

PUNDARIKA PILGRIMAGE

October 2020

Tentative Itinerary

Prices and registration details will be available from November 1, 2019
Itinerary subject to final confirmation of flight availability and timings

The tour consists of four modules, which can be taken individually or combined

- **Consecration of Tsoknyi Gechak Ling in Chobar, Kathmandu, Nepal.** This is mainly aimed at participating in the opening ceremonies of the temple in Tsoknyi Rinpoche's new monastery complex.
- **Main Pilgrimage.** Tour of the four main Buddhist sacred places in Nepal and India, ending in Bodh Gaya, the place of Buddha's enlightenment.
- **Bhutan Short** is a 6-day tour of sacred places in Bhutan.
- **Bhutan Long** is a 10-day tour of sacred places in Bhutan.



Consecration of Tsoknyi Gechak Ling

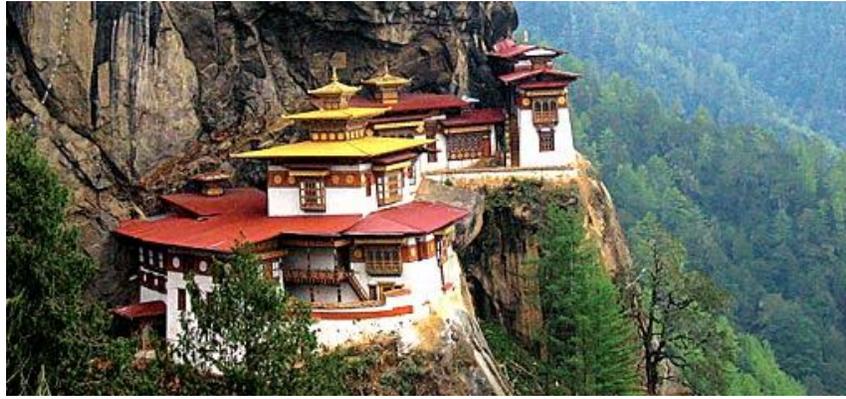
- 30 Sep Arrive in Kathmandu.
- 1 Oct Inauguration ceremonies.
- 2 Consecration ceremonies.
- 3 Day free for independent activities.
- 4-6 Teachings.
- 7 Leave Kathmandu for onward journey.





MAIN PILGRIMAGE

- 6 Oct Arrive in Kathmandu.
- 7 Morning drive to Lumbini (8 hs).
- 8 Visits include the garden where Queen Maya Devi gave birth to Gautama Siddhartha and the ruins of King Suddodhana's Palace.
- 9 Drive to Kushinagar through Bhairava, the Nepal-India border, where immigration formalities must be done.
- 10 Visits include the temple containing a reclining Buddha statue showing the moment of his passing into Parinirvana and the Stupa built on the place where Buddha was cremated.
- 11 Morning drive to Varanasi (7 hs).
- 12 Early morning boat ride in the Ganges River at the time Hindu devotees perform their ritual bathing, while the first sunrays illuminate this ancient city. Short walk through the old streets of Varanasi. Return to the hotel for breakfast. Later visit to the Deer Park in Sarnath where Buddha started the first Turning of the Wheel of Dharma with the teaching of the Four Noble Truths, marked by the huge stupa built by the Emperor Ashoka. There is also a museum containing some of the finest ancient Buddhist statues and stone carvings.
- 13 Morning drive to Bodh Gaya (6-7 hs), the place where Buddha attained enlightenment. Bodh Gaya is highly revered by the whole Buddhist world. The main places of interest are the Mahabodhi Temple, containing a replica of what is said to be the first statue of Buddha ever made, and the Bodhi Tree, a descendant of the pipal tree under which he attained enlightenment. These two are found in a wonderful garden also containing many centuries-old stupas and monuments. Like a sacred city where pilgrims from all Buddhist countries converge, every corner of this place is vibrant with spiritual energy, not only because of its past, but also due to the practitioners keeping alive their traditions through prayer, ritual and meditation.
- 14 Morning visit to Lodruk Kawa, the nearby place by the shore of Nairanjana River where Buddha spent six years practicing asceticism.
- 15-17 Teachings.
- 18 Morning drive to Rajgir (2 hs) to visit the Vulture's Peak, where Buddha taught the Prajñaparamita cycle, therefore initiating the Mahayana with the Second Turning of the Wheel of Dharma. Walking down the path from this peaceful place, there are caves where Ananda and other teachers practiced. Then visit Nalanda University archeological site (45 min). Return to Bodh Gaya.
- 19 Leave Bodh Gaya for onward journey.



BHUTAN SHORT

- 19 Oct In Bodh Gaya, transfer to airport for flight to Kolkata. *If at that time there is a direct flight Gaya to Paro this deviation through Kolkata will be cancelled and this day would added to Bodh Gaya.*
- 20 Flight to Paro in the morning.
Arrive in Paro. City tour. Visits include the Paro Rinpung Dzong (Fort), the present administrative seat of Paro, Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the holiest temples in Bhutan built by King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet, and other places in the Valley.
- 21 Trek to Taktsang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery built by a cave, perched on a rocky ledge with a sheer drop of nearly 800 mts, overlooking the Paro Valley and river. Guru Rinpoche meditated in the adjoining cave for three months in the 8th century. Afternoon drive to Thimphu (1.30 hs).
- 22 Full day sightseeing around Thimphu valley.
- 23 Drive to Punakha (3 hs), the ancient capital of the kingdom. Visits to Punakha Dzong and Drukpa Kunleg (the Divine Madman) Temple.
- 24 Drive to Paro (4-5 hs).
- 25 Leave Bhutan for onward journey to Bangkok, Delhi or Kathmandu.

BHUTAN LONG

Up to 23 October same as Bhutan Short

- 24 Drive to Bumthang (5-6 hs), on the way visit Trongsa Dzong.
- 25 Visits to (1) Kurjey Lhakhang, together with Paro Tatsang they are the two most important sites of Guru Rinpoche in Bhutan; (2) Jambay Lhakhang, together with Paro Kyichu Lhakhang, they are two of the 108 temples built miraculously by King Songtsen Gampo around the Himalayas for the consecration of the Tibetan land; and (3) Tamshing Lhakhang, the most important Nyingmapa temple in Bhutan associated with the Bhutanese Terton Pema Lingpa.
- 26 Visits to Tarpaling, the seat of Longchen Rabjam and to Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche's Stupa.
- 27 Drive to Pobjikha or Punakha (6 hs).
- 28 Drive to Paro (5 hs).
- 29 Leave Bhutan for onward journey to Bangkok, Delhi or Kathmandu.

Bhutan modules can be adopted with individual direct arrival in Paro on 20 October.

Tour Coordinator: Gerardo Abbond

