



# THE FIRST LAW SCHOOL OF THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN



**JIGME SINGYE WANGCHUCK  
SCHOOL OF LAW**

**UNDER THE PRESIDENCY OF HER ROYAL  
HIGHNESS PRINCESS SONAM DECHAN  
WANGCHUCK**

Developing leaders to support stable democracy,  
sustainable development, and the rule of law for  
the Kingdom of Bhutan and beyond



“JSW LAW WILL PRODUCE A GENERATION  
CONTRIBUTE TO A JUST, COMPASSIONATE,  
HAPPINESS, WE BELIEVE, ARE NOT



OF RESPONSIBLE LAWYERS WHO WILL  
AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY. LAW AND  
OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER.”

HRH PRINCESS SONAM DECHAN WANGCHUCK

# JSW LAW

Named for the Fourth King of Bhutan, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the architect of Gross National Happiness (GNH) and the father of constitution and democratic Bhutan, JSW Law opened its door to first batch of students in 2017 as the country's first and only law school.

Headed by the President, Her Royal Highness Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, JSW Law will prepare students for careers throughout the legal profession and beyond, reflecting the core principles of the Kingdom in a unique way.

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OUR MISSION IS TO COMBINE A THOROUGH GROUNDING IN LEGAL DOCTRINE AND SKILLS WITH SEVERAL INNOVATIVE ELEMENTS:

- \* Adherence to traditional Buddhist values, including the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH)
- \* Practical experience in topics of importance to Bhutan's development, such as dispute resolution, entrepreneurship, human dignity, and environmental law and sustainable development
- \* Research in related fields in support of the development of Bhutan's democratic institutions

JSW Law is a vital component of Bhutan's legal, political and social development. The Kingdom of Bhutan is already a global leader on issues such as environmental conservation, carbon-neutrality, holistic well-being and the rule of law in a way that belies its diminutive size.

The law school seeks to serve as a model for the world by providing legal education that focuses on Gross National Happiness, sustainable development, environmental protection, the rule of law, and the preservation of the nation's rich culture and traditions.



## CHOKI PELDEN LHAMO

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CLASS OF 2025

“JSW Law provides a transition from traditional classroom education to practical field experiences, enabling us to discover our full potential. This unique opportunity not only allowed me to showcase my academic strengths but also fostered the embrace of timeless values, resulting in an experience I will forever cherish.”



## KINLEY DHUENDUP NAMGYEL

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CLASS OF 2025

“I have always wanted to be a person who will someday be able to serve my Tsa Wa Sum wholeheartedly. Four years in, I feel happy, proud, and blessed to say that I have made the best decision of my life by joining JSW Law. Here, we are prepared for life, and through the eyes of Justice, Service, and Wisdom, I have been able to find my dream, a family, and a future. For this, my gratitude is everlasting to everyone who made JSW Law possible.”

## A HISTORY OF JSW LAW

Shortly after the people of Bhutan adopted the nation's first Constitution, His Majesty the King reasoned that a democratic society requires lawyers and leaders who are steeped in the values and traditions of that society. He commanded His Sister, Her Royal Highness Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, to assemble a team to examine the nation's legal needs, to study legal education in other nations, and to propose a uniquely Bhutanese vision.

After three years of discussions with Bhutanese from all walks of life, Her Highness submitted to His Majesty a Royal Charter for Bhutan's first law school. The school would be rooted in Bhutan's Buddhist values, and its five-year curriculum would be heavily influenced by the concepts of sustainability, solidarity, mediated solutions, and harmony with the natural environment that inspired Bhutan's unique development strategy, Gross National Happiness. In light of the small size and capacity of the nation's young professional legal community, the law school would also focus heavily on imbuing its students with core legal skills, with an eight-semester mandatory sequence in legal research, writing, speaking, negotiation, and mediation.

His Majesty promulgated the Royal Charter establishing the school on the occasion of His thirty-fifth birthday, 21 February 2015. Shortly thereafter, it was decided that the law school would bear the name of His father, the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck -- author of Gross National Happiness and the father of democratic Bhutan. JSW Law drew its founding teaching faculty from across the legal and educational sectors: the judiciary, parliamentary and government legal officers, and the private sector. In the first five years of the school's existence, the faculty faced a tall order: designing and teaching the first courses in Bhutanese law the world had ever seen.

In order to select high school graduates with the greatest potential for success in law, JSW Law staff embarked on a nationwide recruiting campaign, visiting every high school in the nation to describe the importance of lawyers in a democracy and to explain JSW Law's mission and approach. In order to ensure a bench and bar that reflect all of Bhutanese society, the school's leaders decided that JSW Law would not charge tuition. The school also designed a unique admissions process, combining the national high school examinations with a custom-designed "Bhutan-LSAT" and face-to-face interviews with all finalists.

## A HISTORY OF JSW LAW

During this time, JSW Law also worked to design and build a campus that reflected its values. The school's new campus, in Pangbisa, Paro, is one of the most energy-efficient complexes in the nation.

On 3 July 2017, the law school welcomed its first class of 25 graduates -- 13 young women and 12 young men. In its first five years, the school welcomed 108 students from across Bhutan, who joined the law school community at its temporary campus in Taba, Thimphu.

The law school continues to engage the region and the world, drawing visiting faculty and researchers from India, the United States, Canada, Singapore, Australia, and the European Union. In cooperation with its institutional partners and funders, the law school has hosted several conferences on the interplay between Gross National Happiness and the Rule of Law and on other subjects adjacent to the law school's mission. Law faculty and students participate in leading international conferences and competitions and publish books and articles on Bhutanese and comparative law and society.

Led by its President, Her Royal Highness Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, and an active Governing Council, chaired by the Chief Justice of Bhutan, the law school continues to seek out new opportunities for its faculty, students, and graduates to play a meaningful and impactful role in Bhutan and around the world.







## LEKZANG PAKILA LHAKI

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CLASS OF 2024

“Jargons, maxims, legal principles, our world of learning goes beyond that and delves into learning how to navigate around life by learning to take care of oneself and the people around. At the heart of JSW Law lies sincere hearts and kind eyes, always willing to lend a helping hand in helping us grow.”

# AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

## CURRICULUM

To prepare future lawyers in navigating the increasingly complex legal landscape, our well-rounded curriculum is based on four important pillars: (1) Law, GNH & Sustainability; (2) Law, Business, Commerce & Trade; (3) Law, International Relations & Politics; and (4) Law, Science & Technology.

JSW Law's curriculum integrates rigorous doctrinal and research-based legal education with extensive experiential learning. Two semesters are dedicated to intensive experiential learning through law clinics.

### LEGAL CLINICS

JSW Law currently hosts four groundbreaking legal clinics where students are required to participate in live client and policy advocacy work, supervised by top Bhutanese and foreign faculty and practitioners.

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**THE HUMAN DIGNITY CLINIC** includes core concepts of human rights and their application to pressing social issues in Bhutan.

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**THE APPROPRIATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION CLINIC** incorporates traditional Bhutanese methods of managing conflict, and applies them to address complex disputes.

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**THE ENTREPRENEURIALISM CLINIC** encourages lawyers to think like innovative business consultants, and to write clear legal documents to support local entrepreneurs and introduce best legal practices.

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**THE CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CLINIC** is aimed at training our students how to understand, respectfully interact with, and advocate on climate and environmental issues.

### A SEMESTER EXTERNSHIPS

JSW Law students spend their final semester in a full-time externships with a employer both within and outside Bhutan - in government, private practice, or public service. The practical experience they gain working under the supervision of practicing lawyers - in Bhutan and abroad -serves as a bridge between the end of their formal study of law and the beginning of their legal careers.

### RESEARCH CENTRE

One of our core missions is to create a vibrant research culture that will benefit not only our students and faculty, but also the national parliament, judiciary and government. The Research Centre serves as a focal point for Bhutanese researchers and invited foreign guests to conduct and present joint and individual research.

### CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTRE

Learning from Bhutan's leading experience in natural environment protection, the Centre aims to strengthen legal and policy frameworks for addressing issues concerning climate change, promote sustainable development and ensure that the impacts of climate change are addressed in a just and fair manner.

### GREEN CAMPUS INITIATIVE

The law school is the first campus in Bhutan and in South Asia to fully integrate cutting-edge green campus materials and practices, and thereby a role model throughout the region. Experts were engaged from around the world to advise on the construction.

## GRADUATE PROGRAMS

### POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN NATIONAL LAW

From Autumn 2023, JSW Law started offering Postgraduate Diploma in National Law for students with their first law degree from outside Bhutan.

### MASTER OF LAWS IN CLIMATE CHANGE LAW & POLICY

We believe that our law school and our legal community will be a beacon for the region and the world, to demonstrate how law and legal professionals can promote positive change. With this objective in mind, we are in the process of developing an LLM Program in Climate Change Law and Policy. We are partnering with leading universities from around the world to create a robust curriculum that would help fill the gaps in actual practice. We are listening to key stakeholders such as UN agencies, Climate Scientists, Activists, NGOs and local communities to understand their needs.

## OTHER PROGRAMS

### SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM

JSW Law hosted first summer school program from 26 June - 10 July, 2023 in collaboration with NLSIU, India and Center for Asian Legal Studies, NUS, Singapore. The summer school brought together enthusiastic 20 students from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

JSW Law will continue to offer summer and winter school programs on highly topical and engaging courses taught by skilled and experienced legal academics from both within and outside Bhutan.

### EXECUTIVE TRAINING

JSW Law is in the process of developing executive and other training programs. JSW Law also provides tailor-made training programs based on the request received from various agencies.



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

We have big dreams and the determination to achieve them! However, realization of our dreams are dependent on many factors including having a firm financial footing. We have been very fortunate to have donors and supporters from around the world. We are still looking forward to broadening our connections.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

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STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

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FOREIGN FACULTY HIRING

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RESEARCH CENTRE

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CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTRE

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STUDENT EXTERNSHIPS

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LAW CLINICS: HUMAN DIGNITY, APPROPRIATE DISPUTE RESOLUTION, ENTREPRENEURIALISM, AND CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

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FACULTY AND STAFF TRAINING

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LIBRARY: COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT, DOCUMENT PRESERVATION AND DIGITIZATION

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STUDENT AND FACULTY EXCHANGES

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STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIONS  
GREEN CAMPUS INITIATIVES

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STUDENT RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

## TO GIVE ONLINE:

Please visit our website at <https://jswlaw.bt/giving/>

## FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION:

dean@jswlaw.bt

+975 77184444



## RINZIN DORJI

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CLASS OF 2025

“As a fresh high school graduate, I remember feeling lost, unable to identify my interests. JSW Law helped me get back on the track of understanding myself and the world around me. Immersing myself in the world of law school was an enlightening journey filled with intellectual challenges and personal growth. The rigorous curriculum not only deepened my understanding of legal education but also honed my critical thinking and analytical skills. Collaborating with diverse peers and learning from esteemed faculty members enriched my perspective on legal issues. Beyond academics, the vibrant legal community fostered a sense of camaraderie and a shared commitment to justice.”



## THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

What began as the King's idea, supported by both the Supreme Court and Parliament, has come to fruition through the hard work of many and the generous support of donors.



सत्यमेव जयते

**WHITE & CASE**



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For more information about  
JSW Law, please contact:  
[enquiry@jswlaw.bt](mailto:enquiry@jswlaw.bt)  
+975 77184444  
[www.jswlaw.bt](http://www.jswlaw.bt)