

## GLOSSARY for BHUTAN EXHIBIT

**Anonymous:** Of unknown name.

**Appliqué:** A cutout design that is sewn on to or otherwise applied to a piece of fabric.

**Areca Nut:** This is also known as Betel nut or Pinang. It is the seed of the Betel Palm (*Areca catechu*). These seeds contain high levels of alkaloids and are often chewed for their helpful effects. Chewing Betel nuts is an important cultural activity in Bhutan as well as other Asian countries. It is known as an offering in Hinduism and is often given as a gift. Betel chewing is a tradition which goes back thousands of years.

**Betel Leaves:** The betel plant (*Piper betle*) is a spice and it has medicinal properties. It has heart shaped leaves and is a perennial evergreen. In Bhutan the leaves are chewed together with mineral lime and the areca nut. This substance will enter the blood stream through the tissues of the mouth and a red substance is formed in the spittle. The Betel leaves are used as a stimulant, an antiseptic, breath-freshener, an aphrodisiac, and to treat headaches, arthritis, and joint pain.

**Buddha:** This refers to anyone who has become totally enlightened or awakened. It refers to one who has experienced Nirvana. Some of these Buddha's become enlightened without a teacher to point the way, while others have the help of another Buddha. Some teach others and some do not. Some believe that a Buddhist has nine characteristics: a worthy one, perfectly self-enlightened, stays in perfect knowledge, well gone, unsurpassed knower of the world, unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of the gods and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One or fortunate one. A Buddha who is fully enlightened has a completely purified mind, no desire, no ignorance, and has realized the ultimate truth. He has ended for himself the suffering which unawakened people experience in life.

**Buddhism:** Siddhartha Gautama in the fifth century is believed by many to have begun Buddhism and is known as the first Buddha or first enlightened one. He became enlightened at 35 and spent 45 years spreading his beliefs. Buddhism is thought to be the fifth largest religion in the world. The northern or Tibetan Buddhism is the type practiced in Bhutan.

**Butter Lamp:** Large numbers of these lamps are used in the Tibetan Buddhist temples and monasteries in the Himalayan areas. They burn clarified yak butter or now more often vegetable oil. The lamps help to focus the mind and meditation. The monks take care of them and have to be very careful. They may be a fire hazard and have burned down several important monasteries.

**Calligrapher:** Person who is experienced in fancy penmanship, esp. highly decorative handwriting, as with a great many flourishes.

**Cast:** To form (metal, plaster, etc.) into a particular shape by pouring it into a mold in a fluid state and letting it harden.

**Clay:** A natural earthy material that is plastic when wet and becomes hard when dried; used for making bricks, pottery, etc.

**Commission:** Authority given to perform a particular action or function.

**Conventions:** A widely used and accepted device or technique used in drama, literature, or art.

**Cornice:** Any prominent, continuous, and horizontal projection on a wall or other construction.

**Deity:** A god or goddess.

**Dzong:** A distinctive type of fortress built particularly in Bhutan. This type of architecture includes very large structures with towering exterior walls surrounding courtyards, temples, administrative offices, and monk housing. They typically have huge entry doors made of wood and iron. The inside courtyards and temples have brightly colored Buddhist-themed art motifs. The Chinese-style flared roofs are found on top of the interior temples. Around the top of the walls there will be a red stripe near the top. There are high inward sloping walls of brick and stone painted white with few or no windows in the lower sections of the wall.

**Embroidery:** The art of working raised and ornamental designs in threads of silk, cotton, gold, silver, or other material, upon any woven fabric, leather, paper, etc., with a needle.

**Geometric:** Using simple geometric forms such as circles and squares in design and decoration.

**Guru:** An intellectual or spiritual guide or leader.

**Guru Rinpoche:** His name meant “Precious Master” to the people of Bhutan and Tibet. These followers of the Nyingma school of Buddhism think he is the second Buddha. He is believed to have brought Tantric Buddhism to Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. He is also known as Padmasambhava, Padmakara, or Padma Raja. He is associated with the famous Taktshang or “Tigers Nest” monastery built on a sheer cliff wall above the Paro valley. Supposedly he was incarnated as an eight-year-old child and appeared in a floating lotus flower on Lake Dhanakosha in present Pakistan.

**Himalayas:** This is a mountain range in Asia that separates India from the Tibetan Plateau. The Himalaya mountain system is the highest on our planet and includes Mount Everest. The Himalayans stretch across six nations which are Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. It has three of the world’s major river systems.

**Hindu:** This is a person who believes in the philosophies and scriptures of Hinduism. It is the religious, philosophical and cultural system that originated in India. There is a great diversity in the beliefs, practices, and traditions included in Hinduism. It does not have one prophet, it does not worship one god, it does not have any one dogma, it does not believe in any one philosophic concept, and it does not follow a set of religious rites or performances. They believe that there are many ways to salvation. They also believe that there are a number of gods to be worshipped.

**Lhotshampa:** This word refers to southerners in Bhutanese. They are the Nepali settlers who reside primarily in the southwest of the country and are usually Hindus. Most of these people will not eat beef, particularly the ones that are of the upper caste and are vegetarians. Through the late fifties and sixties the Lhotshampa were accepted into Bhutan. They soon flooded the southern part of the country and in 1980 over 100,000 were forced out of Bhutan and were accused of being illegal aliens. These returned to Nepal or were forced into refugee camps in India. They are looked down on by many of the Bhutanese as a threat to their country and its traditions.

**Loom:** An apparatus for making thread or yarn into cloth by weaving strands together.

**Mantra:** A word or phrase chanted or sung as an incantation or prayer.

**Manuscript:** Handwritten book or document.

**Masonry:** Constructing a building or structure from stone or brick.

**Meditational object:** Anything that is visible or tangible and used as a point of focus and concentration when meditating.

**Monastery:** This denotes a place where people live and work. It is a community of monks, nuns, or other people set apart for a religious purpose. In Bhutanese monasteries are often called gompas. The monks

teach others to become monks, they study, they read holy writings, they worship, dance, and have a patterned life. The king of Bhutan is trying to get the monks to serve their communities.

**Monk:** In Buddhism, becoming a monk is a part of a system of “vows of individual liberation.” Monks and nuns take vows when they have achieved certain levels of understanding or enlightenment. There are four steps to the individual liberation. Monk and nun vows are taken for a lifetime, but can be given back three times in one life. A lay person can take the 5 vows called “approaching virtue.” The next step is to enter the monastery and live the life and wear the required robes. Next is the novice step. Last they take all of the vows and become full fledged monks.

**Mural:** A large picture painted or affixed directly on a wall or ceiling.

**Nepal:** This is a small land locked Himalayan country in South Asia that overlaps with East Asia. It is bordered by Tibet on the north and by India on the south, east, and west. It has eight of the world’s top ten highest mountains including Mount Everest. It has great variation in landscape and temperatures. The largest city and the capital is Kathmandu.

**Prayer Flag:** Colorful panels of rectangular cloths which are often found strung along mountain ridges and peaks in the Himalayas. They are thought to have originated from the Bon religion, which was before Buddhism in Tibet. They are made from woodblock prints with texts and images. The purpose of the flags is to bless the surrounding area. They are used to promote peace, compassion, strength and wisdom. The prayers and mantras on them are to be an offering to the deities so that they will bring good luck and good health. They can be hung horizontally or vertically. They are usually hung in sets of five with five symbolic colors: blue (sky/space), white( wind/air) , red (fire) , green (water) , and yellow (earth). They should be treated with respect and are sacred. They should be burned when taken down.

**Prayer Wheel:** This is a wheel on a spindle, and on the wheel are written prayers or mantras. It is believed that when one spins the wheel it is the same as orally reciting the prayers. They are to bring good luck and come in many different sizes.

**Relic:** An object kept for its association with the past; An object of religious veneration, especially a piece of the body or a personal item of a saint.

**Ritual object:** Anything is visible or tangible used in a religious service or ritual ceremony.

**Sculpture:** To fashion (stone, clay, metal, or wood, for example) into a three-dimensional figure.

**Slate:** A fine-grained metamorphic rock that splits into thin, smooth-surfaced layers.

**Synthetic:** Compounds formed through a chemical process by human agency, as opposed to those of natural origin.

**Takin:** This is an animal found in the forested areas of the Eastern Himalayas. It looks somewhat like a goat antelope. It is the national animal of Bhutan. These animals have large mules and eyes and small ears. They are covered in a thick golden wool which is black on their under-belly. They have small horns that run parallel to the skull and then turn upwards in a short point. They live in bamboo forests and eat grass, buds, and leaves. They travel in herds. It is a unique and strong animal which has an association with the country’s religious history and mythology. The story goes that a great saint, Lama Drukpa Kunley, visited Bhutan in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He was asked to perform a miracle. He first asked for a whole cow and goat for lunch. He ate these, let a big burp, and took the goat’s head and stuck it on the bones of the cow. He snapped his fingers, told the beast to rise, and the beast got up and started grazing on the mountainside. Thus the takin was created.

**Textiles:** Any cloth or goods produced by weaving, knitting, or felting.

**Woodblock:** A block of wood on whose surface a design for printing is carved.

**Woodturning:** The art or process of shaping wood into forms on a lathe.

**Xylography:** The art of engraving on wood, or of printing from such engravings.

**Yak:** A long haired, cow like creature, found in Tibet and the Himalayan region. The domestic yaks are smaller than the wild ones. They have long shaggy hair to insulate them from the cold. The wild yaks are either brown or black. The domesticated ones can also be white. Both the males and females have horns. The wild yaks may weight 2,200 pounds. They usually live in herds of 10 to 30 animals. They prefer the snowy or colder areas. They are often eaten as food. Domestic yaks are kept for their milk, fiber, and meat. They can also be used as beasts of burden carrying goods across mountain passes for local farmers. Their milk can be made into cheese. Yaks grunt rather than moo like cows.