

# Bodhgaya India & Nepal Pilgrimage



**Feb 15<sup>th</sup> – Feb 26<sup>th</sup> 2023**

We are leading a pilgrimage to two of the most sacred Buddhist pure lands. This trip is open to all brave seekers. This trip is also a valuable supplement to culminate the Deep Dive program (It is not required). This powerful intimate journey will deepen our relationship with the heart of vajrayana.

*-We are honored to bring this pilgrimage to you*

## **Semo Sangay & Amri**

Sangay is Tibetan/Bhutanese and the daughter of the great master Terchen Pegyal Lingpa. Sangay has not only been on many pilgrimages to the places on our journey, this is close to her homeland.

Sangay has been a lifelong Vajrayana Buddhist and has close relationships with many of the areas we will be visiting.

Sangay speaks Bhutanese, Tibetan, Nepali, Hindi, English and will be a support in graciously navigating our journey.

Amri has spent decades exploring, living in, and practicing in the areas we will be visiting. At the age of 18 he traveled alone to India and spent the next 5 years living in ashrams and

monasteries. He has traveled extensively throughout India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and many other countries. Every year for over 26 years he has spent at minimum two weeks pilgrimaging in Asia or the Peruvian Andees.

## **The Journey**

### **Fly out of SFO or Your nearest airport on Feb 13<sup>th</sup>**

### **Arrival ( early am feb 15<sup>th</sup> )**

We will begin our trip arriving in New Delhi India on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February at 5:55am and will fly to Bodhgaya at 2:45pm

### **2 days at The Vajra Seat (feb 15<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup>)**



Bodhgaya is the most sacred Buddhist site in the world. Across Asia all Buddhists aspire to have the chance to visit here at least once in their lifetime and some strive to make the journey yearly. This is the site of the Bodhi Tree that the Buddha became enlightened under. The tree that is present there now is a cutting from the original tree, which has survived for 2000 years.

Guru Rinpoche also spent many periods of time here and some say it was here that the invitation to Tibet was delivered by Tibets King Trisong Deutsen. The spark that brought the Vajrayana Dharma through Nepal and into the Land of the Snows.

It is prophesied that every Buddha of this eon will attain Nirvana here, at the Vajra Seat.

It was here, In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, that Atisha spoke with the Green Tara Statue on the outer wall of the MahaBodhi Temple. She explained to him, he can either stay in India and benefit a small number of beings but have a very long life, or he can go to Tibet to revive the teachings and benefit countless beings, but have a very short life. Atisha Chose to go to Tibet and serve all beings.

We will also visit the Majestic Royal Bhutan Monastery. It is one of the most magnificent monasteries in Bodhgaya. Royal Bhutan Monastery at Bodhgaya was built by the King of Bhutan as a tribute to Lord Buddha.

### **1 Night In Patna for Morning Flight (Feb 17<sup>th</sup>)**

We will leave Bodhgaya right after lunch on the 17<sup>th</sup> and head to Patna. We will fly our early in the morning to head to Siligiri. Patna will be a 2.5-3.5 hour drive. We plan to book a luxury tour bus to drive our group to Patna. Patna is on the banks of the Ganges River.

### **2 nights In Siligiri India (Feb 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>)**

From Bodhgaya we will fly to Siligiri, the border town between Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal. Many Tibetan masters have centers here as it is the most accessible midway point for traveling Himalayan pilgrims to reach.

The main seat of Ewam is here in Siligiri. A Nunnery that will eventually house up to 600 nuns under the guidance of our Ewam teachers and our Vajra Master Tulku Sang-Ngag Rinpoche.

### **Check into Hotels and visit Ewams main monastery or rest (Feb 18<sup>th</sup>)**

We will arrive in the midst of a 10 day Drubchen Puja.

We will have the opportunity to enter the mandala of this sacred Tibetan Puja in practice and receive the blessings from our respected Ewam Teachers.

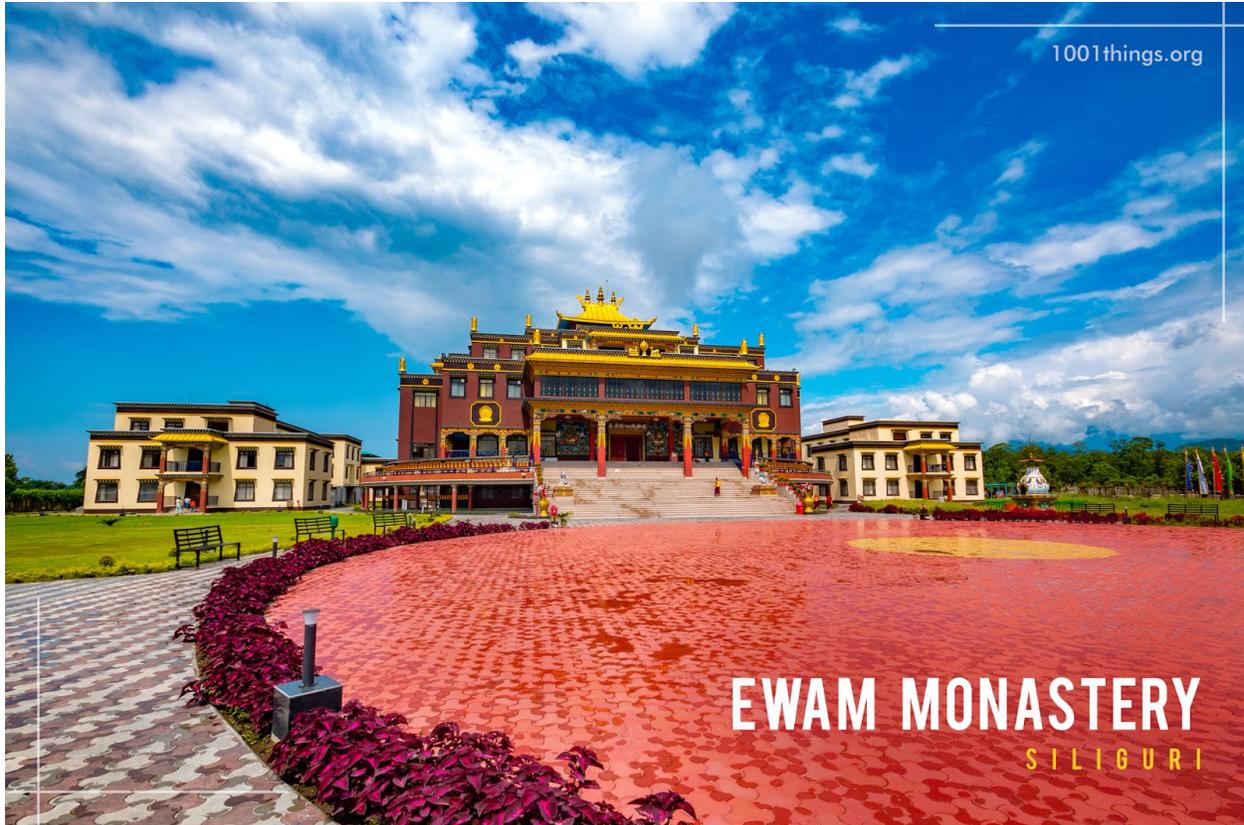
Tulku Sang Ngag Rinpoche

Khen Rinpoche

Jetsunma Jamyang Palmo (tentatively present)

Urgyen Jigme Choeki Palter Rinpoche ( Terchen Pegyal Lingpas reincarnation)

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### **Three Roots Empowerments (Feb 19<sup>th</sup>)**

Amidst the ongoing Drubchen, Tulku Sang-Ngag Rinpoche will bestow the Three Roots Empowerments to our group.

Lama, Yidam, Dakini. The Dakini portion will be the Khandro Gongdu empowerment. These are the empowerments needed to receive and practice the highest yogic teachings. These will be the empowerments that open the conclusion to the 2 year Deep Dive program. For those who cannot make this trip we will have the empowerments again in the future when Druponla eventually returns to the United States. As Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche is the head of Ewam it is a great blessing to receive these empowerments directly from him.

### **Fly to Kathmandu Nepal/ Check to hotels in Pharping (Feb 20<sup>th</sup>)**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> we will enter Nepal and get our E-visas and fly from Bhadrapur Nepal and arrive in Kathmandu. We will go directly to Pharping and check into our hotel for three nights.

- Bhadrapur airport is 1:20 min drive from Siliguri. We will need time to cross the border as well.
- Next a 45 minute flight to Kathmandu
- Finally a 1 hour drive to Pharping



## **Pharping (Feb 21<sup>st</sup>)**

### **ASURA CAVE & YANGLESHÖ**

#### **THE PLACE OF AWAKENING**

In the morning we will meet Drupon Lama Karma and Consort Sangyum Drolkarla.

Together with Drupon Lama Karma we will visit these sacred sites.

This location is considered one of the most profound of all sites connected with the activity of Guru Rinpoché. Here, the Mahaguru spent time in retreat in two caves located in what is now the village of Pharping. During the winter months he practiced at the sunny upper Asura Cave and during the hot summer months he retreated to the lower Yangleshö cave. While at the Asura Cave, through combining the practices of Yangdak Heruka and Vajrakilaya, he attained the ultimate fruition of Mahamudra, the Great Seal.

As followers of Buddha Shakyamuni, we make the journey to Bodh Gaya. As followers of Guru Padmasambhava, we make pilgrimage to the caves of Asura and Yangleshö. Many great masters have emphasized that these caves are as important as Bodh Gaya for practitioners of the Vajrayana, so vast was Guru Rinpoche's attainment here. This extraordinary place, the single most sacred site connected with Guru Padmasambhava outside the land of Tibet, lies just south of Kathmandu in Pharping.

## **Meet Khandro Semo Saraswati & Receive Teachings From Druponla (Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

Yanglesho Cave is located next to Kyabjé Chatral Rinpoché's monastery. We will visit his small monastery and get blessed by his Kudung (preserved body) and his daughter Dakini Semo Saraswati who bestow on us the short transmission of Guru Rinpoche's 7 Line Prayer.

Tulku Sang-Ngag Rinpoche's nun monastery and retreat center is also very close to the Asura Cave entrance. This is the retreat center where Jetsunma Jamyang Palmo spent 10 years in retreat and many other students/nuns of Rinpoche completed many years of retreat.



## **Pharping (Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>)**

Druponla will bestow teachings and transmissions at the Turquoise Leaf Nunnery. We will be receiving teachings in a traditional gumpa and an extremely potent setting. Teachings TBD

## Return to Boudha (Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>)



## Boudha Stupa (Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>)

Boudha Stupa is located within the outskirts of Kathmandu, its massive mandala makes it one of the largest spherical stupas in the world.

This Stupa was listed in the world heritage list by UNESCO in 1979 and is the most popular pilgrimage site in Nepal.

Stupas are built to house holy relics and some claim that Boudhanath contains the relics of the past Buddha, Kashyapa, while others say it also contains relics of Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha.

Throughout the day Tibetans circumambulate the Stupa.

It's believed to have been built by Songsten Gampo the King of Tibet in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century. This Stupa is steeped in magic and lore about how and who built it and how it has influenced the future of Buddhism in Tibet.



### **Swayambunnath (Feb 23<sup>rd</sup>)**

Swayambhu Stupa is the most ancient of all the holy shrines in the Kathmandu Valley. Its golden majesty is visible for many miles from all sides of the valley. Historical records give evidence that the stupa was already a primary Buddhist pilgrimage destination by the 5th century. Its origins however, date to a much earlier time, long before the arrival of Buddhism into the valley. A collection of legends about the site, the 15th century Swayambhu Purana, tells of a miraculous lotus, planted by a past Buddha, which blossomed from the lake that once covered Kathmandu Valley. The lotus mysteriously radiated a brilliant light, and the site came to be known as Swayambhu, meaning 'Self-Created or Self-Existent'. Many masters, yogis, divine beings, and awareness holders journeyed to this lake to venerate this miraculous light for its power in granting enlightenment. During this time, the Bodhisatva Manjushri was meditating at the sacred mountain of Wu Tai Shan and had a vision of the dazzling Swayambhu light. Manjushri flew across the mountains of China and Tibet upon his blue lion to worship the lotus. Deeply impressed by the power of the radiant light, Manjushri felt that if the water were drained out of the lake Swayambhu would become more easily accessible to human pilgrims. With a

great sword Manjushri cut a gorge in the mountains surrounding the lake. The water, draining away, left the valley of present day Kathmandu. The lotus was then transformed into a hill and the light became the Swayabhunath Stupa.

Swayambhunath stupa is at the top of a hill that overlooks the Kathmandu valley. There are hundreds of Monkeys all over the grounds.



**Shechen (Feb 24<sup>th</sup>)**

## **Shechen Monastery in Exile Nepal**

Shechen Monastery in Boudha, Kathmandu

In 1980 Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche began the building of Shechen Tennyi Dargyeling Monastery in Boudhanath, Kathmandu. Intent on preserving the extremely rich artistic tradition of the original Shechen Monastery in Tibet, HH Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche supervised all the aspects of the work with the greatest attention to detail. Magnificent paintings cover the walls of the main temple and one hundred and fifty statues were made for it by the best Tibetan craftsmen and sculptors of the time.

The monastery hosts an important Tibetan library, the Tsering Art School for the preservation of Tibetan culture and sacred arts and a shedra. More than three hundred monks live at the monastery and receive an education which, apart from philosophical teachings, comprises traditional music, dance and painting.

The abbot of Shechen Monastery is the seventh Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche.



### **Durbar Square (Feb 24<sup>th</sup>)**

Walk into the past.

Kathmandu Durbar Square is located in front of the old royal palace of the former Kathmandu Kingdom and is one of three Durbar Squares in the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, all of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Durbar square is full of traditional/ancient stone work and architecture.

### **Free Day (Feb 25<sup>th</sup>)**

This will be our final day together and we are leaving it open as a free day to walk around Boudha and go shopping, eat together, hang out etc.

### **Fly out to Delhi and Home (Feb 25<sup>th</sup> Evening or 26<sup>th</sup>)**

We will fly out the night of the 25<sup>th</sup> or Morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> depending on our return flights. Some people may continue in Nepal on their own journeys. We will have said our goodbyes to are new sangha friends and gone our separate ways. Returning to our lives and homes hopefully with a life changing experience that will deeply shift our lives.



## **Who is invited, and our Intentions**

It is our wish to invite up to 27 people who would like to join us on this sacred journey. Our guess is we will end up with about 10-15 people. We ask that whoever comes understands the intention of this trip is to deepen our connection to our spiritual practice. Visiting these sacred places has been very transformational and life changing in our own experience, and we want to offer this opportunity to others. Seeing other lands and sacred spaces that are thousands of years old can powerfully shift our inner and outer life experience and world view.

We are also extending the invitation to a few young people, aged 16-18 that are welcome to join under our guidance. Our 16 year old son will be joining us on this trip for his third time to India and second time to these sacred places. Each youth's parents (if under 18) will have an in person or zoom meeting with us to discuss the trip and have questions and concerns addressed.

For those interested in registering, we request that while on this trip each and everyone of us respects the container of the trip and stays on the given schedule. If you'd like to continue on your own journey, the end of the trip will be the time to spring forth independently. This is for the safety and cohesion of the journey.

For those who complete the pre-registration we will be available both in person and via several zoom sessions to answer any and all questions. We will also be available privately to answer questions as well.

[EwamKSL@gmail.com](mailto:EwamKSL@gmail.com)

Amri 707-599-4997

### **Pre Registration Zoom Meeting and Q & A**

Our first pre registration meeting will be this Thursday, October 20th 7:30pm PST.

Our second pre registration meeting will be the following Thursday, October 27th 7:30pm PST.

**The trip may fill up after the first zoom meeting**

**[Sign Up for Pre/Post Registration meetings CLICK HERE](#)**

A commitment to register for this trip needs to be solidified by October 27th as plane tickets need to be booked immediately to secure our connections together, as well as booking of rooms, and ground transportation.

### **After the Pre-Registration Zoom meetings if you would like to register for the trip**

We will provide a registration link that will include registration forms as well as the flight numbers, dates and times, and web links will be provided for everyone to book their own flights. We will book the hotels in blocks to ensure that we are staying together as a group. The cost of the trip will be less for those willing to stay two to a room.

### **Post Registration Zoom Meetings**

We will have two more Zoom meetings after registration to go over trip preparation.

Our first post registration meeting will be this Thursday, November 3rd 7:30pm PST.  
Our final pre trip meeting will be on Thursday, March 26th 7:30pm PST.

We will have a chance to introduce ourselves and know who we will be traveling with.

### **Covid/ Vax Requirements**

**India:** It is not mandatory to be fully vaccinated to travel to India, but it is highly recommended for international travel. If you have a recognized vaccination certificate, you are exempted from testing requirements. As of now we will need to show a PCR test from the day before travel.

**Nepal:** The Department of Immigration rescinded all previously issued orders regarding country-specific travel limitations as of March 10, 2022. All travelers regardless of vaccine status can receive on-arrival visas at the port of entry. Amendments to existing orders and new orders may be promulgated with little notice. Please continue to monitor this space and local media for additional information. Nepal currently requires a vax card or negative PCR test 72 hours in advance (unvaxed will have to get a PCR test in Siligiri before we fly)

The WHO recommends a whole list of vaccines when traveling to these countries. This information can easily be found online. If you want to get the other recommended vaccines we highly recommend starting them now as they can weaken the immune system initially and it's best to be strong and at peak health before we travel.

### **Two weeks before the Trip**

We will have a final zoom meeting on March 26th to answer questions and discuss safety for traveling in India/Nepal. We will discuss risks and simple prevention while traveling in India/Nepal.

### **Mental Illness or Disability**

We ask that anyone with any diagnosed mental illness or disability to please be up front with us so we can determine together if this trip will work for all of us.

### **Passport & Visas**

You will need a valid passport that does not expire within 6 months  
Indian Visas can be received by mailing our passports to the Embassy in San Francisco.  
Nepal Visas are given on arrival into the country.

- A valid passport valid for at least six months with two blank pages.
- Photocopies of your passport biodata page.
- One recent passport-size photograph with a white background.
- Proof of accommodation in Nepal.
- A return flight ticket.
- Proof of sufficient funds to prove that you can cover the stay of your trip in Nepal (bank statements).

For Nepal Visas we will need these items on hand and ready.

### **Trip Costs**

The primary expense will be the plane tickets. Plane tickets will roughly be around 2000-2400 for the round trip ticket including all the flights in India and Nepal.

Food and hotels will be about 50 -150 per day (Less expensive if sharing a room)

Add another \$200 buffer for ground transportation during the trip.

India and Nepal Visas about \$150 (combined) Could be less.

The cost of this trip will be on the individual. I will collect for booking hotel blocks and securing transportation ahead of time. We are not profiting; we are doing this as an organizational service and offering.

Plan on making customary Dana/Donation Offerings to Rinpoche and Druponla at the conclusion of the empowerments & teachings.

Suggested minimum \$100 to Rinpoche

Suggested minimum \$150-\$200 to Druponla

Suggested minimum \$50 to Turquoise Leaf Monastery.

Suggested minimum \$50 to Khandro Semo Saraswati and Chatrel Rinpoches Kudung

Other than the Customary Dana we are not charging any fee on our side.

If at the end of the trip you would like to make a donation to us or the center it will be welcome but is not a requirement for this trip.

### **\$3500-\$4500 is the range you will need to plan for this journey**

It could be much less at the end of the trip but this is the general breakdown.

It is better to over plan than to run out of funds.

[Bios of our teachers can be found HERE](#)



