

Undiscovered

# Bhutan

*The Peaceful Dragon Kingdom*



Untouched Pristine Wilderness



# A Letter from the Founder

---

Dear Guests,

Thank you for considering Yana EXPEDITIONS as your tour organizer in Bhutan. Bhutan is one of those countries where traveling by oneself is difficult, if not impossible. So many adventures and discoveries await you right from the moment you step off the plane.

As you explore our website, you will certainly realize we are not your run-of-the-mill 'active adventure' company. One of the main differences is that you can tell us exactly when you want to travel, instead of us giving you a pre-set schedule of tours to choose from. We are also open to any size group. Furthermore, our tours are very flexible and open to your input, as well as what might be called 'the pleasure of chance', the small, daily discoveries that make traveling so exciting. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, we quietly and efficiently take care of a multitude of details in order to ensure that you have a care-free, fun-filled adventure in one of the world's most enchanting countries, BHUTAN: The Treasure Chest Of The Himalayas! Pick from among our sample tours, mix and match or start from scratch. Either way, we can tailor a tour to best fit your travel desires. All this adds up to making your holiday truly personalized and unique, with expert guidance to help pave the way towards having a wonderful, and memorable time in Bhutan.

I hope you will join us and see for yourself.



Tashi "Kelson" Tobgay  
Founder & President

---

## Company Profile

---

Yana EXPEDITIONS was founded to provide a safe, informative, in-depth and FUN travel experience for visitors to Bhutan. The company has prospered because of its dedication to creating and facilitating travel experiences that expand awareness and give each person a true sense of the country and its culture.

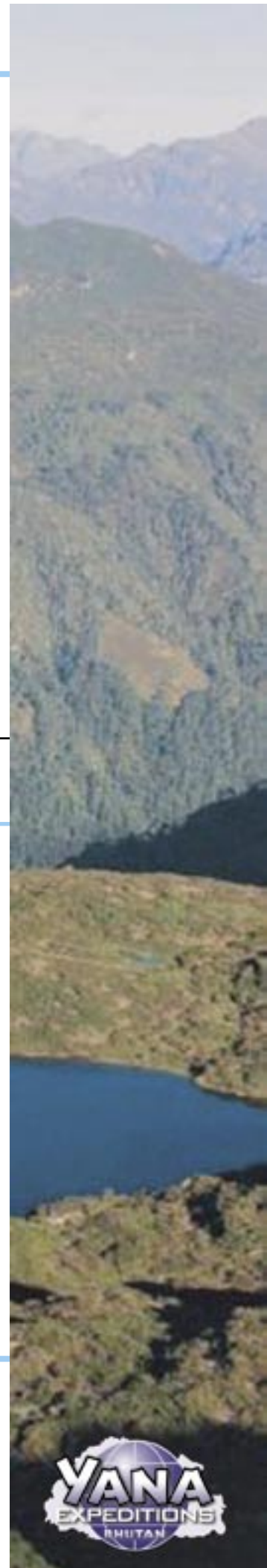
Our tours and treks are ecologically and culturally sensitive to the land and people. We work hard to ensure that we have a positive impact on the areas we visit. When traveling with us you will truly experience the unique Bhutanese culture, and become acquainted with the people of Bhutan instead of just 'Seeing the Sights'. Our personal attention and care creates a group camaraderie not found on most tours.

Tashi "Kelson" Tobgay owns and operates Yana EXPEDITIONS and accompanies most of its tours. With his years of experience in the Bhutanese Tourism Industry, the company strives to provide "Quality Service." He believes the Bhutanese people will win your hearts with their warm hospitality, passionate music, colorful pageantry and wonderful sense of humor. The Bhutanese love of life, country, family and festival is contagious. Mr. Yana's love of the local people and his genuine understanding of the Bhutanese culture has helped to foster many unique long-term relationships. Our groups always feel special and are welcomed everywhere they go.

## Our Philosophy

---

Bhutan was not involved with Industrial Age, the World Wars, nor the Arms Race, and until 2nd June 1999 not even cyber space. As a tour operator, we believe that we can be important contributors to "Peace Through Tourism." Your discovery of this Himalayan Buddhist Kingdom and its heritage in a respectful way can help contribute in creating a network of positive relations to nature, culture and people, laying the foundation stone for peace. We work hard to make travel a culturally, economically and environmentally sensitive activity, upholding the Royal Government's principle of 'Sustainable Tourism' – "Tourism must be environmentally and ecologically friendly, socially and culturally acceptable and economically viable."



# Why Bhutan?

## A Spiritual Nation

Just as religious landmarks characterize the kingdom's history, the influence of religion is highly visible in the everyday life of the lay population. Bhutan is a spiritual nation. The hundreds of sacred monasteries, stupas, religious institutions, prayer flags and prayer wheels which dot the countryside provide a strong infrastructure and atmosphere for the teachings of their living faith.

In both urban and rural Bhutan, religious ceremonies and rituals are performed regularly and with reverence. On auspicious days Bhutanese families make pilgrimages to monasteries to offer prayers and butter lamps. The horoscope of Bhutanese life is drawn from the scriptures. National and regional festivities, coinciding with the seasons, are major events for the entire population the year round. The Buddhist world, thus, regards the kingdom with spiritual importance as the last bastion of Mahayana Buddhism.

Earlier this century, an ethnic Nepalese minority, settled in the southern regions of the country, brought Hinduism, which is regarded in Bhutan as being closely related to Buddhism.

## A Rich Culture

Bhutanese language and literature, the arts and crafts, ceremonies and events, and basic social and cultural values draw their essence from religious teachings. The tradition of fine art is alive today, manifested, for example, in products like legendary Thangkas. The exquisite traditional painting is also visible on monasteries and houses, skillfully enhancing the architecture.

Architecture is also a significant feature of the Bhutanese identity. The combination of engineering skill and aesthetic beauty is unparalleled in all structures, from the massive monastic fortresses to houses and bridges. Traditional shapes, colors and patterns on the walls, doors and windows, place Bhutanese architecture in a class of its own.

## A Natural Paradise



Bhutan has been described as a natural paradise. Even as the world mourns for the loss of its ecology, this small Himalayan Kingdom is emerging as an example to the international community, of the peaceful relationship between man and nature. More than 72 percent of the land in Bhutan still under forest, and a great variety of rare plant and wildlife species are thriving.

Wedged between China and India, Bhutan's terrain ranges from the sub-tropical foothills in the south, through the temperate zones, to dizzying heights of over 7,300 meters (24,000 feet). In historical records Bhutan was known as Lhojong Menjong 'the Southern Valley of Medicinal Herbs.' Besides these rare herbs, the Bhutanese seasons are reflected in full color by wildflowers and plants, which carpet the mountainsides.

## The People

Bhutan's population is, in many ways, one large family. More than 90 percent of the people live on subsistence farming, scattered in sparsely populated villages across the rugged terrain of the Himalayas.

With rice as the staple diet in the lower regions, and wheat, buckwheat, and maize in other valleys, the people farm narrow terraces cut into the steep hill slopes. Bhutanese communities settled in the valleys with limited communication in the past. It is for this reason that the sense of individuality and independence emerges as a strong characteristic of the people.

It is for the same reason that, despite the small population, it has developed a number of languages and dialects. The Bhutanese are, by nature, physically strong and fiercely independent with open and ready sense of humor. Hospitality is an in-built social value in Bhutan.

## An Unconquered Land

It is a matter of great pride to the Bhutanese that their small kingdom has never been conquered or colonized. Its ancient history, a mixture of oral tradition and classical literature, tells of a largely self-sufficient population, which had limited contact with the outside world until the turn of the century.

Among the earliest landmarks of Bhutanese history visible today are two seventh-century monasteries, the Kyichu Lhakhang in Paro and Jambay Lhakhang in Bumthang. Both these deeply revered monasteries have been preserved and developed over the centuries.

In the eighth century, Guru Rimpoche (Padmasambhava) established several sacred religious sites, which are important places of pilgrimage for the Buddhist world today. Among them are the Kurjey Lhakhang in Bumthang and the Taktshang (Tiger's Nest) Monastery in Paro.



# Places of interest in Bhutan

---

## PARO – Beginning of your journey

A trip to Bhutan normally begins and ends at Paro ... And there can be few more charming valleys to be welcomed by, or from which to remember the land of the Thunder Dragon. Mt. Jhomolhari, reigns in white glory and the glacier waters from its peaks stream in torrential flows through deep gorges until finally converging to form the Pacchu River that nourishes the valley.

## THIMPHU – Capital Of Bhutan

The town of THIMPHU is nothing like what you might imagine a capital city to be. But nevertheless for Bhutan it is a fitting and lively place. Wooden houses stand side by side with concrete buildings, all painted and constructed in traditional Bhutanese architectural styles.

## PUNAKHA – Ancient Capital Of Bhutan

The PUNAKHA area is blessed with a temperate climate and drained by the Pochu (Male) and Mochu (Female) rivers, the valley produces rich crops of rice and fruits, including mangoes, bananas and oranges. Until 1955, Punakha served as the capital of Bhutan and even today, it is winter residence of the country's Monk Body.

## WANGDIPHODRANG

The district of Wangdiphodrang, more familiarly known as Wangdi lies south to Punakha. It is the last town before starting your journey to the central Bhutan, Wangdi is a typical small Bhutanese town. The area is known for slate carving and bamboo weaving.

## TRONGSA – Crossroads of the Kingdom

TRONGSA DZONG is the most impressive Dzong in Bhutan. It commands a superb view of Mangde river valley and now houses the state monastery and the headquarters of the Mangde District. Ta-Dzong (Watch Tower) that once guarded the Dzong from internal rebellion stands above the dzong providing visitors with insight into the historical importance of Trongsa in Bhutan's history.

## BUMTHANG

Bumthang is also a name, which echoes a magic charm in the whole of Bhutan. There dark forests grow and mysterious waters flow, hiding strange legends and parts of the history of Bhutan. It is a land graced by many temples and monasteries.

## MONGAR – Journey East

The differences between East and West Bhutan are as great as the high pass that separates them. Like the Scots and the English, there are subtle but important differences. The journey from Bumthang to Mongar is one of the most beautiful in the Himalayas, crossing about 3779m high Thrumshing La pass. The descent from Thrumshing La to Limithang is astonishing for several reasons. The road drops from 3779m to 650m in only a few hours passing from pine forests through semi-tropical forests, to orange groves.



Rinpung Dzong, Paro



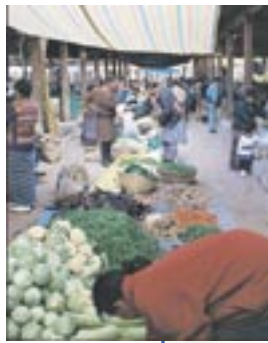
# The Kingdom of Bhutan

"Bhutan - The hidden treasure of the Himalayas"

"The last best place on earth"  
*Travel Magazine*



Weekend Market



Rinchengang Village



Kurjey Lhakhang



Mt. Jhomolhari  
Elevation 7314m



Kyichu Lhakhang



Tashichoedzong



Trongsa Dzong



Thrumshing La Pass  
Elevation 3779m

# Why Travel With Yana EXPEDITIONS?

## Always with a smile

Our expedition staff has the gift of genuine friendly service – the kind only Bhutanese can give. They are attentive and look after the little things, with care.

Visitors say they are one of our most prized assets and we agree. We pride ourselves in making our visitors feel comfortable and relaxed, in an informal, friendly atmosphere.



## The Journey of a Lifetime

Bhutan is a country that is great in every sense of the word. It is one of the world's most appealing, exciting and striking destinations. Any journey in Bhutan is a wonderful tour of discovery. What better way to discover this exceptional country? Any trip through Yana EXPEDITIONS is a memorable occasion, whether it is cultural, trekking, mountain biking, Buddhist pilgrimage tours, textile tours, or anniversary or that long awaited – "Holiday of a lifetime."

Our staffs are highly trained to provide personal service and their attention to detail is second to none. Wherever your journey takes you, will make friends and memories to last a lifetime. Your Yana experience begins from the moment you make your enquiry to the time you step off the plane at Paro – our travel and hospitality expertise are at your disposal along with our commitment to provide 'The Journey of a Lifetime.'

## We are Expeditionists, Not Tours Guides.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'Expeditionist' as, "a person who makes, or takes part in, an expedition." That works for us, and we hope it gives you an idea of the type of adventure we hope to help you to experience. Discover a unique sense of wonder, peace, and relaxation, no matter which adventure you choose.

*The company you book with does make a difference!*



- Buddhist Pilgrimages
- Trekking Tours
- Textile Tours
- Photo Tours
- Bird Watching Tours
- Cultural Tours
- Mountain Biking Tours
- Walking Tours
- Wedding Anniversary
- Educational Tour



## General Information

### Inclusive Package Tours & Reservations:

Visitors can travel to Bhutan only through all-inclusive package tours for which the Royal Government of Bhutan sets the tariff. The Government fixed tariff includes 35% royalty to the Government, accommodation, transport, meals, guide, and entrance fees to monuments. All tours to Bhutan must be booked through recognized Bhutanese Tour Operators like Yana EXPEDITIONS and entire land arrangements provided by the same company.

### Documentation:

All visitors to Bhutan must prepay for a visa and hold a current passport. Visa application is made through Yana EXPEDITIONS. Visa fee (US\$ 20 for first 15 days) is paid on entry in hard currency or traveler's checks. No checks or local currencies are accepted for this purpose. Visa will be entered on arrival in Bhutan though they are cleared in advance and visa clearance numbers are issued.

Visas are not issued at Bhutanese embassies abroad. Visas are issued only when you arrive in Bhutan either at Paro airport or at Phuntsholing (if by road). You must apply for a Bhutan visa in advance. You can either fill in the form or fax us the following information. We will take care of the rest.

1. Your full name as it appears in your passport.
2. Permanent address
3. Occupation
4. Nationality
5. Passport number
6. Date of issue and expiration of passport
7. Date and place of birth

It is absolutely necessary that you double-check that the information you provided us with is correct. There will be delays and complications in issuing the visa

When you arrive in Bhutan if there are discrepancies in any important numbers.

Druk Air will not issue the tickets to Paro until they receive the visa confirmation number from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Yana EXPEDITIONS will process visa extensions for you if they become necessary.





## Accessibility:

### By Air:

The best way to enter Bhutan is by Druk Air

During monsoons and winter, unpredictable weather forces can delay flights and travelers should consider including an extra day in their itinerary.

– Royal Bhutan Airlines. The airport is in Paro.

### Climate:

Bhutan has an unusual variety of climate influenced by varying altitudes. Southern Bhutan, which is situated at low altitudes, has mild winters and hot summers during which morning and evening showers are common.

Paro, Thimphu and other temperate regions have cold winters with sunny skies. In spring and autumn, days are warm but nights are cool. Summers are warm with light but frequent rainfall. The lower temperate regions such as Punakha and Tashigang have mild winters and warm summers.

Spring is generally from March through May, summer from June through August, autumn from September through November and winter from December through February.

### Money:

The Bhutanese currency is the Ngultrum. The Ngultrum is at par with the Indian Rupee. US Dollars are widely accepted throughout the kingdom and traveler's checks can be exchanged at the bank. Ngultrum will be required for smaller purchases of souvenirs beyond Thimphu. Credit cards are now accepted in some locations but checks are generally not accepted.

### Accommodations:

There are comfortable hotels, lodges and guest houses at tourist destinations. Western Bhutan has better hotels while Central and Eastern part of the country has simple facilities. There is no star categorization of hotels in Bhutan and no five star luxuries are available. We use a carefully selected chain of accommodations around the country and are approved by the Department of Tourism, Royal Government of Bhutan. All the hotels, lodges and guest houses are equipped with telephones, fax machines and international dialing.

### Transportation:

Japanese vehicles are regarded as the most appropriate for the Bhutanese conditions. To ensure comfort and safety for our guests we use vehicle of high quality. We use Toyota Coaster buses for larger groups and Toyota or Nissan cars for smaller groups. The vehicles are given an all round mechanical check up before the tours.

### Food:

The Bhutanese delicacies are rich with spicy chillies and cheese. The Yana EXPEDITIONS selected chain of hotels; lodges and guest houses offer delicious Chinese, Continental, Bhutanese and Indian dishes. Even on treks, our trekking team is prepared to serve Continental, Chinese, Indian and Bhutanese dishes.

### Time:

Bhutan Standard Time is half an hour ahead of Indian Standard Time and 6 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)

Bhutan GMT +6

Bhutan MET +5

**Plug Type:** The plug is round, 3 prong, British Type.

### Tipping & Gifts:

Tipping is at each visitors' discretion. Visitors are requested not to give candy, gum, pens, pencils, balloons, etc. to children, who soon learn to demand gifts; or not to hand out medicines to local people which may be inappropriate for their medical problems and delay their seeking professional help. If you want to give children pens, pencils, etc. it is better to give them to local schools. Yana EXPEDITIONS will be happy to arrange a visit to a local school if you indicate at the time of reservation. Instead of gifts, you can show them books and pictures of your country, your home, your children, etc. or teach them a song or a game.

### Shopping:

All visitors are welcome to visit the Handicraft Centre or all local shops, which contains a very wide range of traditional and modern items. Beautiful hand woven textiles, postage traditional handmade paper, colorful bamboo baskets; thankas, ceramics, musical instruments and masks are some of many favorite items for purchase from Bhutan. The textiles with intricate patterns that take months to weave are made of cotton, wool or raw silk. Ethnic silver jewelry can also be found. The best shopping to be found is in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan.

### Photography:

All visitors should bring with them everything they need to take pictures. The photographic opportunities are immense on all trips. Also most important while visiting Dzongs, Monasteries and other religious monuments, please follow your tour escort's instructions properly and carefully.

### Health Information:

No vaccinations are currently required for traveling to Bhutan. However if you are arriving from an area infected with yellow fever, you are required to have a yellow fever vaccination and it shall be administered at least 10 days before your arrival into Bhutan. Also if arriving from Cholera infected area, the vaccination is strongly recommended. Anti-Malarial medication is also recommended for all travelers who are visiting rural areas in the districts that border India.

### Clothing:

Because of the variety of climates you may encounter in one day, choose garments, which can be layered. This means that the majority of your clothing can be worn in layers, so that you can put on more clothing if it is cold or take off layers as it warms up. In general, from June to September cottons and a good sweater will be enough, but from October to May you will need warm clothes including long underwear or woolen tights to wear under trousers, and a down jacket or a warm coat. Also don't forget to bring an umbrella or a rain jacket. Comfortable sports shoes are highly recommended and mountain boots are necessary if you come on a trek or plan to hike up to Taktsang. In Bhutan, you can get sun burnt quite quickly. Don't forget to include a sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, and barrier cream for your nose and lips in your packing list.

Please visit our website at [www.raonline.ch/yana.html](http://www.raonline.ch/yana.html) or [www.yanaexpeditions.com](http://www.yanaexpeditions.com) or email us directly at [yanaexpeditions@asia.com](mailto:yanaexpeditions@asia.com) or [info@yanaexpeditions.com](mailto:info@yanaexpeditions.com) for additional information or any other questions you may have.



# Yene Family Adventures

Yene Family Adventures is a unit of **Yana EXPEDITIONS, Inc** and is the only family adventure company in the country. We are delighted to offer you and your family a year-long selection of family adventures in Bhutan. Each year we grow and change according to what we hear from our travelers. This is one of the reasons **YFI** is different from other travel companies. We really do listen to our travelers.

We are grateful to have families who travel with us every year. As their interests evolve, so do our adventures. If you have yet to travel with us, we invite you to join us and discover how rewarding family vacations can be.



## Why Yene Family Adventures?

### ...Customized Adventures & Family Reunions to Remember

We can organize completely customized private adventures for you and your family; for group of friends who want to plan family vacations together. Drop us a line and see the kind of adventure we can put together for you.



### ...Families of All Kinds

We can include two parent and single parent families, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, grandparents and grandchildren. And our young travelers have ranged from toddlers to teens.

### ...Departures at Your Convenience

We understand that family freedom only arrives at certain times of the year and on top of that we also know that family vacations can be difficult to organize, and often impossible to reschedule. Therefore, we are not tied to a set of pre-scheduled offerings. We will arrange things so you can do what you want to do when you are ready to do it.





# BHUTAN Beyond the Guide Books!

Bhutan is the last Mahayana Buddhist kingdom in the world. The lush green valleys, virgin forests, clear fast flowing rivers and an enthralling landscape have made Bhutan an exclusive tourist destination today. The Kingdom has some of the most famous sites in the world for Buddhist pilgrims. Your Bhutan holiday can be the ultimate spiritual experience. It is home to one of the most vibrant un-spoilt traditions and exciting cultures on earth.



For travelers who look for more than conventional tourist attractions, and desire to experience Bhutan's fascinating traditions, **Yana EXPEDITIONS** opens doors and takes you into the heart of a rich and thriving culture, unique art and architecture and above all, the people whose simple lifestyle will make your Bhutan experience unforgettable. With **Yana EXPEDITIONS** you do not travel in a tour group, but join us as our private guests. Thus, as a member of small, select circle we are able to share with you experiences that cannot be enjoyed by ordinary visitors.

A visit to **Yana EXPEDITIONS** owned farmhouse would offer you a closer look at the Kingdom's unique culture, which dictates simple hospitality extended to any and all guests, even to perfect strangers. We plan each trip separately, making sure you get exactly what you request, and ensuring little special extras for every member of your party. There is abundance of wonderful opportunities, especially for photography, while on a journey through the interior of our Kingdom. **Yana EXPEDITIONS'** dedicated professionals

know the great historical sites and natural locations dotted across the landscape, and they are always there to help you take marvelous pictures.

The natural heritage is richer and more varied in Bhutan than any other Himalayan country. With more than 70% of its area under forest cover; Bhutan is one of the leading countries in environmental preservation. Various parts of the Kingdom are declared as Wildlife reserves, and they are the natural habitats of rare species of both flora and fauna.

Bhutan is largely free of air pollution, traffic jams and any of kind of criminal activity. In Bhutan, you can devote your full attention to a world of natural beauty and rich tradition with the added bonus of the friendly charm, ready sense of humor and gracious hospitality of its people. **Your first visit to Bhutan with Yana EXPEDITIONS will surely not be your last.**



In beauty lies the promise of happiness



Kurjey Lhakhang, Bumthang



Registered with the Department of Tourism, License #1015669  
P.O. Box #319, Thimphu. Kingdom of Bhutan Tel/Fax: +975-2-326337  
Email: yanaexpeditions@asia.com • info@yanaexpeditions.com  
[www.raonline.ch/yana.html](http://www.raonline.ch/yana.html) • [www.yanaexpeditions.com](http://www.yanaexpeditions.com)