

India

Rajasthan



15 – 27 March 2011

World History

The Ohio State University

India

Rajasthan

Group Journal

The Ohio State University

World History

15 – 27 March 2011



Stephanie Austin
Brittany Brooks
Casey Edgington
Andrew Hand
David Snyder

Instructors and Editors:
Dan Christie
Bishun Pandey
Vladimir Steffel

Contents

Introduction | iii

Roster | iv

Group Photo | v

Map of India Study Tour | vi

Columbus – Newark – New Delhi (15-16 March) — Vladimir Steffel | 1

New Delhi – Jaipur (17 March) — David Snyder | 3

Jaipur – Amber Fort (18 March) — Brittany Brooks | 9

Jaipur (19 March) — Andrew Hand | 18

Jaipur – Pushkar (20 March) — Stephanie Austin | 26

Fatepur Sikri – Mathura (21 March) — Casey Edgington | 34

Vrindavan (22 March) — Brittany Brooks | 39

Agra (23 March) — Casey Edgington | 45

Agra – Delhi (24 March) — Stephanie Austin | 48

New Delhi (25 March) — David Snyder | 54

New Delhi – Kushinagar (26 March) — Andrew Hand | 63

Newark, NJ – Columbus (27 March) — Vladimir Steffel | 66



Introduction

During the Winter Quarter 2011 Professors Christie, Pandey, and Steffel introduced students to the history and culture of India and prepared them for travel to the states of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The class was composed of three OSU Marion students and one OSU Program 60 student, and a Marion Tech instructor. They all signed up for History 698.02, Study Tour India.

Our journey took us to the world's largest democracy with over 1.3 billion people. India is also one of the largest traditional societies undergoing modernization—China is the other. We visited Jaipur, Amber Fort, Pushkar, Fatehpur Sikri, Mathura, Vrindavan, Agra, and Old and New Delhi. India is the birthplace of many religions and home to all the major religions. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism were all born here. Tradition holds that Christianity was brought to India by St. Thomas in 52 CE. Islam was introduced to India by the Arab traders of the 7th century CE and established with the waves of Turkic invasions beginning with the Ghaznavids in the 10th century CE. Under the Moghuls Hindu and Islamic art and architecture merged and bloomed. Despite our preparations we were not truly prepared for what we would see and experience. The sheer crush of humanity and unbelievable road traffic had to be seen to be believed.

What did we take home? It is difficult to express in words. It will take some of us a long time to make real sense and see where this fits in the culture and history of India. This journal with photographs may help.

We owe special thanks to Prof. Pandey. Without his vision, leadership, and planning, especially when traveling in India, this study tour would not have been possible. Thanks also to Prof. Christie for introducing students to Peace Studies and the question of religious and political tensions between the Hindus and Muslims. Finally, thanks to OSU Marion for the generous study travel scholarships that made all this possible for our students.

Roster

Stephanie Austin
511 Mary St
Marion, OH 43302
740-341-4474
austin.271@buckeyemail.osu.edu

Andrew Hand
206 Maple Ct
Mount Gilead, OH 43338
419-560-1807
handa@mtc.edu

Brittany Brooks
1551 Caledonia Ashley Rd N
Caledonia, OH 43314
740-244-6385
brooks.649@buckeyemail.osu.edu

Bishun Pandey
2159 Reeves Avenue
Lewis Center, OH 43035
740-549-0599
pandey.1@osu.edu

Casey Edgington
273 CH 34
Sycamore, OH 44882
419-927-2581
edgington.39@buckeyemail.osu.edu

David Snyder
1156 Harrison Ave
Columbus, OH 43201
6142998445
snyder.2848@yahoo.com

Vladimir Steffel
72 Elmwood Dr
Delaware, OH 43015
740-363-2181
steffel.1@osu.edu





India

Rajasthan



15 – 27 March 2011

World History

The Ohio State University

India

Rajasthan

Group Journal

The Ohio State University

World History

15 – 27 March 2011



Stephanie Austin
Brittany Brooks
Casey Edgington
Andrew Hand
David Snyder

Instructors and Editors:
Dan Christie
Bishun Pandey
Vladimir Steffel

Contents

Introduction | iii

Roster | iv

Group Photo | v

Map of India Study Tour | vi

Columbus – Newark – New Delhi (15-16 March) — Vladimir Steffel | 1

New Delhi – Jaipur (17 March) — David Snyder | 3

Jaipur – Amber Fort (18 March) — Brittany Brooks | 9

Jaipur (19 March) — Andrew Hand | 18

Jaipur – Pushkar (20 March) — Stephanie Austin | 26

Fatepur Sikri – Mathura (21 March) — Casey Edgington | 34

Vrindavan (22 March) — Brittany Brooks | 39

Agra (23 March) — Casey Edgington | 45

Agra – Delhi (24 March) — Stephanie Austin | 48

New Delhi (25 March) — David Snyder | 54

New Delhi – Kushinagar (26 March) — Andrew Hand | 63

Newark, NJ – Columbus (27 March) — Vladimir Steffel | 66



Introduction

During the Winter Quarter 2011 Professors Christie, Pandey, and Steffel introduced students to the history and culture of India and prepared them for travel to the states of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The class was composed of three OSU Marion students and one OSU Program 60 student, and a Marion Tech instructor. They all signed up for History 698.02, Study Tour India.

Our journey took us to the world's largest democracy with over 1.3 billion people. India is also one of the largest traditional societies undergoing modernization—China is the other. We visited Jaipur, Amber Fort, Pushkar, Fatehpur Sikri, Mathura, Vrindavan, Agra, and Old and New Delhi. India is the birthplace of many religions and home to all the major religions. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism were all born here. Tradition holds that Christianity was brought to India by St. Thomas in 52 CE. Islam was introduced to India by the Arab traders of the 7th century CE and established with the waves of Turkic invasions beginning with the Ghaznavids in the 10th century CE. Under the Moghuls Hindu and Islamic art and architecture merged and bloomed. Despite our preparations we were not truly prepared for what we would see and experience. The sheer crush of humanity and unbelievable road traffic had to be seen to be believed.

What did we take home? It is difficult to express in words. It will take some of us a long time to make real sense and see where this fits in the culture and history of India. This journal with photographs may help.

We owe special thanks to Prof. Pandey. Without his vision, leadership, and planning, especially when traveling in India, this study tour would not have been possible. Thanks also to Prof. Christie for introducing students to Peace Studies and the question of religious and political tensions between the Hindus and Muslims. Finally, thanks to OSU Marion for the generous study travel scholarships that made all this possible for our students.

Roster

Stephanie Austin
511 Mary St
Marion, OH 43302
740-341-4474
austin.271@buckeyemail.osu.edu

Andrew Hand
206 Maple Ct
Mount Vernon, OH 43338
419-560-1807
handa@mtc.edu

Brittany Brooks
1551 Caledonia Ashley Rd N
Caledonia, OH 43314
740-244-6385
brooks.649@buckeyemail.osu.edu

Bishun Pandey
2159 Reeves Avenue
Lewis Center, OH 43035
740-549-0599
pandey.1@osu.edu

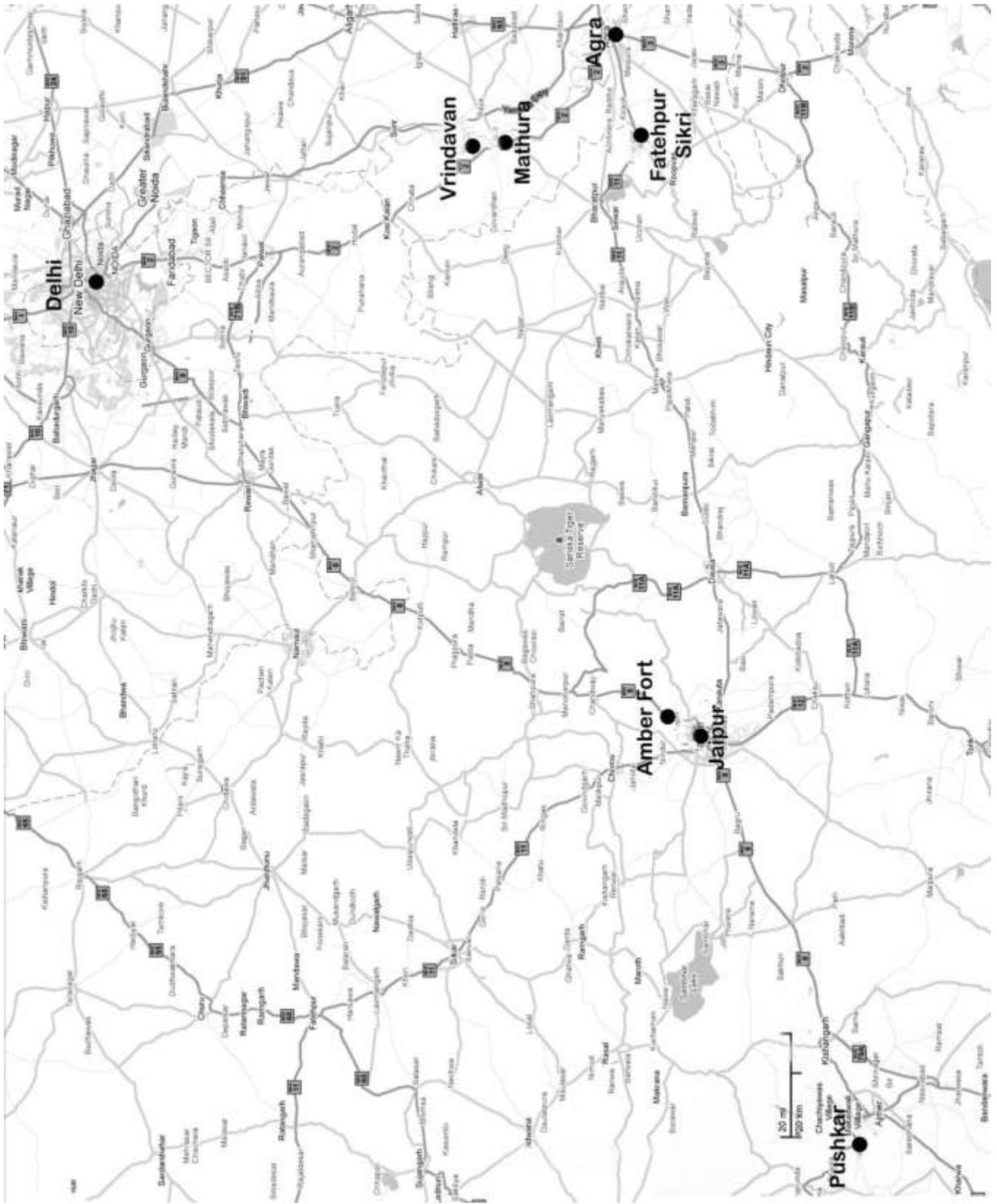
Casey Edgington
273 CH 34
Sycamore, OH 44882
419-927-2581
edgington.39@buckeyemail.osu.edu

David Snyder
1156 Harrison Ave
Columbus, OH 43201
6142998445
snyder.2848@yahoo.com

Vladimir Steffel
72 Elmwood Dr
Delaware, OH 43015
740-363-2181
steffel.1@osu.edu







VLADIMIR STEFFEL

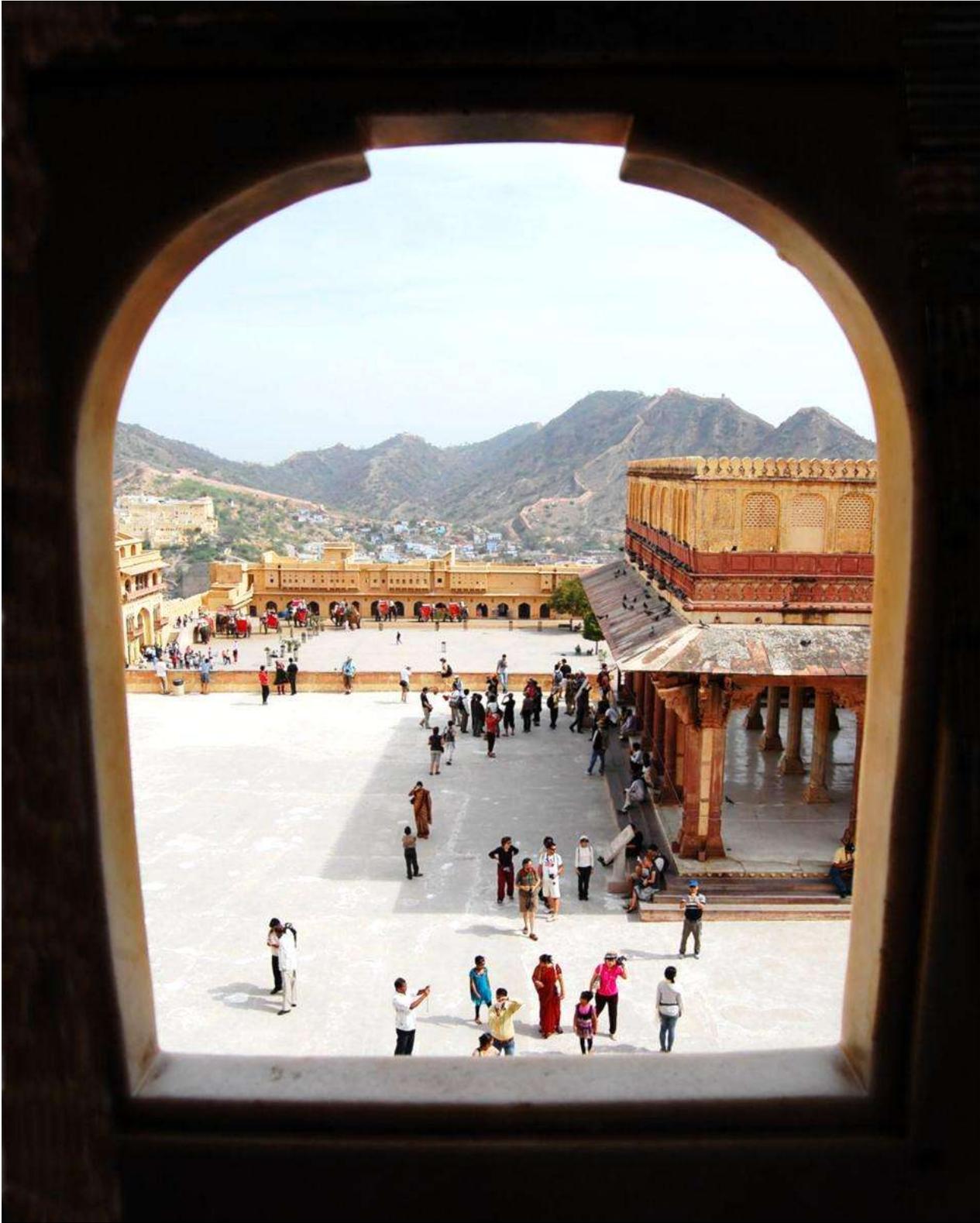
It was raining when we arrived at the Columbus Airport. Stephanie Austin, Casey Edgington, and David Snyder were already at the Continental check-in area when I arrived at 11 am. Stephanie and Casey actually had stayed overnight at an airport hotel. Professor Bishun Pandey arrived at 11:15, and Andrew Hand and Brittany Brooks showed up at 11:30. We checked-in, then proceeded through security to wait for our flight, which was delayed. While we waited, Dr. Pandey had us fill out Continental preferred flier applications, which were processed at the departure desk. The flight on a turbo-prop to Newark Liberty Airport was smooth. We arrived at Terminal 3, which is used for international flights. We talked, we walked, and we had an early supper at Famiglia Market in Terminal 3 near the departure gate 138.

Boarding began about 7:50 p.m. and was completed by 8:30. At 9:00 we taxied to the runway for a 9:15 take-off. The flight was 7,770 miles via the Great Circle Route. During the flight there were several requests to be buckled-up because of turbulence. Dinner was served at 10:00 with a choice of either vegetarian or “chicketarian.” We were provided with a snack flight to hold us until breakfast. We exchanged contents. Breakfast was vegetarian or “eggetarian.” We landed in New Delhi at 8:25 p.m. local time. As the plane taxied to the gate many passengers were standing in the aisles; the plane surged and people fell. We were off the plane by 8:45 and had an easy walk through Indian Immigration and Customs. By 9:30 we entered a completely remodeled terminal, which made for ease of movement.

Prof. Pandey’s brother-in-law, Gangeshwar Mishra, was waiting for us. He led us to a transfer bus that took us to our van, which was waiting to take us to the Omkareshwar Guest House in the Green Park section of New Delhi. We arrived at the guest house at 10:15, were quickly processed and assigned out rooms—the three women had one room and the four males shared two rooms between them. Then we were introduced to Gangeshwar’s wife Madhu and son Anshuman, who has a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering and was just hired by Tata Consulting Services. They brought several vegetarian pizzas from Pizza Hut and we chatted. By midnight we were in bed.

Special thanks are owed to Gangeshwar Mishra for all the preparations he made for our India visit.

Vladimir Steffel



DAVID SNYDER

After a decent night's rest I awoke around 6:30 am and glanced over at the other twin bed to see Andrew already writing notes for his journal. We cleaned-up using the bucket and dipper method with cold water. Only at the end of our trip, when we returned to the Omkareshwar Guest House, did we discover that there was hot water. Breakfast was served family style at a table in the guesthouse lounge area and was nearly like home. We had coffee, tea, omelets, toast and corn flakes. The only difference was that the corn flakes were served with warm milk.

When we gathered near the van, I took the opportunity to pinch several people who were not wearing green, as is the St. Patrick's Day tradition, before giving each member of our group a green button with a holiday message to wear. We soon were on our way, through one of the better sections of Delhi with broad streets and nice buildings. Our driver was Harpal Singh, an Indian of the Sikh religion and about thirty years old with limited English. He had a twinkle in his eye and a good sense of humor. We picked up our guide, who said we should call him Dimple, and proceeded to the Qutb Minar, which is Arabic for pole or axis.

The Qutb Minar is the world's tallest stone minaret at 237.8 feet. It was built to commemorate the Muslim conquest of India by the first Mameluke Sultan of Delhi. Construction began 1193 after Qutb-ud-din Aibak conquered Delhi. During his reign only the first level was completed. His successor, Iltutmish, added three more stories and in 1368 Firuz Shah Tughluq added the final storey.



The Qutb Minar is constructed with red and buff sandstone. It has a diameter of forty-seven feet at its base and about nine feet at the top. It is made-up of several alternating semicircular and fluted shafts separated by balconies that are supported by stone brackets which are decorated with a honeycomb design. It also has bands of Qur'anic text written in calligraphy. Some say the minaret was used to call the people to prayer but it is so tall that a person standing on top cannot be heard. It has been damaged by earthquakes and repaired several times. In 1368 Firuz Shah removed the damaged fourth tier and replaced it using ornately carved white marble which can be easily seen today. In 1794 Major Smith replaced a top pavilion with one of his own. The style did not match the rest of the tower so it was removed in 1848 by Lord Hardinge and placed in a nearby garden. Although this year's local guide said this was untrue, our guide in 2010 and other sources stated it as fact. Due to wear and tear over the years the tower tilts

slightly. Inside the minaret are 378 stairs leading to the top; however, it has been closed since 1981 due to a stampede on its narrow staircase in which forty school children were killed and because of a series of jumping suicides. The grounds are now used for the Qutab Festival, a three day event usually held in November/December featuring cultural art forms of India.

Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque was built simultaneously as the Qutb Minar, but was not attached to the minaret. It is the oldest Mosque in northern India and consists of a raised platform courtyard, cloisters, a prayer hall, and a madrasa nearby. The Qutb Complex site had previously been the grounds of 27 Hindu and Jain temples from which many parts were used in the construction of the Mosque. Since Islam does not allow the depiction of anything with a soul, the reused temple material had the faces removed from them. The mosque had been remodeled and expanded by various rulers, but today its ruins reveal arches, floral motifs and geometric patterns.

The metal pillar in the center of the mosque courtyard was moved there by a Tomar king in the eleventh century from a site on the Tropic of Cancer named Vishnupadagari and reflects early knowledge of astronomy. The pillar has an inscription stating that it was originally erected as a flagstaff to honor the Hindu God Vishnu in memory of the Gupta king Chandragupta II who ruled from 375 to 413. It was once topped by an image of Gordo which has since been lost. The pillar is ninety-eight percent pure wrought iron, stands twenty-three feet eight inches high, has a diameter of sixteen inches, and weighs six tons. It has attracted the attention of metallurgists because it has withstood corrosion for the last 1600 years apparently due to its high phosphorus content and weather conditions which promote formation of a protective outer layer instead of rust; and the method used in forging the balls of iron to form the column was repeated heating and hammering. According to a traditional belief, anyone who can encircle the whole column with their arms while their back is toward it can have their wish granted. Tourists are now kept from the column by a fence to avoid damage from the corrosive properties of perspiration.



There are three tombs of note in the complex. One is of the second Sultan of Delhi, Iltmish. Its central chamber is nine meters square and there is evidence that it probably had a dome which has since collapsed. The main cenotaph is on a platform in the center of the room which has ornate carving on the interior and entrance walls. The inside west wall has a mihrab (prayer niche) decorated with marble and has a combination of Arabic and Hindu motives in the architecture. The second tomb is of

Muhammad Ali, a saint from Turkistan who settled in India around 1500. It is made of sandstone and has a dome on an octagonal base.



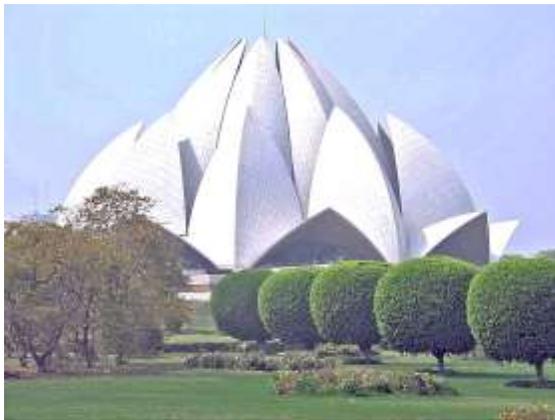
The interior is finished in white polished plaster and has fine perforated screens. The third tomb belongs to Alauddin Khilij who was the Sultan of Delhi from 1296 to 1316. It is in the back of the complex and stands in an L-shaped area that also contains a madrasa, an Islamic seminary, built by him. The center room which contains his tomb has lost its dome, but many rooms of the madrasa have been

restored.

Nearby stands the Ali Minar, an ambitious tower he started building to far surpass the size of the Qutb Minar. He died after only one storey was completed and construction was abandoned.



Our guide chose not to take us to the Alai Darwaza, which is the main gateway on the south side of the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque. According to Wikipedia it is “the earliest example of the first true arches and true domes in India” and is “considered to be one of the most important buildings built in the Delhi Sultanate period.” The Mameluke dynasty did not use true Islamic architectural styles.



Our next stop was Delhi's most original modern structure, the Baha'i House of Worship also known by its more popular name, the Lotus Temple. Baha'i is the youngest of the world's monotheistic religions. It originated in Persia in 1844 when Siyyid Muhammad Shirázi, also known as the Báb, announced that he had been sent by God to prepare the world for a Messenger from God. His teachings spread rapidly but were considered heretical by the clergy and the government so he was

imprisoned and martyred along with 20,000 of his followers. The Messenger from God prophesized by Báb was Mírzá Husayn-`Alí Núrí, a Persian nobleman living in Tehran who declined a life of privilege, became a follower the Báb, and was called Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh claimed to be the most recent messenger from God in the succession of

Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ and Muhammad, each of whom he said had appeared at a time when society had strayed and needed a prophet. He taught that there was one God, there was only one human race, and that all world religions represent stages in the revelation of God's will and purpose for humanity. He stated that the "time has arrived for the uniting of all peoples into a peaceful and integrated global society." The fundamental principles of the Baha'i Faith are: "elimination of all forms of prejudice; full equality between the sexes; recognition of the essential oneness of the world's great religions; the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth; universal education; the harmony of science and religion; a sustainable balance between nature and technology; and the establishment of a world federal system based on collective security and the oneness of humanity." The Baha'i Faith's community has five million members from 2000 ethnic and cultural backgrounds in more than 230 countries and dependent territories.

The Lotus Temple took ten years to build including two and one-half for design and solving engineering problems. There were 800 engineers, technicians, workers, and artisans. It was completed in 1985, seats 1300 people and is 40 meters tall. There are virtually no straight lines in the structure. The architect, Fariburz Sahba, was from Iran but now lives in Canada; he also designed the Sidney Opera House. Baha'i temples around the world attempt to use the host countries' motifs and indigenous designs. The lotus, which is an Indian symbol of peace, purity, love and immortality, was chosen for the temple. There are nine groups of three petals each for a total of twenty-seven free standing reinforced concrete petals covered entirely with white marble. There are nine reflecting pools that give the effect of leaves below the flower floating on water. The number nine is significant in several ways to the faith. Nine is the highest digit, symbolizes unity, completeness, wholeness, and is a perfect number. In the Arabic alphabet the value of Baha, which means glory, is nine. It was nine years between the Báb's prophecy and its fulfillment. According to the Faith there are nine world religions for which we have definite historical knowledge. They include Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, and Sikhism. The Lotus Temple has received awards for religious architecture, structural design, "most artistically built concrete structure," and exterior lighting.



We had lunch at RDX, a restaurant in the Safadarjang area of New Delhi that specialized in Indian and Chinese cuisine. The décor was modern and totally un-Indian,

using all black and white with bold geometric patterns. I ordered Mung Mali Tika which is a kabob that is first marinated in yogurt, cream, cheese along with saffron and other spices then grilled. Some ordered Indian and others had Chinese but all shared so we sampled many new flavors. I was introduced to a new ingredient called paneer. It is cottage cheese that has been molded and most of the water removed then cooked with various sauces. I enjoyed both very much.

Our drive to Jaipur was much longer than expected because there were several “diversions” around construction where a high speed railroad was being built above the highway. Most of us stayed awake to look at all the differences in people and culture. The camels, the great number of people that could be squeezed into a small car, the young men that shyly flirted with our female students, to what seemed to be the certainty of head-on collisions, and so much more. The driver’s strategy seemed to be to straddle the center line until he saw which lane was moving faster then to choose that one. The horn was not used so much in anger, but was used as a warning of “I’m here so look out here I come!” As we neared the hotel in Jaipur the air conditioner froze up and stopped working.



Located about 185 miles from New Delhi, Jaipur is the capital and largest city in the semi-desert state of Rajasthan and was the first planned city in India. It was founded on November 18, 1727 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Sing II, the ruler of Amber. Although it has a population of more than 3.5 million, it feels much cleaner and less crowded than other cities because of its wide streets and their regularity which is rare in Indian cities. It is called the “pink city” because in 1853 it was painted to welcome the visiting Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, son of Queen Victoria. Avenues of buildings remain painted to give the city a distinctive appearance.

The Gangaur Hotel had rooms that were somewhat larger than those at the guest house and real showers, but again we couldn’t get the hot water to work. We did not see a shower curtain in any bathroom in India so everything got soaked. All the room doors opened onto an outdoor corridor with a pleasant courtyard below our second storey rooms. The hotel had two restaurants but only one was open. There was a shop in the lobby to buy souvenirs and a booth to book sightseeing tours.

We ate in the hotel restaurant that served Indian-Chinese cuisine. Andrew wanted to know what a dosa was, so Dr. Pandey took him into the kitchen where they were making them. It is a folded savory crisp fermented pancake with various fillings usually containing potatoes. He ordered and enjoyed it. I had a bowl of Indian tomato soup

which contained no dairy products and had interesting spices, French fries that I covered with delicious sweet Indian ketchup, and a sparse chicken sandwich. For after dinner entertainment Dr. Pandey told us the storey of how Akbar acquired his Hindu wife and the many changes he made that bettered the lives of the Indian people. When he finished a tired group went off to bed after our very full first day of the 2011 study tour.

David Snyder



BRITTANY BROOKS

We gathered on the balcony outside our rooms to meet for breakfast downstairs. We sat in what became our regular booth with our food from the continental breakfast buffet. After breakfast we went to the van where Harpal was freshening up the van by burning strawberry smelling incense, and it was overwhelming, to say the least. Casey, Stephanie, and I waited for the van to air out before we all climbed in. We picked up our tour guide whose hair was colored with a reddish-pink tint for the Holi Festival. As we drove through the city I realized why Jaipur is known as the “Pink City” – the buildings are a pinkish-peachy color known to the natives as Saffron. The main city streets began with big, beautiful gates that seemed to separate different sections of the city and up close one could see the intricate white flowers painted for decoration. I didn’t think that our van was going to fit through the gate because it was a tight squeeze! Harpal just shook his head, smiled, and said, “No problem.”

Our first stop was Hawa Mahal, or the Palace of Winds, built in 1799. The palace is five stories tall but only one room deep. The harem women of the poet Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh were able to look through detailed carvings onto the streets below. They could look out but no one could see in. It is the beautiful pink sandstone color with white detail. After taking a few photos we continued to the Amber Fort on the outskirts of town. On our



way we passed the Water Palace or Jal Mahal. It was here that Akbar spent his childhood and his Hindu wife taught him how to swim. The yellowish palace sits in the Man Sagar, which is a huge reservoir that is filled during the rainy monsoon season. When the lake is full it appears that the Water Palace is floating. Currently, visitors do not have access because it is being converted into a hotel that should open in a few years. We planned to stop here on the way back from the Amber Fort.

Harpal drove the van up a steep winding hill to reach the fort. We stopped at the lake below the fort to view the whole complex, which seemed so far away from us. While we snapped pictures of the fort a young boy was walking his elephant up the sidewalk probably to attract tourists so he could earn a living. The elephant was painted for the Holi holiday. Stephanie and I snapped pictures of the two when the boy was not looking so we could avoid having to pay him. Then from the right came another boy who was much younger than the first and he was carrying a bag and some type of flute

instrument. All I know is that I am scared to death of snakes and lo and behold this boy whipped out a King Cobra and plopped him on the ground. I immediately jumped behind Andrew to avoid looking at it! Then the guide laughed at me and asked the boy



to put away his means of making a living. Not soon enough, we boarded the van to continue our drive up the hill to the base of the fort. Our guide asked us if we wanted to ride elephants up to and through the entrance of the Amber Fort, and, of course, we wanted to. Unfortunately, the wait would be at least two hours so we didn't get an elephant ride. Instead we took a jeep through the village to the back gate. The experience was like being on Disney World ride because we were jostled and you could feel every bump that we hit on the cobblestone paved streets all the way up to the back entrance of the fort. On the way up we passed a huge Hindu temple that was a dark gray in color and had a gold top. It was taller than it was wide with very curvy layers from bottom to top. We got out and walked the rest of the way on a very steeply sloped road. Peddlers hounded us to buy the best products in the world and they did not take



no for an answer. Beyond the gate was Jaleb Chowk or the first courtyard where palace visitors used to wait for permission to enter the palace. Here we saw elephants carrying tourists coming through the main entrance gate. It was such a sight to see because they were huge!



After photographing the elephant procession, we moved to the second courtyard whose highlights were the Diwan-i-Aam and the Ganesh Pol. The Diwan-i-Aam or Hall of Audience was where the ruler met the public and where announcements were made. The Diwan-i-Aam has intricately carved marble columns decorated with flowers, animals, and deities that were very beautiful. We then

viewed the Ganesh Pol or Welcome Gate, which led to the private living areas of the fort. This was a beautiful three storey gateway with arches and different colors to welcome anyone who had the good fortune to be allowed to enter. At the top there was a screen carved out of marble so that people could look out but no one could look in or see them. This was the first great example of the fort's Mughal architecture.

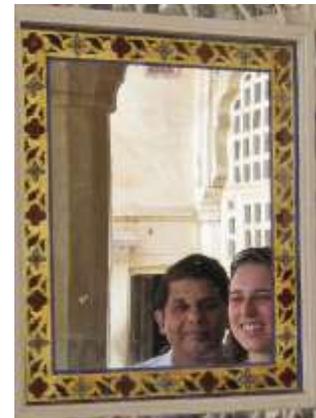


We entered private quarters of the palace through the Ganesh Gate and made our



way up a set of dark stairs into the third courtyard that was filled with flower gardens and small wading pools in the center flanked by two buildings. We started with the Mirrored Palace or Sheesh Maha, aka Jai Mandir. It was absolutely breathtaking: The exterior walls

and ceilings of this palace were lined with mirrors of all different shapes and sized to create beautiful designs. Maharaja Man Singh I had imported the mirrors from Belgium. The interior of the Mirrored Palace was closed to the public, but we looked through the entrance ways. Stephanie, Dr. Steffel, and I were challenged to get a good picture of our reflections. On another side of this palace workers were shining and polishing the mirrors and doing restoration work.



Next, we proceeded up stairs to the Jas Mandir which overlooks the Maota Lake. On the lake there were beautiful formal gardens; the lake was the water supply for the fort and the villagers. We made our way to the interior side of the Ganesh Pol where we could look down into the second or visitors' courtyard without being seen. The screen was carved out of beautiful white marble and the walls had a carved floral design. We moved to the Monsoon Palace or



more commonly known as the Pleasure Palace (Sukh Niwas). It was painted with red, white and aqua colored floral design. It was said that a gold swing used to hang from the ceiling and the king would play with two mistresses at once. The name Monsoon Palace came from the channel of water that flowed through the center to cool the marble during the excruciating summer heat. Between the Mirror Palace and the Pleasure Palace was the Aram Bagh, a garden full of saffron to freshen the air.



Our group then moved into the fourth courtyard known as the Zenana or women's quarters. Here Maharaja Man Singh I kept his twelve wives. The rooms were small: each contained a bath area, living area, and cooking area. In the middle of each section was a communal pavilion where the women would relax and spend time.

After viewing the highlights of Amber Fort, we returned to the parking area where we had our first encounter with monkeys. They were climbing everywhere; in and out of parked jeeps; and I was surprised at how close I could get to them! At the visitors parking lot we met our driver and headed back towards Jaipur.

We stopped to take pictures of the Jal Mahal or Water Palace. Our driver parked in a pull-off so that we could walk down the paved path to the lakeside to take pictures. From far away it was a majestically looking palace because it seemed to be floating on the water. A little boy performed a magic show. He couldn't have been older than five or six years and his show was very well rehearsed. He brought out three little cups to demonstrate a disappearing act; he was very crafty because I couldn't see any of the flaws at all. He then made rupees



appear out of Stephanie's pants! Next, he told me to bend down and announced he was going to make rupees pop out of my nose, and sure enough with a little tug the rupees appeared. I was startled that he touched me but he was absolutely adorable. After he finished his show Dr. Pandey tipped him for his magic show.

All of the guides in India have deals with local shops to encourage them to bring their groups and they get a percentage of the amount spent in the store. Our first shop was a gem cutting / jewelry store. Above the store were workshops where they cut and polished rubies, emeralds, and other precious and semiprecious stones for which Rajasthan is famous. Our guide showed us around and explained the processes. In India, families hand down the trade from generation to generation. Moreover, learning the skills requires many years of apprenticeship. After the tour we browsed through the store downstairs and saw many gorgeous stones. Andrew looked at amethyst for his wife and Casey looked at earrings. I fell in love with the emeralds that were mined in India but, unfortunately, I could not afford them. Dr. Pandey looked for his wife and daughters but was not overly excited with any of the items currently displayed in the store.



We left the store empty handed and headed to a textile shop. One of the workers demonstrated the process of printing the designs on fabrics. He used hand wood block stamps and natural dyes; he then let the fabric dry in the sun to bring out the color. All of the designs were very beautiful and ornate. This shop had everything from table settings, bed spreads, clothes and lastly, sarees. I tried on a dark emerald green saree with gold trim. It looked very pretty but I was very warm wearing it inside the store, so I couldn't fathom wearing it outside in the heat.

Around 2:00, we finally realized that we were starving so our guide took us to the Rainbow Restaurant. I ordered chicken curry and a Limca – both were very good! Everyone enjoyed their lunch. As we left the restaurant we noticed a Holy Man lying outside. After being warned in class that we might see a Jain walking around naked, we pondered whether he was homeless or just practicing his beliefs. It was a very interesting experience and I think a culture shock for everyone.

The heat of the day had finally crept upon us while we were visiting Jantar Mantar. This newly restored historic astronomical observatory is the largest of five in India. It was built 1728 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II who enjoyed astronomy. The

observatory had a variety of astronomical instruments that were made out of marble or sandstone. The Laghu Samrat Yantra, or the “small sundial” can calculate the time accurately to within twenty seconds. I found this to be unbelievable because these instruments seemed archaic. The Rashivalaya Yantra or star sign instrument was used by astrologers to predict horoscopes. It was composed of twelve instruments; each instrument represented one of the zodiac signs. Dr. Pandey told us that Indians evaluate horoscopes very carefully when considering potential partners in life. They have a check list of thirty attributes and characteristics of which nineteen have to be met in order to continue moving the courtship forward. I found this to be very interesting since it is so different from American society.

Most notably at Jantar Mantar was Samrat Yantra, which is the largest sundial at



this observatory and one of the largest in the world. It stood twenty-seven meters high! It predicts time accurately to the second. As we exited Jantar Mantar there were two snake charmers charming King Cobras. As I previously mentioned, I am scared to death of snakes but the way these snakes swayed to the music was very artistic. I appreciated the show at a distance because my of fear. During the walk in the heat of the afternoon I was hit

by jet lag.

The City Palace was our next stop. Our guide handed us our admission tickets and we proceeded to walk through the entrance into an open courtyard. In the middle of the courtyard was the Mubarak Mahal, or Welcome Palace, that was originally a guest house for visitors coming to see the royal family, but now was a museum to house the costumes of previous royalty. The exterior was very detailed with railings and lots of color. Outside one of the entrances there was a bowl of Holi festival color powder. Dr. Pandey took some and rubbed it on our faces. We then proceeded to the crafts building. We watched an artist hand paint a postcard. As he drew he explained the symbolism: the elephant symbolized luck, the horse symbolized power, and the camel symbolized love. With a brush made of squirrel hair, ink, and a steady hand he drew an elephant. Then the artist picked me randomly out of the group to dedicate his work on the back of the entrance ticket. I was flattered and it truly was one of the most memorable experiences





of the trip. Andrew bought a painting that was painted on old Indian government document. It was really neat!

After browsing for through the craft stalls we headed to the Rajendra Pol, a gateway that would lead us into another courtyard. On each side of the gate was a solid white marble elephant—each weighed one ton

and stood about four feet tall. In the center of the next courtyard there was a huge pavilion that had beautifully carved columns and archways. There were crystal glass chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. We proceeded to walk through the Riddhi-Siddhi Pol, a gateway, into the private courtyard for the royal family. Along the east / west walls were four doorways and each was painted differently to represent the seasons. On the north side was the Chandra Mahal, which was the residence of the Maharaja and housed Jaipur government officials. Then we went to the Diwan-i-Aam, or Hall of Public Audience, that was lavishly decorated with gold and floral design. There was a platform that covered the whole floor with thrones reserved for the top two members of the government; other members sat on chairs surrounding the platform. Behind them was a screened area where women sat and listened to the discussions and heard the decisions being made. We returned to the courtyard with the huge pavilion – the Diwan-i-Khas, or Private Audience Hall. Here we saw the largest silver urn in the world: This urn had been filled with water from the Ganges and taken to London by Maharaja Madho Singh II in 1901. Locals in authentic dress were playing music and dancing; Casey joined in their dance.



From the City Palace we went to a street with a jewelry store and marble cutting workshop where they carved small statues of deities. When we arrived Dr. Steffel knew exactly what he was looking for; he wanted a marble replica of the Taj Mahal because the one he bought on the previous trip was not of good quality. While he was deciding which one to purchase, we browsed through the shop. There were marble statues of deities that were unpainted for purchasing. It was very interesting.

On the way to the sound and light show at the Amber Fort, we stopped for a camel ride. The camels were stationed across the road from the Jal Mahal or Water Palace.



After Dr. Pandey negotiated a price, Stephanie, Casey, and I selected which camels we would ride. I, of course, picked the tallest camel whose name was Raj. The owner said he was nine years old and madly in love with Casey's camel. It was the sweetest thing ever. Getting on the camel was quite the experience, especially in a dress, and it required being able to shift one's weight when the camel stood up. It was similar to riding a horse and I quickly caught the

hang of it. Being nine feet off of the ground was pretty high up! My saddle didn't have the horn to hold on to so it was difficult to balance and I was scared that I was going to fall off. We took about a twenty minute walk down the road to a watering hole for the camels. I was glad to be back with the group because Raj was very uncomfortable to ride and he did not smell like roses. Getting off of the camels was challenging because when they go to lie down you really have to bend so you don't fall off. I was glad that I rode the camel but was even happier to have both feet on the ground.

After the camel adventure we headed to Amber Fort for the sound and light show. For some reason we thought we were late for the show so Harpal stepped on it. It turned out that we arrived early! We climbed up the steps to the viewing area and relaxed on the bench seats until the show started. It was a very interesting show because the lights danced on the fort's walls in sync to the music and narrative of Jaipur's history. I wish I had been more awake but because of the day's events I was worn out so I dozed off during the middle part of the show. There was a huge full moon that made for a very enjoyable evening. After the show we walked slowly to the van and returned to Jaipur for dinner. However, we first stopped at Jal Mahal for a night view with the moon shining.

The restaurant we ate at was called Lakshmi Mishtan Bhandar and it is a famous restaurant in Jaipur. Dr. Pandey ordered dishes for all of us to try. I was exhausted and did not feel well so I barely tried any of the food. For desert I ordered fruit chat which was mixed fruit in lime juice with a spicy blend of spices sprinkled on top. It was refreshing. Andrew ordered saffron ice cream because saffron is very famous to Jaipur and everyone tried a bite of it. I didn't think that it was anything too special but I am glad I tried it. It faintly reminded me of soap.

After dinner we returned to the hotel. I felt that we had a tough day of sightseeing and everyone was exhausted. So off to bed we went.

Brittany Brooks



ANDREW HAND

This morning began with a wakeup call from Dr. Pandey who told us to meet for breakfast at 8:30. After getting ready, I stepped out of the room that David and I shared and looked down to see the girls sitting at a table in the hotel courtyard. David and I joined them and we discussed various aspects of the daily journals the girls had been working on. We also noted the strong burning smell in the air caused by the common practice of burning trash, leaves, and brush. Dr. Pandey and Dr. Steffel soon joined us and we headed to the hotel restaurant for breakfast.

By accident, I was treated to a fascinating example of Indian culture. As everyone started to head toward the restaurant, I mentioned to Dr. Pandey that there was no hot water in our room. Instantaneously, Dr. Pandey said something in Hindi to one of the hotel workers who was sweeping the floors with a palm leaf. The hotel worker then hollered across the open air courtyard to another worker, who in turn yelled something to someone else, who loudly instructed another worker to go to our room and fix the hot water. In a matter of minutes, our hot water was fixed. It was quite interesting to witness the specialization, chain of command, and way of communicating that this simple example exemplified.

For the second day in a row, we had the buffet breakfast provided in the hotel restaurant. I had cornflakes with hot milk, toast with sweet mixed fruit jam, humus, and Chi tea. As we ate, Dr. Pandey spun the story of the two-day Holi Festival. After breakfast, we met Dinesh Singh. Dinesh is the son of one of Dr. Pandey's classmates at Banares Hindu University (BHU) where they received their PhDs more than 30 years ago. Dinesh, who lives with his family in Jaipur, had volunteered to guide us through the old central markets, where stores and shops are organized by trade or commodity.

We piled into the van and left the hotel. On the way from the hotel to the market, we travelled through one of the seven gates in the wall that surrounds old Jaipur city to the market area. After parking the van, we walked down the sidewalk stopping to talk to a woman selling freshly cut stalks of garbanzo beans. You could buy and eat these plants as a snack. In addition to the bean stalks the lady was selling rings of animal dung that would be used as fuel in tonight's community bonfires celebrating pre-Holi.



After entering the market area, Dinesh took us down a side street, which was the equivalent of a small alley, to his favorite sari shop. He liked this shop because it provided quality service and products, and because it was a fixed price store, which meant there was no haggling.

As we entered the Goyal Saree Emporium we were welcomed by several men eager to help us. After removing our shoes, we were ushered up into the showroom where all the saris were. We sat on mattresses that covered the majority of the sales area. Several men began showing us various saris while Dinesh and Dr. Pandey described our plans, intentions, and interests. Casey and Stephanie knew that each wanted to buy a sari so they began the shopping process. We observed the women model the saris that the clerks brought. Pretty soon there were a few piles of saris; several of us realized that the decision-making process was going to take quite a while.



Brittany, David, and I ventured out into the market area. David explored on his own; Brittany and I walked down the maze of narrow streets while our senses were bombarded with the sights, sounds, and smells of a bustling Indian city. We saw fresh pasta being made in the open air over a small fire; and we passed an open latrine out in public where men could urinate. Many of the stores were selling clothing and textiles. Brittany bought several scarves for herself and her friends back home. I bought my one year old son a traditional Indian outfit that a young Indian boy might wear to a wedding. I haggled the price down to 200 rupees. As I haggled, the merchant asked me what country I was from and if I could spare any coins from my country. He explained that he had two young children for whom he collected foreign coins. I didn't have any American coins with me but told him I would try to locate some. I returned to the sari shop to ask members of our group if they had any coins. I ended up getting a half dozen American coins and returned to the shop where I bought Marshall's outfit. I gave the man the coins and he



was very appreciative; he smiled, thanked me, and was excited for his children.

Our group spent a very long time at the sari emporium. Casey and Stephanie spent a few hours looking at and trying on dozens of saris with all different colors and patterns before they decided on the right ones. Dr. Pandey also bought several saris for friends and family. To describe the situation, Dr. Steffel used the example that in America “time is money” but in India “money is time”. This distinct difference can be best exemplified by the vast number of workers in the sari shop and the extensive amount of time they spent with us. Because we had



money and were willing to spend it, they were willing to take as much time as necessary to make us comfortable and happy in order to seal the deal. They were extremely knowledgeable and helpful. They were also very good hosts. They provided us Chi tea and were very patient with us.

Once the saris were purchased, we continued walking through the market to buy

additional souvenirs. We walked down to the hardware section of the market district. I wanted to buy some copper pots and I ended up purchasing an inexpensive copper tea kettle and cups. I also bought a copper *lota*, which is an important multi-purpose vessel that holds water used in religious ceremonies, and aids in cleaning after using a squat toilet.



I purchased a heavy bronze Ganesh statue and David bought a small bronze gong. Dr. Pandey and I tried on colorful turbans and David and Casey each bought one. Several of our group bought bracelets and Bengals, i.e., pieces of beautiful fabric and bedspreads.



During our walk through the market we saw and experienced many things representative of India. We passed construction sites with scaffolding that reached three stories high. The scaffolding was made of bamboo poles lashed together with twine. We saw a man hauling a huge

block of ice on his three-wheeled bicycle. We had several women and children approach us begging for money. We also were approached by young boys selling drums made of hand carved wood and animal hide. I bought a small drum for 100 rupees and Brittany was quite proud of herself for bargaining the price of a larger drum from a starting price of 1200 rupees down to a purchase price of 200 rupees.



At the end of our shopping excursion, we returned to the sari shop to pick up the saris and the altered blouses that are worn under the 20 yards of wrapped fabric. Dinesh stood in line at a street vendor and bought a box of Halwai.



Some of us had observed men preparing this popular Indian sweet made with flour, clarified butter, sugar, almonds, and saffron. Each of us tasted this very sweet dessert, then headed back to the van and off to the Elephant Festival.

Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan and its largest city. The annual elephant festival is a tourist activity that celebrates the history and culture of Rajasthan. We were provided with this neat and unexpected opportunity by pure luck. The day before we happened upon a poster in our hotel lobby that advertised the event and we asked Dr. Pandey if he could adjust our schedule to attend the elephant festival. Fortunately, he was able to rearrange our

schedules. At the Rajasthan Polo Club we were herded through the gates with all the other tourists and then stood around the perimeter of the polo field. The elephants, camels, horses, oxen, and all the other participants were gathered at the far end of the polo grounds. They formed a single file and slowly paraded around the edges of the polo field. The large group of viewers encircled the polo field. As the elephants made their way toward us, the crowd surged forward and intermingled with the animals and participants. Many spectators went out onto the field and got very close to the elephants. The procession included hundreds of locals dressed in colorful regalia. We were face-to-face with dancing horses, camels with cannons on



their backs, and more than forty decoratively painted elephants. The festival provided an opportunity to shoot some great photographs; however, at one point a couple of the girls from our group were nearly trampled by an unforgiving elephant.



While most people moved forward for a closer view of the elephants and other animals, I stayed back and talked with Dinesh. He and I discussed our families, living situations, and careers. I learned that all of Dinesh's immediate family lived together in a large house in Jaipur. He shared his beliefs about how so many people today have screwed up priorities and lack self-discipline. He told to me about his belief in the importance of helping others, about how he enjoys his work as an oncologist, and really likes giving back to his city.

After a very enjoyable time at the elephant festival, we drove a short distance to the beautiful Hindu temple known as Birla Lakshmi Narayan Temple. On the hill above the temple was the Moti Doongri Fort. As we approached the white marble temple, we were taken aback by its beauty and ornate design. Right off the path to the temple was an impressive shrine to Shiva that we stopped to admire. At the base of the temple we removed and stowed our shoes. Then we entered the large, marble structure. As we admired all of the beautiful pictures and hand-carved stone figures, Dr. Pandey told us about significance of the temple.



We learned that the temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi. We saw images of famous historical figures, such as Socrates, Christ, Buddha, and Confucius that were displayed around the temple. Dr. Pandey regaled us with stories or legends about Vishnu in his many forms. We learned why, in some pictures, Shiva's throat was blue (he drank but didn't ingest poison) and about the fight over the drink of immortality.



We exited and rested on the temple's enormous steps. We posed for group photos and even took pictures with some strangers who wanted us in their photos.

Directly outside the temple gates was a small plaza where preparations had been made for a ceremonial bonfire. As we left the temple grounds, we were once again fortunate to be able to participate in another annual Indian event. The bonfire celebrates the start of the national Hindu holiday of Holi. We just happened to be in the right place at the right time to participate in the neighborhood gathering for the lighting of the bonfire. The women were adorned in their beautiful saris, many of which made vibrantly colors cloth. The beautiful colors symbolized Holi and its connection to celebrating the start of spring.



Everyone gathered around the bonfire waiting for the sun to set and for the highly respected, oldest man in the community to light the fire. While we waited, several of the young Indian children approached us and asked us questions. David had brought from America bracelets called silly bands and he took this opportunity to share them with many of the Indian children. Stephanie, Brittany, and Casey took the silly bands and gave them to many of the young children gathered for

the bonfire. In return, a couple of the young Indian girls tied bracelets around the wrists of the girls in our group. The girls all stated that it was an enjoyable experience and that they really enjoyed interacting with the Indian children.

After witnessing and partaking in the bonfire celebration, we returned to the van. Just about everyone came to at least one of two realizations: First, we realized that we had a very busy day and we were very tired. Secondly, now that it was night, we realized we were very hungry and that we had not eaten a meal since breakfast at the hotel early in the morning.



On the way back to the hotel we stopped at Niros, a very nice and famous restaurant in the heart of Jaipur. We had a very enjoyable meal; although some of the food was presented differently than we were accustomed. Brittany really enjoyed her chicken and mashed potatoes but its presentation with the chicken on a stick was quite surprising. I ate chicken and vegetable stir-fry along with macaroni and cheese that was not out of the ordinary. However, I also ordered a chocolate shake that when served to me was actually white milk with 2 large rectangles of chocolate ice cream sticking out of the top of the glass. Needless to say, it was not at all what I expected but good nonetheless.

We left the restaurant and drove a short distance back to the hotel. As we headed to our rooms, I passed the front desk and saw the poster advertising the elephant festival. I asked the desk clerk what he was going to do with the poster now that the event was over. He said it would be trashed and so I asked if I could keep it. He said yes and I peeled it off the wall, feeling fortunate to have such a cool and authentic souvenir from our eventful day.

Andrew Hand



STEPHANIE AUSTIN

Today would turn out to be another long day. I rose early to complete yesterday's journal entries, and then went to breakfast. I didn't like the hot soup mix that the hotel served for breakfast, so I ate toast and drank a cup of tea. At breakfast, Dr. Pandey informed us of the day's plans. Dr. Pandey told us that today was Holi: in the first part of the day people threw colored powder or water at each other; in the afternoon families and friends socialized. Dr. Pandey said that Harpal was concerned that the van might be damaged by the celebrators in Aymer; therefore, we were going to drive straight to the Brahma Temple in Pushkar, spend much of the day in Pushkar, and on our return to Jaipur we would go to Professor Singh's home for fellowship and dinner. Dr. Pandey then told us the Brahma Temple was the only temple in the world dedicated to Brahma, and that it was run by a non-profit organization. He said the Pushkar used to be a haven for hippies, but not anymore; however, we might see a hippie. He added that hippies dress and look like Holy Men in order to collect money—he told us not to give them money. He then challenged us to distinguish a Holy Man from a hippie.

The drive to Pushkar was short compared to the drive from Delhi to Jaipur; moreover, there was significantly less traffic. All of the street businesses were either shuttered or had gates pulled down over their doors and windows to honor Holi.

On the way Harpal told us that he has twin girls. He then showed us a picture but it was only of one of the girls. We asked him why he only had a picture of one daughter but not the other daughter; he responded, "They both look the same so I only took one picture." We laughed a little because we thought that it was funny. We, Americans, always take pictures of all of our kids and not just one of them, even if they are twins.

Along the route we passed several universities. We also saw a number of tall smoke stacks and learned that they were brick factories. There were numerous fields of mustard or lentil on both sides of the road. Each crop must be cut, dried, and seeded by hand before being shipped for manufacturing. Several trips into the field were required in order to get enough of the crop to sell. We saw women carrying large loads of harvested crops on top of their heads to the edge of the fields where men loaded them into their large trucks.



We turned off the main road onto a dirt road that was more like a small dirt path. About half way down the road we encountered a human road block. Standing in the middle of the road were three young boys who were approximately between the ages of 9 and 13. Each of them was painted in Holi colors and had large rocks in their hands. They threatened to smash the van if we did not pay them. Dr. Pandey was going to make peace but before he could act, Harpal jumped out his door, picked up rock, and chased the boys. Looking back I now grasp the difference between their tactics. Dr. Pandey wanted to protect us and offer peace by giving the boys a few rupees. Harpal, on the other hand, just chased them away because he didn't feel they needed to be paid. He called them, "Rag-A-Muffins." He checked the van for damage and then we continued to Pushkar.

About a mile outside the city we stopped again. This time it was to pay the city tax before we could enter into the city. When we arrived in Pushkar Harpal pulled the van into a small parking space along the dirt path about a block away from the temple. Pushkar was not at all what I expected. The town was very small but welcoming. There were very few shops in comparison to what we have seen in the past. I did not feel overwhelmed by pushy salesman. I don't think I saw any of the hippies in Pushkar.

After a short walk to the temple gate, we were informed that we could not take our cameras. I gathered cameras and with David took them back to the van. Harpal put them away for us. As David and I walked back toward the group, we noticed several monkey's looking at us intently. David told me to hold on to my sunglasses if I didn't want the monkeys to take them.





Outside the temple gate we stopped to read a large red-clay colored sign that listed the laws or rules of Pushkar. Some of us were amused by specific rules. We then proceeded up the steps into the temple. The temple was built with a light sandstone. In the afternoon sun it had a soft pink glow. The inside of the temple was dirty and run down. The lack of upkeep was overwhelming. There were monkeys and monkey feces everywhere, as well as birds and bird feces. One of the security guards shot an M-80 in order to make the birds fly away. This scared me a little because I didn't know what had happened. I expected something grander since this is the only Brahma Temple in the world. The deities were either behind cages or set back into little shelter temples and were hard to see. One interesting architectural aspect that I liked was where part of the temple went underground. We climbed down a small narrow winding staircase into a small cubby hole area. The priest sat in the corner and blessed pilgrims who came in. After we participated in the ritual, the priest gave us a small

hand full of something warm and gooey to eat. It was very sweet. It left my hands very sticky. Thank God for hand sanitizer.

After exiting the temple we debated whether to walk or take the van to the ghats at the sacred lake. We decided to walk because it would be easier than trying to have Harpal maneuver the van through the narrow streets. Andrew and I went to the van to get everyone's cameras. The gentlemen sitting at the temple entrance allowed us to

take a few pictures from the temple entrance. We were pleased because earlier we had been told no photographs. After taking the pictures, we headed down toward the ghats.

We passed through the residential quarter of Pushkar. Several of families had their shops in the front of their houses. When we arrived at the ghats several men were in the bathing pond. Bathing symbolizes the washing away of sins. This gives them salvation. Dr. Pandey wanted each of us to take part in a Puja or prayer ritual so he had us sit on the steps as he located the priest. He found a priest; however, getting the priest to perform the ritual wasn't so easy. The priest asked Dr. Pandey where his wife was because he could not perform the ritual without his wife's presence. It is Indian tradition that a wife must be present for participation in a religious ceremony. Dr. Pandey then explained that we were students from Ohio State University studying Indian culture. He told the priest that his wife was at home in the US. The priest then consented. The ritual began with the priest telling us the purpose of the prayer. He said that the prayer was to ward off evil and allow good to come. He talked about the death of Rama's father but he spoke so quickly that I could not catch everything. He then placed some milky coconut on each of our foreheads as he said a prayer. He then placed some sassafras on each of our foreheads as he said another prayer. Then he placed some rice in the center of the sassafras on each of us as he said a third prayer. He then asked for each of our names, which he repeated, and then he said another prayer. In closing, the priest gave each of us a unique precept. We all laughed when he told Brittany that she had many boyfriends but could only have one husband. We thanked him and Dr. Pandey paid him for his service.

On the way back to the van we got side tracked. A cow came up to us as we were walking in the middle of the street. It just stood there and stared at us like it was trying to tell us something. Andrew reached down and gave it a good scratch. The cow seemed to enjoy it. Then we noticed a family standing in the doorway of their home smiling and waving to us. Dr. Pandey approached them and they invited us into their home. The house was two storied with an open court yard inside the middle of the living room. On the other side of the living room was a small shrine that housed their deity. The son introduced us to his family. The grandparents, son and his wife, and their three boys lived in the house. The son's brother in-law (his sister) and their children were in town for the Holi festival.





The children and the uncle were covered in the Holi colors. Before leaving we learned that they were in the marble industry and that the marble sold for 33 American cents per foot. We thanked them for their hospitality and returned to the van.

On the road back to the hotel to rest and clean up prior to our dinner visit at the Singhs we got sidetracked again. As we were passing MDS University of Ajmer, Dr. Pandey asked Harpal to pull up to the gate. The university was closed for the Holi holiday. Dr. Pandey spoke to the security officer. He explained who he was and handed the officer his

business card. The officer made a call on his radio and then boarded the van. As we drove around the campus, Dr. Pandey pointed out each section and noted which academic disciplines were housed there. The university was more like an American rural high school. There were no fancy buildings, sport facilities, or massive art work displayed on the lawn. There were a few flowers and a prayer garden. Unlike colleges in America the boys and girls were housed in separate dorms in different areas of the campus.

It was getting late in the afternoon and we were behind schedule. We had not eaten since breakfast so we stopped at a roadside restaurant to eat. With the sun beating down on us, they turned on the ceiling fans under the awning in attempt to cool us off. It was a nice gesture but the fans didn't help much. Some of us choose not to eat because the place scared us a bit. We weren't sure if the food would be safe to eat. There were flies, bugs and small lizards swarming about us. I ordered a Limca . . . Yum! Although it was warm, it was refreshing. We finished our snacks and continued back to Jaipur.



It took us a while to find the Singhs house. When we asked for assistance, one person sent us completely in the wrong direction. I don't think that he knew where the street was and I thought that he did it on purpose. Dr. Pandey said that in India people will try to help even if they don't know the correct answer because they want to be friendly and of service to you. We finally arrived at the Singhs home.

The whole family with exception the great-grandfather came outside to greet us. The Singh home is based on traditional Indian social practices—it is a traditional extended family home. The family consists of the great-grandfather, Dr. K.N. & Parvati Singh, Mr. Alok (Ganesh) & Vandana Singh (the eldest son & his wife), Dr. Dinesh Kumar & Archana Singh (the youngest son & his wife), their aunt & niece. It was a beautiful gated four story home with marble floors and inlaid tile. We were welcomed by Dinesh in the greeting room. He introduced his wife Archana who asked us to call her Sunny. She is a very beautiful women. She has long dark hair and a light brown complexion. Her skin is perfectly flawless. She greeted us with the standard Indian greeting. She touched each of our feet then hugged only the women in our group. She then asked us to sit. She then left the room to start preparing the dinner.



Dinesh splashed a Holi color on our foreheads and said that today was the only day that Indian men could touch a female who is not their wife. Dr. Pandey, Dr. & Mrs. Singh visited in one room, while the rest of us visited in another. I learned that in India the custom is for elders to provide their youth privacy so that they can talk and joke freely. It is Indian tradition that males eat together and females eat together.

Sunny served us drinks. I had the most amazing apple juice that I have ever had. It was kind of like apple wine but without the alcohol content. She then served us a pre-dinner treat of sweets and nuts. After passing the tray around for a while Ganesh loaded it up again and urged us to eat more. Sunni offered us two two kinds of sandwiches, which we thought were supposed to be our dinner. A fried cheese or fresh tomato and cucumber sandwich. I chose the tomato and cucumber sandwich. It was delicious. We had traditional veggies on the side. I was so stuffed that I couldn't eat another bite.



After finishing the meal we were invited into the TV room to sit on the bed to relax. The World Cup cricket games were on and India was playing. Some of us were

curious about the rules since it is not a popular American sport. Dinesh and Ganesh were willing to teach us. They called their friends to come and give us a lesson right inside the TV room. Ganesh was the baller (sort of like a pitcher in baseball) and Dinesh was the batter. He hit the ball and it bounced off of the wall and into the next room. We all laughed. We watched the game for about thirty minutes when Sunny came in and set the table. We just assumed it was for their breakfast. I told Casey to get her head off of the table because I didn't want her hair to get onto the clean plates, thinking that were set for breakfast. Besides we thought that she was being rude and disrespectful to the Singhs. Sunny then said to me, "No these plates are for your dinner." We all laughed because we thought that she was joking. The look on Dr. Steffel's face was priceless. He told Sunny that he was full and that we already had our dinner. She said, "No, you just had a pre-dinner snack." She added, "Uncle you must eat." It is customary for Indians to look at elders as part of their family; so to them, Dr. Steffel was their uncle. Again, we all laughed. He just smiled at her. Then before we knew it there were mounds of food appearing before us. We didn't want to be rude so we took a helping of the food and ate. For desert they brought us something that was warm and sweet.

It was getting very late and the family had not eaten yet. They had served us but did not eat with us so we began to say our goodbyes. Dr. Pandey and Dr. Steffel gave each of our hosts a small gift to express our gratitude for the humble and welcoming hospitality. We taught them how to do O-H-I-O and took their picture. We then took several group photos and said our final "see you later" as they would say. For them it is not goodbye but "hello until we meet again." We headed back to our hotel for the last night in Jaipur. While I sat on the van; I tried to absorb what had just happened. I had a warm rush of emotions come over me. I tried to be silent as I cried. I wiped my tears away and was grateful that I got to experience such a humble offering of love and friendship. Never before in all of my travels have I ever felt so much hospitality from one family. I believe that this definitely was and will continue to be the highlight of my trip. I am truly grateful for the home visit and for Dr. Pandey providing us this experience.

Stephanie Austin



Dr. Ashok Kumar Singh, Dr. Bishun D. Pandey, Dr. Raj Bali
Three Old Friends from Graduate School at BHU

CASEY EDGINGTON

While waiting in the hotel lobby for the rest of the group, Brittany, Stephanie and I looked at the trinkets and images of deities in the glass display cases. Andrew snapped a picture of me just as I turned around and smiled. I was very fascinated by the rich artwork around the hotel that must have seemed ordinary to Indians but seemed exotic and unfamiliar to me. Shiva seemed to be very popular in Jaipur. I also could not help being drawn to the Ganesha wrapped ornately in a pink blanket so that he seemed to be wrapped as a babe. Ganesha is a deity that represents good luck and fortune, and appears as a man with an elephant head, he is one of the most popular deities.

Shortly, Dr. Steffel and Dr. Pandey arrived as well and greeted us. David, who always seemed to be carrying around little toys, gave a small orange ball to a little Indian boy who examined it. Dr. Pandey started to examine the trinkets at the shop, and seemed to be interested in ornamental glass birds. After purchasing some of the decorated glass birds, Dr. Pandey bought the girls skirts, which were really awesome. I purchased a sarong for my grandma for 400 rupees. We boarded the van just as Harpal Singh put incense in the air conditioning vent and filled it with the smell of—well incense. I had commented on the overwhelming smell of incense in India earlier and I decided that incense must be the equivalent of “glade” in the U. S.

As we began our journey to Fatehpur Sikri and Vrindavan, Dr. Pandey motioned for Harpal to stop. He jumped out to purchase a sticky donut treat that reminded me of elephant ears at the county fair, minus the powdered sugar. The treat is traditionally a breakfast food, and is called “Jallebi”. Dr. Pandey told me about another breakfast food that is common in India called “kachori” which is spicy and covered in bread and veggies. Jallebi was very delicious, sweetened with honey, but sticky and messy. I looked out the window as we left Jaipur with continued awe at the sheer number of people who crowded the streets. Many women had their faces covered because of the clouds of dust in the streets. Dr. Steffel and I originally thought that a Hindu woman was Muslim because her face was covered, and he snapped a photo of her. We stopped for bananas that were really good and tasted slightly different than bananas at home.



When we stopped at a gas station to fill up, Andrew remarked that he thought that the gas tank was perpetually filled. Andrew and Brittany bought some drinks; they got me a Limca, which was pretty delicious. We passed a large Hanuman statue who carries a weapon called a “gadda” or mace. Once on the road we observed Indians drive by on motorcycles with five or more people, and small cars that were packed to the extreme, and I thought that our group of seven was crowded in the van. This was day six of our trip so I had already acclimated to the crazy driving and had become acutely aware that traffic laws more like guidelines and not always obeyed.



On the main highways I noticed that many trucks and wagons were so overloaded that they literally were almost twice their size. An interesting aspect of the Indian culture that I had noticed was also how new and old ways of India were intertwined, e.g., camels were on the highways along with trucks carrying loads of bricks, and new skyscrapers perched over old style buildings and rubble of remaining buildings from another time. It seemed that anything that could



move carried bricks in this part of India because of the construction boom. I noticed that the brick factories were not what Americans would call factories, *per se*; rather they were really tall chimneys set out in the middle of nowhere. When we were passing

these brick smoke stacks I noticed a temple under construction; Dr. Pandey noted that rich people usually finance the building of new temples.

I was surprised to actually see the countryside in India; we observed fields of mustard and wheat. The Indian people do almost everything by hand; however, Dr. Pandey told me that they do use a thrashing machine once all of the wheat or mustard seed plants are harvested. The driver told us that we were taking a short cut and he took us on roads through the Indian countryside. We stopped at a rest stop where Dr. Steffel assured me it was okay to throw my trash on the ground.

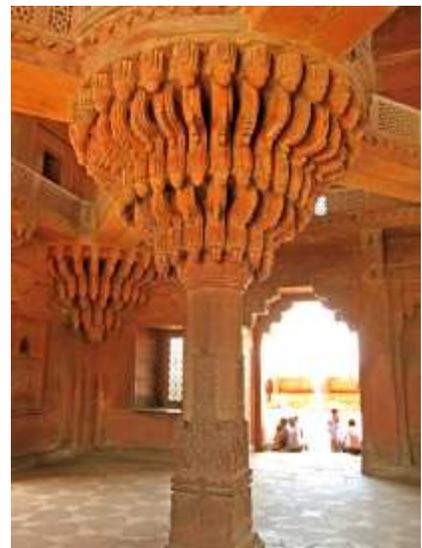


The main attraction of the day was Fatehpur Sikri. We parked at the base of the palace fort and boarded tuk-tuks to take us to the entrance.



A tuk-tuk is a motorized three-wheel rickshaw; it's more like a bumper car at the county fair. Between the parking lot and the fort we saw many religious shrines. At the gates of the fort our guide explained its history.

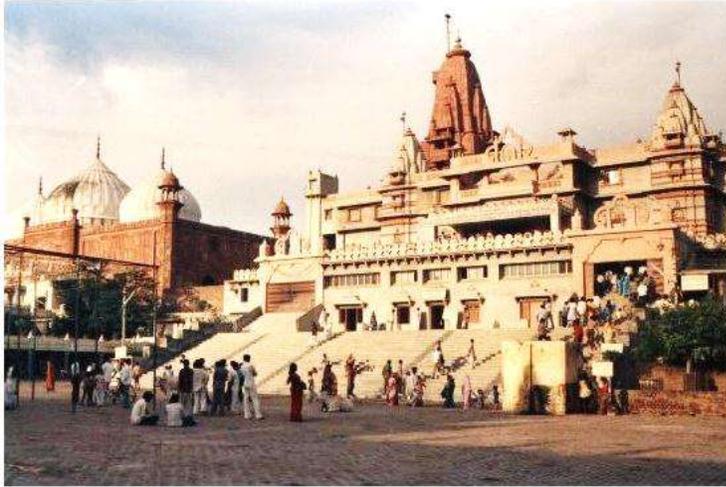
Construction of Fatehpur Sikri began in 1571 by Akbar, one of the great Mughal kings. The guide also explained that the fort was occupied for only four years because there was a scarcity of water. Akbar was a very successful and tolerant emperor; however, despite being illiterate he was a very clever man. He had three wives, one Hindu, one Christian, and a Muslim. Jodha, the Hindu, was Akbar's favorite wife because she had granted him a son that had been predicted by the sufi mystic Salim Chishti. Evidence of Jodha's most favored status was that her palace was much larger than Marium's, the Christian wife, or Turki Sultana's, the Muslim wife; however, the palace of each wife was elaborately designed to reflect her religious preferences. The fort had been built out of red sandstone



and had lush gardens and a large court to play Parcheesi.

As we left the fort we were bombarded by hawkers and even chased by two little boys! We stopped at a drink stand to purchase water. Then nearby we stopped for lunch.

After lunch we headed for Mathura to visit the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple that is considered to be the site of Krishna's birth. The environs of the temple were very



crowded and noisy. The temple was heavily guarded due to the tensions between Muslims and Hindus. There is a disagreement between the two religious groups as to who owns the rights to the land. An electrified barbed wire fence and soldiers with guns separate the temple from the mosque. Stephanie expressed discomfort because of the guns as we entered. We were hard

pressed to hear or follow our guide who kept running ahead of us in the overwhelming and noisy crowd. While we were viewing the elaborately decorated deities in the main hall, I was accosted by some children who wanted to shake my hand. It is very common to be approached by children who want to shake your hands and to take your picture. Probably the strangest quirk about the trip was the Indian fascination with white people. I finally had to break away from the kids as the guide pushed us through the crowd to view the deities who always had a slight smile and were almost always surrounded by gold and colorful clothes. They were absolutely stunning, and completely foreign to someone who is used to the simplicity of a non-denominational church where the most elaborate decor would probably be the floral wallpaper in the bathroom. As we made our way out of the temple into the fresh air, we observed a chariot with Krishna posing majestically. We also stopped at a large lit diorama portraying Krishna's life. Stephanie was still very nervous about being around the military, but once we were out of the crazy crowds she calmed down a bit.

After the exhausting trip through the crowded temple we were off to our hotel. Unfortunately, it turned out that the hotel hadn't retained the rooms we had booked and what was available was not suitable for us. We checked out another hotel which was abysmal according to Andrew. At this point Dr. Pandey called and got us a police

escort, which was the oddest and craziest thing ever! When we finally found a hotel I was ready to collapse from exhaustion, but Dr. Pandey insisted we eat and I ordered an ice-cream that was delicious. I finally showered and went to sleep. It was a long day and I would need my rest for tomorrow!

Casey Edgington



BRITTANY BROOKS

After an exhausting night of trying to find a hotel that met our standards, we awoke and got ready to start our day off on the right foot. Everyone met downstairs with their luggage; we loaded the van, and headed out for breakfast. We ate breakfast at a strictly vegetarian place called Govinda. The restaurant belongs to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) or familiarly known as the Hare Krishna movement. I ordered uttapam which was like a pancake and was very good. Over breakfast Dr. Pandey explained that Vrindavan is the land of Lord Krishna and that almost every temple centered around him.

Fortunately, for us the restaurant we were eating at was right beside the ISKCON Krishna Balram Mandir Temple. This is one of the most famous temples in Vrindavan because it is where Srila Prabhupada (1896 – 1977) saw Lord Krishna. Prabhupada travelled the world sharing his newly found enlightenment, especially New York City and Moscow.



After breakfast we walked to the temple, which was absolutely breathtaking. It is constructed of white marble with an intricately carved exterior that glowed in the sunlight. The temple floor was a black and white marble pattern and the walls surrounding the open courtyard were painted with different Hindu scenes. It was very crowded because this was Holi and everyone was there to pay homage including many hippies from all over the world.

There were two different deities at the front of the sanctuary. We made our way to the altar deities where visitors were playing loud music and everyone was singing and jumping around. It was exciting and the beat made me want to join in. After exiting we went out behind the temple. In the center of a corridor to other buildings there was a caged tulasi (basil) plant that is worshipped and considered holy by Hindus. On the iron cage were phrases that everyone should live by, almost like our Psalms. Andrew and David walked down an alley to a low roofed ceiling where two monkeys were sitting. I walked down to see them and the baby monkey acted like it was going to start after me so I hurriedly took a picture and rejoined the group. From the main entrance of the temple we could easily see the beautiful architecture. I walked away to take pictures of the carved white marble



archway and stairway leading up to offices or homes. At the opposite end of the archway was the memorial site to Srila Prabhupada. The inside of the shrine was open and had high ceilings with carved marble walls. His ashes were in the center in a black box like thing with gold trim. It was very beautiful. Before we entered the shrine, David had another encounter with a monkey. This time the monkey pushed him and left two little paw prints on his shirt. He was startled by it and Andrew had tears rolling down his face from laughing so hard.

When we returned to the van, Harpal explained to Dr. Pandey that he shouldn't drive the crowded, narrow streets of Vrindavan; he suggested that we rent tuk-tuks to take us to the rest of our destinations. So the girls and Dr. Pandey climbed into one and Dr. Steffel, Andrew and David into the other and we made our way to the ghats. Thus



far on our India trip we had witnessed dust and litter, but this was the first city that was actually dirty. We rode through the narrow, curvy, and sometimes unpaved streets with a ditch on each side – the ditches were filled with stagnant, cloudy water. The smell was also something that had to be experienced. This is where I really felt appreciation for home and the level of cleanliness. Our first stop was the ghats. Once we arrived I quickly hopped out because there was no air circulation in the back of the tuk-tuk and I was a sweaty mess. Once everyone was out Dr. Pandey warned us to keep our sunglasses, water bottles, and cameras firmly in our grasp because the monkeys were notorious

for grabbing them right out people's hands or off their heads. We walked single file down a path with some broken steps to the Yamuna River bank. I know that we worry about pollution problems in the U.S., but this river was dark gray on the verge of black. Dr. Pandey said that it was not recommended for people to swim in, yet there was a group of boys cooling off from the heat while showering in the water. Small rickety boats were lined up to take guests out into the Yamuna. After Dr. Pandey negotiated a reasonable price we all climbed in. I was scared to death that this old weathered boat was going to tip over and we would wind up with Delhi bellies against our wishes. We bought a little pie pan looking thing that had a candle surrounded by roses and marigolds; we lit the candle and put it in the water



as our offering. The view of the landscape from the river was quite stunning. Our boat driver returned us to shore and we scampered up the bank to the tuk-tuks for a short ride to the monkey sanctuary.

The present day monkey sanctuary is shared with priests in training who live in this humble area. We walked in and I have never seen so many monkeys in my life. They



were running wild everywhere and some of the noises they made were rather startling. Almost like a dog growling and the ferocity of it. Dr. Pandey told to us a story of Lord Krishna visiting a park and dancing all night with the women of Vrindavan. While he was speaking the monkeys got thirsty so they went to the water pipe and turned on the spigot to start the water flow. I knew monkeys were smart but the

depth of that was not understood. They all joined in taking a drink from the small stream running down the dry ground. After they were finished one of the priests came over and shut off the spigot. I stared in amazement. The sanctuary was full of trees and some rundown buildings. It was originally the home of the man who built and took care of the Baby Krishna. I exited quickly because I was scared that a monkey was going to jump on me!

We then headed to Rang Nath Temple (1851), known for its south Indian architectural style. The temple was a short ride down some back alleys. The temple was surrounded by a huge wall. The first courtyard with pavilions had a huge sacred tank filled with water. As we approached the gateway to the inner courtyard a guard yelled at us not to photograph. I had to go to the bathroom so I asked Dr. Pandey where it was and he took me. We learned that the person in charge of the restrooms decided not to come to work today so the women's bathroom was out of commission. A fellow standing by said he knew of one and offered to take us there so we followed him. What was only supposed to be forty steps turned into like a little over half a mile one way



but we finally made it and I went. On our way back Dr. Pandey explained that people in India have a hard time of estimating distance. I felt bad because our group was waiting but we eventually rejoined them.

What makes this a Southern style temple? One enters the temple grounds through a gopuram or gate pyramid. The temple has a pyramidal tower that is decorated with sculptured religious figures and the altar deities are darker in color. The Rang Nath Temple was humongous compared to some of the others we had visited. It was decorated with bright colors and was very clean. The main deity was in the center with lots of space between it and the worshippers. After viewing the temple we returned to the front of the courtyard where priests were reciting mantras into a microphone because it was time for daily worship and people started flooding in. Just before we departed the temple, Dr. Pandey approached a group of young boys all dressed in orange. They were novitiates in training to become priests and this was part of their duties. It was very interesting to see them all sitting there.

The third temple we visited was Govind Temple, which had been built in 1590 by Maharaja Man Singh of Amber. It is constructed from red sandstone. It was sacked by Aurengzeb in 1670 who ordered the upper four levels demolished. The temple's original image of Govend Deo Ji (another name for Lord Krishna) is in Jaipur where it



had been sent for safe keeping in 1670. Our group referred to it as the monkey temple because there were monkeys everywhere; they are equivalent to squirrels because they are such a nuisance. Thus far this had been the prettiest temple, in my opinion, that we had visited. After Dr. Pandey found a guide to tell us about the inside of the temple we removed our shoes and proceeded to climb up the three foot high steps to the main

sanctuary. It was rather startling to find monkeys sitting on top of the doorway. The interior architecture with its carved decorations was outstanding, but it smelled like monkey urine and they were everywhere. Just as our guide began to explain the history of the temple Stephanie walked outside because she felt ill. I followed her out and sat her down while Dr. Pandey bought her a bottle of water. Andrew stayed with her and I went back in for the rest of the tour. I caught up with the group just as our guide was saying that the ceiling used to be filled with diamonds but it was eventually looted. For as large as this temple was the Niche or altar for the deity's image was very small. As I tried to take pictures of the ceiling a monkey jumped on my leg and startled me! I screamed and jumped around creating a show for the people nearby. We were tired

and after seeing the temple we were ready to go on to the next one. I was behind a lady whose sunglasses were on top of her head and as she walked through the door a monkey grabbed them! One of the guards grabbed a stick and threw it at the monkey to get it to drop her sunglasses. It was a sight to see! Meanwhile, during our temple tour Stephanie had gotten sicker; she failed to hold on to her water bottle, and when she got up a monkey came and swiped it. Andrew said you could see the monkey opening it and drinking the water. These were smart animals! I think by this point in the trip everyone had had enough and we were all tired.

On our way back to the tuk-tuks we were stopped by a couple of teen age boys who wanted a picture of us with them. We readily agreed. Then we left for the Banke Bihari Temple. On the short drive there Stephanie felt worse. I felt so bad for her because I couldn't imagine being miserable while on this trip since it was already hard enough. Our drivers parked and gave Dr. Pandey directions to the baby Krishna temple which consisted of negotiating narrow alleys with electric wires low enough to graze the top of our heads. Stephanie stayed behind and laid down in a tuk-tuk.

At the Banke Bihari Temple (1864) we had to take off our shoes. I was so glad that I remembered to bring socks today because this temple was very crowded and the ground outside of it was wet. I was grossed out for sure and I made the mistake of asking Andrew, "How do your feet feel?" He replied with the action of wiping his wet feet across my ankle. I could have screamed!

I have never seen so many people in one place as inside this temple! One could feel the temperature rise as we stepped inside. We held on to each other and stayed for about five minutes because it was impossible to make our way up to the altar of baby Krishna. The altar curtains opened and closed every five minutes in order to allow baby Krishna rest. The ceiling was damaged and pieces were hanging down; it didn't seem that these people were safe. One thing I learned about India is that liability is not as big of a concern as it is in the United States. We went outside, retrieved our shoes, and then left the temple area .

The walk back to the tuk-tuk will be cemented in my mind for the rest of my life because of how dirty it was. The ditches were filled with stagnant water; pipes were dripping water and/or sewage. I felt like I wanted to shower immediately. Finally, we made it to a main street where Dr. Pandey bought a lassi. Lassi is a yogurt drink equivalent to a smoothie. The man scraped the fat and the curdled milk off the top of a bowl of milk sitting outside and put it in a metal container. He then shook it with ice and served it in a clay pot. Dr. Pandey offered me some but I refused because of all the flies that were sitting on top of the curdled milk and fat. The thought of drinking it made my stomach turn. We continued walking back to meet Stephanie. She told us about

her visitors while we at the temple. She said a cow stuck her head in and a monkey was looking at her over the seat. The tuk-tuks returned to the van.

I was so happy to be back in the van and heading out of Vrindavan. I was never looking back! We headed towards Agra for the night. On our way we stopped at McDonald's and I was ecstatic to eat something familiar. I had the filet o' fish meal with a diet coke. Food had never seemed to taste any better. Stephanie did not eat her dinner and we all were tired from the long day we had just gone through. All I remember is that we fell asleep in the van only to be awakened to carry our luggage into our rooms. We changed and quickly went to sleep knowing we didn't have to rise early in the morning.

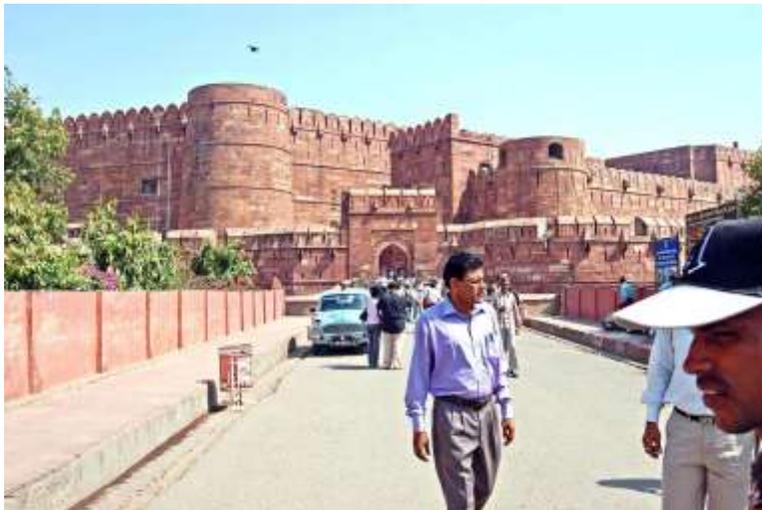
Brittany Brooks



CASEY EDGINGTON

The foyer of our hotel room was hot and humid. Stephanie and Brittany were outside by the van feeding oranges to the monkeys. Since I don't care for monkeys I just observed them. We ate another American style breakfast at "The Palace," a very western and expensive hotel. On the way to Fort Agra the guide explained that tourism was an economic staple in Agra. Stephanie was still feeling sick, so I took over her duties as diarist of the day.

Agra Fort was initially built between 1765 and 1773 by Akbar, who according to our



guide, was one of India's of the greatest rulers. Akbar's grandson Shah Jahan (1628-1657) supervised the construction of the white marble residential quarters that were decorated with semi-precious stones. Shah Jahan is famous for building the Taj Mahal, which is a tomb for his wife Mumtaz. The guide related the story of Mumtaz who gave birth to fourteen children, seven of

whom survived; and she died in childbirth with the fourteenth. Before she died, Shah Jahan asked Mumtaz what he could do to prove his love for her. Mumtaz told him not to take another wife and to do something in remembrance of her that would be unique.

The Taj Mahal would cost roughly 40 million dollars in today's money. Shah Jahan also started construction of a black Taj Mahal across the river for himself. His son Aurangzeb usurped power in 1657-1658 because he believed his father was madly wasting money. Shah Jahan was placed under house arrest until his death eight years later. While confined in the Musamman Burj or tower, his daughters cared for him. When



Aurangzeb moved Shah Jahan to a part of the palace from which he couldn't see the

Taj Mahal, his daughters constructed a mirror device that enabled him to view it once again. On a side note the guide explained that women would sit behind a “paliki” which is a structure that enabled women to see out without being seen.

The black Taj Mahal was never completed but we went to the Mehtab Bagh park where the foundations still remain. From here we had



excellent views of the Taj Mahal across the Yamuna River. Although Aurangzeb did not kill his father, he did kill his older and younger brothers to consolidate his power. His reign was cruel and tyrannical.

Aurangzeb was a devout Muslim who reinstated the Jizya, or the tax on non-muslims, resumed religious intolerance, and launched many campaigns.

There was evidence of British influence at the fort because there was a memorial to a British governor who reigned during the times of the East India Company.

As we left the fort we bought some elephants from the hawkers; I got one for my brother. Instead of going directly to the Taj Mahal we took a siesta at a five star hotel, and the police brought us ice cream.

On the way to the Taj Mahal I saw a medical institute for leprosy which was interesting. There were also many underground sewers being constructed along the road. We arrived at the Taj Mahal with police escort. Our guide led us through the lovely garden right up to the platform just under the Taj



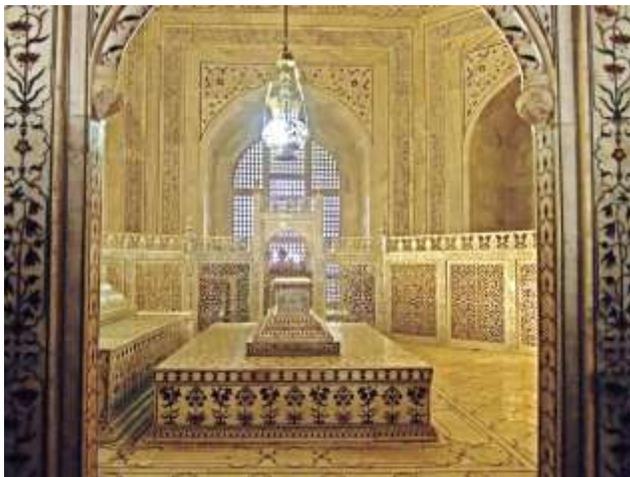
Mahal.. The Taj Mahal's marble is the hardest in the world, and it took 22 years to complete. The colored decorations on the Taj Mahal are all inlaid gems, and none are colored. The guide took us into the mausoleum and described its construction, the stone carvings, and the inlays. He then led us to the river side and let us walk around the tomb to experience it at our own pace. As beautiful as the Taj Mahal is, it has an imperfection in one of its four pillars—as our guide said, “only God is perfect.”

When we left the Taj Mahal we saw Muslims praying in the mosque. We stopped to take some group pictures in front the Taj Mahal. Then we went to the home of Asim Arun who is Agra's Deputy Inspector General; since he was away on business his wife Jyotsn hosted us for a few hours. It was a different experience to be waited on by



servants and I found myself feeling slightly uncomfortable with it, but Jyotsn was a wonderful hostess. She told us how the police force was getting better all the time in India. She explained some things about law, and how it is fashioned after British law. Before we left we took some group shots and Jyotsn told us we needed to see a Bollywood film. After we visited her home we went to eat and I was practically falling asleep at the table and I do not remember much about the restaurant after which we headed back to the hotel to rest for another day.

Casey Edgington



Mumtaz Mahal's Cenotaph

STEPHANIE AUSTIN

After another late night some of us chose to rise very early this morning to view the sun rise at the Taj Mahal. The alarm went off at five o'clock in the morning. I jumped out of bed, brushed my teeth quickly, and got into yesterday's clothes. Someone forgot to leave the room keys with the front desk, so our laundry didn't get picked up. Then I boarded the van. Harpal had been instructed by Dr. Pandey last night to drive Dr. Steffel, Brittany, and me to the ticket counter at the Taj Mahal. Harpal bought three VIP tickets and made the arrangements to have us transported to and from the Taj.



When we arrived, the large wooden doors that open into the outer courtyard were still closed. We waited in two small lines that separated men and women. The doors opened at six o'clock sharp. We didn't wait long in the security line. When the female guard checked my camera case, she pulled me to the side. I had "Flat Stanley" with me. I had planned to take pictures of him at the Taj for my son. The guard stated that Stanley was a terrorist threat and that she would have to lock him up until I was ready to

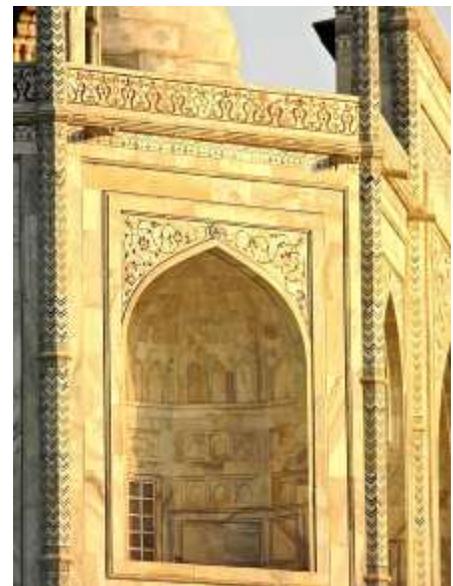
leave. I couldn't believe that I could not take a piece of paper in because they thought it was a threat. I left him with the guard and entered into the outer court yard.

We quickly walked into the inner courtyard because we didn't want to miss the sun rising on the Taj. Brittany and I found a nice corner bench to sit on. We had the perfect view of the sunrise from the bench. The peacefulness was so surreal. The rush of people that we had experienced the day before just didn't exist. The courtyard was quiet. You could hear the birds chirp and smell the freshness of the flowers in bloom. Brittany and I just sat and enjoyed the beautiful view as we took it all in. Shah Jahan built the Taj to honor his wife whom he loved very much. It is supposed to be a place for reflection and meditation and not of haste and discontent. For the first time since I arrived in India, I didn't feel rushed. I was at peace. I was able to really enjoy the beauty that the Taj offered. I believe that this is how one is supposed to feel when one visits the Taj.



The sun rose quickly. The sunlight on the white marble gave it a soft glow of pink as it rose above the doubled dome. The higher the sun rose, the whiter the marble shined. At one point, the sun shined just perfectly on the Pietra Dura (the smaller side panels of the arch ways) and you could see the sparkle from the clusters of gemstones that embellish the Taj. It looked as if it were encrusted in diamonds. I don't think that I have ever seen something as beautiful as what I saw at that moment. We finished taking pictures, I picked up Stanley from jail, and we boarded the van.

When we returned to the hotel Casey was still in bed. She was supposed to be up, showered, and dressed so that Brittany and I would have time to get ready for the long drive back to Delhi. We finished packing and then went the van where were greeted by a group of monkeys. As we ate our oranges the monkeys must have smelled them because they began jumping around for the peelings. As I stood next to the van, a small monkey took my orange right out of my hand as I was eating it. We were having a good time



with them until this monstrous male monkey came along.

Since I had been sick the last two days, I hadn't eaten much. I was very hungry and glad that we stopped at McDonald's to eat something that was more familiar. There



were a few familiar items on the menu and some unfamiliar as well. I ordered the McChicken and although it didn't taste quite like our version it wasn't bad. The fries were hot and salted. YUM, finally a taste from home! After brunch we went across the way to a popular coffee house for

a freshly brewed cup of coffee. This was our first cup of brewed coffee since we arrived. I had a triple chocolate frozen cappuccino. It was good but very rich. Then we boarded the van for the drive back to Delhi.

On the drive to Delhi I sat in the front seat next to Harpal. I wished I could have stayed awake but the seat was comfortable and the nap felt good since I had risen at five to go to the Taj. When I awoke we were just outside of Delhi. Our plans had been changed again while in route. I quickly gathered my senses because I needed to know what was going on. I wanted to be



prepared for our next stops in order to take good notes. Instead of going to the guest house I was told that we were going to Old Delhi to visit the Red Fort and Jami Masjid.

The sight and smells of Old Delhi overwhelmed me. The streets were crowded with cars, rickshaws, tuk-tuks, motorcycles, people, and animals of all sorts. The smell was comparable to rotting garbage and pungent body odor. We had to park several blocks

from our destination and walk up a small hill side with step steps in order to reach Jami Masjid.



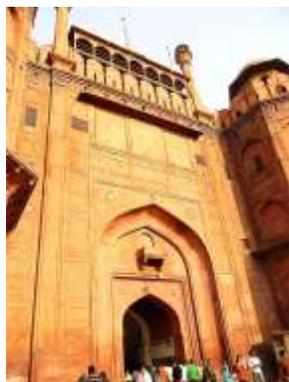
As we entered the mosque, I felt very uncomfortable. They made each non-Muslim woman put on a very long robe that was bright and colorful. We stood out in the crowd unlike the Muslim women who wore all black. Dr. Pandey paid the admission and we entered. Since I had my camera with me I was stopped by entrance guard who requested an additional 200 rupees. He placed his hand

around my arm and gripped my bicep and breast. He held me there until Dr. Pandey turned around and noticed the incident. I have never been afraid for my own safety as I was with this man. I entered the gate and caught up with the others.

Unlike the other mosque we visited, this was a functioning mosque—a place of active worship. We learned that it was built by Shah Jahan between 1644 and 1658 and that it was the largest mosque in India. The court yard was large enough to accommodate up to 20,000 people. The red sand stone with the white and black marble shined in the bright sunlight. It has two minarets that tower over the three domes and the high arches. Most of the group climbed the minaret tower while Dr. Steffel and I walked around and took pictures. This was my least favorite place to visit. I felt most unwelcomed and unwanted here. I didn't care for this visit; I could have done without it.

We walked several blocks through the crowd and boarded the van. Several small boys hopped on the back of the van. They were flirting with Brittany. We laughed as they blew her kisses and held on. They rode on the back almost all the way to Red Fort.





The Red Fort is very similar to the other forts constructed by the Mughals. Shah Jahan began construction in 1638 and it was inhabited by Mughal emperors until 1857. The red sandstone walls and buildings reflect different shades of red and pink as the sun shined down on it. The gates were massive and decoratively arched. The pillars and walls contained bright colored jewels mostly in flower patterns. The screens were hand carved marble and added a touch of delicacy and elegance. We were unable to visit the Moti Masjid mosque because it was closed for renovations. The fort had more to view and study than we had time for since it was close to closing time. I wish I could have visited it with more time. I hate feeling rushed around so much, yet as we exited we dawdled at the arcade shops.

After visiting the fort, we ran across the street to view the Old Delhi area. We visited two temples that some of last year's class hadn't. The first was the Jain Temple complex that included the Shri Digamhar Jain Lal Mandir, the Jain Bird Hospital, and the museum and book store. Unfortunately, we only saw the museum and book store; we never entered the devotional area because it was not open to visitors during prayer time. The temple was built in the 16th century



during the Mughal era and is the most famous of all the Jain temples. This by far was the friendliest and best maintained temple that we visited. All of the priests were excited to see us. They were willing to answer questions and gave us information without asking for a monetary donation. The temple complex was embellished with decorative marble flooring that was clean and freshly mopped. The walls were painted with brightly colored scenes that were outlined in gold. The adjacent bird hospital nurses sick birds, then releases them when they are able to fly. If they can't fly then they are put up for adoption or cared for until their death at the hospital.

The other temple that we saw was the Sikh temple Sisganj Gurudwara. This also was a warm and welcoming place. It was very clean and had the smell of fresh baked goods inside. It was a beautiful marble building. Unlike the other temples it wasn't lavished with rich decor. Before we ascended the staircase to the sanctuary we washed our feet in the running water.



The walls were bare except for a few verses written along the upper border just below the balconies. The priest sat behind the alter reciting prayers as worshipers came forward to pray. As we left, we were given a pamphlet about the Sikh religion. A lady who had just participated in worship asked Brittany and me, if we enjoyed the service and thanked us for visiting the temple.

We were so thirsty we walked to McDonald's for a drink. Then we headed back to the guest house where we had spent our first night in India. It was good to see the familiar faces of the staff. We noticed that Puran had a shaved head. He said that a family member had recently passed away and that men shave their heads as a sign of mourning. Puran prepared a delightful dinner of okra, cauliflower with peas, rice, plain naan and vanilla yogurt for dessert. I enjoyed the okra. I thought that it had a good flavor and was perfectly ripe. Just the way I like it. We thanked him for the dinner and then made our plans for tomorrow's activities.

Then, I spoke to my husband Shad and for the first time, I really missed home. He said that he was having issues with getting registered for his classes and that he needed my assistance. I said my goodnights then went to bed.

Stephanie Austin



DAVID SNYDER

We awoke at the Omkareshwar Guest House in New Delhi, staying in the same rooms we had the first night that we arrived in India. The only differences in the morning routine were that now we knew how to get hot water and I was better at bathing with a bucket and dipper. Breakfast was the same as before but now we knew that we could request cold milk instead of heated for our corn flakes.

Our guide for this day was Prashanto K. Walter. When we asked about his non-Indian last name, we discovered his family had been Methodist Christians for five generations and that one of his ancestors had probably been Caucasian. According to the 2001 census, the latest numbers I could find, the religious demographics of India are: 80.5% Hindu, 13.4% Muslim, 2.3% Christian, 1.9% Sikh, 0.8% Buddhist, 0.4% Jain and 0.6% other. While discussing our day's itinerary he enthusiastically recommended we go to the Gandhi Smriti, and I'm glad that we took his advice.

We drove on a beautifully landscaped boulevard that was lined with many embassies. It was named Shanti Path, which means peace lane or path. We passed the embassies of Great Britain, Australia, the United States, France, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Germany, Canada, Russia and several others that went by too quickly. This area also contained the homes of "the movers and shakers" of the country, including government ministers and politicians. We passed the one time home of Indira Gandhi that is now a museum. Inside a walled complex was the home of the Prime Minister, Dr. Mammohan Singh. We soon arrived at Birla House also known as the Gandhi Smriti.

The Birla family was and is one of the richest and most successful business families in India. They were known for their support of the independence movement and were close friends of Mahatma Gandhi who was the pre-eminent political and ideological leader of India during the independence struggle with Britain. Gandhi pioneered the technique of civil resistance combined with nonviolence. Mahatma is an honorific meaning great soul. He was also called Bapu (father) and is honored in India as the Father of the Nation.

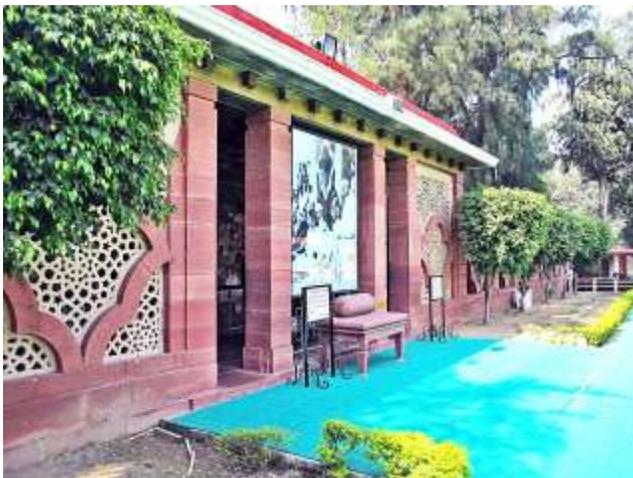
Gandhi spent the last 144 days of his life at a home of his friends, the Birla family; he had been invited to stay while continuing his writings and having meetings. On January 30, 1948 he was ten minutes late going outside for evening prayer because he had been talking with India's Deputy Prime Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel. A crowd of several hundred, along with ten uniformed and twenty plainclothes policemen awaited him. He had ascended the six curved steps that led up to the prayer ground and had brought his hands together to greet the gathering. The Mahatma took a few steps more through the crowd when Nathuram Godse pushed his way through with a small black

Beretta hidden between his hands. He fired three shots into Gandhi's chest and abdomen. Gandhi was dead at 5:17 pm. His last words are said to have been, "Hey Ram, Hey Ram." (Oh God, Oh God.) Reportedly, he had been killed by a thirty-seven year old Hindu extremist who felt that Gandhi had favored too many concessions to the Muslims and Pakistan. Today the Birla House and prayer grounds are a memorial and museum called the Gandhi Smriti (Gandhi Remembrance) and the Eternal Gandhi Multimedia Museum.



On arrival, we walked directly into the garden beyond the house following the cement footprints marking Gandhi's last steps to the spot where he was killed. Along side this path is

a long covered walkway that displayed a collection of informational posters portraying portions of India's history. The spot where Gandhi was killed is now marked by the "martyr's column" that is covered by a roof. To the right of the column at one end of the large grass area is a small pavilion. A sign on it says it is "The Mahatma's Prayer Spot". Its back wall has mural depicting events from the Mahatma's life done in a style and colors that reminded me of Mexican art.



Other parts of the prayer grounds had sculptures, large trees and flowers. As this was a serendipitous event in our itinerary, we had little time to spend on the multi-media exhibits of the museum inside the house, but we were able to see the preserved room in which Gandhi spent the last days of his life. On display were his eating utensils, eye glasses, pocket watch, walking stick, revealing what a Spartan life he led. In the courtyard area is the World Peace Gong,

which is over five feet in diameter, has decals of all nations, and was donated by Indonesia. Most of us would have liked more time here.

Gandhi Remembrance or Gandhi Smriti





Victory Arch and Tomb of Unknown Soldier



Rajghat – site of Gandhi's cremation and memorial

Next we drove through the Vijay Chowk or “Victory Square” and down the Rajpath (King’s Way or Royal Path). We saw the Rashtrapati Bhavan (President House) behind ornate iron gates, the North and South blocks of the Secretariat which are two domed identical buildings containing the offices of the Prime Minister and many other government ministries, and the Sansad Bhavan (Parliament House) where the parliament meets. Continuing on the Rajpath we passed fountains, canals, and lawns ending at the India Gate where we stopped. India Gate is a nearly 138 foot high red sand stone arch built to commemorate those Indian and British soldiers who died in World War I as well as in later wars. Beneath the center of the gate are four eternal flames and the equivalent of our Tomb of the Unknown Soldier called “Immortal Warrior”. In another area on the grass is a red sandstone canopy that once housed a statue of George V.

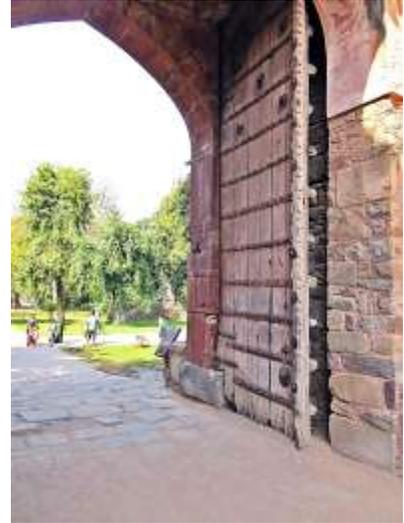
Our next stop was the Rajghat, the cremation site of Gandhi. Several other national leaders have been cremated nearby. His spot is marked by a plain black marble platform inscribed with his supposed last words, “Hey Ram.” There is also an eternal flame and the only color comes from the floral tributes draped across his stone. The cenotaph is surrounded by a cut stone covered earthworks which protects it from the flooding of the Yamuna River. This results in the appearance of an enclosed garden. Our group observed the site from the flood walls, but when Stephanie decided to view it up close, I took advantage of the opportunity and joined her.

According to the guide books and the internet, the Rajghat is a quiet, reflective, meditative spot. There is a sign that appeals to visitors to stay off the grass and not play games or pick the flowers. When we were there the appeals went unheeded by what seemed to me to be about 300 or more young students. They weren’t really badly behaved, they were just being children, and I don’t think Gandhi would have minded. They offered proposals of marriage and dowries of flowers to the females in our group. It seemed as though everyone with a camera, students and adults, wanted their picture taken with the them. We finally had to practically tear our ladies away so that we could move on to our next site, Humayun’s Tomb Complex.

Unfortunately at the complex the Isa Tomb, Mosque and enclosure were closed for renovations. Its construction preceded that of Humayun’s tomb by twenty years and is octagonal with canopies, glazed tiles, lattice screens, and an outside covered corridor supported by columns. It is an example of Suri or Afghan architecture.



As we entered through a gate in the wall around the main tomb, there was a mental if not audible gasp at our first glimpse of Humayan's actual tomb in the distance. But first we turned right to visit the Arab Seri that had housed Persian craftsmen who built the tomb in 1565. We were told that it still has the original wooden gate. Next we stopped at the

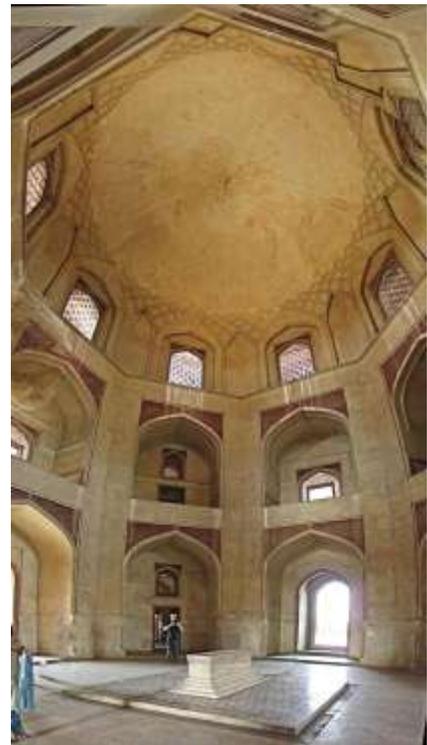


Afsarwala Tomb and Mosque. We continued to the main tomb passing in the distance what is called the "barber's tomb" although the identity of who is buried there is unknown.

Humayun was the second Mughal Emperor, the son of Babur, and the father of Akbar. The tomb was built by his grief stricken senior widow and was designed by Mirak Mirza Ghiyath, a Persian. It was the first garden tomb in India and the first structure to use red sandstone on such a grand scale. It was a landmark in the evolution of Mughal architecture with its



high arches, double domes and intricate lattice work. It is 139 ½ feet tall and has inlaid white and black marble as accents. It is said to have served as the



inspiration for several later monuments, including the Taj Mahal. There are so many of Humayun's relatives buried here that it is sometimes referred to as "a dormitory of the house of Timur."

Lunch was at a very crowded restaurant called Pindi where they served vegetarian and non-vegetarian Mughal, Indian and again Chinese dishes. Because I was having some stomach issues, I chose sweet and sour chicken. It was agreed by most of us that the best menu choices were made by Stephanie and Casey: they ordered mushroom mattar which had paneer, tomatoes, and of course mushrooms, and a number of spices. Their other dish was tandori vegetables which had been marinated in a spicy yogurt then grilled.

It was late afternoon so we returned to our guest house. But Dr. Pandey's sweet



tooth had started to have cravings that could be satisfied only with a trip to a sweet shop. Casey, Brittany, Stephanie, and I went along while Andrew and Dr. Steffel stayed behind. I spotted a sweet shop but Dr. Pandey had a favorite one in mind called Evergreen in the Green Park area of New Delhi. A cart outside was cooking jalebi which is made by deep frying a circularly swirled shaped batter and then soaked in honey. He bought a bag full and shared it

with us. We then went inside and sampled several items including rasgulla and rasmalae which are both made from milk and Indian cottage cheese shaped into a ball. Rasgulla is cooked in sugar syrup and flavored with pistachio and rose water. Rasmalae is soaked in clotted cream flavored with caroming, pistachio, saffron and rose water. We then crossed the street to a stand where we tasted several fruits that were exotic to us and bought a watermelon to have for our dessert after dinner.



Some young men were applying henna to their customers who were sitting on short stools right there on the side walk. Dr. Pandey negotiated a fair price and the ladies took advantage of the opportunity to have designs applied to their hands and feet. Henna is a plant that grows to a height of eight and one half feet and grows in tropical savannah and tropical arid areas. Its leaves have been used since antiquity to dye skin, hair, fingernails, wool and leather. Henna must be crushed with a mild acid releasing hennotannic acid which bonds with the protein in the skin to produce a reddish orange



stain that lasts until the skin is shed. Other things can be added to the henna or done to the design to change its color or make it last longer. The young man who did the application had a steady hand and applied the henna with what looked like a small cake decorating bag. In fact the designs looked as if they were made from brown icing. The longer the applied henna stayed on before cracking off, the darker the design would be and the longer it would

last so the ladies moved around as if they were robots until their designs were fixed.

While the henna was being applied, I wandered around the small Green Park shopping area. There were no tourists, hawkers, or beggars, just regular people shopping. The busiest shop was the Nokia store. There was a place called Archie's Gallery that was very much like a Hallmark store. There was no supermarket, but small "hole in the wall" shops that sold nearly all the staple food items one would find in a U.S. market but without the variety of different brands and sizes we would expect. Most of the same brands appear in American stores. There were cooking supply stores, dress and shoe shops, a travel agent, a video store, and a hair styling salon. It was just your average strip mall. Dr. Pandey had planned to get a haircut, but there were too many people ahead of him. We returned to the guest house where we had a home cooked dinner prepared and served by the employees. It was family style at the table in the lounge. The most interesting dish was made of mashed eggplant. After watermelon and conversation it was time for bed.



David Snyder



ANDREW HAND

Our last day in India began at the Omkareshwar Guest House in New Delhi. Most of us woke up around 8:00 a.m. and got ready for the day: we packed our luggage for the trip back to the states; we were exhausted, antsy, and definitely ready to be home. A late breakfast was scheduled to enable us to meet two OSU faculty who were currently living in New Delhi. We were scheduled to share breakfast with them at the guesthouse around 9:30. Professors Mytheli Sreenivas (History) and Pranav Jani (English) and their daughters Meena and Savita arrived around 10:00 a.m. because they had chosen to walk from their place and the distance was considerably farther than they had expected. After greetings and introductions, we sat down at the large table in the guesthouse for an Indian breakfast composed of plain or onion flavored omelets, toast with ghee or mixed fruit jam, cornflakes with hot milk, and Chi tea. We took turns sharing stories about our time in India and our various travel experiences. The professors told us about their experience of living, teaching, and doing researching in India. They noted how much they enjoyed the opportunity of being able to participate in and experience Indian culture first hand with their children. They also discussed how they were working to set up a May Term program for OSU students at the University of Hyderabad in India. When we finished eating and visiting, we went out on the balcony to take a few photographs.



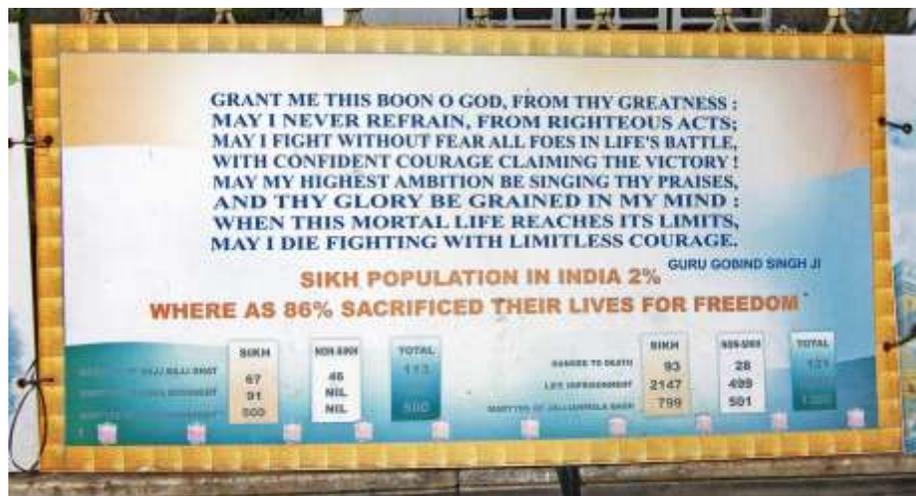
After our visitors left we went to two outdoor markets in Delhi. Some of us were done shopping. I remember Casey saying she was out of money or at her limit and really didn't want to go shopping but alas we all went anyway. At the Indian markets, Stephanie bought two very large puppets, an Indian male and female, for her husband to use in his puppet ministry back in the states. I purchased a couple of final gifts for my wife. I bargained for a hand-sewn, cloth tea cozy and had Dr. Pandey negotiate the best price for me on a very unique tea kettle made of stone or hardened mud. Dr. Pandey purchased some outfits for his grandchildren.

After shopping we went on one last educational sightseeing adventure. Our driver, Harpal, took us to Gurudwara, the Sikh temple where he worships. On the way Harpal told us about the temple. He described the Sikhs' belief in the importance of participating in society and having a common meal. He explained that his temple sponsored a free soup kitchen where all are welcome to come and eat. On the way into the temple, we passed by the droves of people, praying and sitting patiently for their noon meal. Before entering, we followed protocol and covered our heads with bandana's or towels. We entered the Sikh temple to view the beautiful sanctuary or prayer hall. Sikh elders or leaders were taking turns reciting prayers and mantra over the loud speakers while others knelt in prayer. We walked through looking at all of the beautiful carvings and gold decorations. Then we went outside to the large bathing pond behind the temple.



entering, we followed protocol and covered our heads with bandana's or towels. We entered the Sikh temple to view the beautiful sanctuary or prayer hall. Sikh elders or leaders were taking turns reciting prayers and mantra over the loud speakers while others knelt in prayer. We walked through looking at all of the beautiful carvings and gold decorations. Then we went outside to the large bathing pond behind the temple.

Evidence of the Sikh belief in being armed and militant to protect themselves from persecution was documented on a placard wall posted outside the Temple. The posters showed that Sikhs make up two percent of the Indian population but they represent about 10% of the Indian military and they take disproportionately more casualties in war.



We returned to the Omkareshwar Guest House to clean up before going to the airport. We were joined by Gangeshwar and Madha Mishra for a light farewell supper. Their son stayed at home to study for his entrance exams.

We left the temple and then headed to the airport. We arrived at the Indira Gandhi International airport and said goodbye to the van we had spent the last two weeks travelling in. We also said our sad goodbye's to our driver, Harpal Singh, whom many of us had grown quite fond of. To this point, I distinctly remember Brittany saying in an endearing way that she wished she could take him home with her.



We headed into the airport and began the check-in process. We stood in line, eventually checked our bags, and passed through security. It was obvious that security was a high priority at the Delhi airport. We were screened and rescreened; we waited at and went through multiple checkpoints until we reached our boarding gate.

After a long wait, we anxiously and begrudgingly boarded our Boeing 777 for the fifteen hour and twenty minute flight to Newark. We tried to get comfortable and settle in for the long haul. I remember sitting on the plane, with my head spinning, thinking about the whirlwind tour of India that we had just experienced. I zoned out and daydreamed, recalling many of the events and unique experiences of the last two weeks. Eventually, after a couple hours, I put my head phones on, started watching Harry Potter, and fell asleep.

Andrew Hand



VLADIMIR STEFFEL

We departed from New Delhi late Saturday night. The flight was peaceful and tranquil. We passed the time away using our personal entertainment centers and/or napping. We arrived in Newark, NJ about 4:00 a.m Sunday. We went through US Immigration with no complications. We picked up our baggage and cleared US Customs. Now the fun began. We were instructed to take our baggage to the transfer post. Unfortunately, my luggage flight destination tag was missing. So, I was instructed to go to the Continental counter to be retagged. I told a member of the group where I was going. Unfortunately, I had to go to the Continental Check-in counter that was several floors above us. When I got to the counter the assistant was just opening her station, but agreed to deal with my problem when I explained what had happened. I told her that I was at her mercy. As she re-checked the luggage she mentioned that I was a “OnePass” or preferred customer. My response was that “I don’t know if it means much.” She pleasantly and efficiently dealt with the details and gave me instructions on how to change terminals for the flight to Columbus. On arrival at the departure terminal I went through another very thorough check, which included taking out all my cameras. When I arrived at the departure gate lounge there was no one from our group there. So I got a cup of coffee. As I was about to take the first sip guess who arrived—the group.

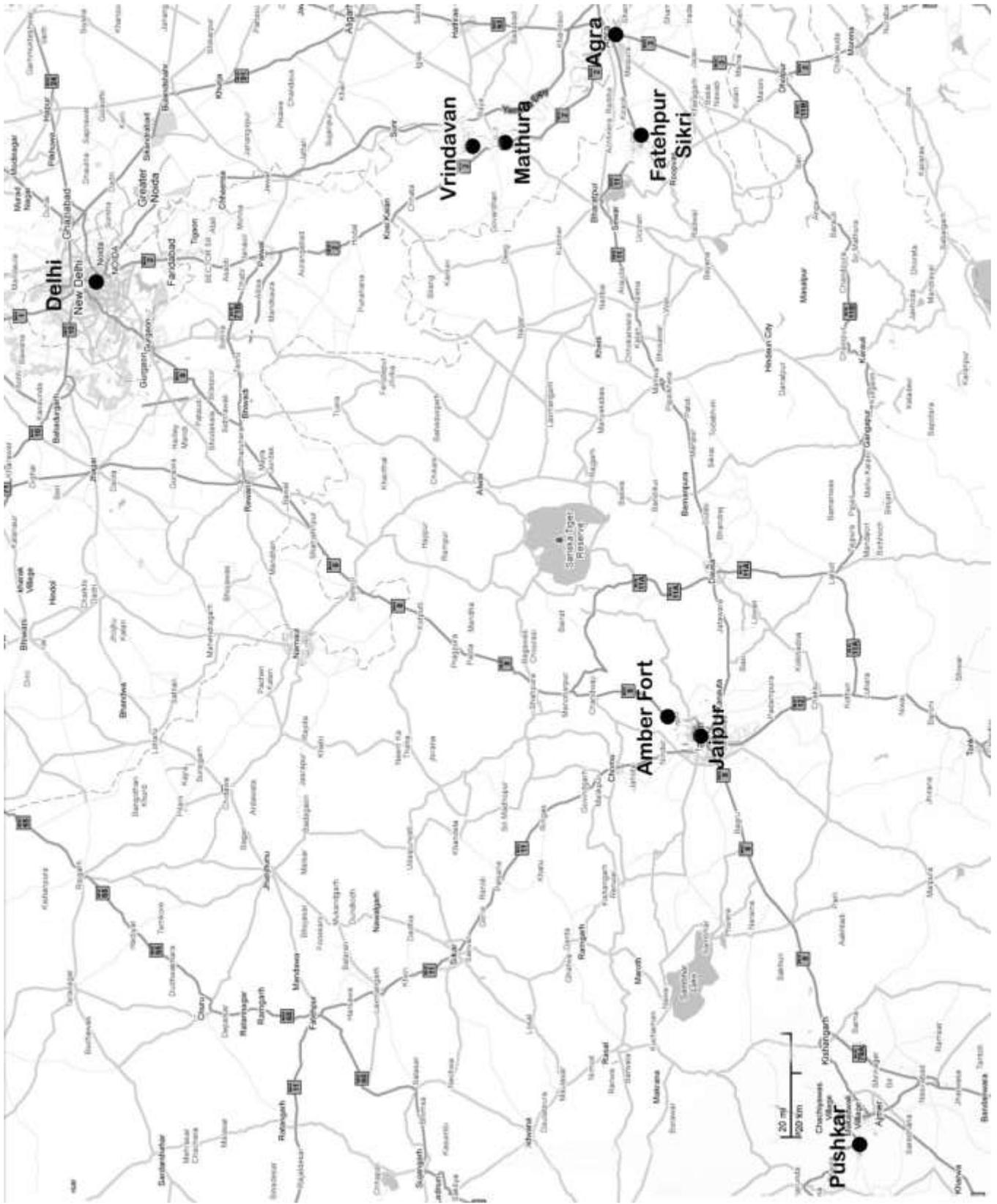
The flight to Columbus was uneventful and on time. Each of us had family to meet us and after good-byes we were off in our separate directions. Home at last!

Vladimir Steffel



T · H · E
OHIO
STATE
UNIVERSITY

MARION



VLADIMIR STEFFEL

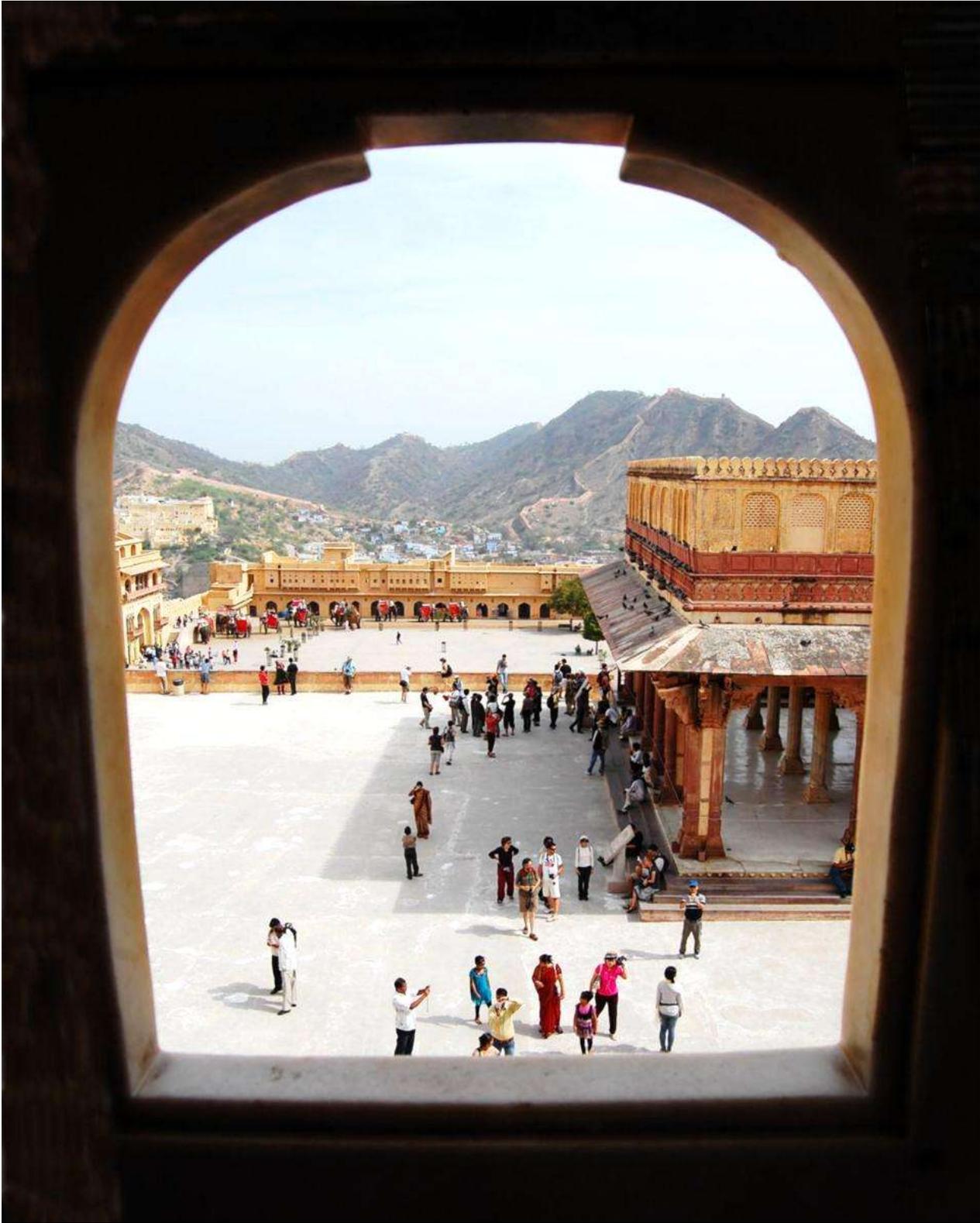
It was raining when we arrived at the Columbus Airport. Stephanie Austin, Casey Edgington, and David Snyder were already at the Continental check-in area when I arrived at 11 am. Stephanie and Casey actually had stayed overnight at an airport hotel. Professor Bishun Pandey arrived at 11:15, and Andrew Hand and Brittany Brooks showed up at 11:30. We checked-in, then proceeded through security to wait for our flight, which was delayed. While we waited, Dr. Pandey had us fill out Continental preferred flier applications, which were processed at the departure desk. The flight on a turbo-prop to Newark Liberty Airport was smooth. We arrived at Terminal 3, which is used for international flights. We talked, we walked, and we had an early supper at Famiglia Market in Terminal 3 near the departure gate 138.

Boarding began about 7:50 p.m. and was completed by 8:30. At 9:00 we taxied to the runway for a 9:15 take-off. The flight was 7,770 miles via the Great Circle Route. During the flight there were several requests to be buckled-up because of turbulence. Dinner was served at 10:00 with a choice of either vegetarian or “chicketarian.” We were provided with a snack flight to hold us until breakfast. We exchanged contents. Breakfast was vegetarian or “eggetarian.” We landed in New Delhi at 8:25 p.m. local time. As the plane taxied to the gate many passengers were standing in the aisles; the plane surged and people fell. We were off the plane by 8:45 and had an easy walk through Indian Immigration and Customs. By 9:30 we entered a completely remodeled terminal, which made for ease of movement.

Prof. Pandey’s brother-in-law, Gangeshwar Mishra, was waiting for us. He led us to a transfer bus that took us to our van, which was waiting to take us to the Omkareshwar Guest House in the Green Park section of New Delhi. We arrived at the guest house at 10:15, were quickly processed and assigned out rooms—the three women had one room and the four males shared two rooms between them. Then we were introduced to Gangeshwar’s wife Madhu and son Anshuman, who has a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering and was just hired by Tata Consulting Services. They brought several vegetarian pizzas from Pizza Hut and we chatted. By midnight we were in bed.

Special thanks are owed to Gangeshwar Mishra for all the preparations he made for our India visit.

Vladimir Steffel



DAVID SNYDER

After a decent night's rest I awoke around 6:30 am and glanced over at the other twin bed to see Andrew already writing notes for his journal. We cleaned-up using the bucket and dipper method with cold water. Only at the end of our trip, when we returned to the Omkareshwar Guest House, did we discover that there was hot water. Breakfast was served family style at a table in the guesthouse lounge area and was nearly like home. We had coffee, tea, omelets, toast and corn flakes. The only difference was that the corn flakes were served with warm milk.

When we gathered near the van, I took the opportunity to pinch several people who were not wearing green, as is the St. Patrick's Day tradition, before giving each member of our group a green button with a holiday message to wear. We soon were on our way, through one of the better sections of Delhi with broad streets and nice buildings. Our driver was Harpal Singh, an Indian of the Sikh religion and about thirty years old with limited English. He had a twinkle in his eye and a good sense of humor. We picked up our guide, who said we should call him Dimple, and proceeded to the Qutb Minar, which is Arabic for pole or axis.

The Qutb Minar is the world's tallest stone minaret at 237.8 feet. It was built to commemorate the Muslim conquest of India by the first Mameluke Sultan of Delhi. Construction began 1193 after Qutb-ud-din Aibak conquered Delhi. During his reign only the first level was completed. His successor, Iltutmish, added three more stories and in 1368 Firuz Shah Tughluq added the final storey.



The Qutb Minar is constructed with red and buff sandstone. It has a diameter of forty-seven feet at its base and about nine feet at the top. It is made-up of several alternating semicircular and fluted shafts separated by balconies that are supported by stone brackets which are decorated with a honeycomb design. It also has bands of Qur'anic text written in calligraphy. Some say the minaret was used to call the people to prayer but it is so tall that a person standing on top cannot be heard. It has been damaged by earthquakes and repaired several times. In 1368 Firuz Shah removed the damaged fourth tier and replaced it using ornately carved white marble which can be easily seen today. In 1794 Major Smith replaced a top pavilion with one of his own. The style did not match the rest of the tower so it was removed in 1848 by Lord Hardinge and placed in a nearby garden. Although this year's local guide said this was untrue, our guide in 2010 and other sources stated it as fact. Due to wear and tear over the years the tower tilts

slightly. Inside the minaret are 378 stairs leading to the top; however, it has been closed since 1981 due to a stampede on its narrow staircase in which forty school children were killed and because of a series of jumping suicides. The grounds are now used for the Qutab Festival, a three day event usually held in November/December featuring cultural art forms of India.

Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque was built simultaneously as the Qutb Minar, but was not attached to the minaret. It is the oldest Mosque in northern India and consists of a raised platform courtyard, cloisters, a prayer hall, and a madrasa nearby. The Qutb Complex site had previously been the grounds of 27 Hindu and Jain temples from which many parts were used in the construction of the Mosque. Since Islam does not allow the depiction of anything with a soul, the reused temple material had the faces removed from them. The mosque had been remodeled and expanded by various rulers, but today its ruins reveal arches, floral motifs and geometric patterns.

The metal pillar in the center of the mosque courtyard was moved there by a Tomar king in the eleventh century from a site on the Tropic of Cancer named Vishnupadagari and reflects early knowledge of astronomy. The pillar has an inscription stating that it was originally erected as a flagstaff to honor the Hindu God Vishnu in memory of the Gupta king Chandragupta II who ruled from 375 to 413. It was once topped by an image of Gordo which has since been lost. The pillar is ninety-eight percent pure wrought iron, stands twenty-three feet eight inches high, has a diameter of sixteen inches, and weighs six tons. It has attracted the attention of metallurgists because it has withstood corrosion for the last 1600 years apparently due to its high phosphorus content and weather conditions which promote formation of a protective outer layer instead of rust; and the method used in forging the balls of iron to form the column was repeated heating and hammering. According to a traditional belief, anyone who can encircle the whole column with their arms while their back is toward it can have their wish granted. Tourists are now kept from the column by a fence to avoid damage from the corrosive properties of perspiration.



There are three tombs of note in the complex. One is of the second Sultan of Delhi, Iltmish. Its central chamber is nine meters square and there is evidence that it probably had a dome which has since collapsed. The main cenotaph is on a platform in the center of the room which has ornate carving on the interior and entrance walls. The inside west wall has a mihrab (prayer niche) decorated with marble and has a combination of Arabic and Hindu motives in the architecture. The second tomb is of

Muhammad Ali, a saint from Turkistan who settled in India around 1500. It is made of sandstone and has a dome on an octagonal base.



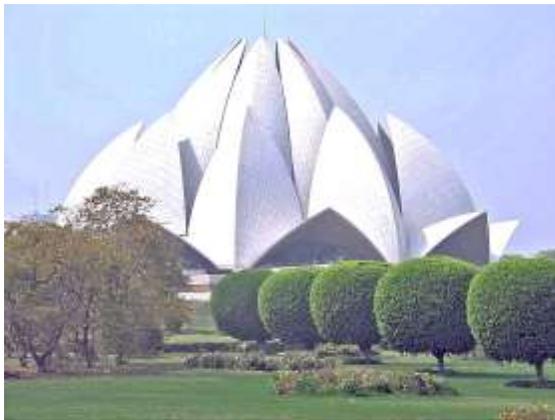
The interior is finished in white polished plaster and has fine perforated screens. The third tomb belongs to Alauddin Khilij who was the Sultan of Delhi from 1296 to 1316. It is in the back of the complex and stands in an L-shaped area that also contains a madrasa, an Islamic seminary, built by him. The center room which contains his tomb has lost its dome, but many rooms of the madrasa have been

restored.

Nearby stands the Ali Minar, an ambitious tower he started building to far surpass the size of the Qutb Minar. He died after only one storey was completed and construction was abandoned.



Our guide chose not to take us to the Alai Darwaza, which is the main gateway on the south side of the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque. According to Wikipedia it is “the earliest example of the first true arches and true domes in India” and is “considered to be one of the most important buildings built in the Delhi Sultanate period.” The Mameluke dynasty did not use true Islamic architectural styles.



Our next stop was Delhi's most original modern structure, the Baha'i House of Worship also known by its more popular name, the Lotus Temple. Baha'i is the youngest of the world's monotheistic religions. It originated in Persia in 1844 when Siyyid Muhammad Shirázi, also known as the Báb, announced that he had been sent by God to prepare the world for a Messenger from God. His teachings spread rapidly but were considered heretical by the clergy and the government so he was

imprisoned and martyred along with 20,000 of his followers. The Messenger from God prophesized by Báb was Mírzá Husayn-`Alí Núrí, a Persian nobleman living in Tehran who declined a life of privilege, became a follower the Báb, and was called Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh claimed to be the most recent messenger from God in the succession of

Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ and Muhammad, each of whom he said had appeared at a time when society had strayed and needed a prophet. He taught that there was one God, there was only one human race, and that all world religions represent stages in the revelation of God's will and purpose for humanity. He stated that the "time has arrived for the uniting of all peoples into a peaceful and integrated global society." The fundamental principles of the Baha'i Faith are: "elimination of all forms of prejudice; full equality between the sexes; recognition of the essential oneness of the world's great religions; the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth; universal education; the harmony of science and religion; a sustainable balance between nature and technology; and the establishment of a world federal system based on collective security and the oneness of humanity." The Baha'i Faith's community has five million members from 2000 ethnic and cultural backgrounds in more than 230 countries and dependent territories.

The Lotus Temple took ten years to build including two and one-half for design and solving engineering problems. There were 800 engineers, technicians, workers, and artisans. It was completed in 1985, seats 1300 people and is 40 meters tall. There are virtually no straight lines in the structure. The architect, Fariburz Sahba, was from Iran but now lives in Canada; he also designed the Sidney Opera House. Baha'i temples around the world attempt to use the host countries' motifs and indigenous designs. The lotus, which is an Indian symbol of peace, purity, love and immortality, was chosen for the temple. There are nine groups of three petals each for a total of twenty-seven free standing reinforced concrete petals covered entirely with white marble. There are nine reflecting pools that give the effect of leaves below the flower floating on water. The number nine is significant in several ways to the faith. Nine is the highest digit, symbolizes unity, completeness, wholeness, and is a perfect number. In the Arabic alphabet the value of Baha, which means glory, is nine. It was nine years between the Báb's prophecy and its fulfillment. According to the Faith there are nine world religions for which we have definite historical knowledge. They include Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, and Sikhism. The Lotus Temple has received awards for religious architecture, structural design, "most artistically built concrete structure," and exterior lighting.



We had lunch at RDX, a restaurant in the Safadarjang area of New Delhi that specialized in Indian and Chinese cuisine. The décor was modern and totally un-Indian,

using all black and white with bold geometric patterns. I ordered Mung Mali Tika which is a kabob that is first marinated in yogurt, cream, cheese along with saffron and other spices then grilled. Some ordered Indian and others had Chinese but all shared so we sampled many new flavors. I was introduced to a new ingredient called paneer. It is cottage cheese that has been molded and most of the water removed then cooked with various sauces. I enjoyed both very much.

Our drive to Jaipur was much longer than expected because there were several “diversions” around construction where a high speed railroad was being built above the highway. Most of us stayed awake to look at all the differences in people and culture. The camels, the great number of people that could be squeezed into a small car, the young men that shyly flirted with our female students, to what seemed to be the certainty of head-on collisions, and so much more. The driver’s strategy seemed to be to straddle the center line until he saw which lane was moving faster then to choose that one. The horn was not used so much in anger, but was used as a warning of “I’m here so look out here I come!” As we neared the hotel in Jaipur the air conditioner froze up and stopped working.



Located about 185 miles from New Delhi, Jaipur is the capital and largest city in the semi-desert state of Rajasthan and was the first planned city in India. It was founded on November 18, 1727 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Sing II, the ruler of Amber. Although it has a population of more than 3.5 million, it feels much cleaner and less crowded than other cities because of its wide streets and their regularity which is rare in Indian cities. It is called the “pink city” because in 1853 it was painted to welcome the visiting Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, son of Queen Victoria. Avenues of buildings remain painted to give the city a distinctive appearance.

The Gangaur Hotel had rooms that were somewhat larger than those at the guest house and real showers, but again we couldn’t get the hot water to work. We did not see a shower curtain in any bathroom in India so everything got soaked. All the room doors opened onto an outdoor corridor with a pleasant courtyard below our second storey rooms. The hotel had two restaurants but only one was open. There was a shop in the lobby to buy souvenirs and a booth to book sightseeing tours.

We ate in the hotel restaurant that served Indian-Chinese cuisine. Andrew wanted to know what a dosa was, so Dr. Pandey took him into the kitchen where they were making them. It is a folded savory crisp fermented pancake with various fillings usually containing potatoes. He ordered and enjoyed it. I had a bowl of Indian tomato soup

which contained no dairy products and had interesting spices, French fries that I covered with delicious sweet Indian ketchup, and a sparse chicken sandwich. For after dinner entertainment Dr. Pandey told us the storey of how Akbar acquired his Hindu wife and the many changes he made that bettered the lives of the Indian people. When he finished a tired group went off to bed after our very full first day of the 2011 study tour.

David Snyder



BRITTANY BROOKS

We gathered on the balcony outside our rooms to meet for breakfast downstairs. We sat in what became our regular booth with our food from the continental breakfast buffet. After breakfast we went to the van where Harpal was freshening up the van by burning strawberry smelling incense, and it was overwhelming, to say the least. Casey, Stephanie, and I waited for the van to air out before we all climbed in. We picked up our tour guide whose hair was colored with a reddish-pink tint for the Holi Festival. As we drove through the city I realized why Jaipur is known as the “Pink City” – the buildings are a pinkish-peachy color known to the natives as Saffron. The main city streets began with big, beautiful gates that seemed to separate different sections of the city and up close one could see the intricate white flowers painted for decoration. I didn’t think that our van was going to fit through the gate because it was a tight squeeze! Harpal just shook his head, smiled, and said, “No problem.”

Our first stop was Hawa Mahal, or the Palace of Winds, built in 1799. The palace is five stories tall but only one room deep. The harem women of the poet Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh were able to look through detailed carvings onto the streets below. They could look out but no one could see in. It is the beautiful pink sandstone color with white detail. After taking a few photos we continued to the Amber Fort on the outskirts of town. On our



way we passed the Water Palace or Jal Mahal. It was here that Akbar spent his childhood and his Hindu wife taught him how to swim. The yellowish palace sits in the Man Sagar, which is a huge reservoir that is filled during the rainy monsoon season. When the lake is full it appears that the Water Palace is floating. Currently, visitors do not have access because it is being converted into a hotel that should open in a few years. We planned to stop here on the way back from the Amber Fort.

Harpal drove the van up a steep winding hill to reach the fort. We stopped at the lake below the fort to view the whole complex, which seemed so far away from us. While we snapped pictures of the fort a young boy was walking his elephant up the sidewalk probably to attract tourists so he could earn a living. The elephant was painted for the Holi holiday. Stephanie and I snapped pictures of the two when the boy was not looking so we could avoid having to pay him. Then from the right came another boy who was much younger than the first and he was carrying a bag and some type of flute

instrument. All I know is that I am scared to death of snakes and lo and behold this boy whipped out a King Cobra and plopped him on the ground. I immediately jumped behind Andrew to avoid looking at it! Then the guide laughed at me and asked the boy



to put away his means of making a living. Not soon enough, we boarded the van to continue our drive up the hill to the base of the fort. Our guide asked us if we wanted to ride elephants up to and through the entrance of the Amber Fort, and, of course, we wanted to. Unfortunately, the wait would be at least two hours so we didn't get an elephant ride. Instead we took a jeep through the village to the back gate. The experience was like being on Disney World ride because we were jostled and you could feel every bump that we hit on the cobblestone paved streets all the way up to the back entrance of the fort. On the way up we passed a huge Hindu temple that was a dark gray in color and had a gold top. It was taller than it was wide with very curvy layers from bottom to top. We got out and walked the rest of the way on a very steeply sloped road. Peddlers hounded us to buy the best products in the world and they did not take



no for an answer. Beyond the gate was Jaleb Chowk or the first courtyard where palace visitors used to wait for permission to enter the palace. Here we saw elephants carrying tourists coming through the main entrance gate. It was such a sight to see because they were huge!



After photographing the elephant procession, we moved to the second courtyard whose highlights were the Diwan-i-Aam and the Ganesh Pol. The Diwan-i-Aam or Hall of Audience was where the ruler met the public and where announcements were made. The Diwan-i-Aam has intricately carved marble columns decorated with flowers, animals, and deities that were very beautiful. We then

viewed the Ganesh Pol or Welcome Gate, which led to the private living areas of the fort. This was a beautiful three storey gateway with arches and different colors to welcome anyone who had the good fortune to be allowed to enter. At the top there was a screen carved out of marble so that people could look out but no one could look in or see them. This was the first great example of the fort's Mughal architecture.

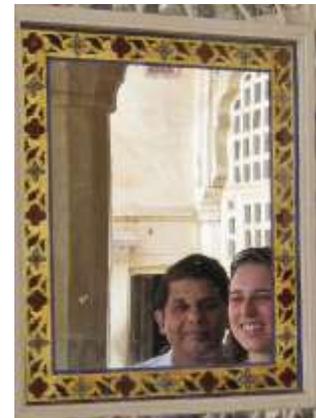


We entered private quarters of the palace through the Ganesh Gate and made our



way up a set of dark stairs into the third courtyard that was filled with flower gardens and small wading pools in the center flanked by two buildings. We started with the Mirrored Palace or Sheesh Maha, aka Jai Mandir. It was absolutely breathtaking: The exterior walls and ceilings of this palace were lined with mirrors of all different shapes and

sized to create beautiful designs. Maharaja Man Singh I had imported the mirrors from Belgium. The interior of the Mirrored Palace was closed to the public, but we looked through the entrance ways. Stephanie, Dr. Steffel, and I were challenged to get a good picture of our reflections. On another side of this palace workers were shining and polishing the mirrors and doing restoration work.



Next, we proceeded up stairs to the Jas Mandir which overlooks the Maota Lake. On the lake there were beautiful formal gardens; the lake was the water supply for the fort and the villagers. We made our way to the interior side of the Ganesh Pol where we could look down into the second or visitors' courtyard without being seen. The screen was carved out of beautiful white marble and the walls had a carved floral design. We moved to the Monsoon Palace or



more commonly known as the Pleasure Palace (Sukh Niwas). It was painted with red, white and aqua colored floral design. It was said that a gold swing used to hang from the ceiling and the king would play with two mistresses at once. The name Monsoon Palace came from the channel of water that flowed through the center to cool the marble during the excruciating summer heat. Between the Mirror Palace and the Pleasure Palace was the Aram Bagh, a garden full of saffron to freshen the air.



Our group then moved into the fourth courtyard known as the Zenana or women's quarters. Here Maharaja Man Singh I kept his twelve wives. The rooms were small: each contained a bath area, living area, and cooking area. In the middle of each section was a communal pavilion where the women would relax and spend time.

After viewing the highlights of Amber Fort, we returned to the parking area where we had our first encounter with monkeys. They were climbing everywhere; in and out of parked jeeps; and I was surprised at how close I could get to them! At the visitors parking lot we met our driver and headed back towards Jaipur.

We stopped to take pictures of the Jal Mahal or Water Palace. Our driver parked in a pull-off so that we could walk down the paved path to the lakeside to take pictures. From far away it was a majestically looking palace because it seemed to be floating on the water. A little boy performed a magic show. He couldn't have been older than five or six years and his show was very well rehearsed. He brought out three little cups to demonstrate a disappearing act; he was very crafty because I couldn't see any of the flaws at all. He then made rupees



appear out of Stephanie's pants! Next, he told me to bend down and announced he was going to make rupees pop out of my nose, and sure enough with a little tug the rupees appeared. I was startled that he touched me but he was absolutely adorable. After he finished his show Dr. Pandey tipped him for his magic show.

All of the guides in India have deals with local shops to encourage them to bring their groups and they get a percentage of the amount spent in the store. Our first shop was a gem cutting / jewelry store. Above the store were workshops where they cut and polished rubies, emeralds, and other precious and semiprecious stones for which Rajasthan is famous. Our guide showed us around and explained the processes. In India, families hand down the trade from generation to generation. Moreover, learning the skills requires many years of apprenticeship. After the tour we browsed through the store downstairs and saw many gorgeous stones. Andrew looked at amethyst for his wife and Casey looked at earrings. I fell in love with the emeralds that were mined in India but, unfortunately, I could not afford them. Dr. Pandey looked for his wife and daughters but was not overly excited with any of the items currently displayed in the store.



We left the store empty handed and headed to a textile shop. One of the workers demonstrated the process of printing the designs on fabrics. He used hand wood block stamps and natural dyes; he then let the fabric dry in the sun to bring out the color. All of the designs were very beautiful and ornate. This shop had everything from table settings, bed spreads, clothes and lastly, sarees. I tried on a dark emerald green saree with gold trim. It looked very pretty but I was very warm wearing it inside the store, so I couldn't fathom wearing it outside in the heat.

Around 2:00, we finally realized that we were starving so our guide took us to the Rainbow Restaurant. I ordered chicken curry and a Limca – both were very good! Everyone enjoyed their lunch. As we left the restaurant we noticed a Holy Man lying outside. After being warned in class that we might see a Jain walking around naked, we pondered whether he was homeless or just practicing his beliefs. It was a very interesting experience and I think a culture shock for everyone.

The heat of the day had finally crept upon us while we were visiting Jantar Mantar. This newly restored historic astronomical observatory is the largest of five in India. It was built 1728 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II who enjoyed astronomy. The

observatory had a variety of astronomical instruments that were made out of marble or sandstone. The Laghu Samrat Yantra, or the “small sundial” can calculate the time accurately to within twenty seconds. I found this to be unbelievable because these instruments seemed archaic. The Rashivalaya Yantra or star sign instrument was used by astrologers to predict horoscopes. It was composed of twelve instruments; each instrument represented one of the zodiac signs. Dr. Pandey told us that Indians evaluate horoscopes very carefully when considering potential partners in life. They have a check list of thirty attributes and characteristics of which nineteen have to be met in order to continue moving the courtship forward. I found this to be very interesting since it is so different from American society.

Most notably at Jantar Mantar was Samrat Yantra, which is the largest sundial at



this observatory and one of the largest in the world. It stood twenty-seven meters high! It predicts time accurately to the second. As we exited Jantar Mantar there were two snake charmers charming King Cobras. As I previously mentioned, I am scared to death of snakes but the way these snakes swayed to the music was very artistic. I appreciated the show at a distance because my of fear. During the walk in the heat of the afternoon I was hit

by jet lag.

The City Palace was our next stop. Our guide handed us our admission tickets and we proceeded to walk through the entrance into an open courtyard. In the middle of the courtyard was the Mubarak Mahal, or Welcome Palace, that was originally a guest house for visitors coming to see the royal family, but now was a museum to house the costumes of previous royalty. The exterior was very detailed with railings and lots of color. Outside one of the entrances there was a bowl of Holi festival color powder. Dr. Pandey took some and rubbed it on our faces. We then proceeded to the crafts building. We watched an artist hand paint a postcard. As he drew he explained the symbolism: the elephant symbolized luck, the horse symbolized power, and the camel symbolized love. With a brush made of squirrel hair, ink, and a steady hand he drew an elephant. Then the artist picked me randomly out of the group to dedicate his work on the back of the entrance ticket. I was flattered and it truly was one of the most memorable experiences





of the trip. Andrew bought a painting that was painted on old Indian government document. It was really neat!

After browsing for through the craft stalls we headed to the Rajendra Pol, a gateway that would lead us into another courtyard. On each side of the gate was a solid white marble elephant—each weighed one ton

and stood about four feet tall. In the center of the next courtyard there was a huge pavilion that had beautifully carved columns and archways. There were crystal glass chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. We proceeded to walk through the Riddhi-Siddhi Pol, a gateway, into the private courtyard for the royal family. Along the east / west walls were four doorways and each was painted differently to represent the seasons. On the north side was the Chandra Mahal, which was the residence of the Maharaja and housed Jaipur government officials. Then we went to the Diwan-i-Aam, or Hall of Public Audience, that was lavishly decorated with gold and floral design. There was a platform that covered the whole floor with thrones reserved for the top two members of the government; other members sat on chairs surrounding the platform. Behind them was a screened area where women sat and listened to the discussions and heard the decisions being made. We returned to the courtyard with the huge pavilion – the Diwan-i-Khas, or Private Audience Hall. Here we saw the largest silver urn in the world: This urn had been filled with water from the Ganges and taken to London by Maharaja Madho Singh II in 1901. Locals in authentic dress were playing music and dancing; Casey joined in their dance.



From the City Palace we went to a street with a jewelry store and marble cutting workshop where they carved small statues of deities. When we arrived Dr. Steffel knew exactly what he was looking for; he wanted a marble replica of the Taj Mahal because the one he bought on the previous trip was not of good quality. While he was deciding which one to purchase, we browsed through the shop. There were marble statues of deities that were unpainted for purchasing. It was very interesting.

On the way to the sound and light show at the Amber Fort, we stopped for a camel ride. The camels were stationed across the road from the Jal Mahal or Water Palace.



After Dr. Pandey negotiated a price, Stephanie, Casey, and I selected which camels we would ride. I, of course, picked the tallest camel whose name was Raj. The owner said he was nine years old and madly in love with Casey's camel. It was the sweetest thing ever. Getting on the camel was quite the experience, especially in a dress, and it required being able to shift one's weight when the camel stood up. It was similar to riding a horse and I quickly caught the

hang of it. Being nine feet off of the ground was pretty high up! My saddle didn't have the horn to hold on to so it was difficult to balance and I was scared that I was going to fall off. We took about a twenty minute walk down the road to a watering hole for the camels. I was glad to be back with the group because Raj was very uncomfortable to ride and he did not smell like roses. Getting off of the camels was challenging because when they go to lie down you really have to bend so you don't fall off. I was glad that I rode the camel but was even happier to have both feet on the ground.

After the camel adventure we headed to Amber Fort for the sound and light show. For some reason we thought we were late for the show so Harpal stepped on it. It turned out that we arrived early! We climbed up the steps to the viewing area and relaxed on the bench seats until the show started. It was a very interesting show because the lights danced on the fort's walls in sync to the music and narrative of Jaipur's history. I wish I had been more awake but because of the day's events I was worn out so I dozed off during the middle part of the show. There was a huge full moon that made for a very enjoyable evening. After the show we walked slowly to the van and returned to Jaipur for dinner. However, we first stopped at Jal Mahal for a night view with the moon shining.

The restaurant we ate at was called Lakshmi Mishtan Bhandar and it is a famous restaurant in Jaipur. Dr. Pandey ordered dishes for all of us to try. I was exhausted and did not feel well so I barely tried any of the food. For desert I ordered fruit chat which was mixed fruit in lime juice with a spicy blend of spices sprinkled on top. It was refreshing. Andrew ordered saffron ice cream because saffron is very famous to Jaipur and everyone tried a bite of it. I didn't think that it was anything too special but I am glad I tried it. It faintly reminded me of soap.

After dinner we returned to the hotel. I felt that we had a tough day of sightseeing and everyone was exhausted. So off to bed we went.

Brittany Brooks



ANDREW HAND

This morning began with a wakeup call from Dr. Pandey who told us to meet for breakfast at 8:30. After getting ready, I stepped out of the room that David and I shared and looked down to see the girls sitting at a table in the hotel courtyard. David and I joined them and we discussed various aspects of the daily journals the girls had been working on. We also noted the strong burning smell in the air caused by the common practice of burning trash, leaves, and brush. Dr. Pandey and Dr. Steffel soon joined us and we headed to the hotel restaurant for breakfast.

By accident, I was treated to a fascinating example of Indian culture. As everyone started to head toward the restaurant, I mentioned to Dr. Pandey that there was no hot water in our room. Instantaneously, Dr. Pandey said something in Hindi to one of the hotel workers who was sweeping the floors with a palm leaf. The hotel worker then hollered across the open air courtyard to another worker, who in turn yelled something to someone else, who loudly instructed another worker to go to our room and fix the hot water. In a matter of minutes, our hot water was fixed. It was quite interesting to witness the specialization, chain of command, and way of communicating that this simple example exemplified.

For the second day in a row, we had the buffet breakfast provided in the hotel restaurant. I had cornflakes with hot milk, toast with sweet mixed fruit jam, humus, and Chi tea. As we ate, Dr. Pandey spun the story of the two-day Holi Festival. After breakfast, we met Dinesh Singh. Dinesh is the son of one of Dr. Pandey's classmates at Banares Hindu University (BHU) where they received their PhDs more than 30 years ago. Dinesh, who lives with his family in Jaipur, had volunteered to guide us through the old central markets, where stores and shops are organized by trade or commodity.

We piled into the van and left the hotel. On the way from the hotel to the market, we travelled through one of the seven gates in the wall that surrounds old Jaipur city to the market area. After parking the van, we walked down the sidewalk stopping to talk to a woman selling freshly cut stalks of garbanzo beans. You could buy and eat these plants as a snack. In addition to the bean stalks the lady was selling rings of animal dung that would be used as fuel in tonight's community bonfires celebrating pre-Holi.



After entering the market area, Dinesh took us down a side street, which was the equivalent of a small alley, to his favorite sari shop. He liked this shop because it provided quality service and products, and because it was a fixed price store, which meant there was no haggling.

As we entered the Goyal Saree Emporium we were welcomed by several men eager to help us. After removing our shoes, we were ushered up into the showroom where all the saris were. We sat on mattresses that covered the majority of the sales area. Several men began showing us various saris while Dinesh and Dr. Pandey described our plans, intentions, and interests. Casey and Stephanie knew that each wanted to buy a sari so they began the shopping process. We observed the women model the saris that the clerks brought. Pretty soon there were a few piles of saris; several of us realized that the decision-making process was going to take quite a while.



Brittany, David, and I ventured out into the market area. David explored on his own; Brittany and I walked down the maze of narrow streets while our senses were bombarded with the sights, sounds, and smells of a bustling Indian city. We saw fresh pasta being made in the open air over a small fire; and we passed an open latrine out in public where men could urinate. Many of the stores were selling clothing and textiles. Brittany bought several scarves for herself and her friends back home. I bought my one year old son a traditional Indian outfit that a young Indian boy might wear to a wedding. I haggled the price down to 200 rupees. As I haggled, the merchant asked me what country I was from and if I could spare any coins from my country. He explained that he had two young children for whom he collected foreign coins. I didn't have any American coins with me but told him I would try to locate some. I returned to the sari shop to ask members of our group if they had any coins. I ended up getting a half dozen American coins and returned to the shop where I bought Marshall's outfit. I gave the man the coins and he



was very appreciative; he smiled, thanked me, and was excited for his children.

Our group spent a very long time at the sari emporium. Casey and Stephanie spent a few hours looking at and trying on dozens of saris with all different colors and patterns before they decided on the right ones. Dr. Pandey also bought several saris for friends and family. To describe the situation, Dr. Steffel used the example that in America “time is money” but in India “money is time”. This distinct difference can be best exemplified by the vast number of workers in the sari shop and the extensive amount of time they spent with us. Because we had



money and were willing to spend it, they were willing to take as much time as necessary to make us comfortable and happy in order to seal the deal. They were extremely knowledgeable and helpful. They were also very good hosts. They provided us Chi tea and were very patient with us.

Once the saris were purchased, we continued walking through the market to buy

additional souvenirs. We walked down to the hardware section of the market district. I wanted to buy some copper pots and I ended up purchasing an inexpensive copper tea kettle and cups. I also bought a copper *lota*, which is an important multi-purpose vessel that holds water used in religious ceremonies, and aids in cleaning after using a squat toilet.



I purchased a heavy bronze Ganesh statue and David bought a small bronze gong. Dr. Pandey and I tried on colorful turbans and David and Casey each bought one. Several of our group bought bracelets and Bengals, i.e., pieces of beautiful fabric and bedspreads.



During our walk through the market we saw and experienced many things representative of India. We passed construction sites with scaffolding that reached three stories high. The scaffolding was made of bamboo poles lashed together with twine. We saw a man hauling a huge

block of ice on his three-wheeled bicycle. We had several women and children approach us begging for money. We also were approached by young boys selling drums made of hand carved wood and animal hide. I bought a small drum for 100 rupees and Brittany was quite proud of herself for bargaining the price of a larger drum from a starting price of 1200 rupees down to a purchase price of 200 rupees.



At the end of our shopping excursion, we returned to the sari shop to pick up the saris and the altered blouses that are worn under the 20 yards of wrapped fabric. Dinesh stood in line at a street vendor and bought a box of Halwai.



Some of us had observed men preparing this popular Indian sweet made with flour, clarified butter, sugar, almonds, and saffron. Each of us tasted this very sweet dessert, then headed back to the van and off to the Elephant Festival.

Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan and its largest city. The annual elephant festival is a tourist activity that celebrates the history and culture of Rajasthan. We were provided with this neat and unexpected opportunity by pure luck. The day before we happened upon a poster in our hotel lobby that advertised the event and we asked Dr. Pandey if he could adjust our schedule to attend the elephant festival. Fortunately, he was able to rearrange our

schedules. At the Rajasthan Polo Club we were herded through the gates with all the other tourists and then stood around the perimeter of the polo field. The elephants, camels, horses, oxen, and all the other participants were gathered at the far end of the polo grounds. They formed a single file and slowly paraded around the edges of the polo field. The large group of viewers encircled the polo field. As the elephants made their way toward us, the crowd surged forward and intermingled with the animals and participants. Many spectators went out onto the field and got very close to the elephants. The procession included hundreds of locals dressed in colorful regalia. We were face-to-face with dancing horses, camels with cannons on



their backs, and more than forty decoratively painted elephants. The festival provided an opportunity to shoot some great photographs; however, at one point a couple of the girls from our group were nearly trampled by an unforgiving elephant.



While most people moved forward for a closer view of the elephants and other animals, I stayed back and talked with Dinesh. He and I discussed our families, living situations, and careers. I learned that all of Dinesh's immediate family lived together in a large house in Jaipur. He shared his beliefs about how so many people today have screwed up priorities and lack self-discipline. He told to me about his belief in the importance of helping others, about how he enjoys his work as an oncologist, and really likes giving back to his city.

After a very enjoyable time at the elephant festival, we drove a short distance to the beautiful Hindu temple known as Birla Lakshmi Narayan Temple. On the hill above the temple was the Moti Doongri Fort. As we approached the white marble temple, we were taken aback by its beauty and ornate design. Right off the path to the temple was an impressive shrine to Shiva that we stopped to admire. At the base of the temple we removed and stowed our shoes. Then we entered the large, marble structure. As we admired all of the beautiful pictures and hand-carved stone figures, Dr. Pandey told us about significance of the temple.



We learned that the temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi. We saw images of famous historical figures, such as Socrates, Christ, Buddha, and Confucius that were displayed around the temple. Dr. Pandey regaled us with stories or legends about Vishnu in his many forms. We learned why, in some pictures, Shiva's throat was blue (he drank but didn't ingest poison) and about the fight over the drink of immortality.



We exited and rested on the temple's enormous steps. We posed for group photos and even took pictures with some strangers who wanted us in their photos.

Directly outside the temple gates was a small plaza where preparations had been made for a ceremonial bonfire. As we left the temple grounds, we were once again fortunate to be able to participate in another annual Indian event. The bonfire celebrates the start of the national Hindu holiday of Holi. We just happened to be in the right place at the right time to participate in the neighborhood gathering for the lighting of the bonfire. The women were adorned in their beautiful saris, many of which made vibrantly colors cloth. The beautiful colors symbolized Holi and its connection to celebrating the start of spring.



Everyone gathered around the bonfire waiting for the sun to set and for the highly respected, oldest man in the community to light the fire. While we waited, several of the young Indian children approached us and asked us questions. David had brought from America bracelets called silly bands and he took this opportunity to share them with many of the Indian children. Stephanie, Brittany, and Casey took the silly bands and gave them to many of the young children gathered for

the bonfire. In return, a couple of the young Indian girls tied bracelets around the wrists of the girls in our group. The girls all stated that it was an enjoyable experience and that they really enjoyed interacting with the Indian children.

After witnessing and partaking in the bonfire celebration, we returned to the van. Just about everyone came to at least one of two realizations: First, we realized that we had a very busy day and we were very tired. Secondly, now that it was night, we realized we were very hungry and that we had not eaten a meal since breakfast at the hotel early in the morning.



On the way back to the hotel we stopped at Niros, a very nice and famous restaurant in the heart of Jaipur. We had a very enjoyable meal; although some of the food was presented differently than we were accustomed. Brittany really enjoyed her chicken and mashed potatoes but its presentation with the chicken on a stick was quite surprising. I ate chicken and vegetable stir-fry along with macaroni and cheese that was not out of the ordinary. However, I also ordered a chocolate shake that when served to me was actually white milk with 2 large rectangles of chocolate ice cream sticking out of the top of the glass. Needless to say, it was not at all what I expected but good nonetheless.

We left the restaurant and drove a short distance back to the hotel. As we headed to our rooms, I passed the front desk and saw the poster advertising the elephant festival. I asked the desk clerk what he was going to do with the poster now that the event was over. He said it would be trashed and so I asked if I could keep it. He said yes and I peeled it off the wall, feeling fortunate to have such a cool and authentic souvenir from our eventful day.

Andrew Hand



STEPHANIE AUSTIN

Today would turn out to be another long day. I rose early to complete yesterday's journal entries, and then went to breakfast. I didn't like the hot soup mix that the hotel served for breakfast, so I ate toast and drank a cup of tea. At breakfast, Dr. Pandey informed us of the day's plans. Dr. Pandey told us that today was Holi: in the first part of the day people threw colored powder or water at each other; in the afternoon families and friends socialized. Dr. Pandey said that Harpal was concerned that the van might be damaged by the celebrators in Aymer; therefore, we were going to drive straight to the Brahma Temple in Pushkar, spend much of the day in Pushkar, and on our return to Jaipur we would go to Professor Singh's home for fellowship and dinner. Dr. Pandey then told us the Brahma Temple was the only temple in the world dedicated to Brahma, and that it was run by a non-profit organization. He said the Pushkar used to be a haven for hippies, but not anymore; however, we might see a hippie. He added that hippies dress and look like Holy Men in order to collect money—he told us not to give them money. He then challenged us to distinguish a Holy Man from a hippie.

The drive to Pushkar was short compared to the drive from Delhi to Jaipur; moreover, there was significantly less traffic. All of the street businesses were either shuttered or had gates pulled down over their doors and windows to honor Holi.

On the way Harpal told us that he has twin girls. He then showed us a picture but it was only of one of the girls. We asked him why he only had a picture of one daughter but not the other daughter; he responded, "They both look the same so I only took one picture." We laughed a little because we thought that it was funny. We, Americans, always take pictures of all of our kids and not just one of them, even if they are twins.

Along the route we passed several universities. We also saw a number of tall smoke stacks and learned that they were brick factories. There were numerous fields of mustard or lentil on both sides of the road. Each crop must be cut, dried, and seeded by hand before being shipped for manufacturing. Several trips into the field were required in order to get enough of the crop to sell. We saw women carrying large loads of harvested crops on top of their heads to the edge of the fields where men loaded them into their large trucks.



We turned off the main road onto a dirt road that was more like a small dirt path. About half way down the road we encountered a human road block. Standing in the middle of the road were three young boys who were approximately between the ages of 9 and 13. Each of them was painted in Holi colors and had large rocks in their hands. They threatened to smash the van if we did not pay them. Dr. Pandey was going to make peace but before he could act, Harpal jumped out his door, picked up rock, and chased the boys. Looking back I now grasp the difference between their tactics. Dr. Pandey wanted to protect us and offer peace by giving the boys a few rupees. Harpal, on the other hand, just chased them away because he didn't feel they needed to be paid. He called them, "Rag-A-Muffins." He checked the van for damage and then we continued to Pushkar.

About a mile outside the city we stopped again. This time it was to pay the city tax before we could enter into the city. When we arrived in Pushkar Harpal pulled the van into a small parking space along the dirt path about a block away from the temple. Pushkar was not at all what I expected. The town was very small but welcoming. There were very few shops in comparison to what we have seen in the past. I did not feel overwhelmed by pushy salesman. I don't think I saw any of the hippies in Pushkar.

After a short walk to the temple gate, we were informed that we could not take our cameras. I gathered cameras and with David took them back to the van. Harpal put them away for us. As David and I walked back toward the group, we noticed several monkey's looking at us intently. David told me to hold on to my sunglasses if I didn't want the monkeys to take them.





Outside the temple gate we stopped to read a large red-clay colored sign that listed the laws or rules of Pushkar. Some of us were amused by specific rules. We then proceeded up the steps into the temple. The temple was built with a light sandstone. In the afternoon sun it had a soft pink glow. The inside of the temple was dirty and run down. The lack of upkeep was overwhelming. There were monkeys and monkey feces everywhere, as well as birds and bird feces. One of the security guards shot an M-80 in order to make the birds fly away. This scared me a little because I didn't know what had happened. I expected something grander since this is the only Brahma Temple in the world. The deities were either behind cages or set back into little shelter temples and were hard to see. One interesting architectural aspect that I liked was where part of the temple went underground. We climbed down a small narrow winding staircase into a small cubby hole area. The priest sat in the corner and blessed pilgrims who came in. After we participated in the ritual, the priest gave us a small

hand full of something warm and gooey to eat. It was very sweet. It left my hands very sticky. Thank God for hand sanitizer.

After exiting the temple we debated whether to walk or take the van to the ghats at the sacred lake. We decided to walk because it would be easier than trying to have Harpal maneuver the van through the narrow streets. Andrew and I went to the van to get everyone's cameras. The gentlemen sitting at the temple entrance allowed us to

take a few pictures from the temple entrance. We were pleased because earlier we had been told no photographs. After taking the pictures, we headed down toward the ghats.

We passed through the residential quarter of Pushkar. Several of families had their shops in the front of their houses. When we arrived at the ghats several men were in the bathing pond. Bathing symbolizes the washing away of sins. This gives them salvation. Dr. Pandey wanted each of us to take part in a Puja or prayer ritual so he had us sit on the steps as he located the priest. He found a priest; however, getting the priest to perform the ritual wasn't so easy. The priest asked Dr. Pandey where his wife was because he could not perform the ritual without his wife's presence. It is Indian tradition that a wife must be present for participation in a religious ceremony. Dr. Pandey then explained that we were students from Ohio State University studying Indian culture. He told the priest that his wife was at home in the US. The priest then consented. The ritual began with the priest telling us the purpose of the prayer. He said that the prayer was to ward off evil and allow good to come. He talked about the death of Rama's father but he spoke so quickly that I could not catch everything. He then placed some milky coconut on each of our foreheads as he said a prayer. He then placed some saffron on each of our foreheads as he said another prayer. Then he placed some rice in the center of the saffron on each of us as he said a third prayer. He then asked for each of our names, which he repeated, and then he said another prayer. In closing, the priest gave each of us a unique precept. We all laughed when he told Brittany that she had many boyfriends but could only have one husband. We thanked him and Dr. Pandey paid him for his service.

On the way back to the van we got sidetracked. A cow came up to us as we were walking in the middle of the street. It just stood there and stared at us like it was trying to tell us something. Andrew reached down and gave it a good scratch. The cow seemed to enjoy it. Then we noticed a family standing in the doorway of their home smiling and waving to us. Dr. Pandey approached them and they invited us into their home. The house was two storied with an open court yard inside the middle of the living room. On the other side of the living room was a small shrine that housed their deity. The son introduced us to his family. The grandparents, son and his wife, and their three boys lived in the house. The son's brother in-law (his sister) and their children were in town for the Holi festival.





The children and the uncle were covered in the Holi colors. Before leaving we learned that they were in the marble industry and that the marble sold for 33 American cents per foot. We thanked them for their hospitality and returned to the van.

On the road back to the hotel to rest and clean up prior to our dinner visit at the Singhs we got sidetracked again. As we were passing MDS University of Ajmer, Dr. Pandey asked Harpal to pull up to the gate. The university was closed for the Holi holiday. Dr. Pandey spoke to the security officer. He explained who he was and handed the officer his

business card. The officer made a call on his radio and then boarded the van. As we drove around the campus, Dr. Pandey pointed out each section and noted which academic disciplines were housed there. The university was more like an American rural high school. There were no fancy buildings, sport facilities, or massive art work displayed on the lawn. There were a few flowers and a prayer garden. Unlike colleges in America the boys and girls were housed in separate dorms in different areas of the campus.

It was getting late in the afternoon and we were behind schedule. We had not eaten since breakfast so we stopped at a roadside restaurant to eat. With the sun beating down on us, they turned on the ceiling fans under the awning in attempt to cool us off. It was a nice gesture but the fans didn't help much. Some of us choose not to eat because the place scared us a bit. We weren't sure if the food would be safe to eat. There were flies, bugs and small lizards swarming about us. I ordered a Limca . . . Yum! Although it was warm, it was refreshing. We finished our snacks and continued back to Jaipur.



It took us a while to find the Singhs house. When we asked for assistance, one person sent us completely in the wrong direction. I don't think that he knew where the street was and I thought that he did it on purpose. Dr. Pandey said that in India people will try to help even if they don't know the correct answer because they want to be friendly and of service to you. We finally arrived at the Singhs home.

The whole family with exception the great-grandfather came outside to greet us. The Singh home is based on traditional Indian social practices—it is a traditional extended family home. The family consists of the great-grandfather, Dr. K.N. & Parvati Singh, Mr. Alok (Ganesh) & Vandana Singh (the eldest son & his wife), Dr. Dinesh Kumar & Archana Singh (the youngest son & his wife), their aunt & niece. It was a beautiful gated four story home with marble floors and inlaid tile. We were welcomed by Dinesh in the greeting room. He introduced his wife Archana who asked us to call her Sunny. She is a very beautiful women. She has long dark hair and a light brown complexion. Her skin is perfectly flawless. She greeted us with the standard Indian greeting. She touched each of our feet then hugged only the women in our group. She then asked us to sit. She then left the room to start preparing the dinner.



Dinesh splashed a Holi color on our foreheads and said that today was the only day that Indian men could touch a female who is not their wife. Dr. Pandey, Dr. & Mrs. Singh visited in one room, while the rest of us visited in another. I learned that in India the custom is for elders to provide their youth privacy so that they can talk and joke freely. It is Indian tradition that males eat together and females eat together.

Sunny served us drinks. I had the most amazing apple juice that I have ever had. It was kind of like apple wine but without the alcohol content. She then served us a pre-dinner treat of sweets and nuts. After passing the tray around for a while Ganesh loaded it up again and urged us to eat more. Sunni offered us two two kinds of sandwiches, which we thought were supposed to be our dinner. A fried cheese or fresh tomato and cucumber sandwich. I chose the tomato and cucumber sandwich. It was delicious. We had traditional veggies on the side. I was so stuffed that I couldn't eat another bite.



After finishing the meal we were invited into the TV room to sit on the bed to relax. The World Cup cricket games were on and India was playing. Some of us were

curious about the rules since it is not a popular American sport. Dinesh and Ganesh were willing to teach us. They called their friends to come and give us a lesson right inside the TV room. Ganesh was the baller (sort of like a pitcher in baseball) and Dinesh was the batter. He hit the ball and it bounced off of the wall and into the next room. We all laughed. We watched the game for about thirty minutes when Sunny came in and set the table. We just assumed it was for their breakfast. I told Casey to get her head off of the table because I didn't want her hair to get onto the clean plates, thinking that were set for breakfast. Besides we thought that she was being rude and disrespectful to the Singhs. Sunny then said to me, "No these plates are for your dinner." We all laughed because we thought that she was joking. The look on Dr. Steffel's face was priceless. He told Sunny that he was full and that we already had our dinner. She said, "No, you just had a pre-dinner snack." She added, "Uncle you must eat." It is customary for Indians to look at elders as part of their family; so to them, Dr. Steffel was their uncle. Again, we all laughed. He just smiled at her. Then before we knew it there were mounds of food appearing before us. We didn't want to be rude so we took a helping of the food and ate. For desert they brought us something that was warm and sweet.

It was getting very late and the family had not eaten yet. They had served us but did not eat with us so we began to say our goodbyes. Dr. Pandey and Dr. Steffel gave each of our hosts a small gift to express our gratitude for the humble and welcoming hospitality. We taught them how to do O-H-I-O and took their picture. We then took several group photos and said our final "see you later" as they would say. For them it is not goodbye but "hello until we meet again." We headed back to our hotel for the last night in Jaipur. While I sat on the van; I tried to absorb what had just happened. I had a warm rush of emotions come over me. I tried to be silent as I cried. I wiped my tears away and was grateful that I got to experience such a humble offering of love and friendship. Never before in all of my travels have I ever felt so much hospitality from one family. I believe that this definitely was and will continue to be the highlight of my trip. I am truly grateful for the home visit and for Dr. Pandey providing us this experience.

Stephanie Austin



Dr. Ashok Kumar Singh, Dr. Bishun D. Pandey, Dr. Raj Bali
Three Old Friends from Graduate School at BHU

CASEY EDGINGTON

While waiting in the hotel lobby for the rest of the group, Brittany, Stephanie and I looked at the trinkets and images of deities in the glass display cases. Andrew snapped a picture of me just as I turned around and smiled. I was very fascinated by the rich artwork around the hotel that must have seemed ordinary to Indians but seemed exotic and unfamiliar to me. Shiva seemed to be very popular in Jaipur. I also could not help being drawn to the Ganesha wrapped ornately in a pink blanket so that he seemed to be wrapped as a babe. Ganesha is a deity that represents good luck and fortune, and appears as a man with an elephant head, he is one of the most popular deities.

Shortly, Dr. Steffel and Dr. Pandey arrived as well and greeted us. David, who always seemed to be carrying around little toys, gave a small orange ball to a little Indian boy who examined it. Dr. Pandey started to examine the trinkets at the shop, and seemed to be interested in ornamental glass birds. After purchasing some of the decorated glass birds, Dr. Pandey bought the girls skirts, which were really awesome. I purchased a sarong for my grandma for 400 rupees. We boarded the van just as Harpal Singh put incense in the air conditioning vent and filled it with the smell of—well incense. I had commented on the overwhelming smell of incense in India earlier and I decided that incense must be the equivalent of “glade” in the U. S.

As we began our journey to Fatehpur Sikri and Vrindavan, Dr. Pandey motioned for Harpal to stop. He jumped out to purchase a sticky donut treat that reminded me of elephant ears at the county fair, minus the powdered sugar. The treat is traditionally a breakfast food, and is called “Jallebi”. Dr. Pandey told me about another breakfast food that is common in India called “kachori” which is spicy and covered in bread and veggies. Jallebi was very delicious, sweetened with honey, but sticky and messy. I looked out the window as we left Jaipur with continued awe at the sheer number of people who crowded the streets. Many women had their faces covered because of the clouds of dust in the streets. Dr. Steffel and I originally thought that a Hindu woman was Muslim because her face was covered, and he snapped a photo of her. We stopped for bananas that were really good and tasted slightly different than bananas at home.



When we stopped at a gas station to fill up, Andrew remarked that he thought that the gas tank was perpetually filled. Andrew and Brittany bought some drinks; they got me a Limca, which was pretty delicious. We passed a large Hanuman statue who carries a weapon called a “gadda” or mace. Once on the road we observed Indians drive by on motorcycles with five or more people, and small cars that were packed to the extreme, and I thought that our group of seven was crowded in the van. This was day six of our trip so I had already acclimated to the crazy driving and had become acutely aware that traffic laws more like guidelines and not always obeyed.



On the main highways I noticed that many trucks and wagons were so overloaded that they literally were almost twice their size. An interesting aspect of the Indian culture that I had noticed was also how new and old ways of India were intertwined, e.g., camels were on the highways along with trucks carrying loads of bricks, and new skyscrapers perched over old style buildings and rubble of remaining buildings from another time. It seemed that anything that could



move carried bricks in this part of India because of the construction boom. I noticed that the brick factories were not what Americans would call factories, *per se*; rather they were really tall chimneys set out in the middle of nowhere. When we were passing

these brick smoke stacks I noticed a temple under construction; Dr. Pandey noted that rich people usually finance the building of new temples.

I was surprised to actually see the countryside in India; we observed fields of mustard and wheat. The Indian people do almost everything by hand; however, Dr. Pandey told me that they do use a thrashing machine once all of the wheat or mustard seed plants are harvested. The driver told us that we were taking a short cut and he took us on roads through the Indian countryside. We stopped at a rest stop where Dr. Steffel assured me it was okay to throw my trash on the ground.

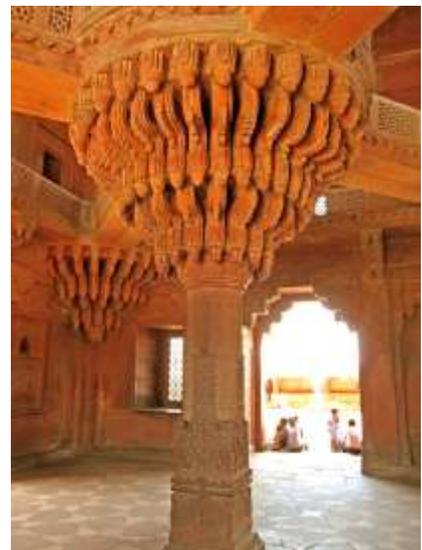


The main attraction of the day was Fatehpur Sikri. We parked at the base of the palace fort and boarded tuk-tuks to take us to the entrance.



A tuk-tuk is a motorized three-wheel rickshaw; it's more like a bumper car at the county fair. Between the parking lot and the fort we saw many religious shrines. At the gates of the fort our guide explained its history.

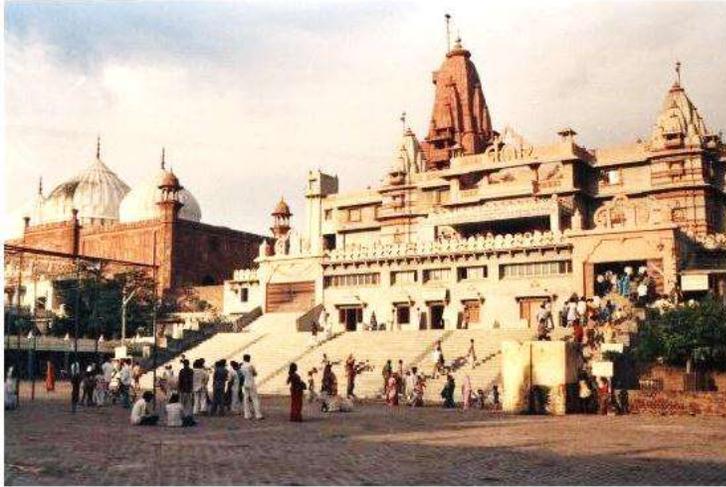
Construction of Fatehpur Sikri began in 1571 by Akbar, one of the great Mughal kings. The guide also explained that the fort was occupied for only four years because there was a scarcity of water. Akbar was a very successful and tolerant emperor; however, despite being illiterate he was a very clever man. He had three wives, one Hindu, one Christian, and a Muslim. Jodha, the Hindu, was Akbar's favorite wife because she had granted him a son that had been predicted by the sufi mystic Salim Chishti. Evidence of Jodha's most favored status was that her palace was much larger than Marium's, the Christian wife, or Turki Sultana's, the Muslim wife; however, the palace of each wife was elaborately designed to reflect her religious preferences. The fort had been built out of red sandstone



and had lush gardens and a large court to play Parcheesi.

As we left the fort we were bombarded by hawkers and even chased by two little boys! We stopped at a drink stand to purchase water. Then nearby we stopped for lunch.

After lunch we headed for Mathura to visit the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple that is considered to be the site of Krishna's birth. The environs of the temple were very



crowded and noisy. The temple was heavily guarded due to the tensions between Muslims and Hindus. There is a disagreement between the two religious groups as to who owns the rights to the land. An electrified barbed wire fence and soldiers with guns separate the temple from the mosque. Stephanie expressed discomfort because of the guns as we entered. We were hard

pressed to hear or follow our guide who kept running ahead of us in the overwhelming and noisy crowd. While we were viewing the elaborately decorated deities in the main hall, I was accosted by some children who wanted to shake my hand. It is very common to be approached by children who want to shake your hands and to take your picture. Probably the strangest quirk about the trip was the Indian fascination with white people. I finally had to break away from the kids as the guide pushed us through the crowd to view the deities who always had a slight smile and were almost always surrounded by gold and colorful clothes. They were absolutely stunning, and completely foreign to someone who is used to the simplicity of a non-denominational church where the most elaborate decor would probably be the floral wallpaper in the bathroom. As we made our way out of the temple into the fresh air, we observed a chariot with Krishna posing majestically. We also stopped at a large lit diorama portraying Krishna's life. Stephanie was still very nervous about being around the military, but once we were out of the crazy crowds she calmed down a bit.

After the exhausting trip through the crowded temple we were off to our hotel. Unfortunately, it turned out that the hotel hadn't retained the rooms we had booked and what was available was not suitable for us. We checked out another hotel which was abysmal according to Andrew. At this point Dr. Pandey called and got us a police

escort, which was the oddest and craziest thing ever! When we finally found a hotel I was ready to collapse from exhaustion, but Dr. Pandey insisted we eat and I ordered an ice-cream that was delicious. I finally showered and went to sleep. It was a long day and I would need my rest for tomorrow!

Casey Edgington



BRITTANY BROOKS

After an exhausting night of trying to find a hotel that met our standards, we awoke and got ready to start our day off on the right foot. Everyone met downstairs with their luggage; we loaded the van, and headed out for breakfast. We ate breakfast at a strictly vegetarian place called Govinda. The restaurant belongs to the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) or familiarly known as the Hare Krishna movement. I ordered uttapam which was like a pancake and was very good. Over breakfast Dr. Pandey explained that Vrindavan is the land of Lord Krishna and that almost every temple centered around him.

Fortunately, for us the restaurant we were eating at was right beside the ISKCON Krishna Balram Mandir Temple. This is one of the most famous temples in Vrindavan because it is where Srila Prabhupada (1896 – 1977) saw Lord Krishna. Prabhupada travelled the world sharing his newly found enlightenment, especially New York City and Moscow.



After breakfast we walked to the temple, which was absolutely breathtaking. It is constructed of white marble with an intricately carved exterior that glowed in the sunlight. The temple floor was a black and white marble pattern and the walls surrounding the open courtyard were painted with different Hindu scenes. It was very crowded because this was Holi and everyone was there to pay homage including many hippies from all over the world.

There were two different deities at the front of the sanctuary. We made our way to the altar deities where visitors were playing loud music and everyone was singing and jumping around. It was exciting and the beat made me want to join in. After exiting we went out behind the temple. In the center of a corridor to other buildings there was a caged tulasi (basil) plant that is worshipped and considered holy by Hindus. On the iron cage were phrases that everyone should live by, almost like our Psalms. Andrew and David walked down an alley to a low roofed ceiling where two monkeys were sitting. I walked down to see them and the baby monkey acted like it was going to start after me so I hurriedly took a picture and rejoined the group. From the main entrance of the temple we could easily see the beautiful architecture. I walked away to take pictures of the carved white marble



archway and stairway leading up to offices or homes. At the opposite end of the archway was the memorial site to Srila Prabhupada. The inside of the shrine was open and had high ceilings with carved marble walls. His ashes were in the center in a black box like thing with gold trim. It was very beautiful. Before we entered the shrine, David had another encounter with a monkey. This time the monkey pushed him and left two little paw prints on his shirt. He was startled by it and Andrew had tears rolling down his face from laughing so hard.

When we returned to the van, Harpal explained to Dr. Pandey that he shouldn't drive the crowded, narrow streets of Vrindavan; he suggested that we rent tuk-tuks to take us to the rest of our destinations. So the girls and Dr. Pandey climbed into one and Dr. Steffel, Andrew and David into the other and we made our way to the ghats. Thus



far on our India trip we had witnessed dust and litter, but this was the first city that was actually dirty. We rode through the narrow, curvy, and sometimes unpaved streets with a ditch on each side – the ditches were filled with stagnant, cloudy water. The smell was also something that had to be experienced. This is where I really felt appreciation for home and the level of cleanliness. Our first stop was the ghats. Once we arrived I quickly hopped out because there was no air circulation in the back of the tuk-tuk and I was a sweaty mess. Once everyone was out Dr. Pandey warned us to keep our sunglasses, water bottles, and cameras firmly in our grasp because the monkeys were notorious

for grabbing them right out people's hands or off their heads. We walked single file down a path with some broken steps to the Yamuna River bank. I know that we worry about pollution problems in the U.S., but this river was dark gray on the verge of black. Dr. Pandey said that it was not recommended for people to swim in, yet there was a group of boys cooling off from the heat while showering in the water. Small rickety boats were lined up to take guests out into the Yamuna. After Dr. Pandey negotiated a reasonable price we all climbed in. I was scared to death that this old weathered boat was going to tip over and we would wind up with Delhi bellies against our wishes. We bought a little pie pan looking thing that had a candle surrounded by roses and marigolds; we lit the candle and put it in the water



as our offering. The view of the landscape from the river was quite stunning. Our boat driver returned us to shore and we scampered up the bank to the tuk-tuks for a short ride to the monkey sanctuary.

The present day monkey sanctuary is shared with priests in training who live in this humble area. We walked in and I have never seen so many monkeys in my life. They



were running wild everywhere and some of the noises they made were rather startling. Almost like a dog growling and the ferocity of it. Dr. Pandey told to us a story of Lord Krishna visiting a park and dancing all night with the women of Vrindavan. While he was speaking the monkeys got thirsty so they went to the water pipe and turned on the spigot to start the water flow. I knew monkeys were smart but the

depth of that was not understood. They all joined in taking a drink from the small stream running down the dry ground. After they were finished one of the priests came over and shut off the spigot. I stared in amazement. The sanctuary was full of trees and some rundown buildings. It was originally the home of the man who built and took care of the Baby Krishna. I exited quickly because I was scared that a monkey was going to jump on me!

We then headed to Rang Nath Temple (1851), known for its south Indian architectural style. The temple was a short ride down some back alleys. The temple was surrounded by a huge wall. The first courtyard with pavilions had a huge sacred tank filled with water. As we approached the gateway to the inner courtyard a guard yelled at us not to photograph. I had to go to the bathroom so I asked Dr. Pandey where it was and he took me. We learned that the person in charge of the restrooms decided not to come to work today so the women's bathroom was out of commission. A fellow standing by said he knew of one and offered to take us there so we followed him. What was only supposed to be forty steps turned into like a little over half a mile one way



but we finally made it and I went. On our way back Dr. Pandey explained that people in India have a hard time of estimating distance. I felt bad because our group was waiting but we eventually rejoined them.

What makes this a Southern style temple? One enters the temple grounds through a gopuram or gate pyramid. The temple has a pyramidal tower that is decorated with sculptured religious figures and the altar deities are darker in color. The Rang Nath Temple was humongous compared to some of the others we had visited. It was decorated with bright colors and was very clean. The main deity was in the center with lots of space between it and the worshippers. After viewing the temple we returned to the front of the courtyard where priests were reciting mantras into a microphone because it was time for daily worship and people started flooding in. Just before we departed the temple, Dr. Pandey approached a group of young boys all dressed in orange. They were novitiates in training to become priests and this was part of their duties. It was very interesting to see them all sitting there.

The third temple we visited was Govind Temple, which had been built in 1590 by Maharaja Man Singh of Amber. It is constructed from red sandstone. It was sacked by Aurengzeb in 1670 who ordered the upper four levels demolished. The temple's original image of Govend Deo Ji (another name for Lord Krishna) is in Jaipur where it



had been sent for safe keeping in 1670. Our group referred to it as the monkey temple because there were monkeys everywhere; they are equivalent to squirrels because they are such a nuisance. Thus far this had been the prettiest temple, in my opinion, that we had visited. After Dr. Pandey found a guide to tell us about the inside of the temple we removed our shoes and proceeded to climb up the three foot high steps to the main

sanctuary. It was rather startling to find monkeys sitting on top of the doorway. The interior architecture with its carved decorations was outstanding, but it smelled like monkey urine and they were everywhere. Just as our guide began to explain the history of the temple Stephanie walked outside because she felt ill. I followed her out and sat her down while Dr. Pandey bought her a bottle of water. Andrew stayed with her and I went back in for the rest of the tour. I caught up with the group just as our guide was saying that the ceiling used to be filled with diamonds but it was eventually looted. For as large as this temple was the Niche or altar for the deity's image was very small. As I tried to take pictures of the ceiling a monkey jumped on my leg and startled me! I screamed and jumped around creating a show for the people nearby. We were tired

and after seeing the temple we were ready to go on to the next one. I was behind a lady whose sunglasses were on top of her head and as she walked through the door a monkey grabbed them! One of the guards grabbed a stick and threw it at the monkey to get it to drop her sunglasses. It was a sight to see! Meanwhile, during our temple tour Stephanie had gotten sicker; she failed to hold on to her water bottle, and when she got up a monkey came and swiped it. Andrew said you could see the monkey opening it and drinking the water. These were smart animals! I think by this point in the trip everyone had had enough and we were all tired.

On our way back to the tuk-tuks we were stopped by a couple of teen age boys who wanted a picture of us with them. We readily agreed. Then we left for the Banke Bihari Temple. On the short drive there Stephanie felt worse. I felt so bad for her because I couldn't imagine being miserable while on this trip since it was already hard enough. Our drivers parked and gave Dr. Pandey directions to the baby Krishna temple which consisted of negotiating narrow alleys with electric wires low enough to graze the top of our heads. Stephanie stayed behind and laid down in a tuk-tuk.

At the Banke Bihari Temple (1864) we had to take off our shoes. I was so glad that I remembered to bring socks today because this temple was very crowded and the ground outside of it was wet. I was grossed out for sure and I made the mistake of asking Andrew, "How do your feet feel?" He replied with the action of wiping his wet feet across my ankle. I could have screamed!

I have never seen so many people in one place as inside this temple! One could feel the temperature rise as we stepped inside. We held on to each other and stayed for about five minutes because it was impossible to make our way up to the altar of baby Krishna. The altar curtains opened and closed every five minutes in order to allow baby Krishna rest. The ceiling was damaged and pieces were hanging down; it didn't seem that these people were safe. One thing I learned about India is that liability is not as big of a concern as it is in the United States. We went outside, retrieved our shoes, and then left the temple area .

The walk back to the tuk-tuk will be cemented in my mind for the rest of my life because of how dirty it was. The ditches were filled with stagnant water; pipes were dripping water and/or sewage. I felt like I wanted to shower immediately. Finally, we made it to a main street where Dr. Pandey bought a lassi. Lassi is a yogurt drink equivalent to a smoothie. The man scraped the fat and the curdled milk off the top of a bowl of milk sitting outside and put it in a metal container. He then shook it with ice and served it in a clay pot. Dr. Pandey offered me some but I refused because of all the flies that were sitting on top of the curdled milk and fat. The thought of drinking it made my stomach turn. We continued walking back to meet Stephanie. She told us about

her visitors while we at the temple. She said a cow stuck her head in and a monkey was looking at her over the seat. The tuk-tuks returned to the van.

I was so happy to be back in the van and heading out of Vrindavan. I was never looking back! We headed towards Agra for the night. On our way we stopped at McDonald's and I was ecstatic to eat something familiar. I had the filet o' fish meal with a diet coke. Food had never seemed to taste any better. Stephanie did not eat her dinner and we all were tired from the long day we had just gone through. All I remember is that we fell asleep in the van only to be awakened to carry our luggage into our rooms. We changed and quickly went to sleep knowing we didn't have to rise early in the morning.

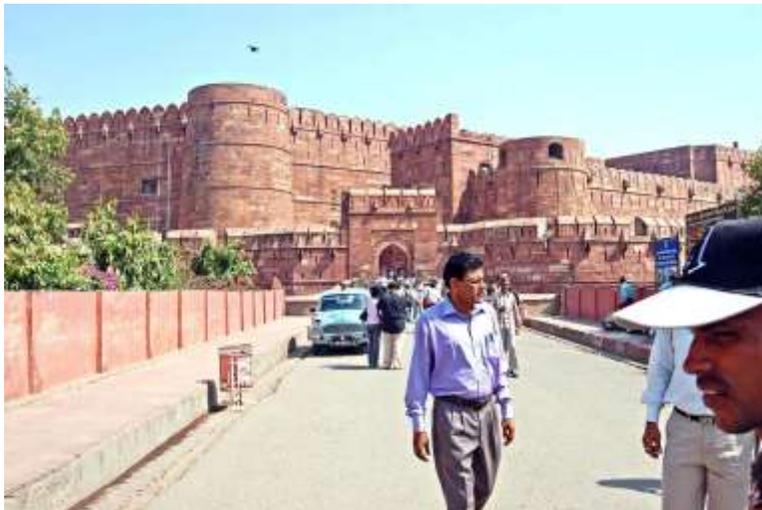
Brittany Brooks



CASEY EDGINGTON

The foyer of our hotel room was hot and humid. Stephanie and Brittany were outside by the van feeding oranges to the monkeys. Since I don't care for monkeys I just observed them. We ate another American style breakfast at "The Palace," a very western and expensive hotel. On the way to Fort Agra the guide explained that tourism was an economic staple in Agra. Stephanie was still feeling sick, so I took over her duties as diarist of the day.

Agra Fort was initially built between 1765 and 1773 by Akbar, who according to our



guide, was one of India's of the greatest rulers. Akbar's grandson Shah Jahan (1628-1657) supervised the construction of the white marble residential quarters that were decorated with semi-precious stones. Shah Jahan is famous for building the Taj Mahal, which is a tomb for his wife Mumtaz. The guide related the story of Mumtaz who gave birth to fourteen children, seven of

whom survived; and she died in childbirth with the fourteenth. Before she died, Shah Jahan asked Mumtaz what he could do to prove his love for her. Mumtaz told him not to take another wife and to do something in remembrance of her that would be unique.

The Taj Mahal would cost roughly 40 million dollars in today's money. Shah Jahan also started construction of a black Taj Mahal across the river for himself. His son Aurangzeb usurped power in 1657-1658 because he believed his father was madly wasting money. Shah Jahan was placed under house arrest until his death eight years later. While confined in the Musamman Burj or tower, his daughters cared for him. When



Aurangzeb moved Shah Jahan to a part of the palace from which he couldn't see the

Taj Mahal, his daughters constructed a mirror device that enabled him to view it once again. On a side note the guide explained that women would sit behind a “paliki” which is a structure that enabled women to see out without being seen.

The black Taj Mahal was never completed but we went to the Mehtab Bagh park where the foundations still remain. From here we had



excellent views of the Taj Mahal across the Yamuna River. Although Aurangzeb did not kill his father, he did kill his older and younger brothers to consolidate his power. His reign was cruel and tyrannical.

Aurangzeb was a devout Muslim who reinstated the Jizya, or the tax on non-muslims, resumed religious intolerance, and launched many campaigns.

There was evidence of British influence at the fort because there was a memorial to a British governor who reigned during the times of the East India Company.

As we left the fort we bought some elephants from the hawkers; I got one for my brother. Instead of going directly to the Taj Mahal we took a siesta at a five star hotel, and the police brought us ice cream.

On the way to the Taj Mahal I saw a medical institute for leprosy which was interesting. There were also many underground sewers being constructed along the road. We arrived at the Taj Mahal with police escort. Our guide led us through the lovely garden right up to the platform just under the Taj



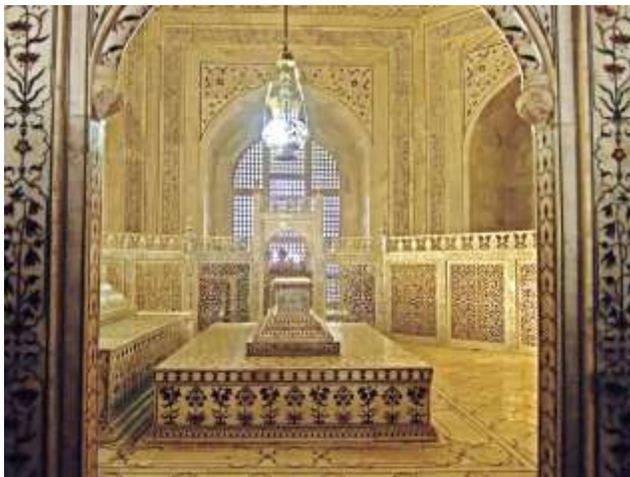
Mahal.. The Taj Mahal's marble is the hardest in the world, and it took 22 years to complete. The colored decorations on the Taj Mahal are all inlaid gems, and none are colored. The guide took us into the mausoleum and described its construction, the stone carvings, and the inlays. He then led us to the river side and let us walk around the tomb to experience it at our own pace. As beautiful as the Taj Mahal is, it has an imperfection in one of its four pillars—as our guide said, “only God is perfect.”

When we left the Taj Mahal we saw Muslims praying in the mosque. We stopped to take some group pictures in front the Taj Mahal. Then we went to the home of Asim Arun who is Agra's Deputy Inspector General; since he was away on business his wife Jyotsn hosted us for a few hours. It was a different experience to be waited on by



servants and I found myself feeling slightly uncomfortable with it, but Jyotsn was a wonderful hostess. She told us how the police force was getting better all the time in India. She explained some things about law, and how it is fashioned after British law. Before we left we took some group shots and Jyotsn told us we needed to see a Bollywood film. After we visited her home we went to eat and I was practically falling asleep at the table and I do not remember much about the restaurant after which we headed back to the hotel to rest for another day.

Casey Edgington



Mumtaz Mahal's Cenotaph

STEPHANIE AUSTIN

After another late night some of us chose to rise very early this morning to view the sun rise at the Taj Mahal. The alarm went off at five o'clock in the morning. I jumped out of bed, brushed my teeth quickly, and got into yesterday's clothes. Someone forgot to leave the room keys with the front desk, so our laundry didn't get picked up. Then I boarded the van. Harpal had been instructed by Dr. Pandey last night to drive Dr. Steffel, Brittany, and me to the ticket counter at the Taj Mahal. Harpal bought three VIP tickets and made the arrangements to have us transported to and from the Taj.



When we arrived, the large wooden doors that open into the outer courtyard were still closed. We waited in two small lines that separated men and women. The doors opened at six o'clock sharp. We didn't wait long in the security line. When the female guard checked my camera case, she pulled me to the side. I had "Flat Stanley" with me. I had planned to take pictures of him at the Taj for my son. The guard stated that Stanley was a terrorist threat and that she would have to lock him up until I was ready to

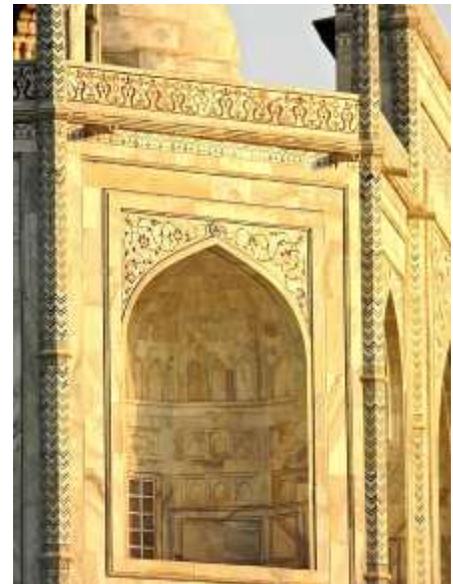
leave. I couldn't believe that I could not take a piece of paper in because they thought it was a threat. I left him with the guard and entered into the outer court yard.

We quickly walked into the inner courtyard because we didn't want to miss the sun rising on the Taj. Brittany and I found a nice corner bench to sit on. We had the perfect view of the sunrise from the bench. The peacefulness was so surreal. The rush of people that we had experienced the day before just didn't exist. The courtyard was quiet. You could hear the birds chirp and smell the freshness of the flowers in bloom. Brittany and I just sat and enjoyed the beautiful view as we took it all in. Shah Jahan built the Taj to honor his wife whom he loved very much. It is supposed to be a place for reflection and meditation and not of haste and discontent. For the first time since I arrived in India, I didn't feel rushed. I was at peace. I was able to really enjoy the beauty that the Taj offered. I believe that this is how one is supposed to feel when one visits the Taj.



The sun rose quickly. The sunlight on the white marble gave it a soft glow of pink as it rose above the doubled dome. The higher the sun rose, the whiter the marble shined. At one point, the sun shined just perfectly on the Pietra Dura (the smaller side panels of the arch ways) and you could see the sparkle from the clusters of gemstones that embellish the Taj. It looked as if it were encrusted in diamonds. I don't think that I have ever seen something as beautiful as what I saw at that moment. We finished taking pictures, I picked up Stanley from jail, and we boarded the van.

When we returned to the hotel Casey was still in bed. She was supposed to be up, showered, and dressed so that Brittany and I would have time to get ready for the long drive back to Delhi. We finished packing and then went the van where were greeted by a group of monkeys. As we ate our oranges the monkeys must have smelled them because they began jumping around for the peelings. As I stood next to the van, a small monkey took my orange right out of my hand as I was eating it. We were having a good time



with them until this monstrous male monkey came along.

Since I had been sick the last two days, I hadn't eaten much. I was very hungry and glad that we stopped at McDonald's to eat something that was more familiar. There



were a few familiar items on the menu and some unfamiliar as well. I ordered the McChicken and although it didn't taste quite like our version it wasn't bad. The fries were hot and salted. YUM, finally a taste from home! After brunch we went across the way to a popular coffee house for

a freshly brewed cup of coffee. This was our first cup of brewed coffee since we arrived. I had a triple chocolate frozen cappuccino. It was good but very rich. Then we boarded the van for the drive back to Delhi.

On the drive to Delhi I sat in the front seat next to Harpal. I wished I could have stayed awake but the seat was comfortable and the nap felt good since I had risen at five to go to the Taj. When I awoke we were just outside of Delhi. Our plans had been changed again while in route. I quickly gathered my senses because I needed to know what was going on. I wanted to be



prepared for our next stops in order to take good notes. Instead of going to the guest house I was told that we were going to Old Delhi to visit the Red Fort and Jami Masjid.

The sight and smells of Old Delhi overwhelmed me. The streets were crowded with cars, rickshaws, tuk-tuks, motorcycles, people, and animals of all sorts. The smell was comparable to rotting garbage and pungent body odor. We had to park several blocks

from our destination and walk up a small hill side with step steps in order to reach Jami Masjid.



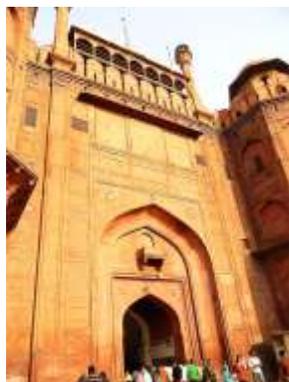
As we entered the mosque, I felt very uncomfortable. They made each non-Muslim woman put on a very long robe that was bright and colorful. We stood out in the crowd unlike the Muslim women who wore all black. Dr. Pandey paid the admission and we entered. Since I had my camera with me I was stopped by entrance guard who requested an additional 200 rupees. He placed his hand

around my arm and gripped my bicep and breast. He held me there until Dr. Pandey turned around and noticed the incident. I have never been afraid for my own safety as I was with this man. I entered the gate and caught up with the others.

Unlike the other mosque we visited, this was a functioning mosque—a place of active worship. We learned that it was built by Shah Jahan between 1644 and 1658 and that it was the largest mosque in India. The court yard was large enough to accommodate up to 20,000 people. The red sand stone with the white and black marble shined in the bright sunlight. It has two minarets that tower over the three domes and the high arches. Most of the group climbed the minaret tower while Dr. Steffel and I walked around and took pictures. This was my least favorite place to visit. I felt most unwelcomed and unwanted here. I didn't care for this visit; I could have done without it.

We walked several blocks through the crowd and boarded the van. Several small boys hopped on the back of the van. They were flirting with Brittany. We laughed as they blew her kisses and held on. They rode on the back almost all the way to Red Fort.





The Red Fort is very similar to the other forts constructed by the Mughals. Shah Jahan began construction in 1638 and it was inhabited by Mughal emperors until 1857. The red sandstone walls and buildings reflect different shades of red and pink as the sun shined down on it. The gates were massive and decoratively arched. The pillars and walls contained bright colored jewels mostly in flower patterns. The screens were hand carved marble and added a touch of delicacy and elegance. We were unable to visit the Moti Masjid mosque because it was closed for renovations. The fort had more to view and study than we had time for since it was close to closing time. I wish I could have visited it with more time. I hate feeling rushed around so much, yet as we exited we dawdled at the arcade shops.

After visiting the fort, we ran across the street to view the Old Delhi area. We visited two temples that some of last year's class hadn't. The first was the Jain Temple complex that included the Shri Digamhar Jain Lal Mandir, the Jain Bird Hospital, and the museum and book store. Unfortunately, we only saw the museum and book store; we never entered the devotional area because it was not open to visitors during prayer time. The temple was built in the 16th century during the Mughal era and is the most famous of all the Jain temples. This by far was the friendliest and best maintained temple that we visited. All of the priests were excited to see us. They were willing to answer questions and gave us information without asking for a monetary donation. The temple complex was embellished with decorative marble flooring that was clean and freshly mopped. The walls were painted with brightly colored scenes that were outlined in gold. The adjacent bird hospital nurses sick birds, then releases them when they are able to fly. If they can't fly then they are put up for adoption or cared for until their death at the hospital.



The other temple that we saw was the Sikh temple Sisganj Gurudwara. This also was a warm and welcoming place. It was very clean and had the smell of fresh baked goods inside. It was a beautiful marble building. Unlike the other temples it wasn't lavished with rich decor. Before we ascended the staircase to the sanctuary we washed our feet in the running water.



The walls were bare except for a few verses written along the upper border just below the balconies. The priest sat behind the alter reciting prayers as worshipers came forward to pray. As we left, we were given a pamphlet about the Sikh religion. A lady who had just participated in worship asked Brittany and me, if we enjoyed the service and thanked us for visiting the temple.

We were so thirsty we walked to McDonald's for a drink. Then we headed back to the guest house where we had spent our first night in India. It was good to see the familiar faces of the staff. We noticed that Puran had a shaved head. He said that a family member had recently passed away and that men shave their heads as a sign of mourning. Puran prepared a delightful dinner of okra, cauliflower with peas, rice, plain naan and vanilla yogurt for dessert. I enjoyed the okra. I thought that it had a good flavor and was perfectly ripe. Just the way I like it. We thanked him for the dinner and then made our plans for tomorrow's activities.

Then, I spoke to my husband Shad and for the first time, I really missed home. He said that he was having issues with getting registered for his classes and that he needed my assistance. I said my goodnights then went to bed.

Stephanie Austin



DAVID SNYDER

We awoke at the Omkareshwar Guest House in New Delhi, staying in the same rooms we had the first night that we arrived in India. The only differences in the morning routine were that now we knew how to get hot water and I was better at bathing with a bucket and dipper. Breakfast was the same as before but now we knew that we could request cold milk instead of heated for our corn flakes.

Our guide for this day was Prashanto K. Walter. When we asked about his non-Indian last name, we discovered his family had been Methodist Christians for five generations and that one of his ancestors had probably been Caucasian. According to the 2001 census, the latest numbers I could find, the religious demographics of India are: 80.5% Hindu, 13.4% Muslim, 2.3% Christian, 1.9% Sikh, 0.8% Buddhist, 0.4% Jain and 0.6% other. While discussing our day's itinerary he enthusiastically recommended we go to the Gandhi Smriti, and I'm glad that we took his advice.

We drove on a beautifully landscaped boulevard that was lined with many embassies. It was named Shanti Path, which means peace lane or path. We passed the embassies of Great Britain, Australia, the United States, France, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Germany, Canada, Russia and several others that went by too quickly. This area also contained the homes of "the movers and shakers" of the country, including government ministers and politicians. We passed the one time home of Indira Gandhi that is now a museum. Inside a walled complex was the home of the Prime Minister, Dr. Mammohan Singh. We soon arrived at Birla House also known as the Gandhi Smriti.

The Birla family was and is one of the richest and most successful business families in India. They were known for their support of the independence movement and were close friends of Mahatma Gandhi who was the pre-eminent political and ideological leader of India during the independence struggle with Britain. Gandhi pioneered the technique of civil resistance combined with nonviolence. Mahatma is an honorific meaning great soul. He was also called Bapu (father) and is honored in India as the Father of the Nation.

Gandhi spent the last 144 days of his life at a home of his friends, the Birla family; he had been invited to stay while continuing his writings and having meetings. On January 30, 1948 he was ten minutes late going outside for evening prayer because he had been talking with India's Deputy Prime Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel. A crowd of several hundred, along with ten uniformed and twenty plainclothes policemen awaited him. He had ascended the six curved steps that led up to the prayer ground and had brought his hands together to greet the gathering. The Mahatma took a few steps more through the crowd when Nathuram Godse pushed his way through with a small black

Beretta hidden between his hands. He fired three shots into Gandhi's chest and abdomen. Gandhi was dead at 5:17 pm. His last words are said to have been, "Hey Ram, Hey Ram." (Oh God, Oh God.) Reportedly, he had been killed by a thirty-seven year old Hindu extremist who felt that Gandhi had favored too many concessions to the Muslims and Pakistan. Today the Birla House and prayer grounds are a memorial and museum called the Gandhi Smriti (Gandhi Remembrance) and the Eternal Gandhi Multimedia Museum.



On arrival, we walked directly into the garden beyond the house following the cement footprints marking Gandhi's last steps to the spot where he was killed. Along side this path is

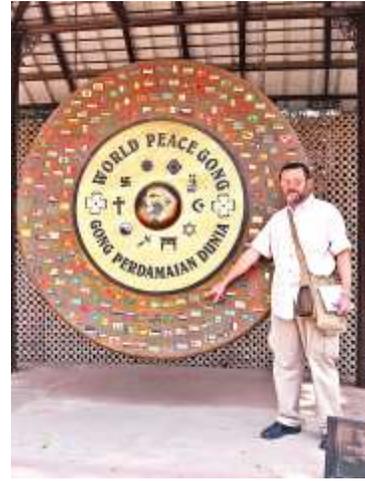
a long covered walkway that displayed a collection of informational posters portraying portions of India's history. The spot where Gandhi was killed is now marked by the "martyr's column" that is covered by a roof. To the right of the column at one end of the large grass area is a small pavilion. A sign on it says it is "The Mahatma's Prayer Spot". Its back wall has mural depicting events from the Mahatma's life done in a style and colors that reminded me of Mexican art.



Other parts of the prayer grounds had sculptures, large trees and flowers. As this was a serendipitous event in our itinerary, we had little time to spend on the multi-media exhibits of the museum inside the house, but we were able to see the preserved room in which Gandhi spent the last days of his life. On display were his eating utensils, eye glasses, pocket watch, walking stick, revealing what a Spartan life he led. In the courtyard area is the World Peace Gong,

which is over five feet in diameter, has decals of all nations, and was donated by Indonesia. Most of us would have liked more time here.

Gandhi Remembrance or Gandhi Smriti





Victory Arch and Tomb of Unknown Soldier



Rajghat – site of Gandhi's cremation and memorial

Next we drove through the Vijay Chowk or “Victory Square” and down the Rajpath (King’s Way or Royal Path). We saw the Rashtrapati Bhavan (President House) behind ornate iron gates, the North and South blocks of the Secretariat which are two domed identical buildings containing the offices of the Prime Minister and many other government ministries, and the Sansad Bhavan (Parliament House) where the parliament meets. Continuing on the Rajpath we passed fountains, canals, and lawns ending at the India Gate where we stopped. India Gate is a nearly 138 foot high red sand stone arch built to commemorate those Indian and British soldiers who died in World War I as well as in later wars. Beneath the center of the gate are four eternal flames and the equivalent of our Tomb of the Unknown Soldier called “Immortal Warrior”. In another area on the grass is a red sandstone canopy that once housed a statue of George V.

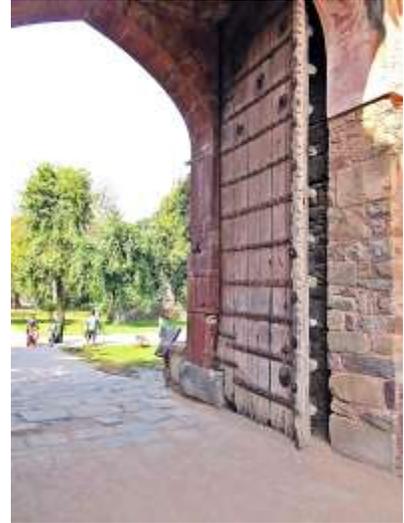
Our next stop was the Rajghat, the cremation site of Gandhi. Several other national leaders have been cremated nearby. His spot is marked by a plain black marble platform inscribed with his supposed last words, “Hey Ram.” There is also an eternal flame and the only color comes from the floral tributes draped across his stone. The cenotaph is surrounded by a cut stone covered earthworks which protects it from the flooding of the Yamuna River. This results in the appearance of an enclosed garden. Our group observed the site from the flood walls, but when Stephanie decided to view it up close, I took advantage of the opportunity and joined her.

According to the guide books and the internet, the Rajghat is a quiet, reflective, meditative spot. There is a sign that appeals to visitors to stay off the grass and not play games or pick the flowers. When we were there the appeals went unheeded by what seemed to me to be about 300 or more young students. They weren’t really badly behaved, they were just being children, and I don’t think Gandhi would have minded. They offered proposals of marriage and dowries of flowers to the females in our group. It seemed as though everyone with a camera, students and adults, wanted their picture taken with the them. We finally had to practically tear our ladies away so that we could move on to our next site, Humayun’s Tomb Complex.

Unfortunately at the complex the Isa Tomb, Mosque and enclosure were closed for renovations. Its construction preceded that of Humayun’s tomb by twenty years and is octagonal with canopies, glazed tiles, lattice screens, and an outside covered corridor supported by columns. It is an example of Suri or Afghan architecture.



As we entered through a gate in the wall around the main tomb, there was a mental if not audible gasp at our first glimpse of Humayan's actual tomb in the distance. But first we turned right to visit the Arab Seri that had housed Persian craftsmen who built the tomb in 1565. We were told that it still has the original wooden gate. Next we stopped at the

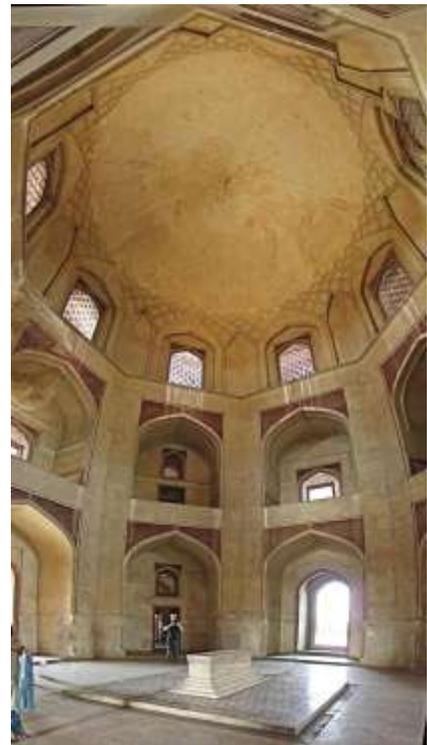


Afsarwala Tomb and Mosque. We continued to the main tomb passing in the distance what is called the "barber's tomb" although the identity of who is buried there is unknown.

Humayun was the second Mughal Emperor, the son of Babur, and the father of Akbar. The tomb was built by his grief stricken senior widow and was designed by Mirak Mirza Ghiyath, a Persian. It was the first garden tomb in India and the first structure to use red sandstone on such a grand scale. It was a landmark in the evolution of Mughal architecture with its



high arches, double domes and intricate lattice work. It is 139 ½ feet tall and has inlaid white and black marble as accents. It is said to have served as the



inspiration for several later monuments, including the Taj Mahal. There are so many of Humayun's relatives buried here that it is sometimes referred to as "a dormitory of the house of Timur."

Lunch was at a very crowded restaurant called Pindi where they served vegetarian and non-vegetarian Mughal, Indian and again Chinese dishes. Because I was having some stomach issues, I chose sweet and sour chicken. It was agreed by most of us that the best menu choices were made by Stephanie and Casey: they ordered mushroom mattar which had paneer, tomatoes, and of course mushrooms, and a number of spices. Their other dish was tandori vegetables which had been marinated in a spicy yogurt then grilled.

It was late afternoon so we returned to our guest house. But Dr. Pandey's sweet



tooth had started to have cravings that could be satisfied only with a trip to a sweet shop. Casey, Brittany, Stephanie, and I went along while Andrew and Dr. Steffel stayed behind. I spotted a sweet shop but Dr. Pandey had a favorite one in mind called Evergreen in the Green Park area of New Delhi. A cart outside was cooking jalebi which is made by deep frying a circularly swirled shaped batter and then soaked in honey. He bought a bag full and shared it

with us. We then went inside and sampled several items including rasgulla and rasmalae which are both made from milk and Indian cottage cheese shaped into a ball. Rasgulla is cooked in sugar syrup and flavored with pistachio and rose water. Rasmalae is soaked in clotted cream flavored with caroming, pistachio, saffron and rose water. We then crossed the street to a stand where we tasted several fruits that were exotic to us and bought a watermelon to have for our dessert after dinner.



Some young men were applying henna to their customers who were sitting on short stools right there on the side walk. Dr. Pandey negotiated a fair price and the ladies took advantage of the opportunity to have designs applied to their hands and feet. Henna is a plant that grows to a height of eight and one half feet and grows in tropical savannah and tropical arid areas. Its leaves have been used since antiquity to dye skin, hair, fingernails, wool and leather. Henna must be crushed with a mild acid releasing hennotannic acid which bonds with the protein in the skin to produce a reddish orange



stain that lasts until the skin is shed. Other things can be added to the henna or done to the design to change its color or make it last longer. The young man who did the application had a steady hand and applied the henna with what looked like a small cake decorating bag. In fact the designs looked as if they were made from brown icing. The longer the applied henna stayed on before cracking off, the darker the design would be and the longer it would

last so the ladies moved around as if they were robots until their designs were fixed.

While the henna was being applied, I wandered around the small Green Park shopping area. There were no tourists, hawkers, or beggars, just regular people shopping. The busiest shop was the Nokia store. There was a place called Archie's Gallery that was very much like a Hallmark store. There was no supermarket, but small "hole in the wall" shops that sold nearly all the staple food items one would find in a U.S. market but without the variety of different brands and sizes we would expect. Most of the same brands appear in American stores. There were cooking supply stores, dress and shoe shops, a travel agent, a video store, and a hair styling salon. It was just your average strip mall. Dr. Pandey had planned to get a haircut, but there were too many people ahead of him. We returned to the guest house where we had a home cooked dinner prepared and served by the employees. It was family style at the table in the lounge. The most interesting dish was made of mashed eggplant. After watermelon and conversation it was time for bed.



David Snyder



ANDREW HAND

Our last day in India began at the Omkareshwar Guest House in New Delhi. Most of us woke up around 8:00 a.m. and got ready for the day: we packed our luggage for the trip back to the states; we were exhausted, antsy, and definitely ready to be home. A late breakfast was scheduled to enable us to meet two OSU faculty who were currently living in New Delhi. We were scheduled to share breakfast with them at the guesthouse around 9:30. Professors Mytheli Sreenivas (History) and Pranav Jani (English) and their daughters Meena and Savita arrived around 10:00 a.m. because they had chosen to walk from their place and the distance was considerably farther than they had expected. After greetings and introductions, we sat down at the large table in the guesthouse for an Indian breakfast composed of plain or onion flavored omelets, toast with ghee or mixed fruit jam, cornflakes with hot milk, and Chi tea. We took turns sharing stories about our time in India and our various travel experiences. The professors told us about their experience of living, teaching, and doing researching in India. They noted how much they enjoyed the opportunity of being able to participate in and experience Indian culture first hand with their children. They also discussed how they were working to set up a May Term program for OSU students at the University of Hyderabad in India. When we finished eating and visiting, we went out on the balcony to take a few photographs.



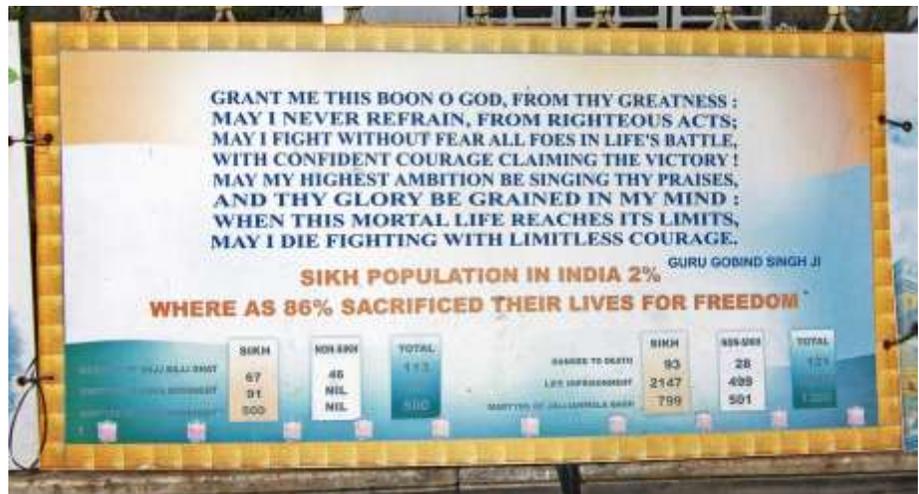
After our visitors left we went to two outdoor markets in Delhi. Some of us were done shopping. I remember Casey saying she was out of money or at her limit and really didn't want to go shopping but alas we all went anyway. At the Indian markets, Stephanie bought two very large puppets, an Indian male and female, for her husband to use in his puppet ministry back in the states. I purchased a couple of final gifts for my wife. I bargained for a hand-sewn, cloth tea cozy and had Dr. Pandey negotiate the best price for me on a very unique tea kettle made of stone or hardened mud. Dr. Pandey purchased some outfits for his grandchildren.

After shopping we went on one last educational sightseeing adventure. Our driver, Harpal, took us to Gurudwara, the Sikh temple where he worships. On the way Harpal told us about the temple. He described the Sikhs' belief in the importance of participating in society and having a common meal. He explained that his temple sponsored a free soup kitchen where all are welcome to come and eat. On the way into the temple, we passed by the droves of people, praying and sitting patiently for their noon meal. Before entering, we followed protocol and covered our heads with bandana's or towels. We entered the Sikh temple to view the beautiful sanctuary or prayer hall. Sikh elders or leaders were taking turns reciting prayers and mantra over the loud speakers while others knelt in prayer. We walked through looking at all of the beautiful carvings and gold decorations. Then we went outside to the large bathing pond behind the temple.



entering, we followed protocol and covered our heads with bandana's or towels. We entered the Sikh temple to view the beautiful sanctuary or prayer hall. Sikh elders or leaders were taking turns reciting prayers and mantra over the loud speakers while others knelt in prayer. We walked through looking at all of the beautiful carvings and gold decorations. Then we went outside to the large bathing pond behind the temple.

Evidence of the Sikh belief in being armed and militant to protect themselves from persecution was documented on a placard wall posted outside the Temple. The posters showed that Sikhs make up two percent of the Indian population but they represent about 10% of the Indian military and they take disproportionately more casualties in war.



We returned to the Omkareshwar Guest House to clean up before going to the airport. We were joined by Gangeshwar and Madha Mishra for a light farewell supper. Their son stayed at home to study for his entrance exams.

We left the temple and then headed to the airport. We arrived at the Indira Gandhi International airport and said goodbye to the van we had spent the last two weeks travelling in. We also said our sad goodbye's to our driver, Harpal Singh, whom many of us had grown quite fond of. To this point, I distinctly remember Brittany saying in an endearing way that she wished she could take him home with her.



We headed into the airport and began the check-in process. We stood in line, eventually checked our bags, and passed through security. It was obvious that security was a high priority at the Delhi airport. We were screened and rescreened; we waited at and went through multiple checkpoints until we reached our boarding gate.

After a long wait, we anxiously and begrudgingly boarded our Boeing 777 for the fifteen hour and twenty minute flight to Newark. We tried to get comfortable and settle in for the long haul. I remember sitting on the plane, with my head spinning, thinking about the whirlwind tour of India that we had just experienced. I zoned out and daydreamed, recalling many of the events and unique experiences of the last two weeks. Eventually, after a couple hours, I put my head phones on, started watching Harry Potter, and fell asleep.

Andrew Hand



VLADIMIR STEFFEL

We departed from New Delhi late Saturday night. The flight was peaceful and tranquil. We passed the time away using our personal entertainment centers and/or napping. We arrived in Newark, NJ about 4:00 a.m Sunday. We went through US Immigration with no complications. We picked up our baggage and cleared US Customs. Now the fun began. We were instructed to take our baggage to the transfer post. Unfortunately, my luggage flight destination tag was missing. So, I was instructed to go to the Continental counter to be retagged. I told a member of the group where I was going. Unfortunately, I had to go to the Continental Check-in counter that was several floors above us. When I got to the counter the assistant was just opening her station, but agreed to deal with my problem when I explained what had happened. I told her that I was at her mercy. As she re-checked the luggage she mentioned that I was a “OnePass” or preferred customer. My response was that “I don’t know if it means much.” She pleasantly and efficiently dealt with the details and gave me instructions on how to change terminals for the flight to Columbus. On arrival at the departure terminal I went through another very thorough check, which included taking out all my cameras. When I arrived at the departure gate lounge there was no one from our group there. So I got a cup of coffee. As I was about to take the first sip guess who arrived—the group.

The flight to Columbus was uneventful and on time. Each of us had family to meet us and after good-byes we were off in our separate directions. Home at last!

Vladimir Steffel



T · H · E
OHIO
STATE
UNIVERSITY

MARION