

WEST SIKKIM

TRAVEL STORIES FROM PELLING, YUKSOM & RAVANGLA
JUNE 2025 / FAMILY TRAVEL DIARY





On our flight to Bagdogra



Stop near the Teesta

BANGALORE TO PELLING

Rough start. Cab accident on the way to the airport. Driver rammed into a truck parked on the highway at 3:30 a.m. Lucky that no one was hurt, thanks to K's alertness. Front of the car was crushed. Made it just in time to board the flight. Anxious about the news of floods, landslides and non-stop rain in Sikkim and Assam.

Guide (Passang Dorji) and driver (Passang Sherpa) met us at the Bagdogra airport. Five hour drive to Pelling, with a stop for roadside breakfast near the Teesta river and a quick halt at cute Jorethang town.



Breakfast of champions!



Near a house in Pelling, lots of flowers everywhere...

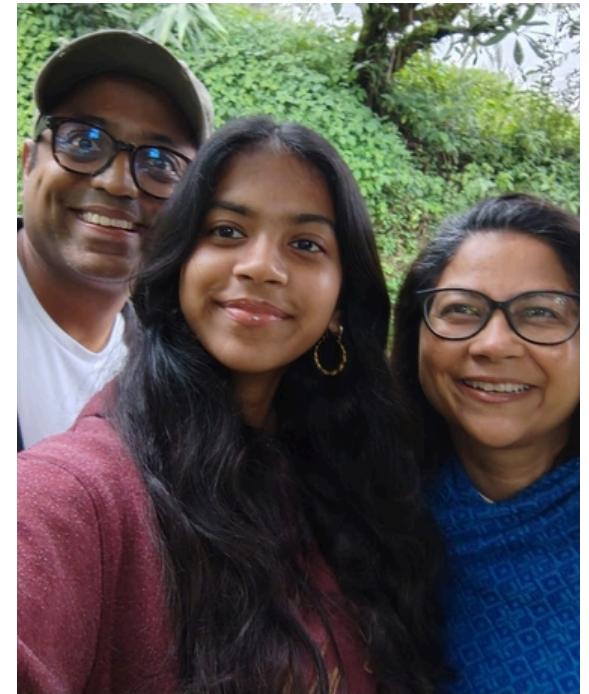


View from the homestay. The homestay itself was basic, but clean and cheerful

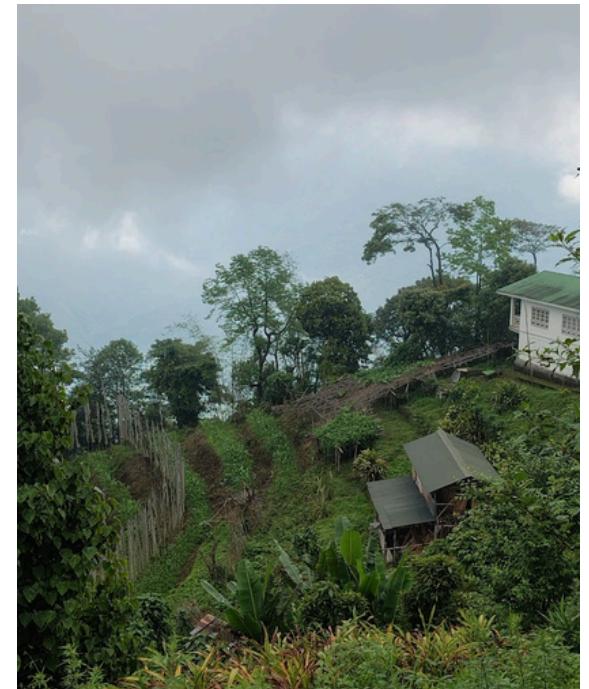
PELLING, MAY 31

Took a while to find our homestay, Mountain Buddies. Basic and comfortable. clean room, though no cupboard for clothes. Friendly and happy hosts, talkative and knowledgeable.

It was misty – almost dark – at 3:30 p.m., but cleared up by 5ish. No rain. Did a long walk into town, uphill, to eat momos in the evening (not great). Walked back and stopped to snack on fries. Clean town. Everything misty, lots of flowers. Stayed bright till late. Ate an amazing homecooked, organic dinner of saag, baby potatoes, chicken, rice, roti.



Selfie time!



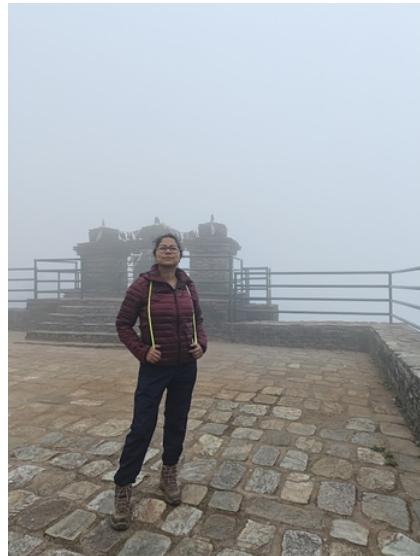
View from the top of Pelling hill



Karaoke party at Baby Reeten in the evening!

HAPPY B'DAY KANCHUKI!!

June 1st 2025



No sugar desserts at Lotus Bakery!



Sharing a drink with Nika, Buddha statue, and Sang-ngag-choling Monastery

Oranges at Yangthang Farms



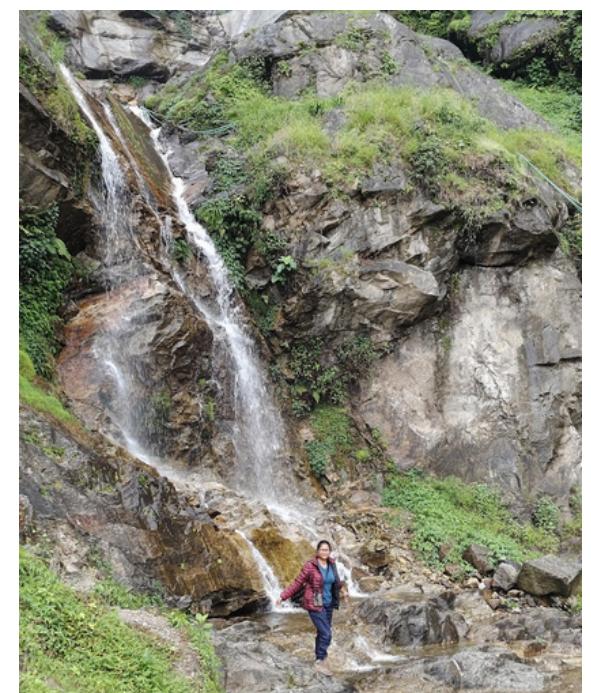
At Yangthang Farms

PELLING, JUN 1

We packed in a lot on Jun 1st. Good weather. Breakfast – eggs and toast – at the homestay. Then on the road at 8:30. First stop Chan-ge falls; then surprise of the trip, the private home of Yangthang Farms (amazing flowers and orchids, lots of interesting birds, and a detailed museum); Buddha skywalk and Sang-ngag-choling monastery, Lotus Bakery (which served not-sweet desserts!), Pemayangtse monastery, then off to Geyzing for late lunch (lunch was OK – a big thali for us, Nika had momo and thukpa), then a walk through very very misty Rabadentse and Sideok bird park. Ended the day drinking Breezers and singing Karaoke at Baby Reeten, a local bar.



Birthday morning tea cup



At the Chan-ge falls

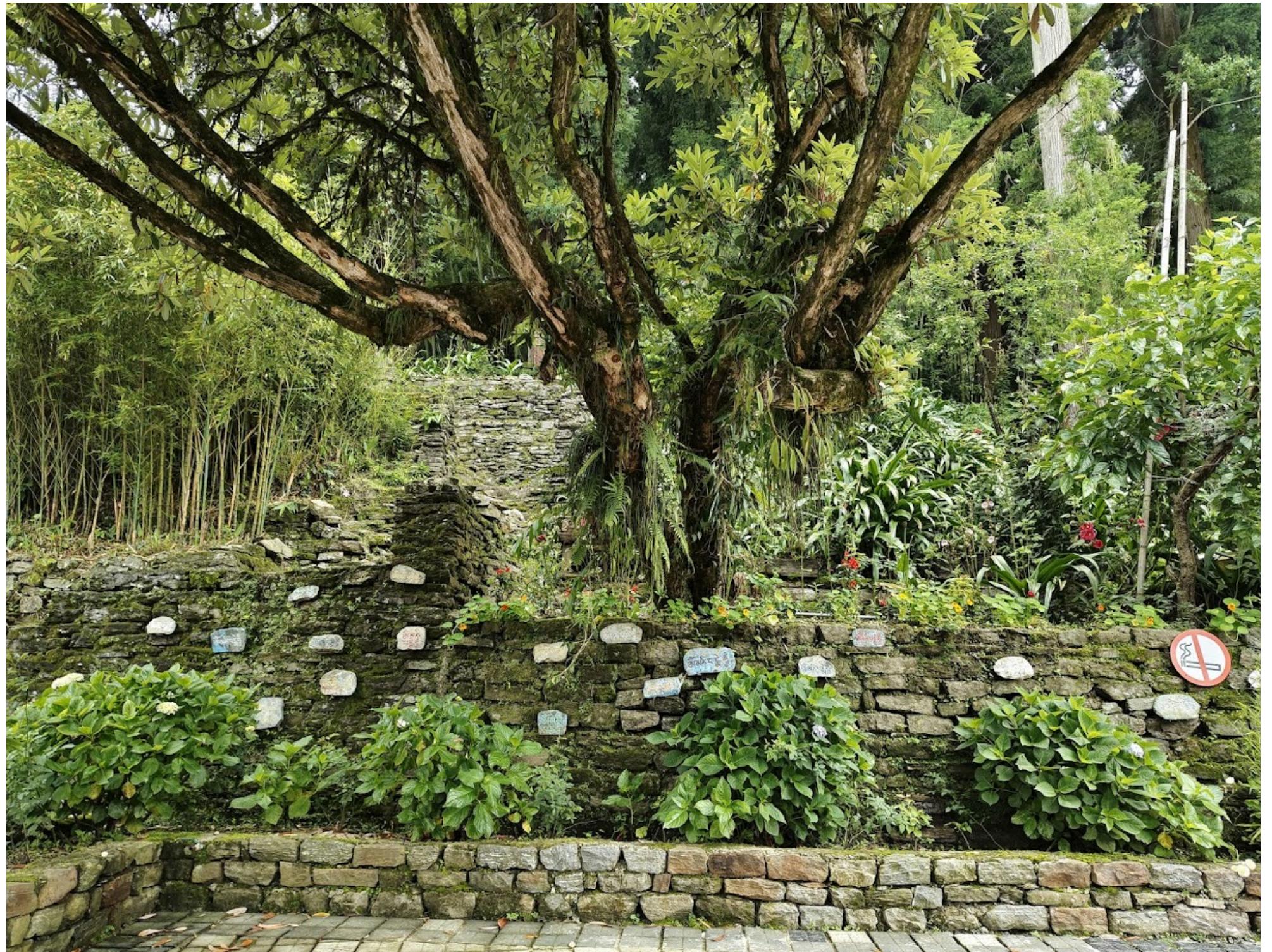


SANG-NGAG-CHOLING MONASTERY

West Sikkim, India



The Misty Rabdentse – first capital of Sikkim – at 3:15 p.m.



Yangthang Farms - one of the surprise highlights of the trip



Spice chutney with local chillies



Simple, but super tasty dinner



Home-made ghee that was delicious



Butter-tawa-toast with eggs - yummy!

FOOD HIGHLIGHTS

Food was a highlight of the trip. Each homestay served fresh, hot, and tasty food – with organic, local produce (Sikkim is a fully organic state in India).

At our first homestay, the food was delicious – dinner with saag, aloo, dal, chutney, homemade ghee, butter-fried toasts and a constant supply of light but flavourful Temi Tea



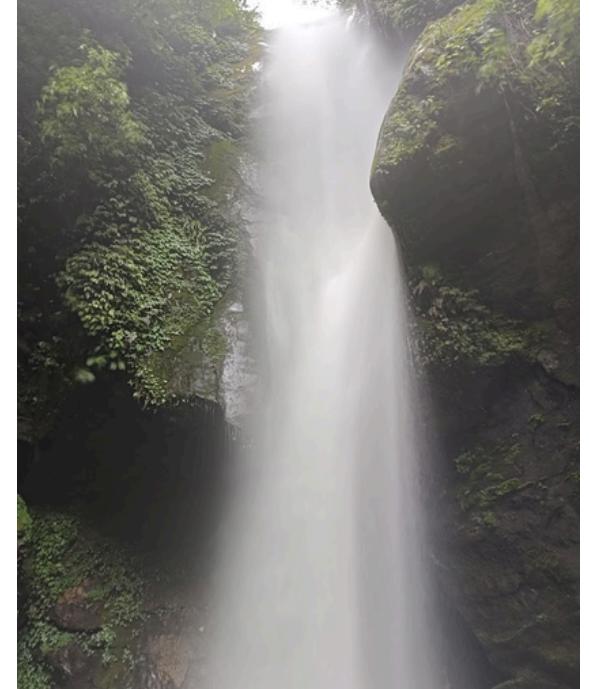
From the viewpoint above Kacheoperi Lake

TO YUKSOM, JUN 2

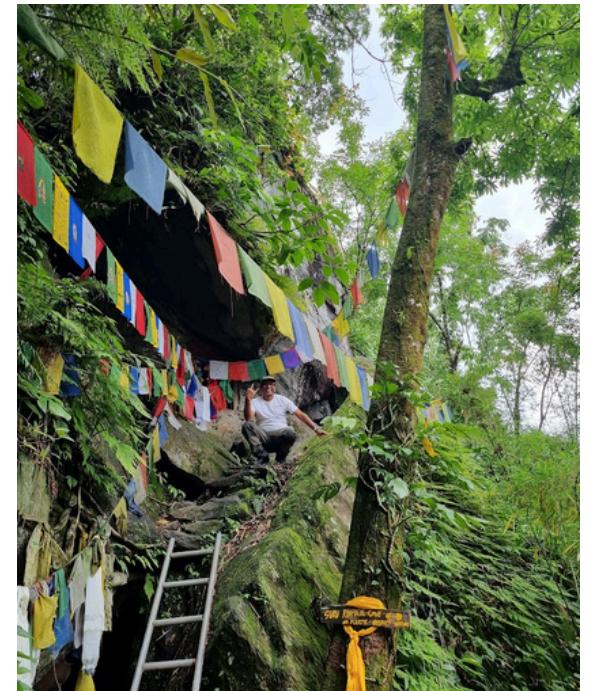
Woke up and left after breakfast for Yuksom. Stopped at a small waterfall, then stopped at Kecheopari Lake. The lake itself was OK, but the hike up to the hidden cave and then the viewpoint was brilliant.

Great views from the top of the hill. Had Maggi and tea at a tiny homestay at the top.

Stopped at Kanchenjunga falls, huge falls, good fun to get close and drenched. Ate Channa and Jhal Muri. Reached Yuksom - cold, spare, beautiful and different from Pelling - at 2 pm



Kanchenjunga Falls



Guru Rinpoche Hidden Cave (West)



Photo of Kanchuki & Nika at the helipad at Yuksom

AT YUKSOM, JUN 2

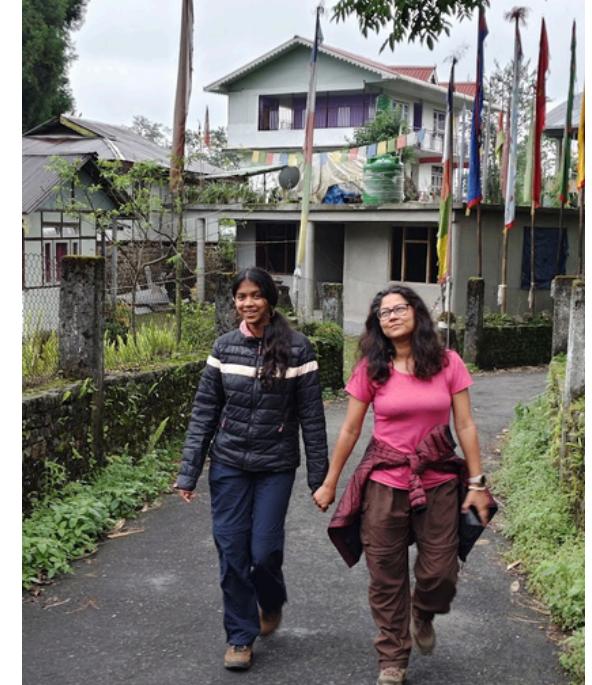
Found a basic homestay called Buddha homestay. It's set in a lush garden and maintained by Mr. Buddha who is growing Kiwis. Went down to Gupta Restaurant for basic thali lunch.

Went to Coronation Throne, which was beautiful and peaceful. Drove to the helipad and then to our homestay. Slept a bit. Spoke to Buddha: he follows a religion called Yumaizm and is a Limboo.

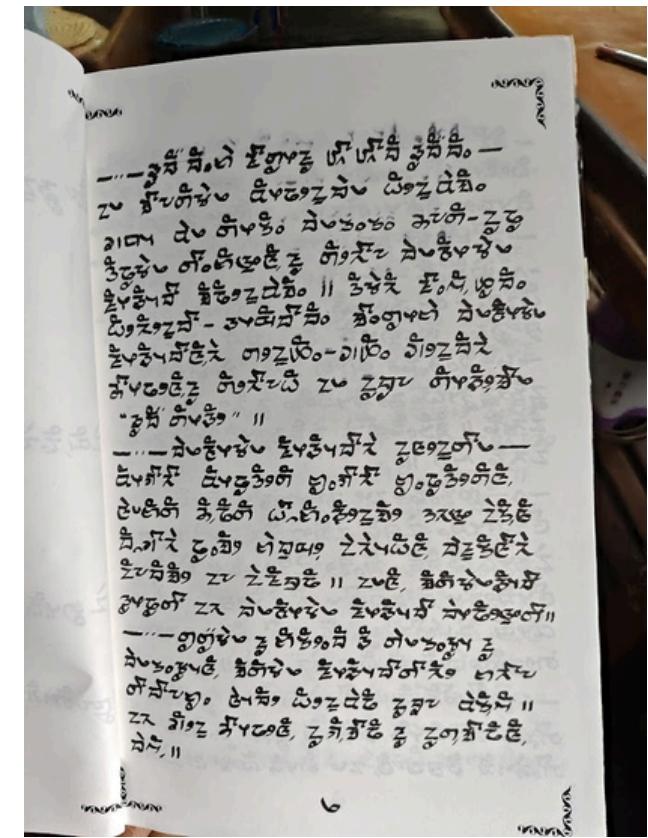
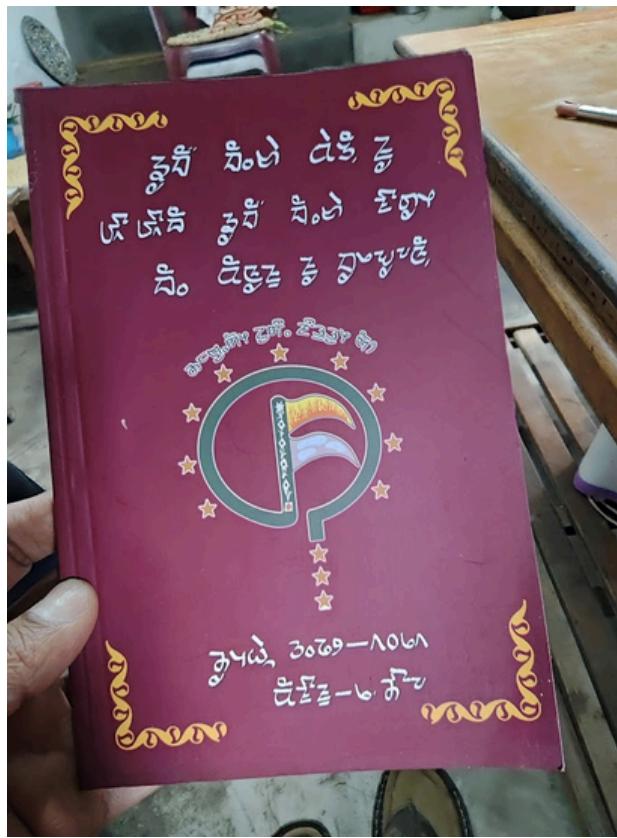
Dinner was good & unique, with odd *saags* and vegetables, including potato with noodles as a vegetable.



On our hike to Coronation Throne



K and Nika on a walk after lunch



We learnt about Yumaizm from Buddha, a Limboo who practices the religion. He glowed with vitality!

A BIT ABOUT YUMAIZM

Buddha, our homestay owner, was very energetic and filled with vitality. He was everywhere, glowing in the rain, in his garden with a raincoat attending to the plants, in our room serving tea, helping make dinner, and so on.

He told us about Yumaizm, his religion, followed by the Limboos. Their deity was a God Mother – so, they went to various retreats organized by a young (less than 30 year old lady) who they considered the reincarnation of the original God Mother from 3000 years ago...



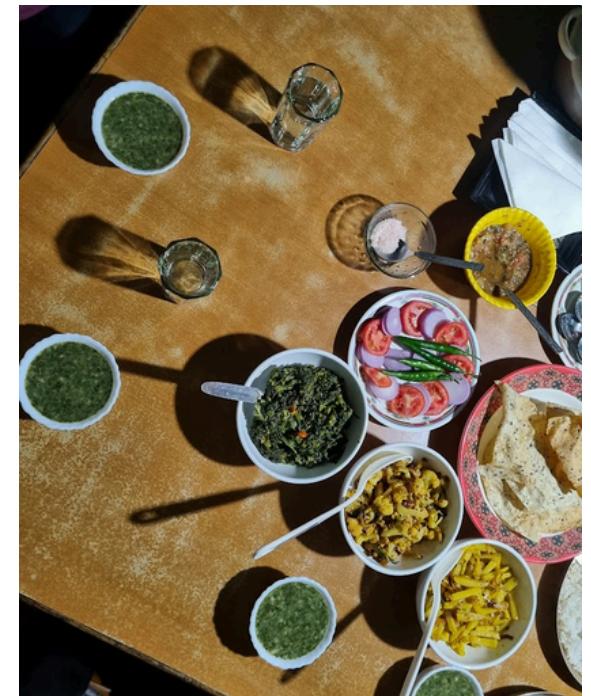
Tongba - warm, fermented millet beer - at the end of a long day

YUKSUM, JUN 3

Got up early and went for a walk around Kathok lake. Morning basic breakfast of Roti and Lao Bilahi, then off for a long walk. Dubdi monastery and then Hungri monastery. Our hike was filled with leeches & leech bites!

Stopped on the way at a person's house for Maggi and tea. He showed us his sons scholarship letter. Reached Hungri at 1 pm.

Ate lunch at guptas at 2, fried rice and momos were good. jumping over the gate. Had Tongba at a neighbours house, and an interesting dinner at Buddha's.



Nettle soup, saag, and tasty dinner!



On the way to Hungri monastery



Dubdi Monastery, an hours walk from Yuksom



On the way to Hungri monastery



At Hungri monastery



At Hungri monastery



Maggi stop on the way from Dubdi

Monasteries – Jun 3rd – with lots of leeches on the way

HAPPINESS IN 5 SIMPLE STEPS



Tongba is made from fermented millet. It is served in these beautiful multi-level containers, which you keep topping up with hot water.

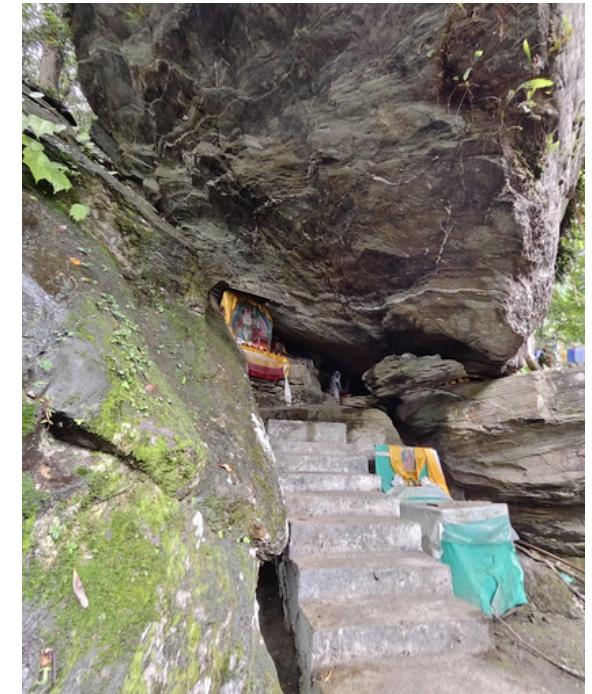
It tastes like warm sake, and is mildly alcoholic. I refilled by Tongba container 3 times, and was buzzed and happy at the end of my hour of sipping on tongba and eating chips and papad...



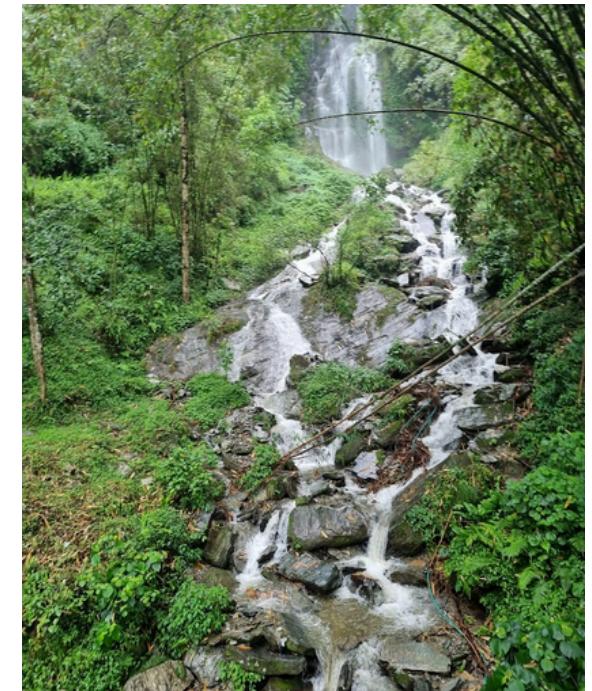
Tashiding monastery, on the way from Yuksom to Ravangla

TO RAVANGLA, JUN 4

It rained from 2 am last night and was still raining in the morning. We weren't sure if we could head out from Yuksom. The driver seemed confident, so we had breakfast and left, after getting some photos with Buddha. We stopped at Tashi Ding monastery after passing a few waterfalls. Walked up Tashiding (short hike) and had a good experience since there were many monks chanting. Went to Guru Rinpoche cave on the way down, and then started the drive to Ravangla: Horrid horrid roads. Got to a hotel that looked promising (Barfung Retreat), but there was no service... we were all hangry by the time we got to Ravangla!



Guru Rinpoche Cave near Tashding



We passed a few waterfalls!



Super cute homestay at Ravangla - Sakoom Lee - we got lucky!

AT RAVANGLA, JUN 4

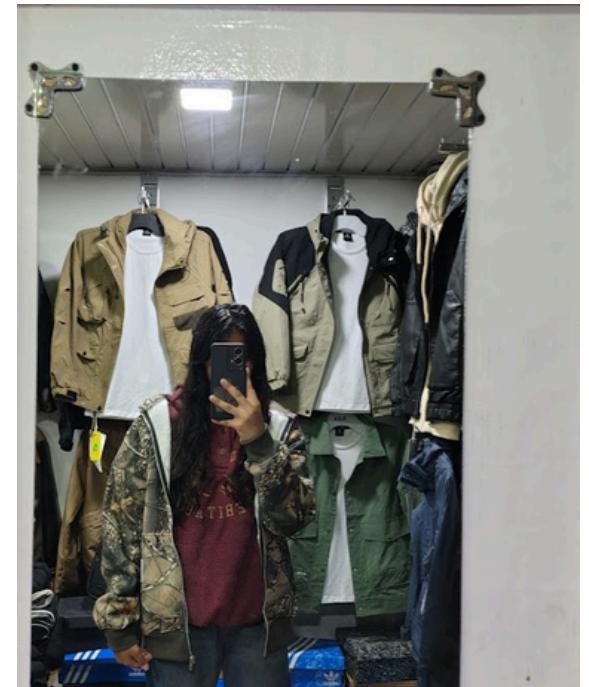
Had lunch in Ravangla town, were hungry and found a decent place (Kookay), where we had fried rice, momos and chow-mein.

We then got lucky with a nice homestay (Sakoom Lee), which is listed only on Google (and nowhere else!).

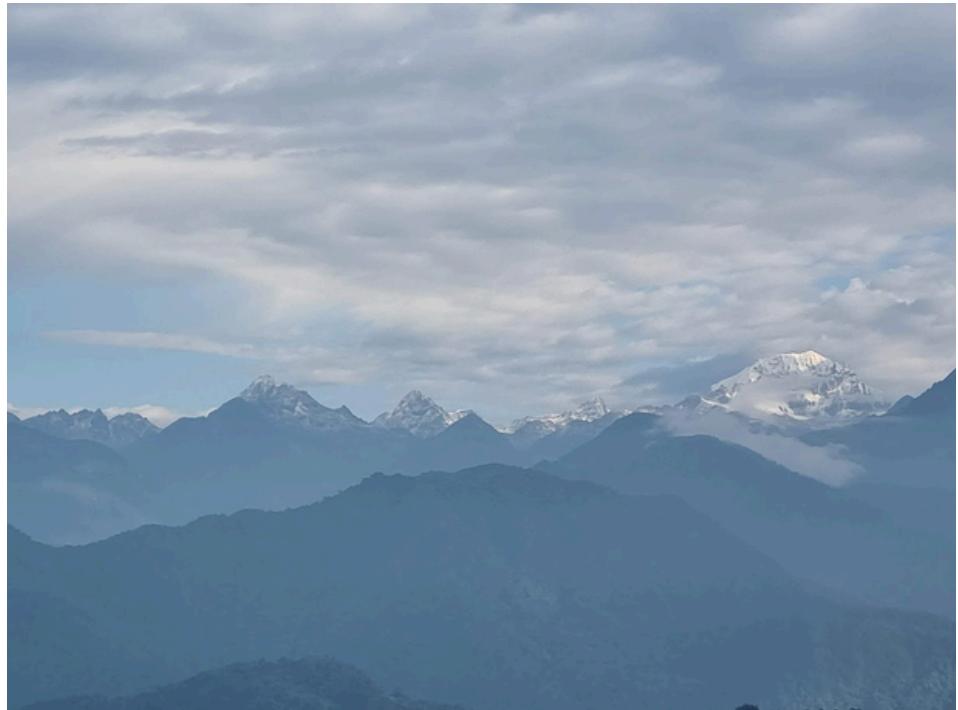
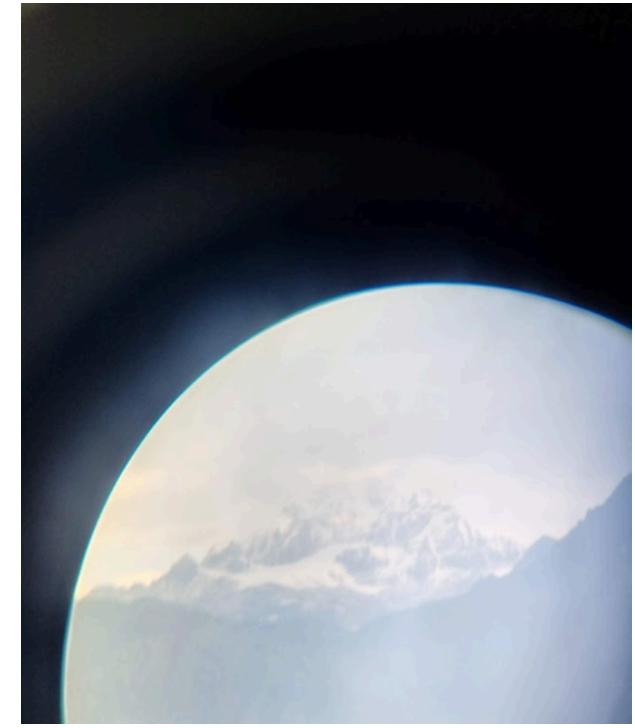
Went in to town centre in the evening, K and Nika browsed the shops, K bought shoes, Nika had pork momos, and then back to homestay. Dinner was ok but snacks in the evening (Cake, Kheer, Cheese Balls) were excellent!



Kookay Restaurant was very good



Ravangla has lots of good cheap shopping!



Morning of Jun 5th - we spot Kanchenjunga peak from our homestay!



New Rabong Monastery - very big and splendid

RAVANGLA, JUN 5

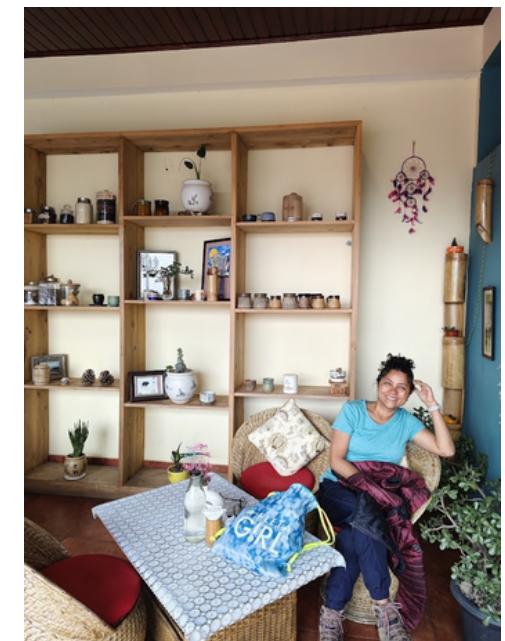
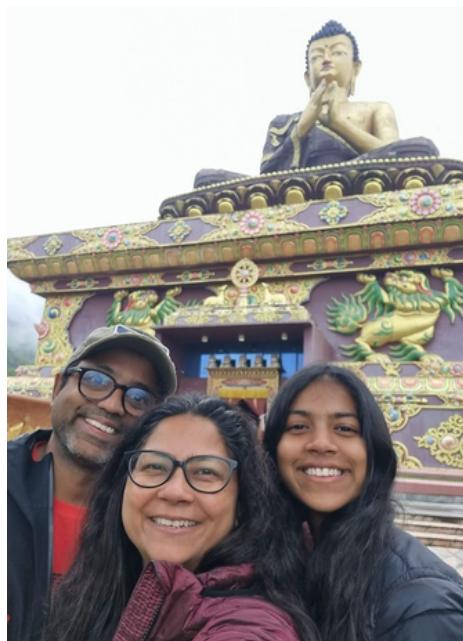
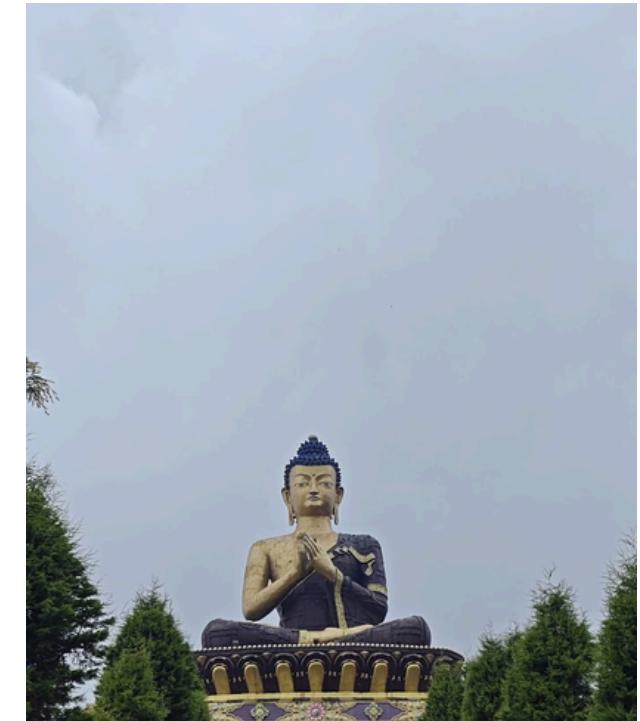
After a basic breakfast, we drove to Titanic viewpoint. The roads were really bad – almost non-existent. Anyway, we pushed on and got to the viewpoint, which was quiet worth the drive. We stopped for maggi and chai, and then drove back up to the Rabong monastery. We stopped at the old monastery first, quiet and calm, and also met a monk (Sonam Palden) who was visiting from Vancouver, who showed us around! Then we went to the new Rabong monastery and then a stop for a bad lunch outside Buddha Park! Buddha Park was itself OK, and we hung around and did shopping for a while before returning to our homestay...



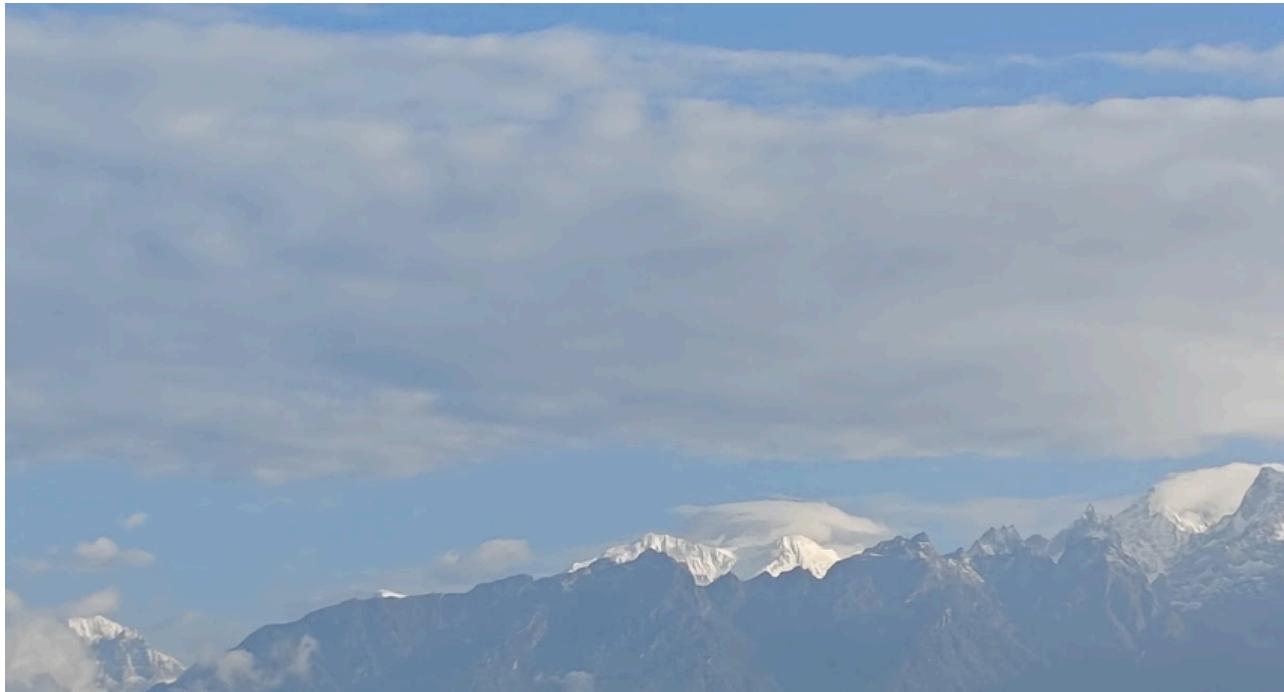
Titanic Point



Old Rabong monastery - quiet and calm...



Buddha Park, in Ravangla, is very touristy. It's not bad. However, avoid the food outside – there are good food and shopping options inside, including a great coffee shop!



One more sighting of Kanchenjunga on our last day...

TO SILIGURI, JUN 6

We had a very good dinner on Jun 5th evening at Sakoom Lee homestay, delicious paneer, tasty saag and pumpkin, and dal and rice. We left after breakfast on Jun 6th (we got a good view of Kanchenjunga on 6th morning too!), heading towards Siliguri.

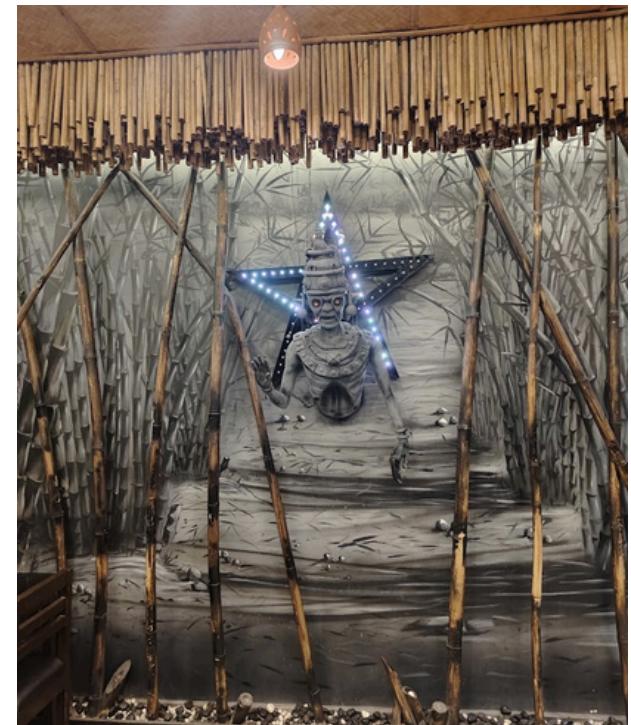
Our drive to Siliguri was uneventful, with Nika and Kanchuki dozing in the car. When we got to Siliguri, what a mess: crowded roads, traffic jam, heat and a hotel right in the heart of the trade district. The hotel had a smelly bathroom, threadbare towels! I walked around and foraged for Arsalan Biryani for my family in the heat of Siliguri that afternoon...



End of the holiday, bags packed!



Getting gifts from our homestay hosts!



Bhooter Raja Dilobor in Siliguri for dinner. The highlight of our sad stay in Siliguri...

WEST SIKKIM TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights from our family trip to Pelling, Yuksom, and Ravangla (Jun 2025)

1. MONASTERIES

Lots of monasteries – Tashiding, Pemayangste, Sangagcholing, Rabong, Hungri, and Dubdi. And also the Guru Rinpoche caves!

2. INCREDIBLE NATURE

It was incredibly beautiful – flowers everywhere, greenery and good hikes. I would come back again in the non-rainy season to do more hikes...

3. CLEANLINESS

Throughout our stay in Sikkim, rooms were basic but clean. Bathrooms were clean. Dustbins everywhere and no trash. All came down with a crash when we entered Siliguri...

4. HOSPITALITY

People were very hospitable in all the homestays, serving extra dal, extra rice. Even those who made Maggi at roadside shops were so friendly.

5. ORGANIC, TASTY FOOD

Delicious organic tasty simple food at generous and happy homestays – though basic, we always felt special. Everything tasted so good & fresh!

6. KANCHENJUNGA VIEW

Seeing Kanchenjunga, despite so many days of cloud and rain, was a real highlight – and not just on one day, but two days in a row from Ravangla: wow!



FINIS.



WEST SIKKIM

TRAVEL STORIES FROM PELLING,
YUKSUM, AND RAVNGLA

@appa
Jun 2025