

## Bhutan Opens Some Holy Sites

Late last year, Bhutan announced that tourists would not be allowed inside its monasteries and temples because it believed tourism was undermining Buddhist society. However, the government has issued a list of 43 religious sites that will be open to visitors after all.

Among the best-known areas are the Tashichhodzong, a monastery in the Thimphu district, which will be open from October to March. During those months the monks from there stay in the Punakha Dzong, a monastery that will be open the rest of the year. Also, tourists will be allowed on a viewpoint area below much photographed Taksang monastery, though the monastery itself will stay closed.

Two temples, Changlimethan Lhakhang and Jigmeling Lhakhang, also in the Thimphu district, and Bitekha Dzong, in the Paro district, will be open to visitors for the first time, the government said.

Bhutan has closed its travel offices outside the country, so tourists must use private agencies for information and to arrange tours. One such office is the former Bhutan Government Tourist Office in New York, which is now a private agency called Bhutan Travel Inc. (120 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022; 212-638-6382).



George Holton/Photo Researchers

Tashichhodzong.

