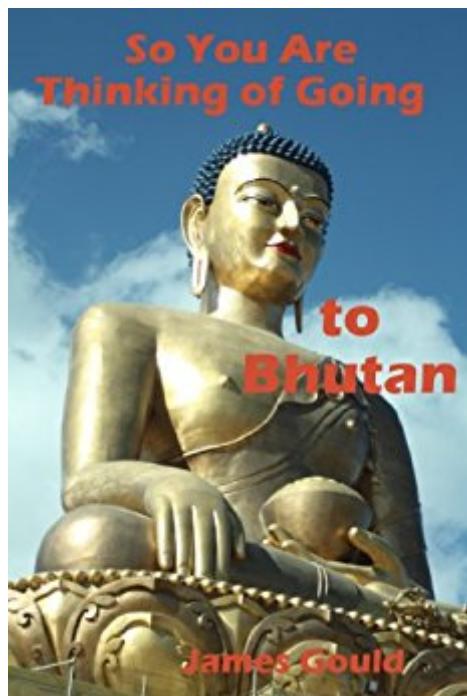


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# So You Are Thinking Of Going To Bhutan



## Synopsis

Bhutan is the last Buddhist Himalayan Kingdom. It is unique in its history, outdoor wildness, and how Buddhism influences everything and everyone in the country, from the farmer to the King. In 8400 words and nearly 30 photos, this Single gives a tourist's view of fertility temples, a hike to a cliffside monastery, dzongs and Himalayan passes and much more, as well as background of the history of the country and of Buddhism to understand what you will experience. The chapters include A Little Bhutan History, Bones and Bows and a Little More History, Signs of Buddhism, The Mahayan Story of Buddha, Tiger's Nest, Dress Code - Western Mode, Gaga Over Our Guide, A Pass to Paro, and Of Kings and Queens. At the end are some Travel Tips for Bhutan, our itinerary and a little more explanation of Buddhism. Come experience this tiny gem of a country and its peaceful people who believe they are a model to the world on how to live and how to run a country, Buddha style. They may just be right.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This E Book is not worth the money! I would have expected that the author had spent more than

one week in the country! The book does not do justice to the title. There is a tonne of more information for free elsewhere on the web. The other aspect I find disturbing is the seeming lack of reverence for an ancient religion. Enough said!

I was surprised that there were so many spelling errors. I didn't realize books were printed without some proof reading.

At 8400 words, this reads like a series of blog entries about the history, religion, and culture of a bit of Bhutan as seen by the author over a week, in between his Indian journey in from Calcutta and out to New Delhi. Gould has written other e-books on visiting that nation and a few others, so I assume this follows the pattern. Very straightforward: he lists among his advice earplugs to ward off barking dogs, acetolizide for altitude sickness, exchanging little money for tangerines and souvenirs as it's hard to transfer it back, and temple socks to wear to avoid butter spilt from the lamps--there, one must not point with a finger to a statue of the Buddha, but only with the palm of the hand. James W. Gould lands in Paro at the airport. He visits the capital, Thimphu, sees the National Library, an arts and crafts school, textiles, and a Takin reserve. Next, off he goes to the Dochula Pass with views of the Himalayas. Punakha, his destination, has a dzong (monastery-fortress center) called, promisingly, the "Palace of Happiness." His appended itinerary notes that he was to tour "Wangdue Phodrang, an old, isolated town" but I am not sure if he did, as the original schedule apparently was altered and his account does not elaborate on this stop. He recommends, again I am unsure if he narrates this location explicitly, to backtrack to Paro's dzong, "The Fortress on the Heap of Jewels". He does devote time to recommend a Leki-knockoff walking stick for the formidable 700 steps up to often photographed "Tiger's Nest" monastery. A grueling ascent despite the tearoom midway up the famous trail, which dissuades many from its incredible views high up a cliff face. Even though he lost a toenail and blistered his feet, he praises the sight. He advises that the afternoon be spent at Kyichu Lhakhang and the National Museum. Nearly 30 photos (my Kindle is b/w) accompany this primer. He delves into the titular theme near the end. It's the best part of the book, as he considers the impact of the Gross National Happiness plan, the urbanization of Thimphu and the diminution in subsistence farming, the struggle as the King gives up power to a possibly corrupt or incompetent constitutional democracy, and how the lack of sudden wealth (it rests in a steadier resource, hydropower) may be a blessing as modernization inevitably arrives. While 10% of the people are monks (government-supported now), 10% also get diarrhea yearly. Challenges loom for literacy and healthcare and skills to be taught. Given the alternative to be crushed underfoot (China), the

Bhutanese as the mouse opt for riding the back (India) of the proverbial elephant, caught between two emerging superpowers. If the narrative had followed the game plan, it'd have flowed easier. As it is, it feels like a term paper of basic Buddhism combined with an array of notes from one on a brief tour. Ten or so typos mar the finish. I would have liked more depth about what he saw and what it did to him, rather than standard recitations of dharma and historical summations found easily elsewhere. Given the energy and expense exacted to tour this region, while the results of his quick tour have satisfied Gould, insight as to why this reward comes about remains too often too reticent here.

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