

Sojourn to Kailash Mansarovar

This was anticipated since 2019. 13 days trip can bring in so much change that I experienced for real. All the support, encouragement, love, and strength showered on me by my beloved hubby dear Kumar Subramanian, my kids - Dr. Ramya and Raj, and as a result of all the blessings of both of my Moms and all elders in the family my dream today has come true.

26th Aug was my Star birthday and my life partner Kumar joined me on the flight to Kathmandu giving me a surprise that I had not really anticipated. We land there and he had arranged Darshans at the Sati Devi - Shaktipeeth temple - Maa Guheshwari and the evening Arati at the Pashupatinath temple. What could I have asked more when I had the divine blessings before I took off on the bigger journey?

With Kumar returning back to Mumbai, I joined the Sacred Walks Group for the Sojourn. It started with an introduction of the group members, satsang, meditation, and chanting.

The next day, our group departed at 5 am from Kathmandu to take a flight to Nepalganj - a day full of air travel and spectacular views as we fly over the majestic mountains and valleys of Nepal. There were a few hours spent in the garden at the Nepalganj airport, chatting away, playing games, and relaxing under the huge banyan trees, followed by another flight to the remote village of Simikot, the gateway to Limi Valley and Mount Kailash.

Simikot Valley had an incredible culture and scenic landscape. Located at an altitude of 9550 feet, and being a region that gets little rain, this was an ideal starting place for pilgrims heading into the Himalayas.

A few of us were put up at the Bijoy hotel and a few at the Kailash hotel. Our daily routine had twice a day of medical check-ups.

The day used to be filled with sumptuous meals, tea, bournvita, boost, horlicks, and fresh fruits 🍎 were flowing in and out without any hesitation.

As a group, we were made quite comfortable and our journey ahead was equally made the same.

We stayed here for 2 nights. Then, started our first short trek to the small Shiva temple on the top of the mountain, grazing, and trekking through the orchards of apples, peaches, plums, beautiful flowers, and the lush green valley with light rain driving its magic as well.

The next day we did another trek to the other side of the mountain and saw the wheat fields, and vegetable gardens, and also saw the Military base camp as well.

After a 2 nights stay - a few of us took the helicopter ride to our next camping site - Hepka, a few did trekking and a few travelled in the jeep all reaching Hepka.

A highlight of the flight / trek / drive was to pass through the DHINGA Valley to the quaint village of Hepka. The whole Hepka Valley has only 3 villages. The people here warmly welcome passing pilgrims and it is impossible not to notice their peaceful demeanor, and how connected they are to the bounty of nature that surrounds them.

We spend 4 nights here, amidst green and luxurious pastures with a backdrop of vibrant hues and colors of the surrounding mountains. An ideal place to stop for acclimatization, as there is plenty of space to walk and explore the terrain, imbibing the energies of this sacred land.

This was the first of the camping, nestled in the lap of Nepal's mountains and valleys.

Chilly cold weather, rains, clouds, and at times the sun was out as well. We also celebrated the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi here.

Trekking to the lakeside, meditating in the midst of the valley, and getting acclimatized in this process.

We were supposed to be here for 2 nights but due to weather conditions - our stay got extended from 4 nights - 5 days. At times, we felt sad - seeing the weather. There were also doubts if we would be able to make it to Kailash or will be returning back down. But the spirits were all charged up by our Rushidhar Anna, music, campfire in the chilly cold, dancing away and gearing us up for the next leg of the journey upwards.

Dakchi

We did a helicopter journey to Tupling-Limi Valley. It gave us an opportunity to have a bird's eye view of our next beautiful camping spot.

A stunning place to spend 3 more nights and get acclimatized before we journey to a higher elevation for our long-awaited Kailash Darshan.

This small village is surrounded by enchanting landscapes of evergreen forest and vast meadows, which makes it the perfect grazing land for the shepherds to bring their herds. Travelling to such remote destinations can be a surreal experience for us who are coming from bustling cities.

Finally, the day had arrived after all the higher treks, we could achieve at the high altitudes, we were cleared by the Station doctors team and our very own Group Doctor - Dr. Archana to take the last leg of the Sojourn- the much-awaited Kailash Mansarovar.

The next day early morning at 4 AM ...we were all set to start our trek after the Gurupooja and the chantings. We had a quick spot of breakfast before we all started our journey towards Mount Kailash 🙏🙏🙏

All the encouragement we got from the team leader - Rushidhar Anna, his cool, calm attitude, and all the positive aura he had around him - kept all of us in high spirits to achieve the most awaited Sojourn which I was looking forward to since 3 long years.

After the drive through the terrains, high peaks, windy weather, and chilly cold we made it up in not less than 3 hrs.

As soon as we put our feet on the Holy terrains of the Kailash mandala there was a different feeling running through each and every nerve of the body, the vibrations, and the positive Aura around me were mind-blowing. Tears rolled down - seeing the Abode of Lord Shiva and Parvati, to the left of Kailash was the mighty Brahma standing - giving the strength to withstand the cold breeze, and to the right was Lord Vishnu - covered by the clouds.

No words to express, my internal energies were being charged up, thinking of each and every person in my life - who has come across me in many ways seeking an abundance of **his blessings and positivity** - was the only thing in front of me.

Chanting away - Shambho Shambho, meditating and getting the blessings of Sadguru through the Gurupooja and his inspiring talk was the few highlights of the Sojourn.

Did not feel like leaving the land of Kailash - but we had to descend down.

Our minds, body, and souls were filled with the sight/image of Mount Kailash - it indeed was a blessed feeling

We made our way back to Dakchi and then to Simikot and enjoyed the last helicopter ride over the vast and versatile mountain ranges of the land. Thanking every bit of nature's best for the wonderful journey.

People of this land exude wisdom and humility like no other. And the memories of this experience remain etched forever.

Immediately we flew to Nepalganj and stayed there for a night.

All charged up after the sojourn, dazed in the Awe of Mount Kailash, and could not take away our minds, off the Majestic sight we had experienced.

Shambho Mahadeva.

Out of words to explain the Sojourn/ the pilgrimage as they say:

One has to experience it for themselves to believe it.

My gratitude to all the team members of the Isha foundation, above all SADGURU 🙏 for **'Making it happen in this life'**

Above all Gratitude to my family, and kids and to the entire Rotary family who has always been with me throughout!