

Spirit Tours

JOURNEYS OF THE SOUL

Dharma Path to Bhutan Tour

February 20th – 28th, 2018



Price \$3989.00

Three nights in Bangkok and six nights in Bhutan

**Includes R/T Air Bangkok to Bhutan and all meals and tours in Bhutan and daily tourism tariff
Dinner and Breakfasts and tours in Bangkok**

Join us on a spiritual pilgrimage to Thailand and Bhutan where two different forms of Buddhism are deeply rooted in daily life. The Kingdom of Siam (Thailand) is home to a deep strain of Theravada Buddhism and in Bhutan, the Vajrayana Buddhist culture is integrated into every aspect of daily life, many describe Bhutan as a unique, deeply spiritual and mystical experience.



February 18th Depart for Thailand
February 20th

Arrive in Bangkok, Thailand (Krung Thep, meaning "City of Angels") and transfer to Best Western Amaranth Premier airport hotel. We will have a day visit to Bangkok and visit Wat Po, the temple of the Reclining Buddha which contains a gigantic 148 foot long 50-foot high gold plated Lord Buddha is resting on his side, representing his entry into Nirvana. The soles of his feet are covered in mother of pearl. Wat Po is an extensive compound and contains more than 1,000 Buddha images. There are also 91 other Chedis of varying sizes around the grounds, along with chapels, rock gardens, an array of different types of statues, inscriptions, and bell towers.

February 21st We will arise early to depart for Bhutan. The flight from

Bangkok will fly over the Himalayan ranges. You will get breathtaking views of the worlds highest and most majestic peaks as



the plane approaches the Dragon Kingdom's cloud-scraping airstrip at the Paro International airport at an altitude of 7330 ft. Moments before the landing you can catch glimpses of the fertile valley of Paro and the winding Paro Chu (river) and the historical Rimpung Dzong (fortress) more popularly known as Paro Dzong. As you step out of the aircraft,

you will feel the peace and tranquility of Bhutan.

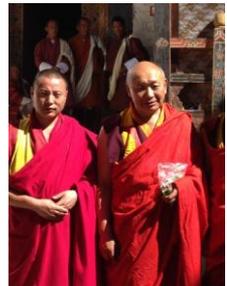
Tshering, our Bhutanese guide, will be there to receive you after you have completed the necessary immigration and visa formalities. We will follow the Paro River and provide plenty of photo opportunities. On the way, we will stop and cross the Paro River on an iron chain bridge built by Thangtong Gyalpo in the late 1300s, and is said to have built 108 of these bridges around Tibet and Bhutan. Many of them are still in use today. After about half an hour's drive, you will reach the confluence of two rivers, one flowing from Thimphu and the other from Paro. From the confluence, we will follow the Thimphu River for another hour.



As you enter into Thimphu, you will see the traffic being controlled by traffic men, as there are no traffic lights in the Kingdom. After lunch at the hotel, we will visit the Thimphu Memorial Stupa, a beautiful landmark built in memory of the late King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. We will be staying at the Riverview Hotel.

February 22nd

Today we will take an early morning pilgrimage to local Changangkha Lhakhang monastery and chant with the monks. This temple is an old fortress-like temple and monastic school perched on a ridge above the capital. We will start early for Punakha, the old capital of Bhutan. The journey will take about three hours. It will take you across the Dochula Pass (3050M) with a spectacular view of the eastern Himalayas. The pass is also marked by 108 stupas dedicated to world peace by



Her Majesty the Queen of Bhutan, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. The descent will take us through sub-tropical vegetation and into Punakha.

After lunch we will take a short hike to mad monk's Chime Lhakhang or Monastery, it stood on a round hillock and was built in 1499 by the 14th Drukpa hierarch. He was known as the "Mad Saint" or "Divine Madman" for his unorthodox ways of teaching Buddhism by singing, humor and outrageous behavior. We will be staying at the Dachula Resort Hotel.

February 23rd Punakha Teschu Festival Early morning we

will journey to the Sangchen Liendrup Choling Nunnery for an early morning chant. The King's maternal Grandmother built this nunnery in 2010. After breakfast we will visit the Punakha Dzong Festival. The Punakha Dzong, built in 1637, was once the old capital of Bhutan and is today the winter residence of the Central



Monastic Body. The Dzong occupies an important place in the history of monarchy in Bhutan as the first King of Bhutan. Wangchuck was crowned here in 1907. The Dzong also houses Bhutan's most sacred relic, the Ranjung Kharsapani (the self-created image of Avalokitesvara). The innermost sanctum of the temple houses the Marchen Lhakhang, containing the embalmed body of the Shabdrung, the first secular leader of Bhutan.



Festivals in the Land of the Thunder Dragon are rich and happy expressions of Bhutan's ancient Buddhist culture. These festivals are held in honor of Guru Rinpoche, the saint who introduced Buddhism to Bhutan in the 8th century. Tsechus are held on auspicious days and months in the Bhutanese calendar and last up to four days in which a highly stylized mask dance ritual are performed. The monks prepare themselves for weeks ahead of the festival, involved in deep prayer and meditation before the festival. The monks perform special masked dances that are inspirations of the enlightened beings in history: and the Bhutanese believe that watching these mystical dances is essential to gain enlightenment. The tsechus are a rich form of oral history tradition where Bhutanese past values, mythology, and spiritual beliefs through dance dramas.



February 24th Punakha-Paro

Today we will drive through Thimphu, en route to Paro, and stop for shopping and lunch in Thimpu. Afterward and we will visit the Buddha Dordenma, a bronze statue, a 'Vajra Throne' Buddha overlooking Thimphu city, about 100 meters (330 ft) above the Wang Chuu River. The statue will house over one hundred thousand smaller Buddha statues, each of which, like the Buddha Dordenma itself, will be made of bronze and



gilded in gold. After our visit to the Buddha Dordenma, we will proceed to our hotel in Paro.

February 25th Local sightseeing in Paro. Today we will wake up to the beauty of Bhutan. On a clear day, one can see the 24,000-ft domed majestic Jumolhari in the background of the fortress, blessing the Paro valley. It is believed that the goddess Jumo resides on this sacred mountain. Further, up the valley, you will see the majestic Taktsang (Tigers Lair), clinging to bare rock face.



We will visit Kichu Lhakang Temple, which was built in 659 (7th century) by the Tibetan King Tshongtsen Gampo. It is believed he built 108 temples across the Himalayas, and Kichu happens to be one of the last remaining ones. The Jowo Temple of Kyichu is one of the oldest temples in Bhutan, originally built in the 7th century by the Tibetan Emperor Songsten Gampo. It is considered to be one of the 108 temples he built. In the 8th century, the temple was visited by Guru Rinpoche, and it is believed he concealed many spiritual treasures here. Pilgrims turn the many prayer wheels along the walls as they circumambulate the temple. The fine statues of Bodhisattvas and the Buddha are national treasures. The wooden floor of the sanctum is inlaid with turquoise and coral gemstones offered by pilgrims. There is also a chorten that contains the ashes of the great Tibetan Lama Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. The teacher of the Dalai Lama.



February 26th After breakfast we will depart early in the morning and hike to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery, which is the most famous monastery in Bhutan. Guru Rinpoche, an Indian saint



is said to have flown on the back of a tigress from Singye Dzong in Lhuntse to meditate in a cave where Taktsang Monastery now stands. It is perched on the edge of a cliff, about 900 meters above Paro Valley. The hike to reach the viewpoint to the monastery makes for a nice half-day excursion. Hike back to Paro. In the afternoon when we return we can take an optional hot stone bath. Overnight stay at the hotel in Paro.

February 27th

Our guide will help you with the departure formalities at the airport and bid you goodbye with traditional Tashi Khadhar. Upon arrival back in Bangkok, you will be transferred to the Best Western airport hotel for a final evening.

February 28th

Depending on your flight time you may or may not have time to see more of Bangkok before returning home.

ABOUT OUR GUIDE



Tshering Jamtsho has extensive knowledge in the field of tourism in Bhutan. His knowledge of Buddhism, Bhutanese culture, history has earned him many friends around the globe.

Dharma Path to Bhutan

TRIP INCLUDES:

- 6 Nights Hotels and all meals in Bhutan
- 2 Nights in Bangkok w Tours to Golden Buddha and Reclining Buddha

Dinner in Bangkok
Round Trip Air Bangkok to Bhutan
Guide Services provided by Tshering Jamtsho
Punakha Tshechu Festival
Hike to Tiger's Nest monastery
Includes Daily tourist fee
All Tours and Transportation and all meals in Bhutan
\$3989.00

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