

## **Himalaya Journey Cultural Policies**

All of the staff of Himalaya Journey are highly respectful of the Himalayan people we work and live among. We continually work in numerous cultural preservation projects, which we are very proud of. Our Cultural Policies are not meant to be restrictive or controlling, but are in place to help you adjust and fit in to a culture that is most likely much different than your own. By joining any of Himalaya Journey's tours, the client agrees to the following cultural policies. :

### **Be respectful of the culture you are visiting**

Most of the Himalayan people are followers of Buddhism or Hinduism. All clients should be respectful when entering temples and monasteries by removing shoes when required, speaking in a low voice, not smoking near temples/monasteries, not touching painting or tapestries, not touching monks or nuns (unless your guide says it's permissible) and not photographing inside temples and monasteries (unless your guide says it's permissible).

### **Dress Appropriately**

Most Himalayan people dress very modestly and can feel uncomfortable when foreign travelers are not dressed appropriately for Buddhist and Hindu culture. This is especially true inside temples and monasteries. When entering temples and monasteries, hats should always be removed. In addition, it is best to wear long pants and avoid sleeveless shirts in temples and monasteries and to overall dress modestly.

### **No Recreational Drug Use**

All areas of the Himalaya have strict drug laws. Clients of Himalaya Journey should not be involved with any type of drug use. Clients going to Bhutan need to be aware that cigarettes are illegal there. Foreign travelers are allowed to bring in a small number of cigarettes, but these MUST be claimed at customs and a tax of up to 200% must be paid. Any cigarettes legally brought in to Bhutan cannot be sold. It is also illegal to smoke in public in Bhutan.

### **No Political Activity**

All areas of the Himalaya are politically sensitive. Clients of Himalaya Journey are required to abstain from any type of political protests, political discussions and from distributing any type of political material of any kind. This includes distributing pictures of the Dalai Lama, Panchen Lama or any other sensitive political figures. In Bhutan, it is illegal to speak negatively of the king or any member of the Royal Family. Any client disregarding this policy will be required to withdraw from the journey immediately without any compensation or right to recover a refund.

### **Displays of Affection**

It is rare for people of the Himalaya to show public displays of affection. In accordance to local culture, we kindly ask for our clients to also limit public displays of affection.

### **Alcohol and High Elevation**

For some of the high elevation treks and climbs that Himalaya Journey arranges, we will recommend clients to either abstain from alcohol or to severely limit the amount of alcohol intake. This is to help our clients acclimatize better to high elevation to reduce the risks of altitude-related sickness. The staff at Himalaya Journey will let you know if this special policy applies to you.