

## Druk Wangyel Chortens

Dochula (3140m) is the first high passes in the western region which is 23 Km from Thimphu en route to Punakha, Wangdiphodrang and to the central Bhutan. It is marked by large array of prayer flags and the 108 chortens (stupa) called **Druk Wangyal Chorten**. With Her Majesty Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wnagchuk's initiative, these chortens were built to honour His



Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuk and his people for their victory in the war fought in the southern region of Bhutan in 2003 and for the benefit of all the sentient beings.

The Druk Wangyal Lhakhang stands on the crest of Dochula overlooking the unique spiral of 108 stupas. The serene temple sits like the core of the a living mandala formed by the great snow-clad northern mountain range that shimmers in the distance.

On a clear day the pass offers a panoramic view of the Bhutan Himalaya, the Himalayan peaks like Gangkhar Puensum ( 7541m), Zonggophu Gang (7100m), Jejekanphu Gang (7100m), Masa Gang (7165m), Gangchheta (6840m) and Kang Bum(6525m).

The area near the pass is believed to be inhabited by numerous spirits, including a cannibal demoness. Lama Drukpa Kuenly, the “Divine Madman”, a 15<sup>th</sup> century saint is believed to have subdued the demoness and have built a temple called Chimi Lhakhang ( Metshina in Punakha district).