Nepal and Bhutan
May 5–17, 2013

IF A WORLD of intriguing destinations, the mountain kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan, nestled amidst the world’s highest peaks, stand literally and figuratively above the rest. This is one of the world’s greatest journeys, for reasons as much artistic and spiritual as geographical.

Nepal houses a repository of stunning cultural wealth, which comes as a great surprise to many who understandably associate it purely with the world’s highest mountain. The Kathmandu Valley alone contains seven distinct groups of monuments that exhibit a sweeping range of historic and artistic achievements.

Bhutan was shrouded in mystery for decades. It began its emergence from complete isolation in the 1970s, yet its then was hardly found until it practiced a strict policy of limited tourism, and in 2011, only 20,000 visitors were allowed entry. Anomalous yet visionary, it was ruled until recently by educated kings, and has consciously cultivated both a fiercely guarded traditional culture and the world’s most well-tended natural environment.

A Yale faculty member will provide insightful interpretation throughout the trip. Don’t miss the opportunity to embark on this exceptional journey.

GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS

Bhutan’s unique approach to governance advocates a new paradigm for measuring the wealth of nations in terms that go beyond consumable goods as measured in Gross National Product. This concept is termed “Gross National Happiness,” which champions individual and environmental well being over materialism. None other than the remote Himalayan land as being on the forefront of a new way of thinking.

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Himalayan Kingdoms
An In-Depth Program Designed Exclusively for Yale Travelers
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UNESCO World Heritage Site with its numerous temples and intriguing Royal Palace. Then visit the near-by Namgay Chapel, where a living goddess parity, after which she is given a life pension and a new goddess is found. The central courtyard of the temple is superabundant with carvings and an elaborate shrine.

May 4 - Kathmandu, Nepal

The city is the largest in the country, being the capital and also an ancient town. It is situated in the Kathmandu Valley, which is surrounded by the Himalayan Mountains. The city is rich in cultural heritage and is home to several UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The most famous is the Swayambhunath Temple, also known as the Monkey Temple, which is believed to be one of the oldest settlements in the Kathmandu Valley. The temple is situated on a hill overlooking the city and is home to thousands of monkeys.

May 6 - Pharping, Nepal

At Pharping, you will have the opportunity to see the first-ever snow leopard in the world. The snow leopard is a magnificent creature that is native to the mountains of Central Asia. It is classified as critically endangered due to habitat loss and poaching. This site is managed by the Snow Leopard Conservation Trust, which is dedicated to protecting the species.

May 7 - Swayambhunath, Nepal

At Swayambhunath Temple, you will witness the incredible sight of the city of Kathmandu from a bird's-eye view. The temple is perched on a hill overlooking the city and offers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape. The temple is also home to a large population of monkeys, which add to the unique atmosphere of the site.

May 9 - Changu Narayan, Nepal

Changu Narayan is a historic site located in the Kathmandu Valley. It is home to a temple named Changu Narayan, which is dedicated to the deity Shiva. The temple is surrounded by a beautiful garden and is a popular destination for tourists and pilgrims alike.

May 11 - Bhaktapur

In Bhaktapur, you will visit the famous Durbar Square, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The square is surrounded by several temples and palaces, including the Nyatapola Temple and the Dharahara Tower. The square is also known for its vibrant street scenes and traditional architecture.

May 13 - Druk Hotel, Paro

In Paro, you will have the opportunity to visit the ancient Paro Taktsang Monastery, also known as the Tiger's Nest. This monastery is perched high on a cliff and offers stunning views of the surrounding landscape.

May 15 - Punakha

In Punakha, you will visit the stunning Punakha Dzong, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The dzong is a fortress-monastery that was built in the 17th century and is considered to be one of the most beautiful dzongs in Bhutan.