

The Impacts of Young Archaeology in Bhutan: A Case Study from the Central Bhutan

Dorji Phuntsho & Dechen Zangmo***

***Assistant Lecturer in History, Sherubtse College, Kanglung*

**History Teacher at Jampeling Central School, Kanglung*

Corresponding Author: Dorji Phuntsho

Abstract: This paper analyses and illustrates the state of impacts of archaeological science in Bhutan towards the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. To assess the impacts of archaeology, the paper studies employs case studies on the prominent excavated sites of Drapham and Bathpalathang from the central Bhutan. Bhutan has remained as one of the richest and unexplored prehistoric sites in the Himalayan region largely in the form of local myths, folklores, legends and traditions preserved through fragile evidences like oral sources. However, with the arrival of archaeological science in Bhutan, the scientific historical evidences to reconstruct prehistory are found more effective than oral history largely contributing to preservation of the culture. The mythical-religious beliefs which have protected and preserved the archaeological sites from looting and destruction so far are weakening to certain extent as Bhutan faces enormous cultural changes, mainly caused by rapid development and road infrastructures. The paper offers some recommendations for immediate sites protection rules and regulations and further shows the tremendous scientific potential of archaeology in Bhutan.

Key Words: Overview, Role of Archaeology, Excavated sites, Prehistory, Issues

Date of Submission: 24-05-2019

Date of acceptance: 08-06-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background History about Bhutan

The Kingdom of Bhutan, in the eastern Himalayas, is situated between India in the south and Tibet (China) in the North, covering an area of 38,000 sq. km. In the north, towering peaks reach a height of 24,000 ft (7,315 m) above sea level. In the south, the foothills descend into the subtropical Duars Plain, only about 200 metre above sea level.

For centuries, Bhutan was made up of feuding regions until it was unified under First King Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck in 1907. The British exerted some control over Bhutan's affairs, but never colonized it. Until the 1960s, Bhutan was largely isolated from the rest of the world, and its people carried on a tranquil, traditional way of life, farming and trading, which had remained intact for centuries. After China invaded Tibet, Bhutan looked for strengthening its ties and contact with India in an effort to avoid Tibet's fate. New roads and other connections to India began to end its isolation. In the 1960s, Bhutan also undertook social modernization, abolishing slavery and the caste system, emancipating women, and enacting land reform. In 1985, Bhutan made its first diplomatic links with non-Asian countries.

In 1998, the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck voluntarily curtailed his absolute powers as monarch and in March 2005 released a draft constitution that outlined plans for the country to shift to a two-party democracy. In Dec. 2006, he abdicated in favor of his son, and Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck became king.

Television and internet were kept at bay until 1999. From 1974 to 1981, a total of 7,800 tourists visited the country. Since 2012, however, approximately 100,000 tourists per year have been expected. Along with this tremendous rush of tourism and cultural exchange, building constructions – mainly hotels – are increasing rapidly and endanger archaeological sites, if unrecognized or disregarded.

Furthermore, it has to be pointed out that Bhutan holds an exceptional position in the Buddhist Himalayan cultural landscape. Whereas Mongolia was affected by the Russian, and Tibet by the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Sikkim and Ladakh have been part of the Indian state for a long time. The Kingdom of Bhutan, however, right at the beginning of facing extensive international impacts, keeps exceptionally vital and pristine historic traditions and myths alive. For this reason, Bhutan is of great importance to the study of Buddhism and cultural history in the Himalayas. For archaeologists, religious knowledge and historical myths

provide unique research opportunities. Therefore, the archaeological research and protection are urgent desiderata for this cultural gemstone in the Himalayas.

1.2. Research Values and problem statement

Although archaeological exploration of Bhutan has been limited to few sites, evidence of civilization in the country dates back to at least 2000 B.C. Aboriginal Bhutanese, known as Monpa, are believed to have migrated from eastern Tibet. The traditional name of the country since the 17th century has been Drukya, Land of the Drukpa (Dragon People), and a reference to the dominant branch of Tibetan Buddhism that is still practiced in the Himalayan kingdom.

According to myths and oral history, the historic period of Bhutan is not earlier than in the mid-seventh century AD with the foundation of two Buddhist temples, KyichuLhakang in the Paro Valley in the west and JampaLhakang in the Choekhor Valley, Bumthang district. It is believed that the two Lhakhangs belonged to the 108 temples built by SangtsenGampo (c. 605–650 AD), the 32nd King of the Yarlung Dynasty of Tibet, and his Nepali and Chinese Queens. The temples subdued the supine demons on which Tibet was founded.

Later on, during the eighth century, as tremendous translation efforts of Chinese and Indic Buddhist literature were forced by the Tibetan King, Padmasambhava, known as the precious teacher Guru Rinpoche and nowadays considered as the country's patron saint, arrived in Bhutan and successfully taught and spread Buddhism. Having had visited and blessed by the 8th century Saint Guru Rinpoche, known as second Buddha, there are some historical sacred sites and hidden treasures in Bhutan which are later revealed by Tertoen Pema Lingpa (1450-1521). As the Bhutanese historian Karma Phuntsho convincingly explains the challenging discrepancy between a traditional Buddhist comprehension of history and the Western way of exploring the past now becomes illustrative. Whereas in Western historiography events and concrete personalities are fixed on and adhered to a linear timeline, Padmasambhava shows us the contrary. In an anachronistic way, he appears in different forms in very different times and spaces and is able to leave footprints in stones and to hold texts in a time warp for their rediscovery centuries later. Thus, he is not merely a historical person but an enlightened energy or state of being. What is known about Padmasambhava, however, is conveyed by hagiographies and other texts, considered as treasure texts from the 8th century and found by so called Tertönsor treasure-discoverers, mainly in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. Bhutan has many areas to be studied and archived for future generations even though the some histories are beyond retrieval with the passing away of elderly citizens.

1.3. Aims and objectives

Recent decades have seen a major expansion of knowledge concerning the prehistory of South East Asia, in part due to opening up of many regions previously closed for research. There is now a better sense of the chronology of the Neolithic in China and the much later transition to farming in mainland South East Asia. However, a key region which has been largely unexplored is study on Bhutan. Archaeology and prehistory remain poorly developed and speculative.

Archaeological accounts of the region largely depends surface finds or mythical oral history. The few excavated sites in Bhutan provide valid information. The rich cultural and inhabitants sites in Bhutan for long centuries are poorly excavated and studied and dated. As a result, there is not a single site in Bhutan which has been reliably dated and excavated and materials have been recovered as case in DraphamDzong in Bumthang in under process. As a consequence, the understanding on Bhutan has been hampered by a lack of hard information.

A method that has so far had little prominence in the reconstruction of prehistory of Bhutan is the use of comparative and oral historical evidences in diverse manner from region to region. This involves the passing of history through generations through oral traditions which are seen as fragile and hard to retrieve when old people dies. With recent arrival of archaeology Bhutan has been identified under a Swiss Helvetas project as a country with great archeological potential.

This paper attempts to evaluate and assess the role of Archaeology in Bhutan with respect to reconstruction of prehistory based on reflection of excavated sites. Archaeology towards fulfillment of national development policy so called Gross national Happiness based on third pillar will also be touched on. The second part of the paper suggest prominent potential sites of archaeological evidence in Bhutan, thus, recommending for the need for policy and acts to protect these worthwhile sites from destruction and looting.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In writing this paper the author has mostly depend on secondary sources of written documents of DraphamDzong excavation report and other written documents. Since it of historical and qualitative nature in study, some aspects of qualitative tools are used in the information collection though inquisitive questions. A thorough reading and collection of information from secondary sources such as published reports, electronic journal articles, articles from print media and personal communications were incorporated to bring out this paper. Although, there were no apparent conflict of interest and need of protecting the author's identity in using

information herein, yet ethical issues were kept in mind while conducting this historical study. Ever there could be some subject of controversy and readers' discretion is solicited.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Archaeology and its positive role

Archaeology is all about putting bits and pieces of the material remains together to reconstruct the past and embark on a journey to the magnificent civilizations standing tall in the history. In a broad sense, archaeology is the study of human culture in historic and prehistoric times by examining the material remains of early human settlements. These remains may range from human or plant fossils to excavated artifacts or ruins of an old building. It is also sometimes considered a sub discipline of anthropology. Archaeology is an elaborate process involving a detailed study and surveying of a particular area to ascertain sites with possible human settlements in the past. The site is then excavated to recover material remains. After it is classified, the unearthed matter' is subjected to proper analysis and interpretation to reconstruct historical events. Its documentation is of great importance, as the amount of information derived from it can be beneficial in terms of both, quality and quantity.

The beauty in Archaeology is that it helps us to travel back into time to get valuable information about the human settlements which existed centuries ago. It throws light on the cultural history of various countries and answers various questions about the lifestyles of people who lived in that part of the world. It has also helped to ascertain the chronology of the prehistoric times. In the Indian subcontinent, archaeological excavations unearthed the Indus Valley Civilization which flourished between 2600 - 1900 BC. The excavations, which started in 1920, opened the door to a human settlement which was far more evolved and scientifically advanced; characterized with well-planned cities and well-developed network of trade routes.

Archaeological investigations also help in understanding mysterious subjects, like the Egyptian religion and the cultural life of some communities which were invisible at a point of time. At the same time, it can answer questions and fill the loopholes in history. It can give a brief idea about the changes which occurred over a period and the factors responsible for them. It's an important aid in reconstructing the prehistoric era about which not much is known due to absence of written records. The material remains of this era include carvings on the walls of caves, artifacts like pottery, weapons used to hunt animals for food, etc. Even after writing was developed, written records which were maintained were highly biased and largely based on assumptions. In such cases, archaeology helps to prove the authenticity of written records.

Archaeology can also contribute to rewriting history. When researchers found thousands of pieces of red slip pottery in the ancient city of Pompeii, the role of this civilization in trade and commerce of Mediterranean region was altered. Earlier, it was assumed that the people from Pompeii imported pottery from other settlements, but this find proved that the people of Pompeii used local pottery as well.

Archaeology has been categorized into various sub-divisions, such as historical archaeology, which involves the study of cultures, underwater archaeology, involving the study of remains of any human activity lying at the bed of a water body. (The latter has also helped in collecting information of the cities which were submerged under water.) More recently, the development of 'salvage/rescue archaeology' and 'urban archaeology' has increased the quantity of data that can be possibly obtained from excavation sites.

Archaeology is dependent on other sciences and social sciences, including DNA, geology, chemistry, dendrochronology, history and zoology in terms of data collection. For instance, when an object is recovered from excavation site, an archaeologist can use chemicals to determine its age, while botany or zoology can provide the details about the surroundings where it was found.

Public archaeology, a new dimension given to archaeology to foster its public appreciation, has also helped a great deal. It has played a significant role in spreading awareness about the possible ill-effects that this field faces from hazards such as encroaching development, archaeological thefts, etc.

3.2. Prehistory towards unfolding potential archaeology

Bhutan is a land given with many rich histories. The author has made any attempt to get the primary information for the prehistoric period of Bhutan but the lack of any historical record either in writing or oral form the study on prehistory on Bhutan has remained obscure. However, the author herein has surfaced on very prominent prehistoric cultures like early inhabitants, social organization and economic life of early records but not limited based on some of archaeological evidences and finds. It is much believable if all prevalent, in Bhutan that some other modern matter like Ethnology, Genetics, Linguistics and Archaeology are preferred so as to help reveal more information about this period are in their infancy (Phuntsho, K. 2013).

One of the main clues to prehistoric history of Bhutan is learnt through the discovery of artifacts and monoliths from very prehistoric periods. There are some very old artifacts and monoliths discovered such as the **Namchagand Doring** owned by Bhutanese households which indicates the presence of human civilization during the Stone Age, which lasted approximately from 8000 to 3000 BC. Karma Phuntsho's Book the History of

Bhutan (2013, pp. 67-68)^{*} provides a clear explanation on these monoliths and stones adzes found in Bhutan in prehistoric periods.

From the historical point of view, these tools serve as important evidences since archaeologists could study them in order to learn about the ancient period of our country. As for the monoliths, Dorings, they have been found in several parts of the country. Dorings were most probably used for border demarcations as well as for religious rituals. From these few discoveries we know for certain that people lived in Bhutan from a very early period. The study of one stone axe suggests that it was made in the period between 2000 – 1500 B.C.¹

Phuntsho, K. (2013) claims that like Ashoka Pillar in India, Stonehenge in England, historians have also traced several prominent stone pillars or megaliths found in different parts of the country. The most prominent ones include the megaliths in the Somtharang, Kenchoksum Lhakhang in Bumthang and Nabji temple in Trongsa. But unlike other pillars, the Bhutanese megaliths have no inscription and generally thought of as pagan symbols or objects connected to the dead or death rituals by modern historians. Each of these has symbolic purposes. Karma Phuntsho (2013) takes us to the information that similar stone megaliths also were found in Nyidugkha and Tanabji in Dagana which locally known as 'the rock pillars of the sky'.

The² early inhabitants in Bhutan can be traced with history of early civilization which dates to the Neolithic or the Stone Age Period (8000 to 3000 BC).

In every civilization there are certain features that they all had in common – people raised children, domesticated animals, organized governments and developed religions. There were variations in the processes in different countries because they were greatly influenced by natural factors. Given the high mountain ranges, steep cliffs and torrential rivers the social organization of early inhabitants in the country was greatly influenced. These prevented regular contacts among groups living in different valleys. The settlers, therefore, evolved into different clans, each made up of several families. The person who founded the clan was perhaps the chief who exercised special authority over the other members. In the course of time, there developed different linguistic groups each occupying a certain region, such as Chalipas in Mongar, Monpas in Trongsa and Lhops in Samtse. In Bhutan we believe that today in the landscape, there are many ruins which need proper study.

One of the traditions says that the early inhabitants of Bhutan were nomadic herders who moved with their animals from high land pastures to the warm valleys in winter in search of fresh grass and water and back to the high mountain pastures during the hot summer seasons. This practice of seasonal migration from place to place with domestic animals still prevails in many parts of the country. It is probably much later that they became agriculturalists and started cultivating lands and living in permanent settlements. According to History of Bhutan for Class IX (2012), new knowledge and ideas in farming developed through experiences as well as from the migrants who probably brought new seeds and ideas from different lands. The rich fertile lands of this

¹It is certain that, as cited in Karma Phuntsho (2013), Michael Aris had one of the stone adzes from Bhutan examined by Gale Sieveking of British Museum who classed it as artifact from Late Stone Age- 2000- 1500 B.C. Similar stone implements as per Gale Sieveking are also found in Myanmar, Yunnan, India (Assam, Bihar and Orrissa), Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia. This helps us to understand that different parts of Bhutan were inhabited by early settlers.

²A History of Bhutan for Class IX (2012) states that the Bhutanese historians mention that the fertile river valleys of Bhutan were also inhabited as early as the Rig-Vedic era in India. Some hundreds of years before the birth of Buddha Shakyamuni, an Indian prince called DrimedKuenden (sanskrit. Vesantara) was exiled to the wild mountains of northern Bhutan present day the Punakha region accompanied by his wife and two children. On their journey through the **JowoDurshing** range commonly known as **Ri-Nag** (Black Mountains) they met people living in different places. On reaching the Changra area of Mangde, the prince was said to have given away one of his eyes as an alm to a blind old man. **Changra** was initially known as **Chen Rey** (clear vision) after this incidence based on Prince DrimedKunden's compassion and generosity. Similarly, on reaching present day Bubja village under Trongsa Dzongkhag, the family came across three people who asked for their children. The kind hearted prince felt sorry for the people and gave away the children. Bubja village was therefore earlier known as **Bu Drel** (separated from child). DrimedKuenden and his wife continued their journey to DuriHashang which is still the name of the place located near the source of MangdeChhu. However, there is need for detail research that History of Bhutan states Hashang Mountain as hills between Mochu and Phochu rivers while the History of Bhutan for Class IX (2012) highlights same mountain located in Trongsa.

country provided its inhabitants with almost everything that were needed for human survival. Even today, people collect many varieties of mushrooms and other plants from the forests. Still the Khyeng people of Mangde, Zhemgang and Mongar areas also collect many varieties of wild yams from the forests. This aspect of the culture is an inheritance of the very old system practiced by people when agriculture was little known. As discussed earlier, the main occupation of the early inhabitants was farming and animal husbandry, the tools they used for farming were made of stones and wood, followed by iron tools later. They cleared forests to grow crops and shaped their environment to their own needs. They were pre-occupied with the overwhelming need for food to survive. The land they cleared was used for a few years and then left to revert to nature while they took over a new piece of land from the forests. This is perhaps the initial practice of tseri (shifting cultivation) which still prevails in some parts of the country. However, so far we do not have an evidence of kind of people who inhabited Bhutan.

A History of Bhutan for Class IX (2012) mentions that the early inhabitants might have been nomadic gatherers people largely self-sufficient in food, shelter and clothing except salt. This led Bhutanese to get salt from Tibet. Men and women worked together in the fields and produced their own food. Women learned to spin the fleece from sheep into thread and use it to weave woollen cloth³. Depending on the availability of materials, each region thus picked up a particular trade which gradually became hereditary and unique to their own regions. At a later stage contacts were established between our country and its neighbours, mainly Tibet and India. This led to a kind of trading business with these countries whereby herbal medicines, spices, cereals, dried fruits and crafts products were exchanged for other things that were not available here. This was the beginning of international trade for Bhutan through mainly the barter system. Travellers and pilgrims from India, Tibet and other countries used the several passes in Bhutan as their transit routes over the Great Himalayas. Some authors ascertain that (who?, quote the page), as back as 125 BC, the Indian Prince, Nyathri Tshenpo (of Lichchavi family) used the Manas River valley to migrate to Tibet where he established the Pugyal Dynasty that lasted until 842 AD in Tibet with Langdarma as its last king. So the legendary Songtsen Gampo of Tibet would have also belonged to this dynasty. However, this version is not substantiated by the Tibetan sources which consider Nyathri Tshenpo to have arrived from the sky and started a local dynasty.

Besides Bhutan was visited by many Buddhist Saints in early 12th century until 17th century C.E. who belonged to various sects or schools from Tibet to Bhutan. According to Dargye (2008), 'they were basically attracted to Bhutan either by the great pilgrimage sites of Padmasambhava or by the search for local patronage and recognition, while some intruded into the sacred valleys of Bhutan to escape the turmoil of Tibetan politics.' Bhutan then in any circumstances was very fortunate to have been blessed by many renowned masters and saints, like Phajo Drugom Zhigpo, Kunkhyen Longchen Rabjam, Zhabdrung Rinpoche, etc (History of Bhutan for Class IX, 2012). All of the saints and masters had some impact on Bhutanese be it politically, culturally, and even in religious spheres. Maximum of these saints, lamas came to western Bhutan but there were few who have travelled to the east and established themselves there. They all founded temples, monasteries in number of their destined places. In that due course of propagation of Buddhism, they have constructed many Dzongs and castles as centres. Some of these are already in ruin structures and history has never been unfolded with lack of modern archaeological techniques. One prominent example of such could be the ruins at Tshenkharla built by Lhasay Tshangma, Tibetan prince who has many ruling clans spread in different parts of Bhutan but this attribution is now contested⁴.

However, today not many know of Bhutan's prehistoric existence cultures which are beyond retrieval from oral history perspective. But with emergence of archaeology, the reconstruction of prehistory for learning for future generations and authentication of information is found much at easier disposal.

3.3. Founding of Archaeology in Bhutan

In 1998 there was one excavation being initiated in Batpalathang under the guidance of RNR-RC project, SLFA (Swiss Liechtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad). The archaeological

³They collected fibres from cotton and wild nettles to make cloths and bags. It was also discovered that raw materials like wood, bamboo, mud and later even metals like iron were available and could be used for crafts work. Yak hair was perhaps one of the oldest fibres used by the pastoralists of high altitude settlements. The coarse outer hair called tsidpawas used to make drawa (tents) and ropes and the soft hair beneath called khuloowa was used for making caps and other dresses.

⁴ John Ardussi "A Preliminary Investigation of Bhutanese Castle Ruins and Caves associated with Lhasa *Gtsang ma*." in Ardussi J. & Pommaret, F.. *Bhutan. Traditions & Changes*. Proceedings of the 12th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Oxford 2003. Leiden, E.J. Brill. 2007.

excavation work under Archaeologist Blumer discovered square stone layer horizontally which made team to go ahead for digging.

In Bhutan archaeology are recent and early 2010 was given an impetus under the Swiss- Helvetas Project. The idea of archaeology steeped in 2005, when Bhutan's former Prime Minister expressed to Helvetas the wish to initiate archaeological projects in Bhutan and the request to receive further support. Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that it is His Majesty, the fourth King of Bhutan's personal wish to initiate archaeological projects in the country. By invitation of Helvetas, the Swiss-Liechtenstein Foundation of Archaeological Research Abroad (SLSA) organized preliminary inquiries and clarifications in 2006. Consequently, the Bhutan Swiss Archaeology Project, a cooperation to institutionalize archaeology, was set up between the Kingdom of Bhutan, Helvetas, and SLSA. Thus, the historically important DraphamDzong fortification ruin in the Jakhar Valley, Bumthang district, was excavated in first phase. The second phase (2011–2013) was focused on capacity building in the field archaeology and its institutionalization. In cooperation with the University of Zurich, a modular teaching program was elaborated. The Royal Government of Bhutan is currently establishing an Archaeology Section under the Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites of the Department of Culture.

IV. ARCHAEOLOGY TOWARDS PREHISTORY THROUGH THE EXCAVATED SITES

4.1. DraphamDzong Ruins

Until after the excavated took place the exact information of this historical site, the ruin of DraphamDzong, was unknown to many Bhutanese. With archaeological excavation the history surrounding this historical site is unfolded that dates back to the second half of the 16th century during the reign of Choekhor-Deb (1450-1521) contemporary of Pema Lingpa. The biography of Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye (1638–1696; rg. 1680–95) authored by the 6th Je Khenpo Ngawang Lhundrub (1670–1730; rg. 1724–30) mentions the name of the dzong as “Drabel” (written as: Gra-sbal), which in the literal sense has no direct meaning. I am of the opinion that the word ‘drabel’ seems to be the corrupt rendition of “Draphey” (written as: Brag-phe), the name by which the dzong is locally known. According to Bumthang dialect, the word “Brag” means “cliff” and ‘phe’ means ‘edge’ or the one, which is ‘on the edge of a sheer cliff.’ So therefore the dzong is known as DrapheyDzong or the ‘Dzong, which is located on the sheer edge of cliff’ (Dargye, Y. 2013)

Some are of the opinion that the name could be “Drakbel” (written as: brag sbal) — ‘brag’ denotes ‘cliff/ridge’ and ‘sbal’ denotes ‘frog/tortoise’ — so the meaning would be the ‘Dzong which is located on the frog-shaped cliff/ridge.’ To be sure, when we look from the other side, we can see that the whole ridge where the dzong was built resembles the shape of a frog.

According to another version, the dzong is called “Drapham” (dGra-pham). Drapham literally means a ‘defeated enemy.’ It is said that the ChoekhorDepa, who revolted against the central government in the 17th century, was defeated by the forces of ChoetsePenlopMingyurTenpa, after, which the dzong was named DraphamDzong or the Fortress of the Defeated Enemy. However, this version does not seem a likely derivation for the name, since the dzong is thought to have been built in the late 9th century.

The Founder of the Dzong

Historical text records that, at the time in Tibet when King Langdarma (rg. 838–842 CE) was destroying the teachings of the Buddha and causing them to decline, LhalungPalgyiDorje was residing at DrakYerpa in meditation. To safeguard the Dharma, the three powerful deities – Mahakala, MachigPalgyiLhamo (guardian deity of Lhasa) and Dzongtsen urged LhalungPalgyiDorje to eliminate the wicked king and roused his spirit. LhalungPalgyiDorje then assumed the guise of a strolling black hat dancer, hid in his ample sleeves a bow and arrow and — riding a white horse blackened with soot — journeyed to Lhasa.

One day, when the King was playing chess (miglangs), he heard people crying and wailing. Feeling restless, he had gone to the outer circular road of Lhasa. While he was standing, looking at the writing on a stone pillar, LhalungPalgyiDorje, having secreted a bow and arrow in the broad sleeves of his tantric costume, performed the steps of a dance before him. When the attention of everyone watching him was diverted, LhalungPalgyiDorje fixed the arrow to the bow and, firing off at the king's forehead, killed him then and there. LhalungPalgyiDorje then sped away on a black horse, plunged through the KichuRiver on the outskirts of Lhasa, from the waters of which his horse emerged in its natural white colour, as it had been merely blackened by soot, and he himself turned outside the white lining of his coat. He fled and nobody knew who he was. Those, who hastened after him in pursuit, did not catch him.

Dargye, Y. (2013) claims then LhalungPalgyiDorjewent to the Rock of Yerpa and stayed there as if performing meditation. His footprints were taken over by birds that churned them up and covered them with droppings. As he stayed there, the pursuers came up. “It's not this man; a long time has elapsed without his moving around on foot,” they said. As they were about to return back, however, one from among them, who was intelligent and noble-minded, came back and placed his hand on LhalungPalgyiDorje's chest over his heart and

looked at him. Knowing that LhalungPalgyiDorje's heart was beating rapidly with fear, he said: "The culprit is here, for my own part I shall not break his skull for the sake of the common weal." He went back without telling the others. Feeling great fear in that place, LhalungPalgyiDorje's mediation was disturbed and he was compelled to flee to Kham, where he continued to meditate therein.

Following this incident, his six Vajra brothers (rDo-rje spun drug), also out of fear fled in different directions. Three of the brothers — TobdanLawaDorje, GarwaKhyeuDorje and YangtsalTreuDorje — came to Bumthang by way of Paro from the direction of Tsang Phari. Along the way, they roved through the villages of western Bhutan, where only a few people were settled.

Arriving in Bumthang, the three brothers thought that, since they were from the families and clans of Tibetan chiefs, people would come forward to honour them, but no such thing happened. The three brothers held a discussion and decided that, by peaceful means, each should adapt in the manner best suited to him, in accordance with the will of the local communities.

So when agreement was reached, TobdanLawaDorje went to the district of Tang, where he established a district castle and took control of an estate. His descendants gradually increased and became Ponpo (chiefs). GarwaKhyeuDorje seized the pastureland on the Mon (Bhutan)-Tibet border, surrounded by pristine land and lofty mountains. His descendants are nowadays the important pastoral families of Tshampa. According to Dargye, Y. (2013), the third brother YangtsalTreuDorje established a district castle in Bumthang (that very castle could be the one we now know as DrapheyDzong) and took control of an estate. His descendants, and the so-called Bumthang ChoekhorPonpo/Depa, this universally renowned name of those possessing great strength and dominion, arose. (Although the ChoekhorPonpos are said to be from Paro, it is said so only because YangtsalTreuDorje came by way of Paro from the direction of Tsang Phari).

Similarly, the other three brothers, KhatsingLekyiDorje, PhotsharDrakpaDorje and MrakheyChangrigDorje, who came from the direction of Lhodrak, settled in lower Kurtoe, Zhongar (Mongar), and the present Trashiyangtse regions. Through the brothers' extensive activities, all communities in those places were said to have been brought under their rule. From them descended noble families, ponchen (great chiefs), zhal-ngo (chief nobles) and khengpo (clans) — who ruled in different valleys of eastern Bhutan.

Founding of Khar (Castle)

Being an ancient structure, many historical records found so far tend to give it only a passing reference, and do not mention much about it.

The castle is built on the top of a ridge, projecting quite prominently from the surrounding area, with Ngang village on the right and Zangling village on the left, in upper Choekhor. Judging by its specific location, it was built for a strategic reason — especially as a garrison against attack from enemies. From a defense point of view, the area has a vantage point, from where the entire surrounding area can be surveyed.

According to Dr. YontenDargay (2013), the founding of the castle, according as cited in GyalrigJungkhungSelwaiMelong, is attributed to YangtsalTreuDorje, one of the six Vajra brothers of LhalungPalgyiDorje and his descendants. It is not known exactly when it was built. KhenpoPhuntsho Trashi share his view (Proceedings of the Third Colloquium 2001, p. 138–141) that any palaces, castles or forts built between the 8th and 12th centuries were known by the names khar, gyalkhar, tsankhar, yulkhar, phodrang, etc. The kind of castle that YangtsalTreuDorje recorded to have built was yulkhar (castle of village), a common structure built around that period, based on which its initial construction can roughly be placed in the later part of 9th century. However, later on, when GyalwaLhanangpa (1164–1224) introduced the dzong system in the late 12th century, that very castle or khar built by YangtsalTreuDorje seems to have been known as a dzong, and it has retained that name until the present day.

Calculating 1676 as the year when the dzong was abandoned, today Drapheydzong has been lying in ruins amidst huge trees and bushes for more than 333 years.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SITES PROTECTION

As Bhutan believes strongly in Gross National Happiness (GNH) as developmental policy the archeological science has much connection to contribute towards the achievement of third pillar, Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage. As a small kingdom in the Himalayas with a unique culture and heritage, Bhutan recognizes culture and heritage as an essential element in its development policy. Archaeology is, therefore, an emerging but important field as Bhutan faces the increasing challenges of globalization and rapid urban development. For example destruction of Somthrang sites in Bumthang by local community through use of power tractors came out as serious issue to have looked into⁵. Second prominent example for sites destruction

⁵SamtenYeshi (June 27, 2016) Heritage and sacred sites may be losing as the cultural kingdom await a law protecting it (*Phrumshingla National Park gives a lead to such a case in Bumthang.*)

is that Burial Mound at Phobjikha is largely destroyed as per the report of Swiss Archaeological report of 2013. Thus, currently protection of archaeological sites in Bhutan is felt need because of concerns arising from rapid infrastructure expansion and the risks they pose for cultural and heritage resources. However, it is very interesting to know that such sites protection is gaining importance and happening in the absence of a focused and institutionalized organization or policy framework to guide and professionally manage archaeological sites spread around the country (White.J. C. 1905).

Looting is sites found as main risk of survival of archeological sites. Looting of archaeological sites is an ancient problem. For instance, many of the tombs of the Egyptian pharaohs were looted during antiquity. Archaeology stimulates interest in ancient objects, and people in search of artifacts or treasure cause damage to archaeological sites. White.J. C. (1905) states that the commercial and academic demand for artifacts unfortunately contributes directly to the illicit antiquities trade. Smuggling of antiquities abroad to private collectors has caused great cultural and economic damage in many countries whose governments lack the resources and or the will to deter it. Looters damage and destroy archaeological sites, denying future generations' information about their ethnic and cultural heritage. Indigenous peoples especially lose access to and control over their 'cultural resources', ultimately denying them the opportunity to know their past.

The study found that Bhutan is undoubtedly rich in historical sites but sign of destruction and looting are seen practical, it needs proper regulation for protection and preservation. The result of first excavation project at Drapham resulted to organize the workshop on Legal Aspects in Archaeology at Thimphu from April 20 and 21 based on draft Heritage Sites Act of Bhutan provided by the lawyer lic. iur. Hansruedi Diggelmann, specialised in heritage conservation and building law. The thirty participants from administration and political departments conducted teamwork sessions and discussed the current legal situation, its socio-political context, actual and upcoming dangers and problems as well as potential differences to the Swiss and European situation. Subsequently, Diggelmann compiled a report which was sent to the Division for Conservation of Heritage Sites, Department of Culture. The further pilot work to develop, cross-read and comment the Heritage Site Act is taken care by Swiss Archaeologists team.

Archaeological finds are state property anyway and sites for these finds must be also state property. Thus, in Bhutan concerned authority must work on to create public support awareness and education to preserve and take care of sacred and historical sites which are country's culture identity. Besides the ongoing training of practical archaeology personnel in several districts, the set-up of a central archaeology department is necessary. Ongoing archaeological excavations and fieldworks as well as research projects enhance national public awareness and survey activities – linked with data mapping and the set-up of a geographical information system which can be integrated or linked to existing plans – are essential components of institutionalized archaeology in Bhutan.

VI. CONCLUSION

Through this paper archaeological exploration of Bhutan though limited to few sites indicates that in Bhutan evidence of early inhabitant dates back to at least 2000 B.C. In addition most of archaeological and historical sites owe to those Buddhist masters like Songtsen Gampo, Guru Rinpoche, Tertoen Pema Lingpa, Zhabdrung and Lhase Tshangma who have built distinct castles and dzongs as seat or centre for propagation of their Buddhism. Mostly having had visited and blessed by the 8th century Saint Guru Rinpoche, there are some historical sacred sites and hidden treasures in Bhutan later revealed by Tertoen Pema Lingpa. Bhutan has many areas to be studied and archived for future generations even though the some histories are beyond retrieval with death of old aged people.

The paper found out that prehistoric and medieval histories of Bhutan have many areas to be studied and thus, Bhutan remains undoubtedly as potential archaeological sites. The study has made conclusion that primary information for the prehistoric period of Bhutan remains largely unexplored due to lack of any historical record either in writing or oral forms. However, one of the main clues to prehistoric history of Bhutan is learnt through the discovery of artifacts and monoliths from very prehistoric periods such as the Namchagand Doring owned by Bhutanese households.

Today not many know of Bhutan's prehistoric existence cultures which are beyond retrieval from oral history perspective. But with emergence of archaeological, the reconstruction of prehistory for learning for future generations and authentication of information is found much at easier disposal. Through the undergoing excavation at Drapham Dzong ruins, the importance of archaeological science to reconstruct Bhutanese history is felt solidly thereby helping to achieve the pillar of Gross National Happiness. With Bhutan Government trying to institute more Archaeological Centre, lot of potential sites would be excavated unfolding larger pages of Bhutanese history. For this the proper policy and rules for important archeological sites protection and preservation is considered in the paper.

REFERENCES

- [1]. A History of Bhutan (2012). *A History of Bhutan for Class IX*. Department of Curriculum Research Development (CAPSED), Ministry of Education
- [2]. Aris, M. (1979). *The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom*. England: Aris and Phillips Ltd, Warminster.
- [3]. Ardussi, J. (1977). *Bhutan before the British- a Historical Study*
- [4]. Christian Bader, Sumjay Tshering et al. (2012). *The ObtshoDzong Ruin-Inventory and Documentation of pre-Zhabdrung Dzong under Gasa Dzongkhag in Northern Bhutan*: SLSA Annual Report 2012.
- [5]. Dargye, Y. (2013). *Drapham: the Defeated Dzong Ruins*. Thimphu: National Library of Bhutan, Thimphu.
- [6]. Della Casa Ph, Fux P., Waiser, C., Pommaret, F. (2014). "Bhutan-SwissArcheology project 2013: Report on activities and outlook" reprinted in *Archeology in Bhutan*
- [7]. *Heritage Sites Journal 3 Thimphu: Department of Culture*, november, 279-286.
- [8]. Delle, P, Walser, C. et al.(2012). *Bhutan Swiss collaboration to institutionalize Archaeology in Bhutan: Report activities in 2012*.
- [9]. Helvetas Bhutan Swiss Intercooporation. (n.d). *Final Narrative Report Preserving and Leveraging Bhutan's Unique Cultural Diversity*.
- [10]. Olschak, B.. (1971). *Bhutan: Land of Hidden Treasure*. New York: Stein and Day Publishers
- [11]. Phuntsho, K. (2013). *The History of Bhutan*. India: Random House.
- [12]. Pommaret, T. (1989). *The ObtshoChoejes of Gasa*. Ministry of Education, Bhutan (unpublished)
- [13]. SLSA. (n.d). *Archaeology in Bhutan: Heritage Sites Journal 3*. Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs: Division of Conservation of Heritage Sites (SLSA)
- [14]. Society for American Archaeology. (n.d). *Archaeology: Building our future by Protecting the Past*.
- [15]. White.J. C. (1905). *Across Unknown Bhutan*. World Wide Magazine

IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) is UGC approved Journal with Sl. No. 5070, Journal no. 49323.

Dorji Phuntsho. " The Impacts of Young Archaeology in Bhutan: A Case Study from the CentralBhutan." IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS). vol. 24 no. 06, 2019, pp. 01-09.