

Bhutan has journeyed through several phases through history. It was inhabited by humans in early years of history. It witnessed internal strifes, practised Shamanism and then embraced Buddhism. It entered in conflict with the British and then the monarchy itself introduced democratic system in the country. History of the country can be segregated into following phases:

Archaeological Times

Archaeologists have dug out significant number of stone tools and megaliths in Bhutan. This testifies that Bhutan became man's residence in early age of history, probably around 2000BC.

Arrival of Buddhism

Known history of Bhutan commences with the arrival of Buddhism in the country. People of Bhutan followed Shaman traditions before advent of Buddhism. Padmasambhava, who became popular as Guru Rimpoche, is credited with bringing Buddhism to Bhutan. Between 8th and 17th century AD, several Buddhist monks arrived in Bhutan from Tibet and its birthplace India. The religion played an important role in bringing the people of the country together.

Emergence as a Country

Till early 17th century, Bhutan was the battleground of warring tribes. Credit of unifying them goes to Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, a Tibetan lama and military leader. Chased by political adversaries in Tibet, he came to Bhutan in 1616. He busied himself with military fortification and built number of fortresses. He introduced cultural symbols and established the dual system of government. Under this system, the power was shared by an administrative leader and a spiritual leader together.

First King

Ugyen Wangchuck, the Penlop of Trongsa, was the first hereditary monarch of Bhutan. He came to power in 1907. He was unanimously elected by the regional governors, the clergy and the representatives of the people to end factional rivalries and unending strife.

Strife with the British

The Bhutanese occupied the Indian kingdom of Cooch Behar in the early 1700s. The Cooch Beharis appealed to the British for help. The British arrived and chased the Bhutanese out. They even attacked Bhutan in 1774 and forced the Bhutanese to sign a treaty. The treaty failed

to bring peace between the two and border conflicts continued between them.

As a Modern Nation

King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the third king of Bhutan, initiated landmark constitutional reforms in Bhutanese history. A National Assembly with 150 members was established. The country launched its first Five Year Development Plan in 1961 and opened itself to international community.