VISIT BHUTAN: LAND OF THE THUNDER DRAGON

October 1 – 12, 2017

with Larry Robinson
Board Member, Center for Climate Protection

This trip is a benefit for: center for climate protection

This very special tour of Bhutan, the last Buddhist kingdom in the Himalayas and the world's only carbon negative country and, will provide insight into:

- **The people and their livelihoods**— some lodged in the 16th century and some as current as today
- **Geography**— from the temperate midlands into the foothills of the Himalayas, across rivers and through forests
- **An amazing culture**— the unique aspects of Tibetan Buddhism and its manifestations in all Bhutanese life
- **Stunning arts and architecture**— from exquisite mandalas on walls and thankas to the arrangement of buildings in an ancient monastery, the beauty of Bhutan will astound you
- **The emerging government**— how does this small constitutional monarchy focus on Gross Domestic Happiness, balancing the needs for modernization and economic growth with the urgency of environmental protection, while hovering between political and economic giants China on the north and India to the south?

"This trip to Bhutan was pure delight! Our knowledgeable guides covered the cultural, historical and religious aspects and Larry gave us spirituality, poetry, and group spirit, deepening and anchoring the experience in our life: priceless."
— Cristiane St. Jean, Montreal, Quebec

Join us to learn the answers first hand.

Meet with government officials and religious leaders and speak with everyday Bhutanese people. Travelers will walk to villages, hike through rice paddies and native vegetation, climb hillsides to visit ancient fortress/monasteries and be immersed in a land both foreign and welcoming.

Itinerary:

Day 1: OCT 1 Bangkok - Paro - Thimphu

Flight to Paro over the Himalayas. Meet our guide and drive to Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. Overnight in Thimphu.

Day 2: OCT 2 Thimphu

We will join the celebrations at the third and last day of Thimphu Tsechu, the main religious festival of the year. Enjoy a picnic lunch; spend the whole day at the festival grounds. Back at our hotel, we will meet with one of Bhutan's leading lamas for a discussion of Tibetan Buddhism and Gross National Happiness. Overnight in Thimphu.

Day 3: OCT 3 Thimphu

We will visit the Memorial Chorten, where people gather to pray and pay homage. Then we will hike to Tango Monastery and have an introduction to Bhutan's native flora and fauna. At dinner, we will meet representatives of Bhutan's Department of Gross National Happiness during dinner to discuss this groundbreaking policy initiative. Overnight in Thimphu.

Contact Larry Robinson for more information and to reserve your trip:
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Day 4: OCT 4 Thimphu - Punakha
We begin a scenic drive to Punakha, stopping at Dhochu La Pass (3,048m) to enjoy the fabulous views of the eastern Himalayas. We will visit the Lemperi Botanical Garden, then stay at Punakha.

Day 5: OCT 5 Punakha
This morning we will hike through a village and rice fields to the legendary Chimi Lakhang, also known as the 'temple of fertility.' In the afternoon we will drive to the ancient capital of Bhutan, the Dzong of Punakha. Overnight stay in Punakha.

Day 6: OCT 6 Punakha - Trongsa
Today's drive to Trongsa will bring us through towns and villages of the Wangdue district. We will drive up the Black Mountains at the western boundary of central Bhutan. On a clear day, views of the valleys and mountains, including Mt. Chomolhari, can be seen. After making several stops on the way for pictures, we arrive in Trongsa to stay the night.

Day 7: OCT 7 Trongsa - Bumthang
We will visit the Trongsa Dzong and admire this testament to Bhutanese architecture built to defend the surrounding region. After visiting Trongsa Dzong, we drive across the Yotong La Pass and descend into the valley of Chumey, the first of four Bumthang valleys. We will see fields of buckwheat, a staple in the region's diet. Night in Bumthang.

Day 8: OCT 8 Bumthang
In Chokhor valley we will visit Jambay Lhakang and continue to Kurjey Lhakang. After Kurjey, we will cross the suspension bridge over to Tamshing Leaking and continue walking to the Swiss farm and then on to the main town area. Night in Bumthang.

Day 9: OCT 9 Tang Valley Excursion
Tang is one of the four valleys of Bumthang and home to numerous holy sites. We will visit the Ugyencholing Palace which has been converted to a museum that exhibits the lifestyle and art works of a Bhutanese noble family. Night in Bumthang.

Day 10: OCT 10 Bumthang – Paro
We will take a domestic flight back to Paro where we will visit the national museum and the lively town of Paro. Night in Paro.

Day 11: OCT 11 Paro
Today we will hike to the most famous pilgrimage site in Bhutan: Taktsang Lhakhang, or the Tiger's Nest Temple (2835m). Visible from across the valley, this stunning monastery clings to a vertical granite cliff above the valley floor (610m). Back in the valley we will explore Paro town. Night in Paro.

Day 12: OCT 12 Paro - Bangkok
Early departure for our flight back to Bangkok. If the weather is clear we will have a spectacular view of Mt. Everest and the high peaks of the Himalayas.

Additional Trip Option:
The Jomolhari Loop

Oct 13 – 20, 2017

Jomolhari Loop is the shortest of the Jomolhari trekking routes, which are the most popular treks in Bhutan. With altitude differences of 2,500m and nearly 5,000m, it offers a wide range of landscapes, fauna, and flora. The highlight of this trek is the spectacular view of Mount Jomolhari from Jomolhari Basecamp (Jangothang). Trekkers who want to avoid high passes and high altitude can chose an easier version of the Jomolhari Loop by retracing their steps from Jangothang (see days 1-2), while still having the majestic impressions of Mount Jomolhari.

Itinerary:

Day 1: OCT 13 Sharna Zampa - Thangthangkha

Distance 22 km, 7-8 hours, 770 m ascent, 10 m descent, camp altitude 3,610 m. On this long day, the trail continues with lots of small ups and downs. After going uphill through the river valley, the valley narrows gradually to a mere path which descends to a meadow where we will camp.

Day 2: OCT 14 Thangthangkha – Jangothang

Distance 19 km, 5-6 hours, 480 m ascent, camp altitude 4,080 m. If you did not see Mt. Jomolhari the previous evening, you will still have a chance to get a great view early this morning. This trek continues up the Paro Chhu valley which widens into patches of alpine meadow.

Day 3: OCT 15 Jangothang Halt

The rest day in Jangothang provides plenty of possibilities for day hikes with great views of lakes and snow capped mountains such as Jomolhari and Jichu Drake. There are good chances to spot some blue sheep on the upper slopes of the valley. Jangothang is a perfect environment for your acclimatization.

Day 4: OCT 16 Jangothang to Soi Yaktsa

Distance 16km, six to seven hours, 810m ascent, 1,090m descent, camp altitude 3,800m. The trail leads to a last settlement in the valley and drops to the Paro Chhu. Passing the lake of Tshophu (4,380m) you will climb up steeply to Bhonte La pass at 4,890 m, the highest point of this trek route.

Day 5: OCT 17 Soi Yaktsa to Thombu Shong

Distance 11km, four to five hours, 720m ascent, 340m descent, camp altitude 4,180m. The trail climbs 100m over a ridge to drop to another stream then. After crossing the Takhung La pass (4,520m), you descend to Thombu Shong, where your campsite sits next to three yak herder huts.

Day 6: OCT 18 Thombu Shong to Gunitsawa Village

Distance 13km, four to five hours, 200m ascent, 1,650m descent, camp altitude 2,850m. Crossing Thombu La pass (4,380m), you will finally reach Gunitsawa where you can be collected to drive to Paro, or you may choose to stay at the campsite, Sharna Zampa.

Day 7: OCT 19 Paro - Bangkok

Depart to the Paro International Airport for your flight to Bangkok. End of Bhutan Tour.

Details

Bhutan Tour with Thimphu Tshechu cost is $4,995 per person. With additional Jomolhari Loop, cost is $6,995 per person Single travelers pay an additional charge of $500.00.

Included in our cost:

- All meals and lodging in Bhutan
- All transportation in Bhutan
- Air transportation from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan
- A $1,500 tax-deductible contribution made to the Center for Climate Protection, the trip's beneficiary organization, to offset your carbon footprint from air travel

Not included in the price of the tour:

- International air fares between your home and Bangkok
- First night's stay at Bangkok hotel
- Tips, souvenirs, laundry, and alcoholic beverages

RESERVATIONS

A deposit of $500.00, made by October 31, 2016, reserves your place on the tour. The first 15 individuals will be accepted as tour participants and subsequent registrants will be placed on the waiting list. Your deposit enables us to guarantee tour arrangements. Final payment of the balance on the tour cost is due no later than December 31, 2016.

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