



Lynne Hardie

Bhutan – Paro

~ Wednesday 10 June 2009 ~

No internet yesterday as floods had wiped out the power lines- Had a lovely stay in PHUNARKA. We hiked up to a stupor- it was really warm there as we have come down in altitude a lot. 34degrees but totally dry so didn't seem that hot at all. Got up early this morning and walked along the river to the Kings weekend palace- there are literally walks everywhere and everyone you meet along the way is so friendly.

Yesterday we drove over the 2 high passes- 11,000 feet again. Today, a long drive as roads quite bumpy. We have 2 minivans so 4 of us in ours. Our guide and driver are lots of fun. Excellent English and a great grasp on our life and sayings etc and so much knowledge and so proud of their country. We had local dancers last night and tonight we have an astrologer! Tomorrow is the BIG climb up to Tigers Nest! Leaving at 7am and it is 4-6 hours round trip and extremely high!

The lodges are amazing, rooms are very similar which is great as you get used to where everything is - but the atmosphere in the different places is so different. This is a big one - 24 rooms and very spread out. Everything is included- all drinks meals etc so we are being totally spoilt. What an incredible country. Not one person has frowned on us taking photos and not one person has been in the slightest bit aggro - just smiles and peace- quite amazing. All teenagers where National costume as school uniform- how pleasant to see everyone happy. Paro is a lovely peaceful town but the lodge is 14 miles away up in the mountains. G&T time here so must go for dinner.

Bye for now and hopefully I can say tomorrow I got to the top and down again!!

Take care,
Love Lynnie xx





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Paro Valley - Tiger's Nest ~ Thursday 11th June ~

This morning we left at 7am to hike up to view one of Bhutan's most revered monuments, the Taktshang Goemba, more commonly referred to as the "Tiger's Nest". The four hour return trek offers spectacular views of this sacred monastery perched on a cliff face 900m above the valley floor.

One of the holiest sites for Tantric Buddhists in the Himalayas, Guru Rinpoche meditated here in 8th Century when he brought Buddhism to Bhutan. Later on, great lamas including the Tibetan Yogi Milerapa also meditated in the caves. Destroyed by a fire, it was rebuilt in 2004 but still retains its old-world charm. The hike is in two parts: you can hike up to the cafeteria, which is a two-hour round trip, from where you can get a spectacular view of the monastery. There is a higher view point (about one hour's extra climbing) from where you can get a closer look. Walking along a cliff, you reach a point that juts out where the trees open up and the Tiger's Nest is in full view. You can then descend down a series of slate steps and back up the other side to get to the monastery. Riding horses for the uphill climb to the cafeteria is possible (at your own expense), if required.

NOTE: This is a tough hike on a track that is at times, in a poor state of repair. They are reliant on good weather to undertake the hike.

We all loved the hike and went into the monastery before descending and having a lovely picnic lunch.

