

**14-29 April 2017 (16 days) India's Sikkim & Bhutan**

**Trip Cost excluded flight fare Rm10,430 (8 pax group), Rm10,330 (10 pax group), RM10,230 (12 pax), RM10,130 (14 pax) Rm9930 (16 pax group and above)**

(Note : Based on USD1 = RM4.10. We will make final adjustment on the cost based on the USD exchange rate in Feb-Mac 2017)

**Update 11 Jul 2016-** In 2009, we organized a sightseeing & trekking trip in Sikkim coupled with 8 days in Bhutan. Do register your interest asap. Note that in Sikkim, the mode of travel will be by jeeps because many roads are narrow and not suitable for buses. This trip required early preparation for some document e.g Sikkim entry permit, Bhutan Visa etc. We will use Air Asia to Kolkata and overland to Bhutan, only fly back from Bhutan to Kolkata before end trip. As such, trip cost above is excluded air ticket (international & Two way domestic). Kindly confirm your seat asap if you keen and email to [rachelheng123@gmail.com](mailto:rachelheng123@gmail.com) for registration. **(NOTE : we had revised our itinerary from past trip where add on some light/easy trek in Sikkim)**

**Air Asia** (Flights checked as at 6 Oct 2016, air fare included taxes RM850)

Depart

**14 April 2017 (FRI) AK 63** Kuala Lumpur (KUL) to Kolkata (CCU) **Depart 2230 Arrive 2355**

Return

**29 April 2017 (Sat) AK 62** Kolkata (CCU) to Kuala Lumpur (KUL) **Depart 0040 Arrive 0655**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

This is meant to be a "free and easy" adventure trip. Participants should be relatively fit, with a good sense of humour, and above all, have the right attitude for close travel with others through possibly some trying times. Most definitely, this is not a trip for prudes, whiners, fuss-pots, and other similarly assorted types! We had a couple of those before and it wasn't pleasant for us or them. Although every effort will be made to stick to the given itinerary, ground conditions may change and cause some disruption and/or deviation from the norm. Otherwise, have fun!



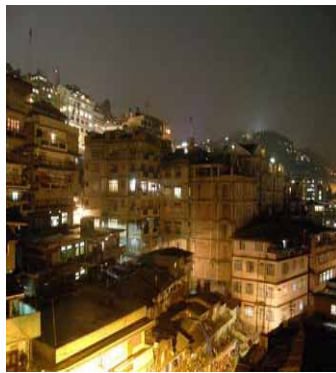
landscape View in Bhutan (Photo by KC Liu)

Small but beautiful, **Sikkim** is situated in the eastern Himalayas . The state is spread below the Mount Khanchendzonga (8534 mts), the third highest mountain in the world, and revered by the Sikkimese as their protective deity. With an area of 7,300 sq km and measuring approx. 114 km from the north to south and 64 km from east to west, the elevation ranges from 300m to over 8540m above sea level. Amidst the grandeur of the mountain peaks, lush valleys, fast flowing rivers, hills, Sikkim offers her visitors a rare and spectacular experience. Within a matter of hours one move from the sub tropical heat of the lower valleys to the cold rugged mountain slopes below year round snow-covered peaks.

The modern history of Sikkim begins from 1642 A.D. with the coronation of Phuntsog Namgyal as the first Chogyal or king of Sikkim in a tranquil pine covered hill in Yuksom Norbugang in West Sikkim. The Namgyals were scions of the Mi-nyak House in Kham in Eastern Tibet. It is said that there were three brothers, chiefs of Kham Mi-nyak. A letter dropped from heaven directed the middle brother to go south towards Sikkim where his descendents were fated to rule. It was in Sakya that his eldest son single-handedly raised the pillars of the Sakya monastery and earned himself the sobriquet of 'Khye Bumsa' ( the strength of a lakh of men). Khye Bumsa also earned himself the hand of the daughter of the Sakya hierarch and settled in Chumbi Valley, which remained, for a long time, the epicenter of the later kingdom of Sikkim.

**Day 1 KLIA2** : Meet up at KLIA2 for night flight AK63 at 2230PM and will be arrive at 2359. . O/N Kolkata

**Day 2 Kolkata-Bagdogra- Gangtok (125km 4-5 hrs drive)** : After breakfast, transfer to airport for domestic flight to Bagdogra. Once we reach Bagdogra, will transfer on a journey to Gangtok, capital of Sikkim. Gangtok is spread out on a ridge 1520m above sea level, and looks something out of a fairy tale with houses precariously balanced on the slopes of steep hills. Apart from the gorgeous view of deep valleys, waterfalls and snow-capped mountain ranges that separate from neighbouring Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal. ON Gangtok



View of Kangchenjunga from Goechala/Darjeeling "tea" town/ Tea lady

**Day 3 Tsomgo Lake Excursion (4-5 hrs drive)**:After breakfast, drive to Tsomgo Lake, also means as The Source of the Lake (3,780m). Warm clothes needed for this place. The lake derives its water from melting snows off the surrounding mountains, which is one of the famous sacred lakes in Sikkim, situated near the borders of Tibet. On arrival Tsomgo lake start our short trek for 3 Hrs to Tsamgo range which is 4230 Mtrs Back to Tsamgo lake heaving lunch after lunch drive back to Gangtok visit Sikkim Flower Exhibition Centre where a wide range of rare species of orchids display (Seasonal). Evening walk around the local market, 2nd night Gangtok.

**Day 4 Gangtok Lachung (6-7 hrs drive)**:Today, we leave for North district of Sikkim to a small village, Lachung (2,400m). This spectacular drive will take about 6-7 hrs en-route visit Kabi-Lungchok, apart from its historical and cultural importance is also rich in biodiversity. This place is a symbol of reverence to the guardian deity Mt Khangchendzonga and had ushered in a new era of communal harmony in the annals of Sikkim as the venue where the blood brotherhood treaty between the Lepcha chieftain Thekong Thek and the Bhutia king Kheybumsa had been solemnized in the 13th century. Stop at Seven sister waterfalls for photo session visit Phodong Monastery which is one of the oldest monastery in north Sikkim lunch en-route stop at Naga waterfalls & Bima waterfalls If weather is clear, you will see the magnificent range of the third highest mountain in the world, Kanchengzonga and some wild orchids blooming (during spring) on the way. Arrive Lachung in the late afternoon and check in at a lodge. (Please be reminded that the facilities here are very basic) ON Lachung.

**Day 5 Lachung Yumthang excursion Gangtok**: After breakfast, we leave for Yumthang (3,500m) excursion. This panoramic drive will bring you to the Valley of Flowers which consists of about 36 species of rhododendrons, primulas and other spectacular alpine wild flowers. Yaks and dzos can be seen grazing on the meadows. On way back, walk across the Lachung Chu and have a dip in a hot spring (swimming costumes advised). If not, just enjoy the scenic surrounding. Back to Lachung for lunch and rest of day, free to walk round the villages. ON Gangtok.



Sikkimese people/ Rhododendrons

**Day 6 Gangtok Rumtek Rawangla Namchi (140km, 3-4 hrs drive):** Drive to Visit Rumtek Monastery. Rumtek served as the main seat of the Karma Kagyu Lineage in Sikkim for sometimes. 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. On Completion drive to Singtam for Lunch. Drive to Rawangla to visit Tathagata Tsai also known as Buddha Park. It was constructed between 2006 and 2013 and features a 130 foot high statue of Buddha as its centerpiece. The site was chosen within the larger religious complex of the Rabong Gompa (Monastery), itself a centuries-old place of pilgrimage. Drive to Namchi and transfer to Hotel. Namchi commands panoramic view of the snow-capped mountains and vast stretches of valley. It is also headquarters of South Sikkim district.

**Day 7 Namchi - Kalimpong (83km, 3 hrs):** Drive to Samdruptse - the world's largest statue at 118 feet of the Buddhist Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, the patron saint of Sikkim is on the Samdruptse hill (The Wish Fulfilling well) opposite Namchi. It was completed in February 2004. It is also said that the Samdruptse hill is actually a Dormant Volcano. Myths say that the buddhist monks have been going on top of the hill and offering prayers to the volcano to keep it calm. On completion drive to visit recently inaugurated (November 2011) Siddhesvara Dhaam where you can view 87 feet statue of Lord Shiva and replicas of Four Dhaams of the country at one place at Solophok hilltop in Namchi. The four most revered Dhams of the Hindus Jagannath, Dwarika, Rameshawaram, Badrinath. Drive to visit Sai Temple. Back for lunch.

After lunch drive through picturesque tea gardens to the world renowned hill station Darjeeling. After dinner, free & easy at local bazaar. O/N Kalimpong..



Sikkimese kids/Bhutanese

**Day 8 Darjeeling :** Depart hotel at about 4am for Tiger Hill (2585m) for sun rising view and a panoramic view of the spectacular snow-clad mountain peaks of the Himalayan Range reroute to the Ghoom Monastery, built in 1850 by Lama Sharb, which enshrines at 15ft. Statue of Maitreya Buddha. After breakfast start short **easy trek** to Lebong village via Bhotey busty, one of the very famous village in Darjeeling on arrival Labong village visit Happy Valley tea garden and the drive to visit the Himalayan Zoological Park. The zoo serves as a breeding center for snow leopards and red pandas, as well as a home for mountain yaks, Himalayan black bears and Siberian Tigers. Visit the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, located within this zoo, which was founded in 1954 to commemorate history's first successful conquest of Mt. Everest in 1953 by 'Darjeeling's son', Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary. Then after, then proceed to Tibetan Refugee Center. Second night Darjeeling.

**Day 9 Darjeeling Phuentsholing (Bhutan) (175km, 6hrs drive):** Drive to Phuentsholing and met by Bhutan representative. After clearing immigration formalities, check at Hotel. Visit Zangtho Pelri, situated in city centre, this

small temple represents the heaven of Guru Rinpoche. On ground floor there are statues of eight manifestations of Guru Rinpoche and paintings on Buddha's life while the next floor contains eight Bodhisattavas and statues of Avalokiteshvara and Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal. On top floor, there is a main statue of Amitabha. Evening explore local market. O/N Phuentsholing.



Tiger Nest/Monks/ Little Monk Football match

#### [Day 10 Phuentsholing Thimphu \(180km, 6 hrs drive\) :](#)

After breakfast drive to Thimphu. 4 km ahead of Phuentsholing, visit Kharbandi Gumpa, the beautiful monastery situated in garden of tropical plants and flowers. The monastery contains paintings depicting scenes from the life of Buddha and statues of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and Guru Rinpoche. From the monastery garden there is a splendid view of Phuentsholing and plains of West Bengal and their tea gardens beyond.

Proceed further to Thimphu. This entire drive is very pleasant with numerous scenic spots en route. Lunch would be served at Bunakha cafeteria, Five miles, before Thimphu, visit Simtokha Dzong, the oldest fortress of the Kingdom which now houses the School for religious and cultural studies.

After checking into hotel, refresh and visit National Memorial Chorten. The building of this landmark was originally envisaged by Bhutan's third king, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuk ("the father of modern Bhutan") who had wished to erect monument to world peace and prosperity. Completed in 1974 after his untimely death, it serves both as a memorial to the Late King and as a monument to peace. After office hours visit the beautiful medieval fortress Trashichho Dzong which now houses most of the Government's office and King's Throne room. It is also the summer residence of Je Khenpo, the Chief Abbot.

#### [Day 11 Thimphu:](#)

Proceed to the National Library which houses an extensive collection of Buddhist literature, with some works dating back several hundred years. Visit the nearby Institute for Zorig Chusum (commonly known as the Painting School), where a six year training course is given in the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan. Visit the nearby Institute for Zorig Chusum (commonly known as the Painting School), where a six year training course is given in the 13 traditional arts and crafts of Bhutan. Also visit Textile and Folk Heritage Museum: These museums, both of which opened in 2001, provide fascinating insights into Bhutanese material culture and way of life. Later continue on to Handicrafts Emporium that displays wide assortment of beautifully handwoven and crafted products.



**Day 12 Thimphu-Punakha (75km, 3hrs+ drive):** After breakfast, we drive up to visit Dochula Pass (3088m) . The top of the pass is decorated with prayer flags and a chorten; We continue to the majestic Wangdue Phodrang Dzong, which was built to guard the approach to Central Bhutan, and turn off towards Punakha, a former capital of Bhutan and current winter seat of Je Khnep (the chief abbot).

We then visit Punakha Dzong, built at the junction of Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu rivers in 1637. One of the most picturesque fortresses that dot the landscape of Bhutan, Punakha Dzong is also one of the most historically-important fortresses – it is the former seat of the royal family and the current winter residence of the national monastic body. ON Punakha.



The Bhutanese monk / Yongo traveler with local people

**Day 13 Punakha-Paro (125km, 4hrs+ drive):** Morning excursion to Chimi Lhakhang. About 400 years old, maintained by a monk with 42 trainees, and linked to Lama Drukpa Kinley, The Divine Madman. Afternoon visit to Ta Dzong (National Museum) and Rinpung Dzong. ON Paro.

**Day 14 Tiger Nest Manastery Excursion :** In the morning, morning excursion to Taktsang Monastery viewpoint (approximately 5 hrs walk). Probably the most famous of Bhutan’s monasteries, the landmark seems to defy gravity as it clings to the sheer cliff face 900-metres above the Paro valley floor. Legend has it that Guru Rinpoche arrived at this point on the back of a tigress, hence the common name “Tiger’s Nest”.

Afternoon visit Drukgyel Dzong, a ruined fortress where Bhutanese warriors fought Tibetan invaders centuries ago. Along the way, we also visit the 7th century Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the 108 temples built in the Himalayas by

Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo. The building of this temple marks the introduction of Buddhism in Bhutan. ON Paro

**Day 15 Paro- Kalkota-Home (28 April 2017):** Morning check-out and transfer to Paro airport for Druk Air flight KB212 departing at 0720 hours for Kolkata 0800. Day tour in Kolkata and final shopping around Kolkata before transferring to Kolkata Airport at night for the past midnight (29 April 2017) flight AK62. O/N Plane

**Day 16 Home:** Take AK62 at 0040AM and reach KL 0655AM early morning on SAT **29 April 2017**



National Archery in Bhutan

#### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

1. Cost cover budgeted accommodation, Sikkim's (Lachung) permit fees and transport.
2. Not covered are airfares 1) KL-Kolkata-KL, 2) One Way Kolkata-Bagdogra & 3) ONE way Paro-Kalkota flight estimated Rm2k-2.5k for all sector), India Visa fees Rm190, Bhutan Visa fees USD40, Bhutan Tourism Development Fees USD10, airport taxes (international & domestic), entrances ticket (approximately Rm100) and meals(Sikkim) except Bhutan (FULL BOARD). Allocate about Rm250-300 for 8 days meals.
3. Guides/driver accompanying group do expect tips. Yongo encourages group members to be generous but should of course, commensurate with their level of service rendered.
4. A deposit of **Rm2060** is payable to confirm your place.
5. Cost is subject to change if there's a significant changes in foreign exchange rates and/or airfares.

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