Travel with The Met

Buddhism & the Himalayas: Bhutan, Nepal & Tibet
with Kurt A. Behrendt, Associate Curator of South Asian Art

October 2–17, 2019
Buddhism & the Himalayas: Bhutan, Nepal & Tibet

Dear Members and Friends of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,

Please join me for a journey through the captivating lands of Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet, where artistry, rich cultural tradition, and spiritual enlightenment come together amid the majesty of the mighty Himalayas.

In Bhutan we will visit stunning monasteries perched on high cliffs, living temples, and massive palaces. Learn how a resilient people thrived by preserving their environment and culture in a communal effort to promote “Gross National Happiness.” In the capital city of Thimphu, we will spend time with local artisans who create meticulously designed textiles and admire the throne of the Bhutanese kingdom, housed inside the country’s largest monastery.

Our next stop is Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, where we will have the opportunity to see diverse Hindu and Buddhist temples, shrines and relic stupas that populate and overlook this valley. Exquisite Sculptures in wood, bronze, and stone produced over the last 1,300 years can be seen at many of these sites. We will meet a Nepalese writer and a diplomat who will speak about contemporary society and politics, and a curator who will provide insight into the country’s history. We will see the local communities celebrate their traditions through colorful art forms and festive gatherings.

Then, it is on to the city of Lhasa in Tibet. Visit the Jokhang the oldest temple in Tibet, which is a World Heritage Site and the focus of intense pilgrimage. Step inside Potala Palace, the primary home of the Dalai Lama until 1959. Admire its treasure trove of paintings, sculptures, and fine objects in silver and gold. Later, witness a debate among Tibetan monks at Sera Monastery, one of the country’s three university monasteries associated with the newest school of Tibetan Buddhism.

I hope you will join me for this awe-inspiring adventure and travel experience of a lifetime.

Sincerely,

Kurt A. Behrendt
Associate Curator of South Asian Art
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Trip Highlights

— Meet a government minister, a historian, and a spiritual leader in Bhutan to discuss Buddhism and Bhutan’s policy of “Gross National Happiness”

— Enjoy Bhutan’s breathtaking mountain views from Dochula Pass, on an optional hike to “Tiger’s Nest,” and at the spectacular fortress and capital city of Thimphu

— Admire Nepal’s exquisite stupas, monasteries, and temples

— Attend special meetings with a Nepalese writer, a diplomat, and a curator

— Visit Lhasa’s Potala Palace, the impressive chief residence of the Dalai Lama until 1959

— Witness a debating ceremony by Tibetan monks at Sera Monastery

Traveling with You
Kurt A. Behrendt

Kurt A. Behrendt has been at The Met since 2006. He has curated more than a half-dozen exhibitions including Buddhism along the Silk Road (2012) and Tibet and India: Buddhist Traditions and Transformations (2014), and Cosmic Buddhas in the Himalayas (2017). He has published widely on Buddhist art and architecture and is currently working on How to Read Buddhist Art (forthcoming fall 2019). Before coming to The Met, he taught graduate and undergraduate courses on South Asian art. Ongoing field research in India, Pakistan, Nepal, Tibet, and Southeast Asia provides a foundation for his exhibitions and publications. He received his PhD from UCLA, with a dissertation focused in the Buddhist architecture of Gandhara.
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Paro / Taktsang (Tiger’s Nest)
Sunday, October 6
At nearby Ramthanka gather for an optional half-day hike to the legendary Taktsang (Tiger’s Nest) a breathtaking Buddhist monastery perched on a Himalayan mountainside cliff 10,000 feet above the Paro Valley. It is one of the most sacred of all Buddhist sites. A less strenuous option will also be offered around Paro.

Paro / Kathmandu, Nepal
Monday, October 7
Fly to Kathmandu and check in at Dwarika’s Hotel for a four-night stay. Explore the multi-faceted Pashupatinath Temple on the banks of the holy Bagmati River. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the temple attracts elderly religious followers seeking end-of-life spirituality and is considered a masterwork of Hindu architecture.

Kathmandu, Nepal
Tuesday, October 8
Arrive at Patan Durbar Square and stroll among ancient palaces, pagodas, shrines, and terra cotta stone carvings. Step inside the Patan Museum for a guided tour. After lunch at the museum café, visit the Mahabodhi Temple and the monasteries Uku Baha and Kwa Baha. Return to the hotel or spend the evening at the holy stupa of Boudhanath, the largest Buddhist shrine in Nepal.

Kathmandu
Wednesday, October 9
In the morning, drive to Bhaktapur, one of the “royal cities” in the Kathmandu Valley and deemed the cultural gem of Nepal. Called the City of Devotees, it is renowned for its elegant art, colorful festivals, and traditional dances. Later, enjoy a drive to the peaceful, rural village of Panauti.

Paro
Saturday, October 5
At the Kyichu Lhakhang temple, partake in a traditional Buddhist lamp-lighting ceremony. Later, explore art, relics and intricate thangka paintings exhibited in the National Museum rotunda. On your way back to the hotel, explore the Dumtse Lhakhang, a 15th-century temple with murals representing heaven, hell, and earth, and featuring some of the finest artworks in Bhutan.

Kathmandu
Thursday, October 10
Depart for Swayambhunath, a 2,500-year-old hilltop stupa displaying four sets of painted eyes, representing the all-seeing presence of Buddha. Explore the National Museum and visit the impressive Budhanikantha Temple with tremendous floating statue of the sleeping Hindu god, Vishnu. Return to the hotel or opt for a walking tour through the national park.

Lhasa, Tibet
Saturday, October 12
We arrive at the celebrated Jokhang Temple, a World Heritage Site and religious center of Tibet exhibiting a vast collection of spiritual treasures. Along the circular Barkhor Street, worshippers walk clockwise from dawn to dusk holding traditional prayer wheels. After lunch, visit the Ani Tsankhung Nunnery where the holy sisters pray, study, and assemble traditional crafts.

Paro, Bhutan
Thursday, October 3
Arrive in Bangkok and connect to a flight to Paro, Bhutan, via Bangkok. Travel to Bhutan’s capital city, Thimphu, with dazzling views of the Himalayas en route. Check in to the Le Meridien Hotel for a four-night stay. In the afternoon, visit Punakha Dzong, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan, and admire the fine architecture of Rinchen Pung Dzong, an administrative office and a monastery of 200 holy men.

More Travels with The Met

High Art in the Low Countries Aboard Magnifique III  May 17–25, 2019
Swiss Sophistication: Zurich & Basel Featuring Art Basel  June 12–20, 2019
Persian Odyssey: Almaty to Tehran  October 1-18, 2019
A Journey into Antiquity: Egypt & the Nile  October 14–25, 2019

For details please go to metmuseum.org/travel
Lhasa

Sunday, October 13
Take a scenic drive to Drathang Monastery for a look at ancient paintings depicting the teachings of Buddha. Continue to Potala Palace, the former winter retreat of the Dalai Lama, fortified by massive walls, gates, and turrets and sitting hundreds of feet above the valley. Inside are murals, painted scrolls, sutras, sculptures, carpets, porcelain, jade, and other fine objects in silver and gold.

Lhasa

Monday, October 14
Drive along the Yerpa-chu tributary to arrive at Drak Yerpa, ancient meditation temples and caves embedded in a shallow hillside. Afterwards, visit Gaden Monastery, one of the “Three Great Temples” in Tibet and a national preservation site recognized for its religious, artistic, political, and cultural significance. Gather for a festive farewell dinner tonight at the hotel.

Lhasa / Kathmandu

Tuesday, October 15
Depart for your flight back to Kathmandu. Gather for dinner at the hotel this evening.

Kathmandu / Depart

Wednesday, October 16
Depart for your return flight, arriving home on October 17.

A four-night postlude to Gyantse and Shigatse, Tibet, is offered from October 15–19, 2019.

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Reservation Form

To secure your reservation, please call Arrangements Abroad at 844-TRVLMET (844-878-5638), or complete this form and return it with your deposit of $1,000 per person (of which $500 is non-refundable for administrative fees), to be paid by debit card, credit card, wire transfer, or check payable to Arrangements Abroad. Mail to: Arrangements Abroad, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10018-3721.

Names in full as on passports. Please print.

Address

City          State          Zip

Telephone (home) (business)

Fax

Email

Accommodations

Hotel room preference One bed Two beds Single

I wish to share a room with

Optional Prelude & Postlude

☐ I wish to join the optional prelude in Bangkok, Thailand

☐ I wish to join the optional postlude in Gyantse and Shigatse, Tibet

Hotel Room Preference One bed Two beds Single

Form Of Payment

Enclosed is my check (payable to Arrangements Abroad) ☐ Credit card ☐ Debit card

Name on credit card

Credit card number

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Each participant must sign below. I/We have read, understand and agree to the Terms & Conditions at www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms and detailed in program documents.

I/We agree to full payment 120 days prior to departure.

Signature (required) Date

Signature (required) Date

For additional information, please call 844-TRVLMET (844-878-5638) or to opt out from receiving mail, email travelwiththemet@metmuseum.org
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