

14-Day Pilgrimage Journey to Nepal & Bhutan

Period:

7th - 21st June 2019

8th - 22nd November 2019

Introduction:

With this pilgrimage journey to Nepal & Bhutan we start our first 6 days in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, where we explore the sacred areas of Swayambhu, Pharping, Namu Buddha and Boudha Stupa - listed to be some of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage spots in the world. After becoming acquainted with the Nepali Buddhist cultures of the Himalayan region, we travel to the other sacred Buddhist land of Bhutan. Here we spend 8 days, embarking on a journey where we get to both observe and learn about the spiritual heritage of Bhutan, as much as taking time to practice ourselves and take in the many blessings of this place.

Program:

DAY 1 - ARRIVAL IN KATHMANDU

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. There may be time to rest from the journey, go for a walk or enjoy the spectacular views over Kathmandu Valley. In the afternoon there will be an introduction to the pilgrimage by instructors Alex d'Artois & Sisse Budolfson

DAY 2 – PHARPING

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 – SWAYAMBHU

Morning meditation and breakfast. After breakfast meditation and talk about Buddhist philosophy. Afternoon pilgrimage to Swayambhu Stupa. Meditation session after dinner.

DAY 4 - NAMO BUDDHA

After breakfast we continue our journey to the lovely area of Namu Buddha, where we spend the next two nights. We will have lunch in the beautiful surroundings of the resort we will stay in, followed by a free afternoon. After dinner we will have a meditation session.

DAY 5 - NAMO BUDDHA PILGRIMAGE

Morning meditation session and breakfast at our resort in Nammo Buddha. After lunch we hike to pilgrimage in Nammo Buddha where it is said that the previous incarnation of Shakyamuni Buddha sacrificed his body to feed a starving Tigress and her cubs. We visit the stunning monastery of Thrangu Rinpoche and the sacred Nammo Buddha Stupa. We overnight again at the beautiful resort in Nammo Buddha.

DAY 6 - WE FLY TO PARO / BHUTAN

After breakfast we depart for the international airport and fly to Paro, Bhutan. We visit Dhuntse and Kyichu Lhakhang - the house of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, one of the greatest Tibetan Buddhist masters of this century. We spend the night at a lovely resort.

DAY 7 - JALA DZONG

After breakfast, we drive to up the hill behind the dzong to begin our walk to Jala Dzong. We have lunch at camp and then visit the Dzong and enjoy the day at this location. This is also a famous location for encountering the national flower of Bhutan – the blue poppy – but only during summer season. We spend the night camping at Jala Dzong.

DAY 8 - CAMP AT LATAYKHA MONASTERY

After breakfast, continue our walk to Lataykha monastery, which as retreat location for Buddhist practitioners of the region. From this location, we can enjoy Great views of Hemphug Monastery, Bemri and Phurdo Gompa.

DAY 9 - HIKE TO BEMRI, THE SITE OF THE 100,000 DAKINIS

After breakfast, we walk to Bemri a sacred site which is known as the mountain of 100,000 dakinis who took flight from here. We continue hiking for visits at Dhunkalha or Phurdo Gompa and return to hotel by vehicle. We spend the night at a beautifully located resort in Paro.

DAY 10 - CHELE LA & KILAY NUNNERY

We rise early for the drive to Chele la and visit Kilay gompa (nunnery) along the way. We have a picnic lunch at the top of the pass where we will get great Himalaya views if the weather is clear. After this continue down the back side of the pass to Haa valley. We spend the night at a beautiful farmhouse.

DAY 11 - VISIT TO SHEKHAR DRAK & THIMPHU

We visit Shekhar Drak (dedicated to Avalokitesvara) and continue on driving the back road of Haa. We will stop for a picnic lunch at the scenic Dobsey Dzong. We continue onto Thimphu and check into the hotel. In the afternoon – free time for exploring the city. Prior to dinner, we pay a visit to the Dordenma Buddha which sits above the city and overlooks the entire Thimphu valley.

DAY 12 - RETURN TO PARO

We spend the morning (half day) in Thimphu – select from visits to: Zorig Chusu the School of 13 Traditional Arts, Textile Museum, the Traditional Medical Center or Memorial Chorten. Lunch in Thimphu and then return to Paro with a stop at Tamchoe monastery the famous location of Iron bridge builder Thang Thong Gyalpo and see his chain bridge and other relics located here. We spend the night back at a beautiful resort in Paro.

DAY 13 - TAKTSANG/TIGER'S NEST

We begin our early morning pilgrimage walk to Taktsang Monastery or the famous Tiger's Nest. On the way back down, we have lunch at the Taktsang "cafeteria". Return to the hotel where an optional Bhutanese hot stone bath can be organized (at an additional cost) and a farewell dinner for our last night in Bhutan.

DAY - 14 - RETURN TO KATHMANDU

We return to Kathmandu, Nepal by morning flight and spend our last night in Boudha. Free day and farewell dinner at Kathmandu's famous pizza joint, Fire and Ice.

Guidance

Sisse Budolfson & 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 7 people and of maximum 15 people.

Price	Single room	Double room
Normal price:	4425 USD	3850 USD
Early Bird Special in June (low season) until March 15 st 2019:	4225 USD	3650 USD
Normal price:	4774 USD	4199 USD
Early Bird Special in November (high season) until August 15 th 2019:	4565 USD	3990 USD

Including:

- 14 nights
- All food and accommodation throughout the pilgrimage
- Local transportation
- Return flight from Kathmandu to Paro
- Experienced guides and facilitators
- Bhutanese visa
- All meditation and philosophy sessions
- Healthy, delicious and organic vegetarian meals

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.