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Voyages à thème
en Himalaya

Festival at Mount Kailash 2010

From May 11 to June 02 2010



Trekking & Meditation
23 days - 4/5 days walking

Highlights:

- *Everest and Himalayan range mountain flight*
- *Discovery of sites known and less known of Lhasa and Central Tibet*
- *A major pilgrimage around the Sacred Mountain*
- *Adventure in the heart of the nomadic civilization of the Tibetan Plateau*
- *Practice of meditation in an exceptional environment*

From Lhasa to Mount Kailash

Who has not dreamed of making the pilgrimage around Mount Kailash, a mountain dear to the hearts of Buddhists since Milarepa challenged for it Master Bönpo Naro Bön Chung during a game of legendary powers? Who does not want to contemplate the holy mountain while pilgrims from all over Tibet struggle to climb the sharp bends of the Drolma La Pass, at over 5700 meters? Who has not wanted to sit down and create a vacuum to join this world axis (axis mundi), to blend in with the spiritual influence of this high place to which converge Tibetans, Bhutanese, Indians, Nepali in the same devotion, despite differences in religious expression.

A great journey through the Tibetan Plateau (Chanthang) combining walking and sitting meditation to approach also this precious mountain in the silence of the heart.

1 (11 Mai) Departure to Katmandu

2 Arrival in Katmandu. Welcome upon arrival and transfer to hotel.
Night Sechen Guest House in B/B

3 Katmandu

Day to visit Katmandu, including the great Boddhnath stupa, a Mecca of the Buddhists of Katmandu valley surrounded by thirty Tibetan monasteries, and the ancient Buddhist city of Patan with its superb museum. Patan is known among others for its bronze foundries and old Buddhist Newari temples.

Introduction to meditation by a Tibetan Lama.

Night Sechen Guest House in B/B

4 Katmandu

Free time in Katmandu.

Night Sechen Guest House in B/B

5 Katmandu/Lhasa

Flight to Gongkar (1 hour). One of the most beautiful mountain flight of that winds between Everest and Kanchenjunga to reach the Tibetan capital. Transfer to Lhasa.

Afternoon walk in the Barkhor, the spiritual heart of Lhasa.
Overnight at hotel in Lhasa Ganggyen B/B on the Barkhor.

6,7 Lhasa

Two-day of visit of Lhasa: the imposing Potala Palace which dominates the city with its 13 floors of temples, chapels, apartments and corridors. Built by the fifth Dalai Lama (XVII century), it contains over a thousand pieces. It is the largest building in Asia and without doubt one of the most beautiful, both by exterior architecture and wealth of treasures it shelters. While the Chinese want to transform it into a museum, still hundreds of pilgrims wander to worship the statues and tangkas.

The Jokhang Temple and Barkhor, the heart of the Tibetan town that still beats to the rhythm of the chants of monks, ritual horns and devotion of pilgrims. The Jokhang still houses the famous statue of Buddha in Glory, the Jowo, which was brought from China by the wife of King Songtsen Gampo (VII century).

Night in Lhasa at hotel Ganggyen B/B

8 Lhasa - Gyantse (5 h)

Crossing the Khampa La Pass, we skirt the shores of Lake Yamdrok (turquoise) to Gyantse, one of the most beautiful villages of central Tibet. At the foot of the Karo La Pass, we'll walk till Ralung which houses a Drukpa Kagyu monastery, situated in a breathtaking natural amphitheater. Arriving in Gyantse, visit the monastery and the famous Kumbum Stupa with the one hundred thousand representations built in the XVI century by Newari from Katmandu. Overnight at hotel.

9 Gyantse - Shigatse - Phuntsoling

Drive to Shigatse. We visit quickly the Tashi Lhumpo monastery, the seat of Panchen Lamas. Then along the Brahmaputra we reach the beautiful monastery of Phuntsoling and the famous Jonang Stupa where Jonangpa school takes its name. The monastery houses some beautiful frescoes in luxurious surroundings. Camp after village along the Brahmaputra.

10 Phuntsoling - Sarga

By the southern track we reach the High Tibetan plateau over 4000 m altitude, between the Himalayas and the Brahmaputra (Tsangpo). Many settlements of nomads, herds of *Kyang* (Hermione), gazelles and antelopes, and even a pack of jackals howling in the dark or a lone wolf... We will use these camps on the Tibetan plateau to pitch our meditation tent and practice our daily meditation sessions, morning and evening.

- 11 Sarga - Baryang**
Following the trail to Mount Kailash in the striking scenery, we reach and camp in Baryang.
- 12 Baryang - Manasarovar**
Arriving in the area of Mount Kailash which can be seen off the top, we'll stay in Guest House in Dharchen.
Guest House
- 13 Excursion to Gyandrak & Serlung monasteries**
We spend a day acclimatizing and we prepare ourselves for the Kora. Excursion to the monastery Gyandrak, astonishing place of meditation in the heart of Kailash and Serlung. Back to Dharchen.
Same Guest House.
- 14 Mount Kailash Circumambulation (* see option below)**
Following the pilgrims, 3 days walking to perform the ritual circumambulation of the mountain and have time to sit and feel this exceptional place. The Khora of Kailash is done in one day by some pilgrims, others realize it in prostration at every step, others rise their tents to meditate at the foot of the holy mountain.
Camps near Diraphuk monastery (4910 m - 5 hours walk)
- 15 Mount Kailash Circumambulation**
Most difficult day of the journey because we have to cross the Tara pass (Drolma La, 5,700 m) before descending to camp above Milarepa cave that we'll reach the next day. Camp (4800 m - 8 hours walk)
- 16 Tharboche**
A few hours walk to reach the cave of Milarepa (Zutrul Puk, the Cave of Wonders) and then finish the Khora, our car gets us to go camping at Tharboche Camp (5 hours walking).
- 17 (27 May) Tharboche festival - Manasarovar**
In this day of full moon, crowds of pilgrims and nomads of the region come together to change the prayer flags of the main mast which has to be erected each new year in an atmosphere of devotion and joy in the presence of the great lamas of surrounding monasteries. After lunch, we joined the shores of Manasarovar Lake (1 h) and we walk upon its shores. Night and camp at Chiu Gompa Monastery.

- 18 Manasarovar- Sarga**
Back on the road to Nepal, taking advantage of wide horizons to practice our daily meditation. Camp.
- 19 Sarga - Pegutso Lake - Zhangmu**
This is in the boundless width of Changthang Plateau that we measure the Tibetan immensity. Following the course of the Brahmaputra, beautiful track from which suddenly emerges a troupe or kyang gazelles, wild asses, or even sometimes a lone wolf. Leaving the Brahmaputra we go around the Pegutso lake dominated by the imposing shape of Shishapangma (8 000 m). After the Tong La pass (5000 m), we down till Zhangmu for the night. Hotel.
- 20 Zhangmu - Nepalese border - Katmandu**
The road plunges into the gorge of the Bhote Kosi to the Nepalese border. After the formalities, drive 3 hours to reach Katmandu. Overnight in Katmandu at Hotel Shanker B/B.
- 21 Katmandu**
Free time at leisure.
Overnight in Katmandu at Hotel Shanker B/B.
- 22 Katmandu**
Transfer to airport for international flight onward.
- 23 (02 June) Arrival at destination**

** Option: For those who do not want or could not cross the Drolma La Pass (5700 m) but nonetheless willing to absorb the magic of places:
Day 14: same with the group.
Day 15: Day excursion to the Diraphuk Monastery (4900 m). Same camp.
Day 16: Return to Tharboche to join the group and attend the festival.*

Dates 2010: * *from May 11 to June 02*

Level of trek:

Sustained because of the altitude
Up to 5/6 hours daily walk (1 day 8 hours)

Trekking :

The three-day circumambulation of Mount Kailash although sustained, are not difficult except the crossing of Drolma Pass (5700 m - 8 hours), the only real challenge may come from the altitude but we will take time to be well acclimatized.

For those that altitude repels, it is possible to stay 2 nights at Dhiraphuk in an exceptional setting at the foot of Kailash and join back the group on next day.

Remember that to enjoy the most your trip, the more you are fit, the more fun you'll get, so feel free to do some walking, jogging, biking, etc.. Few weeks before leaving.

Our trek is lead by a local guide with cook and assistants.

Meditation :

1 ou 2 sessions quotidiennes, matin et soir selon la faisabilité, les lieux et le timing.

Les sessions de méditation, sans être obligatoires, sont vivement recommandées pour soutenir chacun dans sa discipline personnelle et pour générer une dynamique de groupe par la méditation collective. Les sessions ont lieu dans une tente spacieuse spécialement conçue pour cela, en plein air ou dans les temples des monastères.

Cette initiation ne requiert aucune expérience préalable de la méditation bouddhique et est donc ouverte aux débutants comme aux méditants confirmés. Les techniques enseignées sont Shamatha, le Calme mental et Vipassana, la Vision Pénétrante, ainsi que quelques techniques de visualisation et des exercices spirituels tirés de l'Entraînement de l'Esprit.

1 or 2 daily sessions, morning and evening depending on the suitability, location and timing.

The sessions of meditation, without being mandatory, are strongly recommended for support of oneself in their respective discipline and to generate a group dynamic around meditation. The sessions are held in a spacious tent specially designed for this, outdoors or in temples and

monasteries.

This initiation requires no previous experience of Buddhist meditation and is open to beginners and confirmed meditators. The techniques taught are Shamatha, mental calmness and Vipassana, insight, along with some visualization techniques and spiritual exercises drawn from the mind training.

Guide :

Your guide is not a guru, it is a 'spiritual friend' French/English speaking who practiced Buddhism and meditation for years and was acknowledged fit to teach by a formal Buddhist lineage. He will lead the discussions we have on the road.

Participants :

Small independent groups ranging from 6 up to 15 people maximum supervised by a local guide and his team, drivers, cooks and yakmen.

Accommodation :

A l'hôtel avec petit déjeuner à Katmandou (dîners et déjeuners non compris).
Sous tente individuelle ou parfois en Guest House, hôtel en pension complète au Tibet.

At hotel with breakfast in Katmandu (Lunch and dinner not included).

In tent or sometimes Guest House and hotel, on full board in Tibet.

Personal equipment recommended :

- A sleeping bag and hiking shoes, a pair of sneakers and flip flops.
- Light pants and shorts, sweater or fleece, anorak.
- A rain cape, a swimsuit, cap or hat, a pair of gloves, hot tights, scarf, sun cream, lip balm, sunglasses.
- A toilet kit, metal water flask (2 liters) or thermos, flashlight, some big plastic bags.
- A tote bag with zipper (casters impractical) 15 kg max
- An unbreakable bowl or cup for tea, a cozy shawl for meditation
- Some books and a notebook. For those who want a voice recorder can be an interesting accessory.
- *A little extra food for pleasure, like chocolate, energy bars, sausage, ham, if any, cheese (from Holland necessarily), dried fruits, and of course a little something to drink to ease the evenings.*

Pharmacy:

Your guide will hold basic medicine for first aid but also bring your own medicines.

Note: your guide is neither a doctor nor a nurse even if he knows the drugs from the pharmacy, has been trained to use them and knows the basics of first aid.

Visas:

1 - Nepal Visas: to obtain at the immigration office at the airport upon arrival.

30 days, \$ 40, multiple entries + 1 passport size photo

2 - Tibet Visas must imperatively be made at the Chinese Embassy in Katmandu by us. We must be in possession of a photocopy of the passport of all participants 4 weeks before departure. Visas obtained in France or elsewhere will not be valid.

Working days of the Chinese Embassy for the visa: Monday, Wednesday and Friday. You must be in Katmandu two nights before the flight to Lhasa to obtain visas.

Photo ID: Please bring 4 passport photos for visas.

Plane Katmandu/Lhasa 2009 :

Rotations 2009 are:

March 29 to October 24: 4 flights per week (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday)

October 25 to March 27: two flights a week (Tuesday & Saturday)

Flights are quite full then we must apply for tickets around April 1st. It is good that we have a first name list at that date.

NB: Air China may change flight schedules without notice.

Meet group in Katmandu:

Those who wish may take their tickets separately but they must be in Katmandu on the evening of day 2.

Insurance :

You must be in possession of repatriation - cancellation insurance that you can buy in the travel agents who will make the plane ticket or you can purchase individually as Europe Assistance, Helvia, etc.. Or with your Visa card: make sure of conditions.

3 - PRICE & CONDITIONS

From Lhasa to Mount Kailash - ref: Aj Kailash10

<u>Pri:</u>	<u>2/3</u>	<u>4/6</u>	<u>7/10</u>	<u>11 & +</u>
Price per pax	€ 3790	€ 2588	€ 2280	€ 1970

Plane KTM/Lhasa € 305/person (price may change)

Supplement Tibet visa (non commissionable): European: 95 Euros - US: 200 \$

Single bedroom supplement : € 135

Different Airport - Hotel Transfer : €10

- Includes:**
- All transportation and transfers by private vehicle
 - 3 nights at Sechen Guest House in B/B.
 - 2 nights at the Shanker Hotel in B/B
 - 1 day visit Katmandu with guide
 - Entry fees in visited sites in Katmandu
 - Full board in Tibet
 - French/English speaking Buddhist Guide
 - Camping and kitchen equipment
 - Local English speaking Tibetan guide, cook and assistants

- Excludes:**
- International flight to Katmandu round trip
 - Lunch and dinner in Katmandu
 - Repatriation insurance / cancellation required
 - Airport taxes, Nepal visa, beverages, tips, sleeping bag, etc

Extra night Supplement in Katmandu:

Shanker Hotel in B/B : € 40/night

Sechen Guest House in B/B : € 16/night

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AJANTA TRAVEL CONDITIONS

Itinerary & Price

The itinerary and price are disclosed under the information in our possession at the date of this contract, but changes may occur especially on domestic flights.

We will do our best to keep you informed of these changes so that they cause you the least inconvenience as possible.

Insurance & Emergencies

You must contract a repatriation / cancellation insurance and provide us a copy of your policy, your policy number, a copy of your passport and the name of the person to contact in an emergency case, this to facilitate the process.

Cancellation charge

Thank you kindly to make the payment for your trip at least 30 days before your departure.

Cancellation Conditions :

- More than 15 days before departure: no cancellation fee except airfare Katmandu / Gongkar as below.*
- 15 days or less before departure: 30% cancellation fee will be deducted on the land trip and airfare Katmandu / Gongkar*

Note: Once the ticket is issued, the cancellation or change of name is \$ 80/ticket

I, Mr, Mrs, Miss

declares to have acknowledge general and special conditions of this journey. I am aware of the risks that I might take but I take full responsibility and I will not defer this responsibility to the agency Ajanta, guides or local team.

At:

The:

Signature:

Page to return to us completed after printing it from website of Ajanta
by mail or fax: (00 977) 1 44 12 33