An Intimate Journey
Through Bhutan, the Last Remaining
Himalayan Kingdom

October 17 - 28, 2019

Paro • Thimpu • Punakha • Trongsa • Bumthang • Taktsang
Erika Hoffmann-Dilloway is an associate professor and chair of Anthropology. She has taught a range of classes including Linguistic Anthropology, Language and the Body, and Literacies in Social Context. Convinced of the deep value of experiential learning, in all her courses she strives to create opportunities for students to bring theories to life through interactions outside the classroom. Erika’s research focuses on sign languages, exploring the flexible, multi-modal nature of communicative practices. She has over twenty years of experience conducting fieldwork with Nepali deaf communities, culminating in a recent, award-winning book, titled, Signing and Belonging in Nepal. One of the highlights of her teaching career was bringing a team of Oberlin students to Kathmandu to collaborate in her research there. She has also had the pleasure of co-leading a winter term trip to Indonesia. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, running, and playing music.
Dear Oberlin Travelers,

High in the majestic eastern Himalaya, nestled between Tibet and India, is the small Kingdom of Bhutan, increasingly renowned as one of the Earth’s last precious unspoiled spots. Here, an intact Buddhist culture is integrated into every aspect of daily life. The breathtaking landscape is dotted with fluttering prayer flags, and colorful farmhouses set into terraced fields. Thick forests are alive with bird calls, and panoramic views of the Himalaya unfold.

On this ten-day trip you’ll interact with the architects of Bhutan’s national policy of “Gross National Happiness;” will participate in Buddhist rituals explained by learned lamas; will try your hand at making indigenous crafts; and will enjoy a meal with a farming family. You’ll visit magnificent dzongs (fortress monasteries) and travel east to Bumthang Valley, the cultural heartland of the Dragon Kingdom.

Our Bhutanese guides will introduce you to a way of life that values traditions and respect for the environment while embracing a better way of life for all of its citizens. Smiles are infectious and you’ll come away surely having made new friends. Please join us!

Warm regards,

M. Danielle Young
Executive Director
Oberlin Alumni Association
October 13 - 14 • U.S.A. - Kathmandu
Depart the USA. Cross the international dateline and arrive in Bangkok the next day.

October 15 • Arrive in Kathmandu
Fly to Kathmandu. Asia Sublime representative staff will meet you at the Tribhuvan International Airport and transfer you to your hotel. Time permitting, drive to the base of Swayambhunath stupa, mounting a long stairway lined with carved stone statues and curious monkeys. Join pilgrims as they walk (clockwise) around the stupa and stop to look out over the Kathmandu Valley. Later, enjoy a Welcome Dinner and cultural dance. Overnight in Kathmandu. (D)

October 16 • Kathmandu
Visit King Birendra’s home, Narayan Hiti Palace Museum in downtown Kathmandu, where, sadly, the royal massacre took place in 2001. Enjoy a relaxed lunch in an expansive garden setting before driving to Pashupatinath, one of the most important Hindu temples in all of South Asia. Here, Hindus perform cremation rituals for family members and pray to Lord Shiva, one of the three supreme deities of the Hindu pantheon of three million gods and goddesses. (B/L/D)

October 17 • Patan - Bhaktapur
In the morning, drive across town to walk through Patan Durbar (Royal) Square and Patan Museum, displaying some of Nepal’s most exquisite statues and repousse metal-work. Midday, enter the courtyards of Babar Mahal Revisited -- a maze of boutique artisan shops -- for a catered gourmet lunch and shopping.

In the afternoon drive a short distance to Bhaktapur, a lovely well-preserved medieval city where you’ll take a guided walk through the cobblestone streets, seeing artisans, the royal palace and magnificent temples. Dinner on your own. Overnight in Bhaktapur. (B/L)

October 18 • Bhaktapur
Rise early and drive to Nagarkot hilltop (7,000 ft) for a panoramic view of the Himalayan range and breakfast. Then set off on an easy downhill walk through farm fields and village scenes to Changu Narayan temple. Damaged in the earthquakes, it is lovingly being restored using local artisans. After lunch, continue your walk down and along farm roads to Bhaktapur. Enjoy a Farewell Dinner of traditional Newari food and overnight in Bhaktapur. (B/L/D)

October 19 • Bhaktapur - Paro
Depending upon the flight time to Paro, stroll the shadowy lanes of Bhaktapur as the town’s farmers get ready for the day. Time permitting, take a one-hour mountain flight that flies close to Mt. Everest. Transfer to the Kathmandu airport and fly to Paro to begin your Intimate Journey Through Bhutan. (B)

Highlights of the Kathmandu Valley
Pre-Tour Extension to Nepal

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Extension Tour $2,250
Single Supplement $690

*Flight cost between Bangkok and Kathmandu not included. We will invoice you upon issuing this ticket.

Travel Dates for Nepal Pre-Tour Extension
October 13 - 14 • U.S. - Kathmandu
October 15 • Arrive Kathmandu
October 16 • Kathmandu
October 17 • Patan-Bhaktapur
October 18 • Bhaktapur
An Intimate Journey Through Bhutan

ITINERARY

October 17, 18, 19 • U.S. to Paro
Depart U.S. on your flight to Bangkok. Cross the international dateline and arrive in Thailand the next day.

On the following day, fly from Bangkok to Paro. Flying into Bhutan is always a thrill. Weather permitting, you will be able to see the spectacular peaks of the snow-capped Himalaya, with sacred Mount Jomolhari and Jichu Drake. Upon arrival at the Paro airport you’ll be received by our representative who will drive you to Thimphu (1.5 hours), the capital of Bhutan.

En route, you’ll briefly visit the 15th century iron chain bridge to Tachogang Temple. Time (and schedules) permitting, you’ll be welcomed at the Sisina Nunnery before proceeding to Thimphu. After lunch visit the READ Global Library at Changjiji. The library serves children and women who wish to learn how to read and anyone who enjoys books. Check in to your hotel in Thimphu.

Toward evening, you’ll drive to a nearby hilltop to see the gigantic Buddha Dordenma. Standing 169 feet tall, it was built to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Bhutan’s fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck. The hill offers a spectacular view of Thimphu. Before dinner, take a stroll of the capital city’s streets to get a sense of the city’s mix of tradition and modernity. (L,D)

• Accommodations: Namgay Heritage Hotel

October 20 • Thimphu
After breakfast visit the Memorial Chorten (stupa) and the Royal Textile Museum, displaying and explaining the elaborate weaves worn by Bhutanese men and women. At the Deysho Factory, you’ll see how traditional handmade paper (called deysho) is made. Time permitting, visit the weekend market today or tomorrow.

Bhutan and the eastern Himalaya are well known for the practice of ayurvedic medicine, influenced by the centuries-old Tibetan medical use of plants, minerals and other natural products. Learn from a Drungtsio (indigenous medicine doctor) about the effects of the elements (fire, water, earth, wind, and space or ether) on one’s health, how imbalances create health issues, and how to ameliorate ailments through ayurvedic treatment.

A short drive takes you to the Takin Reserve, home to Bhutan’s national animal, takin – an animal that looks half goat and half moose. Today, you’ll also hear a presentation about Bhutan’s policy on Gross National Happiness with a chance to ask questions about how it affects daily life and influences government decisions. Enjoy dinner with GNH experts. Overnight Thimphu. (B,L,D)
October 21 • Thimphu–Punakha

Today you’ll visit the National Institute of Zorig Chusum, a crafts school that trains boys and girls in the thirteen traditional crafts of Bhutan. You’ll have a chance to try your hand at some of the crafts under expert direction. Then depart Thimphu and drive towards the Simtoka Dzong where the Thimphu road meets the east-west highway. Perched on a hill above the road is the Hongsho Gompa, built in the 15th century by Ngawang Choegyal, a cousin of one of Bhutan’s favorite saints, Lama Drukpa Kinley. It may be possible to visit.

After passing through the Hongsho check point, the road climbs up to the 10,334 feet elevation pass, Dochu La, marked by prayer flags and a memorial chorten. If the weather is clear you’ll catch panoramic views of the central Bhutan Himalaya.

The road winds down the other side, through a spectacular ever-changing forest of maples and pines giving way to rhododendrons, magnolias, cypress, hemlock, and fir.

Your drive takes you past Thinleygang, with its holy spring lining the roadside to the junction at Metshina. Drop some 5000 ft. before turning off the main road to drive a short distance to Punakha, your home for two nights. (B/L/D)

• Accommodations: Dhensa Boutique Resort (2 nights)

October 22 • Punakha

After breakfast tour the 17th century Punakha Dzong, set at the confluence of two sacred rivers. The dzong served as Bhutan’s capital from 1637 until 1955, initially under the Zhabdrung (lama) rulers and later under the modern royal lineage, commencing with Ugyen Wangchuck, the first King of Bhutan’s coronation in 1907.

Next visit Chimi Lhakhang, Temple of the Divine Madman by way of a short walk or drive through the countryside. This temple is dedicated to Drukpa Kinley, a popular lama known for a radical approach to Buddhism in the 15th century. Gather here to hoist prayer flags. Afterwards, drive to the riverside and engage in making tsa-tsa. Tsa-tsa are small clay representations of monuments that Buddhists use as offerings to benefit deceased loved ones or to increase one’s good fortune. A monk will give a talk on the benefits and reasons behind tsa-tsa making. Return to Punakha. (B/L/D)

October 23 • Punakha-Trongsa

Depart Punakha in the morning, pass through the town of Wangdi Phodrang, and continue on the main highway across Pele La (11,340 feet) to reach the town of Trongsa (approx 5 hrs).

En route stop to visit Rukubji and Chendebji villages. Stop at the Chendebji Chorten, situated at the point where three ridges and three edges of
the sky meet. It is recognizable by its roundish shape and the eyes painted on its sides, similar to the Boudhanath stupa in Nepal.

Reach Trongsa, historically considered in the middle of Bhutan. Before the advent of motor roads, the trail connecting eastern and western Bhutan passed through it. Thus, the regional lord (Penlop) of Trongsa became the most powerful person in the country. The 19th century Penlop was the first to press for a hereditary monarchy, and it was his son who became the First King of Bhutan in 1907. Visit the Trongsa Dzong.

(B/L/D)

• Accommodations: Yangkhel Resort

October 24 • Trongsa-Bumthang

Continue driving along the east-west highway, offering ever fascinating views. You’ll reach the Bumthang Valley and the town of Jakar (w/in 2-3 hrs). Considered perhaps the most sacred place in Bhutan, the valley holds important monasteries and pilgrimage spots, amidst a vibrant farming community known for its apples and Swiss cheese (a modern development). Visit Jambay Lhakhang and Kurje Lhakhang, two of the valley’s most important Buddhist and historical sites. (B/L/D)

• Accommodations: Jakar Village Lodge

October 25 • Bumthang

Today reveals a special treat. Drive to the Tang Valley to visit the Ugyen Chholing Palace, an excellent museum displaying otherwise unseen Bhutanese treasures once belonging to noble families. Enjoy lunch at a nearby restaurant. Return to Jakar, passing picturesque villages and scenes of daily life. (B/L/D)

October 26 • Bumthang-Paro

Time permitting, visit other notable sites in the Bumthang area before your 25 minute flight to Paro. On a clear day you’ll see the snow-capped peaks of Bhutan from the window. In Paro you will visit the National Museum, Paro Dzong, the famous Paro bridge, and Kyichu Lhakhang, the oldest temple in Bhutan. You may also witness a game of archery, the national sport of Bhutan.

At Paro, or at another suitable place on the journey, you’ll attend a private ritual ceremony at a Buddhist monastery where you’ll have the rare opportunity to ask questions about the meaning of the ritual of an English speaking resident nun or lama.

In the traditional manner, as do the Bhutanese, you’ll make an offering of food known as tsokhor, a ritual offering
to the monastery’s great masters, teachers, spirits, and Buddha. The offering of food is distributed afterward. Another fascinating activity performed by monks during their studies at monasteries is known as tsenyid, or spiritual debate, where monks challenge each other in verbal question and answer, debates to test what they have learned in their studies. You may or may not be lucky enough to witness this at one of the monasteries visited. (B/L/D)

- Accommodations: Dewachen Resort (2 nights)

October 27 • Paro–Taktsang

The journey to Taktsang Monastery is to many a highlight of their time in Bhutan. We save it to the last, so that you are well acclimatized to the Himalayan elevations for this moderately challenging hike. Taktsang is one of Bhutan’s most famous landmarks and one of the kingdom’s most sacred sites, also known as Tiger’s Nest Monastery. Most people with reasonably good fitness can complete this hike in about 4-5 hours round trip, but we will give as much time as necessary.

Taktsang Monastery is perched on the side of a cliff 2,950 feet above the floor of the Paro valley. On April 19, 1998, a fire of unknown origin destroyed the main structure of Taktsang, but it has since been rebuilt to its original splendor. If you prefer not to hike the entire way, you can go as far as the cafeteria (mid-way) from where an excellent view of the monastery is available. Or, you can drive to nearby Sangchoekor Monastery, from where you will have a spectacular view of the Paro valley.

On your last night in Bhutan, another special treat awaits. You are invited to dinner with a family in their traditional country-side home updated with a few amenities. Himalayan hospitality is next to none and you’ll come away well satisfied with deliciously prepared locally grown food as well as having a better understanding of the life of a farming family. Return to your hotel. Overnight in Paro. (B/L/D)

October 28 • Paro–U.S.A

After breakfast drive to Paro Airport and fly to Bangkok. Overnight or connect to your U.S. flight and arrive the same day. If you need to overnight in Bangkok, you may call our office for additional information. (B)
**Tour Cost**

- **Main Tour, Double Occupancy**: $5,790
  - **Single Supplement**: $1,490

*International flights to destination and connecting cities are not included. Please see details below:

- **Bangkok-Paro-Bangkok** flight approx $895 Economy and $1,020 Business Class, subject to actual fare at time of booking.
- **Jakar/Bumthang-Paro** flight approx $180, subject to actual fare at time of booking.

**Pre-Extension to Nepal: Highlights of the Kathmandu Valley**

- **2 - 6 People**: $2,250
  - **Single Supplement**: $690
- **7+ People**: $1,950
  - **Single Supplement**: $690

**Round-trip International Air** is available through AirTreks. For pricing, please contact AirTreks directly at 415-977-7136 or at asiasublime@airtreks.com.

**Main Tour Includes:**

- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner as shown (B/L/D)
- Bottled drinking water during travel
- Private guided sightseeing tours and activities as per itinerary
- English speaking tour guide throughout the trip
- Entry fees to monasteries/monuments as per itinerary
- Dinner and drinks for invited GNH guests
- Honoraria for guest speakers, lamas giving special instruction (e.g., tsatsa making, offering giving)
- Airport transfers and land transportation by private vehicle
- 4-star hotel accommodations (hotels named or equivalently priced, double occupancy)
- Bhutan visa fee and all other daily government taxes.

**Not Included:**

- Nepal Visa Fees
- Excess baggage charges on all flights
- Overnight hotel and services in Bangkok/en route
- **Mandatory emergency evacuation/medical insurance**
- Trip cancellation insurance (recommended)
- Personal medical kit
- Personal expenses (e.g., laundry, drinks, telephone calls, wifi services, taxi service, etc.)
- Donations at monasteries or social service
- Tips to driver, guide, hotel and service staff
- Meals and beverages other than those specified in the itinerary
- Optional activities.

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**Tour Reservation Form**

Oberlin Alumni Association

*An Intimate Journey Through Bhutan ~ October 17 - 28, 2019*

Enclosed is a deposit for $____________ ($1,000 per person/$700 is non-refundable) to hold __ place(s).

Please make checks payable to Asia Sublime Travel, Inc. and mail to the address below.

*Note: Deposit can be paid by credit card. Final payments are made by check or wire transfer. If final payment is made by credit card, please add a 3% credit card processing fee.

**Final payment is due on March 31, 2019**

- Passport Name/s __________________________ Birth date __________
- Passport Name/s __________________________ Birth date __________
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Please add additional family members’ names on a separate sheet.

- Address __________________________ City __________ State ____ ZIP __________
- Home/Office __________________________ Cell __________________________
- Email __________________________ Email 2 __________________________

**Optional Extension:**

- Nepal: Highlights of the Kathmandu Valley Pre-Tour Ext

**Accommodations:**

- Single
- Double
- Smoking
- Nonsmoking

**Bed Request:**

- One Bed
- Two Beds

I/we understand that, by signing below, I/we acknowledge that the Terms & Conditions section of this brochure has been read and accepted.

Signature __________________________ Date __________

Signature __________________________ Date __________

Credit Card Number for Deposit: __________________________

Exp. Date _______CVV Code______ (Payments accepted by credit card or check.)

Signature __________________________ Date __________

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*Please fax, email, or mail Reservation Form, with deposit, to:*

Asia Sublime Travel, Inc.

3843 Brickway Blvd • Suite 210 • Santa Rosa, CA 95403
tel: 888-333-2585 • fax: 415-841-1790 • email: info@asiasublime.com
TRAVEL IN BHUTAN

The schedule will be demanding with moderate physical activity. Travel in Bhutan requires good physical condition and health (special needs must be arranged far in advance and may result in additional costs), a spirit of adventure, a flexible attitude, and a sense of humor. The itinerary is subject to change and modification. Every effort will be made to carry out the program as planned, but alterations may still occur. Participants should be aware that no refunds will be made as a result of unforeseen changes, modifications, or delays.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Reservations: Bookings are subject to the terms and conditions mentioned in these sections. A contract has been entered into as soon as your booking is received and accepted. To confirm the reservation, a deposit of $1,000.00 per person is required.

Air: Air cancellations and penalties are based on each carrier and ticket. Be sure to review these policies before purchasing air. Neither Asia Sublime Travel, Inc. nor Oberlin College, is responsible for any penalties incurred due to air changes or cancellations.

Cancellations: Cancellation must be notified to our office in writing. If you cancel any portion of the trip while in progress or do not avail of any planned services, there is no refund. We strongly suggest that you take travelers' insurance to cover unforeseen cancellations.

Responsibilities: Asia Sublime Travel, Inc. and Oberlin College, act only as agents for the various carriers for which tickets are provided and assumes no responsibility or liability in connection with the service of any train, vessel, carriage, aircraft, motor vehicle or other conveyance which may be used either wholly or in part, in the performance of their duty to the passenger. Neither will they be responsible for any act, error, or omission or for any injury, loss, accident, delay or irregularity which may be occasioned by a reason of any defect in any vehicles, or through neglect or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger, or for any hotel proprietor, hotel service or restaurant, or for any other person engaged in carrying out the purpose for which tickets or coupons are issued. In the event it becomes necessary or advisable for the comfort or well being of the passengers, or for any reason whatsoever, to alter itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the operators. The right is reserved to withdraw any or all tours should conditions warrant, also to decline to accept or retain any passengers as members for the tours. In such instances, full or equitable amounts will be refunded. Refunds for unused carrier tickets may be only in accordance with the regulations of the carrier. CST 2064278-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California. All legal questions will be settled within the jurisdiction of the County of Nevada City, California.

Visa: To obtain a Bhutan visa, a passport is required that is valid for at least six months beyond the duration of the tour.

Insurance: Emergency Evacuation and Medical Insurance is Mandatory for travel through Bhutan. It is highly recommended that you purchase additional coverage, such as trip cancellation/interruption or baggage coverage. Information on additional insurance is available and will be mailed upon receipt of your reservation.

Please note that Oberlin College does not conduct tours, nor does it act as an agent for guests interested in tours. Oberlin College acts as a facilitator with tour operators, with whom tour participants make arrangements for completing travel, and is pleased to act as a liaison with tour operators should you have any questions or concerns that may arise before, during, or after your tour. Oberlin College encourages you to familiarize yourself thoroughly with the tour operator’s cancellation and refund policies, and also to investigate available services such as trip cancellation insurance. The College is not responsible for changes to trips or travel arrangements, or for losses or additional expenses resulting from travel.

Pricing and inclusions on the main tour are based on a minimum 20 paying passengers. Itinerary is subject to modification. All price quotes are based on prevailing fuel prices, airfare and currency exchange rates in effect as of April 2018 and are subject to change. Although the tour operator will do everything possible to maintain the published trip price, it may be necessary to institute a surcharge.