



**Dates** September 22-24, 2010 (festival dates)

**Trip Duration** 11 nights/12 days

**Difficulty Rating** Easy

**Highlights** The Mani festival is a boisterous occasion that takes place in the most spectacular of settings. Performed by the monks of Chiwong, it depicts the victory of Buddhism over the ancient 'Bon' religion.

**Cost** Cost depends on the group size. Contact us for details. Costs will include ground transportation to and from Paro airport, transportation and entrance fees to all listed activities, entry fees, all meals, accommodations

- Itinerary**
- Day 1 Arrive at Paro Airport. You will be received by our guide at the Paro International Airport and escorted to your hotel for refreshment. Visit the National Museum of Bhutan and Paro Dzong. Overnight in Paro.
  - Day 2 We take a 1 hour drive to Thimphu and transfer to hotel. Sightseeing in and around Thimphu Valley includes the National Library, the Painting School and the Textile and Folk Heritage Museum.
  - Day 3 Thimphu - Wangdue. This morning we depart Thimphu towards the East to Wangdue. En route enjoy a short break for tea/ coffee at Dochu-la Pass (10,000 ft) and view the Eastern Himalayan Mountain ranges while surrounded by hundreds of prayer flags and Buddhist chortens; Spectacular! Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 4 Wangdue - Bumthang. It takes 5 – 6 hours to drive between Wangdue and Trongsa. The route crosses the Black Mountains via Pele-la (10,800 ft) before entering the Mangde Chhu Valley. From Pele-la the road follows the Nikka Chhu (River) to the Village of Chendebji. Stop for a picnic lunch at Chendebji. Continue our drive from Trongsa to Bumthang; a 3 hour drive crossing Yotung-la Pass (11,000 ft). Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 5 Bumthang. Today we attend a very unique village festival. Masks of glorious demonic demons and animals arouse your senses as you watch the purification take place. We will join the local people for a picnic lunch. Watch for the Atsara (clown). This dancer mimics dancers and entertains onlookers. Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 6 Bumthang. Today we will enjoy some Bumthang sightseeing. Bumthang has an individuality that separates it from other regions. Comprised of four smaller valleys, the deeply spiritual region is shrouded in religious legend. Here tales of Guru Padmasambhava and his re-incarnation, known as Tertons, still lingers. It is also known for its woolen material (yathra) which is hung outside the houses to display for sale. Visit the Jakar Dzong, 7th century Jambay Lhakhang, Kurjey Monastery, Tamshing and Kunchosum Monastery. Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 7 Bumthang. Returning to Tangbi Mani Festival in the morning. After lunch we have free time for wandering and shopping. Textile fabric can be purchased here at a good price. It makes for a unique and wonderful gifts. Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 8 Bumthang - Wangdue. Drive to Phobjikha Valley. Stop to view the Black Neck Cranes. These large, beautiful and graceful birds migrate each year from Tibet and Siberia to Phobjikha Glacial Valley on the Western slopes of the Black Mountains. Drive to Wangdue with scenic stops for photos along the way. Visit the Wangdue Dzong after lunch. Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 9 Wangdue - Paro. After breakfast, drive to Paro via Dochu-la Pass. We stop at various points along the way to take in the views and have lunch. Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 10 Paro. Day excursion to Haa Valley bordering Tibet. On arrival in the picturesque Haa Valley, stroll through attractive town. Return to Paro and stop at Chele-la Pass at 13,000 ft. It's the highest pass on this road and offers fantastic views of Mount Jhomolhari (24,000 ft). Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 11 Paro. Hike to the famous Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest). The monastery is perched on a rocky ledge with a drop of 3,000 feet. Here we enjoy snacks and tea at the viewpoint. Overnight at hotel.
  - Day 12 Paro. Early morning drive to Paro international airport after breakfast.

