

# **Inside the Hidden Kingdom of Shangri La**

## **Trekking the Mount Kawa Karpo Pilgrimage Circle and Cultural Exchange with Yunnan Tibetan People**

### **Day 1-3: From Beijing - Lijiang**

Our guides and staffs will meet you in Beijing. After a brief stay, we will travel as a group to the Old Town of Lijiang in Yunnan Province.

We will spend a whole day touring Lijiang, which offers a colorful exhibition of multi-ethnic culture, including Naxi, Yi and Bai. We will explore the meandering streets of the Old Town and browse through the handcraft market. We'll also sample the exquisite local cuisine, sure to warm you up for the coming adventures.

### **Day 4-6: Dechin and culture exchange with local people**

We then take a van on a roller-coaster road leading westward toward the sublime alpine country of the eastern Tibetan Plateau. We will pass through the legendary city of Shangri-la, where we will visit the Songzanlin, an important temple and monastery of the Tibetan Buddhism faith.

Next Day, we are greeted by our first glimpse of the majestic peak of Mount Kawa Karpo while our van ascends a 13,000-foot (3,962 meter) pass. We'll spend the night in the inn near Feilai Temple outside the city of Dechin. Feilai Temple marks the traditional beginning of the pilgrimage circle. During evening, we will have an interaction session with local drivers and business. We will help them practice conversational English and in turn learn a few Tibetan songs and dance steps from them.

On the morning of the sixth day, we watch the awe-inspiring sunrise bathe Kawa Karpo in golden light. Those who choose will participate in a simple ceremony and offer up prayers to the mountain. In the morning, we will visit a local market in Dechin and get a glimpse of people's daily life in this town. In the afternoon, we will visit the Puli Tibetan School and play with the children.

### **Day 7-10 Pilgrimage Inner Circle**

On day 7, we will take bus to Xidang Hot Spring and then embark on the actual pilgrimage. Through lush forests, we trek to the highest pass on the pilgrimage circle, the Nazong Pass at 12,140 ft. If it is a clear day, we will be presented with a stunning, panoramic view of the entire mountain range. Trekking down from the pass, we arrive at the Yubeng village, cradled in a peaceful valley at the foot of Kawa Karpo. No paved road reaches Yubeng to this date. We have arrived the only ways possible: walking or riding a horse or pack animal; which, happily, are also the best ways to soak up the entrancing beauty of our surroundings. If possible, we will also be doing the anti-litter project on this day in collaboration with Puli School. See details in Community Service.

On Day 8, we will make day hikes to *Mystic Waterfall* where the pilgrimage route traditionally ends. If possible, we will continue our litter-cleaning project on this part of the trail as well.

On Day 9, the schedule is flexible during the day. You can hire a guide and hike to a site called "Ice Lake", or simply wander around the upper and lower village, or just relax on the lodge's balcony, watching the ever-changing hues of majestic Kawa Karpo, and listening to the message whispered in the divine tranquility that surrounds you. At night, we will possibly participate a party with local villagers.

On Day 10, we hike the second portion of the circle. This is a 15 mile of hike mainly on flat trails. However, more than half of the trail cuts through a cliff band lining up a deep gorge, sometime with more than 2000 ft of sheer drop on one side. It can be the most thrilling hike in your life. If it is raining or trail condition is particularly wet, we will have to change the plan and hike back through the way we came in, because a slip on this trail can possibly send you tumbling down the rushing Lancang river. We will spend the night back at Feilai Temple.

### **Day 11-12 Foggy Top Village**

These two days we will spend at Foggy Top village. Unlike Yubeng village, people in this village have not participated in tourist industry yet but they are thinking of it. By practicing community-conscious tourism, we hope that our presence will encourage them to preserve the essence of their traditional way of living, instead of simply change everything to emulate the “modernized” style of living in order to please the tourists. We will attend their daily activities in the next two days and learn doing chores around the household from them.

### **Day 13-15 Back to Beijing**

Instead of making a day-long bus trip back to Lijiang, we take a direct flight from Shangri-la to Kunming, the capitol city of Yunnan Province. In 50 minutes, you will have left behind a magical land of myths, legends and snow-capped mountains, and will have arrived in the hustle and bustle of a metropolitan city. After coming back to Beijing, we have one day to do a tour, either to the Great Wall or the Forbidden City, depending on the weather and interest.

### **Day 16**

Fly back to US according to your flight schedule. Trip ends.