

JOURNEY TO INDIA ROOTS OF MEDITATION

2019 November 4 - 23th



DHARMA



NATURE



JOURNEY TO INDIA | ROOTS OF MEDITATION | 2019 November 4-23th

As you will notice by reading the program, the most important aspect of the trip is the element of meeting: meeting India, and to meeting ourselves. We will meet Indian culture through encounters with its population. We will go by foot or by bike to meet villagers living off the beaten tracks of tourism. We will visit children in schools, meet my music teacher and his family, chat with Indians on the Ghats of Varanasi, as well as cook with a family...And of course we will come to meet ourselves.

We will practice meditation in the mornings and/or evenings whenever that is possible and also develop together our capacity for introspection, our understanding of what spirituality is, and seek to stay closely in touch with ourselves during the whole trip. Our day to day experience will be where our practice takes place, and we will pay close attention to the inner movements that this trip will no doubt stir up. India is the perfect place for this, and we will be particularly supported and inspired in this undertaking since all of our destinations are spiritually important places dedicated to introspection, to faith, self-mastery and self-knowledge, and to the encounter with the ultimate.

We will certainly come out of this adventure with a greater knowledge of India, but also with a greater understanding of ourselves. This trip is an invitation to slow down. To slow down the frenetic pace of our days by accepting to spend time sitting still in silence. To slow down by taking the train rather than the plane, accepting to "see less" in order to soak in more. To slow down in order to be in harmony with the Indian slowness that can simultaneously bewilder, seduce, or challenge, and which will remain alien to us if we visit the country in the western touristic style.

A meeting, once again, with a country of extremes, where the lethargic stands alongside the dynamic, where "non-doing" is not completely devoured by activity, where materialism is far from the only priority, and where the notion of emptiness takes on its full meaning.

We will practice meditation, walking meditation "the yatra", yoga only if you want to. We will have a swim in the river Ganges and many visits, meetings, free time and shopping. We will listen to Indian classical music, will participate in Satsang, participate in Aarti (evening prayer of light) and we will take our time with each discovery. We will visit the cities of Delhi, Dharamsala, Varanasi, Sarnath, Pushkar.

Denis



DELHI

Day 1

Nov 4th | Arrive in Delhi

AM | Arrive in Delhi

PM | Visit of Pahar Ganj, district of Delhi

Evening | We leave for Dharamsala by train.



On arrival you will be welcomed at the airport and taken to our hotel, **Treebo Natraj Yes Please** for the day.

Visit of **Pahar Ganj** area of Delhi, located next to our hotel.

In the evening, we will take a sleeper train to **Dharamsala** and arrive there the following morning.



Focus on DHARAMSALA - Himachal Pradesh

Dharamsala, which peaks at 1240 metres in the Himalayan valley of Kangra, on the edge of the Dhauladar mountains, is where India meets Tibet. This city is home to Tibetans in exile since 1960, and Tibetan culture is very present.

It is divided into 2 "towns", the lower town, **Dharamsala**, and the upper town, **McLeod Ganj**, which is where we will be staying. The latter rises culminates at 1700 metres and is where most Tibetans reside.

It is also in **McLeod Ganj** that the seat of the Tibetan government in exile is located, as well as the residence of the Dalai Lama, which explains why we will come across many Buddhist pilgrims.



James Hervey



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DHARAMSALA

Day 2

Nov 5th | Arrive at Dharamsala, McLeod Ganj, Shree Guest House

AM | **Arrive, visit of McLeod Ganj**
PM | **Opening Circle, introduction to meditation, free time**
Evening | **Free time**

Day 3

Nov 6th | Meditation, tours & activities

AM & PM & Evening | **Meditation, tours and activities**

Day 4

Nov 7th | Meditation, tours & activities

AM & PM | **Yatra Triund Hill (2875m)**
Evening | **Meditation**

Day 5

Nov 8th | Meditation, tours & activities

AM & PM & Evening | **Meditation, tours and activities**

opening circle, theoretical approach to meditation will be given, as well as a guided meditation.

Throughout our journey, we will gather all together within this circle for meditation as well as teachings and talks. It will be a special moment between the participants to start and/or close the day.

McLeod Ganj is a large mountain village where one immediately feels at home. You will be able to take some time to wander around and discover this mixture of Indian life and Tibetan culture, or you can decide to go walking in the countryside surrounding the village, with its impressive trees and its mountainous views.

There will be the opportunity for guided meditation in a Buddhist monastery, free time, tours and organized activities for those who wish (eg. astrology consultations, massage etc - to organize in advance), getaways to the Shiva Café, a place that I really like to drink tea in the midst of nature, near some waterfalls: we will take the time to just live.

The Yatra is a silent walk which will enable us to experience intensely the adventure of trekking to Triund, from where we will be able to contemplate the eternal snows of the Himalayas.

And for those of you who prefer to stay in McLeod, instead of setting off on this rather a physical getaway, you can take the opportunity to experiment a class in Tibetan cooking, a yoga session, an astrology consultation, a massage , etc ...



Photos non propriétaires de DN

Focus on VARANASI - Uttar Pradesh

Varanasi – also known as Kashi or Banaras, is the spiritual capital of India for Hindus. Varanasi is a melting pot of timeless and overwhelming experiences. We see devotion and beauty juxtaposed with the harsh realities of Indian life.

Mark Twain said about Varanasi : "Older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, Varanasi looks twice as old as all of them put together». Varanasi is one of the world's oldest living cities and it is still characterized by its medieval

atmosphere. This city is unique in India and impossible to describe accurately. Experiencing the feel of it is a must ! We will have enough time to soak in the atmosphere of the Ghats, allowing us to be stimulated by the infinite activity taking place all around.

The **Ghats** are unique embankments that are actually long flights of wide stone steps leading down to the river where people can take a holy bath. But there is much more to these Ghats than just ba-

thing and cremating. Each of the eighty-four Ghats of Varanasi holds some special significance. It is on these Ghats that many aspects of life and religion take place. It somehow feels like we could sit there forever, watching Sadhus taking holy bath, local people performing their own rituals, children playing, laundry washing, pilgrim's devotion towards the river Ganges, and so on.



Walk on the Ghats in Varanasi

VARANASI and SARNATH

Day 6

Nov 9th | Arrival in Varanasi

AM | Transfer to Dharamshala airport to board flight to Delhi. Change flight to Varanasi.

PM | Arrival in Varanasi, transfer to Yoga Mandir ashram

Mindful walk on the Ghats

Evening | Meditation & free time

During the **mindful walk**, we will practice a way of being present that gives immediacy to what we see and feel, enabling us to engage with our present moment experience rather than remaining in our thoughts and judgments. This way, we can realize for ourselves how much living in the moment can enliven our experience.

Aarti is a spectacular fire ceremony dedicated to the river Ganges. It is said to have come from the Vedic concept of fire rituals. People sing and play music with a deep sense of reverence, adoration, and meditative awareness.

Sarnath: after the Buddha attained enlightenment in Bodhgaya, he walked to the village of Sarnath. There, in the Deer Park, he delivered his first sermon on the four noble truths. Sarnath is thus considered as being the birthplace of Buddhism. We will spend the whole day in this peaceful place.

Day 7

Nov 10th | Free time and music

AM + PM | Free time or traditional cooking course with a hindu family I am friends with

Evening | Aarti ceremony

A guide will bring the place back to life for us. We will also meditate there and have some free time.

Alice Project : the philosophy of schools which follow Alice Project is based on universal spirituality, welcoming both students of any faith and of no faith in particular. The students are encouraged to explore their inner life, based on their own direct experience rather than on theories and dogmas. Instead of encouraging them to change, students have for mission to learn to accept and know themselves better.



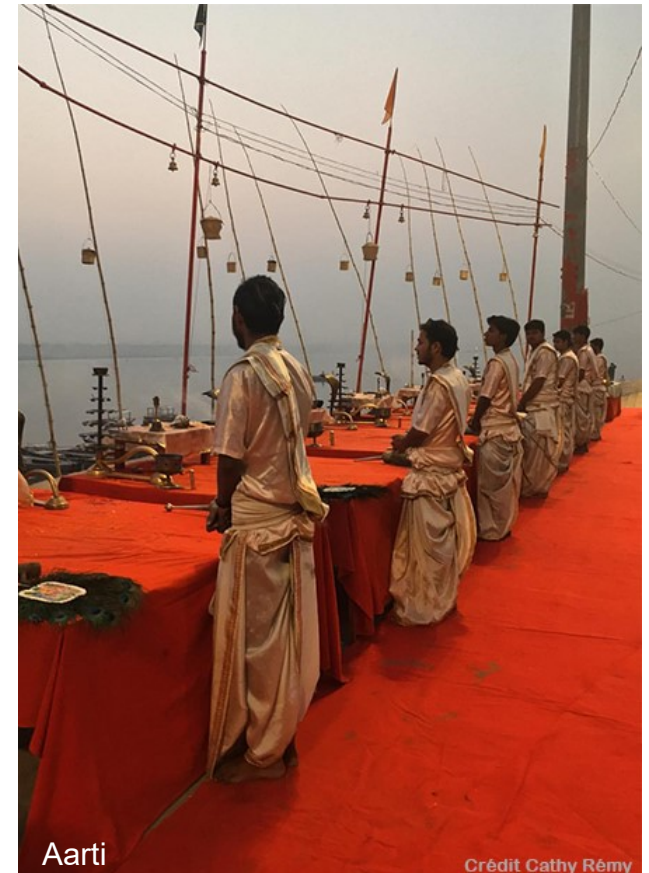
Day 8

Nov 11th | Sarnath and Alice project

AM | Bus trip to Sarnath, visit Alice project School

PM | Visit of Sarnath

Evening | Meditation and concert in Varanasi



VARANASI

Day 9

Nov 12th | celebration of Dev Divali

AM | **Mindful walk on the ghats & visit the old Varanasi**

PM | **Rest, free time, preparation to make our own mandala on the ghat**

Evening | **Dev Divali night**

Dev Divali is a celebration of light which signifies enlightenment, existence of life, sign of immortality and victory of good over evil. On the festive eve, the entire riverbanks of the city are decorated with thousands of brightly-lit earthen lamps ('Diya') amid chanting of Vedic hymns, as a symbolic welcome to the Gods as they descend on Earth. Thousands of lights float down the Ganges.

We will take a boat and spend an hour on the river River Ganges heading towards the **krishnamurti Foundation**. On the way, we will see all the Ghats of the city and spend 2 nights in this wonderful retreat place. We will dedicate our time in silence to meditation and to reading and study texts available in the library.

Day 10

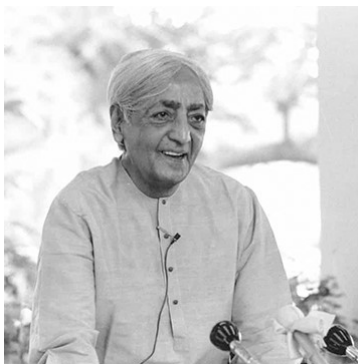
Nov 13th | Krishnamurti foundation Beginning of silence in the evening

AM | **Meditation, free time and departure for Krishnamurti foundation (KMF)** (45min boat trip on Ganga)

PM | **Arrival in the KMF**

Evening | **Meditation, beginning of silence**

Krishnamurti was born in India in 1895 and died in the United States in 1986. He spoke throughout his life in many parts of the world to large audiences and individuals, including writers, scientists, philosophers and educators. Being asked to describe what lay at the heart of his teaching, he said, "Truth is a pathless land. Man cannot reach it through any organization, creed, dogma, priest or ritual, nor through any philosophical knowledge or psychological technique. He has to find it through



the mirror of relationship, through the understanding of the contents of his own mind, and observation, rather than through intellectual analysis or introspective dissection..."

Day 11

Nov 14th | Krishnamurti foundation Silence day

AM + PM + Evening | **Meditation, Study of the Krishnamurti's text.**



Dev Divali: our Own Mandala on the gath in 2016



Krishnamurti foundation

KOPPA VILLAGE & DELHI

Day 12

Nov 15th | Arrive in Koppa village

AM | Bus to Koppa village, meeting with Guruji and his family

PM | Walk and discover the village and surrounding countryside

Evening | Concert with Guruji's family



My Guruji is the man who taught me how to play the tablas in the indian classical music tradition for

over 10 years. His wife and he will welcome us to their village named Koppa, 30km from Varanasi.

We will be staying at their home, one of the biggest in the village. There will be an evening and a night sleeping in dormitory style that is slightly less comfortable, but well worth it. We will take advantage of the countryside location to go for a walk and meet the villagers. We will have the honor to attend a **private concert** from Guruji and his family of musicians !

Day 13

Nov 16th | Koppa village and night in a train

AM | Free time in the village

PM | Transfer to railway station Varanasi to Dehli

Evening | **Night in the train**

In the evening, we will take a sleeper train to **Delhi** and arrive there the following morning.

We will have time in the **Gurudwara Bangla Sahib**, the bigger Sikh temple in Delhi. The Sikh community is famous for its hospitality and generosity. We will eat there as so many pilgrims and devotees do. You can also be volunteers to help in the kitchen, an amazing experience with indian people. We will then take the subway to visit the old city, Old Delhi. The clean and efficient new subway of Delhi that shows a big contrast from the rest of India ! We will then come back by **auto-ricksaw**, an unforgettable event !

Day 14

Nov 17th | Delhi

AM | Arrive in Dehli, transfer to Treebo Natraj Yes Please

PM | Free time or visit Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, bigger Sikh temple in Delhi

Evening | **Meditation on the roof top of the hotel**



Focus on PUSHKAR - Rajasthan

Pushkar is a town where mythology meets history. It is a place of hindu pilgrimage.

The city of Brahmâ, one of the indian trinity Gods (Vishnu and Shiva being the other 2). Many legends relate to the story of Pushkar. Here is one of them :

Brahmâ killed a demon, letting go of 3 lotus petals from his hand. 'Push' means flower and 'kar' means hand. Where the 3 petals were released, 3 lakes were born, and their waters are considered sacred.

The city is built around one of those lakes, lined with Ghats all around.

Ghats are banks built up with large stones. These steps lead down to the water, where people take their sacred bath. Many rituals take place on these banks.

To meditate or simply walk peacefully around this sacred lake is certainly



PUSHKAR

Day 15
Nov 18th | Departure by train

AM | **Train to Pushkar**
PM | **Visit of Pushkar**
Evening | **Meditation**

Taking the train in India is a unique experience, unlike normal public transportation. It is characteristic of the essence of India, like a microcosm in itself, where we often and surprisingly experience the unexpected and extraordinary at work.

We will then take part in a **Yatra** up to the '**Monkey Temple**', also known as 'temple of Savriti' (Brahmā's wife). Yatra means pilgrimage. Together we will walk in silence, using our capacity of mindfulness and presence. The monkey temple is a magical place, located on the highest hill of Pushkar Mountain. We will ride through the semi desert countryside with Indian bicycles (not always in a very good condition but always with at least one ringbell!). We will go to **Adjaipal** and visit temples that are not very frequented, lost in the hills at the entrance of the Rajasthan desert.

Day 16
Nov 19th | Yatra towards 'Monkey Temple'

AM + PM | **Silent Yatra toward the 'Monkey Temple'**
Evening | **Meditation**



Day 17
Nov 20th | Visit and free time

AM | **Meditation**
PM | **Bicycle trip in the countryside**
Evening | **Free time**

Day 18
Nov 21th | Visit and free time

AM | **Yatra & Meditation in the desert**
PM & Evening | **Shopping and Free time**



PUSHKAR & NEW DELHI

Day 19

Nov 22th | Pushkar, free time
and departure to Delhi

AM | Closure circle

PM | Train to New Delhi

Evening | Late arrival to Treebo Natraj

Yes Please

Day 20

Nov 23th | Delhi, ending the trip

AM & PM & Evening | Departure to the air-
port

During **the closure circle**, we sit and take time to review what we learned during the journey together, and will discuss the 'after retreat' and how to integrate all of this into our daily life.

Transfer to the airport will be organised from the hotel.

**The Journey will end
on november 23th**





crédit : Alexander Pelican

PRICING

This year our trip is a bit longer than the last one. We wish to take more time, in order to live this moments more fully. At the same time we had our heart set on making the price as low as possible.

Confirm your participation before 2019 march 31th and you will get a nice “early bird” price. Prices here are not including the return flight to New Delhi, nor the Visa. Please read all details below.

Early bird before 2019 March 31th

Double shared room
 > 1 890 €
 Single room > 2 070 €

After 2019 March 31th

Double shared room
 > 1 990 €
 Single room > 2 170 €

INFORMATION and REGISTRATION

Contact
 helenejamesse@gmail.com



Practical aspect of the trip is supported by Indus Discoveries travel agency, our local partner in New Delhi.

THE COST INCLUDES

- All teaching and practises lead by Denis Robberechts.
- Accommodation
- Most breakfasts and some lunches and dinners.
- All transfers with India, long drives and sightseeing with private chauffeur on board.
- Services of a local English-speaking interpreter. The whole trip will be bilingual, English and French
- Entrance fees to all monuments and holy places of our intinerary.

THE COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International Flights to and from New Delhi
- India Visa fee
- Travel insurance
- Most lunch and dinner. We will give you an idea of budget.
- Other various expenses such as laundry, phone calls, beverages or additional food.
- Possible fees on touristic sites (ej :camera fees..)