

BHUTAN 1994

What about having miserable day of lockdown enlightened by the feeble light of the yack butter lamps of BHUTAN !

That little kingdom is the smallest of the Himalaya with less than one million inhabitants. It is the size of SWITZERLAND but its altitude spreads regularly from 400 meters to more than 7000 meters. Although BHUTAN environment appears rather similar to the rest of the Himalaya it also reveals some distinctive features and has its own specific charm.

When the British entered TIBET in 1904 in order to open the main local markets to Indian goods the Bhutanese were on their side and curiously the strong man of BHUTAN, Tongsa Penlop, who soon later became king, was standing ahead of the British troops when they entered Lhasa. Just a funny anecdote on the same subject: Tongsa Penlop was short with a rather fat figure which in the eyes of the Brits was showing some similarities with Frenchmen figures so they nicknamed him 'ALPHONSE" a typical French name of those days.

De facto Bhutan being stuck between the two main Himalayan powers has kept its social links with the UK and India while standing mostly under Indian influence. Both its king and queen have been educated in UK.

Before the start of the Covid 9 pandemic some parts of the Himalaya like TIBET were facing the impact of mass tourism, mostly by Chinese but also by Europeans. BHUTAN did not want it and in order to limit the number of visitors any tourist had to spend at least \$300 a day whether he would be alone or in a group, staying in a 3-star hotel or sleeping in his own tent.







Their Majesties,
Jigme Khesar WANGCHUCK, King of BHUTAN
and
Jetsun PEMA, Queen of BHUTAN