India is like an ancient manuscript on which layer upon layer of thought and daydreaming has been inscribed. This is the complex and mysterious personality of India. About her is the elusive quality of a legend long ago; some enchantment seems to have held her mind. She is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet very real and present….

Nehru

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

The cost of the tour is $4,980* on a twin share basis. (Single Supplement is $978 per person)

(* Flights in India as well as hotel accommodation are costed in USD at an exchange rate of 1:1. Fluctuations in the exchange rates may occur, so variation is to be expected.)

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

✓ Return flights on Thai Airways in Economy Class
✓ Twelve nights hotel accommodation in 5 star hotels on twin share basis
✓ Breakfast and dinner daily
✓ Lunches on days 3, 4 and 12
✓ Comprehensive Travel Insurance
✓ All transport services using Mini/Large deluxe coaches as available in the area with driver & helper as per the group size
✓ Services of accompanying English speaking guide/Escort for the duration of the tour
✓ Museum entrance fees
✓ Toy train ride in Darjeeling
✓ Jeeps for visit Tiger Hill and local sightseeing in Darjeeling
✓ Morning boat ride on river Ganges, Varanasi.
✓ Meet and assist on arrival/departure by our office representative at all places
✓ Overnight train in 1st class in 2 tier or 3 tier air-conditioned class for New Jalpaiguri to Mughal Sarai
✓ Two bottles of mineral water per person every day
✓ One Gala evening with music and dances
✓ All present applicable Government tax
✓ $60 Gratuity levy (Tipping is customary, expected and frequent in India) This will be managed by Mr Geoghegan and Mrs Agius from a central fund.

WHAT ISN’T INCLUDED?

- Services not mentioned above
- Expenses of personal nature like any drinks, tips, portage, phone calls, laundry etc.
- lunches except days 3, 4 and 12
- Visa fees: Visa cost for Australian passport holders for India and Nepal $ 200 per person

HOW MANY CAN GO?
All members of the St. Pat’s community. Existing students, past students, and parents are all welcome. The tour is costed on a minimum of 30 persons.

WHO WILL LEAD AND ESCORT THE TOUR?
It will be under the joint leadership of Mr Geoghegan and Mrs Agius
(Please note that two complete Free of Charge have been included for the escorts.)
**HOW DO I SECURE A PLACE FOR MYSELF?**

Pay a deposit of $1000* to the College bursar as soon as possible. All Cheques and payments are to be made to St. Patrick’s College, and handed to the bursar, Mrs Deanna Hurley. Final payment to be made by the end of Term 4 2012. (Please note that departure taxes are subject to change until paid in full.

**NB. This deposit is non-refundable.***

Please do not commit funds unless secure in the knowledge that the expense is manageable and that either you or your son/daughter is desirous of the experience. Requests for refunds of the deposit cannot and will not be entertained either by St. Patrick’s College, the tour operator, or the travel agent.

**WILL WE HAVE FREE TIME OR TIME TO OURSELVES?**

Yes, sometimes the best parts of a tour are the times when you make your own personal discoveries and there is so much to see (and buy) in India. However, I do want your discoveries to be memorable and pleasant. Therefore, I am mindful of the safety and well-being of my students, so there will be clear guidelines laid down about where to go, with whom, and when to return. We have to catch many flights and board many buses, and one person can be the cause of an entire group missing a flight. We are a long way from home, and much depends on the exercise of self-discipline. Most accidents, injuries and mishaps are avoidable, and they usually occur because someone is not abiding by instructions. Refusal by a student to abide by the reasonable rules will earn them an immediate flight home, with NO refund. As tour leader, this is my decision alone. This is to ensure the smooth functioning of the tour and the enjoyment of all concerned. While Indian cities are safe, they are VERY different. Not respecting that difference is highly irresponsible.

**HOW MUCH SPENDING MONEY WILL I NEED?**

This is entirely up to you. You do have to buy lunch and refreshments for yourself, and because India is cheap by Australian standards, $200 would comfortably see to your needs, *in this regard*, for the two week period. Of course India has wonderful jewellery and carpets – but that’s another matter.....
Itinerary

March 30

05.00    Arrive at Mackay airport
06.35    Depart Mackay on Virgin DJ600 for Brisbane
08.00    Arrive Brisbane

14.20    Depart Brisbane on Thai Airways flight TG474 for Bangkok
20.30    Arrive Bangkok
23.25    Depart Bangkok on Thai Airways flight TG313 FOR Kolkata

March 31    Kolkata

Arrive by Thai Airways TG 313 at 00:30 hrs at Kolkata airport, meeting and assistance on arrival and transfer to hotel TAJ BENGAL (Breakfast). Accommodation held from 12:00 noon previous day at the TAJ BENGAL HOTEL, KOLKATA.

10:00 hrs, proceed for a sightseeing of city with colonial influence, Kolkata still captures much of the atmosphere of the days of the British Raj and it was from this city that British influence spread throughout India in the 1700’s. The British East India company had its headquarters in what they called Calcutta and this city was the heart of the British Opium trade. This interesting city has a lot to offer. It has a distinctive character, quite different from the rest of the country. Full day visit sightseeing tour visiting Howrah Bridge - Flower Market, Dakshineswar Kali Temple, Belur Math, Jain Temple, Kumartuli (during puja’s), Tagore House and much more.

Overnight at hotel in Kolkata. (Breakfast & Dinner)

April 01    Kolkata – Bagdobra –Gangtok

08:00 hrs, transfer to airport to board flight to Bagdobra (9W 7081 10:40 hrs / 11:40 hrs), assistance on arrival at Bagdobra airport and drive to Gangtok (120 kms/approx. 4.30 hrs drive), upon arrival check into HOTEL WELCOMEHERITAGE DENZONG REGENCY.

GANGTOK: At an altitude of 1750m, Gangtok became the state capital in the mid 19th century and has undergone rapid development since then. The downtown area is dominated by huge government buildings decorated with traditional Buddhist symbols. Gangtok is also a resting ground for people traveling to North Sikkim. Surrounded by Monasteries and Orchids, Gangtok is truly a travelers delight.

Overnight at hotel (Breakfast & Dinner)

April 02    Gangtok

After breakfast sightseeing in Gangtok:

Rumtek Monastery: -24 Kms. from Gangtok is the awe-inspiring Rumtek Monastery, the world Dharma chakra Centre and the seat of His Holiness, the Gyalwa Karmapa, who is the head of the Kagyu or ‘Black Hat’ order of Tibetan Buddhism. Behind the main monastery is the lavishly decorated Karmae Nalanda Institute of Buddhist Studies, which attracts students from the world over. Opposite the entrance to the Institute is a small hall featuring a beautiful jewel studded Chorten the Golden Stupa, which contains the ashes and remains of His Holiness the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa. According to legend, it is believed that after years of meditation, the first Karmapa was said to have been visited by ten thousand fairies who came to congratulate him, each of whom offered a strand of her hair as a gift. These were said to have been woven into a black hat, which was passed down and is still at
the Rumtek Monastery today. It is said that unless held on to by the wearer (who of course, cannot be anyone else but the Karmapa) or kept in a box, the hat would fly away.

Later proceed for visit to Enchey Monastery, Institute of Tibetology, Do Drul Chorten and Cottage Industry

**The Enchey Monastery:** -Perched on a ridge above Gangtok, the Enchey Monastery is nestled within lush woods with a spectacular view of Gangtok town. Built in 1910 on the site of the hermitage of the great tantric saint, Lama Drutob Karpo, who was renowned for his powers of levitation, this monastery houses the monks of the Nyingmapa Order of Tibetan Buddhism.

**Namgyal Institute of Tibetology:** -Amidst a serene surrounding of oak, birch and ash lies the unique organization established in 1958. Built in traditional style, the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology promotes research in Mahayana Buddhism and the language and tradition of Tibet. It has one of the world’s largest collections of rare books and manuscripts on Mahayana Buddhism. The Institute also has retail outlets where related books and commercially produced religious art and craft of Tibet can be bought.

Adjacent to the institute are two exquisite stupas, the **Do Drul Chorten**, built to commemorate the victory of good over evil and the Jhang Chub Chorten, built in the memory of Thrukshik Rinpoche, an ardent devotee, a great spiritualist and interpreter of Buddhism. Near the Chorten are housed two giant statues of Lord Buddha and Guru Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rimpoche, the patron saint of Sikkim.

**Directorate Of Handloom And Handicrafts:** -This Directorate was set up to promote traditional Sikkimese art and handicrafts. Exquisitely carved wooden friezes, intricate bamboo work, along with beautiful hand woven carpets and handlooms are on exhibit here. Visitors can not only purchase these items here but also see the artisans at work. Among others, a favourite item here is the choktse a wooden table with carved panels that can be folded into a portable pack.

Dinner and overnight at hotel. **(Breakfast and Dinner)**

**April 03** Gangtok – Darjeeling 117 kms  5 hours approx.

After breakfast drive from Gangtok to Darjeeling, on arrival check into **HOTEL WINDAMERE**.

**Darjeeling:** Standing high in the Himalayas at an altitude of 2134m, ‘Dorje Ling’, or place of the Thunderbolt, offers breathtaking views of snow-capped mountain peaks, with the Kanchendzonga rising higher than all the others. Often referred to as the “Queen of the Hills”, it remains just as alluring with its tiny waterfalls, little villages and a narrow gauge railway track. Surrounded by World Famous Tea Gardens and snow-capped mountains, Darjeeling remains one of the most exotic destinations. Graeme Westlake in his book ‘An introduction to hill stations on India’ refers to Darjeeling as having “A view Scarcely Unrivalled on Earth”.

Afternoon proceed for visit to Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Zoological Park and Tibetan Refugee Centre

**Himalayan Mountaineering Institute/Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park:** - The Himalayan Mountaineering Institute was started in Darjeeling after Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary climbed Everest. Attached to institute one can visit the Himalayan Zoological Park where one can see Himalayan animals like Snow Leopard, Tibetan Wolf, Tibetan Yak, Himalayan Black Bear.

**Tibetan Self-Help Centre:** This institute is run by Tibetan Refugees to preserve their handicrafts and one can see making of Tibetan Carpets, Leather work, Paintings and Wooden work etc.
Overnight at hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner)

April 04       Darjeeling

Early morning visit Tiger Hill and Ghoom Monastery. The group will be divided into two due to limited space on the train. However the first group which arrives first will wait for the second group to join and carry on for the rest of the sight seeing.

**Tiger Hill:** - It is 13 kms from Darjeeling from which one can see key peaks on the Himalayan Range like Kanchandzonga and Mount Everest. One can see the horizon changing colors just before sunrise and then the entire Himalayan range turn golden. It is truly a majestic sight.

**Ghoom Monastery:** - This is oldest Monastery in the area which was built in 1875 and one can see the image of Mythey Buddha 15ft. height on the way back from Tiger Hill.

After breakfast proceed for a ride on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in Darjeeling.

Sometimes known as the ‘Toy Train’ the spectacular landscape unfolds as the tiny 2-foot gauge, steam driven locomotive, labours at about 10 mph across some of the most spectacular scenery you will see. This is the highest railway line in Asia. It has tiny 4-wheel locomotives (some over 100 years old). One can experience the sound, smell and romance of a bygone era. DHR is a considerable engineering accomplishment given that it was constructed in 1881.

Afternoon visit to Tukvar Tea Estate to see the processing of Tea

**Tukvar Tea Estate:** - Teas grown on the misty heights of Darjeeling, popularly known as the ‘Champagne of Tea’ are famous world over for their exquisite taste. The premium Darjeeling teas are mild in character and have distinctive natural fruity flavors. The different steps in Tea manufacture can be seen in the factory of Tukvar Tea Estate.

Overnight at hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner)

April 05       Darjeeling – New Jalpaiguri (NJP) 95 KMS 4 hours approx.

After breakfast enjoy walk to Observatory Hill followed by a Tea Tasting session at Nathmull’s Tea Lounge

Early afternoon drive from Darjeeling to New Jalpaiguri railway station (approx. 118 kms – 4 hrs), upon arrival board **overnight train North East Express departure at 17:15 hrs.** Overnight on board. (Breakfast & Packed Dinner)

April 06       Arrive Varanasi by train

07:02 hrs, arrive Mughal Sarai railway station, assistance on arrival at the railway station and transfer to the hotel for Breakfast. After breakfast check in at hotel in the late morning as check in time is 12 noon, however if rooms are available they would be made available earlier.

After check in and freshening up, proceed for a half day sightseeing tour of this most ancient city of India, which is the epicentre of Hindu Religion. Evening a walk thru the city narrow streets to see the daily lives of people who live in this city, proceed to the River Ganges and witness Ganga Aarti (light ceremony) on the banks of River Ganges performed by various Sadhus or Saints as they are locally named. Overnight at hotel. (Breakfast & Dinner)
April 07 Varanasi - Kathmandu
Early morning at dawn a boat ride on the holy river Ganges. Return to hotel for breakfast and transfer to the airport to board flight to Kathmandu (AI 251 1230hrs – 1340hrs). Assistance on arrival at Kathmandu airport and transfer to hotel SOALTEE COWN PLAZA. Overnight at hotel. (Breakfast & Dinner)

April 08 Kathmandu
Today visit, Pashupatinath Temple, one of the biggest Hindu temples of Lord Shiva in the world (non Hindus are not allowed into the temple). Bouddhnath, the holiest shrine for the Buddhist culture in Nepal. Also visit Bhadgoan (Bhaktapur), Bhadgaon is listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO for its rich culture, temples, wood, metal and stone artwork. Overnight at hotel (Breakfast & Dinner)

April 09 Kathmandu
Today proceed for guided tour of Kathmandu city visiting Durbar (Royal Palace) Square where important ceremonies, such as the coronation of the Nepalese monarch still take place. Continue visiting Swayambhunath, an ancient religious complex atop a hill in the Kathmandu Valley. Afternoon excursion to Patan (also known as Lalitpur), the city is full of Buddhist monuments and Hindu temples with fine bronze gateways, guardian deities and wonderful carvings. Overnight at hotel. (Breakfast & Dinner)

April 10 Kathmandu
In the morning visit Dhulikhel located 30 kms away from Kathmandu. The spectacular snow-fed mountains seen from Dhuklikhel must be one of the finest panoramic views in the world. Enjoy the day in Dhulikhel. Lunch at the local restaurant/hotel in Dhulikhel. In the afternoon drive back to Kathmandu. Overnight at hotel (Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner)

April 11 Depart Kathmandu
Morning breakfast at the hotel. 09:30 hrs, you will be transferred to airport to board flight Thai Airways TG 320 departure at 13:30 hrs for Bangkok.
13.30 Depart on Thai Airways flight TG320 for Bangkok.
18.15 Arrive Bangkok and remain in transit for your onward flight to Brisbane.
23.59 Depart on Thai Airways flight TG473 for Brisbane.

April 12 Brisbane
11.50 Arrive Brisbane International Terminal change over to the Domestic Terminal for your final flight of the trip.
15.05 Depart on DJ613 for Mackay.
16.40 Arrive Mackay Domestic Airport.
BOOKING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. A non-refundable deposit of $1,000 is required upon reservation.
2. The full balance inclusive of visa costs, is due before end of fourth term 2012.
3. This quotation is based on a rate of exchange of AU$1.00 = US$1.00. We reserve the right to vary this exchange rate should there have been a fluctuation at the time of final payment.
4. Airfares and taxes quoted are correct as at 16th July, 2012 but are subject to change unless final payment has been received.
5. Passport and completed visa forms should be handed in during the first week of the term one in January 2013. This will allow sufficient time for processing. Passports must be valid for at least six months from the date of re-entry to Australia.
6. Cancellations should be advised to us immediately in writing and the following cancellation terms will apply:
   - Up to 120 days before departure – Forfeiture of deposit
   - 120 to 70 days before departure – 50%
   - 70 to 31 days before departure – 75%
   - Less than 31 days – No refund

5. Payments made by credit card will attract a 1.5% handling fee.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Comprehensive Travel Insurance which includes Excess Waiver (individual therefore does not have to pay excess on a claim) has been included. This cover is dependent upon acceptance of the Applicant by the Insurer according to the standard conditions for acceptance as detailed in the Aussie Travel Cover’s booklet. Certain pre-existing conditions, a list of which can be found under the ‘Pre existing’ in the Aussie Travel Cover booklet pages 9 – 14, will not automatically be covered and Applicants can apply for additional cover by completing an additional medical form. If accepted by the Insurer, there will be an additional premium to be paid by the Applicant.

Every participant is required to complete the Application Form contained in the booklet and hand this in to the school. Cover is not included if this form is not completed.
ST. PATRICKS COLLEGE INDIA AND NEPAL 2013 BOOKING FORM

Please complete one booking form per passenger and supply with deposit payment and to the bursar’s office.

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We respect your privacy. All personal information you provide to us in this booking form will be treated in accordance with our privacy policy. In order to facilitate your holiday, certain information may be required by and disclosed to certain organizations (e.g. customs and immigration authorities or airline carriers if a transfer is required) but only as necessary. You can request access to the personal information we have collected about you and obtain a copy of our privacy policy. We will not be able to properly facilitate the booking and administration of your holiday if you do not provide us with all the information requested on the form.