

SHIVALIK TO ZANSKAR

(A journey in Great Himalayas)

Duration: 22 Days / 21 Nights

City Covered:

Delhi – Amritsar – Dharamsala – Manali – (Lahaul & Spiti) Kaza – Kibber – Pin Valley – Kaza – Keylong-Sarchu – Tsokar – Leh – Pangong – Uletopko – Lamayuru – Alchi – Nubra Valley

Day 01: Arrival Delhi

On arrival at Delhi international airport, you will be received by our office representative with the pla card/ paging board showing your name and our company name. There could be few reasons that you might require your airport transfer representative's help even before you meet him so we will mail you later the mobile telephone number and name of your rep, so you can contact him any time. He will assist you to hotel and take care of your smooth check in. He will again join you back on next morning and assist you to board the train for Amritsar- the holy land for Indians, especially Sikh community. You rep will hand over the tickets and hotel vouchers in the morning.

Day 02: Train to Amritsar

Journey by train to Amritsar is time saving and comfortable. This is the SHATABDI train, one of the fastest moving trains in India which serves the different meals, tea/ coffee/ mineral water/snacks etc. inside the train along with the daily newspapers. It leaves Delhi at 0720 and reaches Amritsar at 1320. We are sure that you will have an enjoyable and comfortable journey. Inside the train, you do have the facility for international calls but it should be used only in emergency. On arrival at Amritsar, you will find your local guide with the plea card, who will assist you to one of the best hotel of Amritsar. After check in, you will be taken for the local sightseeing of this historic city by the guide and car driver. This driver is going to be with you till Leh. Golden Temple Amritsar- The Golden Temple or Durbar Sahib, situated in Amritsar, Punjab, is the most sacred temple for Sikhs. It is a symbol of the magnificence and strength of the Sikh people all over the world. In the evolution of the Durbar Sahib, is entwined the history and ideology of Sikhism. In its architecture are included, symbols associated with other places of worship. This is an example of the spirit of tolerance and acceptance that the Sikh philosophy propounds. The history of the Durbar Sahib starts with Guru Amar Das, who took the first steps towards building a shrine. Around the Golden Temple, the holy city of Amritsar came into being. His successor, Guru Ram Das, came to live near this tranquil and peaceful site, and started building the pilgrimage centre around the small pool, (later to become the Sarowar) which had initially drawn Guru Amar Das. By the time of Guru Ram Das' death, the pre eminence of the Durbar Sahib among the Sikh devotees was unquestionable. The Harmandir Sahib, or the sanctum, was envisioned by Guru Arjan Dev. He to reflect the resoluteness, clarity and simplicity of the Sikh religion conceived this. The Harmindir Sahib today stands as the

hallowed symbol of the indestructibility of the Sikh faith. He designed it to have four doors, one on each side. The Golden Temple would thus be open to all four castes- Kshatriyas, Brahmins, Shudras & Vaisyas. The gilding, marble, mirror and inlay work on the Harmandir Sahib came much later. It was the nineteenth century during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, that the proud people of Punjab lavished their wealth on their shrine in Amritsar. The Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs, was installed in the Harmandir Sahib in 1604, three years after its completion. The location of the Granth Sahib here adds to the sanctity & reverence of the Harmandir Sahib. Here lies the heart of Sikhism. Every Sikh holds this symbol of abiding faith and tolerance in high esteem. And this is the place, which every Sikh dreams, ever so often, of visiting.

Day 03: Drive to Dharamsala 200 Kms

Morning temple visit in Amritsar and the drive to Dharamsala. Amritsar to Dharamsala is 200 Kms drive through the various towns of Punjab till you reach the boundaries of Himachal Pradesh- the mountain state. Once you enter Himachal, you will have small green fields, farmers, small shops and towering Dhauladhar Mountains indicating you that shortly you are reaching Dharamsala. Your accommodation is booked at McLeodganj which is the home of HH the Dalai Lama in India and the head office of Tibetan Government in Exile.

Day 04: Dharamsala

This is the Tibetan Kingdom in exile with the residence of HH The Dalai Lama. McLeodganj is a beautiful Tibetan town at the top of Dharamsala, blessed equally by nature and religion. The residence of HH Dalai Lama, Namgyal monastery, Tibetan Parliament, Tibetan library, Tibetan medical centre, Tibetan handicraft centre, Tibetan children village, Church of St. Elgin in wilderness and a market of Tibetan goods will be visited with your guide. A visit to Norbulinga Institute run under Tibetan administration would be very interesting to understand the real Tibetan system in Exile. Overnight at hotel.

Day 05: Drive to Manali (260 Kms)

A drive of 260 Kms is amazingly wonderful moving from Buddhist centre to Gaddi (shepherd's) areas to tea gardens to city of temples - Kashi of Himalayas and to valley of Gods- Kullu. Driving under the shining mountains through the tea gardens of Palampur takes to Baijnath for a short visit of ancient temple of Lord Shiva, an architectural masterpiece of Pagoda family. Another temple on the itinerary is Triloknath temple of Mandi and further driving on the banks of River Beas we reach Kullu, 42 Kms less to Manali, the beautiful hill station and gateway to Ladakh and Spiti. Overnight at hotel.

Day 06: Manali

Manali is a small but very beautiful town in western Himalayas. There is lot of places to visit near around. You will be guided to Hadimba temple and then to Manu temple in the morning and later to Nagar Castle and Roerich Art gallery. You will be surprised to see Old Manali village which has mythical values in Indian culture and religion, the

houses are years old, made of wood and stone hundreds years back and capable to feed a family in all seasons with ample store of food grains, cattle, fire wood and weaving system. Evening is free to visit market in the town and relax.

Day 07: Drive to Kaza in Spiti (200 Kms)

Morning we leave Manali after breakfast and prepare to enter into a different tribal world of Spiti. We cross Rohtang Pass which is 51 Kms from Manali and then start moving down into a different valley of Chandra. The snow capped peaks, deep valleys, barren but shining mountains and a beautiful silence is all with you. After crossing Rohtang La, you leave Kullu- Manali and enter into Lahaul and Spiti area. From Gramphu, there is a diversion that takes you 16 Kms ahead to Chatru small seasonal establishment. You stop at Lal Singh's Dhaba who is from my village and have some tea/coffee and snacks. Now you are in Spiti. Spiti- the forbidden land: Spiti (locally pronounced 'Piti') or the 'middle country' has its sub divisional headquarters at Kaza. The river Spiti originates at the base of the Kunzam range and flows eastward to join the Sutlej at Khab in Kinnaur. In practical isolation for centuries, Spiti has an intensely introvert culture centered around its several monasteries- Dhankar, Ki, Tabo, Mud, Kungri, Lidang, Hikim, Sagnam, Mane Gogma and Giu to name a few. Spiti was loosely ruled for many centuries by a hereditary wazir, styled Nono. The majority of the people are Buddhists, followers of the Gelukpa sect. The repetition of the mantra "Om Mani Padme Hum" (literally, 'Behold, the jewel is in the lotus'), is constant; it is believed to bring good fortune and wash away all sins. For all the seeming bleakness, Spiti possesses a haunting beauty. The wildlife in the region includes the elusive snow leopard and ibex, found in the Pin valley. Spiti has come to be known as the "fossil park of the world". The three villages Kibber, Kaza & Ki fall on the route favorite among those looking for fossils. These villages are situated at heights between 13,500 ft. and 14,400 ft. Langza is famous for fossils of maritime life. These fossils are found on either side of Kang-yur and Paapen-yu nullahs near the village. After this Dhaba at Chatru, you drive to the base of Kunzam Pass (4550 Meters) and finally reach Kaza- the head quarter of Spiti by late afternoon. Though Manali to Kaza is only 200 Kms but terrain makes it a long drive.

Day 08: Kaza to Kee monastery (12 Kms + 12 Kms) (the Kalchakra monastery of year 2000) and Kibber (the highest village of Asia) and drive to Tabo (46 Kms)

Not more than 40 Kms both ways. The vehicle stops at the highest motorable village of Kibber (4205M). This is the start point of one of the most exciting Himalayan trekking route to Tsemoriri over Parang La. A small walk in the village can never be missed with our Tribal Guide. It has a small restaurant run by a local man. We turn back to *Kye Gompa (4116M) (the millennium monastery with famous Kalchakra of year 2000)* It is only 11 Kms from Kibber. Visit in side of this huge monastery - a famous school of Buddhist religion for hundreds of years in Trans Himalayas. Kee Monastery is situated 12 Kms. north of Kaza and serves the western population of Spiti. It is the oldest and biggest monastery of the valley and located at (4116 m) above Kee village. It houses beautiful scriptures and paintings of Buddha and

other gods. Lamas practice dance, sing and play on pipes and horns. Many Lamas get religious training here. It has murals and books of high aesthetic value Drive back to Kaza and then move to Tabo, 46 Kms from Kaza. Overnight at Hotel.

Day 09 : Drive to Pin Valley, Dhankar Monastery and Lalung Monastery and back to Kaza.

Geographically and archeologically, Spiti is nothing else but a living museum. The mountains are devoid to any vegetation due to erosion by wind, sun and snow over thousands of years. We drive towards Tabo which is 45 Kms from Kaza but take a right turn after 11 Kms and enter into Pin Valley which is amazingly green in Spiti. We move up to Kungri Gompa, another old monastery of Spiti, this is the place of again several in-house monks and Buddhist school. The Cham dances, the Tantric oracles and monks debate all incidentally if you could watch, may take you to a world of different planet. Ample time to find individual imaginations about a traditional, ancient Buddhist village, believe me, your world is several hundred years ahead of these villages, and here you are back in time. After the visit to Kungri Monastery, we turn back on same road for 18 Kms and go straight to Tabo. (3050M) Built around the year 996 AD, the Chos Khor monastery at Tabo is the largest monastery in Spiti and one of the few remaining examples of the golden period of Buddhist Culture in the Himalayan region. In 1995, the Tabo has celebrated its Millennium year with a Kalchakra Sermon. The wall frescos of the monastery are comparable in their antiquity and quality of those of the Ajanta caves; hence they are called the Ajanta of Himalayas. It houses more than 100 Lamas, a large number of scriptures and pieces of art, wall paintings, Thankas and stucco. It belongs to the tenth century and has a famous Gompa next to Tholing Gompa in Tibet. Murals of this Gompa have a great similarity to that of the Ajanta paintings. Drive to Dhankar and Lalung monasteries and reach Kaza by evening. The total journey will not exceed 70-80 Kms in this day. Dhankar was once the King's Palace of Spiti; the rock cut monastery is amazingly surviving on a edge of barren dry mountain. This is again one of the oldest monastery of Spiti. **DHANKAR MONASTERY** is situated about 25 Kms. east of Kaza and serves eastern part of central Spiti. Danker is a big village and erstwhile capital of Spiti Kingdom. On top of a hill there is a fort which used to be the prison in old times. The Monastery has about 100 Lamas and is in position of Buddhist scriptures in Bhoti language. Principal figure is a Statue of " Vairochana" (Dhayan Buddha) consisting of 4 complete figures seated back to back. It has relics in the shape of paintings and sculptures Honestly speaking, the monasteries of Spiti are the finest in the Himalayas and technically for a short time visitor to India for Buddhism, Spiti offers better than Ladakh by un commercialized culture, gompas and easy access from both Manali and Shimla. The second visit takes to Lalung Gompa, the inside wall paintings are much resembling with the Tabo, it is on a hill top which offers a mystic view of one white colour village in front of far off mountain gorge in height. Evening back to Kaza, the headquarter of Spiti. Overnight at hotel.

Day 10 : Hikkim, Komic and Langza excursion and back Kaza (15 + 15 Kms)

Morning we drive towards Hikkim and walk for 2 Kms on flat section and reach at the base of Hikkim. Then we start trekking up towards Hikkim Village. The landscape is dry and barren but the village has green fields and vegetation. We start the day with a walk to Langza's Fossil Centre: The Spiti Valley was formed as a result of the collision of the Indian and the Eurasian plate millions of years ago which led to the disappearance of the ancient Tethys Sea leaving behind fossilized clues of the sea life of that era. The route to the natural fossil centre starts from the Lang (temple) at Langza, from where it is about a half hour walk to its base. The fossil centre ranges from an average altitude of 4400 mts to 4600 mts along a narrow stream and is best explored here. It might seem extremely tempting to pick up a few of these geological relics, however, kindly refrain from depriving Spiti of its natural heritage. **Komic Monastery:** The Komic Lundup Tsemo Gompa (Monastery) is one of the world's highest at 4587mts. Komic Gompa was earlier located near Hikkim and had to be shifted to its present location after an earthquake destroyed the earlier Gompa. The Gompa is well maintained and the local lamas (monks) will respectfully explain you the monastery. **Tangyud Shakyapa:** A visit to the ruins of the old Shakyapa Monastery is about a 3 hour walk from Komic. The legend goes that it was foretold in Tibet that there would be 3 streams meeting at a point above which there would be a mountain in the shape of a heart, where the current monastery should be placed. The paradox of this monastery is that even though there were 3 streams flowing in the vicinity, yet the Monastery was abandoned due to water scarcity after an earthquake. As per local folklore it is said that the presiding deity "Maha Kala" of the Monastery had blessed 6 Bharals (blue sheep) which live in the vicinity of the Monastery till date. The fortunate may well be blessed with the sightings of these creatures. After having a typical day in Spiti, we come back to Kaza hotel with plenty of memories and experience for whole life.

Day 11: Kaza to Keylong/ 210 Kms

Drive over majestic Kunzam La pass. Kaza (3600M) to Chota Dara (3960M) is 120 Kms which takes about 06 hrs with a short halt at Kunzam Pass (4551M). The road gives an experience of several small Himalayan Villages where women often are seen with a full cloth on their faces to avoid cold harsh wind coming down from high passes. As you move up, the toughness of local living increases with the same pace. The village monasteries, togetherness, celebrations and festivals are only escape during winters here. I got fascinated always with the mountains at Tackche, some 12 Kms before Kunzam La. It changes colors in a day and basically it is because of different shining shrubs in it. Reach Kunzam La, a mountain pass with some Chortans and a temple of goddess Kunzam, check here, if you are god fearing the goddess accepts your coin by catching it on a stone. Batal, the base is just 12 Kms down and from Kunzam we do the beautiful Chander Tal lake trekking. *Ask for the detailed program. We are moving under the CB ranges of mountains, the Chandra river which originates from Chander Tal lake remains with

us towards Chota Dara. From Chota Dara, we reach Chatru after 16 Kms and Gramphug another 16 Kms. Here you have to show your passports which would take not more than 10 minutes for all 04 travelers and then drive into Lahoul Valley and reach Keylong. This would be a little long day but evening you can see the 15th August- Indian Independence day program at Keylong. This celebration is very popular in Himalayas and probably the only place in India where Independence day is celebrated as a festival by local people. Overnight at Hotel

Day 12: Keylong to Sarchu camp (115 Kms)/ Camp

We can afford a late start. Morning after breakfast we can walk up to Kardang Monastery and then drive towards Sarchu. The highly revered Kardang Gompa is five Kms from Keylong and has a large library of Buddhist Kangyur and Tangyur scriptures. It is believed to be built in 12th century. Kardang village was once the capital of Lahoul. Kardang is the largest Gompa popular throughout the region. It was in ruins up till 1912 when 'Lama Norbu' of Kardang renovated it. With colorful frescoes and murals, it has an enormous prayer drum containing strips of paper upon which the sacred mantra 'Om Mani Padme Hum' is inscribed a million times. Nuns and Lamas enjoy equality. Lamas can marry and generally they stay with their families during summer and work in fields only to return in winter. The store here has large collection of musical instruments, dresses, Thanks and other articles. Clay images of various Buddhist lamas can be seen arranged in almirahs. We leave the Gompa and back in our jeeps at 1100 hours and drive for our day's destination. On the way we can stop at Jespa village and if possible can meet the Tibetan Lady Doctors who runs a small hospital with Tibetan Medicines here. It is 25 Kms from Keylong and after 5 Kms we reach Darcha, the last village on road towards Sarchu. From here we can start trek to Padum and Lamayaro. The Indian Government is constructing a road from here to Nimu in Ladakh over Shingo La pass. Once it is ready it would be the shortest road to Leh with only one high pass, Shingo La. We need to deposit one copy of group's naming list here and register again ourselves. We can have fresh but simple lunch here in any of way side Dhaba and leave Darcha at 1300 hours. Further is Patseo Ground- the place which used to be the meeting place of ancient traders till 1966. History sleeps here and with out disturbing it we start gradually climbing the Baralacha La Pass. Just before the pas we see a huge lake Suraj Tal which is the origin of Bhaga River. The zig zag road takes us up to Baralacha La which has witnessed the kings moving towards Spiti and Lahoul ages back both for marriages and aggressive reasons. You can still find the old trek routes and finally we climb down to Sarchu by around 1800 hours, we check into our camp-This is the first luxurious resort on world's highest motorable roads set by Adventure India. You will have Swiss cottages here with separate restaurant of 30 covers, attached toilets and hot water showers. From Baralacha and Sarchu there are many trekking routes commence to Spiti and to Zanskar. Sarchu is based at a flat ground which gets good winds during morning hours. The altitude is 3900 meters and it is the final stop in Himachal on the way to Ladakh

Day 13: Sarchu to Tsokar/ tents (97 Kms)

Morning we leave the camp at 0800 hours and drive to Tsokar - the meaning of Tsokar is Salt lake. The drive after Sarchu is extremely different where we see the shining high mountain peaks of different colors, barren areas and it takes us to another high pass Lachung La of 5056 meters. After few Kms of Sarchu we reach Brandy Nallah and ahead of it, start the region of Gata lopes. There are 21 hairpin road bends and we will find trucks loaded and awaiting a second breadth. The road from the top of the Gata lopes till Lachung la pass is generally mettled with a few unmetalled tracks in between. We proceed further to the Double humped Pass called Lachung La (5060M) where your escort will serve you a hot bowl of soup in the running vehicle. From here it is all down hill with un metal led road and scree rocks till we hit Pang (4630m). You will see some aweinspiring scenery today. Pang is located in a gorge like feature with habitation of army cantonment and some tent offering meals, tea and beds. Ascend uphill to proceed further & we get out of the gorge of pang & than it is a drive into the plateau area of Morey Plains- a straight road of 45 Kms. Just short of Dibring, at Mangzul; we proceed on the southeastern axis and reach in the heart of famous Rupshu valley known for Tso Kar and Tso Moriri. In olden times the salt lake was responsible for the supply of salt to the inhabited Ladakh valley. Our camp team will be waiting at Tsokar where we join them at about 1500 hours. Rest of the day is free to explore surroundings. Tsokar: It is 110 Kms from Sarchu and 86 Kms before Tsemoriri Lake. It has a small Gompa in the village of Thukse- a collection of solid stone huts set up for dramatic winters.

Day 14: Tsokar to Leh

Tsokar is the salt Lake region with picturesque landscape just in between of Himachal and Rupshu valley. We drive towards Leh from our campsite in the morning and it is about 08- 09 hours drive to reach Leh.

Day 15 : Leh - Pangong Lake & back

Fullday excursion to Pangong Lake 135 kms one of the biggest natural brackish lakes in Asia. Enjoy a picnic lunch at the Lake side. Back to Leh by evening and free at leisure. Dinner & overnight at the Hotel in Leh.

Day 16: Sightseeing of Leh

This day we start little early so we can reach Thikse Monastery and join the Lamas in Morning Prayer. The exact time of this prayer will be informed to you on previous evening. This monastery lies on a hill top and provokes the memories of Potala in Lhasa, though it is very small in comparison. **Thikse Monastery.** This Gompa was built some 600 years ago and consists of 12 levels ascending a hillside, culminating in an Incarnate Lama's private apartments at the summit. The Gompa contains 10 temples; below the monastery itself are chapels and "houses" of monks stretching down the hillside. There are about 100 monks of the yellow-hat sect of Buddhism living here. A 15 meters tall Buddha was constructed in 1970 to commemorate a visit to Thikse by the Dalai Lama. This statue is the largest Buddha figure in Ladakh and took four years to construct. It is made of clay and covered with gold

paint. Inside, the statue is filled with holy books; the translated word of Buddha, called the Kangyur and the translated commentary compiled by the religious teacher Bu-Stun (1290-1364 AD), called the Tangyur - a 225-volume commentary on the Kangyur .The statue was made entirely by local craftsmen and represents Maitreya, ("compassion" in Sanskrit) - the Buddha of the Future. It is believed that the world will be undergoing such chaos that the Future Buddha will teach compassion to the people. Located directly above is a small narrow room used as a schoolroom for local boys. Here the lamas instruct the children and some are later selected to become lamas. Traditionally, Ladakhi families donated one son to become a lama. The wheel of life unfolds the reality of life in wonderful manor. There are many hand-written or painted books inside the Gompa. Recent editions are done by block printing, as was previously done in Tibet. This procedure is still used for printing the holy books. Wooden painting plates are made for each page and pressed by hand. Older and more important editions are not printed with black ink on white paper, as is usual, but with gold ink on black lacquered paper which is then decorated with Buddha figures. **Shey palace & Gompa:** The palace was built in 1645 by King Deldan Namgyal as a summer residence for the kings of Ladakh. It is the oldest palace in Ladakh and above the palace is an even older ruined fortress. From the palace the view ranges in the south to the Thikse Gompa and in the west to the Zanskar range. Hundreds of chortens of all shapes and sizes stand below the palace and Gompa. These chortens demonstrate the interest taken in Shey by the Ladakhi kings and queens who succeeded Shey's builder. In 1655, in memory of his father, this same king built the two-storey Gompa adjacent to the palace. He installed a two-storey high image of the seated Buddha. After entering the central courtyard located on the second storey of the Gompa, the 12-meter high image of the Buddha is found in the room to one's right. The Buddha is worked of copper sheets gilded with gold. This is the biggest metal statue in the region and was the largest Buddha statue of any type in Ladakh until Thikse installed a 15-meter tall Buddha made of clay in 1970. Shey's Buddha statue was made in 1655 by a Nepalese sculptor who was assisted by three Ladakhi craftsmen. The castings of the statue were made in Leh while the statue's copper was collected in Zanskar and hammered into plates on big rocks. More than five kilos of gold were then used to plate the copper. The statue was built in parts in the Zanstil Palace ("Zans" means copper and "til" means to hammer) in Leh and then transported to Shey where it was assembled and installed. Sacrificial offerings such as grain or jewels, holy signs and mantras are contained inside the figure. The most important moment in the construction of the Buddha figure is when the eyes are painted on, for this is the moment when the statue can "see". For this reason, the artist or monk will paint in a Buddha's pupils over his shoulder, with his back to the idol, for none would dare to look the Buddha in the eye. In front of the statue of Buddha, to the right, is a statue of a blue horseman, Paldan Lamo and to the left is a statue of the red horseman of Chakmen, representing the king of Ladakh. Also in front of the Buddha is a large bowl of wax with a central flame that burns for one

year before being replaced. This flame represents divinity and purity and is present in front of all Buddha statues in the Ladakh region. **Hemis Monastery:** The Hemis Monastery situated in the South of Leh, at a distance of 43 Kms, on the south bank of the Indus river, Belonging to "BKA BRGYUDPA "School of Tibetan Buddhism - one of the four major school, Hemis is a religious institute of one of the schools. The Hemis Gompa was founded 350 years ago and is one of the wealthiest monasteries in Ladakh. Hemis belongs to the Kagupa Brugpa sect of Buddhism, the sect dominant in Bhutan.

Day 17: Leh - Uletopko (68 Kms)/ Uley Ethnic Resort

The distance from Leh to Uletopko is just 68 Kms and so we have liberty to little relax and start at 0900 hours after breakfast. On the way we visit Likir, Chulichen nunnery and Rizong monasteries. The route gives us the nice view of Zanskar and Indus River confluence. We reach Likir Gompa at about 1100 hours and can spend one hour here. Likir Gompa is situated on an isolated ridge a few Kms north to Saspol which is on our way. Likir was established around the 15th century and early in its history, became responsible for the oversight of Alchi Gompa, to which it has posted lamas up to the present day. Likir belongs to the yellow-hat sect and currently houses about 120 lamas. There is a school too inside of the Gompawith 30-40 students who learn Buddhism with languages like Hindi and English and spend most of time in the monastery if they become lamas. Once we climb up to monastery, it is a wonderful sight indeed, we reach into the central courtyard and immediately on the right is the main Dukhang or assembly hall. On the right veranda wall is a Wheel of Life mandala held by Yama- the divinity that decides a person's future fate after death. Chulichen nunnery/Gompa This Gompa is in fact a nunnery and it's located about 2 kilometers before Rezhong Gompa. The nuns here are really friendly - they will show you their gompa and invited you for tea, I guess not for the large groups this tea can be generally offered. All over the monastery you may find apricots laid out under the sun to dry, while in other parts they have stocked almonds which they pressed to obtain massage oil. Rizong Gompa is located on the left bank of the Indus River, about 75 kilometers west of Leh. To get there take the right turn after Uletopko. This Gompa was built in the 19th century by Tsulrim Nyima, a monk from nearby Saspol. There's a chorten with his ashes somewhere in the monastery. About 50 Gelugpa monks live in the complex, and they are very friendly - if you can, ask them to see their kitchen: it's truly spectacular - a jump back in time.

Day 18 : Uletopko to Lamayaro (60 Kms) and back Leh

The day will start at 0900 hours after the breakfast; we don't need to pack up as we will be coming back to same rooms in the evening. Only the day sac is required including your camera and film rolls. The drive from our resort to Lamayuru is 55 Kms and same distance we drive back in the evening. We reach Lamayuru at 1130 hours and explore a land with wonderful monastery and civilization. After exploring the area we drive back to Leh and on the way we explore Alchi Monastery and Likir. **Lamayuru Monastery:** The Gompa is situated 15 Kms east of the *FOTU LA* on the

Srinagar- Leh highway in a medieval village at rocky hillside. The monastery belongs to red-hat sect of Buddhism and in past it housed for about 400 lamas. Presently there are about 50 lamas in the main Gompa and rest perform their duties in various other monasteries of same line but in nearby villages. There is an interesting legend about this monastery according to which, at the time of Sakyamuni- The historic Buddha, Lamayaro was a clear lake area with NAGS -the holy serpents which lie in the neck of Lord Shiva. It was foretold that the lake will disappear one day and a monastery will come up in its place. In 11th century NAROPA -renowned Indian Buddhist scholar reached here and started meditating near the Lake in a cave which still can be seen in the Dukhang. Naropa then found a split in the surrounding hillside and the lake started getting empty through this opening. In the empty place Naropa found a dead lion and afterwards at the same place he built the first temple -the SINGHE GHANG. (Lion mound) There is one another story saying that in 10th century, King of Ladakh ordered making of Lamayaro and asked Rinchen Zangpo for its supervision. In 16th century when the King of that period Jimyang Namgyal, was cured by a Lama from Tibet, he presented the Lamayaro Gompa as a gesture of gratitude to this Lama and ordered not to collect any tax from this area. Surrounding area of the monastery was declared as sanctuary where none could be arrested. That's the reason Lamayaro is also known as "Tharpa Ling- the place of freedom." In the wall on the right side of the Dukhang is a small cave known as Naropa's cave, where he is supposed to have meditated for several years. This cave contains a statue of Naropa as well as statues of Marpa (Naropa's student who became a translator of religious texts and famous poet) and Mila Re-pa (Marpa's student and a spiritual head of the red-hat sect of Buddhism, famous for his asceticism). The place Alchi is one of the larger villages in Lower Ladakh and is located on the southern bank of the River Indus at an altitude of 3,250 meters and from Leh it is 70 Kms of distance. Consisting of four separate hamlets, the village contains numerous historic monuments of different ages and in various states of repair, the oldest and most famous of which is a monastic compound today under the jurisdiction of Likir monastery. It is this complex which the term 'Alchi monastery' refers to. The monastic compound (chos-'khor) of Alchi accommodates some of the most fascinating Buddhist monuments in the Himalayas Alchi monastery: Of the legendary 108 monasteries made by King Yeshe and Rinchen Zangpo during the second diffusion of Buddhism, the best preserved is Alchi in Ladakh. The three-storied temple of Alchi is a classic Kashmiri structure, which was made by Kashmiri artists who were invited there. Alchi is an oasis of beauty and color in the midst of the vast and barren landscape of Ladakh. Inside the temple, the worshipper stands close to the grand statues of the Bodhisattvas that are over 14 feet tall. The dhoti of the Avalokitesvara statue has some of the most gorgeous paintings. We see here the only surviving visual representations of the culture and architecture of ancient Kashmir. These paintings are especially valuable, as the paintings of Kashmir of that period have been lost. The walls of Alchi are resplendent with figures made in the most luminous colours painted anywhere. It speaks for the

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development of the ancient techniques and materials that these colours still appear fresh, a thousand years after they were painted. One of the masterpieces of the Alchi paintings is the Green Tara. We are reminded of Ajanta in the manner of shading with a gradual lightening and deepening of color, which creates a sense of volume and roundedness of form. The painting also follows pan-Indian medieval norms of art, such as the protruding farther eye, which extends beyond the line of the face. This is a convention in Indian painting, which is seen particularly in the Jain paintings of Western India. We take our lunch at Alchi and drive back completely mesmerized with the history and present of Alchi Monastery and reach Leh around 1600 hours. Plenty of time to have a round in the local market for necessary things.

Day 19 : Drive to Nubra Valley (120 Kms)/ Camp

Early morning drive from Leh to Nubra—a beautiful valley lies in the north of Leh over the Khardung-la (18,380 ft) the highest motorable road in the world. The valley was a trade route from Leh and Khasgar via Saser and Karakoram passes. Apart from unparalleled trekking opportunities the valley has several Buddhist monasteries namely Sumur, Tiger and 350 years old Diskit monastery famous for its murals. From Khardung-la drive to Khardung village through starkly beautiful countryside to the Traffic Check Post (TCP) at Khalsar where permits have to be registered and checked. From here one has to turn to the left side from the Shayok River and drive for 24 Kms over a narrow steep road to Diskit. We move to Hunder for overnight stay at deluxe camp.

Day 20 : Drive back to Leh (120 Kms)

Morning visit Samstanling Monastery and drive back to Leh. Evening at Leisure at your own to walk along the Leh market streets and to have some souvenirs for your family & friends. Overnight at hotel.

Day 21: Leh to Delhi.

Your transfer rep will take you in time to the airport and on arrival at Delhi; you will meet your Delhi assistant for drive to hotel.

Day 22: Fly home.

Our office representative will assist you to International airport for your flight to home.

Our Net/ Non-commissionable rate to organise above tour (Including all applicable taxes) is as following

02-03 Pax	US\$ 2050* per person
04-06 Pax	US\$ 1875* per person
07-10 Pax	US\$ 1610* per person
Single Supplement	US\$ 370* per single.

**(Prices can be changed without prior information)*

Above Cost includes the following:

1. All Accommodation on Twin Share basis in O3 star categories in New Delhi, Amritsar, Dharamsala & Manali. A Class hotel in Leh and best available in Small towns.
2. All sightseeing as per the itinerary.
3. International Arrivals & Departure at New Delhi.
4. Air ticket Leh- New Delhi in economy class.
5. All entrance & Monument fees to the place of visit (excluding Camera fees).
6. English speaking local guide at the place of visit.
7. All applicable taxes.

Above Cost does not include the following:

1. International air ticket, Visa fees, Insurance of any kind whether personal, accidental or of Luggage.
2. All meals other than mentioned in itinerary.
3. All kind of beverages, Alcohols, Expenses of personal nature like Telephone, Laundry, Tipping etc.
4. All Camera fees (still or Video) at the monument of place of visit.

Important:

- Client is advised to read all Booking terms & conditions before booking any tour.
- Prices can be changed without any prior notice, hence kindly confirm the price before booking as it varies due to US\$ fluctuations.
- Cost is based on 1US\$ = Rs 47 INR.
- All though due care has been taken while preparing the itinerary however company may not be held responsible for any kind of errors.