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Kham – East Tibet Itinerary

Day 1

Our caravan of insight and adventure begins as we depart for China.

Day 2

Arrive in Chengdu and transfer to hotel. We have an early dinner and rest from our international flight. Overnight Chengdu.

Day 3

Chengdu is the capital of Sichuan Province and is the economic, political, and cultural center in Southwest China. After breakfast we will explore Wenshu Monastery which dates back to the Tang dynasty. This is Chengdu's largest and best preserved temple. It is a very active temple with many worshippers coming each day to pray and make offerings. After lunch we will take a short drive outside of Chengdu to explore Baoguang Monastery – Monastery of Divine Light. This is another active monastery and was founded in the 9th century and houses a beautiful white Jade Buddha statue. Before we return to Chengdu we will visit Zhaojue Temple, a Tang Dynasty building dating back to the 7th century. Overnight Chengdu.

Day 4

After breakfast we depart Chengdu to Leshan. Leshan is home to Da Fo, the Grand Buddha, a towering rock carved image of the Future Buddha Maitreya. Carved into a cliff overlooking the Dadu He and Min He rivers, it is the world's largest rock carved Buddha measuring 232 feet tall. We will also explore Wuyou Monastery that dates back to the Tang dynasty. This monastery has a fantastic collection of Buddhist sacred art. Overnight Leshan.

Day 5

After breakfast and thousands of miles of travel, our exciting tour of East Tibet actually begins as we depart for Kangding. We have a spectacular mountain drive where we begin to see our first Tibetans and Tibetan-related peoples herding yaks, sheep, and goats on the high Kangba Plateau grasslands. Kangding is a large town nestled in a steep river valley. When arriving in Kangding, one begins to feel they are at the end of the Chinese world and beginning of the Tibetan. Overnight Kangding

Day 6

In the morning after breakfast we will visit two of Kangding's most important monasteries. We begin our day at Nanwu Gompa, the area's most active monastery with 80 lamas in residence. The monks are very friendly at this monastery and enjoy our group exploring their gompa. We will also visit Ngachu Gompa built in 1654 that has a fantastic collection of sacred art. We then depart Kangding for Lhagang. On our drive out of Kangding we see Miyak Gongkar Mountain, the highest mountain in Kham at 24,783 feet. Overnight Bamei

Day 7

After breakfast we explore Garthar Chode Monastery that is near the birth place of the 11th Dalai Lama. This is a very famous Gelugpa monastery that was founded by the 7th Dalai Lama. After lunch, we visit Lhagang Monastery one of Kham's most sacred gompas. It is believed that when the Chinese Princess Wen Cheng, on her way to Lhasa in the 7th century to marry King Songsten Gampo, she stayed here. Legend tells us that the Shakyamuni Buddha image that she was bringing to Lhasa actually spoke here and requested to stay in this idyllic setting. This monastery has a fantastic



collection of sacred art and houses a beautiful giant 1000 arm Avalokitesvara. Overnight Bamei

Day 8

In the morning after breakfast we will visit Rago Monastery, a very beautiful old Nyingma monastery that houses a fine collection of sacred art. After lunch we will explore a very famous Sakya monastery called Sangku Gompa. Late afternoon is dedicated to exploring the market at Bamei. Overnight Bamei.

Day 9

Morning departure for Kandze. On our way out of Bamei, we will visit Denba Lung, an old Bon Monastery. After this Bon monastery, we continue on a beautiful drive through the countryside where we will see nomads and many herds of yaks. In the afternoon we will visit the 540 year old Kandze Monastery, the region's largest monastery with more than 500 monks. This Gompa has a beautiful collection of small golden Shakyamuni statues in its main prayer hall and an entire floor to ceiling 3 story sculpture of the entire Tibetan Buddhist pantheon! Overnight Kandze.

Day 10

After breakfast we will explore Den Gompa, the oldest temple of Kandze. This gompa contains a revered image of the great protector Mahakala in the form of Prajnananatha. After lunch we will visit Lamdark nunnery that has a spectacular view of the Kandze valley. At the end of the day there will be free time to walk through this lively market town. Overnight Kandze.

Day 11

After breakfast we will take a day trip to one of the most beautiful lakes in Tibet – Yarlunglhatso. This is one of Tibet's most sacred lakes that is filled by a glacier and is surrounded by the massive glaciers of the 19,558 feet Trola Peak. The lake is surrounded by many giant rocks with sacred mantras carved into them. This place is drop-dead gorgeous! We will have a picnic lunch here. After lunch we will visit a nomad family. Overnight - Kandze

Day 12

After breakfast we depart Kandze on another beautiful drive into Kham's countryside where we will see mantras carved into mountainsides and many mountain passes covered with colorful prayer flags on our way to Drango. In Drango, we will explore one of Kham's largest and most important monasteries – Drango Gompa. The monks are very friendly at this monastery and they take us into many chapels and temples that house beautiful examples of Buddhist sacred art. Overnight Drango.

Day 13

In the morning we begin our drive out of Kham on another breathtaking drive to Denpa. We will pass over a few of Kham's highest mountain passes driving through pine forests, alpine gorges with many cascading waterfalls. Overnight Denpa

Day 14

Before departing Denpa, we visit a small monastery at the base of the sacred mountain Moerduo Shan called Daisibao Gompa. On our drive to Yaan we will stop and climb a few of the Qiang stone watch towers (gudiao). Overnight -Yaan

Day 15

After breakfast we will visit the Yaan Panda Reserve. This reserve is estimated to have some 3,000 different kinds of plants and is home to panda's, golden monkeys, musk deer and snow leopards. Here we will visit the China Research and Conservation Center for the Giant Panda where we will have the opportunity to see many of these beautiful pandas. After lunch we drive to Chengdu. Overnight Chengdu



Day 16

Entire day is free to rest and shop and prepare for our return flight back to the States.
Overnight Chengdu.

Day 17

Our trip comes to its end as we depart Chengdu on our flight home.