



Pilgrimage to the Five Wisdom Ḍākinīs

A Buddhist Journey in the Himalayas: from India to Bhutan

India (optional): September 29th – October 7th, 2024

Bhutan: October 7th – October 19th, 2024

A Buddhist pilgrimage to the caves and temples of the ḍākinīs
and to Tiger's Nest Hermitage in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Optional pre-trip to Dharamsala, India - to the
abode of H.H. the Dalai Lama.

With Tiffani Gyatso and Dr. Ian Baker

'Look into the mirror of your mind . . . The mysterious home of the ḍākinī.'

– Mahasiddhā Nāropā

This journey through the universe of Tibetan and Himalayan Tantric Buddhism in India and Bhutan and the places of power of the ḍākinīs—female embodiments of enlightenment—presents Buddhism through its iconographic art in artists' studios, temples, and monasteries. The trip also includes visits to rarely visited sacred sites and pilgrimages to cave sanctuaries where Buddhist yogis and yoginis meditated and left their blessings.

The trip will begin in India with a journey to the mountain town of Dharamsala, the principal home of the Tibetan community-in-exile and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Tiffani Gyatso lived and studied for three years at Dharamsala's Norbulingka Art Institute. She will guide us through the environs of Dharamsala with visits to the temples of H.H. the Dalai Lama and the 17 th Karmapa, in addition to local artists' studios where the group will experience the process of creating Tibetan thangka paintings and other traditional arts, as well as exploring the lively streets of McLeod Ganj and the smaller villages on the slopes of Nadi and Dharamkot mountains.

After this introduction to Tibetan Buddhism in India, the journey will continue in the Kingdom of Bhutan, amidst rugged Himalayas peaks, pristine nature, and majestic temples. It is here in this last Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom that we will explore the magic and mysteries of the Five Wisdom ḍākinīs, the 'sky farers' who exemplify our innermost awakened nature and assist seekers on the path to enlightenment. We will explore the ways in which the ḍākinī archetype manifests in Bhutanese Buddhist geography, art, and culture, as well as within our own experience as the dynamic expression of the Five Buddha Families and Five Elements. While Outer Ḍākinīs embody sublime human qualities, Inner Ḍākinīs refer to our innate wisdom and transform afflictive emotions into liberating awareness. When we fail to recognize our five inner Wisdom Ḍākinīs, they can manifest as the five klesha-s, or mental disturbances, of anxiety, anger, jealousy, arrogance, and desire. When we acknowledge and express them, they appear as relational, emotional intelligence and wisdom. Signifying openness, boundless energy, and liberating action, ḍākinīs invite intimate connection with our own deepest nature in myth, meditation, ritual, and art, urging us to live ever more aligned with the interconnected flow of life.

Join Tiffani Gyatso, Ian Baker, and local Bhutanese yoginīs on this immersive, magical journey through the “last jewel in Buddhism’s Himalayan crown” while rediscovering your original nature of innate wisdom, intrinsic freedom, and altruistic joy through experiential immersion in the symbology and power of Tantric Buddhism, combined with contemplative practices in settings of extraordinary cultural, artistic, and environmental beauty. The Bhutan portion of our journey will begin in the Paro Valley and extend to spiritual power places in Punakha, the Phobjikha Valley, and Bumthang, Bhutan’s cultural and religious heartland.

For those lacking time to participate in both the India and Bhutan portions of this journey, it is possible to join only the Bhutan portion.

“For the past twenty years, I have dedicated my life to the sacred arts of Tibet, India, and the Middle East, producing original creations while serving as a teacher and guide on art-oriented journeys in India, Nepal, and Bhutan. All accommodations and scheduled activities on this journey have been personally chosen to ensure the highest quality experience for an intimate group of up to fifteen people. Like all art, this journey represents a kind of alchemy in which challenges that may arise can deepen and enrich our experience of life. Taking its lead from the Five Wisdom Dākinīs, we will be guided throughout our journey by beauty, art, and poetry, as well as fearless love.”

– Tiffani Gyatso

CONCISE ITINERARY

INDIA (Part 1, Optional)

29/09 - Arrival in Delhi, India

30/09 - Flight to Dharamsala and Orientation.

01/10 - Visit McLeod Ganj. Visit Tsuglagkhang Temple of HH the Dalai Lama.

02/10 - Visit Norbulingka Institute and Gyuto Monastery of the 17 th Karmapa.

03/10 - Visit Himalayan Museum, with introduction to thangka art.

04/10 - Visit Tushita Center and walk to Bagsu Waterfall and Dharamkot.

05/10 - Morning visit to Karma Sichoe and Dolls4Tibet workshop. Art lessons.

06/10 - Free Day.

07/10 - Flight back to Delhi. Rest or visit Lotus Temple (time allowing).

BHUTAN (Part 2)

07/10 - Arrival in Delhi, India. Overnight at hotel.

08/10 - Flight from Delhi to Paro. Visit Kyichu Lhakhang, Bhutan's earliest Buddhist temple.

09/10 - Visit Jangtse Dumtseg Lhakhang temple and the National Museum.

10/10 - Pilgrimage to Dzongdraka and Five Wisdom Ḍākinī temples.

11/10 - Travel to Punakha Valley. Visit Punakha Dzong and the fertility temple of Chimi Lhakhang. Continue to the Phobjika Valley.

12/10 - Visit Gangtey Monastery, followed by a hike and hot stone baths.

13/10 - Travel to Bumthang Valley, stopping on the way at the monastic fortress of Trongsa Dzong and Chendebji Stupa.

14/10 - Visit Jambay Lhakhang temple, Kurjey temple (body print of Guru Rimpoche), and Tamshing Monastery.

15/10 - Visit Monmo Tashi Khyidren temple and the Tak Rimochen temple. Continue to Ogyen Choling Manor.

16/10 - (Padmasambhava Day). Visit the Twenty-One Taras Temple and Longchenpa's Secret Cave of Bliss (Sangwa Dechen Phug).

17/10 - Morning flight from Bumthang to Paro. Explore downtown Paro.

18/10 - Pilgrimage to Tiger's Nest, Yeshe Tsogyal's Lion Cave, and a cave temple of Yoginī Machik Labdron.

19/10 - Flight to Delhi. (Connect to your international flight back home the same evening, or book an extra night in Delhi with our assistance.)

DETAILED ITINERARY

**Itinerary subject to change depending on external conditions and circumstances beyond our control.*

INDIA (Part 1 with Tiffani Gyatso)

September 29 - Arrival in Delhi

Each participant will be greeted on arrival at Delhi International airport and will be escorted to the hotel. Reception by Tiffani and rest.

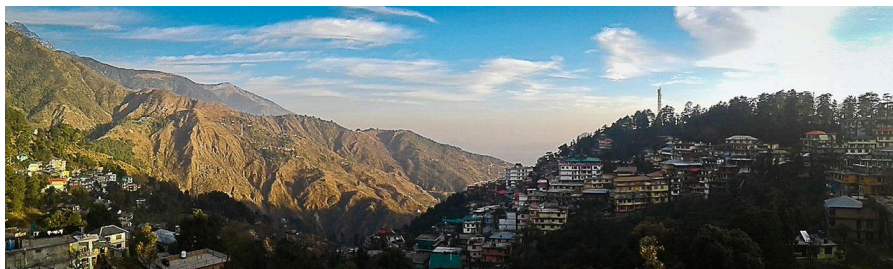
* Stay at Aerocity. Dinner included.



September 30 - Dharamsala Flight

Today we will take a 1.5 hour flight to Dharamsala, in the Himalayan foothills. Dharamsala is home to a large Tibetan Buddhist community-in-exile. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has lived in Dharamsala since he fled Tibet in 1959. After check, rest and lunch, the itinerary of the whole trip will be presented. As we like, we can take a walk through the surroundings of Sidhpur.

* Stay at Blossoms Village Hotel or similar. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.



October 1 - Exploring McLeod Ganj

Today we will visit the heart of the Tibetan community-in-exile, in McLeod Ganj, in the hills above Dharamsala. One of McLeod Ganj's main attractions is the mix of Indian and Tibetan cultures that can be seen and experienced throughout the small town.

Buddhist monasteries, prayer flags fluttering in the wind, Tibetan restaurants and a lively market selling traditional crafts and religious artifacts are all part of the atmosphere.

* Breakfast included. (Lunch and dinner not included)



October 2 - Norbulingka Art Institute & 17th Karmapa Temple

We start our day with a visit to the Norbulingka Art Institute, a non-profit institution dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan art and culture. The Institute features a variety of workshops and ateliers, such as the one for Tibetan scroll (thangka) painting where Tiffani completed her training. Here we can see how canvases, pigments, and scaled drawings transform into paintings, and also witness bronze casting, wood carving, a traditional fashion boutique, a doll preservation museum, and a beautiful temple with a large statue of a golden Buddha. We will then visit Gyuto Monastery, the seat of the Karmapa lineage and home to over 1,000 monks, including the current 17th Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje. The monastery is divided into two sections: the Lower and Upper monastery. The Lower is where the monks live and study, while the Upper monastery is where tantric rituals and ceremonies are performed.

* Breakfast, lunch (in Norbulingka) and dinner at the hotel included.



October 3rd - Himalayan Art Museum and art lessons

After a quiet morning to relax, draw, and meditate, will have lunch together and then visit the Himalayan Art Museum. The Museum was founded in 1998 by Dr. Sarika Singh and Master Locho Rinpoche. The Museum's collection includes more than 450 thangkas, sculptures, and ritual objects from Tibet and the Himalayan region. The thangkas are the main highlight of the Museum's collection, which will be presented to the group by the founding masters, who will clarify with great knowledge the iconographic art of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism and its function in Buddhist practice.

- Breakfast, lunch (local place) and dinner at the hotel included.



October 4 - Tushita Center, Bagsu Waterfall, Dharamkot, and McLeod Ganj

Early in the morning we will climb the mountain above McLeod Ganj and visit the Tushita Meditation Center, a peaceful and very beautiful retreat located in a pine forest amidst wild yet friendly monkeys. From there, we will walk downhill through small villages and past Hindu temples to Bhagsu waterfall. After lunch in Dharamkot, we will end our day in McLeod Ganj.

- Breakfast included (lunch and dinner not included)



October 5 - Visit to Karma and Mona's Art Studio

Visit to the studio of Tibetan artist Karma Sichoe, Tiffani's second thangka teacher. In addition to being one of the best traditional artists in Dharamsala,, Karma Sichoe also creates his own contemporary compositions, which reveal his position as a creative and politically exiled artist. His wife Mona founded the Dolls 4Tibet atelier, a social foundation that provides work and support for women in the region. Her dolls and characters from the Tibetan plateau are extremely delicate and make wonderful gifts. Lunch in a local place and back to our hotel to continue our practice of drawing and coloring the face of the Buddha.

- Breakfast, lunch and dinner included



October 6 - Free Day

This is a free day to explore on your own, revisit places, shop in McLeod Ganj, or perform the ritual circumambulation (kora) around the Dalai Lama Temple.

- Breakfast included (lunch and dinner not included)

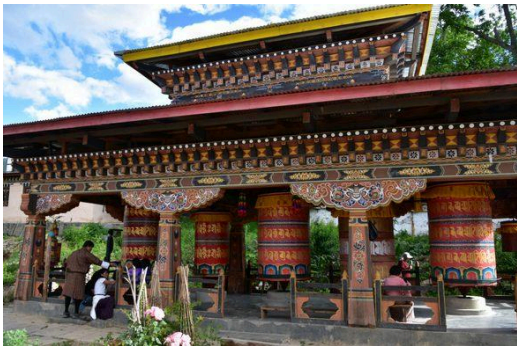


October 7th - Flight to Delhi & Visit to Lotus Temple

Today we will return to Delhi on a late morning flight. Check in at the hotel, walk around Aerocity exploring different places for lunch and time permitting, we will visit the famous Lotus Temple to admire the sunset. People who will join only the Bhutan trip (part 2) will be joining us in the afternoon at the hotel today.

- Breakfast and dinner included (lunch not included)

BHUTAN *(Part 2, with Ian Baker and Tiffani Gyatso)*



October 8th - Flight to Paro

Fly from Delhi International Airport to Paro, Bhutan. Time permitting, visit the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, Bhutan's earliest Buddhist temple. Program orientation and introductions in the evening.. Overnight at Tenzinling Resort. All meals incl.



October 9th - The Iconography of Tantric Buddhism

Following a morning discussion of the Five Wisdom Dākinī Maṇḍala – an archetypal modeling of enlightenment in which the center and four directions are associated with specific elements, colors, energies, and transformational wisdom—we will visit the Jangtse Dumtseg Lhakhang—a maṇḍalic temple constructed by Mahasiddhā Thangtong Gyalpo (1361–1485 CE)—for an immersive, visual introduction to the outer, inner, and secret iconography of Tantric Buddhism. After lunch at a traditional Bhutanese farmhouse, we will visit Ta Dzong, a former watchtower where the National Museum exhibits an extensive collection of antique thangka paintings, textiles, weapons and armor, as well as household objects and a rich assortment of natural and historic artifacts. Overnight at Tenzinling Resort. All meals incl.



October 10th - The Five Wisdom Dākinīs

Today begins with a pilgrimage to the cliff-side monastery of Dzongdraka and receives blessings from the resident lama. After lunch, we will continue with visits to the power places of the other four wisdom ḍākinīs (Ramna Temple, Tengchen Gönpa, Dzongdrakha, Gangteng Temple). Overnight at Tenzinling Resort. All meals incl.



October 11th - Punakha and Phobjikha Valleys

Today, we will cross the Dochu La pass (3,100 meters) to the Punakha Valley where we will visit the monastic fortress of Punakha Dzong, at the confluence of two rivers, and the famous 'immortal' fertility temple of Chimi Lhakhang, associated with the Tibetan karmamudra master Drukpa Kunley (1455–1529). We will then continue on to Phobjikha, one of the most beautiful and ecologically rich mountain valleys in Bhutan, on the western slopes of the Black Mountains. Overnight at Dewachen Resort. All meals incl.



October 12th - Gangtey Monastery & Phobjikha Valley

In the morning we will visit Gangtey Monastery, situated on a prominent hilltop and one of the two main centers of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism and associated specifically with the spiritual revelations of the Dzogchen, or 'Great Perfection', master Pema Lingpa. After visiting the monastery's artistic treasures, including a mural of the 84 mahasiddhas, we will walk back through small villages, charming forests, and along winding rivers to our guesthouse, where we can enjoy traditional hot stone baths.

Overnight at Dewachen Resort. All meals incl.



October 13th - Journey to Bumthang

Today we will drive over the Pele La pass (3,420 m) to Bumthang, Bhutan's cultural and spiritual heartland. On the way, we will visit the artistic treasures in the monastic fortress of Trongsa Dzong, and stop for lunch, and possibly a swim, at a spectacularly located café beneath a waterfall as well as visit the eight-eyed Chendebji Chorten, a 17th century Buddhist stupa in an area renowned for its density of Royal Bengal tigers. Overnight at Mountain Resort. All meals incl.



October 14th - Temples of the Bumthang Valley

On this auspicious Medicine Buddha Day, we will visit Jambay Lhakhang, the temple of Maitreya, the future Buddha, and one of the 108 temples built by the 7th century Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo to subdue an obstreperous demoness. The temple is also known for its chapel of Kalacakra, the Wheel of Time. We will walk from here to Kurjey, a temple famous for its body print of Padmasambhava, who brought Vajrayāna Buddhism to Bhutan in the 8th century. Afterwards, we will continue to Tamshing Monastery, the primary seat of the 15th century treasure revealer Pema Lingpa. Overnight at Mountain Resort. All meals incl.



October 15th - Journey to the Tang Valley

Today will begin with a visit to the ancestral home of Monmo Tashi Khyidren, the daughter of a local Bumthang king and a consort of Padmasambhava, renowned in myth for her ability to transform into a tigress. After lunch on the grounds of a temple commemorating Padmasambhava's 'Glorious Copper Colored

Mountain' (Sangdopelri) paradise, we will visit the Nyingmapa temple of Tak Rimochen, at the base of a tiger- striped cliff, before continuing to Ogyen Choling Manor. Traditional Bhutanese dancing after dinner. Overnight at Ogyen Choling Heritage House. All meals incl.

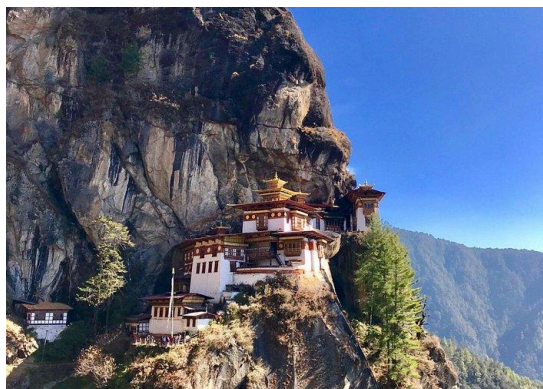


October 16th – Treasures of Tantric Buddhism

Today is Guru Rinpoche, or Padmasambhava, Day, and we will celebrate by exploring the artistic treasures of Ogyen Choling Manor, including the principal shrine room dedicated to twenty- one manifestations of Tārā, the mother of all Buddhas. Time permitting, we will also visit Longchenpa's Cave of Secret Bliss (Sangwa Dechen Phug). Overnight at Ogyen Choling Heritage House. All meals incl.

October 17th – Flight to Paro

Leaving early from Ogyen Choling, we will drive one and half hours to Jakar for a thirty- minute flight to Paro. After lunch, we will have free time to explore downtown Paro or to visit the monastic fortress of Paro Dzong. Overnight at Tenzinling Resort. All meals incl.

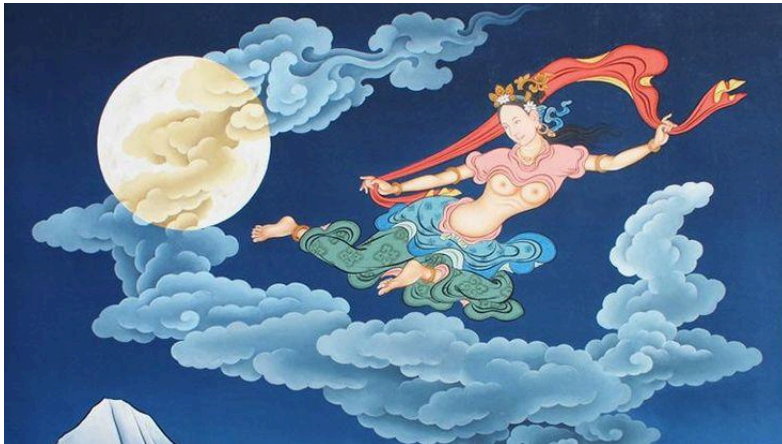


Oct 18 – Tiger's Nest

On this culminating day of our pilgrimage to Bhutan, we will hike to the world heritage site of Paro Taktsang ('Tiger's Nest'), followed by visits to Yeshe Tsogyal's Senge Phug ('Lion Cave') and Machig Phug, the cave hermitage of the renowned female Tibetan siddha, Machig Lhapdrön, situated above a 'white crystal' waterfall. Lunch at Tiger's Nest

Teahouse and final celebration in the evening.
Overnight at Tenzinling Resort. All meals incl.

Oct 19 – Morning departure from Paro Airport to Delhi, India, for connecting international flights or extended stay in India. (Contact us for extra days in Delhi.)



Tashi Delek

TRIP LEADERS



Tiffani Gyatso is an artist from Brazil, specialized in traditional Tibetan Thangka painting based on her study at Gandan monastery in Mongolia and Norbulingka Institute in India from 2003 to 2006. She later furthered her study on sacred geometry of the Middle East at the Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London. In 2018 she graduated in Visual Arts at Dulcina de Moraes University in Brasilia. Today she runs her own art retreat center at the Atelier YabYum in the mountains of Brazil and annually guides art groups to India, Nepal, and Bhutan. She is the author of the book, *Life and Thangka*. For further information about her life and work, please visit www.tiffanigyatso.com.



Ian Baker, PhD earned degrees in History and Anthropology following earlier graduate work in Buddhist Studies and a degree in English Literature from the University of Oxford. He is the author of seven critically acclaimed books on Himalayan and Tibetan cultural history, environment, art, and medicine, including *Tibetan Yoga: Principles and Practices*, *Buddhas of the Celestial Gallery*, *The Tibetan Art of Healing*, *The Dalai Lama's Secret Temple*, and *The Heart of the World*. He was designated by National Geographic Society as one of seven 'Explorers for the Millennium' for his field research concerning 'hidden lands' (beyul) in the Buddhist Himalayas. He is co-founder, with Dr. Nida

Chenagtsang, of The Vajra Path, an initiative for bringing the practices of Vajrayāna Buddhism into interdisciplinary dialogue with the contemporary world as well as with parallel traditions across time and geographies.

Prices and Registration

Participants may register for parts 1 and 2 of this pilgrimage, or only for the Bhutan portion of the trip (Part 2). The group is limited to 15 people to ensure optimal quality. English and Portuguese speakers are invited, and translation will be provided in both languages.

For any questions, queries, or comments, please schedule a free Zoom conversation with Tiffani at: arteperegrina@gmail.com

India: (Part 1) September 29 - October 7 (9 nights)

Double Room: US\$1,500 (dollars)

Single Room: US\$1,900

INCLUDED in the India Trip

- Pick up at Delhi Airport
- Delhi - Dharamsala round-trip airfare
- Hotels *** (2 nights in Delhi. 7 nights in Dharamsala)
- Scheduled meals
- Comfortable ground transportation
- Monument admission fees
- Guidance, translation, and thangka instruction by artist Tiffani Gyatso

NOT INCLUDED in the India Trip

- International flights to and from India
- Travel insurance
- India Tourist Visa
- Drinks and Meals which are not included in the itinerary
- Gratuities (normally group members add some amount to common tips given to the principal guide to distribute while setting aside additional funds for independent tips)

Bhutan: (Part 2) October 8 - October 19 (12 nights)

US\$200 Early-bird Discount signing up until April 1st, 2024 *(for double rooms)*

Early-bird Double Room: US\$5,700 (before April 1st)

Double Room: US\$5,900 (after April 1st)

Single Room: US\$6,700

INCLUDED in the Bhutan Trip

- Bhutan Visa Fees, Travel Insurance, and Sustainable Development Fees (*Bhutan charges a tourist tax (SDF) of US\$100 per day - this amount is included in the comprehensive trip fee.)
- All Meals (veg and non-veg)
- Hotels (1 night arrival in Delhi, 11 night in Bhutan)
- 1 domestic flight in Bhutan
- Round-trip flight from Delhi to Paro
- Local transport in comfortable mini-buses
- Entrance fees to monuments
- All indicated teachings and activities
- Expert local guides and teachers
- Accompanying experts: artist Tiffani Gyatso and historian Ian Baker

NOT INCLUDED in the Bhutan Trip

- International airfare from your country to Delhi, India
- India visa
- Travel insurance (except limited travel insurance while in Bhutan)

The Bhutan itinerary includes roundtrip airfare to Paro from Delhi, India. Those who are not coming from Dharamsala may meet the group in Delhi at the hotel on the 7th, where the whole group will meet prior to the flight to Bhutan on the 8th. One may also choose to arrive one or more days earlier in Delhi to acclimatize with jet lag. These extra days in Delhi are not included in the itinerary, but we can support you with organizing your stay.

The last day of the itinerary, October 19th when we make our way back from Paro to Delhi, overnight in Delhi is not included - you may reserve an extra night if needed with our assistance.

Those participating in the Dharamsala component of the pilgrimage (Part 1) will be received at Delhi International Airport on September 29 with an overnight stay in Delhi also included

prior to the next day's flight to Dharamsala.

REGISTRATION

Limited spaces. For a group of up to 15 people.

To reserve, pay in full (preferably for administrative purposes) or send a deposit of \$4,000 dollars to the following account:

Transfer to Wise Bank or to the India Bank US4,000 in the name of Mukul Purohit .

Bring the remaining amount in cash (dollars)

*Note: we are not a travel agency, this trip is organized by Tiffani Gyatso personally in partnership with Mystic Art Retreats (Mukul Purohit), India. We work with local agencies in India and Bhutan who ask for payments in advance and partly in cash. Bringing dollars is a legal way to transit.

* Wise Bank (Wise Bank is a virtual bank that facilitates transfers between accounts in any currency in any country. If you don't have an account, it's very easy to open. Download the "Wise Bank" app on your cell phone and register. It's free of charge.

Step by step (for non-brazilians - otherwise check the portuguese PDF)

Step 1: Contact Mukul: mp@mysticart.org requesting payment/registration, or via whatsapp: +91 98101 15366

Step 2: Transfer the amount of \$4000 to Wise or India Bank as Mukul will instruct according to your conveniences.

Step 3: Send the transfer confirmation to the same email

Step 4: Send a quality photo of your passport (your passport must be valid for at least 1 year) and a face shot (document style) with a white background (so we can start processing your Bhutan visa)

Step 5: Visit the official website of the government of India to apply for a tourist visa (check that the visa starts on the date of entry and not on the date of application)

Step 6: Have dollars in cash to bring the rest of the amount remaining. In Bhutan there is little use of credit cards, ideally bring in cash too the amount you like to spend on personal purchases and exchange it there. There are ATM options, but when withdrawing, consider the fees. In India, the use of ATM and credit cards work more efficiently.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Trip payments are fully refundable until June 28, 2024 (subtracting transfer fees). Cancellations between June 28 and July 26 will receive a 50% refund of the amount deposited. If you cancel for any reason after July 26, no refund will be possible due to Bhutan's tourism policy.

More travel updates, reading guidelines, and other details will be sent after trip registration. Group Zoom meetings will be scheduled four weeks before traveling, to acquaint group participants with each other and to clarify travel details.

For any questions or a free Zoom conversation to clarify trip details, please contact Tiffani Gyatso at: arteperegrina@gmail.com