

Bhutan

Trip Report # 3

October 2009

The flight from Bagdogra, India to Paro, Bhutan is like no other in the world. Disney World or Canada's Wonderland has little better to offer. The plane flies along the string of tallest places on the planet including Mt. Everest. It is an amazing view, the brilliant snow in bright sunlight. You are actually flying lower than the mountain peaks!

The Airbus A319 suddenly banks, turns left and flies down a narrow valley, weaving back and forth to miss the irregular mountains on either side of the valley. The plane skims over a mountain ridge, so close that you think the laundry hanging beside the houses could hook onto the wheels. The final approach is a sudden bank, before dropping quickly onto a very short runway. I keep thinking to myself,



this is not a Cessna 172! Check out the YouTube link that is included with the email.

We are now in Paro, Bhutan. It is about an hour drive from the capital Thimphu. Paro has the only flat spot in Bhutan large enough to accommodate an airport. This is a country of great history and culture. It is a Buddhist Kingdom, clean and very proud of its 'Gross National Happiness' quota. You do not see beggars although many live at subsistence level in rural areas. Bhutan really is an amazing place; peaceful, little traffic and a small population.

Christian gatherings are still illegal here, but it is clear that the Christian presence is growing rapidly. The day is filled with meeting Bible Students, board members and leaders. Canadians are welcome. Father William MacKay, from Canada, helped Bhutan establish a high end education system two generations ago. He was given the highest honour in the country for his work. Bhutanese think Canada is a wonderful place.

I ate dried Yak tonight. When you are traveling, it is a good thing when Yak is a noun and not a verb. Yak does not taste like chicken. More like beef with lots of salt.

Our ministry leader took me to a leper colony. The Christians were thrilled to have a foreigner visit them and I had a chance to pray with a family. There are not many opportunities in Bhutan when you cannot use your hands.



Off to Pakistan tomorrow. The beard is filling in nicely.

Phil Dempster

www.partnersinternational.ca

