

Joni Herison, Co-Author of Bhutan Travelog and Founder, Druk Asia

What inspired you to write “Bhutan Travelog”?

I have always held a special place in my heart for Bhutan. When I first encountered this mystical kingdom, I felt overcome by a sense of tranquility. It was a transformative experience that stirred something deeper within me. Essentially, I created Druk Asia to share this personal journey with all who wish to visit Bhutan, so that they can experience Bhutan as guests and friends of the country.

As I delved deeper into Bhutan’s rich tapestry of culture and history and discovered its beautiful natural landscapes, I felt compelled to share the magic of this enchanting destination with others. The idea that there should be more literature about Bhutan came to us just before the pandemic when Ashley joined the team. When the pandemic struck, it was the opportune time to work on the book and provide an Asian perspective on traveling in Bhutan. The travelers’ stories included in the first edition of

the book were mostly from travelers based in Asia. We hope this book showcases the essence of Bhutan and offers a glimpse into its profound beauty and culture.

Bhutan Travelog aims to provide readers with more than just travel tips and recommendations; we strive to convey the magic of Bhutan—a land where time seems to stand still, and every moment is infused with a sense of wonder and discovery.

Special thanks go out to all our photographer friends who generously contributed their captures in Bhutan and allowed us to use them in the book. Also to the ex-Prime Minister Dasho Dr. Lotay Tshering who generously took time off his duties to write such a thoughtful foreword for us, and to many more friends in the Bhutan tourism fraternity who took the time to help us vet our work for accuracy and even inform us about new information that we were not aware of.

In your opinion, what sets Bhutan apart from other travel destinations?

Bhutan's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage and environment while embracing modernization is truly remarkable. Their High Value, Low Volume policy is unique in this world. With only 100,000 visitors in 2023, if you avoid the peak festivals, you do get to experience the history and culture all to yourself, with our guides and drivers as your travelling companions

Just the experience of landing at Paro International Airport itself sets the tone of the journey. As the Drukair plane skillfully glides through the valley, you touch down at the airport, greeted by a portrait of Their Majesties, the King and Queen of Bhutan. You are allowed to leisurely take your time to traverse from the tarmac to the arrival terminal and snap as many selfies and wefies as you desire. The welcome to this very Kingdom by itself is out of the world. The very air that you take in, already smells different, infused with the positive charges and ions from the pines and conifers from the surrounding forest, and the prayers in the wind from the flu

At the immigration counter, the immigration officer, dressed in his traditional gho reminiscent of times gone by some thousand years ago, warmly welcomes you. Yet, he dutifully enters your information into his network-linked computer to extract your biodata and swiftly sends you on your way *to collect your baggage, which arrives on the carousel adorned with a replica of one of the dzongs you will be visiting.*

A perfect blend of ancient and modernity, Bhutan brings you the fantastical magic with every footstep, every breath.

My personal experiences in Bhutan have been nothing short of transformative, as I've witnessed firsthand the profound impact this land can have on the soul. It's a place where the boundaries between the physical and spiritual worlds blur, where moments of introspection and revelation are commonplace. Writing "Bhutan Travelog" is our way of inviting others to discover the profound beauty and magic that can be found within Bhutan.

Can you tell us about the importance of purposeful travel, especially in a place like Bhutan

Purposeful travel involves more than just sightseeing; it entails immersing oneself in the culture, connecting with locals, and leaving a positive impact on the destination. In Bhutan, this holds particular significance due to the country's emphasis on sustainability and preservation. By traveling with intention and respect, visitors can actively contribute to ongoing efforts to protect Bhutan's unique heritage and support its environmental conservation initiatives.

At Druk Asia, we actively listen to our guides on the ground to provide urgent assistance to communities as needed. During the pandemic, we received alerts about students lacking laptops to attend online classes. We collaborated with our associates in Singapore to deliver refurbished laptops to these students. Annually, we identify causes close to our hearts and allow our travelers to choose which ones they would like to support, such as the ***Gyalyum Charitable Trust****. In Bhutan, where official orphanages are nonexistent and orphans often find refuge with extended family members, we work with Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Sangay Choden's shelters to provide for their essentials and further education, aiming to mitigate the risks of abusive environments.*

Recognizing grassroots football as a means to impart skills, foster teamwork, and steer children away from negative influences, we have supported ***Paro Football Club (PFC)****'s grassroots academy over the years. PFC, led by passionate Bhutanese individuals, is committed to elevating the country's football standards. We are privileged that they have welcomed us to be part of their journey.*

We've heard that "Bhutan Travelog" includes interviews with individuals with a deep connection to Bhutan, including a Lonely Planet editor. How do these sharings benefit the readers?

*Each story brings a unique perspective and experience to Bhutan. For our second edition, we refreshed the interviews with another set of friends who are also very connected to Bhutan. We have James Low, a Malaysian who has been the General Manager at Uma Paro for the last 8 years, who rediscovered his calling for Bhutan during his second working stint after 7 years. Linda Leaming wrote one of the bestselling books about Bhutan, "**Married to Bhutan**", and has lived in Bhutan for over two decades. Bradley Mayhew has written the last 5 editions of Lonely Planet's Bhutan guidebook. Francois Pommaret, the author of "Bhutan: Himalayan Mountain Kingdom," who has lived most of her life in Bhutan for the last 30 years, just to name a few.*

Each interviewee offered invaluable insights into the profound impact of Bhutan's beauty and spiritual richness on themselves. Each has their own stories of how they ended up in Bhutan and what keeps them coming back or staying for a long time, and their thoughts on how best to prepare oneself for the ultimate trip to Bhutan for our travelers.

These authentic narratives not only showcase the diverse ways travelers have been touched by Bhutan, but also highlight the transformative power of embracing the unknown and immersing oneself in Bhutan's deep spiritual culture.

What is one unique experience you would recommend for someone planning a visit to Bhutan?

In my opinion, one of the most enriching aspects of exploring Bhutan is immersing oneself into Bhutan's spiritual practices,, and one should consider going on a "Neykor" meditation retreat. This experience provides travelers with the opportunity to visit some of Bhutan's most spiritual places and delve deeper into their own inner journey as they travel with a Rinpoche. In addition to spiritual experiences, Bhutan boasts a wealth of diverse encounters, from vibrant cultural festivals to captivating nature safaris. It requires several visits if you really want to have a comprehensive understanding of this multifaceted destination.

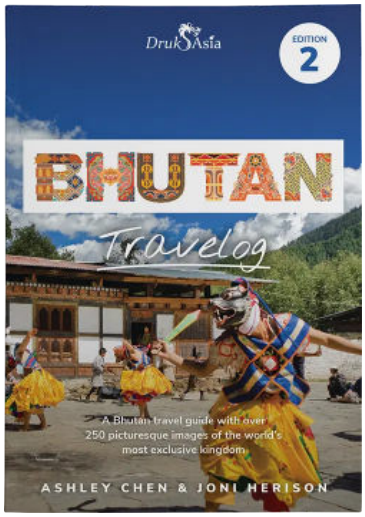
The tour will be led by Khedrupchen Rinpoche, a rising star in the realm of spiritual leadership, has been gaining increasing recognition for his profound teachings and compassionate guidance. He has spent time focusing on mindfulness research at various reputable universities in the US and Europe. Most recently, he also led a group of well-known public figures from the United States for meditation retreats in Bhutan.

With Neykor, we hope to elevate a travelers' trip to Bhutan to a new level of spiritual awakening and bring travellers on a journey of spiritual discovery.

What are the future developments and plans for "Bhutan Travelog"?

Over the years, we have received quite a few requests from fans of Bhutan to provide other language versions, and the team is currently working on various translations of the travel guide-book, including Spanish, Japanese and Chinese. With each language version, we also hope to reach out to our travellers to share their personal experiences in Bhutan. We hope these language translations will allow the enigma of Bhutan to reach more diverse audiences.

Bhutan Travelog is currently available for purchase off-the-shelves and various online platforms. For more information, visit their website



Joni Herison is an avid traveler and co-author of "Bhutan Travelog". With a passion for authenticity, Joni founded Druk Asia, which is a specialist in bespoke tours to Bhutan. Joni has travelled over 40 times since his first visit to the "Land of the Thunder Dragon" in 2008. Each visit has deepened his understanding of Bhutan's unique blend of tradition and modernity, shaping him into a tireless advocate for preserving Bhutan's heritage and promoting it on the global stage.



On a family trip in 2019 just before rafting the Pochu river on a winter morning

As Joni continues to share his insights and experiences through his writing and advocacy work, he remains committed to fostering a deeper appreciation for Bhutan's timeless beauty and profound wisdom. His commitment to curating transformative odysseys is evident in every aspect of Druk Asia's operations, as he invites travelers to embark on journeys where every moment is infused with wonder and discovery.

About Druk Asia

Druk Asia is dedicated to crafting personalized experiences that transcend conventional travel arrangements. With a deep appreciation for Bhutan's heritage, Druk Asia ensures that each journey offers travelers a deeper experience as they learn about

the country's culture, landscapes, and the Kingdom's spiritual essence.