

Background of Gasa Tshachhu

Gasa Dzongkhag is well-known for its hot spring (Tsachhu). Located about two hours walk down hill from the Dzong, beside Mo Chhu, Gasa Tshachhu is one of the most popular hot-springs in the country and it stands out for its extraordinary beauty and prime location. Nestled in the foothills of a Majestic Himalayan peak, it offers naturally warmth, wonderful mineral-rich bathing to soothe one's body and soul. A hot soak at Gasa Tshachhu provides relief for a variety of health conditions like rheumatism, arthritis, ulcers, indigestion, skin diseases, tuberculosis and other ailments. The historical records of Gasa Tshachhu are sketchy sat best as it is for numerous other Tshachhus in the country.

The healing water attracts more than 8,000 visitors annually, making it the most visited place of the country's largest and least populated district. Winter draws more people for several reasons. Firstly, it is believed that the water has stronger curative powers in the colder months. Secondly, one can soak better than in summer. People from far and wide come to Gasa Tshachhu to seek the curative powers, some visitors stay for months.

Spiritually, it is believed that Tshachhu and Menchhu owe their origin to the good wishes and blessings of Buddha's and Bodhisattvas. In some other countries Tshachhu is more commonly used for recreation and relaxation, but in Bhutan it is mainly used as a therapy for treating diseases. Hence, most of the Tshachhus (Hot Spring Water) are found in the areas of Nye's (sacred sites).So is with Gasa Tshachhu.

There are five bath houses at Gasa Tshachhu for general public. Out of five, one of the bath houses is pay and use, where visitors can book in advance. The water temperature varies in each of the pools with different medicinal values. Bathing facilities have also been provided to ensure that the Hot Springs remain clean and hygienic. There is also an outdoor pool especially for children to swim.

In the past days due to the lack of motor road, visitors had to carry all their necessities with on horse back from Tashithang to Tshachhu bearing all sorts of difficulties. Now the things are much better with motor amenities.

Lodging and other facilities at Gasa Tshachhu

Lodging Facility

There are 4 categories of public guest house at Tshachhu. It ranges from category A to D. These guest houses are located at Jawathang, a place which is just

Category A

There are four guest rooms furnished with basic necessities -furniture, kitchen items, mattress, pillow and blanket. Each guest room has an attached toilet and kitchen. There is a communal lounge. The room has an accommodation capacity of 5-6 people. This guest room cost Nu.2100 per night.

Category B

There are four blocks of this category and each block has four guest rooms. Each guest room has one bedroom with an attached toilet and kitchen cum living room. This guest house has with a mattress only (2 numbers in each room) in each guest room it has an accommodation capacity of 6 to 7 persons. Out of four blocks, block one is a designated Dzongkhag Guest House. Each guest room costs Nu.600 per night.

Category C

There are three blocks of this category and twenty guest rooms in each block. There guest rooms are not furnished with room facilities. It has common toilet. It can accommodate of 3 to 4 persons. It cost Nu.200 per night

Category D

This guest house is not furnished. It has a common toilet outside. It cost Nu.200 per night.

Guest House for Disabled people

In addition to the public guest house facility, we have a guest house for disabled people close to Tshachu pond. It allows only one attendant with the disabled person and two attendants for serious case. It cost Nu.300 per night.

Rest Room

This room is used by general public who come to Tshachu. It is constructed mainly to take rest after soaking in Tshachu which is for free.

Dratshang Guest House

This guest house is solely managed and operated by the Gasa Rabdey. There are two types of guest house costing Nu.1000 and Nu.600 for each room. Each type of guest house has four rooms with attached toilet and kitchen. While guest room costing Nu.1000 is furnished with kitchen items and 3 mattresses while the guest room costing Nu.600 is furnished with 4 mattress only.

VVIP Guest House

The guest house which is located above the hot spring is exclusively for VVIP.

Transit Camp

This guest house is used by the VVIP entourage team and other high ranking officials visiting on official. It is above the Tshachu.

Other Facilities

Conference Hall

Besides the lodging facility, the Tshachu also has a conference hall, used for conducting an annual conferences and workshop.

Nyekhang

The Nyekhang (shrine for Dhendup Norzang, believed to be the Tshachu deity) was completed on 07th October 2015 to mark the 60th Birth Anniversary of the Fourth Druk Gyelpo. It was inaugurated by Her Majesty the Queen Mother Azhi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. It was constructed mainly to offer prayer to the deity.

Shops around Gasa Tshachu

Currently, there are five shops in Tshachu including a farm shop located at place called Jawathang, where guest houses are constructed. The farm shop located near Tshachu pond sells mainly dairy products and locally produced organic vegetables at a reasonable price.

Chorten (Stupa) and Canopy

The Tshachu also has religious monuments like Chorten (stupa) and Mani Dungkhor (Prayer wheel). It has a canopy to hang out and relax after soaking in the hot spring pool for the visitors. These amenities are all located nearly Tshachu pond.

Hot Spring Pond

There are six ponds, including one VVIP and Pay and Use pond.

Pond -A

It's believed that Soaking in this pond helps in curing the following diseases. Refer figure 1 for pictorial reference in Annexure.

- i. Poisoning
- ii. Blood related diseases and body fluid disorders.
- iii. Stomach disorders

Pond-B

Pond B helps to cure the following diseases: Refer figure 2 in Annexure for pictorial reference.

- i. Mental poisoning.
- ii. Relieving of Toxic load.
- iii. Quick recovery of the fracture dislocation of the joints.
- iv. Healing of contracture and stiffness in joints

Pond-C

Soaking in this pond has an impact of curing stomach disorders like indigestion,bloating and abdominal pain. It has an impact of curing joint pain and other body aches. But one must note that excessive soaking time may cause dizziness. Refer figure 3 for pictorial reference.

Pond-D

This pond has the following curing effect. Refer figure 4 for pictorial reference in Annexure.

- i. Chronic joint and body ache, soaking in this pool of hot-spring water can effectively relieve from the pain.
- ii. Curing skin related diseases. It can help to naturally relieve certain skin conditions.
- iii.Throat related problems.

Pay and use pond

The pay and use pond has a combination of all the medicinal values and benefits as mentioned on the foregoing lines of pond A,B,C and D respectively of cost Nu. 500 for two hours. Refer figure 5 for pictorial reference.

VVIP Pond

This pond is exclusively for the VVIP.Refer figure 6 in Annexure.

Types of Menchhus available in Gasa Dzongkhag with different Therapeutic Values:

According to the elderly people of the Dzongkhag, Gasa is blessed with 108 Menchus by holy being.Popularly are being commonat present with four Menchus; Bjagay,Loyee,Tokay,and Mage-Phenday Menchu.

A. Bjagay Menchu

Bjagay Menchu is 20-minutes walk from Gasa Tshachhu. It is beneficial in curing arthritis and joint pain. Its history is similar to that of Bjagay Menchu in Paro. It is believed that a vulture, having erroneously swallowed a metal piece placed in the Torma (ritual cake), was suffering from severe choking. It was healed after it soaked in the water of Bjagay Menchu for a few days. The Menchu was thereafter named Bjagay Menchu, ‘medicinal spring of the vulture’. Refer figure 7 in Annexure for pictorial reference.

B. Loyee Menchu

Loyee Menchu is located at an elevation of 1635 meters above sea level. This Menchu has significant therapeutic properties for persons suffering from asthma and lung tuberculosis. Further, it is believed that this Menchu even cure the poisoned patient. It's to be noted that It cannot be used in a hot stone bath. Refer figure 8 in Annexure.

C. Mage-Phenday Menchu

Mage-Phenday Menchu is located at an elevation of 1640 meters above sea level. The hiking path follows towards Laya. It takes about 30 minutes hike to reach the site. Mage-Phenday Menchu cures sore infections and other skin related ailments. It is through these healing properties that the Menchu got its name Mage-Phenday, which can be translated as ‘beneficial for sore and inflamed wound infected patients’. Refer figure 9 for pictorial reference in Annexure.

D.Tokay Menchu

Tokay Menchu is about 15 minutes drive from Gasa Dzong towards. It is located below the highway of the Dzongkhag and takes about 15 minutes walk from the road. The site has properly built shelter for bathtubs and also for heating stones. Tokay Menchu is effective in curing gastritis, headaches and stomachaches. Refer figure 10 for pictorial reference in Annexure.

Other curative measures available nearby Tshachu

Gasa Hot spring is said to have capabilities of healing many health problems. At above Tshachu one can find a pond with pungent smell of nauseating gas comes out. It is known to heal sinusitis inflammation when inhaled. Its surrounding has muddy and pungent smelling clay which is proven to cure acne, sunburn, facial sores and other dermatological diseases. It is believed to heal nasal sores and injuries. Refer figure 11 for pictorial reference in Annexure

In the same location, there is water which is believed to be effective for gastrointestinal ulcer if drunk often especially before meals. That's why we see visitors taking containers of this water.

Rules and regulations of the Public Guest House

- i. The Allocated room key should be collected from the office of the manager upon the deposit of the security fee (refundable).
- ii. The occupant should abstain from misusing of facilities. Any damage to the facilities should be paid by the occupant from their security deposit.
- iii. The room shall be inspected by the authorized personnel only for the functioning of light, water tape and other existing facilities available in the respective room. .
- iv. The occupant shall dispose the waste in the designated place. The Defaulter shall be levied a penalty of Nu.500 per incidence.
- v. The occupant shall ensure that the room is cleaned before it is handed over to the Manager/Caretaker.
- vi. The Occupant shall observe every Friday as a cleaning campaign, which starts from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

- vii. The female visitors having menstruation are not allowed to soak in pond.
- viii. The room key shall be handed over to the Manager upon rent payment. To this effect, the receipt shall be issued.
- ix. The check out time is 12:00 PM

Conclusion

Over the years, Gasa Tshachu has developed tremendously. With the construction of infrastructure in and around the hot spring, the road connectivity and public guest house, visitors coming to Tshachu has been increased. The Dzongkhag Administration will always work towards providing improved basic amenities. The Dzongkhag will explore the possibility of increasing the hot spring pool to accommodate the increasing visitors.

The most important support required for general public and visitors is the management expects full support and cooperation in managing waste and taking ownership Tshachu facilities.

The mission of the Gasa Dzongkhag is to make Gasa the cleanest Dzongkhag in the country. Gasa Tshachu receives maximum number of visitors from other Dzongkhags yearly. With the increasing number of visitors at the site, managing waste and sanitation has become a growing issue. The committee has designated separate disposal pits for the degradable and non-degradable waste. Every Friday cleaning campaign has helped to keep the Tshachhu area clean.

Tshachhu management has three staffs including Tshachhu manager. There are four categories of public guest house. As explained in the foregoing lines, accommodation facilities are: Category A,B,C and D. Inorder to book room, visitors must contact the Tshachu Manager at 16288150/17458034 for details.

Gasa tshachu receives 5000 to 6000 visitors annually and it generates Nu.1.7M on average which is being deposited in government revenue account. It has a huge potential to increase the income.

Gasa Dzongkhag is planning to build better facilities, enhance and develop more ponds and rise facility standards in the future notwithstanding all the challenges and confrontations before us.

Annexure



Figure 1 (Pond A)



Figure 4(Pond D)



Figure 2 (Pond B)



Figure 5 (Pay and Use Pond)



Figure 3 (Pond C)



Figure 6 (VVIP Pond)



Figure 7 (Bjaygay Menchu)



Figure 10 (Tokay Menchu)



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Figure 8 (Loyee Menchu)



Figure 11(Yamduesa)



Figure 9 (Mage Phendey Mehchu)



Figure 12 (Gastrointestinal Ulver Water)

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