

*Buddhist Cultural Study Tour
West Sikkim
08 Days/09 Nights*





Bagdogra Airport –Pelling (6250 fts/142 kms/6 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 Pelling. We clear our check in formalities of permit at the border check post at Melli Check post. After this we will drive to Pelling, enroute we stop at Jorethang town to have lunch. After lunch we drive further for another 3 hrs to reach Pelling and check in at our hotel. 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.

In the evening time, we have a schedule for Introduction of the team and discuss about the further programme by our representative. Talk about History and Buddhism in Sikkim by Meditation Teacher/ Resource Person/ Guide.

Dinner & Overnight stay at the Hotel.



Excursion to Buddhist sites

The day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the Teacher/resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation. Breakfast will be served after the conclusion of the session.

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) through 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. Evening time is scheduled for a talk & discussion about the traditions & culture of Sikkim with the Teacher/Resource person and Guide.

Dinner & Overnight at the Hotel.



Pelling- Khechupalri (5500 fts/28 kms/2 hrs)

The day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the Teacher/resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation. Breakfast will be served after the conclusion of the session.

After breakfast we drive to Khechupalri, famous for the Holy Lake, the lake which is 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. An interesting feature of the lake is that leaves are not allowed to float on the lake, which is ensured by the birds which industriously pick them up as soon as they drop into the lake surface. We accommodate ourselves in a homestay where we can see and experience the local lifestyle of the people and the local cooked food.

In the Evening time, the Teacher/resource person will talk about the history of Khechupalri Holy Lake, the inhabited Lepcha tribe and the significance of the surrounding place.

Dinner & Overnight at Homestay.



EXCURSION/HIKE TO DHUFUK (7200 fts)

The day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the Teacher/resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation. Breakfast will be served after the conclusion of the session.

After Breakfast, we start to hike through the forest overlooking the beautiful and sacred lake and finally climbing for a couple of hours reaches us to the elevation of 7200 fts – The Dhufuk meditation cave on the hill top which is believed to be the holy site where Guru Padmasambhava during his visit in the 08th century had come for meditation and retreat. Khechupalri Lake which is seen exactly like a foot prints about 1700 feet's below the valley and which according to the legends Guru Padmasambhava preached to sixty-four yoginis here; it is the residing place of the Goddess Tara Jetsun Dolma and the Khechupalri Lake is her footprint; the lake represents the Goddess Chho Pema. Hence, Goddess Tara Jetsun Dolma is believed to be the Guardian deity of the Lake. And some also says the foot mark is of Guru Rimpoche himself .

The view from Dhufuk is beautiful and very much mesmerizing as it offers a magnificent view till far-sight. As the cave itself is believed to be the holy cave, people from different parts of the region come every year and it has been one of the pilgrimage sites for centuries.

Evening time is again scheduled for the talk & discussion regarding Buddhist culture and traditions and also about the Guru Padmasambhava.

Dinner & Overnight stay in the Homestay.

VILLAGE EXCURSION

The day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the Teacher/resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation. Breakfast will be served after the conclusion of the session.

After breakfast, we walk down to the lake side; the very lake which we have enjoyed seeing from Dhufuk is a crystal clear even in the middle of the jungle. The lake believed to be the Holy and sacred lake both by Hindu's and the Buddhist is one of the pilgrimage sites. After visiting a lake, a nearby Nunnery could be included in the itinerary for the day and visit before we head for a village walk to Tsho-zo (a typical Lepcha village) to see and experience a local life style, culture and traditions.

Evening time is scheduled for the Talk & Discussions regarding the Buddhism of the region.

Dinner & Overnight stay in the Homestay.



The day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the Teacher/resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation. Breakfast will be served after the conclusion of the session.

A drive through a beautiful valleys on sight reaches us to the famous Khanchendzonga waterfalls in no time where we can spend a while enjoying this scenic waterfalls and yet again driving for another 40 minutes which will reach us to the small but beautiful village of Yuksum. Yuksum which is also the 01st capital of erstwhile kingdom of Sikkim in the ancient time has turn on to become the base camp for worldwide famous Dzungri-Goechala Trekking. We check in to the hotel and after a lunch, we walk around and visit the Norbughang coronation throne, the place where the 01st king of Sikkim, Chogyal Phuntsog Namgyal was crowned as the first king of Sikkim in the year 1641-42 A.D. We also visit a small and yet again a holy lake named Karthok Lake which is in the middle of the village itself.

In the evening time, the Teacher/Resource person will talk about the History of Sikkim's erstwhile kingdom and the Namgyal Dynasty of Sikkim.

Dinner & Overnight stay in the Hotel.





Excursion/Hike

The day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the Teacher/resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation. Breakfast will be served after the conclusion of the session.

After breakfast we start our hike to famous Dubdi Monastery(Hermit cell) built in the year 1701 A.D. and is about 40 minutes hike from Yuksum. Dubdi monastery is central to the history of Sikkim as it is closely linked to the founding of the State of Sikkim at Yuksum in the middle of the 17th century by Lhatsun Chempo and his two associate lamas. Chempo's green image is enshrined in the Dubdi monastery as it was established by him to commemorate the founding of the Kingdom of Sikkim. The Monastery has an elaborately painted interior area. Images of divinities, saints, other symbols and collection of manuscripts and texts are housed in the monastery. The statues of three lamas who were responsible for establishing Yuksum are also installed in the monastery. After visiting the site, we explore village (village walk) and reach Karthok Lake (Sacred Lake), small but beautiful lake is in the centre of this valley which has its own ambiances and this calm and a serene lake, is also linked to the historicity of the place and the kingdom. Later we walk to Norbu Ghang coronation throne, the place where the first king of the Namgyal Dynasty was coronated by three learned lamas in the year 1641-42 A.D. The stone throne stand stills with a history of Sikkim on its back is worth a visiting place, being at the place itself will make one feel the rich heritage and cultural and traditional values of the erstwhile kingdom of Sikkim. The place is so quiet and peaceful thus the place could be considered for the meditational value.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.



Yuksum-Tashiding (4500 fts/22 kms/1 hr)

The day starts early with yoga and meditation in the hall at the Hotel itself with the Teacher/resource person supervising and teaching the benefits of Yoga and meditation. Breakfast will be served after the conclusion of the session.

After breakfast, we check out and drive to Tashiding stopping enroute to see the Phamrong waterfall which in itself is beautiful creation of nature. It is a short in distance and upon our arrival, we check into the homestay and after lunch, we visit the famous Tashiding monastery. Tashiding Monastery is a Buddhist monastery of the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism and is the most sacred and holiest monasteries in Sikkim. Tashiding means "The Devoted Central Glory" and the monastery by this name was founded in 1641 by Ngadak Sempa Chempo Phunshok Rigzing who belonged to the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Ngadak was one of the three wise men who held the consecration ceremony crowning the first King of Sikkim at Yuksum. It was extended and renovated in 1717 during the reign of the third Chogyal Chakdor Namgyal. 'Bhumchu Ceremony' or festival is a popular religious festival that is held on the 14th and 15th day of the first month of Tibetan Calendar. There are several legends linked to the most revered monastery and the Bhumchu festival that is held here. According to one local legend Guru Padmasambhava shot an arrow into the air to select the place. Where the arrow he shot landed, he sat in meditation and that site eventually became the site of the Tashiding Monastery. Yanchong Lodil, the Master craftsman crafted the flagstones that surround the monastery. These are carved with the holy Buddhist mantra 'Om Mane Padme Hum'.

During our visit to the monastery, we will also have a session of yoga & meditation in the afternoon time and a brief talk about the significance of Tashiding Monastery and the Holy Bhumchu Festival by our Teacher/Resource person and Guide.

Dinner & Overnight stay at Home stay.



DEPARTURE

After breakfast, we check out and drive to Bagdogra which is about 120 kms and takes around 5 hours via Jorethang town and Melli (Border town) and Teesta before reaching down to the plains of India and to the airport to board a flight the onward destination of your choices.

