



## KINGDOM IN THE SKY

7 days / 6 nights

### Day 1

Paro-Thimphu 55kms – approx 1½ hours

On arrival at Paro airport, you will be met by our representative and driven to Thimphu, the modern capital town of Bhutan. Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu.

### Day 2

Thimphu

Today's full day of sightseeing in Thimphu valley includes:

- National Library; it holds a vast collection of ancient Buddhist texts, manuscripts, modern academic books and printing blocks for prayer flags.
- Institute for Zorig Chusum; commonly known as Painting school, the Institute was established in 1971 by Royal Government of Bhutan to preserve invaluable heritage and promote traditional arts in Bhutan.
- Textile & Folk Heritage Museum; a fascinating testimony of Bhutan's living traditions.
- Memorial Chorten; the beautiful stupa built in the memory of Bhutan's third King. The paintings and statues inside the monument provide a deep insight into Buddhist philosophy.
- Trashichhoedzong; the beautiful fortress/monastery, which houses Secretariate building, King's Throne room and other government's offices. It is also the summer residence of Chief Abbot.
- Handicrafts Emporium; it displays wide assortment of beautifully handwoven and crafted products.

Overnight at the hotel in Thimphu. B

### Day 3

Thimphu-Trongsa 200kms – approx 6 hours

After breakfast drive to Dochula pass (3,080m). If the weather permits, you can see a range of high Himalayan peaks towards the northeast. The following peaks can be seen from this pass on a clear day; Masagang (7,158m), Tsendagang (6,960m), Terigang (7,060m), Jejegangphugang (7,158m), Kangphugang (7,170m), Zongphugang (7,060m), a table mountain that dominates the isolated region of Lunana – finally Gangkar punsum, the highest peak in Bhutan at 7,497m.

Continue to Wangduephodrang town for lunch. The descent from Dochula into Wangdiphodrang valley is quite long as the altitude difference is 1,700 meters. Proceed to Trongsa across Pelela pass (3,300m), the traditional boundary between east and west. A large prayer flag marks the pass and the ground is covered with high altitude dwarf bamboo. Stop enroute at Chendbji Chorten, which was built in the 18th century by a Lama named Shida, it is Nepalese in style with eyes painted at the four cardinal points. Arrive Trongsa and check into the lodge. B

### Day 4

Trongsa-Punakha 135kms – approx 4½ hours

After breakfast visit Trongsa Dzong. Like almost all towns in the Kingdom, this Dzong architecture dominates the entire Trongsa horizon dwarfing the surrounding buildings. Built in 1648, it was the seat of

power over central and eastern Bhutan. Both the first and second King ruled the country from this ancient seat.

After lunch drive to Punakha en route visiting the 17th century majestic Wangdue Dzong followed by a visit to the local market. The district of Wangduephodrang is also famous for its bamboo products, slate and stone carvings.

Evening visit Punakha Dzong, a massive structure built at the junction of two rivers. It was the capital of Bhutan until 1955, and still serves as the winter residence of the monk body. The first King, Ugyen Wangchuck was crowned here in 1907. The fortress has withstood several damages from fire, earthquake and flood. The latest flood of Oct 1994 caused great damages to the fortress but miraculously spared the statue of Buddha Jojampa. Overnight at the hotel in Punakha. B

**Day 5** **Punakha-Paro** *125kms – approx 4½ hours*

After breakfast drive to Paro. This afternoon visit Ta Dzong, once a watchtower, built to defend Rinpung Dzong during inter-valley wars of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Ta Dzong was inaugurated as Bhutan's National Museum in 1968.

Afterwards, walk down a hillside trail to visit Rinpung Dzong. Built in 1646 by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, the first spiritual and temporal ruler of Bhutan, the Dzong houses the monastic body of Paro, the office of the Dzongda (district administrative head) and Thrimpon (judge) of Paro district. Overnight at the hotel in Paro. B

**Day 6** **Paro**

After breakfast drive up the valley to view the ruins of Drukgyel Dzong. It was from here that the Bhutanese repelled several invading Tibetan armies during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Nearby visit a traditional Bhutanese Farm House, which offers a good insight into lifestyle of local people.

Then take an excursion to Taktsang Monastery, the most famous of Bhutanese monasteries. It is said that Guru Rinpoche arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated at this monastery hence it is called "Tiger's Nest". The excursion to monastery takes about 5 hours for the round trip.

While returning to Paro visit Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest and most sacred shrines of the Kingdom. Overnight at the hotel in Paro. B

**Day 7** **Paro**

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight. B