HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS
A JOURNEY THROUGH TIBET, NEPAL & BHUTAN

May 29–June 12, 2017
With
ANDY ROTMAN,
Professor of Religion,
and
JANNA WHITE ’07,
South Asia and Buddhism Specialist
Dear Smith Alumnae,

Travel to the “rooftop of the world” with Smith Professor Andy Rotman and South Asia and Buddhism specialist Janna White ’07 to explore the ancient kingdoms of Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan. These starkly beautiful and isolated countries flourish in the isolation of the Himalayas, offering a richness of religious and cultural traditions and an amazing diversity of art and architecture.

Begin your journey in Beijing, with time to explore the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square. Then continue to Tibet’s colorful capital of Lhasa, alive with spice merchants, pilgrims, and Buddhist monks at prayer in numerous monasteries. On your flight from Tibet to Nepal, view some of the highest peaks in the Himalayas—including Mt. Everest (weather permitting), which rises more than 29,000 feet above sea level. In Nepal, explore the Kathmandu Valley, crossroads of ancient Asian civilizations and home to seven UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Enjoy four full days of exploration in Bhutan—where fascinating dzongs (fortresses), chortens (religious structures), and the incomparable Tiger’s Nest monastery compete with the friendly Bhutanese and astonishingly beautiful scenery for best memories ever and provide an unforgettable cap to this adventure.

This exploration of ancient Himalayan kingdoms is a Smith College exclusive, limited to 35 travelers, so I encourage you to call Smith Travel today at (800) 225-2029, or go to http://alumnae.smith.edu/travel to book your space.

Best regards,

Elizabeth Bigwood
Director, Smith Travel
Office of Alumnae Relations
Andy Rotman is a professor of religion, Buddhist studies, and South Asian studies at Smith College, where he has been teaching for the past fifteen years. Andy specializes in the cultural history of Buddhism and Hinduism, and he teaches a wide range of courses about religious life in South Asia. Andy has spent many years living in the subcontinent and speaks a number of vernacular and classical languages. His next book, which will be published in 2017, is a second volume of translations from the Divyavadana, one of the most important collections of ancient Buddhist narratives.

Janna White ’07 is a writer and editor specializing in South Asian and Buddhist materials. She has been living and working in India intermittently since 2005, including time as a consultant to a study abroad program in Varanasi and as a travel-writing fellow sponsored by National Geographic. Janna, who speaks Hindi, is the coeditor of a forthcoming volume on the intersections of Western science and Tibetan Buddhism, The Monastery and the Microscope: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on Mind, Mindfulness, and the Nature of Reality (Yale University Press, 2017).
**ITINERARY**

**MONDAY, MAY 29 & TUESDAY, MAY 30**

**Home / Beijing, China**

Depart the U.S. on an overnight flight to Beijing and transfer to your hotel, located in the city center near the Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square.

*Fairmont Hotel*

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 31**

**Beijing**

Visit Tiananmen Square, where Mao Zedong announced the birth of the People’s Republic of China and, 40 years later, a student protest made headlines around the world. During a guided tour of the Forbidden City, which only those on imperial business could enter until the last emperor was overthrown in 1911, see the majestic Imperial Palace, the largest and best-preserved cluster of ancient buildings in China. Also visit the Temple of Heaven, a 15th-century complex of religious buildings. Join fellow travelers at this evening’s welcome reception.

*Fairmont Hotel (B,L,R)*

**THURSDAY, JUNE 1**

**Beijing / Lhasa, Tibet**

Depart for Tibet this morning, flying over some of the most forbidding and remote mountains in the world. After landing at the Lhasa airport, settle into the hotel and enjoy an afternoon at leisure.

*St. Regis Hotel (B,L,D)*

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**HIGHLIGHTS**

**TRAVEL** with Smith Professor Andy Rotman and Smith alumna Janna White ’07

**VISIT** Lhasa’s Potala Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site built on the side of “Red Mountain” and fortress-like in appearance.

**VIEW** the Himalayas by air, flying above more than one hundred awe-inspiring peaks, including Mt. Everest.

**ENJOY** privileged access to local dignitaries, recently opened temples rarely seen by Westerners, and religious sites not open to outsiders.

**SEE** the famous Taktsang Monastery, which clings to a cliff nearly 10,000 feet above the valley floor and is a holy pilgrimage destination for all Bhutanese.
FRIDAY, JUNE 2

Lhasa
Lhasa, the heart and soul of Tibet, is filled with colorful sights including nomads in native dress and saffron-robed monks with prayer wheels. Spend time at the imposing Potala Palace, which dominates the city and houses the principal shrines of past Dalai Lamas. At the Deprung Monastery, view important cultural relics such as iconic statues, rare sutras (texts), and lush decorative murals. St. Regis Hotel (B,L,D)

SUNDAY, JUNE 4

Lhasa / Kathmandu, Nepal
Take a morning flight to Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, nestled high in the Himalayas. Enjoy breathtaking panoramic views of this magnificent mountain range, including Mt. Everest (weather permitting). Upon arrival, visit Bodnath, a small town that boasts a World Heritage stupa built by Tibetan Buddhists. Dwarika’s Hotel (B,L)

MONDAY, JUNE 5

Kathmandu / Paro, Bhutan / Thimphu
This morning fly to Paro, site of the only airport in the tiny country of Bhutan. After lunch, drive to Thimphu, Bhutan’s capital since 1955. Along the way visit Simtokha Dzong, an important historical monastery/fortress that also houses one of Bhutan’s premier learning institutes. Le Meridien Hotel (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, JUNE 6

Thimphu
Visit the Third King’s Memorial Chorten, a prominent landmark with its golden spires and bells. View the royal textile collection at the National Textile Museum and continue to the School of Arts and Crafts, where students learn 13 traditional Bhutanese handicrafts. This evening, meet with Bhutanese intellectuals and local dignitaries for dinner. Le Meridien Hotel (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7

Thimphu / Punakha
Today travel overland through scenic countryside, past wild orchids and rare pines, to Punakha. En route visit Chimi-Lakhang, a 15th-century fertility pilgrimage shrine. Kunzang Zhing Resort (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, JUNE 8

Punakha
An optional morning hike takes you past farms and fields to the charming village of Nezigang. Continue a gradual climb to Khasmum Yuley Namgay Chorten, built by the royal family, which has superb views of Punakha Valley. Then follow the trails along the river to the impressive Punakha Dzong, the winter fortress of Jo Khenpo, chief hierarch of Bhutanese Buddhism. Alternatively, the dzong can be visited directly from the hotel. Kunzang Zhing Resort (B,L,D)

FRIDAY, JUNE 9

Punakha / Paro
On a leisurely drive back to Paro, stop to admire the countryside and observe local village life. See the 17th-century Paro Dzong, the center of civil and religious authority in the valley and popularized by the film The Little Buddha. Zhiwaling Hotel (B,L,D)

SATURDAY, JUNE 10

Paro
By special arrangement, visit the iconic Taktsang (“Tiger’s Nest”) Monastery, whose white temples cling to a soaring cliff 10,000 feet above the valley. The monastery is a pilgrimage site that all Bhutanese people aspire to visit at least once in their lives. Zhiwaling Hotel (B,L,D)

SUNDAY, JUNE 11

Paro / Bangkok, Thailand
Fly to Bangkok and transfer to an airport hotel for an evening at leisure. Novotel Suvarnabhumi Hotel (B,L)

MONDAY, JUNE 12

Bangkok / Home
Depart Bangkok for home, re-crossing the International Date Line and arriving the same day. (B)
PROGRAM RATES
Per person, double occupancy: $11,990
Per person, single occupancy: $14,980

PROGRAM RATES INCLUDE
All accommodations and meals as specified in the itinerary • All sightseeing as specified in the itinerary • On-tour flights (economy class): Beijing/Lhasa/Kathmandu/Paro/Bangkok • Full program of briefings and lectures • Pre-scheduled arrival and departure transfers • Wine, beer, and soft drinks for all lunches and dinners • Visas for Nepal and Bhutan • Baggage handling • Gratuities to porters, waiters, guides, and drivers • Entrance fees • Welcome and farewell receptions • Bottled water on motor coaches • Professional tour manager

AIR ARRANGEMENTS
U.S. domestic and international airfare is not included in the program rates. Round-trip economy-class airfare from New York to Beijing, China, with return from Bangkok, Thailand, is approximately $1,700 per person as of June 2016, subject to change. Information about making flight arrangements will be sent to all participants.

WHAT TO EXPECT
This is a relatively strenuous program covering rugged terrain, with considerable walking and a number of rigorous travel days with early departures. Daily excursions involve one to three miles of walking, including stairs without handrails, high thresholds, and cobbled uneven paths. The excursion to Taktsang Monastery is a rigorous hike. Coach rides to remote locations are sometimes long and on bumpy roads. If you are susceptible to altitude sickness, please be aware that Lhasa is 11,450 feet above sea level.

Participation requires that passengers be in generally good health. It is essential that persons with any medical issues and/or dietary restrictions make them known to us well before departure. Any impairments regarding mobility must be disclosed prior to booking. We can counsel participants on whether this trip is appropriate for them.

A NOTE ABOUT COSTS
Tour costs are based upon current airfares, fuel prices, taxes, tariffs, and a minimum number of participants. While we will do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change (for example, if there are significant increases in fuel prices). If changes should occur, details and costs will be advised prior to departure.
RESERVATION FORM

HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS
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May 29–June 12, 2017

To reserve your space, please make your deposit check payable to Criterion Travel and mail to: Smith Travel, 33 Elm Street, Northampton, MA 01063. You may fax credit card information to: (413) 585-2015. For questions, call Smith Travel at (800) 225-2029.

CONTACT INFORMATION (PLEASE PRINT)
NAME (AS IT APPEARS ON PASSPORT)   SMITH AFFILIATION
NAME (AS IT APPEARS ON PASSPORT)   SMITH AFFILIATION
CITY/STATE/ZIP
HOME PHONE            BUSINESS PHONE
FAX              E-MAIL
PAYMENT
☐ Enclosed is my check for $_________ ($1,000 per person), to hold ____ place(s) on Himalayan Kingdoms. OR
☐ Charge my deposit to:
   ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover
   CARD #     EXP. DATE
   CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE    SECURITY CODE
SINGLE TRAVELERS
If this is a reservation for one person, please indicate:
☐ I prefer to have single accommodations.
☐ I plan to share accommodations with

☐ I am willing to share with another participant (not guaranteed).
I am a ☐ Non-smoker ☐ Smoker.
I understand that if a roommate cannot be found by the final payment deadline of January 29, 2017, I will pay the single rate.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Bed preference in hotels (not guaranteed):
☐ One bed ☐ Two beds
☐ /We have read the tour information section of the brochure and agree to the Terms and Conditions stated herein.

SIGNATURE     DATE
SIGNATURE     DATE
In Buddhism, prayer wheels are used to accumulate wisdom and merit (good karma) and purify negativities (bad karma).