

## Digitization of Bhutan's literary heritage

The National Library and Archives of Bhutan (NLAB) was established in 1967 and functions under the Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, Bhutan. NLAB was initially established with the aim of safeguarding and preserving the cultural and literary heritage. Gradually it started to collect and maintain written documents and scriptural resources of the kingdom.

As Bhutan slowly and steadily moves into the era of knowledge-based society, the NLAB as information centre play a greater role in an emerging society and promoting a well-read and well-informed society. The NLAB thrives to be the most dynamic resource centre for preservation, protection, and promotion of the literary heritage of Bhutan, and manage the diverse literary resources and ensure their sustainable development. Pursuant to the commitment to its mandate, the National Library of Bhutan is in the process of disseminating information to wider audiences electronically with the automation of library. Although the use of information technology such as Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and the internet to deliver library service is relatively new in Bhutan, NLAB is working to make documents more accessible with digitization of materials.

The NLAB endeavors to discover Bhutan's rich literary heritage and preserve important and rare documents for the nation. The NLAB team is in the process of carrying out survey of rare text and manuscripts throughout the country. The team travel to the Dzong (Fortress), Monasteries, temples, private houses and temples with permission throughout the country. The main objective of the documentation is to register the textual possession and location of rare documents owned by the different monasteries, temples, and households. This will help the owners or the bearers obtain a copy of the documents in case of the natural calamities like fire, earthquake and flood in the future. The survey includes digitization and registration of rare texts, and recording of details of their location and condition for future reference. These rare texts are then catalogue, digitized and stored in external hard drive for future use.

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