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शि योमी जिला
SHI YOMI DISTRICT



NEWSLETTER

#11 OCTOBER 2024

Dear Reader,

This month, as we continue to explore Mechukha, we focus on an important Buddhist tradition - home to numerous revered Neh locations established by various Rinpoche and lamas. We also highlight key pilgrimage sites such as Neh Karte, Neh Shekar Bumji, and Neh Phukp Khana, where annual ceremonies celebrate a community spirit. In addition, we delve into the natural beauty of these sacred sites, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the Memba tribe and their dedication to preserving these important traditions.

- **Liya Bagra** A.P.C.S, Deputy Commissioner, Shi-Yomi District & Chairman-Destination Management Committee-Mechukha

According to Buddhist tradition, Mechukha is home to numerous recognized Neh sites, established since the discovery of Tseri Neh Bhenza Shingri in Mechukha by various Rinpoche and lamas. These revered figures set their sacred footsteps across this beautiful and holy land, blessing several locations throughout Mechukha Valley, as outlined below.

Neh Karte



Neh Karte, also known as Kunsang Dorjee Bao, is located in Karte village, about 4 km from Mechukha town. The annual pilgrimage typically occurs in January, aligning with the lunar calendar month called "Dawa Chungyib Tseb Chuthambh." Each year, devotees visit this revered Neh site to receive blessings. The Dorjee Bao Neh was originally established by Lama Lodre Gayltsen.



NEH (PILGRIMAGE)



Shekar Bumji

Shekar Bumji, also known as Dorjee Tsomu Neh, is located in Shekar village, just 1.5 km from Mechukha town. The main pilgrimage visit occurs in February, during the full moon, which locals refer to as "Dawa Dangbu Tseb Cheng."

Neh Pema Shelphu site and Neh Saram

During the Neh ceremony, visitors and devotees raise vibrant religious flags and share traditional feasts, tea, and indigenous foods. Together, they participate in prayers, chanting, meditation, and worship to seek blessings for the present and future. Lamas, Daabas, and Rinpoches lead prayers for the well-being of all. The celebration includes joyful singing and traditional dances, adding to the festive atmosphere.

The Neh site itself is rich in natural beauty, with caves, streams, mountains, and scenic landscapes. Revered Rinpoches and Lamas have left their footprints on cave walls and stones, surrounded by wildflowers and sacred symbols, creating a deeply spiritual ambiance.



Neh Pema Zelling site

This Neh occurs in October and March, locally known as "Dawa Nyib Tseb Cheng" and "Gaybe Cheng." It is located approximately 6 km from Mechukha town, near the premises of Segon and Thargelling villages. The area features several caves where the meditating Lama Traden Cheje Lingpa practiced. This Neh site was also established by Guru Rimpoche.



Neh Phukp Khanaa

Neh Phukp Khana is considered one of the important pilgrimage sites and is located near Dorjeeling village, approximately 3 km from Mechukha town. This ancient Buddhist shrine is an underground cave adorned with images of Lord Buddha and various deities imprinted on its walls. It is traditionally believed that a great Lama meditated inside this cave for several years without food or water. The Phukp Khana pilgrimage holds significant traditional and religious value, attracting many members of the Memba community to participate in the Neh ceremony. The visiting time for this Neh occurs in March, coinciding with the Hindu festival of Holi.



Neh Tsyenden Dakph

Neh Tsyenden Dakph is located in Lhallung village. During the Neh ceremony, visitors and devotees raise colorful religious flags and share traditional feasts, tea, and indigenous foods. Participants engage in prayers, chanting, meditation, and worship to seek blessings for a prosperous present and future. Lamas, Daabas, and Rinpoches lead the worship and prayers for well-being. Devotees also partake in merriment, singing melodious songs and dancing to showcase their cultural traditions throughout the Neh events.

According to local lore, Monk Chenden undertook a deep meditation that is said to have transformed the landscape, shaping Mechukha into the beautiful valley we see today.

BAKING CLASSES

On September 11th, baking classes were conducted at Café Lilo in Mechukha under Operation Sadhbhavana, led by Miss Apili Mosing and sponsored by the 13th Grenadier Indian Army. Mechukha ADC Tana Yaho expressed gratitude to the 13 Grenadiers, highlighting the program's direct benefits for the local community and its role in promoting self-sufficiency. The Commanding Officer of the 13 Grenadiers, SC Basera, attended the event. The baking classes saw participation from many individuals, including homestay owners, hoteliers, shop owners, and local residents.



TRADITIONAL GORSHEY INAUGURATED

The Neh-Nang Cultural Development Society (NCDS), the primary representative body of the Memba tribe, recently inaugurated a Traditional Gorshey event in collaboration with all Mani Tshokpas. The ceremony, held in Mechukha, featured the esteemed presence of the ADC of Mechukha, Mrs. Tana Yaho, as Chief Guest, and Sri Gebu Onge, Chairman of the Onge Welfare Society, as Guest of Honour.



The vibrant and unifying Traditional Gorshey circle dance was scheduled to be held every Wednesday, inviting both locals and visitors to experience its magic. Gorshey, a lively social dance of the people of Mechukha, fostered community spirit, joy, and shared experience. Participants danced in a counterclockwise circle, with the dance varying in style based on region and occasion, making it a cherished highlight of festivals, weddings, and religious gatherings.

Wednesdays hold special significance for the Buddhist community, as it is a favorite day of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. On this day, devotees pray for his long life, don traditional attire, and gather in the evening from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM to perform Gorshey, ensuring blessings for all participants. Whether young or old, every participant became part of a tradition that transcended generations, strengthening the bonds of the community in celebration and gratitude.



SWACHHATA DRIVES

Multiple Swachhata Drives have been conducted in Mechukha, organized by the District Administration as part of the Swachhata Hi Seva 2024 campaign. The District Urban Development Agency, Mechukha, Mr. Shi-Yomi, has also launched a cleanliness initiative themed “SAFAI APNAO, BIMAARI BHAGAO,” which means “Adopt Cleanliness, Drive Away Illness.”

This campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance of hygiene and sanitation in the community, encouraging residents to adopt cleanliness practices. Activities include cleaning public spaces, responsible waste disposal, and promoting eco-friendly materials. Through these collaborative efforts, the initiative aspires to enhance public health, prevent diseases, and foster a culture of cleanliness, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being of Mechukha's residents.



WORLD TOURISM DAY

On World Tourism Day 2024, Mechukha embraced the UN theme of "Tourism and Peace," emphasising the vital link between tourism, global harmony, and cultural understanding. The celebration showcased how tourism can serve as a bridge to promote respect for diverse cultures.

At the Higher Secondary School in Mechukha, a quiz competition and an essay writing event inspired students to contemplate sustainable tourism and the significance of cultural exchange. Participants eagerly shared insightful views on how embracing various cultures fosters global peace.

To further underline this message, a cleanliness drive was organized along the Yargyapchu River bank. This initiative not only raised environmental awareness but also highlighted the importance of preserving Mechukha's natural beauty, which is essential for creating a peaceful atmosphere for both residents and visitors.

Through these activities, Mechukha reaffirmed its dedication to promoting sustainable tourism and contributing to global peacebuilding efforts.

