human beings who lie, as this would affect those human beings negatively in their future. However, they do not care for the sake of themselves or out of "morality."

↳ Supernatural beings care about honouring oaths:

– Yes

Notes: Honouring oaths, for example, when being in the territory of a certain mountain god or earth spirit, is very important. Otherwise, this can lead to punishment and severe consequences.

↳ Supernatural beings care about laziness:

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about sorcery:

– Yes

Notes: Personal magical practices at places that are inhabited by local spirits can lead to complications.

↳ Supernatural beings care about non-lethal fighting:

– Yes

Notes: Supernatural beings (non-enlightened) are involved in non-lethal fighting with other supernatural beings or also humans. The life story of the Buddhist master Drukpa Künlé from the Drukpa Kagyü school includes many examples of such fights.

↳ Supernatural beings care about shirking risk:

– I don't know

Notes: Personally, I have not encountered such instances in textual sources or heard about otherwise.

|

↳ Supernatural beings care about disrespecting elders:

– Yes

Notes: Buddhist supernatural beings such as Bodhisattvas would care about the negative Karma of sentient beings who commit such actions.

↳ Supernatural beings care about gossiping:

– I don't know

Notes: Personally, I have not encountered such instances in textual sources or heard about otherwise.

↳ Supernatural beings care about property crimes:

– Yes

Notes: Supernatural beings (non-enlightened) can be disturbed if their property (not in a Western sense) or their territory is used without their consent or necessary rituals or offerings to them are not carried out (before taking property or entering their domain). However, stealing from a monastery or shrine of the Drukpa Kagyü school is also associated with bringing severe negative Karmic consequences upon the religious adherent.

↳ Supernatural beings care about proper ritual observance:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about performance of rituals:

– Yes

↳ Supernatural beings care about conversion of non-religionists:

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about economic fairness:

– No

↳ Supernatural beings care about personal hygiene:

– Yes

Notes: In some instances, rules for menstruating women exist. Other issues about personal hygiene are not known to me, but it is possible that other taboos exist.

↳ Supernatural beings care about other:

– Yes [specify]: In general, Buddhist deities and Bodhisattvas care for all sentient beings, including humans. Other local supernatural beings do not generally care for others, only in the context of their specific interaction with them.

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is the cause or agent of supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done by other entities or through other means [specify]

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is the reason for supernatural punishment known:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– Yes

Notes: This answer refers to non-Buddhist local supernatural beings (non-enlightened).
Non-adherence to rituals demonstrates disrespect for their rules and territory.

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– No

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– No

↳ Done randomly:

– No

↳ Other [specify]

– No

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in the afterlife:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Supernatural punishments in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of mild sensory displeasure:

– No

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory displeasure:

– No

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as an inferior life form:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in an inferior realm:

– Yes

↳ Other [specify]

– No

↳ Supernatural punishments are meted out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Supernatural punishments in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in this life consists of bad luck:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in this life consists of political failure:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in this life consists of defeat in battle:

– Yes

Notes: This refers to the pre-modern period of the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school's history.

↳ Punishment in this life consists of crop failure or bad weather:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in this life consists of disaster on journeys.

– Yes

↳ Punishment in this life consists of mild sensory displeasure:

– No

↳ Punishment in this life consists of extreme sensory displeasure:

– No

↳ Punishment in this life consists of sickness or illness:

– Yes

↳ Punishment in this life consists of impaired reproduction:

– I don't know

Notes: Personally, I have not encountered this in textual sources, but it is possible that certain classes of supernatural beings are believed to punish in this way.

↳ Punishment in this life consists of bad luck visited on descendants:

– No

↳ Other [specify]

– No

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is the cause/purpose of supernatural rewards known:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done only by high god:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done by many supernatural beings:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done through impersonal cause-effect principle:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done to enforce religious ritual-devotional adherence:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done to enforce group norms:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done to inhibit selfishness:

– Yes

Notes: Buddhist supernatural beings, such as Bodhisattvas or other realized practitioners, such as Buddhist masters, may reward adherents for overcoming their afflicted emotions, such as ignorance, desire, or hatred. But they would solely do that out of compassion for the adherents.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Done randomly:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in the afterlife:

– Yes

Notes: Only if by "afterlife" future rebirths are meant.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Supernatural rewards in the afterlife are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– No

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of eternal happiness:

– Yes

Notes: Only if "eternal happiness" is equated here with Nirvāṇa.

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation as a superior life form:

– Yes

↳ Reward in the afterlife consists of reincarnation in a superior realm:

– Yes

Notes: Reincarnation in a superior realm of certain Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

↳ Other [specify]

– No

↳ Supernatural rewards are bestowed out in this lifetime:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Supernatural rewards in this life are highly emphasized by the religious group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of good luck:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of political success or power:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of success in battle:

– Yes

Notes: One prominent example from the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school is their founder, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (1594-ca. 1651). The conquest and unification of the territory of Bhutan through his conventional and "magical" warfare is expressed in terms such as the "subjugation of a spiritual field"/"field of conversion" (Tib. gdul zhing/'dul zhing/gdul bya'i zhing) or the "heavenly field"/"Buddhafield" (Tib. zhing khams/dkar rgyud zhing khams) of his protector deity. His Buddhist protector deity Mahākāla had revealed itself to Zhabdrung in visionary dreams both earlier in Tibet, and also later in Bhutan.

Reference: Himalayan Resources Art Item: Mahakala (Buddhist Protector) - Kakamukha (Raven-faced)

Reference: Dagmar Schwerk. Drawing Lines in a Maṇḍala: A Sketch of Boundaries Between Religion and Politics in Bhutan.

Reference: Dagmar Schwerk. A Timely Message from the Cave. isbn: 9783945151105.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of peace or social stability:

– Yes

Notes: The rule of Zhabdrung Ngagwang Namgyel in Bhutan is associated with plenty of such "rewards."

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of healthy crops or good weather:

– Yes

Notes: See also previous note.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of success on journeys:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of mild sensory pleasure:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of extreme sensory pleasure:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced health:

– Yes

Notes: Religious practices for health and long life are common in the Drukpa Kagyü school. They are mostly associated with the "Buddha of Infinite Life" (Skt. Amitāyus) or the Medicine Buddha (Skt. Bhaiṣajyaguru).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of enhanced reproductive success:

– Yes

Notes: In cases of infertility.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reward in this life consists of fortune visited on descendants:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Other [specify]

– No

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present:

– Yes

Notes: The academic field of Tibetan Buddhism has different opinions about whether certain beliefs can be called "messianic" or not. Two examples of what could be interpreted as "messianic" are the Kālacakra Tantric cycle teachings and the coming of the future Buddha Maitreya. The answers to the following questions refer to the Buddha Maitreya.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is the messiah's whereabouts or time of coming known?

– Yes

↳ Alive, identified:

– No

↳ Coming in this lifetime:

– No

↳ Coming on specified date:

– No

↳ Coming in unspecified time in near future:

– No

↳ Coming in unspecified time in distant future:

– Yes

↳ Coming has already passed:

– No

↳ One in a line of many past and future messiahs:

– No

↳ Is the messiah's purpose known:

– Yes

↳ Messiah is a political figure who restores political rule:

– No

↳ Messiah is a priestly figure who restores religious traditions:

– No

↳ Other purpose:

–Yes [specify]: Buddha Maitreya will be the successor of the present historical Buddha Śākyamuni and will restore the Buddhist teachings.

Is an eschatology present:

– Yes

Notes: If we adopt a broader definition of "eschatology" in the sense of cycles of eons (with beginnings/endings) but not an apocalypse or final end, we can speak of a Buddhist "eschatology."

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Eschaton in this lifetime:

– No

↳ Eschaton at specified time in future:

– No

↳ Eschaton at unspecified time in near future:

– No

↳ Eschaton at unspecified time in distant future:

– Yes

Notes: According to Buddhist and Hindu mythology and cosmology, we are currently in the "Age of Struggle/Dark Age" (Skt. kaliyuga), the last of four time cycles.

↳ Eschaton at some other time:

– No

↳ Adherents need to perform specific tasks to bring about World's end:

– No

↳ Divine judgment event:

– No

↳ Restoration of the world:

– No

↳ Start of a new temporal cycle:

– Yes

↳ Establishment of a new political system:

– No

↳ Establishment of a new religious system:

– No

Notes: But the Buddhist teachings will be revived by Buddha Maitreya.

↳ Will anyone survive the eschaton:

– Yes

↳ All religious in-group members will survive the eschaton:

– No

↳ A subset of religion in-group members will survive the eschaton:

– No

↳ All members of the sample region will survive the eschaton:

– No

↳ Everyone in the world will survive the eschaton:

– No

↳ Other survival condition:

– Yes [specify]: Anyone who has not yet reached enlightenment and is still part of the cycle of rebirth will be reborn - hence "survive."

Norms and Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the religious group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious group:

– No

Notes: For adherents of the Drukpa Kagyü school, ethical and moral norms are, in theory, universal. Nevertheless, those Buddhist ethical and moral norms are also highly contextually dependent, for example, considering specific vows taken. Furthermore, according to Buddhist soteriology and cosmology, relative and ultimate truth are to be conceptualized ultimately as not separate. Therefore, everything takes place in the "heavenly field/Buddhafiend" (Tib. zhing khams/dkar rgyud zhing khams) of the protector deity of the Drukpa Kagyü school, Mahākāla, that is equated with the nation-state of Bhutan. Well-being in the country is, for example, achieved by individually following the Buddhist ethical and moral norms and by carrying out state and communal rituals of the Drukpa Kagyü school. In a transformed and modernized way, those norms are part of the Buddhism-induced ideas and policies of Gross National Happiness (GNH).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: In general, the virtues and qualities of a Bodhisattvas are to be cultivated on the graded path taught also in the Drukpa Kagyü school. These are, for example, codified in the six Pāramitās: (1) generosity (Tib. sbyin pa), (2) discipline (Tib. tshul khriims), (3) patience (Tib. bzod pa), (4) diligence (Tib. brtson 'grus), (5) one-pointed concentration (Tib. bsam gtan), and (6) wisdom (Tib. shes rab). I answer the following questions with "yes" when these virtues seem to be logically connected to them (or other Buddhist qualities). However, as aforementioned, Buddhist ethics and "morality" are highly contextually dependant.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Honesty / trustworthiness / integrity:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Courage (in battle):

– Yes

Notes: Magical and conventional warfare was important in the past of the Drukpa Kagyü school.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Courage (generic):

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Compassion / empathy / kindness / benevolence:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Mercy / forgiveness / tolerance:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Generosity / charity:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Selflessness / selfless giving:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Righteousness / moral rectitude:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Ritual purity / ritual adherence / abstention from sources of impurity:

– Yes

Notes: In general, ritual purity and ritual adherence are important for ordained nuns and monks as well as ritual specialists, to a lesser degree for lay adherents.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Respectfulness / courtesy:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Familial obedience / filial piety:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Status of Participants: ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

↳ Fidelity / loyalty:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Cooperation:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Independence / creativity / freedom:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Moderation / frugality:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Forbearance / fortitude / patience:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Diligence / self-discipline / excellence:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Assertiveness /decisiveness /confidence /initiative:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Strength (physical):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Power /status /nobility:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite

↳ Humility /modesty:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Contentment /serenity /equanimity:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Joyfulness /enthusiasm /cheerfulness:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Optimism /hope:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Gratitude / thankfulness:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Reverence / awe / wonder:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Faith / belief / trust / devotion:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Wisdom / understanding:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Discernment / intelligence:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Status of Participants: ✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists

↳ Beauty / attractiveness:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Cleanliness (physical) / orderliness:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳

↳ Other important virtues advocated by the religious group:

– No

Practices

Membership Costs and Practices

Does membership in this religious group require celibacy (full sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: Celibacy is required for fully ordained nuns and monks (technically, nuns in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition are not fully ordained). Usually, lay practitioners are not required to take any vows of celibacy. However, lay practitioners can decide to take celibacy vows voluntarily either temporarily or permanently.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence):

– No

Notes: See above. A lay practitioner can decide to avoid sexual contact and wear robes with the promise to behave like a nun/monk on top of the five lay precepts (to refrain from killing, to refrain from stealing, to refrain from false speech, to refrain from sexual misconduct, to refrain from using intoxicants). Abstaining from sexual misconduct has been interpreted very differently depending on the cultural and social context. Nowadays, discrimination against LGBTQIA2S+ folks is more frequently addressed in Bhutan. In December 2020, Bhutan finally decriminalized homosexuality.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require castration:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require fasting:

– No

Notes: Certain meditation practices require fasting, such as Nyungné. In general, in longer retreats in secluded places, there are often dietary restrictions for certain Tantric practices as they influence the bodily energies, or there is simply a lack of food or resources. Religious practitioners, therefore, regularly practice fasting. It is believed that highly realized religious practitioners can survive on nearly nothing. The hagiographical textual sources about Milarepa (1052-1135), a prominent Yogin in the Kagyü schools, report that he lived from nothing else than nettle soup.

Reference: Tsangnyön Heruka. The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa. Shambhala Publications. isbn: 9780834840508.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods):

– Yes

Notes: Monks and nuns are not allowed to consume intoxicating substances. To avoid intoxication is also one of the lay precepts. However, adherents decide this individually, and consuming alcohol and betel nut (Areca) is very common. In addition, vegetarianism is partially practiced in monastic communities and by other adherents (to follow the precept of not killing sentient beings).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of adults:

"Adults" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition of a human who is 18-years-old or older and who is legally responsible for his/her actions, then please specify that difference in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of children:

"Children" here referring to an emic or indigenous category; if that category is different from the popular Western definition, please specify that different in the Comments/Sources: box below.

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require self-sacrifice (suicide):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of property/valuable items:

– No

Notes: The sacrifice of property/valuable items is not required. However, various kinds of offerings, for example, to monasteries or sacred places or for the production of sacred texts, are very much encouraged and result in the accumulation of good Karma. This is a very important part of the religious activities of the adherents of the Drukpa Kagyü school in Bhutan.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require sacrifice of time (e.g., attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.):

– No

Notes: Membership in the Drukpa Kagyü school in Bhutan does not require sacrifice and participation in ceremonies, rituals, and prayers but is up to the individual. However, those practices are very common. Monks and nuns who live in monasteries or also Buddhist masters who have their own temple/small monastery have to fulfill their duties toward their monastic institution/their community. In the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school, the Chief Abbot of Bhutan (and members of the Central Monastic Body) have to carry out many official religious duties partially laid out in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan from 2008.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require physical risk taking:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require accepting ethical precepts:

– Yes

Notes: Three different sets of vows can be taken: (1) Pratimokṣa (monks/nuns) or refuge and lay precepts for lay adherents, (2) Bodhisattva vows, (3) Tantric vows of a Vidyādhara.

Reference: Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen, Sa-skya Pa??i-ta Kun-dga?-rgyal-mtshan. A Clear

Differentiation of the Three Codes. SUNY Press. isbn: 9780791452868.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require marginalization by out-group members:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household):

– No

Notes: Membership in this religious group does not require participation in small-scale rituals, but they are very common. A household is in need of a ritual specialist (ordained/lay), in particular, in cases of sickness or death of family members or important Buddhist holidays.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does membership in this religious group require participation in large-scale rituals:

I.e. involving two or more households; includes large-scale “ceremonies” and “festivals.”

– No

Notes: Membership in this religious group does not require participation in large-scale rituals, but public teachings, mass gatherings for religious ceremonies and rituals, and consecration of sacred places and new religious institutions are widespread and, in fact, one of the regular duties of the Chief Abbots of Bhutan. They are part of the general Buddhist calendar of the Drukpa Kagyü school in Bhutan and very popular among lay adherents. For example, the reference links to extensive video footage of the 69th Chief Abbot of Bhutan Geshe Drapuk Gendün Rinchen's official travels throughout Bhutan during Spring 1992. This extensive video footage was shot in eleven separate movies ranging from 1:49:35 to 3:07:29 hours.

Reference: Khenpo Namgyal STN Namgay, Tsento, Paro, Bhutan [Video footage of the 69th Chief Abbot of Bhutan]

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present:

E.g. special changes to appearance such as circumcision, tattoos, scarification, etc.

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Tattoos/scarification:

– No

↳ Circumcision:

– No

↳ Food taboos:

– No

↳ Hair:

– Yes

Notes: Monks and nuns shave their heads.

↳ Dress:

– Yes

Notes: Monks and nuns wear robes (maroon/saffron). Depending on the status of an ordained person, such as Tulku or Abbot, there are differences in the robes. In addition, the high status of the Chief Abbots of Bhutan (as the spiritual head of the Drukpa Kagyü school and leading the religious branch of the government) is visible in the official dress code, which only allows the King of Bhutan and the Chief Abbot of Bhutan to wear a saffron scarf. In the seventeenth century, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel introduced the traditional official dress code and etiquette (Tib. sgrig lam rnam gzhag) that we still see today. In addition, the Chief Abbot of Bhutan often wears a blue cap in public appearances. This is a tradition that goes far back to the Tibetan branch of this school.

↳ Ornaments:

– No

↳ Archaic ritual language:

– No

↳ Other:

– No

Does the group employ fictive kinship terminology:

– Yes

Notes: In Tibetan literature, the male Tantric teacher/Lama is often called a "spiritual" father (Tib. pha bla ma) and the disciple their spiritual son/daughter. In addition, when taking the Bodhisattva vows, an adherent automatically becomes a "son"/"daughter" of the Buddha.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Fictive kinship terminology universal:
– Yes

↳ Fictive kinship terminology widespread:
– Yes

↳ Fictive kinship terminology employed but uncommon:
– No

Society and Institutions

Levels of Social Complexity

The society to which the religious group belongs is best characterized as (please choose one):

– A state

Notes: As mentioned in the introduction, the "Chief Abbot of Bhutan" oversees the institutions of the religious branch of the "Joint Twofold System of Governance" and is the spiritual head of the Bhutanese Drukpa Kagyü school. The "Joint Twofold System of Governance" was renewed in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan from 2008. As of today, the 70th Chief Abbot Tulku Jigmé Chödrak is in office. Most of the areas listed below fall into the jurisdiction of the "political branch of the governance": Welfare, education, bureaucracy, public works, taxation, enforcement, and warfare. However, Bhutan's relationship between religion and politics has been very complex and interesting, and I have pointed out such instances below.

Reference: Rinzin Wangchuk. Bhutan commemorates the Silver Jubilee of His Holiness the Je Khenpo. Kuensel.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Welfare

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized famine relief:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is famine relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the

religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: One particular form of disaster relief in Bhutan is "Kidu." This is an earlier principle of mutual aid in times of disaster common in the Tibetan cultural area. Kidu is nowadays a prerogative of the King of Bhutan and is frequently granted by him. The different kinds of Kidu that the King of Bhutan can grant are described in art. 2, sec. 16 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan from 2008.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized poverty relief:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is poverty relief available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: In the form of Kidu (see above).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is institutionalized care for the elderly and infirm available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Education

Does the religious group provide formal education to its adherents:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is formal education restricted to religious professionals:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is such education open to both males and females:

– Yes

Notes: In theory, education is open for monks and nuns. Primary monastic education is available for both sexes. However, in practice, as nuns are not fully ordained they are prohibited from studying certain topics that are necessary as prerequisites to acquire higher monastic education or a position with high status.

Reference: Sonam Wangmo, Juli Edo. Empowerment Through Monastic Education: A Case Study of Buddhist Nuns in Bhutan. *Sarjana*, 31(1)

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is formal education available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group:

– Yes

Notes: There is a free and primarily public education system in Bhutan.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

↳ Is extra-religious education open to both males and females:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Bureaucracy

Do the group's adherents interact with a formal bureaucracy within their group:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Do the group's adherents interact with other institutional bureaucracies:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Public Works

Does the religious group in question provide public food storage:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is public food storage provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does the religious group in question provide water management (irrigation, flood control):

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is water management provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does the religious group in question provide transportation infrastructure:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is transportation infrastructure provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Taxation

Does the religious group in question levy taxes or tithes:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are taxes levied on the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Enforcement

Does the religious group in question provide an institutionalized police force:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized police force provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does the religious group in question provide institutionalized judges:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Do the group's adherents interact with an institutionalized judicial system provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Does the religious group in question enforce institutionalized punishment:

– No

Notes: It needs to be noted that adherence to the monastic code (Vinaya), of course, is primarily monitored within the monasteries. The Drukpa Kagyü school as a "state religion" has a certain autonomy which is laid out in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan from 2008 and respective legislative acts.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are the group's adherents subject to institutionalized punishment enforced by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan



Do the institutionalized punishments include execution:

– No



Do the institutionalized punishments include exile:

– No



Do the institutionalized punishments include corporal punishments:

– No



Do the institutionalized punishments include ostracism:

– No



Do the institutionalized punishments include seizure of property:

– No

Does the religious group in question have a formal legal code:

– Yes

Notes: Monks and nuns follow their monastic code (Vinaya).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are the group's adherents subject to a formal legal code provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Warfare

Does religious group in question possess an institutionalized military:

– No

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Do the group's adherents participate in an institutionalized military provided by institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Are the group's adherents protected by or subject to an institutionalized military provided by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Written Language

Does the religious group in question possess its own distinct written language:

– Yes

Notes: Religious texts and instructions are composed and read in classical Tibetan, which is called in Bhutan the "language of religion" (Tib. chos skad). This is to be differentiated from the national language in Bhutan, "the language of the fortress," called Dzongkha.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan



Is use of this distinct written language confined to religious professionals:

– Yes

Is a non-religion-specific written language available to the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is a non-religion-specific written language used by the group's adherents through an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Calendar

Does the religious group in question possess a formal calendar:

– Yes

Notes: The Bhutanese Buddhist calendar is a lunar calendar.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is a formal calendar provided for the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Notes: The Western calendar.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Food Production

Does the religious group in question provide food for themselves:

– Yes

Notes: This depends on where members of the religious group live in Bhutan. Secluded rural monasteries may produce part of their food themselves, while monasteries close to cities may not need.

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan



Please characterize the forms/level of food production [choose all that apply]:

– Gathering

– Pastoralism

– Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

Is food provided to the group's adherents by an institution(s) other than the religious group in question:

– Yes

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan



Please characterize the forms/levels of food production [choose all that apply]:

– Gathering

– Patoralism

– Small-scale agriculture / horticultural gardens or orchards

– Other [specify in comments]

Notes: Trade (local or import).

Specific to this answer:

Region: Bhutan

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