

Mt. Kailash: The Saga Dawa Festival Tour

29 May - 14 June 2020



This tour is being themed The Saga Dawa Festival and after 25 years of traveling to Mt. Kailash I wish to be there at same festival as I was in 1996 when I completed two mountain and one lake kora... The highlight of our tour is the four-day kora (circumnavigation) of this auspicious mountain **and** in this itinerary are visits to two other of the holiest sites in Tibetan Buddhism – Lake Manasarovar and Thirthapury – in addition to other precious locations!

We have carefully crafted this itinerary to support a balance between culture and walking the kora once the people have moved on. We have the blessings of Saga Dawa; and participate on the Saga Dawa the main Buddhist Festival at Mt. Kailash. All this during the period of the Saga Dawa month, in this time one circumambulation of the mountain is popularly considered to have the merit of a 100 thousand times on top of that to be purifying one life time. At time for the full moon of Saga Dawa (Buddha's day of enlightenment and para-nirvana) more pilgrims than usual visit Kailash.



“Where Mount Kailash is considered the father-mountain, the active principle of skillful means, Lake Manasarovar is the mother-lake, the principle of transcendent reality.”

J. Snelling – The Sacred Mountain



Holy Mount Kailash

The most sacred mountain in the Tibetan Buddhist world is considered by many to be the centre of the universe and to repeat, the crown of our planet.

Uncannily symmetrical, this remote and remarkable peak is located in the far west of Tibet, 1200 km from Lhasa. Mt. Kailash (6714m) is not only geographically one of the most important mountains in Asia, it is also the source of four major rivers, namely, the Indus, Sutlej, Karnali and Tsang Po which nourish Asia with water. In Sanskrit, Kailash means 'luminous crystal'. Hindus believe Mt. Kailash to be the abode of Lord Shiva and his wife Parvati. For Hindus, to make the arduous pilgrimage to Kailash and have the darshan (divine view) of Shiva's abode is to attain release from the clutches of ignorance and delusion.

Tibetan Buddhists call the mountain Kang Rinpoche, the 'Jewel of Snow', and regard it as the body mandala of Korlo Demchog and his consort, Dorje Phagmo (Chakrasambhava and Vajravahni). A pilgrimage to this great sacred and magical landscape is the most precious of pilgrimages for both Tibetan and Indian people, a journey they hope to experience at least once in a lifetime.



“[It] is the ladder which simultaneously ascends to heaven and descends from heaven...and it thus has the same function as the 'heavenly cord' which links heaven and earth”.

G Tucci – The Religions of Tibet

Overview: We will visit one of the TOP 3 Trekking destinations in Nepal! It's called Langtang... Gosaikunda is a significant place of interest a sacred Shiva pilgrim site where annually many pilgrims visit. This on the Dhunche-Helambu trekking route. From Kathmandu we drive into the Langtang Region for acclimatization to the altitude, the journey ahead and one another – this will include walks to carefully selected sites that will support both our inner and outer journey. In Nepal Indra will lead the group and in Tibet Roger takes over into the core of this journey: an unhurried four-day circuit trek (kora) among Tibetan pilgrims around holy Mt. Kailash followed by a visit to Thirthapuri Hot Springs and monastery and the beautiful Lake Manasarovar. We enjoy silence and nature, spectacular panoramic views, as well as our group interactions.

Expedition or Inner Purification



All trips to Mt. Kailash have an expedition nature about them. This expedition, more than any tour – holds a deep sense of simplicity. Our journey, through vast open spaces, is likely to catalyze a variety of deep personal inner reflections and experiences. Long drives and simple accommodations require a lot of patience, tolerance and little expectation. In return, we will see some of the most untouched and beautiful landscapes, visit some of the most auspicious locations on the planet and are likely meet many genuinely kind and considerate people.

The reverence and silence held at many of the locations we will visit, will continuously give us the opportunity to return to our conscious awareness...and see where it wants to take us.

Special Tours: This tour has been organised in such a way that the effort of making all transport, accommodation, food and admin arrangements has been taken care of, giving you more personal time to prepare for, experience and enjoy your journey. We plan to see all the most important sights along the way, while you are taken care of by professionals: your tour leader, a Tibetan guide and drivers – and part of the tour with Sherpas and cook.

Tour Leaders Tibet part:

Roger Pfister, Swiss, born in 1960 has been based in Boudhanath, Kathmandu in Nepal since



1995. During this time, he has owned and operated Snow Jewel, leading expeditions to remote locations in Nepal and Tibet. In addition, he has worked for over five years as a volunteer for the British operated not-for-profit ROKPA Nepal. Roger has practiced extensively in both the Tibetan and Theravada traditions, completing annual Vipassana retreats in Thailand at Wat Ram Poeng and in India at Bodgaya and Sarnath with Christopher Titmuss. During his time in Nepal, he spent two years in study at Ka-Nying Shedrup Ling, the official seat of very venerable Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, as well as Pullahari Monastery under the guidance of Khenpo

Tsultrim Gyatso Rinpoche. His inaugural trip to Mt. Kailash was during the spring of 1996 and since then he has made over 100 circuits of the mountain and 14 of Lake Manasarovar.



Indra Rai, one of our most experienced Sherpa guides, he will accompany you in the Nepal part and take care of you in the acclimatisation period. He is father of 4 and comes from the Everest region in over 20 years he has been in all remote locations in Nepal!



Group Size: Minimum 7, maximum 15 people.

Group in 2019



Duration: 17 days from May 29 – June 14. 2020

Price: 22'600 CNY /US\$ 3180 / €uro 2890, (@ 7.5 to the Euro)

Single room mark-up 320Euro (only guaranteed in 90- 95% of the places)

200 Euros deposit to confirm your booking

Included: From Kathmandu drive in a private vehicle to Langtang region tea house trek with Indra and helpers. **In Nepal:** Permits; TIMS 20\$ & Langtang 35\$; Guide and porter for 5 days in the acclimatisation part (you can give maximum 6kg to the porter the rest will stay in storage for the later part!

**Included Tibet:**

drive to Mt. Kailash, Lake Manasarovar Khyunglung and onwards to Kathmandu, with private transport and support truck (see itinerary); all permits and road tolls in Tibet; local guide, drivers and cook; two vegetarian meals daily (breakfast and dinner) and picnic lunch during the time from Tibet and all the way to Kathmandu; all fees for sightseeing, Kailash circuit, grassland fee, yak and yak driver for your luggage; camping gear; hotel in Kyirong, Saga x2; all other overnight stays in basic accommodation (pilgrim guesthouses) or tents.

Excluded: Tibet visa fee for Tibet 114\$ (USA 198\$); horse and horse driver for personal ride; porter at Mt. Kailash, cost in case of an emergency personal expenses; insurances; tips & gratitude's.

Nepal: visa for Nepal; All cost for food in Nepal 4,5 days while Tea house trekking (you will need about 20-25 USD per day); airport transfer and hotel in Kathmandu;

Note: We will be pleased to organise airport transfer or hotel booking in Kathmandu if needed (Please see booking mail).



Itinerary – Short

- May 27: Arrival in Kathamndu hand over of passport for the group visa in Tibet.
May 28: Briefing with Roger, 11 Am.
May 29: The tour starts see here.

Itinerary – Short Itinerary – Short

- Day 1: Kathmandu – Langtang - Acclimatisation / Tea house
Day 2: Langtang - Acclimatisation / Tea house
Day 3: Langtang - Acclimatisation / Tea house
Day 4: Langtang - Acclimatisation / Tea house
Day 5: Kyirong / H.
Day 6: Saga /H.
Day 7: Saga – Monsier /G.H.
Day 8: Saga Dawa Festival Mt. Kailash
Day 9: Excursion Khyunglung ancient Kingdom /G.H.
Day 10: Visit Thithapury G. drive to Darchen /G.H.
Day 11-13: Kailash Kora / trekking / camp
Day 14: Kailash Kora / Lanbona Gompa / camp
Day 15: Langbona G.–Saga / G.H.
Day 16: Saga – Kyirong – Rasuwa - Kalikasthan.
Day 17: Kalikasthan - KTM – End of service 14.06.2020;

Fly back home 15. June, evening.

We recommend to better stay one more day to digest the hole tour!



Itinerary - Detailed

- Day 1:** Early morning 5AM transfer by private transport to the Langtang area near Nepalese border, 134km, 6-7h drive, after lunch break 3,5-4 h walk up the mountain to 3270m. Tea house trek.
- Day 2:** Rest and acclimatisation day late afternoon walk 1,5 h up to 3900M Laurebina Yak here a morning view from May 2018.



- Day 3/4:** During these two days we offer short treks, so that one can adjust to the altitude or simply rest & acclimatise. Day 4: afternoon, trek down to 3270m in about 1 h.

- Day 5:** Early morning 5 AM, 3h trek down to where we meet with our Bus/Car which will take us Rasuwa border 1,5 h drive. After crossing the border, we meet up with the Tibetan Guide/ Drivers. We begin our overland journey in Tibet to Kyrong 2800m 2-3h drive, with a marvellous view over the Himalaya. We stay the night in a simple Hotel.



- Day 6:** Kyrong to Saga 150km 4h drive. In the morning we will visit Guru Rinpoche cave complex monastery, afterwards travelling on to Saga. We drive through a magnificent hill landscape. Overnight Hotel.
- Day 07:** Saga – Monsier (4'440m). 9-10h drive (540km). We cross several high passes and enter the high desert of Western Tibet – through beautiful landscape from Paryang via Darchen. After crossing the Mayumla pass (5216m), we drive along the shores of Gung Gyu Lake, before getting our first glimpse of holy Mount Kailash. We stay in a pilgrim guesthouse (public bath).

Day 08: We drive to Darchen 70km 1h and then onwards to Tarpoche for the biggest festival on Mt. Kailash!



Day 09: Day excursion to Kyunglung, with the famous Garuda Valley which is considered the entrance to the Shangrila (hidden paradise). According to several scientists and explorers, this is the site of the former pre-Buddhist Bön-kingdom Shang Shung, cradle of the Tibetan culture. We can explore the ruins of the ancient city and enjoy the spectacular atmosphere.

Day 10: In the morning we visit Thirthapury - holy hot springs we walk the small kora around the idyllic monastery complex- this is considered one of the most important places and to have a real pilgrimage one should visit all 3 (Mt. Kailash/ Lake Manasarovar/ Thirthapury). Afterwards we head to Darchen and prepare for the kora. Simple G.H.



Day 11: Beginning of the Kailash kora. This is a medium trek (20km, 6-8h), slightly uphill. From the south, we reach Tarpoche, the so-called centre of the universe. Then, we pass Chuku monastery (those who have lots of energy can go for a short visit) and the west face of Kailash. Our camp is right below Dirapuk monastery at 4900m with awesome views of Mt. Kailash's north face.

Day 12: Rest day at Mt. Kailash's north face for acclimatisation. Those who would like to can visit the Dirapuk monastery (famous yogi Gyalwa Gotsangpa meditated there in a cave for long time), make an excursion to the north face (2h), stroll into a side valley (1-2h) or simply enjoy Mt Kailash's power in the camp right below Dirapuk monastery at 4900m.



Day 13: This day is the core of the kora this is a difficult trek (18km, 8-10h), where we need the energy reserves built up from the day before. For the first 2-5h, we slowly ascend towards the Tara-Pass/Drölma-La (5630m). After a break we steeply descend to the valley (1-2h). From here it is another 2-3h slightly downhill to the camp, just 2km before Zutulpuk monastery (4790m).

Day 14: This day is fairly easy (11km, 3-4h). We pass Zutulpuk monastery and hike slightly downhill back to Darchen where we have lunch in a simple restaurant. Then drive 30 km to Langbona Gompa next to Manasarovar Lake and spend half a day here so one can stroll around the lake collect stones and get the blessing of the Lake Manasarovar. Camp



Day 15: Drive from Langbona back to Saga 500km 8h. We will stay at the same place as on the way in. Hotel



Day 16: Saga to Kyirong/ Rasuwa 4h 160km. We drive over a high mountain pass (Zhongma) and descend the high desert and enter the green and lush vegetation. Along the way we visit the enlightenment cave of Milarepa. In Lower Kyirong/Rasuwa we leave the Tibetan crew and cross the border and change to new vehicles and continue the trip to Kalikasthan around 40km 3h. Overnight in small Hotel.

Day 17: From Kalikasthan we drive 6h/ 120km to Kathmandu **here ends the service!**

You can fly home 15. June at your convenience or extend your stay if you like.



Blue Sheep 2019

General Information

Please Note

- We will not be responsible for extra cost incurred by landslides, road blockages and other weather-related or political problems.
- You are responsible for your own health. The itinerary has been designed to allow sufficient time for acclimatisation.
- Accommodation will occasionally be in shared rooms (small dormitories). During the Kailash kora we stay in tents for two people each. We assume your preparedness to share rooms/tents with others, regardless of gender.
- We reserve the right to increase the tour price should the Euro in relation to the Chinese Yuan (RMB) depreciate significantly.

Visa and Passport Information

Visa Nepal

Entry from Nepal, Nepalese visa is best applied upon arrival in Kathmandu. You will need a passport photo. At arrival you get a 30 day or 90 day multiple-entry visa valid from the date of entry. The visa costs US\$ 50 or US\$ 125, respectively.

Tibet Group Visa Nepal

Entering Tibet from Nepal: One can only travel by so called "Group visa" any other valid Chinese visa will be deleted by the Chinese embassy! We will obtain this for you in Kathmandu. For this, we need one passport photo and a completed visa application form. Please download, print and fill out: <http://snowjewel.com/visalinks.html>. The visa costs US\$ 114 in cash, payable upon arrival when handing over the passport. (US citizens must pay US\$ 198.)

Passport Validity

Minimum 6 months from date of entry.

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May all beings be happy!