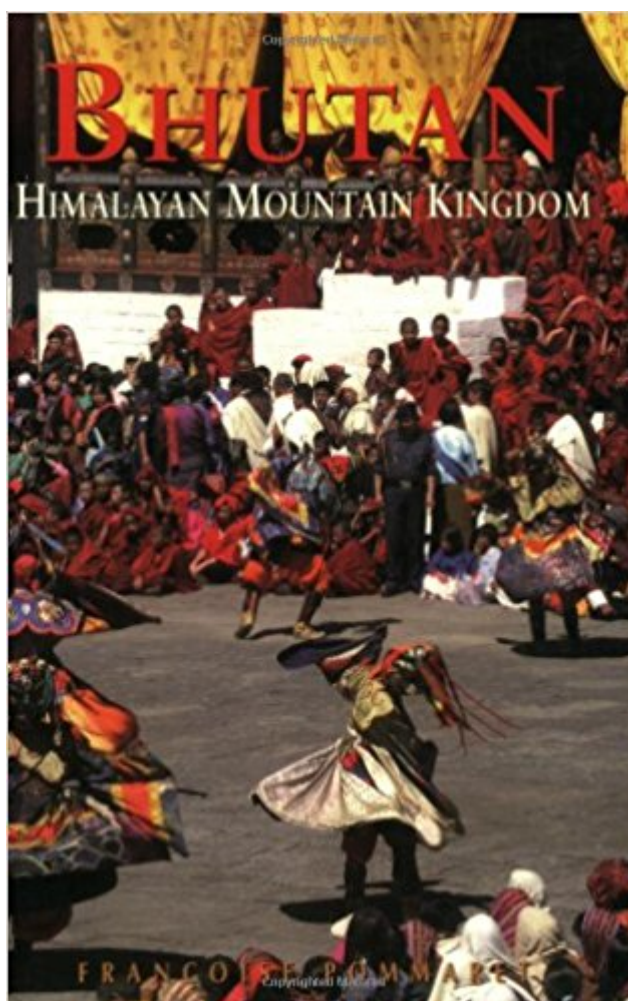


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Bhutan: Himalayan Mountain Kingdom, Fifth Edition (Odyssey Illustrated Guides)



Synopsis

On the rooftop of the world, shoe-horned into the Grand Himalayas, Bhutanor Thunder Dragonis a fiercely independent kingdom. Isolated, charming, peaceful and religious, the Bhutanese are a pragmatic, sensitive people who take from the West what will benef

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"...Colourful, practical guide, well illustrated with many astonishing photographs. Provides an in-depth general introduction to this kingdom's history, culture and ecology, with a comprehensive itinerary ranging from the major cities to the remotest monasteries. Special sections on selected topics, plus literary excerpts, ncluding J. Claude White on an inter-sex mudfight..." - Traveller "...The bible of Bhutan guidebooks..." - Travel & Leisure "...outstanding..." - Michael Palin, Himalaya"

Tibetologist Francoise Pommaret has travelled extensively in Asia, particularly Bhutan, where she has lived and worked intermittently since 1981. She was a Research Assistant for the Bhutan Tourism Corporation and a History Research Officer in the Department of Education of the Royal Government of Bhutan. She now holds a permanent position as Director of Research at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) in France, and is also an advisor on a variety of issues to the Bhutanese Education Division and National Commission for Cultural Affairs. She speaks French, English and Dzongkha, and reads classical Tibetan, and has written numerous academic and general interest articles on different aspects of the culture and history of Bhutan. She teaches at the

National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations (INALCO) in Paris and lectures throughout the world. She is considered the world's leading specialist on Bhutan, and resides in Bhutan.

This book was terrific reading preparing for my visit to Bhutan. Beautiful pictures, interesting copy. Of course, it doesn't cover some of the more hidden aspects of Bhutan that are kept well hidden from visitors due to strict controls and mandatory guides, but a magical fantasy nonetheless.

This guidebook to Bhutan was not at all helpful. It is filled with tiny details which may be of interest to the devotee, but gives the average traveler very limited background. You can read about the many different kinds of chortens, for example, but you will find the discussion of Tantric Buddhism in general perplexing. The maps are not good, and no attempt is made to separate the spectacular (such as the Punakha Dzong) from the mundane (such as the Thimpu Dzong). The information on trekking is very limited and dated. Get the Lonely Planet guide, along with the Bart Jordan book on trekking-if you intend to do a trek. Bhutan is a very expensive country to visit, and you should have a better guide in hand before your visit.

I have traveled extensively in the Far East, but have never before to Bhutan, until now (2007). I always like to read up on places before I visit them and generally travel as independently as reasonably possible. I purchased both this book and the Lonely Planet guide and found the combination excellent. This book has more about the places, the people and their customs and the history. Don't expect it to be a comprehensive list of places to stay and places to eat. It contrasts well with Lonely Planet's backpacker's reference book image. I think this is a good book and doubt whether you will be disappointed if you buy it.

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