

IMMERSIVE BHUTAN

A Journey into Sacred Places and Festivals



Tigers Nest Temple, Paro

BHUTAN



Tsetok Temple, Paro

Yatra refers to a journey of purification and accumulation of merits through visiting power places.

Ultimately, it is an inner pursuit of transformation and realisation and building courage, resilience and resolve, which then manifest in other aspects of one's life.

This twelve-night *Yatra* in Bhutan aims to help you to explore and connect to your inner self to make you respond with compassion and courage.



Preparing for the Journey

To make the most of taking two weeks of your life for this pilgrimage, here are a few things to note.

- The world will keep moving – with or without you. Hence, pilgrimage is a good chance to temporarily set aside your normal life, distractions, desires, deadlines, assumptions, and comfort. And instead, it is a good opportunity to create time and space for introspection and contemplation - to renounce the mundane and give yourself two weeks of your life to find some greater meaning and push yourself further and deeper.
- Buddhists believe in the interconnectedness of all phenomena, including life, relationships, and moments in time. Fostering a sense of lifelong connection with the place, people, and fellow pilgrims is highly encouraged.
- Buddha means “awakened one.” Buddhists believe in the inherent Bodhicitta (seed of Buddhahood) in every sentient being. If one can move beyond the intellectual grasp to experiential realization, it is possible to reach that state of innate wisdom, compassion, and loving kindness within oneself.
- Dharma means “universal truth.” It doesn’t mean religion. During a pilgrimage, one goes deeper inside and decides what is important and what is not and what serves and what does not. One should be prepared and willing to undergo some transformative moments should they arise. Pilgrimage is one’s rare chance for personal, emotional, and spiritual growth.



The Journey Within: Connecting with Self and the Other

DAY 1: ENTER THE DRAGON

We start our experience from an unassuming little but the most sacred temple in Paro Valley – [The Talking Tara Temple](#).

Dharma Talk 1: Why Bhutan?

DAY 2: HONOURING THE DIVINE AND SELF

We will drive up a mountain and visit Bhutan's highest temple at over 12,000 feet. Legend has it that a 13th-century yogi saw these peaks as the celestial abode of Avalokiteshvara - the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

The [Nyechen Dongkala](#), located at the highest peak, was established in the 16th century by Tertön Tshering Dorji.

Here we participate in a ceremony for the protector deities of Bhutan. We also honour ourselves and show some self-love.

We continue the day making some rounds of [Dra Karp Caves](#) - a sacred hill that is believed to be able to cleanse one's bad karma – even one as bad as killing one's parents.

We close the day by seeking blessings from the sacred Kangyur (Buddhist canon) at [Euthok Gonpa](#) (15th century). The Kangyur, one of the two holy canons in Buddhism, is believed to have been blessed by the Medicine Buddha. A wish made here clears even the most dreaded medical condition, as many believe that the spiritual power of the Medicine Buddha can aid in healing and provide comfort to those suffering from illness.

Dharma Talk 2: Interconnectedness: The Essence of Bhutan (a deeper look at what keeps the Bhutanese society closely bound).

DAY 3: THE LEGENDARY TIGER'S NEST

We visit the legendary Taktshang – literally meaning [Tiger's Nest](#).

The most iconic of all the religious monuments of Bhutan, Taktshang – literally translated as “tiger's nest” - is also one of the two holiest places in Vajrayana Buddhism. Mentioned in the biography of Guru Padmasambhava, Pema Kathang, it attracts thousands of pilgrims every day. It is also a must-stop for visitors to the country who are awed by the sheer location and picture-perfect setting with the Himalayan mountains.

The Journey Within: Connecting with Self and the Other

DAY 4: INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

We drive towards Central Bhutan.

Dochula Pass, located at 3,100 meters (10,171 feet) between Thimphu and Punakha in Bhutan, is a scenic mountain pass famous for its 108 [Druk Wangyal Chortens](#) and panoramic Himalayan views.

Dharma Talk 3: From Buddha to Vajrayana. The Evolution of Buddhism.

After the session, we will drive towards Gangtey in central Bhutan.

DAY 5: THE SACRED VALLEY OF PHOBJIKHA

We spend a day in the alpine valley of Gangtey and Phobjikha and visit the 14th-century [Ngelung Drechaling](#) and [Gangtey Gonpa](#).

The Gangtey Monastery, one of the largest in the country, is one of the mother temples of the Pema Lingpa tradition.

Dharma Talk 4: The Four Elements in Buddhism: Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind.

Day 6: ENTER THE HIDDEN LAND

We drive to the sacred valley of Bumthang and visit [Trongsa Dzong](#) (Abode of Palden Lhamo Mahakali).

Trongsa Dzong was a significant citadel in medieval Bhutan, as it controlled the entire east and central Bhutan. It is one of the most beautiful castles, known as Dzongs, in Bhutan.

Dharma Talk 5: Three Marks of Existence: Impermanence.

DAY 7: WHERE BUDDHISM TOOK ROOT

We spend the first day in Bumthang visiting the temples of [Kurjey](#), [Jambay](#), Tamshing, and Kencho Sum. Kurjey is the spot where Buddhism firmly took root in Bhutan after the visit of the Indian Mahaguru, Padmasambhava – widely considered as the Second Buddha by the Bhutanese.

Lecture 6: Three Marks of Existence: Dukkha (Unsatisfactoriness)

The Journey Within: Connecting with Self and the Other

DAY 8: LEAVING BUMTHANG

We drive back to Punakha and, on the way, visit Prakar Temple and Manor, which has some of the rarest relics in the possession of a noble family. Chiefly the relic statue of Guru Padmasambhava is the most important.

Dharma Talk 7: Three Marks of Existence: Anatta

DAY 9: LET IT FLOW

We spend half a day hiking to Khamsum Yulley Namgyal Chorten in Punakha - a spectacular temple situated on the pine forest ridge overlooking the valley. The hike is about 2 hours.

After lunch we take a raft along the mighty and spectacular Mo Chu river.

Dharma Talk 8: Compassion and Loving Kindness: The core practice in Mahayana Buddhism.

DAY 10: FINDING YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

We visit Chimi Lhakhang, the famous fertility temple. And get introduced to Buddhism's most colourful character: Drukpa Kuenley, 15th-century yogi.

Known for his unconventional ways and wisdom of practicing the dharma, which bordered on being outrageous and profane with excessive sexual overtones, he was known as the Divine Madman and is one of the most favourite yogis in the history of Tibetan Buddhism.

Dharma Talk 9: What is your authentic self?

DAY 11: LIFE AS A BARDO

We spend the day attending the Wangdue Festival and enjoy seeing the mask dances and folk dances and join the people and wear the gho and kira to blend in with the local culture and traditions. It is a great chance for you to witness the ancient living culture of Bhutan.

Dharma Talk 10: What is the opposite of compassion?

The Journey Within: Connecting with Self and the Other

Day 12: FINAL BLESSINGS

Departure from Bhutan

We spend the last day in Bhutan with the most special water blessings on this holy day called the Blessed Water Day. It is believed that water is blessed by all the devas and the dakinis for one day.

We also attend the Great Thimphu Festival and visit the country's largest citadel called Tashichho Dzong—the Fortress of Auspicious Sacredness.

Built in the eighteenth century, it houses both the King's Chambers and the nation's highest abbot, and it is the venue of all the major state functions and ceremonies.

Dharma Talk 11: What is sacred to you?

DAY 13: LETTER TO SELF

We close the journey with a self-reflection—just as we opened it—and share it with the fellow travelers to create an everlasting bond with the place, the locals, and the people you traveled with.

Departure from Bhutan



The cost of a 15-day Yatra & what is included

- Hotel accommodation in DoT approved hotels
- Meals
- Economy airfare Bangkok-Paro-Bangkok.
- Transport (Toyota HiAce and Hyundai H1 vans)
- Visas, taxes, entry fees, and government-SDF fees.
- Licensed cultural guides*
- Full-time support staff.

Teachings & Ceremonies

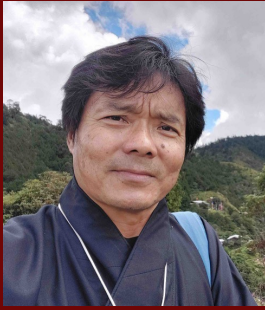
- Qualified instructor for daily dharma talks and an in-depth journey into spiritual Bhutan.
- Ceremonies in 7 key sacred sites led by the monks.
- Monetary offerings to high lama and monks.

Not included

- Air ticket in business class (add USD 400)
- Other personal expenses
- Alcoholic drinks
- Tips for local guides and drivers

Contact the organiser.

* Tourism is highly regulated in Bhutan, and all hotels, cultural guides, van drivers, and hotel staff need to be certified. Drivers and guides have to undergo regular medical examinations, including drug tests.



The Instructor:

Dorji Wangchuk (PhD)

An award-winning documentary filmmaker, university professor and researcher with a doctorate in communication studies from the University of Macau and a Laurea degree in engineering from the University of Bologna (Italy).

His research explored the question of traditional Bhutanese identity and spirituality and the influence of technology and modernity.

He is the former Director of Communication for the Royal Family of Bhutan and Dean of the Royal University of Bhutan and led the historic introduction of television in Bhutan in 1999.

His family bloodline traces to some very significant Buddhist teachers and yogis in Vajrayana Buddhism in eastern Bhutan.

