a program of the stanford alumni association

STANFORD TRAVEL/STUDY

THE KINGDOM OF Bhutan

IN THE LAND OF THE THUNDER DRAGON

October 10 to 25, 2013
I’ll never forget the first time I visited Bhutan with a Stanford group: the people welcomed us with genuine, open smiles and the sky was such a clear, crisp blue it literally took my breath away. One of the world’s most isolated countries, Bhutan still possesses an unparalleled mystique and charm for the intrepid traveler, filled with treasures few tourists ever see. Stanford faculty leader Greg Watkins, ’85, PhD ’02, has conducted research in Bhutan and recently taught a documentary workshop for the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy. Join him and us on this extraordinary journey!

BRETT S. THOMPSON, ’83, DIRECTOR, STANFORD TRAVEL/STUDY

Highlights

MEET and discuss Bhutan’s past, present and future with local dignitaries and government officials at a special reception in Thimphu.

ADMIRE the impressive dzongs (monumental fortresses) and exceptional artifact-filled museums in Punakha, Trongsa and Paro.

HIKE to the 10,000-foot-high Taktsang (“Tiger’s Nest”) Monastery, spectacularly perched on a cliff 3,000 feet above the valley floor.
Itinerary

THURSDAY & FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10 & 11
U.S. / BANGKOK, THAILAND
Depart the U.S. on an overnight flight to Bangkok, arriving late Friday evening. Upon arrival, check in to our hotel.

AIRPORT NOVOTEL SUVARNAHUMI

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12
BANGKOK / PARO, BHUTAN
Early this morning, fly over the eastern Himalayas to Paro, location of Bhutan’s only airport. Enjoy lunch at a nearby restaurant, then drive through the countryside for a mid-afternoon arrival in the country’s capital, Thimphu. Join fellow travelers at a welcome reception and dinner this evening in our hotel.

TAJ TASHI HOTEL (B,L,D)

SUNDAY & MONDAY, OCTOBER 13 & 14
THIMPHU
Spend two full days exploring sites in and around Thimphu. Begin at the monumental Memorial Chorten, which dominates the skyline and overflows with elegant Buddhist iconography. Then continue to Sangay Gang, a hilltop offering panoramic views of the Thimphu Valley. Visit Changgangkha Lhakhang, a temple that contains ancient Buddhist scriptures and thankas, the painted or embroidered Buddhist banners typically hung in monasteries or carried by monks in ceremonial processions. Learn about the history of weaving and traditional clothing at the National Textile Museum. Enjoy a special evening with Bhutanese dignitaries and scholars at a nearby restaurant.

TAJ TASHI HOTEL (B,L,D – BOTH DAYS)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15
THIMPHU / PUNAKHA
On our half-day journey to Punakha, stop at scenic Dochula Pass (10,200 feet) with its views of the Himalayas on clear days and the site of 108 chortens, small religious monuments that are symbols of enlightenment and one of the most ancient icons of Buddhist art. Enjoy a picnic lunch before descending 6,000 feet into the Punakha Valley, where we set out on a walk through rice paddies and villages to visit Chimi Lhakhang, a 15th-century fertility pilgrimage shrine.

ZANGTO PELRI HOTEL (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16
PUNAKHA
An optional morning hike near the village of Nezigang takes us on a gradual climb to Khamsum Yuley Namgay Chorten, a monument built by the royal family that is festooned with magnificent colorful images of Guru Rinpoche, known in the Himalayas as “the second Buddha.” Take in breathtaking views of the Punakha Valley, then continue to the impressive 17th-century Punakha Dzong, winter fortress of the Je Khenpo, traditional chief hierarch of Bhutanese Buddhism.

ZANGTO PELRI HOTEL (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17
PUNAKHA / BUMTHANG
A scenic, full day’s drive takes us eastward into central Bhutan. Pass picturesque villages and forests and cross the 10,830-foot-high Pele La Pass. Descend into the Trongsa Valley, catching a glimpse of Trongsa’s magnificent fortress as we continue to Bumthang, a district of four mountain valleys.

GONGKHAR LODGE (B,L,D)
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18 & 19
BUMTHANG
Spend two days exploring the area around Bumthang. Visit the royal monastery of Kurje Lhakhang, which contains the remains of the first three kings of Bhutan. Stop at a traditional country house to see how puta (buckwheat noodles) are made, and to sample ara, the locally brewed rice wine. Explore the Choekhor Valley, a remote and pristine place where cultural and religious traditions have changed little through time. Visit several of the oldest temples in the country that are among the most sacred sites in all of Bhutan.
GONGKHAR LODGE (B,L,D – BOTH DAYS)

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20
BUMTHANG / TRONGSA
Begin our return journey westward as we travel to Trongsa. Upon arrival, explore the Trongsa Dzong, the great ancestral home of Bhutan’s royal family, built on a mountain spur high above the gorges of the Mangde Chhu (Trongsa River). Inside the dzong’s watchtower’s museum, admire relics and artifacts collected from the royal family’s archives.
HOTEL YANGKHILL (B,L,D)

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21
TRONGSA / PHOBIJKHA / PUNAKHA
Depart Trongsa this morning on a scenic, full day’s drive. Stop in the valley of Phobjikha to see the endangered black-necked cranes that migrate here in the winter from the high plains of Tibet. After a late lunch, arrive back in Punakha.
ZANGTO PELRI HOTEL (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22
PUNAKHA / PARO
Depart Punakha for Paro and, upon arrival, visit the Paro Dzong, one of the most beautifully situated fortresses in Bhutan. As the key location for the movie, Little Buddha, this particular dzong is one of the most recognizable in the West. At the National Museum in Paro, view exhibits about the history, culture and religion of Bhutan.
ZHWA LING HOTEL (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23
PARO
Enjoy an optional hike to see the famous Taktsang (“Tiger’s Nest”) Monastery. Taktsang marks the spot where the 8th-century Indian mystic, Guru Padmasambhava, arriving on the back of a flying tigress, meditated after bringing Buddhism to Bhutan. The sight of the white temples at an elevation of 10,000 feet and clinging to a cliff some 3,000 feet above the valley below is one of the highlights of our stay in Bhutan. Those who prefer not to hike will be able to view the monastery from afar, then visit Kyichu, a 7th-century monastery located along the river, and Dungtse Lhakhang, established in the 15th century and housing perhaps the most beautiful wall paintings in Bhutan. Celebrate the conclusion of our adventure at a farewell reception and dinner in our hotel.
ZHWA LING HOTEL (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24
PARO / BANGKOK, THAILAND
Depart on a flight to Bangkok, arriving in the afternoon, and check in to our airport hotel.
AIRPORT NOVOTEL SUVARNABHUMI (B,L,D)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25
BANGKOK / U.S.
Fly to the U.S., arriving the same day. (B)
Trip Information

D A T E S
October 10 to 25, 2013 (16 days)

S I Z E
Limited to 28 participants

C O S T *
$8,995 per person, double occupancy
$10,795 per person, single occupancy
*Association nonmembers add $200 per person

I N C L U D E D
14 nights of best-available hotel accommodations
- 14 breakfasts, 13 lunches and 13 dinners
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions
- Bottled water on excursions
- Gratuities to porters, guides and drivers for all group activities
- All tours and excursions as described in the itinerary
- Bhutan visa for U.S. citizens
- Flights between Bangkok and Paro on October 12 and 24
- Transfers and baggage handling throughout program
- Minimal medical, accident and evacuation insurance
- Educational program with lecture series and pre-departure materials, including recommended reading list, a selected book, map and travel information
- Services of our professional tour manager to assist you throughout the program

N O T I N C L U D E D
International and U.S. domestic airfare
- Passports and visa fees
- Immunization costs
- Meals and beverages other than those specified as included
- Independent and private transfers
- Trip-cancellation/interruption and baggage insurance
- Excess-baggage charges
- Personal items such as internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for nongroup services
- International and U.S. domestic airfare from home to Bangkok is not included in the program cost. Round-trip, economy-class airfare on Cathay Pacific from San Francisco to Bangkok is approximately $1,285 as of November 2012 and is subject to change without notice.

W H A T T O E X P E C T
We consider this to be a fairly strenuous program that is at times demanding and busy. Participants must be physically fit, active and in good health. Travel in Bhutan puts us at high altitudes, from approximately 5,000 to 10,800 feet above sea level. Daily programs involve several early-morning departures, and most excursions require a considerable amount of walking, often on uneven terrain such as that found at temples and fortresses, where elevators are unavailable and stairs are very steep and do not have handrails. Roads in Bhutan are winding, narrow and often undergoing repair, and our journey at times requires long travel days in small minibuses (up to 7 or 8 hours on a few days). We make occasional rest stops, but often toilets are not available and nature’s facilities are more inviting and abundant than those that are man-made. The hotels we use are the best-available; all are clean, safe and comfortable, but a few (with the exception of the hotels in Thimphu and Paro) are considered quite basic by Western standards. We expect that participants will be a self-selecting group whose appreciation for the places we visit outweighs the need for creature comforts. We welcome travelers 15 years of age and older on this program.
Deposit & Final Payment
A $1,000-per-person deposit is required to hold space for this program. Complete and return the attached reservation form or place your deposit online. Final payment is due 120 days prior to departure. As a condition of participation, all confirmed participants are required to sign a Release of Liability.

Cancellations & Refunds
Deposits and any payments are fully refundable, less a $500-per-person cancellation fee, until 120 days prior to departure. After that date, refunds can be made only if the program is sold out and your place(s) can be resold, in which case a $1,000-per-person cancellation fee will apply. We recommend trip-cancellation insurance; applications will be sent to you.

Insurance
Stanford Travel/Study provides all travelers who are U.S. or Canadian citizens with minimal medical, accident and evacuation coverage under our group-travel insurance policy. Our group policy is intended to provide minimal levels of protection while you are traveling on this program. We strongly recommend that you subscribe to optional baggage and trip-cancellation insurance. A brochure offering such insurance will be mailed with your confirmation about one week after we receive your deposit. The product offered in this brochure includes special benefits if you postmark your insurance payment within a specified window: 15 days of the date listed on the confirmation letter for the Waiver of Pre-existing Conditions and coverage for Financial Insolvency; 21 days for the Cancel for Any Reason benefit.

Eligibility
We encourage membership in the Alumni Association as the program cost for nonmembers is $200 more than the members’ price. Parents and their children under 21 may travel on one membership. For more information or to purchase a membership, call (650) 725-0692 or visit alumni.stanford.edu/goto/membership.

Responsibility
The Stanford Alumni Association, Stanford University and our operators act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and exercise every care possible in doing so. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity in connection with the service of any automobile, motorcoach, launch or any other conveyance used in carrying out this program or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the program. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, force majeure or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger as tour rates provide arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to make such alterations to this published itinerary as may be deemed necessary. The right is reserved to cancel any program prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the program. No refund will be made for an unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. Baggage is carried at the owner’s risk entirely. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time that passengers are not onboard their plane or conveyance. Neither the Alumni Association, Stanford University nor our operators accept liability for any carrier’s cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable ticket in connection with the tour. Program price is based on rates in effect in November 2012 and is subject to change without notice to reflect fluctuations in exchange rates, tariffs or fuel charges.
Faculty Leader

**GREG WATKINS, ’85, PHD ’02,** is the assistant director of Stanford’s Structured Liberal Education (SLE) program and a resident fellow in East Florence Moore Hall. His research interests focus on the intersection of religion with art and philosophy. Greg first traveled to Bhutan as a technical assistant for a cultural archiving project at the Centre for Bhutan Studies and subsequently led two Overseas Seminars for Stanford undergraduate students to the country. Recently, he taught a documentary workshop for the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy.

Greg describes Bhutanese society as “part feudal society, part social innovator.” He explains, “From its pioneering efforts to make Gross National Happiness the guiding principle in government to the Buddhist festivals that are as old as the fortresses in which they are performed, Bhutan is a fascinating mix of ancient and modern forces.” This combination of current social trends and deep tradition makes the country an especially exciting place to visit—and, says Greg, “it also happens to be one of the most beautiful places on earth.” During our program, he’ll discuss the history of Bhutan, Buddhism and its place in Bhutanese culture and society, and Gross National Happiness in theory and practice.

- Assistant director, Stanford Structured Liberal Education program (SLE)
- Co-director, Virtual Mandala project, Stanford Humanities Lab
- Instructor, The Examined Life, Continuing Studies Program
- BA, social theory, 1985, and PhD, religious studies and humanities, 2002, Stanford University

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**ANNE FACTO, ’55, BHUTAN SUITCASE SEMINAR, 2011**

"I had little knowledge of Bhutan before preparing for this trip, and I learned so much."

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**Reservation Form**

The Kingdom of Bhutan

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<th>MR. / MRS. / MS.</th>
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<td>PHONE CELL / WORK / HOME</td>
<td>EMAIL ADDRESS</td>
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I/We have read the Terms and Conditions for the program and agree to them.

SIGNATURE

If this is a reservation for one person, please indicate:

- [ ] I wish to have single accommodations.
- [ ] I plan to share accommodations with:
  - [ ]
  - [ ]

OR [ ] I’d like to know about possible roommates.

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**BED PREFERENCE:**

- [ ] Twins
- [ ] Double

Here is my deposit of $________ ($1,000 per person) for _____ space(s).

- [ ] Enclosed is my check (payable to Stanford Alumni Association)
- [ ] Charge my deposit to my:
  - [ ] Visa
  - [ ] MasterCard
  - [ ] American Express

CARD #

EXPIRATION DATE

CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE

DATE

Mail completed form to address on mail panel or fax to (650) 725-8675 or place your deposit online at alumni.stanford.edu/trip?bhutan2013. Submit your reservation only once to avoid multiple charges to your account.
"Bhutan is a unique country and Stanford did a fabulous job of showing us and teaching us about it....We got a view of Bhutan that few travelers get."

MARGARET LEAVITT, ’75, BHUTAN SUITCASE SEMINAR, 2011