

# India

## Uttar Pradesh



19 – 30 March 2010

World History

The Ohio State University

# India

## Uttar Pradesh

### Group Journal

The Ohio State University

World History

18 – 31 March 2010



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## Introduction

Spring Break 2010 turned out to be an extended break. During the Winter Quarter Professors Christie, Pandey, and Steffel introduced students to the history and culture of India and prepared them for travel to New Delhi and the state of Uttar Pradesh. The class was composed of six OSU Marion students and three OSU Program 60 students. 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 traveled to the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, which is the heart of the Ganges Plain or historic Hindustan. The urban population is only 28% compared to the rural 72%. 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 came was introduced to India by the Arab traders of the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE and established with the waves of Turkic invasions beginning with the Ghaznavids in the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. 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.

We experienced the various forms of Hinduism in Vrindavan and Varanasi. We sensed the tensions between Hindus and Muslims in Mathura, Varanasi, and New Delhi and yet in rural as well as urban areas Hindus and Muslims lived side-by-side in relative peace and tolerance. We were immersed in rural life in the village of Murera. We experienced Buddhism in Sarnath and Kushinagar. We saw the struggle to provide health and hope at the cancer hospital in Gorakhpur. We interacted with students at Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi and at Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. We were awed by the Persian influence introduced by the Mughals in our visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra. The vegetarian diet was not our western stereotype—and surprise of surprise the ubiquitous potato was served even at breakfast time.

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. But it can be added that we experienced unseasonable high temperatures (in the high 90s F and low 100s F) as well as dehydration and heat exhaustion, but we soldiered on.

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 his contacts at Jamia Millia Islamia and for his caring of students traveling for the first time in such alien surroundings. Finally, thanks to OSU Marion for the generous study travel scholarships that made all this possible for our students.

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**First Row: Sarah McNamee, Barbara White, Shonda Ritterspach, Ellen Graham, Amanda Willis**



## VLADIMIR STEFFEL

The group met in the concourse opposite Continental Airlines check-in at the Columbus Airport. In preparation for the India experience, Anjana, Prof. B. D. Pandey's daughter, spoke with the women in the group. By 11:30 a.m. we were check-in. Then we checked-in, cleared security, and boarded the plane for a short flight to Newark Airport. During our layover we had a mid-afternoon lunch and Bishun gave us talk on Vrindavan and Lord Krishna in story form.

We boarded Continental's non-stop flight to New Delhi about 7:15 p.m. and were to depart at 8 p.m. We took off at 9:00 pm. The 14 hour flight took the Great Circle Route and was uneventful. We arrived in New Delhi at 8:30 p.m. on 19 March (or 10:30 a.m. Columbus time). As we were deplaning we spoke with a person who originally was from Mumbai. While waiting for our luggage David Snyder spotted a man with an OSU jacket who was waiting for his daughter. He said that he had sent his two daughters through OSU. Somehow we got separated from our group. Finally, we saw them coming into the greeting area—a lesson in not having clear instructions.

Prof. Pandey's New Delhi relatives, who had helped facilitate much of the ground transportation, greeted us. After a short visit we climbed into two vans for a trip to Vrindavan. On the road to Vrindavan we stopped at Hori Dhaba, a truck stop restaurant, for a meal and drinks. When we turned off the main road at Mathura we were greeted by a giant statue of Durga. We arrived at the Bhakti Dhama Residency at 2:45 a.m. on 20 March and quickly got to our rooms to catch some sleep and to wake up in the land of Krishna.



## SHONDA RITTERSPACH



Alas, after a grueling 14 hour non-stop flight, we finally landed in Delhi with our cramped bodies and swollen ankles. We successfully navigated through immigration and found ourselves waiting for what seemed like eternity for our baggage to make it around the carousel. Many of us feared that our luggage went to some other foreign destination, but finally it appeared. Soon after, we realized that Vlady and David were in some foreign destination. B. D. Pandey and Dan went in two different directions in hopes of finding the duo in the baggage claim area. No such luck. We decided to make our final customs stop in hopes of finding them on the other side. Fortunately, they were there and our first Indian crisis had been averted.

We then proceeded out of the airport. It took a moment for us to realize we were outside because the air was so thick with smog and dust. We traveled down a corridor where we saw the first signs of India's poverty lying on a blanket along the wall. B. D. Pandey's brother-in-law was there to greet us and give us the much needed cell phones and rupees. We piled our luggage into the two vans and then shoehorned our bodies in as well. Vlady, who was apparently disoriented from the long plane ride, tried to get into the drivers' side, which is on the opposite side in the land of India. I couldn't help but to giggle.



Loaded up and ready to head to Vrindavan, we had our first exposure to the rules of the road—India style. A better way to state it was the lack of rules of the road. We quickly learned that stop lights, stop signs, speed limits, and lines dividing lanes on the road were all optional. The assured clear distance is about a half millimeter. There is truly no way to aptly describe the free-for-all that happens on the Indian roadways. Motorized rickshaws and motorbikes weaved and wedged between the cars. Large delivery trucks traveled without lights on the front or the back of their vehicles. Cars would zoom to the very rear of the van and flash their lights. Bicycles and pedestrians would play a daring game of Frogger as they tried to reach the other side of the road. To



make a right hand turn, the drivers would just turn into the oncoming traffic and they would be ready with their brakes. It was quite frightening. And, oh, the horns. I can still hear the horns. Later we learned that police officers do not patrol for traffic violations. Customarily, they pull over citizens to ask for proper paper work, claim the paper work was fraudulent, and then accept cash donations as a bribe for their release.



When we weren't gaping at the traffic situation, we were trying to soak in all we could of this new world that we were in. At one point we stopped so that the other van could catch up. Even our cameras easily captured the dust particles that fell from the sky. Our noses were filled with scent after scent as we navigated down the Delhi streets. In the span of one breath, you could smell beautiful flowers and cow manure.

You could smell delicious food followed by an unidentified unpleasant aroma.

Our bellies began to grumble so the decision was made to stop at a Dhaba. Dhabas line the highways of India and are normally located near petrol stations. Similar to the American version of a truck stop, people can stop, use the restroom, and dine on local cuisine. It was at Dhaba that we met our first, of many, squat toilet. By the end of the trip, we praised Western style toilets and worshipped toilet paper. We also became acquainted with our friend the mosquito.



They ate at our ankles as we enjoyed our cold drinks and light meal. We tried naan with a paneer (cheese) dipping sauce and a delicious chickpea concoction. There was also chutney, a more spicy dipping sauce. One of the many challenges of the trip was remembering and trying to spell the uniquely named food that we consumed along the way. As I picked up an empty alcohol bottle so that our van would not run over it, I realized this dry state of Uttar Pradesh was not really dry if you knew where to go.

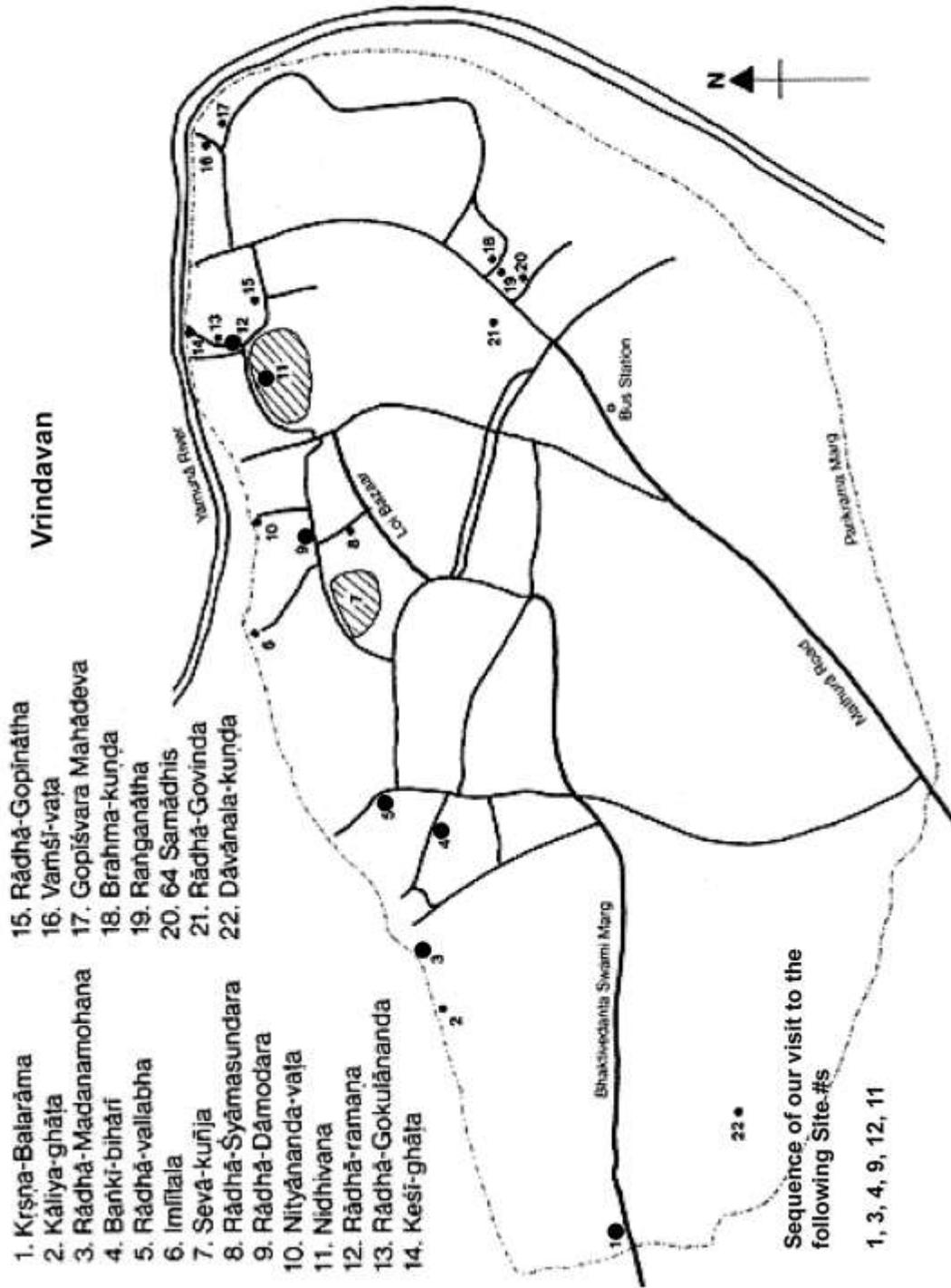
We jumped back in the vans and continued our journey to Vrindavan. At this point, I realized I had no concept of time. We all had the opportunity to call home to let our families know we safely arrived. I could feel the sigh of relief in America with each of the phone calls. It felt like we had been in planes and in cars for days. Finally, the wonderful aroma of raw sewage and bumpy streets told us we had arrived at our destination. We were at our guesthouse, the Bhakti Dhama Residency, in Vrindavan. It was late. We unpacked the vans and figured

out the rooming situation. I had decided to take a shower to help with the bathroom congestion in the morning. The shower, even after letting it run, seemed to shoot ice shards at me. I blew my nose and cleaned out my ears. The dirt and dust that entered our van as we drove through Delhi had consumed me. Amanda and Ellen were dreaming in their peaceful slumber. I soon joined them in what would seem like the shortest night I had ever had.



Shonda Ritterspach





## SHONDA RITTERSPACH



As we awoke with our tired bodies and swollen ankles, the reality that we were in India began to set in. We stepped out on the balcony where we watched the local monkeys play. Our first close up monkey encounter occurred when Paco (he needed a name) joined me on the balcony. I was rather intimidated but I stayed calm and collected. Amanda and Ellen were standing at the screen door also staring in amazement. Paco then went to join his monkey friends. A small monkey came to our window so we fed him some of our American stockpile of food. He was adorable. The three of us decided to go down to check on Sarah and Barbie. We stood on the terrace hallway and watched the sun come up. I decided that my camera would be a novel thing to have, so I proceeded back to our room. When I opened the door, I watched at least two monkeys scramble out of our balcony door. I laughed and called the other girls down. We had been ransacked and robbed! They tore into a bag of tampons and random bags of beauty supplies on the countertop and in suitcases. We looked outside and there was one monkey in the tree holding an unopened bag of sourdough pretzels, and another monkey was banging and trying to bite his way into a small plastic container of pills. He dropped the container and it shattered all over the ground. The monkey with the bag of pretzels finally got it opened and monkeys scrambled in from everywhere to get a stake in the prize. Indian crisis number two was not averted. Needless to say, we were more cautious about locking the balcony door. Soon after, a monkey showed his teeth and freaked Ellen out. In a panic, she managed to lock Barbie and Sarah into their room from the outside and ran back to our room. So much adventure and we hadn't even made it to breakfast yet.



After waiting for the desk worker at the Bhakti Dhama Residency to record all of our passport information, we headed to New Govinda's Restaurant behind the ISKCON Temple for breakfast. Though the walk was quite short, we did have the opportunity to see some of the local women constructing a roadway with concrete blocks. It was rather amazing to watch them carry the stacks of blocks on their heads. There were cows lying in the

roadway where they were working! When we entered the restaurant, we had the opportunity to check out some of the exquisite pastries that they had created in the Govinda Bakery. We then headed to our tables for our first Indian feast! B.D. Pandey sent dish after dish to us so that we could sample the fine cuisine. There was of course naan with paneer (cheese) and various other dipping sauces. We also tried masala dosa that had a potato concoction inside and puri. A very tasty falafel sandwich was also delivered to our table. Breakfast in India was a far cry from the bacon, eggs, and toast that we were accustomed to back home. Since many people of India are vegetarian, there are many restaurants that only serve vegetarian dishes. From that point on, we realized that finding meat protein and non-spicy foods would be a challenge.

While enjoying our breakfast feast, we also had the opportunity to attempt conversation with our local tour guides. Sujeet, who was dressed in white, was very comfortable talking to us. The other guide was a local Hindu priest dressed in a saffron gown. Sujeet had definitely taken a fondness to Ellen, and it was quite entertaining to watch.



From the lecture by Shive K. Chaturvedi prior to our trip, we learned that Vrindavan means forest of Vrinda. There are more than 5000 Hindu temples that celebrate Krishna (and Radha) in this town of 60 to 70 thousand people. Regardless of religious beliefs, all the residents of this area are knowledgeable about Krishna traditions. We began our whirlwind temple journey by visiting the ISKCON Temple (International Society for Krishna Consciousness or Hare Krishna Society). The temple is known as Krishna Balram Mandir, which was near our guest house.



This temple was established by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada on Rama Navami in 1975. The outside of the structure was absolutely stunning with its pristinely kept off-white walls with light pink trim and bougainvillea vines of magenta flowers. Upon taking our shoes off and entering the temple, we were greeted by the beautiful sounds of the Hare Krishna Mantra:

*“Hare Krishna Hare Krishna  
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare  
Hare Rama Hare Rama  
Rama Rama Hare Hare”*

George Harrison, of the Beatles, recorded the song “My Sweet Lord” about Lord Krishna, and also sang a track entitled “Hare Krishna Maha-Mantra” with the London Radha Krishna Temple. (Both are on YouTube if you care to reminisce.)

The theory is that by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, you will be placing yourself in the same harmony as Lord Krishna and thus returning yourself to the pure and natural state of consciousness that is within you and waiting to be awakened. The vibrations of the mantra will cleanse your mind and free it from anxiety and illusion. By becoming in touch with Krishna, it is believed that you will become happy and your life will be sublime.



While gazing around the temple, we saw beautiful details like brightly colored peacocks adorning the walls near the ceiling. There were three altars that are dedicated to Gaura-Nitai deities, Krishna and his brother Balaram, and Radha Shyamasundara, respectively, and their gopis (female cow herders)--Lalita and Vishakha. To the left of the main altars is a shrine with a sculpture of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. To the right of the altars was a Hindu priest who was handing out a Prasad (food offering) to the worshipers that had originally been brought to the temple as an offering to Lord Krishna.

After exiting the temple gates, we were greeted by a head butting cow that wanted attention, vendors trying to sell drums, and women begging for rupees. It was definitely a stark contrast from the peacefulness that we experienced in the temple just moments before. At that point, B. D. Pandey requested rickshaws for our group and tour guides. Rickshaws proved to be the most effective mode of transportation through the often tiny, yet chaotic streets of Vrindavan. We mustn't forget the relief that our feet also had.



Our next stop was the Radha-Madan Mohan Temple. It was here that we had our first official warning by the locals about the monkeys that commonly steal glasses in hopes for food. We were on high alert as we climbed the stairs to get a closer look at the beautiful red temple. Madan Mohan was built in the 14<sup>th</sup>



century, and it is one of the oldest temples in Vrindavan. It is positioned near Kali Ghat and was home to the original murti (or Sacred image) of Lord Madan Gopal (one of the more than 100 names for Krishna). It is said that in the reign of Aurangzeb the image was moved to Karauli in Rajasthan for the purpose of safety, and today a replica of that murti is worshiped inside the temple. The views overlooking the walls on top of the hill were absolutely stunning. You could easily see the primitive, dusty, and bustling city, and then pan across and see rural farm land. Some local children were eager to talk to us and have their pictures taken. The Hindu priest/guide recited mantra from the Vedas.

We safely passed the monkeys again and returned to our awaiting chariots. Our next stop was the Banke Bihari Temple. The area outside of the temple was very congested with various vendors and temple goers. We were also greeted by some very clean and well dressed children holding baskets and begging for money. The dreaded King Cobra lived within each of the three children's baskets. I, personally, was not impressed! We proceeded into the temple and the women were told to go up to the altar. None of the Fab 5, as we later named ourselves, really knew what we were supposed to be doing. Other women were giving offerings of flowers and money. A priest then took flower necklaces and placed them over Barbie, Ellen, and Amanda. He then threw one at Sarah and denied me the privilege completely. Upon leaving the altar, Sujeet placed one over my neck. At this point, still confused, we rejoined with the men. B. D. Pandey led us to a man who was sitting on a stage. The man then put reddish-orange smudges on our foreheads and gave us a sweet mushy food item. The smudge of color is known as a Tilak. This represents a third eye, or the mind's eye, that is associated with many Hindu gods. These marks are often worn by followers of Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, or Lord Krishna and Lord Shiva.



Our next stop was Radha Vallabh Temple. We had to travel up a set of stairs and enter a little room to drop off our shoes before heading down the corridor to the temple sanctuary. Unfortunately, we were unable to photograph the inside of this temple and my memory of this temple eludes me; however, our group will always remember this location. When we reclaimed our shoes after

the tour, David's shoes were missing! We concluded that someone traded in their smaller worn out shoes for his brand new Reebok's. Indian crisis number three was not averted. I can only imagine how his poor feet must have felt by the end of the day, but at least he no longer had the inconvenience of taking off his shoes at every temple!

When arriving at the Radha Damodara Temple, we were told that we must wait for 15 to 20 minutes as temples often close for various parts of the day. While waiting, we took a lap around the building to look at the cemetery composed of Samadhi mandirs, which are similar to mausoleums. It is my understanding that these tomb-like structures are the Samadhis of those gurus who have achieved a state of complete control over the functions and distractions of consciousness. We all seemed to be in an altered state of consciousness for we neglected to remember the danger of the monkeys. We were abruptly reminded as Dustin was attacked by a monkey who was at a high vantage point. As the monkey attempted to steal Dustin's glasses, Sujeet just happened to have a stick and smacked the monkey. The glasses were quickly retrieved without damage. Indian crisis number four was averted.



resemblance to Christian art.

Since this temple was more or less a complex, we headed into one of the large Samadhis and looked in the two altars. The Fab 5 took a photo opportunity to show off our Tilak marks and flower necklaces. We also viewed the paintings on the wall which had a striking

While here, we also learned about the Mundan (hair-offering) ceremony.. The Mundan ceremony symbolizes the removal of undesirable traits from a past life and getting a fresh start the development of power, better understanding, and long life.

Alas, we were finally able to enter the temple that had been established by Srila Jiva Goswami in 1542. Since then many gurus or saints worshipped here. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivendanta Swami Prabhupada lived at this temple We viewed the two rooms, the kitchen and the study where he wrote, on our exploration of the temple. B. D.



Pandey also explained that there is a Banyan tree in every Hindu temple. It is considered the wish fulfilling divine tree.



Next, we visited the Shri Radharaman Temple where our very own B. D. Pandey delightfully rang the bell. Customarily, when a Hindu enters or exits a temple, he or she will ring the bell to let the gods know that they are present or that they are leaving. In this case, Pandey rang a bell continuously as a sign of happiness and joy. There were beautiful Hindu writings and pictures in an alcove within the temple. We also had the opportunity to view a performance of sorts by the priest up on the altar. After leaving the temple, our monkey friends were waiting. Many of us had already proceeded to the rickshaws unaware that Indian crisis number five was unfolding. David, who was already shoeless, was assaulted by a monkey who stole his glasses.

With some food, the glasses were retrieved, but only after the monkey had taken the opportunity to munch on them. As a souvenir from the monkey, David received a monkey footprint on his sleeve.

Our final stop before heading back to the guest house was Nidhivam, one of the two sacred groves where Krishna played. Prof. Shive K. Chaturvedi spoke of the other grove – Seva-Kunj – and told us a story about Krishna meeting with Radha every night to play and the grove turned lush with flowers and grass. There is a belief that if you stay in the garden to see the nightly spectacle, you would either die or go insane. Before closing the gates for the day, it is made sure that no human or animal is still within the walled grove.





As we headed back to our rickshaws, we saw the first real sign of the widows of Vrindavan. There were several of them lined along the street, dressed in all white, and begging for money. According to Hindu tradition, when a woman's husband dies, her essence dies. Widows flock to the holy city of Vrindavan to await their death because they are seen as a financial burden to their families. By dying in Vrindavan, the widows hope to free themselves from the cycle of life and

death and have a less condemned life when reincarnated. There are more than 15,000 widows living in this city.

Our parade of temples and journey via rickshaw had come to an end as we arrived back at the guest house. We took a few moments to freshen up and then sat outside and discussed the events that were to follow. Before we left, B. D. Pandey rationed out our rupees. In retrospect, often times it was nice not having any money to give to the beggars. There was often a sense of guilt among many of the travelers when we had nothing to offer to some of the poorest people in the world. Finally, we loaded up in the cars and were headed to see the magnificently remarkable Taj Mahal!

Image Source:

p. 9, Banke Bihari Temple: [http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3392/3475939101\\_45ec38a62b.jpg](http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3392/3475939101_45ec38a62b.jpg)

Shonda Ritterspach



## BARBARA WHITE



After spending the morning in the colorful city of Vrindavan, we loaded into our vehicles to visit the Taj Mahal in Agra. On the way we stopped for a late pizza lunch. There had been apprehension among the group that the Taj would be closed and we wouldn't get in. What we didn't realize was that Dr. Pandey had made arrangements to ensure we would get to see this UNESCO World Heritage site. When we arrived at the Information Center just before sunset we received VIP treatment: we were whisked into waiting vehicles, driven to the main gate of the Taj Mahal where a local guide was waiting for us, and taken straight to the grounds. Our guide described in some detail the Taj Mahal's construction that was started in 1631 but not finished for another 22 years. We learned that this "Islamic garden of paradise" was dedicated to Mumtaz Mahal ("the Elect of the Palace"), who was the third wife of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and the apple of his eye. We began to walk the area of the monument in total admiration. There were probably a thousand visitors at the site that early evening. You could see many visitors marveling at the beautiful structures built by a husband for his wife lost in childbirth. Our very knowledgeable guide described the key components of the complex: the main gateway, the rest houses, the gardens, the mosque, and the mausoleum. As we walked through the gardens and viewed the reflecting pools, he told us that the Taj Mahal's white marble was brought from Rajasthan and the precious stones from all over Asia.

He emphasized the monument's symmetry. He noted the care that was given to geometric designs and the arrangement of the elements, and he pointed out some Hindu motifs on its walls, like the red lotus flower of Lord Brahma.



After taking some pictures in the gardens we headed up the central dome to view the burial crypt. Simple words cannot describe the haunting beauty of the interior. The calligraphy, the burning lamp, and the art of the tomb were breathtaking. People spoke in low voices or silently absorbed the experience. Our police escort opened wider the crypt's screen so that we could photograph. After exiting the mausoleum, we were hit with the glow of the sun. At sunset, we admired the marble and the precious stones inlaid in the marble. At one point our guide took out a tiny flashlight and proudly showed us that the stones were translucent under the point of his flashlight. We walked around the center and took many pictures, even some with other visitors. It was a beautiful place to be. So beautiful you might have felt you never wanted to leave it.

That night we walked down to a specialty shop and watched artists at work. The men were on the porch of the shop working with marble. We observed them perform their skills and shopped for gifts to bring home. Then we drove through Agra and found a charming restaurant. We sat on the second floor balcony and ordered drinks. Over dinner we talked about our day's experiences and our plans for the following day in Mathura and the trip to Varanasi. After our meal, we drove back to Bhakti Dhama Residency in Vrindavan and turned in for the night.



Barbara White



Saraswati

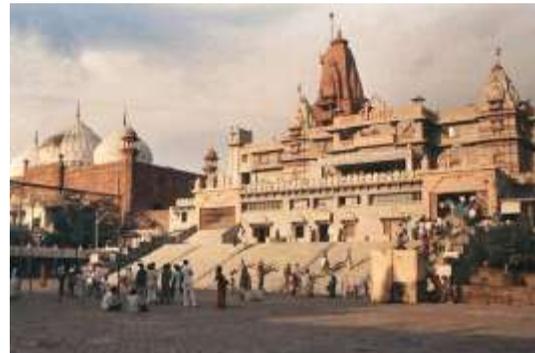
## SHONDA RITTERSPACH

After another delectable breakfast at the Govinda Restaurant, it was time for us to load up all of our luggage and check out of the hotel. Our day would take us to the city of Mathura and then back to New Delhi so we could catch a night train to Varanasi. Before we could part, we had to say good-bye to our dear tour guides. Sujeet's crush on Ellen still remained as he talked to her in broken English about going to the Embassy and coming to the United States. Though it was unclear what exactly he was implying, the look on poor Ellen's face was priceless. He asked for both her address and phone number, but he had to suffice with just her email address. He then collected all of our email addresses and gave us his. It was now time for us to say good-bye to the beloved city of Vrindavan. Though our stay was short, the many crises that we encountered will make for memories that can never be forgotten.



Mathura is another highly regarded city for Hindus because they believe it to be the birthplace of Lord Krishna. The drive to Mathura was about 15 kilometers, but it took quite some time to get into the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi (birthplace) Temple. Once again, we had to rely on the powers of our dear B. D. Pandey. After our experience at the Taj Mahal, it was certain that he could seemingly make anything happen. We sought refuge under a shade tree and watched some local children foraging for anything of value to put in their bags. While we were chatting, Pandey was trying to get us access to the temple V.I.P. style so that we wouldn't have to walk such a long distance. This road to the temple was accessible only to locals who lived there. Eventually, as if we had any doubt, we were able to pass the police barricades for front row access to the temple.

The Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple is a site of extremely high tension between Hindus and Muslims. We were "thoroughly" checked by security upon entering and we could take nothing with us. We then dropped off our shoes and met our tour guide. He informed us that there were seven temples in the complex. We first visited the newest temple that



was dedicated to Baby Krishna. We were given rose water to drink or put to our mouths as we walked around the altar. Our guide explained how the Muhgal Emperor Aurangzeb had destroyed the Kesava Deo Temple in 1669 and built a mosque on part of the site. The mosque is open only twice a year for Ramadan and Bukareed. Military personnel are dispatched to guard the mosque that is enclosed by a very tall electric fence with a barbed wire ring around the top. The electric fence is turned on from midnight until 4 a.m. every night. The tension continues with the Hindus' belief that it was in fact originally a Hindu temple since it sits on the bank of the Yamuna River.

Following the exploration of the Baby Krishna's temple, we headed to a marble wall that had been put in place in 1958. For the past fourteen years, the marble has been magically yielding images including one depicting the Lord Krishna playing his flute. Our guide said that he actually saw one of the images emerge five years ago.



At this time, we went down a flight of stairs that lead to the site of the jail where Krishna was born over 5,000 years ago. As the Hindu followers bowed, our guide pointed out stone slab on which he was born. Krishna's parents were Princess Devaki and her husband Vasudeva. King Kansa, Devaki's brother, knew that his sister's eighth son would kill him, so he imprisoned the couple and had the first six children killed. When the eighth child, Krishna, was born, he was in the form of Vishnu and quickly was exchanged with a baby girl. The baby girl slipped from Kansa's hands as he tried to kill her and took on the form of Goddess Durga. She told him that Krishna was living somewhere else and would kill him for being foolish enough to kill innocent children. It was then that Kansa begged Devaki and Vasudeva for forgiveness and released them from the jail. Krishna hid away in Vrindavan for 11 years.

Our next stop of the tour was entering the massive Krishna temple that housed five altars to Hindu deities. We visited a massive altar for Radha and Krishna and then viewed the altars for both Shiva and Durga. Above our heads was a beautifully hand painted ceiling that told many stories of Lord Krishna. We then headed out of the temple and down the stairs. We dashed across the scorching sun baked marble in search of shade spots to relieve our poor western feet. At this point, we had a better view of the temple/mosque complex that was in question.

As our tour concluded, we thanked our guide and loaded up in the steamy hot cars. It was time for another adventure through Delhi's crazy traffic. En route

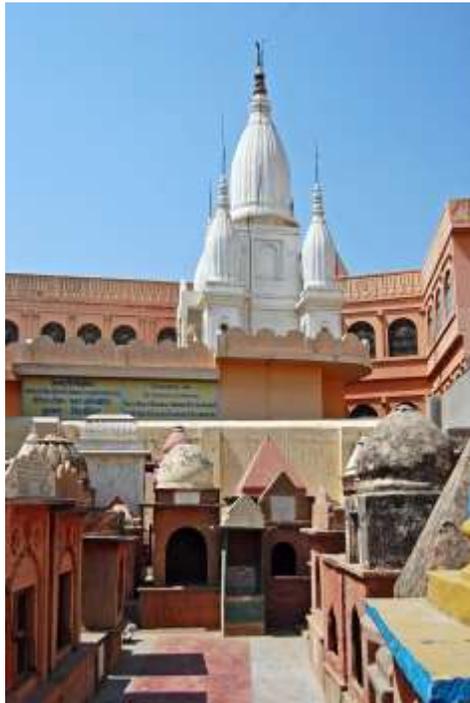
to the train station, we stopped for lunch in a small mall, and we even got a chance to see an accident that resulted in a motorcyclist throwing a shoe at the driver of a delivery truck! Throwing a shoe remains one of the greatest insults in Muslim culture.

Image Sources:

p.16, Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple: <http://www.tourism-of-india.com/mathura.html>

p. 17, Baby Krishna: [http://students.ou.edu/K/Mary.E.Kaszynski-1/krishna\\_QA31\\_I.jpg](http://students.ou.edu/K/Mary.E.Kaszynski-1/krishna_QA31_I.jpg)

Shonda Ritterspach



## BARBARA WHITE

Our drivers dropped us off at the New Delhi Train Station in time to catch the Shiva Ganga Express to Varanasi. With weary bodies we pulled our luggage through train station. The station was packed and we had to move quickly to avoid blocking the path of other commuters. We got the sense of where we were when people started to stare at us and some people stood beside us just to keep their eyes on us. We were observed carefully by many people as we waited for our 6:45 p.m. departure. The New Delhi Train Station was a new experience for us. Every traveler moved fast to get their luggage on the train and locate their seat. We successfully got on board and found our seats. We had nice compartments where we shared space together and made our beds for the overnight journey to Varanasi. On the train, we had to sleep on bunk beds stacked on top of each other. One compartment fit 6 beds each with a sheet and blanket provided. A waiter later came around and asked us what we preferred to eat that night. We had a choice of vegetarian or chicken. Many of us were too exhausted from the hot day and opted to lie down and rest. Our accommodations were comfortable. Most of us were given enough hours to rest adequately and prepare for what came next. When we arrived in Varanasi we located our two drivers who took us to Hotel Haifa – our lodging for the subsequent days.

Barbara White





## AMANDA WILLIS



After awaking from my slumber to the monotone chanting of “coffee, coffee, coffee” on the train, I looked out the window and wondered where in the world I was. It was 8 am and I found myself in the city of Kashi/Varanasi/Banaras, and so on. It really started to sink-in that I was in *India!* I drank some delectable instant coffee and sat there with my lovelies and marinated in my own delight and amazement. I was excited for another day in India where I would have no idea what I would be doing or seeing or eating.

We drove through part of the city on our way to the hotel, and I was fascinated with all of the commotion on the streets and people going about their daily business. There was a lot to look at in Varanasi. Hotel Haifa was our hotel, and the accommodations exceeded my expectations. Ellen, Shonda, and I had a sweet room with a couch, and a balcony that was far away from any trees that monkeys could use to invade our room 😊. We enjoyed nice hot showers and then met the group for breakfast in the hotel restaurant. I was delighted to see a “Mediterranean Breakfast” that included hummus, pita bread, and my favorite vegetables. I believe the very moment I ate hummus for breakfast was when I fell in love with India.



Then we went to Tulsi Manas and Sankat Mochan Temples, but they were closed. So, our first stop was the Durga Temple. The temple is dedicated to the Goddess Durga who is the embodiment of creative feminine force, fearlessness, and patience. We saw many women in the temple, apparently praying for a husband and lasting marriage. Our faces were painted and then someone came up to me and tied a string bracelet around my wrist. We took a look around to the sacred pool



adjacent to the temple and then made our way to some of the little shops in the

alleyways. Most of us made our first souvenir purchases and began to hone our bargaining skills.

Next we ventured to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple, which is dedicated to Lord Shiva and recognized as one of the most important places to worship in Hindu religion. After emptying our pockets and getting a gentle frisking, we were allowed to enter the temple precinct. Half of the group walked the temple grounds to the site of Jnana Vapi Mosque that was constructed by Aurangzeb on the site of the temple. Today the mosque is separated from the temple area by a high electrified fence with military guards patrolling—similar to the situation in Mathura. After we returned to the temple entrance, Pandey negotiated with the temple administration to get permission for us to visit and leave offerings at the Shiva shrine Jnana Vapi (Wisdom well) which contains a lingum. It is very rare for non-Hindus to experience this. We got some milk and flowers to offer and then try to touch the lingum. After I made my offering I received a sopping wet flower lei that the gentleman pulled out of the pool of water and put around my neck. It kept me pretty cool in the India heat, and my nose really appreciated the sweet fragrance of the flowers.



We left the temple and started marching on toward the Ganges. We zig-zagged through the alleyways and as we got closer there was a strange smell that began to get stronger. It wasn't until I noticed a huge pile of wood for sale that I figured out what the smell was. We were getting closer to the Manikarnika Ghat of Kashi where cremations take place 24/7. We emerged from the building-lined alleys and walked into a cloud of smoke from the funeral pyres with the holy Ganges river before us. The smoke was overpowering so we



found a spot where the wind was not blowing it. While we were discussing the sight before us, a nice gentleman approached a few people to kindly take their empty water bottles off their hands. We all were shocked to see him casually dispose of them in the river. I just thought, "So that is how its done". I surveyed the river a little closer and noticed an abundance of litter and waste floating on the banks. People must figure that Mother Ganga will take care of it for them.

We walked a short distance to a spot where we could all sit on the steps that lead to the river to decide what to do next. We had the option to either shop around a little or take a boat ride on the Ganga. It was pretty well agreed that the boat ride would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that was much more valuable than any trinket or piece of jewelry that we would buy. While we had our "Special Drink", Pandey *stealthily* disappeared to go negotiate a price for the boat ride. We sat on the steps and were ambushed by the meddling kids that had been persistently trying to sell us things earlier in the day in the alleyway. I was actually overjoyed to see one little girl selling the flowers with candles that you light and place on the river to make a wish. This was one of the things that I wanted to do in India, and so I happily bought one and felt pleased that my previous wish was already coming true. Pandey returned with bags of oranges and bananas in hand and said "Let's get on the boat!" We piled into the boat and enjoyed some fresh fruit on our river-cruise. Those of us who bought the candles and flowers then successfully lit the candles with our wishes and sent them down the river and into the universe.



We paddled back over to the Manikarnika Ghat and watched a cremation ceremony for a little while from the boat as darkness settled in. I couldn't take my eyes off of the family members standing around the pyre. I tried to imagine what they were feeling or thinking. And then we saw a boat heading toward the center of the Ganges with a body completely wrapped in a

brightly colored sari. My attention stayed on that boat until I saw people drop her off into the water. She must have died from some sort of unnatural cause to have been dropped into the river rather than be cremated. This seemed to me like the worst kind of funeral that a family could experience when they had to say goodbye somewhat swiftly as it only takes a second to sink, and seems almost less dignified than a cremation. The cremations seemed like a lasting experience where you can sit and pray, meditate, or do whatever you do to say

goodbye as you stare into the fire, and this probably creates a better sense of closure. For many of us, this was a very emotional experience. For me, it was a reminder of how precious life is, and how grateful I am to be living and loving my life.

We started to head away from the Manikarnika Ghat, and I realized that there had been drums playing close-by. I was so engrossed with what I was witnessing that I didn't even notice the sound of my favorite instruments. My jaw hit the deck when I saw the awesome sight of five men dressed up doing rituals



with incense, oil lamps, and bells, and others playing the drums as a part of the daily “Night Ganga Puja”—prayers to the goddess Ganges. There was a whole crowd of people on the shore and in boats watching them worship the Ganga. The sun had set and the warm colors of the ceremony lit up the dark sky. We sat there for some time as I became hypnotized by the music and motions. When we started to make our way back to the Tulsi Ghat to call it a night, I felt completely relaxed and still.

We made our way back to the hotel, and met for dinner. After a day where all of my sensory, emotional, and mental parts had been stimulated, I went to bed and slept very well.

Image Sources:

p. 22, Kashi Vishwanath Temple: <http://varanasi.nic.in/temple/KASHI.html>

Amanda Willis

## DANIEL CHRISTIE and VLADIMIR STEFFEL

In the morning before breakfast some of us were on the roof of the Haifa Hotel. Amanda and Ellen stayed there to take a yoga lesson. Bishun and Vlady walked down to Assi Ghat on the Ganges. The sun was rising across the Ganges and the river shimmered in gold. Bishun entered the Ganges to pray. Then we talked about Tulsi Ghat and the owner of the buildings, including his guest house and residence. We had morning tea and returned passing the stone carvers who had statues of Hanuman the monkey deity. We had an authentic Banarasi breakfast at the Madhuvan Sweet House before returning to the hotel.

Our first stop was Tulsi-Vidya Niketan, a nearby private school. India has made enormous gains in student attendance rates at the primary school level and literacy rates throughout India are increasing. At present, nearly two-thirds of the population is literate. Many of the gains in literacy have been attributed to improvements in education, especially the development of private schools like the one we visited. School attendance has also benefitted from India's laws against child labor (though sometimes enforcement is a problem).

We were greeted by the Director of the school and the Head of the Middle School, which had morning programs. High School classes were taught in the afternoons. No students were present because their exam papers were being graded. A typical school year was 200 plus school days. School holidays were from 16 May to 30 June plus all the religious holidays—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist.

We all sat with the Director and Head of the Middle School. They answered a lot of questions. India has some difficulties with the reliability of electricity and we noticed this problem at the school. A generator was running in the background as we asked questions. We learned that the teacher student ratio is about 1 to 30; that class is held six hours per day, six days per week; though there's an expected fee for school, in actuality fees are on a sliding scale; admission to private schools is through an entrance exam; education is not compulsory in India; bullying is not a problem because principals can expel disruptive students; corporal punishment is banned in India.



The Director also explained that the school was accountable to the Central Board of Education (national), India School of Secondary Education, and Uttar

Pradesh Education Board. The curriculum was the same across the country. Exam papers for grade 10 and 12 are graded at the state level; exam papers for grades 6 and 9 are graded locally. Students who fail have to repeat the grade.

Tuition at Tulsi-Vidya Niketan for students grades 6 through 12 is 500 rupees per month; in contrast, public education at (government) primary schools is free in India. Public school teachers are employees of the state. Accountability is a problem; many public school teachers have poor attendance.



Private school teachers work every day and teach every class and are paid less than public school teachers. Public school teachers may be assigned to teach anywhere in the state. School teachers first get a bachelors degree in subject matter and then a bachelors in education. Some go on and get a masters in their teaching subject area. There are three pay scales: one for grades 1 – 5; another for grades 6 – 10; and lastly for grades 11 – 12. They

work thirty hours per week, six days per week, and teach five periods per day.

Before having a tour of the facilities, Mrs. Tina Bhattacharya, the Head of the Middle School, asked us to sing “Silent Night”. She told us that her mother was fluent in English and would sing English songs to her as a small child. She now uses these songs to teach her students the English language. Her mother's favorite was Silent Night, and Mrs. Bhattacharya shared that she could not remember all the words and had not heard the song in over two decades. She was from Rangoon, Burma; she married an Indian and moved to India. She misses her motherland and her parents. Our song brought tears to her eyes because it tugged at her childhood memories, or maybe it was our discordant voices.

We then visited the physics, chemistry, and biology labs as well as classrooms. We also met with teachers who were grading exams. They seemed happy to have their picture taken with us.

### **Peace Institute at Banaras Hindu University (Malaviya Centre for Peace Research)**

We were greeted by Dr. Anjoo Upadhyay, Chair of the Department of Political Science at BHU and the wife of the Director of the Peace Institute, Dr. Priyankar Upadhyaya. She provided a brief historical overview of the university and the faculties (colleges). Dr. Upadhyaya arrived late because his father was hospitalized. Despite dividing his attention between the family problem he was facing and our presence at the Institute, he graciously spent a little time with us. He described the two main programs at the Institute: a one-year program for

students who want to earn a diploma in Conflict Management and Development and a two-year masters degree, also in the area of Peace and Development. In the one-year program, students learn analytic and practical skills so they can analyze and manage conflict situations. These kinds of skills are useful in today's job market. In the two-year program, the emphasis is on skills but research and publication is also valued. The Institute does research a range of themes including terrorism, human security, religious understanding and dialogue, and grass roots activism.

Dr. Priyankar stated that the focus of the institute was structural violence by which he meant the unequal distribution of material and political resources. He used Karl Marx to provide an insight. Marx wrote that religion was the opiate of the people. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century opium had been used to treat many maladies and the effects were delirium. Hinduism has a similar affect on the people. He noted that religion deals with the caste system from a spiritual perspective; the social sciences focus on critical issues by collecting data. One question led to an exposition of development issues and structural violence. Another question sought to understand the effect of bakhti on the Hindu caste system. The bakhti movement spread from south India (beginning around the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE) to the north. The movement challenged the caste system by emphasizing social action and stressing devotional practices.

As this was exam time there weren't many classes being taught. We were invited to visit a course on "Development and Disaster Relief." The BHU students were interested in our assessment of US politics and some of our OSUM students responded, mostly citing concerns about the polarizing quality of US politics. One of the students in the Peace and Conflict Studies program seemed particularly well-informed (or maybe he was just more outgoing than others) and he voiced some concerns about the role of the US in promoting conflict worldwide. He also seemed quite well informed about conflicts in South Asia.



We left the Peace Institute, for lunch at the IT cafeteria, which is where Dr. Pandey regularly had lunch as a student. The menu had many choices at very reasonable prices.

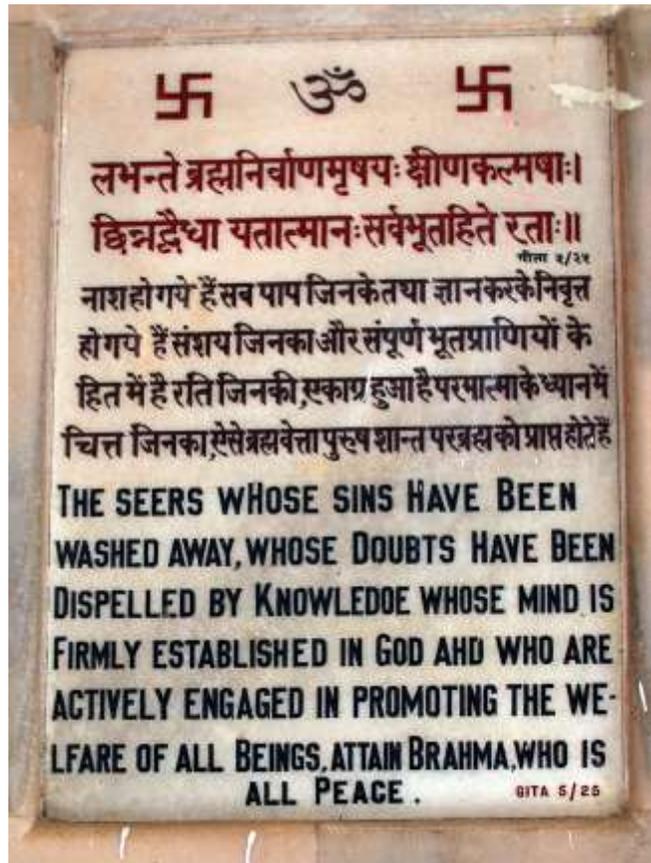
### **Pandey's Tour of BHU**

Prof. Pandey took us to the Applied Math Department at the Institute of Technology to meet some of his professors. We then walked over to the new Math building that will soon have a second storey added. Our tour included classroom facilities. Before we left we had a group faculty photo minus Pandey. Then we drove to the dorm

area that is organized by faculties and saw Pandey's room from the outside and spoke with the warden. We drove through the Faculty housing area and got to the post office before 5 pm, but the stamp window had already closed.

Three buildings are central to the BHU campus geographically and symbolically: College of Agriculture, library, and temple. These buildings are clustered together near the center of the campus. Symbolically, these buildings emphasize the importance of food for the body, knowledge for the intellect, and Hinduism for spirituality.

After viewing the three buildings from the outside, we walked through the Vishwanath Temple, a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. Built of white marble, the temple is open to people of all religions and castes. Inside, the walls of the temple are inscribed with all the verses of the *Bhagavad Gita* (songs of god), about 700 verses in all. The *Gita* is part of the *Mahabharata*, one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India. (The other epic is the *Rāmāyaṇa*.) Here it became apparent that Krishna's influence spread well beyond Vrindavan and Mathura. Krishna is the teacher in the *Gita* and among his important teachings inscribed on the walls of the temple are his warnings about the six evils that should be avoided: anger, delusion, greed, jealousy, lust, and pride. These evils can be barriers to the human quest for liberation from the life-death cycle or moksha.



### Temples

We left the BHU and went to a temple nearby: Sankat Mochan Hanuman (the monkey god) Temple. Sankat Mochan is Sanskrit for one who delivers people from trouble. (Hanuman did a pretty good job in light of the potential problem we had with a passport). This temple was the site of a terrorist bombing on 7 March 2006. Nearly simultaneously, another blast occurred at the Varanasi Railroad Station. The blasts injured more than 100 people and killed 28. The next day, a member of Lashkar-e-Toiba, a terrorist organization based in Pakistan, who was thought to be behind the incident, was shot dead by police

near Lucknow. We discussed this terrorist organization in class, the same organization that was responsible for the Mumbai attack.

Close by was the Tulsi Manas Mandir. This recently built temple is dedicated to Lord Ram with verses from the *Ramcharitamanasa* carved in the walls. The temple is built on the site where the *Ramcharitamanasa* was transcribed into Hindi by Tulsidas (1532-1623), who lived during the reign of Akbar. He translated the sacred sanskrit text *Ramayana* into Hindi. While the temple is dedicated to Lord Ram, images of the whole family – Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana – are on display.



We returned to the Haifa Hotel, and after a short rest we went shopping in the heart of the city, “Godaulia.”



### Shopping

We spent the evening shopping in the old bazaar. Pandey revealed his penchant for bargaining. He assisted everyone who wanted to buy something. We returned to the hotel by 9:30 and had a late supper. Two of Pandey’s old college chums joined us—both are in banking today.

Daniel Christie and Vladimir Steffel

**Draft Police Report**

March 24, 2010

To  
The Station Officer  
Bhedupur Police Station  
Varanasi, UP.

Dear Sir

I have ~~lost~~ <sup>missed</sup> my passport  
# 464441877 issued  
Jan 13, 2010, USA. I ~~was~~  
became aware today that I don't  
have my passport.

I am writing this report to  
ensure the local authorities are  
informed by this. Thank you.

~~Mr~~ Dustin Bechel  
Dustin Bechel

Official Police Report

March 24, 2010

To: The station officer  
Bhelupur Police Station  
Varanasi, UP  
Re: USA Passport

Dear Sir:

I have missed my passport #464441877 issued Jan 13, 2010, USA. I became aware today that I don't have my passport. I was wandering on the bank of Ganges and I assume I missed it at that time. Thank you

~~I am~~

Dustin O'Neil Beckel

Local Address

Hway Fa Hotel  
Aadighat  
Varanasi -  
UP.

Dustin Beckel March 24, 2010  
418 Avendale Ave  
Marion, OH 43302  
USA



## SARAH McNAMEE

We woke up at 5:30 am to head down to the Ganges and see the sunrise. Ellen, Amanda, Shonda, Dustin, Barbie, Dr. Pandey, and I left the hotel at 6:10am. Strolling through the streets of Banaras in the morning was amazing.



The city comes alive very early and we observed many residents out doing their routine morning chores. The Ganges River was breathtaking. People were sitting on blankets watching the sun rise with their families, several were bathing in the river, and we even saw a few people in the Ganges worshipping the sun. Dr. Pandey explained that they use the water of the Ganges as an offering. The sun is worshipped in the morning in much the same way as the Ganges is worshipped at night.

We arrived back at the hotel at 7:15 am. We brought our luggage down to the hotel lobby so that we could have the cars packed and ready to head towards Sarnath and Gorakhpur by the time breakfast was finished. Barbie and Ellen were feeling ill and Dustin discovered that his passport had been misplaced. We split up for breakfast. Shonda, Ellen, Barbie, and Dustin stayed at the hotel restaurant and had toast with strawberry jam. Dr. Steffel, Dr. Christie, Dr. Pandey, David, Amanda, and I went to experience the traditional Banaras breakfast at the Madhuvan Sweet House on Assi Ghat. The tables were not the cleanest. We were told that most locals order breakfast as “take-out”, and the staff was so busy filling to-go orders that they had little time to pay attention to the few tables in the restaurant itself. We had saffron yoghurt (a little like a custard), some jalebi (a pretzel-shaped, deep-fried, pancake-style batter dipped in honey), kachaudi with sabjee (a puri-like bread with cooked vegetables), chutney, and rasgulla (a white sponge ball with cheese water). After returning from the restaurant, I checked on Barbie and Dustin while David, Amanda, Shonda, Ellen, Dr. Pandey, and Dr. Christie went in search of the famous betel nut. Betel leaves, which come from the Paan tree, are wrapped around an areca nut and lime is added to create a small stimulant effect. Amanda, Dr. Christie, Dr. Pandey, and Shonda were brave enough to try it, despite the fact that it would stain their mouths red.

Several of us had enjoyed music played by a man selling handmade wooden flutes outside of the hotel. Right before we left the Haifa Hotel, several of the girls bought flutes for rs400. Dustin bartered with the man and only had to pay rs350 for his. He was very proud of his bargaining skills! We were finally in the vehicles and on the road to Sarnath at about 10:30 am.



We stopped at the police station to report Dustin's missing passport, as we were required to file a claim within 24 hours. While Dr. Steffel, Dr. Christie, Dr. Pandey, and David went to help him file the report, Barbie, Shonda, and I tried to get our postcards mailed. Unfortunately, the post office was closed for Rama Navami, the birthday of Lord Rama. Amanda, Ellen, Shonda, Barbie and I decided to look at a ladies shop that was in the vicinity of the police station, but after climbing several flights of stairs we discovered the shop was no longer in business. While walking back to the vans, Amanda lost her footing and slid into the sewer. After dousing her with our bottles of water and as much instant hand sanitizer as we all had in our backpacks, she exchanged her skirt for the jeans in her carry-on, changed her shoes, and was ready to go. The men finished their business at the police station a few minutes later and we were back on the road in no time.

We stopped at Sanskrit University (Central). The ground crew was burning leaves when we arrived. The smoke bothered our eyes, but it kept the mosquitoes away! The main university building was beautiful and has stood for



over 200 years. The school is similar to a seminary, where they teach the philosophy and the rituals of the *Vedas*, ancient Indian texts that were written in Sanskrit. With the exception of the linguistics faculty which teaches all the major world languages, every other class is taught in Sanskrit. The university boasts a faculty dedicated to teaching classical Indian traditions, like palmistry, astrology, and yoga. One of the more interesting aspects of the university was the sundial that is housed in back of the main building. We actually learned how to tell the time (it was 11:30 am when we were there) and when we checked Dr. Steffel's watch, the sundial was correct! We returned to the vehicles and headed northeast to Sarnath.

We pulled over at a service station so our drivers could fill the vans with petrol. Several Indian men flocked to the vehicle and stared at us. It was a little hard getting used to the constant attention. It felt like we were zoo animals on display.

We arrived in Sarnath to tour three important Buddhist sites: the museum, the ruins, and the temple. We visited the Archaeological Museum of Sarnath first. A guide from the Archaeological Society of India showed us around the museum which contains materials collected during the excavation of the ruins. The centerpiece of the museum is the Lion Capital of Asoka, a stunning piece commissioned by Emperor Asoka (272-232 BCE). The Lion Capital has four lions carved from sandstone, each one facing the four cardinal compass points. The museum housed several exhibits of relics from the Hindu and Jain faiths (the 11<sup>th</sup>

Jain Tirthankar was born in Sarnath), but most of the museum was dedicated to the Sarnath ruins and was, therefore, primarily Buddhist.



After leaving the museum, we walked through the ruins. The ruins were once the site of a thriving Buddhist community that stood near the site at Deer Park where Siddhartha Gautama gave his first sermon. There were seven monasteries that surrounded the original temple, dating from 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE until Afghan raiders plundered the site in the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE. The locals then covered their destroyed village with mud and it remained hidden until the King of

Varanasi pulled down the remaining temple stupa in 1794 to use for building material. British archaeologist Sir Alexander Cunningham rediscovered the site in the late 1800s and assembled a team to catalogue and preserve remaining artifacts.



We walked over to see the Dhamekh Stupa that also sits in Deer Park. Dhamekh is a commemorative stupa, but our guide advised that there were four different stupa types: votive, relic, commemorative, and corporal. Several local children followed us over to the Dhamekh Stupa, trying to sell us postcards, statues, and other little items until Dr. Pandey asked them to “scatter”. Our guide explained that it was a blessing to walk clockwise around the stupa, so we participated in that tradition.

Next, we visited Mulagandha Kutya Vihara, a Buddhist temple that is maintained by the Maha Bodhi Society of India. The interior of the temple features a gold Buddha statue and beautiful frescoes that were painted by Japanese artist Kosetsu Nosu. Nosu worked on the frescoes for three years, finally finishing the project in 1935. Adjacent to the temple was a little garden area that had thousands of Buddhist prayer flags waving in the breeze. Ellen was inundated with people who wanted to have their pictures taken with her. She



was gracious and posed for as many pictures as possible, but was eventually a little overwhelmed. It was also very hot, so we left the park with the intention of

acquiring several bottles of drinking water to rehydrate and resume our journey toward Gorakhpur.

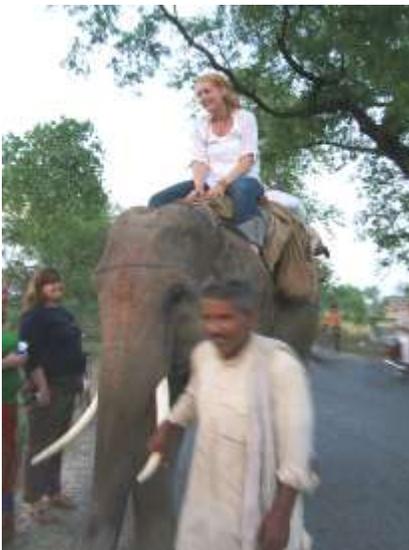
One of our van drivers advised us to stop at one more place before we left Sarnath. He drove us to the Vajra Vidha Institute, a Tibetan monastery where we



witnessed the lamas at prayer. The most prominent object in the room was a giant golden Buddha cloaked in bright yellow. We watched in awe as the lamas chanted and played several unique instruments as they meditated. The sight was breathtaking.

Spiritually refreshed, we returned to our vehicles and resumed our journey. Our next stop

was a little town along the road where Dr. Pandey got out of the van and got us snacks since we'd missed lunch. We had oranges, carrots, grapes, raw cashews, spicy nuts, smart chips, cashew cookies, and 50/50 biscuits. He even bought a pomegranate for Dustin to enjoy. It was about 3:20 pm and we still had 83km to drive to reach Gorakhpur. The people in the community were intrigued by us and huddled around the van. Barbie had a bag of lifesavers that she handed out to the children who came up to the windows to see us.

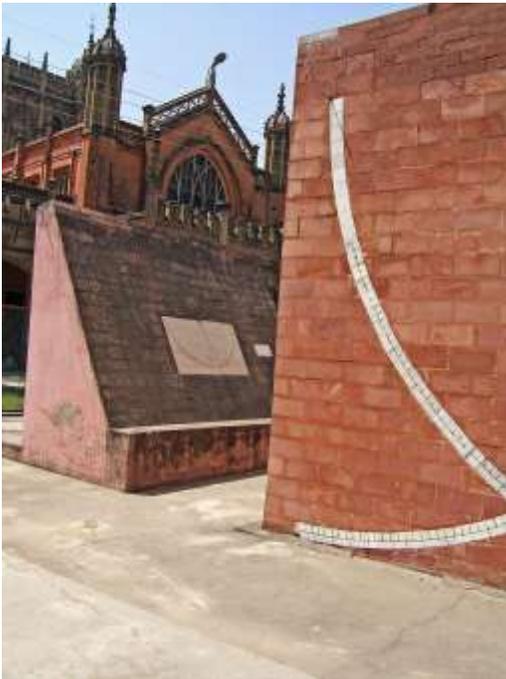


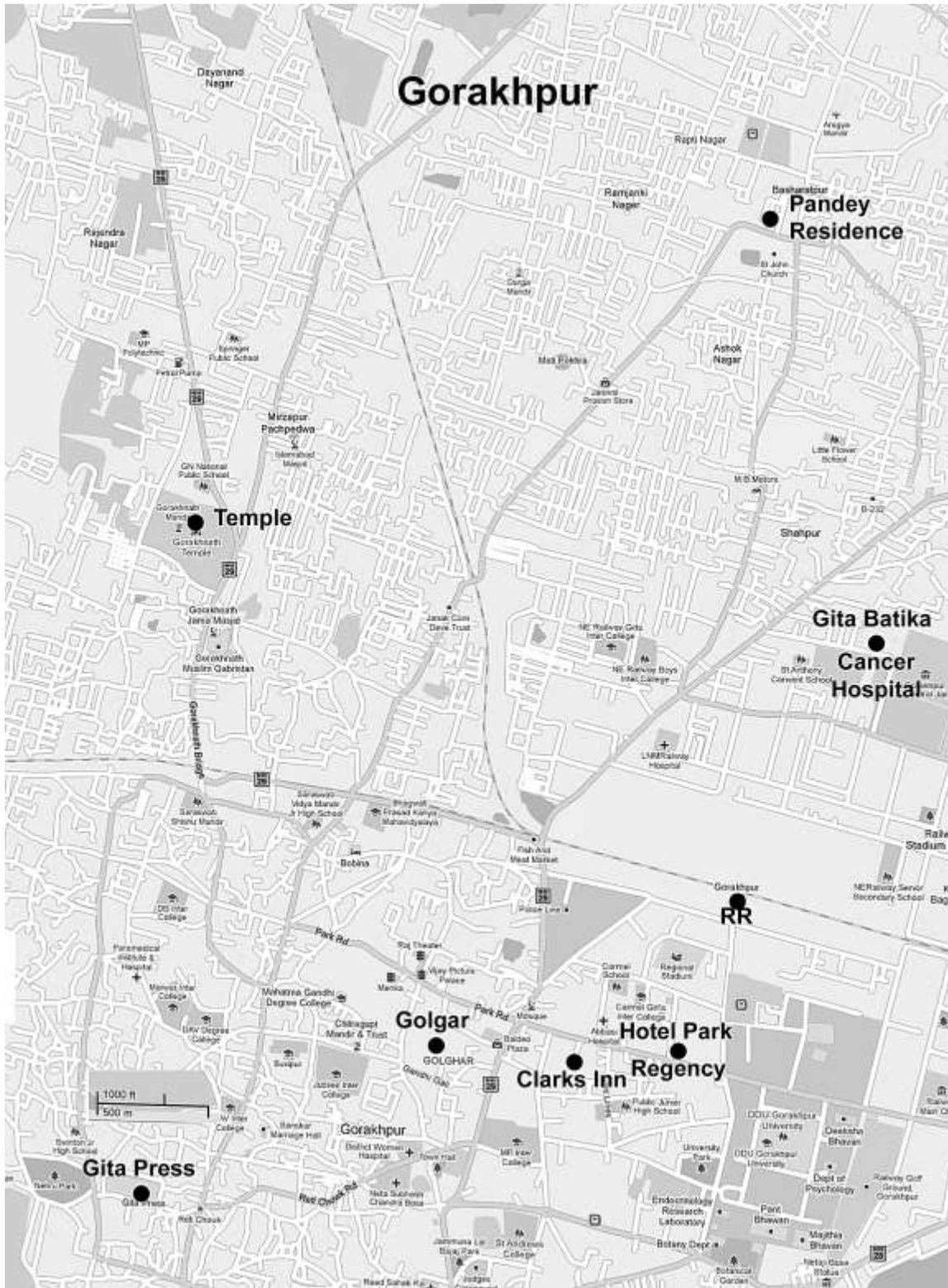
The scenery along the roadway was beautiful. We passed through miles of farmland and noticed many brick factories dotting the skyline. There were several villages with giant mosques in between them along the bumpy road. At about 6:15 pm, we spotted a man riding an elephant coming toward us and pulled over the vehicles to take pictures. He was gracious enough to stop and let us not only pet the elephant, but to ride her! Amanda was the first one to climb on and head down the road. She had dreamed of this moment and it was awesome to witness her realize her dream. By the time Ellen got to ride the elephant, traffic was starting to back up on the road and people were climbing out of their cars to watch us. Shonda and Dustin were the last of our

group to ride. By that time we had attracted quite a crowd.

We finally arrived at the Hotel Park Regency around 9:00 pm and were settled in our rooms by 10:00 pm. The Hotel Park Regency was not the nicest place we stayed. The rooms were filthy and the hotel staff was a little too friendly with the girls in our group. After a few scary incidents with a member of the hotel staff, Dr. Pandey advised us to tone down our natural “American friendliness” and explained that there were some cultural misunderstandings that had taken place. Barbie was running a high fever and went right to sleep after taking some medication while the rest of us went down to the hotel restaurant and ordered some dinner. Ellen wanted something familiar and ordered macaroni and cheese. It was a bit of a surprise when our meals were delivered and we discovered that macaroni and cheese came with fruit baked inside! We discussed finding a doctor for Barbie that evening, but we returned from dinner to find that her fever had finally broken. We were so tired when we returned back to our rooms that we went right to sleep so that we could be ready to explore Gorakhpur the next morning.

Sarah McNamee





## SARAH McNAMEE

When we awoke in Gorakhpur, Dr. Pandey stopped by to ask us to repack our things and be in the hotel lobby by 9:30 am so that we could switch hotels. We breathed a sigh of relief, repacked, and reloaded the vehicles. We then walked to Agarwal family home for breakfast. Dr. Pandey explained that he went to university with their son and that the Agarwals were like a second family to him. We received a very warm welcome and were introduced to the whole family before they served us breakfast. Our meal was delicious! It included fresh fruit, cucumber and tomato sandwiches, jalebi, kachaudi with sabjee, puri, and rasgulla. After breakfast, we were invited to tour the house.



The house was in the shape of a square with all of the residential rooms along the exterior and a large indoor courtyard in the center. Each floor contained two different family residences, each with a living room, several bedrooms, a shrine area, a bathroom, and small kitchen. The main kitchen was on the top floor and was a shared space where most of the cooking took place. The upper floor also contained a laundry room with a room for a servant. The rooms were open and inviting, sparsely decorated and very tidy.

After we said our goodbyes to the Agarwals, we checked into the Clarks Inn Grand Hotel and were relieved to find our new rooms were clean and the hotel staff seemed nice and professional. We were asked to leave our passports and Dustin's police report at the desk so that the staff could record them, but they quickly searched out Dr. Pandey when they discovered they had Dustin's passport but were missing Amanda's. When Amanda opened her bag, she found her own passport still inside and we figured out that Dustin had given his to her in Varanasi when he asked her to carry his things and he just forgot to retrieve it. All the world travelers were back on track!

We climbed in the vans and headed for the Hanuman Prasad Podder Cancer Hospital (Gita Batika). We met with the hospital director, Umesh Singhania, who gave us an overview of the facilities and then took us on a tour of the treatment rooms and wards. The hospital had two rooms reserved for radiation therapy and only two full-time physicians on staff. We walked past many patients in the waiting room, but we were assured that all of them would be seen by a



physician by 3:00 pm. Dr. Singhania told us that the hospital treated over 4,000 new patients per year and that over 70% of their patients enter the hospital with stage IV cancers. There were guesthouses available on the campus for dependents of terminally ill patients so that families could spend time with their dying loved ones. He also advised us that the most common cancers for men in the area were gall bladder and prostate cancer and that most of the women were being treated for uterine cancer. The hospital was in one of the poorest areas of the region, which also has one of the lowest literacy rates in Uttar Pradesh. People are not turned away for their inability to pay, so the hospital relies heavily on donations.

Dr. Singhania informed us that most people don't seek treatment until they are too ill to work or participate in their daily activities, so cancer survival rates are very low. Most women do not have access to a female physician and the hospital does not currently have one on staff, making women less likely to seek medical attention in an earlier stage of the disease. The hospital has limited resources, making it impossible to afford new equipment, larger facilities, or more full-time staff members. We were all touched by this experience and left Hanuman committed to finding ways to help once we returned home.

Our next stop was Dr. Pandey's house in Gorakhpur. The house was rented, but the tenants were out for the day and we had the opportunity to look around inside. He had fun showing off his very large basement and we went up to the roof so that he could point out the water tanks that line the rooftops of the homes nearby. His home was built in a Christian neighborhood and we noticed how peaceful and quiet it was compared to the hustle and bustle of the main city.

At 2:30 pm, we found ourselves at the Gorakhnath Temple. The complex was quite large and had beautiful gardens full of flowers that were lined with



ashoka trees. On our way into the temple, Dr. Pandey bent down and touched the steps. He explained to us that this is a custom that lets the deity know, "I am coming to your home, please bless me", in much the same way that the faithful ring bells at the other temples we visited. We then walked through the main temple and were given yellow and red wristbands after making an offering. We also learned the story behind this particular

temple, said to commemorate Gorakhnath, the fourth or fifth Amar Yogi. We visited the statue of the sleeping Bheem (an avatar of Hanuman) and concluded our visit at the temple's pristine pool.

We stopped to have lunch at the Chowdhry Sweet House, where half the group ordered traditional Indian cuisine and half ordered American cuisine. Most of us ordered the “cold coffee”, a delightful coffee and ice cream drink that was the hit of our large, family-style table. The Chowdhry Sweet House sat in the middle of a well-trafficked street, making the restaurant very busy and an interesting place for us to observe other diners.

After lunch, we went shopping at the textile shop at the Gita Press. The



shop had sheets, tablecloths, fabric, saris, and other goods in every color imaginable. There was a men’s shop across the hall that carried clothing and even had tailoring available. We spent quite a bit of time and rupees shopping for souvenirs before touring the

actual printing rooms of the Gita press. The printing room was quite impressive, with gigantic machines and huge rolls of paper. Printing is done in a four-step color process. Each print is cycled through four separate machines, each of which lay down a separate color. It was interesting to see each step of the printing process, as well as the end result.



We also toured the Gita Press Gallery, a huge room that houses pictures that were painted specifically for use as templates at the Gita Press. We only had a few minutes to look around before the lights went out, but they were quickly restored and we had fun looking at the beautiful artwork. Our guide, Ishwar Patawari, told us that four in-house artists were originally commissioned to produce these pictures to illustrate religious pamphlets in 1923, and by 1954 the gallery had over



1500. We stopped at the Gita Press book store where the girls bought day planners and Dr. Pandey bought us all three books: *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā*, *Real Love*, and *What is Dharma? What is God?*

Shailendra Kumar Rai, the sub-inspector who accompanied us in Gorakhpur, was asked to bring us to



the home of the Deputy Inspector General of Police's home for refreshments. The DIG's house was within the security complex that the police station is housed in. We were welcomed by DIG Asim Arun and served coffee, tea, sodas, and sweets. Our discussion with him was one of the most informative and educational parts of our trip. He asked Dr. Pandey, Dr. Steffel, and Dr. Christie about pursuing graduate studies in the United States, but the discussion soon shifted and we were invited to ask questions.

We inquired about his job and the types of issues that the Gorakhpur police usually find themselves dealing with. He advised us that counseling psychologists are rare and that most people visit the local police stations to resolve all kinds of issues that the officers aren't particularly trained to deal with, including rape and domestic violence. He laughed when we expressed interest in the traffic patterns and explained that the only rule is to "Keep Left". He said that India has the highest accident rate in the world, partially due to the fact that there are about 500 new (and not always trained) drivers added to the already congested roadways each day. He informed us that his officers are kept busy investigating illegal liquor (bootlegging) and vehicle theft. When asked if the police stations throughout India had access to a universal database, he explained that the Indian government is working on connecting them all by December 2010 as well as implementing a universal identification card that would be voluntary for citizens, but necessary for employment in government positions or loans. He told us that India has a long judicial process and that it can take up to eight years for a case to be resolved. We also discussed the Muslim/Hindu issues that are affecting the country, the types of crimes that women are participating in (human trafficking, drug peddling, decoys for theft, and shoplifting), dowry deaths, and female feticide. Our time with him was brought to a close when he had another matter that needed his attention. He did provide us with his e-mail and asked us to keep in contact with him (asimarun@hotmail.com) as he walked us out.

We returned to the Clarks Inn for a brief five minutes and then got back in the vehicles to run some late errands before the shops closed. Barbie, Ellen, and I shopped for fabric in the market while Dr. Christie, David, and Dustin kept watch over us. Dr. Pandey, Dr. Steffel, Amanda, and Shonda went in search of a tailor to fit Amanda's sari and stitch the handle back on her bag, as well as a pharmacy to get Dustin some penicillin for his mouth and malarone tablets. Malarone was not available and Amanda didn't get the sari fitted, but the bag was fixed and penicillin was acquired. By the time we returned to the hotel, it was 10 pm. Dr. Christie skipped dinner with the group to have some quiet time and the rest of us had dinner in the hotel restaurant. It was a smorgasbord of choices in the form of a buffet line. After a light meal, we made some phone calls home and turned in for the night.



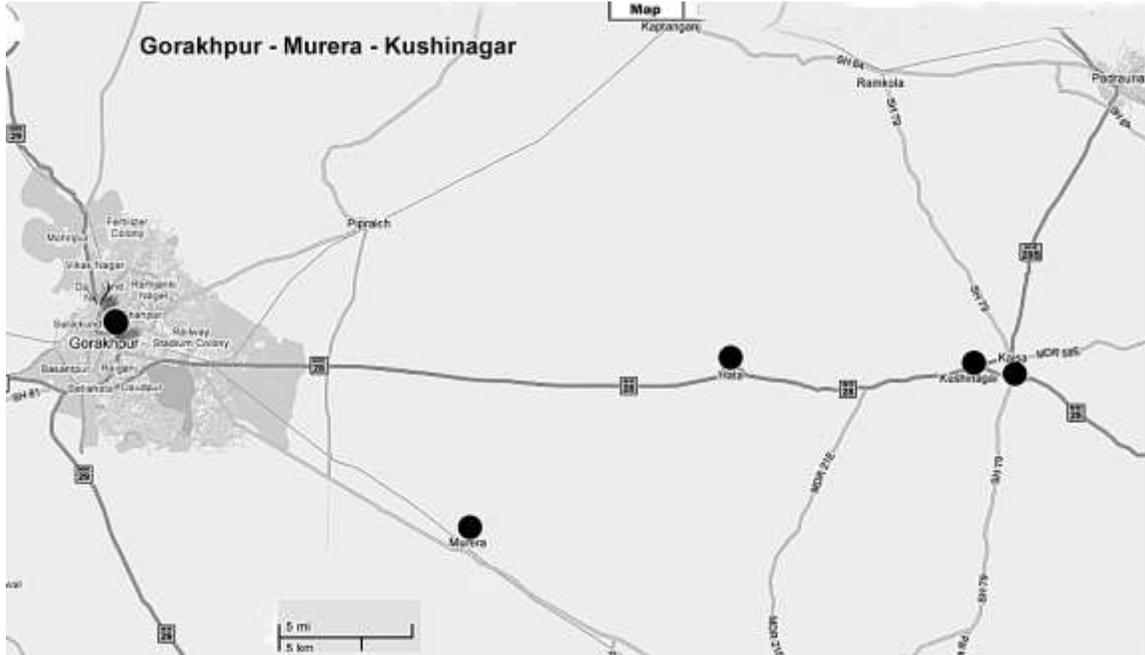
Shiva



Vishnu

Sarah McNamee

## ELLEN GRAHAM



## Murera

The drive on the back roads to the of village Murera was undoubtedly a bumpy one. At one point our driver had a rough time making a hill and must have cracked his bumper. To no surprise he was rather relaxed about the whole ordeal. We didn't realize until the later that day that the bumper was broken. We stopped on the side of the road and a gentlemen and a young child repaired it. I believe it cost 40 rupees or less than one dollar to fix, and took around ten minutes! Quite a difference from the car service we're used to.

In the countryside on the way to Murera we saw Muslim villages with mosque minarets dotting the skyline. As we were entering the village we stopped on the side of the road to observe several Hindu women performing a ceremony at the Durga shrine.



When we arrived at Balram Pandey's house we were welcomed by almost the whole village! People of all ages surrounded us. Dr. Pandey had mentioned that many of his fellow villagers had never been exposed to westerners before. I can only imagine what they thought of this new experience. We met Pandey's father, brother, maternal uncle,

and many others I cannot remember. The women took us girls inside the house to a place that opened on the inner courtyard. A welcoming tradition was

performed by a barber woman who washed and massaged our feet, trimmed our toenails, and painted our feet with red color. We all expressed our gratitude for welcoming us into the home with a beautiful cultural tradition.



While we had our feet washed and decorated, Dr. Steffel handed out OSU pencils and pens to the village girls on the other side of the courtyard. When we went back out to the front porch David was distributing lots of rings and noticed that some kids would take rings and again stay in the line to receive another one.

There was a picture in their home of Dr. Pandey's uncle, Gorakh Pradesh Pandey. He had been a Mao Naxolite who tried to settle land and distribute it among poor families. Dr. Pandey had also said that his uncle had believed in love before marriage and was not a believer of arranged marriage. He was a very talented poet, and unfortunately committed suicide at a young age.

The hospitality was incredible. Dr. Pandey's maternal aunt prepared lunch for us and the food was outstanding! We all ate outside and it was a tad overwhelming. It seemed as if the whole village was surrounding us. A few times Dr. Pandey and his brother had to yell at them to back away from the porch. After we ate we took a tour of the village. Umbrellas were handed to us by the children to protect us from the heat. The children were interested in our every move. It was difficult because I wanted to talk to them, but the only way we could communicate was through smiles and laughter—when in doubt smile 😊.

Dr. Pandey gave us a tour of the village. We walked through the section where the business class families lived, then the Dalits quarter (who used to be known as untouchables), and on to the Muslim and Brahmin quarters. We noticed that Muslims and Brahmins live next to each other but on opposite sides of a twelve-foot wide road. The village has an elementary and a middle school, several temples, and a mosque.

Throughout our walk through the village we saw many goats and cows. To my surprise we stumbled upon a small plot of marijuana, which is used by villagers for medicinal purposes. Shonda and Dustin were led on their own V.I.P. tour. A boy took them around the village and gave them some stalks of sugar

cane. Dustin had eaten the entire stalk before we left! We visited Pandey's house in the village where he lived until the age of 15, and saw a tree that his wife Kamla planted in the back yard when she moved there in 1975.

When we returned back to his uncle's house the girls went back inside, while the boys went in another room off the porch. The women gave the girls amazing hand made bags



decorated with deer, lions, and peacocks. We were also given bindi's, a coconut, and a washcloth. The women had prepared the girls yogurt for good luck. We all took tiny bites, because the flavor was rather pungent. Barbie was a trooper and ate quite a bit of the yogurt. The men received scarves. Dr. Steffel gave three OSU bags to Balram and others for their hospitality and care that they provided during that warm morning. Two girls were photographed with all the ladies.



people living there.

## Kushinagar

We stopped at the Lotus Nikko hotel to re-hydrate and to meet his Kamla's brother's oldest son, his wife, and his daughter. The daughter had just been engaged and we (us girls 😊) talked to her about her feelings about getting married. She seemed very excited, and a little nervous about moving in with the grooms's family.

Shortly after our stop at the hotel we drove down the street to the Ramabhar Stupa, the site where Buddha was cremated and his ashes were stored temporarily. Near the stupa there was a ruin of a meditation center that



was destroyed by Muslims in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. We met with three newspapers' reporters and were interviewed about our experience in India. Then we all walked



around the stupa for Buddha's blessing. The next stop was the Japanese Buddhist temple that was built in 1982 that contains the Ashta Dhatu statue of Buddha, which is made from eight metals. We then went to the Matha Kuar Shrine, which was where Buddha gave his last sermon. The shrine contains a 11 foot statue of Buddha sitting – it was

carved from a single stone block and is 1,000 years old. Surrounding the shrine were the excavated foundations of what used to be a monastery that had been destroyed by Muslims in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Our final stop was to the Mahaparinirvana Stupa and Temple. The stupa contains Buddha's ashes. The temple exhibits the 20 foot golden statue of Buddha laying down facing west. The statue symbolizes Buddha's final breath. Buddha attained nirvana during a full moon at the age of 80 in 483 B.C. We lingered here and many participated in the ceremony taking place.



Japanese Buddhist Temple



Ashta Dhatu statue of Buddha



Mahaparinirvana Temple

From Kushinagar we went to Kasia, Kamla's home and were greeted by her family members and had soft drink. From there we drove towards Gorakhpur and stopped in Hata to get the bumper fixed. While the bumper was being repaired, we got out for a cigarette and lots of people came to see us. Dr.

Pandey mentioned that they were surprised to see us smoking because girls in India don't smoke. After the bumper was repaired for only 40 rupees (about \$1) and the tire filled for 10 rupees (about 25 cents), we continued our journey to Gorakhpur. Finally we arrived in Gorakhpur, had dinner at the Clarks Inn, and then went to the train station.

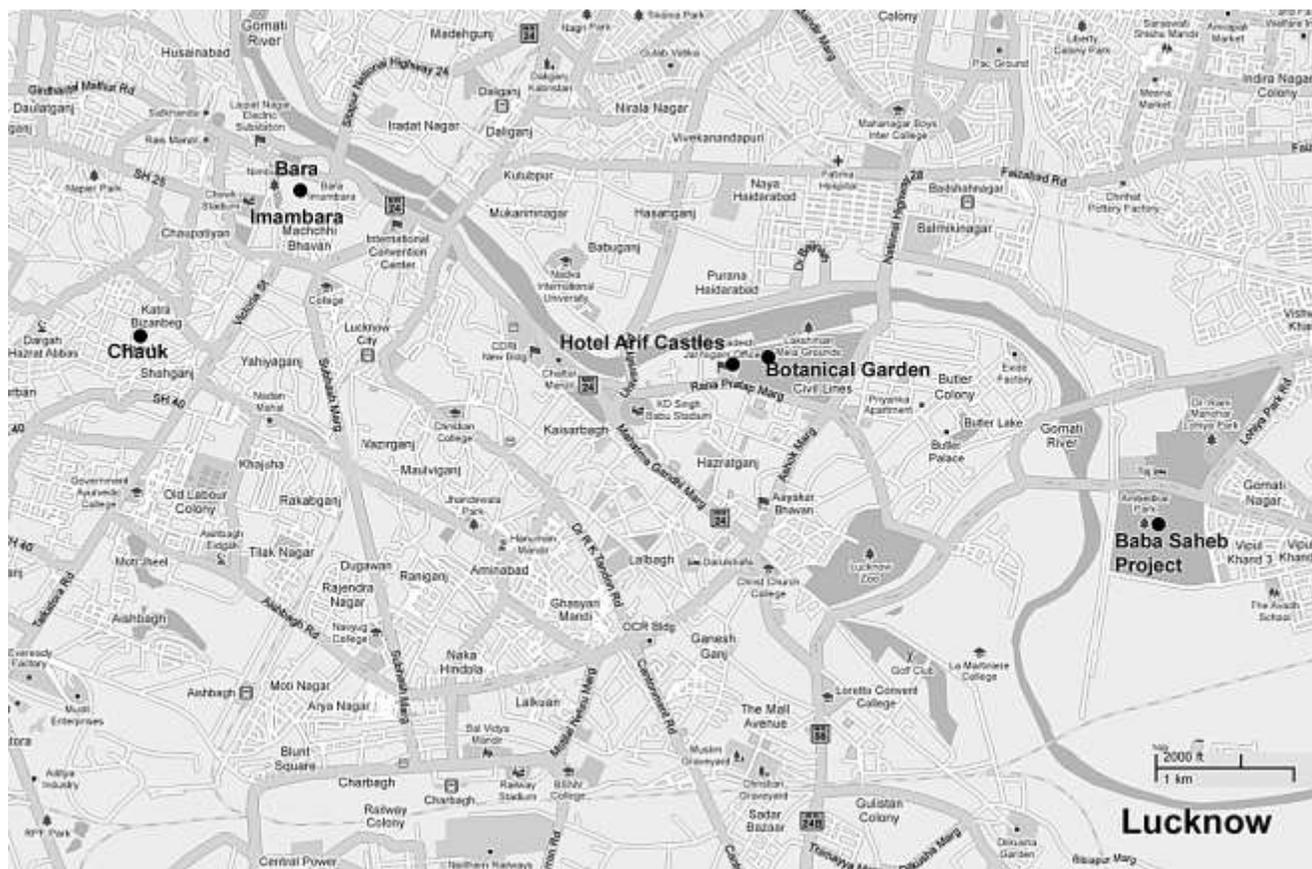
### **Night train to Lucknow**

The train ride was rather uneventful, and consisted of much needed sleep for the whole crew. I believe Dustin had a rough time sleeping because the side beds weren't long enough for his legs. Barbie was still in relatively bad shape and was coughing an awful lot. Vlady and Dave were also feeling congested the next day probably because of bad air circulation. Luckily I was able to sleep soundly on the train. We all were awakened abruptly because we had arrived in Lucknow. The conductor or TTE (Traveling Ticket Examiner) hollered in Hindi for us to wake up and get the heck off the train, (well at least that is how I translated it).

Ellen Graham



## DAVID SNYDER



Lucknow is a city of 1,917,000 people. It is 321 miles east of Delhi and is the capital of Uttar Pradesh. As the Mughal Empire disintegrated and independent states were established, the city came to prominence when the fourth Nawab of Avadh, Asaf-ud-Daula, moved his capital there. Nawabs were provincial governors or viceroys and were renowned for their refined and extravagant life styles and under them music and dance flourished and many buildings were built. Lucknow was the cradle of Hindu-Muslim-Sikh symbiosis. The language spoken is a combination of Urdu and Hindi that is written in Devanagari script. Urdu is also spoken in Pakistan.

The train from Gorakhpur to Lucknow arrived at 6:00 am and we took one of the least congested rides of our trip to the Hotel Arif Castles where we would be based for the day. Several of our group preferred to rest for awhile before continuing our sightseeing, but since I had fallen asleep early on the train and was snoring before the conversations below me were finished, I felt rested and went exploring on my own.

Just outside the hotel were a number of young men in Muslim dress apparently heading for their madrasa. One of them made a point of talking to me. Beyond exchanging names and him asking my country I was pretty much unable to communicate. He seemed to want to accompany me but with the lack of understanding and my limited time I indicated that it was more important for him to go on to school.

Further along, colorful banners with elephants were hanging over the street, speakers were blaring, and chairs were being set up. I had happened on the site where a political meeting of the Bahujan Samaj Party was to be held. It happened that Dr. Pandey's sister, Urmila Dwivedi, was in the area because of the meeting as well as to visit her brother. She is president of the Samajawadi (Socialist) Party at the district level. It was very nice meeting her.



Continuing on my walk, the road paralleled the Gomti River, where clothes were being washed in three places by thrashing them down again and again on the rocks and water and then spreading them on the grass to dry. I eventually stumbled on to the National Botanical Garden where I spent a short time with the plants and with people who were exercising by walking or running in the less hot morning air. There were also some ruins and a mosque, and on the side away from the river there was a

cramped residential area composed of Hindus and Muslims.

Upon returning to the hotel, I joined the others for breakfast and then we proceeded in the vehicles to our selected sights. Although we did not stop, we were able to see the Residency. It was an exclusive British enclave that was protected by fortifications and during the uprising in 1857 all the British citizens took refuge there from a five month long sepoy siege. Almost 2000 people died from bullet wounds, cholera, and typhoid. The bravery and tenacity shown by the occupants became one of the rallying points for British Imperialism.



Our first stop of the day was at the Bara Imambara. An imambara is a ceremonial hall used during Muharram, a commemoration of the martyrdom at Karbala, Iraq of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson, Iman Hussain. The 1783 building was essentially a ten year famine relief project of Asaf-ud-Duala, the fourth Nawab Waizir of Awadh. It employed a group of builders during the day and a group of dismantlers at night. The Bara Imambara's main room is a large vaulted chamber containing the tomb of Asaf-ud-Daula. At fifty by sixteen meters and over fifteen meters

high, it has no beams supporting the ceiling, has no European elements, and uses no iron. It is one of the largest such arched constructions in the world. There are eight surrounding rooms of different roof heights which permitted the space above to be reconstructed as a three-dimensional labyrinth (*bhulbhulaiya*) with interconnecting passages through 489 identical doors. The labyrinth came about unintentionally to support the weight of the building. There are also tunnels below the building which were purported to lead to other cities, including Delhi, and contained hidden treasures. They were closed in 1957 over fears of disappearances and to eliminate anti-social behavior.



We entered the Bara Imambara complex through the lavishly decorated fifty-nine foot high west entrance called the

Rumi Darwaza (door) and walked through another gate into a well landscaped garden. To our right was the beautiful Asfi Mosque and to the left a row of cloisters which conceal a stepwell. Straight ahead inside the main building our guide showed us beautiful crystal chandeliers collected from mosques in various parts of the world. We were shown an unattached stairway used to reach a silver chair from which the Iman delivers a message at Ramadan. There was a large portrait of Muhammad Ali



Shaw, the third King of Awadh. We saw a picture of the pigeon used to send a message to Iman Hussain at Karbala from his ill daughter who had been left behind in Medina that was made of words from a message. In another frame there were the words of the Koran written so small that they had to be read with a magnifying glass.

Another room contained a twenty foot high replica of Imman Hussain's tomb made of colored paper and bamboo called a *tazi*. It is carried on men's shoulders for processions during the ten days of Muharram. Both Muslims and Hindus contribute money, materials, and labor to the construction and carrying of the *tazi*. However, although Muslim kings built some Hindu temples, the opposite is not true. A mosque built or financed in any way by non-Muslims would not be acceptable for worship to the Muslims.

In yet another room we saw the grave of Nawab Asaf-ud-daula and a shrine used by Muslims who are unable to take the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudia



Arabia. There was also a beautiful white tazi carved in filigree from elephant tusks. We saw the round women's hall and the India hall with its watermelon design ceiling and heard the echo.

The highlight had to be the labyrinth of passages hidden between the ceilings and the roof of the building. Up and down, in and out, round and round, another passage, another opening to a room or to the outside and the balconies crossing along the walls of the rooms right next to the ceiling. Next we arrived on the large, high, flat roof with spectacular views and architecture in all directions. The kid in me wanted to play hide and seek, but the adult knew that I would be hopelessly lost for hours and that even

Marco Polo would be of no help. Finally as we started out, our guide challenged us to pick the right doorways to get us out in forty-five steps. We failed almost immediately, and he led us out via the foretold forty-five steps.



Our next stop was at the Baba Saheb Park. Its formal name is Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Samajik Parivartan Sthal. The park is a project of Chief Minister Mayawati of Uttar Pradesh. It celebrates dalits and Dr.



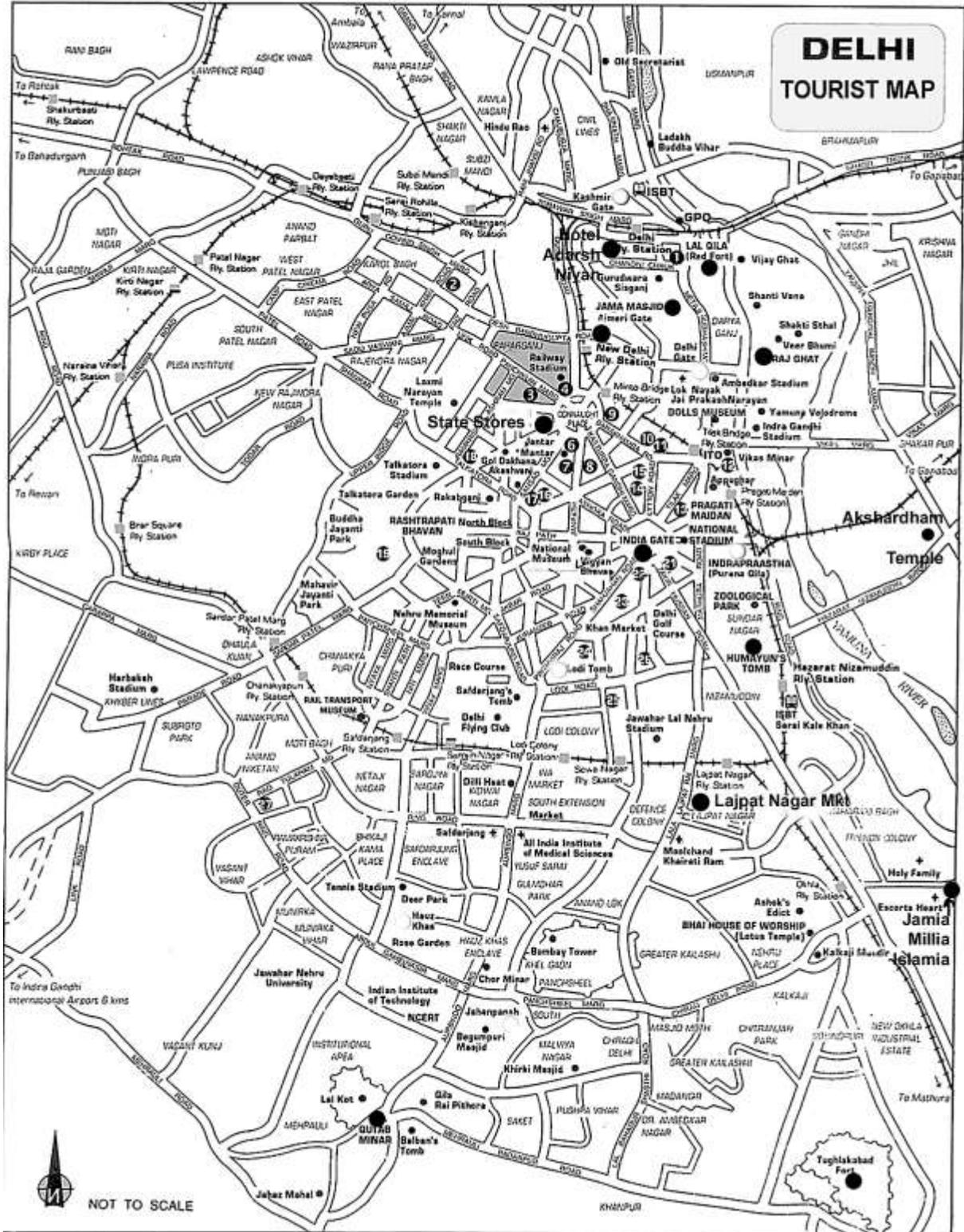
Ambedkar, who was born an untouchable. He graduated from Bombay University and received a scholarship to study in the United States and excelled in economics, but his first published work was on the caste system. He was a patriot and fought for the oppressed, women and the poor. He favored giving up traditional religious values and adopted Buddhism in which the caste system did not exist. Many dalits followed his example.

The Baba Saheb Park complex now covers 100 acres, has two fountains that cost 30,000,000 rupees, a court of sixty red sandstone elephants each costing 6,500,000 rupees, ten marble elephants at the main dome and entrances that cost 340,000,000 rupees, and a surrounding red sandstone boundary wall that is thirty-five kilometers long at a cost of 110,000 rupees per meter. The estimated total cost of 12 billion rupees would equal \$269,835,130. The original plan was for twenty-eight acre park that would cost ninety million rupees. There is much criticism as Chief Minister Mayawati chooses to spend so lavishly on such projects glorifying herself and other dalit reformers while people in the U.P. are dying by the hundreds from floods, Japanese encephalitis and malaria. The project is also criticized because the elephant is the symbol of Madame Matawati's B.S.P. supporters and the use of elephants in the projects promotes that party especially among the illiterate. The sight is quite a beautiful expanse, but when we were there it was also quite, quite empty.



We next visited a shop that specialized in the sale of chikankari, fine muslin delicately embroidered with thread work. Many of our group made purchases of this handicraft. We continued to Lucknow's main market situated in the chowk which is a name for the city's atmospheric old quarter. We were allowed to roam freely through the shops and stalls bargaining and buying freely. After a dinner at the city's finest kabob restaurant we picked up our luggage at the hotel and headed for the train station where we were installed in our "second class A C" cabins aboard the "Lucknow Mail" train for our overnight trip to Delhi.

David Snyder



## AMANDA WILLIS

We arrived at the New Delhi Train Station early in the morning and drove to our hotel which is located in Old Delhi. Our driver seemed like a hot-headed gigolo with his shiny snakeskin shirt and hot pants. He was getting frustrated because he didn't know exactly how to get to the hotel and kept having to turn around to find the place. So I was entertained by his temperament, most of our drivers before seemed pretty easy going, but I feel this guy would fit right-in in America. Old Delhi seemed like another bustling city much like Varanasi. There was lots of commotion and flowers on the streets replete with its fair share of car jams and buildings.

Our hotel, Hotel Adarsh Nivas, was through an alley and up some steep marble stairs. Ellen, Sarah, and I shared a room on the third floor. The accommodations were sufficient and I immediately crashed on the bed for what seemed like an hour. This day for me was a rough one, as I was feeling exhausted. I thought, all right, here it comes, the crash and burn. And then someone kindly informed me that I was the diarist of the day. So I got my head together after drinking some coffee and eating toast.

We drove by the Red Fort which lies along the Yamuna River. It was massive and clearly a place of importance back in its day. I believe this was the "Xerox Copy" of the one in Agra that Pandey described. Across from the Fort was a place he said was called "Bloody Gate" where thousands of Hindus were murdered and thrown onto the street during some takeover. Looking at that small building in the middle of the road gave me a flashback vision to what that might have been like to see the result of this kind of human violence and brutality.

We ventured to the Lotus Temple, which unfortunately was closed. We were just glad that we weren't getting in the mile-long line that led to another temple. That line made us all a little nervous. So then we marched on to a little place they call Qutb Minar, which was also deemed a World Heritage Site. The



enormous tower was beautiful and built in 1193. There were numerous buildings around the tower that were also beautifully constructed. I was thoroughly entertained by the airplanes whizzing by the tower and thought that the people on the plane had a pretty cool sight below them. Pandey was at-it-again when he demonstrated the tastiness of another plant, this one being the Neem tree, whose leaves tasted like oniony cilantro. It was a beautiful tree that provided us some nice shade and place to sit underneath. The Neem tree is said to treat 40 different diseases and is often called the "Village

Pharmacy". I liked our tour guide; he made the tour short and sweet and spoke very clear English. He took us to a shop on the other side of the complex, which sold handicraft items that were made by incarcerated men in India. The prices were a bit steep, but I purchased a ring that I thought was pretty funky. We had to talk Ellen out of buying the comforter that she had her heart set on, because they were asking a pretty rupee for it. Pandey reassured us that we would find some good shopping later on in New Delhi. Then we went to view the Parliament, were hassled a bit by the security, and soon left.

New Delhi's Lajapat Nagar provided a very nice shopping area where we were turned loose for an hour or so. Ellen and I did some major power-shopping and tried really hard to wheel and deal, especially Ellen. I applauded her for her persistence but one guy selling blouses was stone-cold and uncompromising. We battled the crowd, found the sought-after burlap bags, and all sorts of neat things to take back to friends and family. We met back with the rest of the group with 3 minutes to spare and moved on to our next stop, India Gate.

It was beginning to get dark and as we approached the India Gate, we could see the yellow glow of this monument. It is a World War One memorial commemorating the 90,000 soldiers who fought for the British Indian Empire. As we got closer, the traffic became heavier and I was surprised at how many people were there. The atmosphere was like the Fourth of July, complete with light-up toys being thrown in the air, men blowing bubbles, and vendors selling food everywhere. We mingled around for a little while and then made our way back to the van. Shonda and I spotted a guy sleeping on top of his van which cracked us up. Then we realized that we were going the wrong way, but eventually found the cars.



After a long day of buzzing around we had worked up an appetite and so we all went to a famous restaurant called Haldiram. It was nuts in there. We went to the top dining floor and so we had to devise a food-ordering game plan. My serving skills were put to the test when I was nominated to take everybody's order and go down to the first floor to order it all with Pandey's brother-in-law. I thought, 'Oh this will be easy, I do it everyday at work.' I have to say that the madness in this restaurant was a little overwhelming with people everywhere pushing their way through and then auctioning off the food at the counter. I can usually handle a lot of chaos but this was something else. One by one we got everybody's food, chowed it down, chatted, and then left. All of our bags from

the shopping frenzy were placed in one of the vans and we walked maybe a half mile back to the hotel. It felt good to walk off the food and anxiety, and nevertheless it was another great day in India.

Amanda Willis



DUSTIN BECKEL, *et al.*

This was a day spent touring and shopping. This also was a day of successes and frustrations.

The day started like most days of the tour, riding in the van on the busy streets of India. As we drove down the street, our vans stopped at a red light and



we were able to see a cop arguing with a local over not having his papers. From what we saw and heard, bribes are very common in such situations and that is how this case ended as well.

Our first stop was the Raj Ghat, where the republic's leaders are buried. We visited Mahamat Gandhi's memorial site, where he was cremated and his ashes buried. Nearby one can view burial memorials of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and her son, Rajiv Gandhi.

We then drove down ceremonial avenue Rajpath past the Presidential Palace, Secretariat Buildings, and Parliament.

The next stop was the Humayun's Tomb. Humayun was the Mughal Emperor from 1508 to 1556 and consolidated control over northern India and Afghanistan. He also introduced Persian art,



architecture, language and literature to India. One of the best examples of the Persian style is his tomb, which is a precursor of the Taj Mahal. Also while we were there we stopped into the Isa Khan Tomb. These tombs are constructed from white marble, black marble, and sand stone. One can easily see a series of lotus flowers around the tombs, which represent Hinduism.

As the group was finishing the tour of the tombs, Ellen stepped onto a small platform and a lady with a stick rushed into the area out of nowhere and forced us out of the room.

The highlight of the day was shopping at the Palika Bazaar in Connaught Circle. After this excursion we went to the Jama Masjid (Muslim mosque). Our two vans arrived at different gates. What a mix-up. Our driver contacted the other van and realized that he had better stay with us until Pandey arrived. We arrived about 4:30 pm, which was too late to enter the mosque because of afternoon prayer. Finally, Pandey took David, Dan, and Sarah to the other entrance via an outside path. David wanted to roam the markets of neighboring Chandni Chowk and visit the Sikh and Janist temples nearby. Then we would all meet at the gate of the Red Fort at 8:00 for a *son et lumineare* show in English. Barbie and Vlady went back to the Advarsh Nivas Hotel.



Towards the end of the day as I sat in the van waiting for one of the group leaders, I saw a man and a woman ride up on a bike and the man on the bike started yelling to get what appeared to be one of his friend's attention. The man and woman both got off the bike and the man left his wife to act as a human bike rest while he talked to his friend.

It turned out that on Tuesday's the Red Fort was closed so there was no *son et lumineare*. Our group returned to the hotel, re-grouped, and went out to eat. About 10 p.m. Pandey and all the students walked to a family house to have their hands painted with intricate designs – this also known as henna. The women's henna would last until we got back to Ohio. Dustin got a male version that was very simple but elegant. The woman who painted the henna was a middle school teacher. It took about three hours to decorate the six of us. At 1 a.m. it was scary to walk, but family members walked with us to the hotel.

Dustin Beckel, *et al.*

## DANIEL CHRISTIE and VLADIMIR STEFFEL

After breakfast we checked out of the hotel, loaded our luggage into the vans, and drove to Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), one of India's central universities. We were greeted by Prof. Waheeda Khan and by Shri Prakash, Professor and Director of the Academy of Third World Studies. Gathered were a number of JMI



faculty and students, as well as our group. Prof. Khan had invited our group to the university and was a gracious host. She is an old friend and colleague of Prof. Christie and shares an interest in the psychology of peace and conflict. During the introductions it became obvious that JMI had students from Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan, and Kenya. Because of technical difficulties

the film on JMI was delayed. Instead Prof. Christie gave his lecture.

Prof. Christie presented "Peace Psychology Around the World." It focused on psychological features of peacebuilding in various parts of the world with emphasis on India. He raised the question: what are the ways to prevent violence? Among the approaches he suggested were conflict management, violence de-escalation, and post-violence peacebuilding. He emphasized the importance of pursuing both negative and positive forms of peace, that is, preventing direct forms of violence and promoting the reduction of indirect forms of violence (i.e., structural violence). Gandhi pursued both nonviolence (negative peace) and social justice (positive peace), what some scholars and activists have referred to as "peace by peaceful means." The discussion was lively. One professor expressed his pleasure with the excellent presentation of the concept; however, he suggested that we need to take into account the reasons for it, and he thought that it was in the mind. One student suggested that Americans make peace inside the U.S. before they go outside. Another student suggested that Americans should study war psychology first and look at their own violent history. At the time of our session, the US was stepping up military efforts in nearby Afghanistan and the climate seemed to reflect this



tension. Nonetheless, our hosts were gracious and everyone conducted themselves in a civil way.

After the discussion we viewed two films that presented the history and objectives of JMI. The films seemed long to our travel-weary OSUM explorers. But stepping back a bit, I remembered that this is just what we should expect from our Indian hosts who are accustomed to sitting in the classroom and listening and taking notes in a very disciplined way. Following formal introductions, we had a rather long session in which we were expected to listen and learn. After the session, Prof. Khan had arranged for a buffet that featured just what we expected, great Indian fare.

After lunch we drove across the Yamuna River to visit the Akshardham Temple that was opened in 2005 on a 100 acre site. We went through very tight security to gain entrance. Hoods on vehicles were opened and in addition to walking through metal detectors, frisking was the order of the day (with ladies and gentlemen forming separate lines, something we encountered several times in India). Protecting Hindu temples and devotees is the norm these days in part because Hindu-Muslim relations are often tense and India's recent history is marked by a number of acts of terrorism. This is an enormous and comprehensive Hindu temple (some say the largest in the world). The complex was built in only five years with a workforce of about 3000 volunteers and 7000 artisans. While, the main temple was closed for repairs we were able to stroll through the gardens and the colonnade. No photography was allowed. The ambiance was designed to inspire, with soft music and chanting in the background played through speakers all around the complex.

We then left for refreshments at Pandey's brother-in-law's flat near the airport. His brother-in-law is a management level engineer employed by the government in a Public Works Department Agency responsible for monitoring the flow of electricity to various grids around India. His flat is adjacent to the building that houses the equipment that monitors the flow of electricity. He took the group to see the facilities. We learned that workers are moved every three or four years to another site in the country. Everyone is required to serve a tour of duty on the frontier, which is considered hazardous duty. His previous appointment was on the NW Frontier that borders Pakistan and China. In northern India coal is the primary source of generating electricity; it is followed by hydroelectric in the north. In southern India it is the reverse. Nuclear energy supplies only a small percentage of India's electricity.

After a light meal and a quick run to the spice shop we departed for the airport. Luggage was loaded onto trolleys. We entered and cleared security as a group. There were many check points. We were some of the last passengers to board. Finally, we were able to relax and prepare for the 15 hour flight to Newark.

We arrived in Newark, NJ about 4:30 am on 31 March, quickly cleared US Immigration and Customs. We left Newark about 6:30 am and arrived in Columbus by 8:00 am. All's well that end's well.

Daniel Christie and Vladimir Steffel



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