



SACRED HIMALAYA TRAVEL & IIPT

2nd World Peace Tour to the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan
A Tour of Kindness
October 7 –22, 2008

Day One: Bangkok to Paro, Welcome celebration ,
Paro Dzong, Farmhouse stay

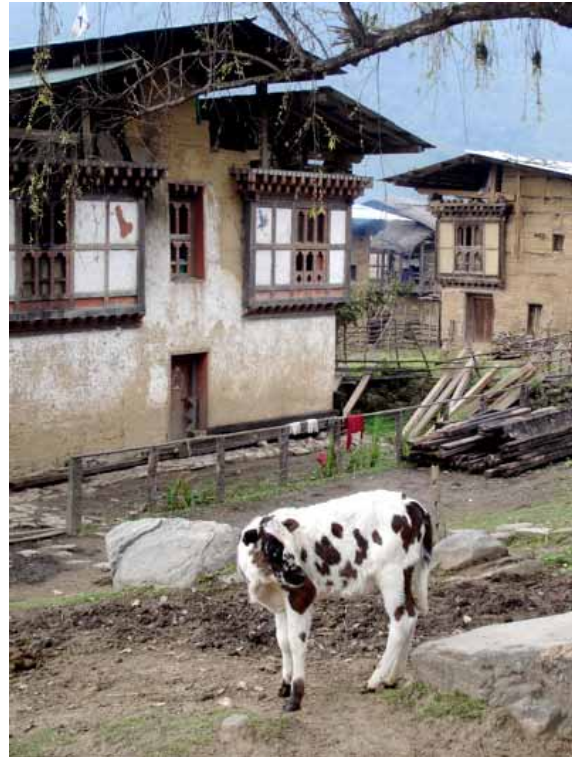


Flying in on Druk Air, the National Airline of Bhutan, you have a spectacular raven's-eye view of the great Himalayan peaks to catch your first glimpse of Bhutan. Descending into beautiful Paro valley at 8,000 feet, you will land in a world apart and be warmly received by your Bhutanese guide

Crystal clear Himalayan air, the scent of pines, a beautifully crafted traditional airport and the warm greetings of Bhutanese in their distinctive centuries-old style robes, signals that your journey, rare in time, place and spirit has begun.

Drive through scenic Paro valley, past Rinpung Dzong, a fairytale like fortress to follow Paro's sparkling river up the valley to a traditional Bhutanese farmhouse nestled in pine trees and apple orchards that will be home the next two nights. After a hot lunch, take a leisurely tour of the National Museum, located in the old Ta Zong watch tower above the small rural town of Paro. Later walk to Rinpong (Paro) Dzong, a monastic "fortress on a heap of jewels." We cross a traditional wooden bridge fluttering with prayer flags. Prayers ride the wind to the river below to bless all beings along the river's journey. With only the sound of wind, bird song and ever present laughter, you'll be welcomed into the magic of Bhutan.

Overnight at the Farm House. Hosted by a warm Bhutanese family we can share daily life and conversation with their small family. Wake to birdsong, the peace of the valley and a morning breakfast on their sunny porch.

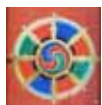


FARM HOUSES: The beauty of Paro valley is embellished by cluster of quaint farm houses. Bhutanese houses are very colorful and traditionally built with out the use of a single nail. The house looks very big from outside but is quite simple inside. The best room is always kept for the family's altar and daily Buddhist practice and prayers . A visit to a farm house will open a window for us to share the everyday life of a rural Bhutanese family.



Day Two: Chelala Pass , Chela Nunnery -Peace offering , Farmhouse stay

Drive up to Chelala pass above Paro, located at 3,400 meters or 11,000 ft- the highest pass accessible by vehicle. A country road winds through small villages and lush valleys, up hills of dense pine forests, firs, spruce, hemlock and alpine grasses . From the top Paro valley stretches out below. On a clear day view beautiful Himalayan peaks that punctuate Bhutan's border with Tibet : Bhutan's legendary Jomolhari, the Mountain Goddess at 7,314 meters and Jichu Drake at 6,914 meters. From the top we'll take a short walk along a path to Chela Nunnery built into the mountainside near by. Meet resident nuns and by special arrangement, make a peace offering for all sentient beings. Descend for an evening at the farm house , for a traditional Bhutanese meal and an option of a hot Stone Bath.... Stones with their tonifying minerals are heated in a outside fire then added to deep bath water... a relaxing traditional Bhutanese soak under the stars.



Day Three: To Thimphu , Kindness-Dharma talk with Lama, Thimphu sights

After breakfast a two hour drive winds along a river valley, past small villages and traditional farm houses, through peaceful countryside to Thimphu, Bhutan's capital. It's a small charming capital city sheltered in the heart of the Himalayas. Altitude 7,493ft. All of the houses and buildings are painted and constructed in traditional Bhutanese style.



Check in at the hotel in Thimphu. After lunch by special arrangement a Lama or Local Teacher will share thoughts on kindness and compassion with a Dharma Talk.

Some options for sightseeing include the Traditional Painting School, a school for Bhutan's 13 traditional arts and crafts, the National Library where ancient scrolls wrapped in silk keep the wisdom of Buddhist texts, or visit the Folk Heritage Museum. If time, take milk tea at a local cafe around the warmth of a bukhari wood stove. After dinner, on your own to explore small downtown Thimphu, where local people gather in the evenings on the main street to shop and chat outside brightly painted store fronts.



Day Four: Day Hike atop Dochula Pass & Picnic to Small temples

Driving from Thimphu the road climbs to Dochula Pass, at 10,004 feet where we'll have a breathtaking, panoramic view of the Himalayan ranges: magnificent mountains so vast many remain un-named.



Take an easy day hike from the pass to climb gradually through forests of pine, hemlock and spruce bright with rhododendrons to Lungchutse Lakhang (temple) We'll descend on the trail to visit Tashigang Goenpa and enjoy a picnic lunch. Back to Thimphu to enjoy time on your own in town. Overnight in Thimphu.



Day Five : To Punakha- Sunrise from Dochula Pass - Visit Chimi Lhakang

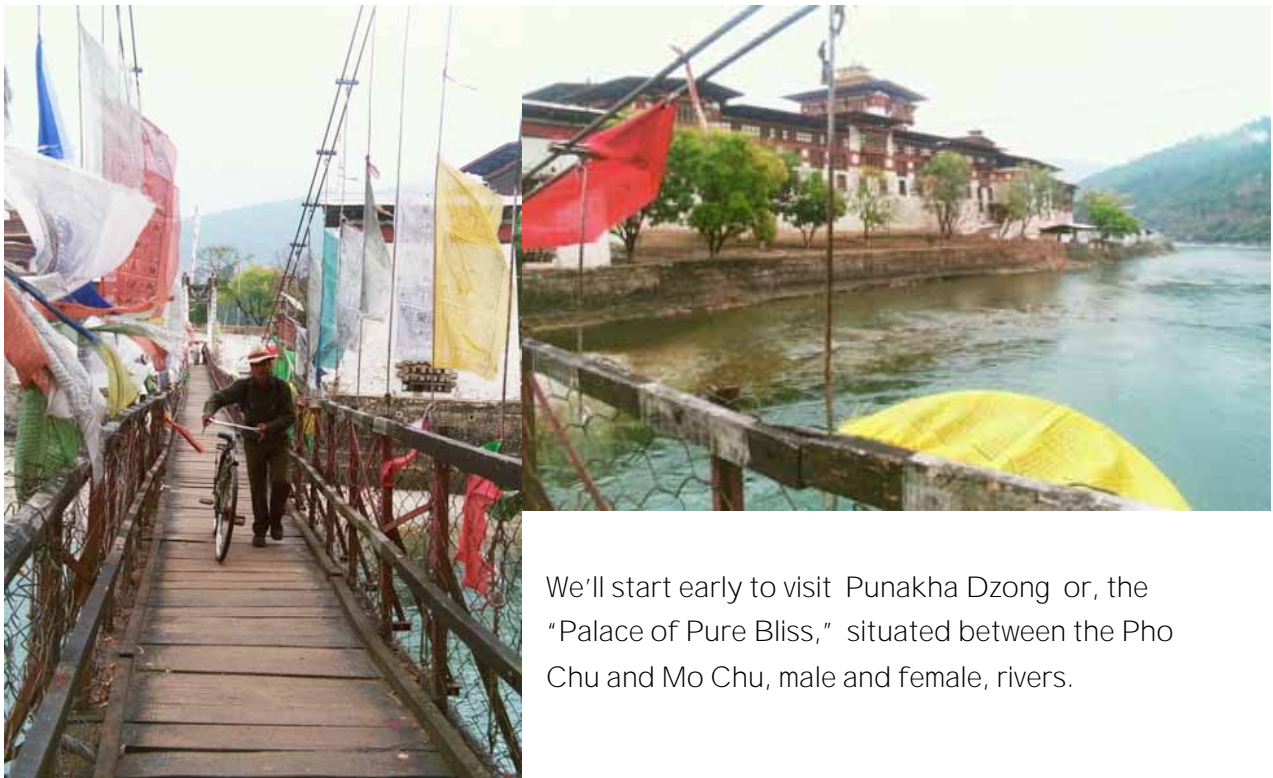
Start Early to catch sunrise at Dochula Pass on our way to Punakha. Driving from Thimphu the road climbs steeply through forests of pine, hemlock and spruce bright with rhododendrons. From atop Dochula the road descends through lush forests to the fertile valley of Punakha at 4430ft.



Before proceeding to Punakha, take a short hike, about 45 minutes, to Chhimi Lakhang, a temple on a small hill-top. This temple is dedicated to the great yogi in 14th century known as Drukpa Kuenly, or popularly known as the Divine Madman. It is believed that this temple blesses women who seek fertility. Overnight in Punakha hotel.



Day Six : To Trongsa- 'Palace of Pure Bliss Dzong & Trongsa Dzong



We'll start early to visit Punakha Dzong or, the "Palace of Pure Bliss," situated between the Pho Chu and Mo Chu, male and female, rivers.



This fortress is now used as the winter seat of the Je Khenpo, the spiritual head of Bhutan, though for nearly 300 years this Dzong served as the capital seat of the Kingdom.

Continue toward the central valleys of Bhutan through the breath-taking beauty and serenity of Bhutan's rich flora and fauna. Passing Wangdi Dzong (fortress) the road climbs steadily through semi-tropical vegetation up to Pele la Pass at 11046 ft. You may spot a yak grazing along the roadside. With an alpine environment, bright with rhododendron flowers and dark green with dwarf bamboo, the pass is considered the boundary between East and West Bhutan. On clear days view sacred Mount Jomolhari (23,355 feet) as we pass by Chendebji Chorten. As you enter Trongsa valley, the huge fortress of Trongsa Dzong on the far side of a deep valley, makes you wonder if you will ever reach it.

Tonight sleep in Trongsa hotel above the valley that falls away far below.



Day Seven: To Bumthang – Relax , River Lodge, Evening free to stroll town

This morning tour the spectacular Trongsa Dzong, perched so high on a mountain it's said the clouds float below it. Continuing on our journey, the road rises rapidly through a series of hair-pin bends up to Yotong La pass at 11,200 feet with incredible views over snow

capped mountains. Enjoy the colorful, quiet peace of the pass with its many prayer flags fluttering in the breeze.



Drive downhill to arrive in the Chumey Valley. At Tsugney village, you'll witness traditional Yathra weaving with the bright geometric patterns distinctive of this area. Once made from Tibetan wool, some wool now comes from local sheep. A local shop offers old

and new textiles for sale. Continue to Choekhor valley, where Jakar Dzong, the "castle of the white bird" perches above Bumthang. Over night with very friendly hosts in Bumthang at lovely guesthouse lodge. We can arrange for traditional hot stone baths.



Day Eight: Bumthang sights - Day Hike to Tangbi Village - Attend Festival, Camp



Often compared with Switzerland, Bumthang's long beautiful valleys charm visitors. In October families plough fields and help thresh buckwheat, the staple diet of Bumthang valley. This deeply spiritual region is shrouded in religious legend. Bumthang names a complex of four valleys: Chumey, Chokhor, Tang and Ura valley. Chokhor is the holiest of four valleys and many Bhutanese from all over the country visit here on pilgrimage to pay their respects. Today we'll take short drive and walk around Chokhor valley.

First visit an ancient temple "Jambay Lakhang" built by a Tibetan King, Songtsen Gonpo in 659. Passing through a village meadow we'll come to Kurjey Monastery, where the great tantric saint Padmasambhava (Guru Rimpoche) meditated and subdued a local deity. Leaving roads behind we'll take an easy one hour hike to Thangbi village to join Thangi Mani Festival. Mingle with villagers to intimately share and appreciate their culture and sacred ceremonies. Bhutanese love to socialize, joke, play and consume betel-nut and alcohol which helps them join in the spirit of the celebration. Family picnics cover the festival grounds. Amid a swirl of

color, the traditional masked dances performed by monks bring blessings to onlookers....
Camp overnight , make friends around the campfire and sleep in comfort in state of the art tents under the stars.



Day Nine : Thangbi Mani Festival, Camp

Join local villagers and attend Tangbi Mani festival. The festival displays rich traditions and celebrates the ancient heritage of this Lkhang . The dances are performed by Gomchens (lay monk) . Local women perform folk dances. The day starts with a fire blessing followed by the Black hat dance and continues with other mask and folk dances through out the day.

Camp overnight.



Day Ten: Day hike toTang Valley, Visit Tang Primary school, Camp

Back to Bumthang where we'll catch a ride to walk a trail that leads over a gentle hill through towering pines and visit a small nunnery . Picked up by our car, drive to reach Tang valley- bright pink with autumn buckwheat flowers –In the afternoon visit Tang primary school to share stories and songs and kindness with the young children.





Day Eleven : Day hike to Sacred Sites, Overnight River Lodge

Walk 2hrs to Kunzangdrag where one of Bhutan's most important sacred treasure finders, Pema Lingpa, lived and worked as a blacksmith. Many of his most important relics are kept here including a gilded stone bearing his footprint. Visit Khandroma Lhakhang where holy water seeps from the rock face above the structure. Picnic Lunch then visit other sites such as Membartsho or "Fire Lake," a deep green river covered with prayer flags. Small clay offerings called tse tsa are left behind by the local worshippers. Overnight River Lodge Hotel, Bumthang.



Day Twelve: Bumthang to Phobjikha. Valley: home to Black Neck Cranes

Travel on to Phobjikha, climbing up and passing through semi-tropical dwarf bamboo and the blush of many colored rhododendrons. Yak often graze by the pass at 10,000ft.



Arrive in the broad glacial valley of Phobjikha, the chosen winter roosting home of the rare Black-necked Cranes.

Endangered cranes leave the Tibetan plateau for Bhutan each winter and return come early spring. By legend, they are reincarnated sacred souls of Lamas that come to pay homage to the nearby monastery of Gangtey Gomba and help other souls to enlightenment.

When they first return, it's said,

the cranes circle the Monastery three times before landing in the wetlands below.

Over night in the quiet valley of Phobjikha under the crackle of a zillion stars and wake to bird song.





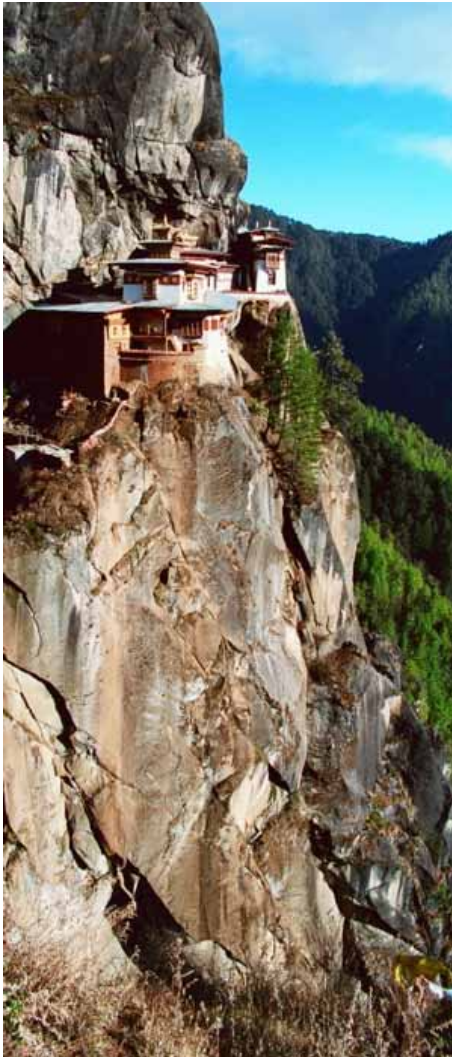
Day Thirteen: To Thimphu , Free afternoon

After breakfast, journey back to Thimphu. Climbing the great Dochula Pass offers another chance to view the astonishing Himalayan ranges and scout for snow leopard prints. In Thimphu check in at hotel, relax. Free afternoon and evening.



Day Fourteen : Thimphu Weekend Market, Drive To Paro, Explore Old Ruins

Open morning. Last chance for shopping, souvenirs or sights. In the small shops you can find antique textiles, prayer flags, and great collections of Bhutanese books. Stroll through the weekend market where Bhutanese from remote regions come to sell their products. Stacks of oranges, strings of dried cheese, red chilies and a rainbow of produce. Fortune tellers read futures. Drive to Paro and if time explore Drukgyel Dzong ruins. Overnight in Paro.



Day Fifteen : Excursion hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery, Farewell Celebration Paro.

We will spend much of the day on a hike to Taksang Monastery, the most famous monastery in Bhutan. Taksang means "Tiger's Nest" so named because Guru Rimpoche reportedly flew to the site on the back of a flying tiger late in the 9th century. Between blue pines and a blue sky, the monastery perches miraculously on a cliff nearly 2,700 feet above Paro's valley floor. If you decide to ride rather than walk, we can arrange for a pony. We'll break along the way at a small tea house. We'll offer and light a butter lamp in the temple, before we descend in distilled afternoon light.

Afterwards visit Kyichu Lhakang, built in 659 and said to be one of 108 temples scattered across Tibet and Bhutan to pin an ogre to the earth. Now days, it is a realm of peace that holds a statue of Chenresig, the god of Compassion, with 1,000 arms.

Our last night in Bhutan, step out for a quiet moment under a sky brimming with stars. Overnight in a picturesque hand painted Paro Hotel



Day 16 Depart to Bangkok

We say goodbyes to Bhutan today and board a flight for Bangkok for onward destinations. We hope you'll carry this gentle kingdom in your heart: may it bring peace to you and others. Have a safe journey home.

For more information please contact:

wendy@sacredhimalayatravel.com



Departure Dates & Net Package Cost per Person.

October 7 to October 22, 2008

Trip Limit : 10 guests

Tour of Kindness: 16 days , 15 nights in Bhutan

Costs per person in US \$	Single room supplement	Tour Dates
\$3,950	\$350	Oct 7 to 22, 2008

*Costs largely reflect Bhutan's National Policy for a fixed tariff/per day tourist rate. The Royal Government has adopted a very cautious approach to the development of tourism in an effort to avoid the negative impacts of tourism on their culture and pristine environment. All tourists must travel on a pre-planned, prepaid, guided package tour, or custom travel program. Tourism supports the Kingdom of Bhutan and its citizens as a portion of all tourist fees goes directly to the government. *Rates are subject to change.

Tour Cost Includes:

Expert co- leadership with Sacred Himalaya Travel English speaking Bhutanese guide & International trip leader.

15 nights twin sharing accommodations in Bhutan (for single room supplemental charge is extra)

Full meals while in Bhutan.

All transportation, sightseeing, taxes and monument fees in Bhutan.

Bhutan Tourist Visa fee and Bhutan airport tax

Cost Excludes:

Air fares and excess baggage, hotel in Bangkok, laundry, phone calls, travel insurance, bank wire fee, beverages and personal expenses, tips for Bhutanese guide and driver, and religious site offerings.

Airfare Notes:

Airfare Bangkok-Paro-Bangkok = \$780 per person is not included in package cost. Must be paid within 2 weeks of booking a tour as required by Bhutanese National Tourism regulations and to secure reservations on Druk Air. Visas must be approved before Druk Air will allow boarding. **Visitors to Bhutan need to finalize their travel plans as soon as possible.**

Tour participants should be advised as per Bhutan's regulations total payment of both tour cost and Druk airfare must be submitted in advance. Fees should be paid as soon as possible to secure your reservation. We strongly recommend payment 4-6 months ahead of the tour starting date.

Airfare to Bangkok from point of origin , is not included in package cost: Participants are responsible to arrange their own tickets to and from Bangkok. We can suggest hotel reservations for our guests. International trip leader will meet guests in Bangkok for our early morning departure to Paro, Bhutan.

Lodging in comfortable hotels in Paro, Thimpu, Phobjikha, Bumthang, Trongsa, and Punakha. Reminiscent of mountain lodges and beautifully Bhutanese, with hand painted designs, wood panels and thick quilts, all have hot running water, electricity, and western style bathrooms. Meals are deliciously prepared traditional Bhutanese and Indian dishes suitable for Western tastes.

Camping will be comfortably set up with state of the art tents and equipment. Expert cook and camping staff provided.

Insurance: We strongly advise participants to purchase their own travel/health insurance. We ask that you sign a limits and liability waiver on confirmation of your booking. We are happy to suggest a contact for international health insurance

Note: This is a sample intended to give you a general idea of the likely trip schedule. Numerous factors such as weather, tour conditions, group options and the physical condition of participants, may dictate itinerary changes either before departure or while on tour. We reserve the right to change this schedule in the interest of the trip participants safety, comfort and general well being.

