**‘10-Day Pilgrimage to the Birthplace of the Buddha & Jungle Safari’**

April 3-12 2020

November 6-15 2020

**Description**: We spend the first days in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, exploring the Pharping Valley and its many sacred sites. We stay at a beautifully located Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Pharping and receive daily guided meditation sessions and introduction to Buddhist philosophy. From here we journey southward to the birthplace of the Buddha in Lumbini, near the border between India and Nepal. We pilgrimage in Lumbini for a few days, visiting the Buddha’s birthplace and the sacred sites of the area. We then journey 2-3 hours by road to a beautiful lodge near the Chitwan jungle. Here we can rest, swim in the pool, enjoy the amazing wildlife in the vicinity and the jungle surrounding us and go for walks with the elephants into the jungle. If we are lucky we will be able to spot rhinos, tigers, wild deer, birds and other wildlife. Upon our return to Kathmandu on day 8 & 9 we will stay in Boudha and visit both Boudha Stupa, as well as Swayambhu Stupa.

**Program:**

**DAY 1 - ARRIVAL & STAY AT A TIBETAN BUDDHIST MONESTARY IN PHARPING, KATHMANDU VALLEY**

Arrival and pick up at Tribhuvan International Airport of Kathmandu. We drive straight to a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Pharping, the South Western corner of the Kathmandu Valley. Here we have time to rest, go for a walk or enjoy the spectacular views over Kathmandu Valley. In the afternoon there will be an introduction to the pilgrimage by the Himalayan Hermitage facilitator.

**DAY 2 - STAY AT A TIBETAN BUDDHIST MONASTERY**

Morning meditation session followed by breakfast. We have our introduction session to Buddhist philosophy before lunch. After lunch and a rest, we hike through rice fields to visit the Asura cave and the self-arisen Tara in Pharping. Dinner and Meditation session. We spend the night at the Tibetan Buddhist monastery guesthouse.

**DAY 3 - WE FLY TO LUMBINI**

In the morning we fly to Lumbini. After lunch we settle in at the hotel. In the evening we have a Dharma talk and introduction to Lumbini. Meditation session after dinner.

**DAY 4 - PILGRIMAGE TO THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE BUDDHA, LUMBINI**

Morning meditation session followed by breakfast. We spend the day visiting the Buddha’s birthplace and exploring the monasteries of the different Buddhist traditions. We move around on bicycle inside the inner area of Lumbini. Rest followed by dinner. Evening meditation.

**DAY 5 - WE JOURNEY TO THE THARU LODGE IN CHITWAN**

After breakfast we travel 2-3 hours by jeep to the beautiful Tharu Lodge. After lunch we can rest at the lodge or have a swim in the pool. Afternoon walk on the premises. Dinner and evening meditation.

**DAY 6 - STAY AT THE THARU LODGE**

Morning meditation practice & discussion. In the middle of the day it is possible to take a rest and a dip in the lovely pool. Evening jungle walk with the elephants. Evening meditation.

**DAY 7 - STAY AT THE THARU LODGE**

Morning meditation session. In the middle of the day it is possible to take a rest and a dip in the lovely pool. Evening jungle walk with the elephants and sundowner while they bathe. Evening meditation.

**DAY 8 - WE RETURN TO KATHMANDU, OVERNIGHT IN BOUDHA**

After breakfast we return to Kathmandu by jeep which takes between 4-5 hours. Lunch, rest, and free time until dinner at a rooftop restaurant near the magnificent Boudha Stupa. Evening meditation.

**DAY 9 – WE SPEND THE DAY IN BOUDHA, EVENING AT THE SWAYAMBHU STUPA**

After breakfast we walk to Shechen Monastery. We have a meditation session in the meditation room of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, one of the greatest Tibetan Buddhist masters of our time. After lunch the group will have a closing circle with homemade chai in Swayambhu. Back to Boudha for dinner.

**DAY 10 – DEPARTURE**

Day of departure. We provide transportation to the airport.

**Guidance**

Sisse Budolfsen & Alex d’Artois are the founders and co-directors of the specialised company called Himalayan Hermitage that offers authentic pilgrimage journeys throughout the Himalayas, namely to Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan (India to-be-added in 2019). Our expertise comes from merging Western and Eastern perspectives. We explore the hallmarks of Himalayan Buddhist cultures –philosophy, history and various cultivation practices, such as mindfulness, compassion and wisdom. With this we offer a unique introduction to the spiritual heritage of the Himalayan region through becoming pilgrims (rather than tourists) as we immerse ourselves experientially into the raw, powerful environments and uplifting cultures of the Himalayas.

**Introduction to Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy & Meditation Practice**

We receive daily introductory sessions in Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and get to both learn about, as well as practicing meditation, according to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The pilgrimage journey is set up in a way that allows for daily meditation practice time morning and evening. We will be introduced to the foundation of *Shamatha* meditation practice, a Sanskrit word that means calm abiding, or peaceful abiding that we will become familiar with during the pilgrimage journey. At the end of the pilgrimage journey, through familiarisation and practice we will be able to bring back home the meditation tools that we have learned throughout the journey.

**Group**

The groups are of minimum 6 people and of maximum 15 people.

**Price and Period Single room Double room**

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‘Early Bird Special’ (expires 6 months before) 3,809.00 USD 3,399.00 USD

Normal price 4,009.00 USD 3,599.00 USD

Deadline for registration: 2 months before the starting date.

**Including**:

* 9 nights / 10 days
* All accommodation, meals & transport in Nepal
* Experienced guides & instructors
* Flight from Kathmandu to Bharatpur (Lumbini) and jeep ride from Chitwan to Kathmandu
* Jungle Safari & elephant walks while in the jungle
* Healthy, vegetarian meals
* Daily Dharma talks & introduction to meditation
* Notebook for journaling during the pilgrimage

**Exclusive**:

* international flight to Nepal
* Visa required for Nepal (25 USD for 15 days / 30 USD for 30 days)
* Personal insurance during the pilgrimage
* Alcoholic beverages throughout the pilgrimage
* Personal tip to the local guides

**Language**: The pilgrimage is held in English