

A Buddhist monk in a red robe is walking on a dirt path in the Himalayas. The path is lined with colorful prayer flags. In the background, a waterfall is visible, and the scene is set against a backdrop of lush green mountains. The text is overlaid in a yellow, cursive font.

*Buddhist Circuit in the Himalaya
(Sikkim & Darjeeling)
10 Days/11 Nights*

01

Bagdogra Airport – Gangtok (5500 fts/120 kms/4 hrs)

Arrival at Bagdogra Airport. Meet and assist by our representative and then some check out formalities at the airport. Introduction to the drivers and the team, we board the car to travel to Gangtok (120 kms/4 hrs). We can do some refreshment break in a way side restaurant at Rangpo meanwhile we clear our formalities of permit at the border check post. After this we will drive to Gangtok to check in at our hotel.

Evening Free to refresh and settle down.

At 6 Pm Introduction of the team and programme by our representative.

Talk about History and Buddhism in Sikkim by Guide / Resource Person.

Dinner and Overnight at the Hotel.

02

Buddhist Monastic Tour

We start the day with the meditation & Yoga programme in the morning and which will be supervised by resource person followed by talks and meditation experience. Breakfast will be served after the programme concludes.

After breakfast, we leave for Rumtek Monastery/Dharma chakra centre (24 kms/1 hr) belonging to the Kagyu sect of Buddhism. The monastery is said to be the replica of Tshurpu monastery in Tibet and was founded as the official seat in exile to His Holiness The Karmapa, head of the Kagyu lineage by the Late 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje. Rumtek monastery, originally built in the mid 1700's, But when Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, 16th Karmapa, arrived in Sikkim in 1959 after fleeing Tibet, the monastery was in ruins. Despite being offered other sites, the Karmapa decided to rebuild Rumtek hence the monastery became the official seat in exile to the Karmapa's. Later we drive back to Gangtok and visit the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (only museum of its kind in whole of India) The museum housed in a traditional Tibetan-style mansion boasts a jaw-dropping collection of artifacts related to Vajrayana Buddhism and Tibetan culture. Established in 1958 to promote scholastic and cultural research, its ground-floor hall displays Buddhist manuscripts, icons, thangkas (Tibetan cloth paintings) and Tantric ritual objects, such as a thöpa (bowl made from a human skull) and kangling (human thighbone trumpet). The library on the 1st floor houses precious Buddhist tomes, some dating back several hundred years. After lunch at the Hotel, we drive to Enchey Monastery, established in 1909 above Gangtok, the capital city of Sikkim was blessed by Lama Druptob Karpo, a renowned exponent of tantric (adept) art in Buddhism with flying powers; initially a small Gumpa was established by him after he flew from Maenam Hill in South Sikkim to this site. The literal meaning of Enchey Monastery is the "Solitary Monastery". Belonging to the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism, Its sacredness is attributed to the belief that Khanchendzonga and Yabdean – the protecting deities – reside in this monastery. As, according to a legend, Guru Padmasambhava had subdued the spirits of the Khanchendzonga, Yabdean and Mahākāla here. In view of this legend, the religious significance of Enchey Monastery is deeply ingrained in every household in Gangtok. It is also believed that these powerful deities always fulfill the wishes of the devotees.

Evening time is scheduled for a talk about the 3 different communities of Sikkim Bhutia, Lepcha & Nepali. The talk is mostly focused in Lepchas (Oldest known inhabitant of Sikkim) of Sikkim by Guide / Resource Person.

Dinner and Overnight at the Hotel.

03

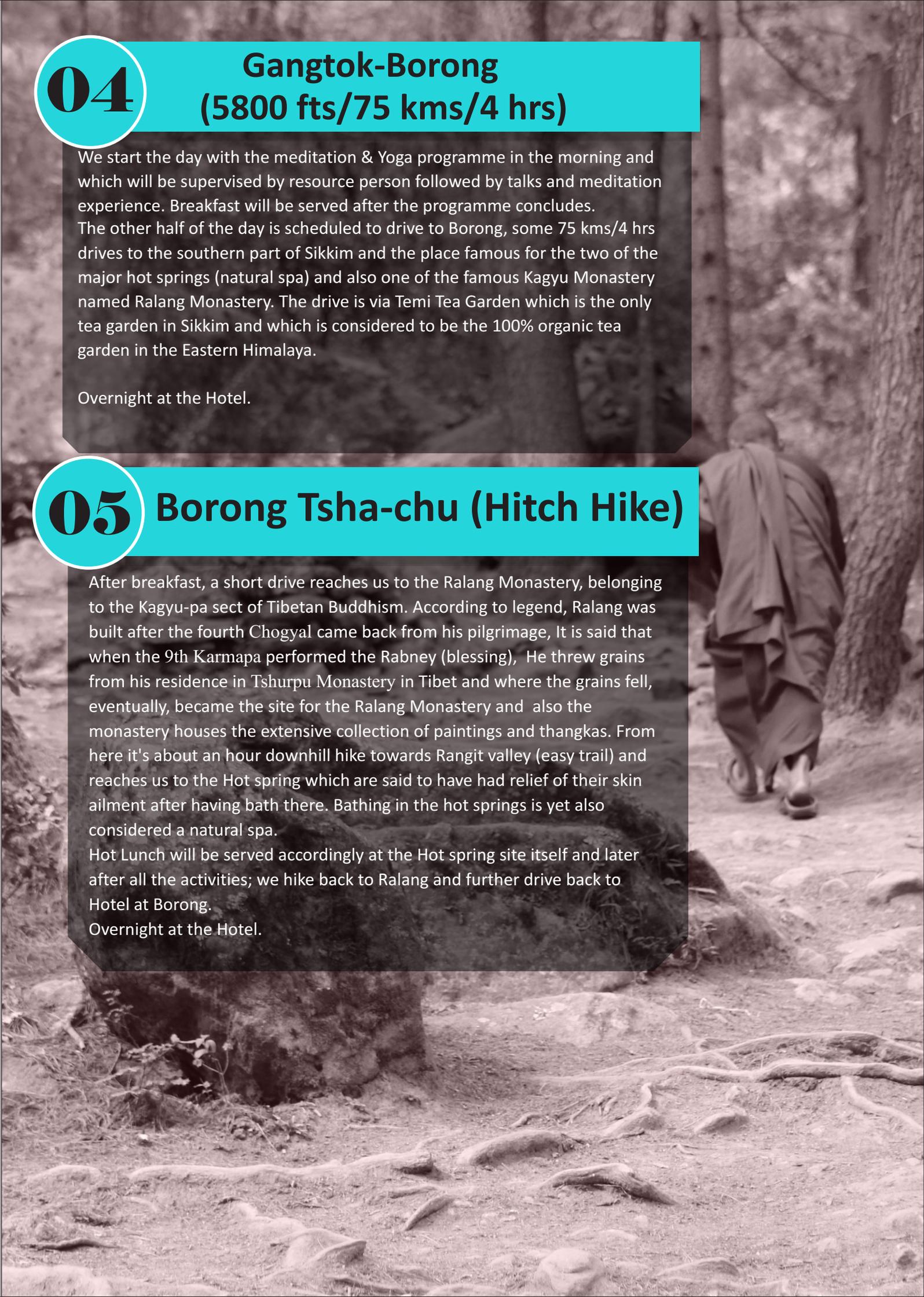
Meditation & Retreat

The day is scheduled for the meditation hence; the resource person will lead the group to the core and the benefits of meditation in Buddhist religious points of views.

Glossary: Buddhist meditation refers to the meditative practices associated with the religion and Philosophy of Buddhism. Buddhist meditation encompasses a variety of Meditation techniques that aim to develop Mindfulness, Concentration, Supramundane powers, Tranquility and Insight. Later after lunch, the schedule is to drive to the nearby village called Rey-Mendu village to see and understand the life style of the Lepchas and the Bhutia's. The evening is followed by Cultural programme by local people and Dinner at the Village.

Drive back and Overnight at the hotel.



A monk in brown robes is walking away from the camera on a dirt path in a forest. The path is covered with tree roots and the background is filled with trees and foliage. The monk is wearing traditional brown robes and is walking towards the right side of the frame.

04

Gangtok-Borong (5800 fts/75 kms/4 hrs)

We start the day with the meditation & Yoga programme in the morning and which will be supervised by resource person followed by talks and meditation experience. Breakfast will be served after the programme concludes. The other half of the day is scheduled to drive to Borong, some 75 kms/4 hrs drives to the southern part of Sikkim and the place famous for the two of the major hot springs (natural spa) and also one of the famous Kagyu Monastery named Ralang Monastery. The drive is via Temi Tea Garden which is the only tea garden in Sikkim and which is considered to be the 100% organic tea garden in the Eastern Himalaya.

Overnight at the Hotel.

05

Borong Tsha-chu (Hitch Hike)

After breakfast, a short drive reaches us to the Ralang Monastery, belonging to the Kagyu-pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. According to legend, Ralang was built after the fourth Chogyal came back from his pilgrimage, It is said that when the 9th Karmapa performed the Rabney (blessing), He threw grains from his residence in Tshurpu Monastery in Tibet and where the grains fell, eventually, became the site for the Ralang Monastery and also the monastery houses the extensive collection of paintings and thangkas. From here it's about an hour downhill hike towards Rangit valley (easy trail) and reaches us to the Hot spring which are said to have had relief of their skin ailment after having bath there. Bathing in the hot springs is yet also considered a natural spa.

Hot Lunch will be served accordingly at the Hot spring site itself and later after all the activities; we hike back to Ralang and further drive back to Hotel at Borong.

Overnight at the Hotel.

06

Borong-Pelling (6250 fts/66 kms/4 hrs)

After breakfast, check out and drive to Ravangla to Visit Tatagatha-Tsal (Buddha Park) which features a 130-foot high statue of the Buddha as its centerpiece. The site was chosen within the larger religious complex of the Rabong Gumpa which in itself is a centuries-old place of pilgrimage. The statue was consecrated on 25 March 2013 by the 14th Dalai Lama, and became a stop on the Himalayan Buddhist Circuit. The statue of the Buddha marks the occasion of the 2550th birth anniversary of Gautama Buddha. After spending a while here, we further drive to Pelling which is in the west Sikkim. Pelling is a fast growing tourist destination. Situated in a small hamlet in the hilltop offering the closest view of Mt.Khanchendzonga (from Motorable point) and its adjacent peaks. Formerly known as Paradzong meaning the "land between two great monasteries" is absolute and is landlocked between the Great Pemayangtse Monastery & the Sangachoeling Monastery belonging to the Nyingma-Pa order of Tibetan Buddhism and both of them built in the beginning period of Namgyal dynasty of Sikkim who ruled this tiny Himalayan kingdom for 333 years ending the reign in the year 1975 when Sikkim was merged into the Indian Union and thus Kingdom converted into the state.

Overnight at the Hotel.

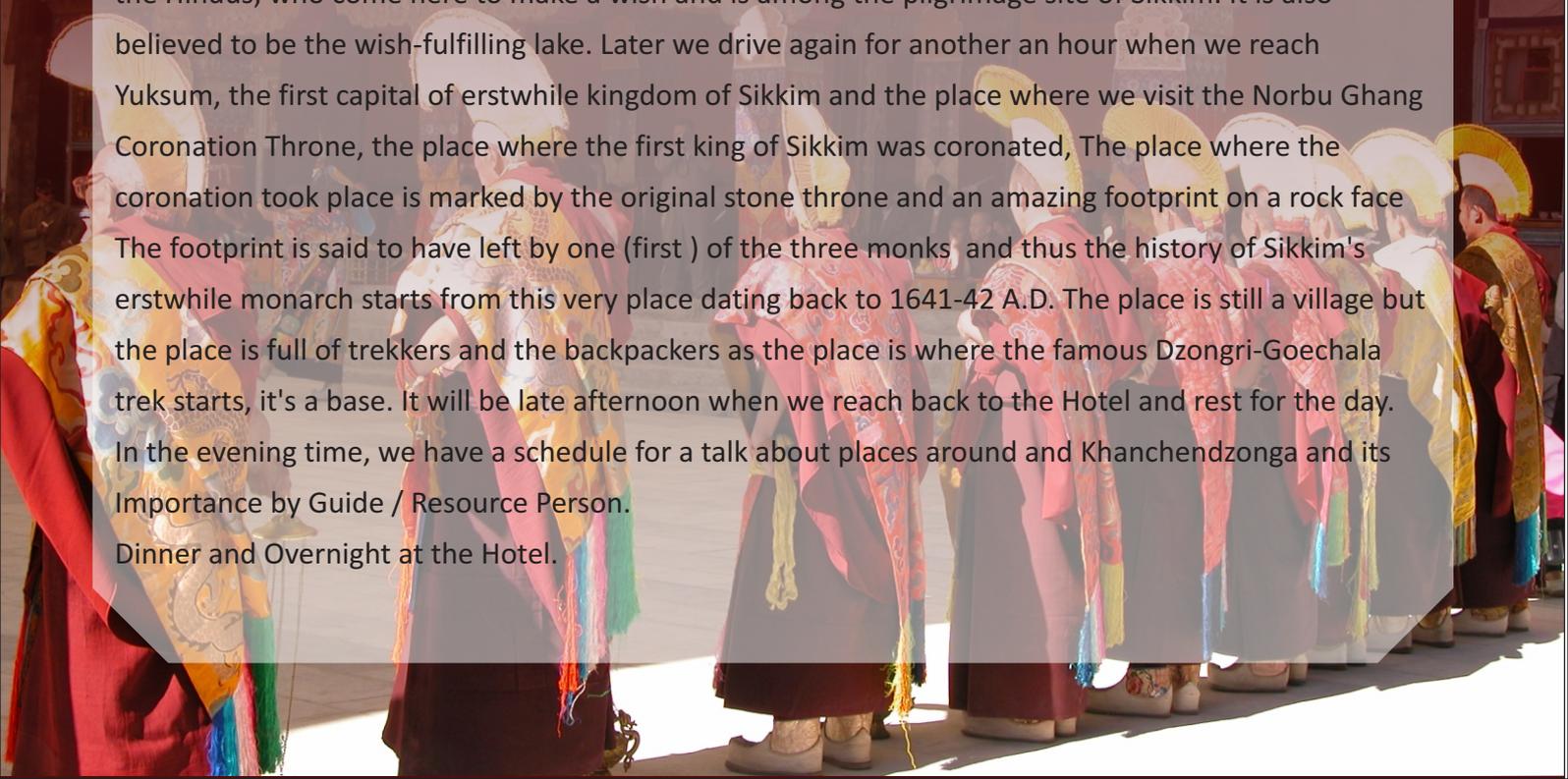
07

Sightseeing

As usual, the day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation.

After breakfast, we drive to Khechupalri Lake, 28 kms and an hour drive from Pelling, this unusually calm and placid lake, located in the midst of a dense forest is considered sacred to both Buddhist and the Hindus, who come here to make a wish and is among the pilgrimage site of Sikkim. It is also believed to be the wish-fulfilling lake. Later we drive again for another an hour when we reach Yuksum, the first capital of erstwhile kingdom of Sikkim and the place where we visit the Norbu Ghang Coronation Throne, the place where the first king of Sikkim was coronated, The place where the coronation took place is marked by the original stone throne and an amazing footprint on a rock face. The footprint is said to have left by one (first) of the three monks and thus the history of Sikkim's erstwhile monarch starts from this very place dating back to 1641-42 A.D. The place is still a village but the place is full of trekkers and the backpackers as the place is where the famous Dzongri-Goechala trek starts, it's a base. It will be late afternoon when we reach back to the Hotel and rest for the day. In the evening time, we have a schedule for a talk about places around and Khanchendzonga and its Importance by Guide / Resource Person.

Dinner and Overnight at the Hotel.



As usual, the day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation.

After breakfast, we drive to Pemayangtse Monastery (2 kms). Pemayangtse monastery (1705 A.D.) belonging to the Nyingma-pa order of Tibetan Buddhism and is also the most important Nyingma monastery and only to have a direct religious access to the Royal family of Sikkim. Originally built by Lhatsun Chempo in the 17th century, as a small Lhakhang, it was subsequently enlarged during the reign of the third Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal who was considered as Lhatsun Chenpo's third reincarnate, Jigme Pawo. The monastery follows the Nyingma Order of Tibet Buddhism and controls all other monasteries of that Order in Sikkim. The monks of this monastery are normally chosen from the 'Bhutias of Sikkim. The monastery was built for "pure monks" (ta-tshang) meaning "monks of pure Tibetan lineage", celibate and without any physical abnormality. This practice is still retained. Only the monks of Pemayangtse Monastery are entitled to the title "ta-tshang". The head lama of this monastery had the unique privilege of anointing the Chogyal of the erstwhile monarchy of Sikkim with holy water. Pemayangtse means "Perfect Sublime Lotus", and is said to represent one of the four plexus of the human body. Later we visit Rabdentse Palace ruins, the 02nd capital of Sikkim from 1670 to 1814. From the vantage point of this former capital, superb views of the Khanchendzonga ranges can be witnessed. This monument has been declared as of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India. It is about 30 minutes walk from the main road and is through the rich forest with a C.C. Footpath reaching all the way to the Palace. We drive back to Pelling for Lunch and after lunch, we drive halfway to Bhanjyang from where we start our hike (30 minutes) on the ridges with a beautiful view of the villages and valleys on the both side finally reaching Sangachoeling Monastery on the top of the hill. Literally meaning of Sangachoeling is "Island of the Guhyamantra teachings", where gling means a vihara and "secret Mantra teachings" is a synonym for "Vajrayana Buddhism". Built in the year 1697 A.D. by Lhatsun Chempo, it belongs to the Nyingma order of Tibetan Buddhism is also known as the place of secret spells. It has clay statues dating back to the 17th century. The monastery was affected by fire several times and was rebuilt. The Monastery's location provides very scenic and panoramic view all rounds.

Overnight at the Hotel.



09

Pelling-Darjeeling (6700 fts/125 kms/5 hrs)

After breakfast, we check out and leave Pelling and further driving to Darjeeling. . The day is also the last day in Sikkim, the land of "Hidden Paradise" as we drive to the Queen of the hills-Darjeeling. As we drive by the River Teesta, we try to memorize the good moments of Sikkim until we reach the border town-Melli. As we drive further in West Bengal alongside river Teesta and through the beautiful tea gardens till we reach the altitude of around 2300 mtrs where we find one of the highest & oldest railway station of India dating back to 1890-91, The famous toy train, a UNESCO world heritage site still running by the road side through this hilly town adds a extra charm to the tour. Different places with different ambiances, finally reaches us to the hotel to check-in, refresh and relax.

Evening time is free to stroll around the Chowrasta (The Mall)

Overnight at the Hotel.

10 Sightseeing/ Excursion

We start at around 03:00 am to go to Tiger Hill. The Tiger Hill at about 2600 mtrs, is a place from where we can have a magnificent sunrise view over the mountain, the mountain of Everest, Khanchendzonga, Makalu & Lhotse- the four giants of the Himalaya is seen from the top which explains why the Darjeeling is named "the queen of the Hills " we spend most of the morning here mesmerizing the view of a lifetime and we slowly head back to the town to visit the Ghoom monastery or the Yiga Choeling Monastery dates back to the mid 1800's and belongs to the Gelug order of Tibetan Buddhism. There is a 15-feet high statue of "Maitreya Buddha" (Coming Buddha) in the monastery and the images of Buddha's disciples, Chenrezi and Chongapa is a worth seeing which explains many more things about Buddhism. After a short while, we drive back to Hotel where breakfast is served and an hour rest is scheduled. Later, The day follows with a visit to the Padma-jha Naidu Zoological Garden and the famous HMI(Himalayan Mountaineering Institute) founded by Lt.Tenzing Norgay (First man to summit Mt.Everest with Sir Edmund Hillary) and some of his close friends. The museum at HMI is a place to observe and learn many things about the Himalaya, the mountaineering skills and techniques. We have a afternoon Evening time free to stroll around the famous Chow-rasta(Mall) to collect a souvenirs' from the hills to carry back home which will reminds you of your beautiful and memorable trip to this part of the world for a life time.

*Padma-jha Naidu Zoological park & HMI are closed on Thursday.

Overnight at the Hotel.

II

DEPARTURE

Departure to Bagdogra which is about 75 kms via beautiful Kurseong and the tea valleys till you reach the plains of India .It takes around 4 hours to reach to the Airport and from where one can take a flight to the onward destination of choice.

