



Pilgrimage to the Five Wisdom Dākinīs

A Buddhist Journey in the Himalayas: from India to Bhutan

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

Bhutan: October 7 – October 19, 2024

A Buddhist pilgrimage to the caves and temples of the Wisdom Dakinis
and Tiger's Nest Monastery in the Kingdom of Bhutan.
With an optional pre-trip to Dharamsala, India, the abode of H.H. the Dalai Lama.

Focusing on the study of Buddha Dharma with Ian Baker, PhD
and iconographic art with Tiffani Gyatso.

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

– Mahasiddhā Nāropā

This journey through the universe of Tibetan and Himalayan Tantric Buddhism and the places of power of the *ḍākinīs*—female messengers of Enlightenment—in India and Bhutan will present you with the most vivid expression of Vajrayāna Buddhism—through iconographic art in the wall paintings of sacred temples and artists' studios—while also introducing sacred, less visited, sites in the mountains of Bhutan where yogis and yoginis have meditated in caves and left their palpable blessings.

This first part of this journey begins with a visit to the home of the Tibetan community in exile and H.H. the Dalai Lama in the mountain township of Dharamsala, India. Tiffani Gyatso will guide us through the places that she lived and studied for three years, at the Norbulingka Art Institute. We will also visit the monastery of H.H. the Dalai Lama and the temple of the 17th Karmapa, in addition to local artists' studios to learn more about the thangka painting process and other traditional arts. Trip participants will also get to know the lively streets of McLeod Ganj and the small villages on the slopes of the mountains of Nadi and Dharamkot.

After this introduction to the Tibetan Buddhist world in India, we will head to mystical Bhutan, situated amidst rugged Himalayan peaks, and boasting beauty, art, and ancient Buddhist temples, and emanating profound tranquility amidst pristine nature. It is here that we will start our deep pilgrimage, following the steps of the enlightened *ḍākinīs* and yoginis.

In Buddhist Tantra, *ḍākinīs* refer to female embodiments of enlightened energy and awareness that assist practitioners in awakening creatively to the luminous potential of their innermost being. On this journey to the last Himalayan Buddhist kingdom, we will explore the ways in which the *ḍākinī* ('sky farer') archetype manifests in Bhutanese Buddhist geography, art, and tradition as well as within our own experience as the dynamic expression of the Five Buddha Families (Kulachara) and Five Elemental Processes. While Outer *Ḍākinīs* offer access to the intangible divine, Inner *Ḍākinīs* refer to our inner wisdom, transforming the five 'poisons' of afflictive emotion into liberating awareness (*yeshé*). When we fail to recognize our five inner Wisdom (*jñāna*) *Ḍākinīs*, they can manifest as the five *kleshas*, or mental disturbances, of anxiety, anger, jealousy, arrogance, and desire. When we embody them, they appear as wisdom and relational, emotional intelligence. Signifying boundless openness, unobstructed energy, and empathetic buddha activity,

ḍākinīs invite intimate connection with our deepest nature through myth, meditation, ritual, and art, urging us to live ever more aligned with the interconnected flow of life within and around us.

Join Tiffani Gyatso, Ian Baker, and local Bhutanese yoginīs on this immersive, magical journey through the last Himalayan Buddhist kingdom while rediscovering your essential, original nature of intrinsic freedom, innate wisdom, and altruistic joy through experiential encounters with the symbology and power of Tantric Buddhism, combined with dynamic contemplative and yogic practices in sacred settings of extraordinary cultural, artistic, and natural beauty in the “last jewel in Buddhism’s Himalayan crown,” from the Paro Valley, in western Bhutan, to the spiritual power places of Bumthang, Bhutan’s cultural and religious heartland.

Please know that It is possible to choose to join only the Bhutan portion of this pilgrimage or to participate in the India and Bhutan portions together.

"For the last twenty years I have dedicated my life to the sacred arts of Tibet, India, and Middle Eastern Islamic Geometry, teaching and producing paintings and murals as well as guiding groups on journeys through the cultural and artistic treasures of India, Nepal and Bhutan. I discover great joy in serving everyone who joins these outer and inner journeys and witnessing the flourishing of their souls and spirits with the roar and laughter of the wisdom dragon emanating from the core of their hearts!

Our boutique accommodations are hand-picked to optimize your experience. It will be an intimate and exclusive group of up to 15 people to better facilitate collective experience of the wonder and ecstasy that the wisdom ḍākinīs represent. When we open ourselves to new experiences beyond our everyday lives, a kind of alchemy occurs, further igniting the fire in our hearts – the fire that illuminates our being and fuels our sense of purpose as we navigate this fleeting lifetime. That inner fire strengthens our motivation to cultivate bodhicitta and benefit all beings as much as possible, and to experience obstacles as hidden teachings, and even blessings, by increasing our passionate resolve and fearless wisdom, guided always by love and virtue and, wherever possible, with beauty, poetry, and art."

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

INDIA (Part 1, *optional*)

29/09 - Arrival in Delhi.

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 Karmapa.

03/10 - Himalayan Museum visit, introduction to thangka drawing.

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

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

06/10 - Free Day.

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

BHUTAN (Part 2)

07/10 - Arrival in Delhi, India. Stay at night.

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

09/10 - Visit Jangtsa Dumtseg Lhakhang temple and Ta-dzong/National Museum.

10/10 - Pilgrimage to Dzongdraka and Five Wisdom Dakini Temples in Paro Valley

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

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

13/10 - Travel to Bumthang Valley, stopping at Trongsa Dzong temple 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 Tak Rimochen temple. Continue to Ogyen Choling Manor in the Tang Valley.

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 Machik Labdron.

19/10 - Flight to Delhi. (Connect to your international flight back home the same evening from Delhi 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.

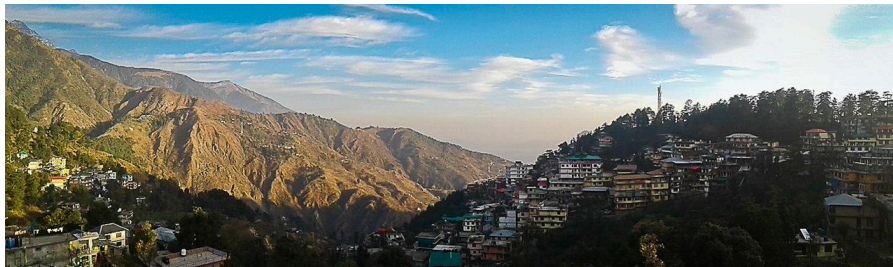
* Stay at aerocity. Dinner included.



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 Bagsu 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)

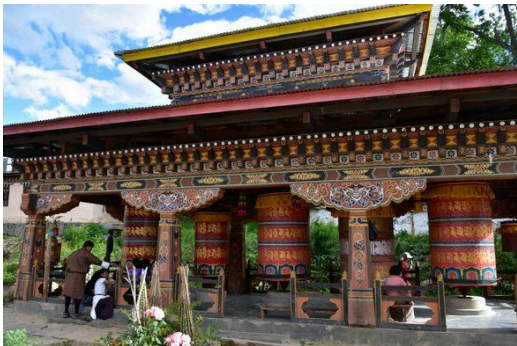


October 7th - Flight to Delhi & Visit to Lotus Temple

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.

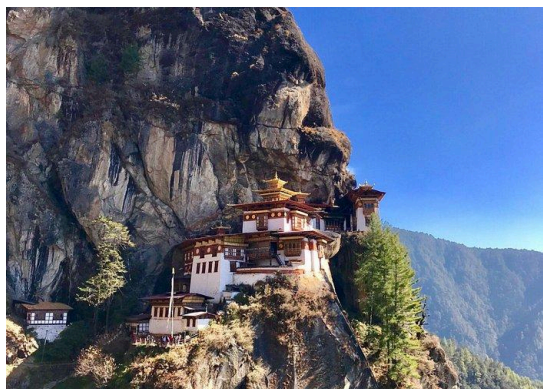


October 16th – Treasures of Tantric Buddhism

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.

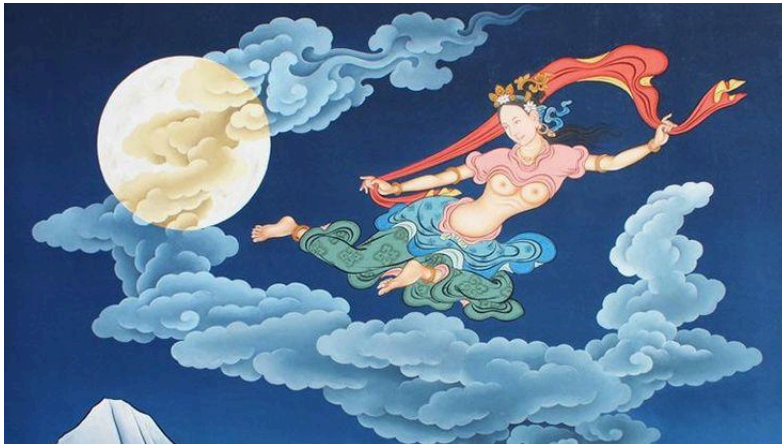


Oct 18 – Tiger's Nest

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 of 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 English Literature at 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 8 (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
- Boutique Hotels
- Breakfast
- Comfortable ground transportation
- Monument admission fees
- Guidance and translation by Buddhist culture and art expert Tiffani Gyatso

NOT INCLUDED in the India Trip

- International flights to and from India
- Travel insurance
- India Tourist Visa
- Drinks and Meals other than those indicated in the itinerary.
- Tips (normally group members contribute to a collective offering to the Indian guides and drivers while setting aside additional tip money to offer individually.)

Bhutan: (Part 2) October 8 - October 19 (11 nights)

Double Room: US\$5,900

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 3: 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. Cancellations between June 28 and July 26 will receive a 50% refund of the amount deposited. If you cancel for any reason after July 26th, no refund will be possible due to Bhutan's agency policy.

More travel updates, reading guidelines, tips and other details will be sent, as well as group zoom meetings 4 weeks before traveling, to acquaintance with each other who's joining the group for all clarifications, organization and vibration!

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