

NATURE



THE HAPPINESS OF NATURE

A TAKIN'S TALE

Written and directed by **Heike Grebe and Michael Riegler**
Executive producers: **Sabine Holzer, Walter Köhler**
1 x 50 min., 4K, 5.1 + Stereo



Perched high in the Himalayas lies the Kingdom of Bhutan – the country of happiness. It values its citizens' contentment and well-being over economic growth. Perhaps this is part of the reason biodiversity thrives in this small kingdom. It may only be the size of Switzerland but, in Bhutan, nature is truly at its wildest.

Known locally as Drukyl, the Land of the Thunder Dragon, Bhutan remained largely cut off from outside influences for centuries, allowing unique national traditions and ways of life to flourish. Nature, too, benefitted from this lack of interference. A Bhutanese myth says that, many hundreds of years ago, a Tibetan saint grafted the head of a goat onto a cow's body, thereby creating the truly unique takin. Bhutan's national animal has a snout like a moose, horns like a wildebeest and a body like a bison. **A TAKIN'S TALE** examines the lives of these unusual-looking creatures and the many species they share their home with.

Takins often hide in dense forests, and they are not alone: binturongs, similarly strange-looking animals that resemble a mixture of bear, cat and marten, seek out the safety of the trees and sleep high above the

ground, their long tails wrapped around branches for safety. The female binturong is one of the few mammals that can time the birth of her young according to environmental conditions, but little more is known about these animals – something this documentary hopes to change.

During the monsoon season, herds of takins travel to high-altitude pastures to graze. It is a journey filled with peril, as predators including Bengal tigers and Himalayan brown bears can pounce at any moment. Once they reach their destination, the takins have just one thing on their minds: sex! During the rut, males butt heads in dramatic courtship displays.

Following the takins' migration route, the viewer is introduced to Bhutan's rarely-seen picturesque valleys, the mountain peaks 7,000 metres above sea

level, and the lush, sub-tropical hollows and pine-covered hills that lie between. At every elevation, the landscape teems with wildlife: snow leopards, bharals and gorals traverse the snow-covered cliffs, while serows, tragopans and red pandas do their best to avoid leopards, Tibetan wolves and sloth bears in the warm forests below.

In this film, Bhutan's takins and binturongs take the audience on a fascinating expedition through the country's unique wilderness – a wilderness that is inextricably woven into the local culture. As Buddhists believe in infinite rebirth, any animal could potentially be an ancestor. This has created a powerful bond between humans and wildlife. There is much the Land of the Thunder Dragon can teach us about the true nature of happiness – and the happiness of nature.

A production of Terra Mater Studios



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