INDIA
WEST BENGLA

EXPLORING INDIA’S HOLY RIVERS

February 25 to March 13, 2017

a program of the stanford alumni association
Join us to discover the elaborate prayer rituals, funeral rites, artistic traditions and complex history of the communities that line two of India’s most sacred waterways, the holy Ganges River and the Hooghly River, a major distributary of the Ganges. We’ll explore the unique culture of the state of West Bengal with its distinct cuisine, progressive politics, rich literary heritage, singular dance forms and fine modern art. Bookending our adventure are India’s “two capitals”—we start in Delhi, the nation’s capital since 1911, and conclude in Kolkata (Calcutta), capital of India’s British-held territories from 1772 until 1911. In between we visit Varanasi, Hinduism’s holiest city, and take a leisurely eight-night cruise aboard the RV Bengal Ganga, observing daily rituals of village life and exploring some of India’s lesser-known sites.

BRETT S. THOMPSON, ’83, DIRECTOR, STANFORD TRAVEL/STUDY

**Highlights**

**DELIGHT** in a thrilling rickshaw ride through the crowded, colorful lanes of Chandni Chowk market in Old Delhi.

**OBSERVE** Hindu funeral rites from a motorboat on the Ganges River in Varanasi, Hinduism’s holiest and India’s oldest city.

**CRUISE** along the Hooghly River aboard the RV Bengal Ganga, stopping to explore off-the-beaten-track sites.

**VISIT** the Motherhouse in Kolkata, a place of pilgrimage where Mother Teresa lived for 50 years and lies in rest today.
Dr. Kori Schake, a research fellow at the Hoover Institute, began traveling the world at a young age, thanks to her father, an airline pilot. He would take her wherever she wanted to go provided she agreed to act as his guide. Since her first visit to India, Dr. Schake has been consistently awed by the country’s political and religious diversity, its fundamentally democratic nature, and the fact that “culturally it is so refulgent and magnificently different.” Her research and teaching focus on understanding the causes of war and building cooperative solutions to security problems. She has recently written an article for The Atlantic, “How to Manage a Rising Power—or Two,” about what the U.S. can learn from 19th-century Britain vis-à-vis India and China. Of India, Dr. Schake says, “India is changing in interesting and important ways as it sheds the trappings of the nonaligned movement and reconsiders its contemporary security challenges.” During our program, lecture topics may include understanding the various dimensions of South Asia, the problems and prospects China poses for India, and potential regional cooperation in South Asia. Dr. Schake has worked in the Defense and State departments, on the National Security Council and as senior policy advisor on the 2008 McCain-Palin presidential campaign. She and her sister, Kristina, who currently works on the Clinton campaign, will be traveling together on our program. The two were profiled in the January 2016 issue of Vogue magazine in an article entitled “Reconcilable Differences.” Their opposing political alliances should make for some lively dinner conversation!
SATURDAY & SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25 & 26
U.S. / DELHI, INDIA
Depart the U.S. on overnight flights, arriving in Delhi in the late afternoon or evening on Sunday. TAJ MAHAL HOTEL

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27
DELHI
Visit the Mughal Emperor Humayun’s Tomb, the architecture of which was the first of its kind in India and set a precedent for future Mughal royal mausolea. Gather this evening for a welcome reception and dinner. TAJ MAHAL HOTEL (B,l,D)

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28
DELHI
Embark on a tour of Old Delhi, seat of power for Mughal India. Visit Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India, then take a rickshaw ride through the lanes of Chandni Chowk, one of Delhi’s oldest and busiest markets. Also tour Raj Ghat, the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi. Next visit Qutub Minar, an ancient, elaborately carved pillar, then head to New Delhi to view its British colonial monuments. TAJ MAHAL HOTEL (B,l,D)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1
DELHI / VARANASI
Fly to Varanasi this morning. From a motorboat on the river, observe aarti, a Hindu worship ritual involving the offering of light in the form of flaming diyas (oil lamps) and the singing of devotional songs. THE GATEWAY HOTEL GANGES (B,l,D)

THURSDAY, MARCH 2
VARANASI / SARNATH
On an early-morning boat ride, observe pilgrims bathing in the sacred waters of the Ganges, on the banks of which bodies are cremated at the base of special ghats (steps) designated for this purpose. Enjoy a special visit to Benares Hindu University. Drive to Sarnath to explore the ruins of 2,000-year-old Buddhist monasteries and view the Ashoka Pillar, whose lion capital has been adopted by the Republic of India as its state emblem. THE GATEWAY HOTEL GANGES (B,l,D)

FRIDAY, MARCH 3
VARANASI / KOLKATA
Take a walking tour of Old Varanasi, then fly to Kolkata, capital of the state of West Bengal. Kolkata (then Calcutta) served as the headquarters of the English East India Company and later the capital of British India until 1911, when New Delhi became the capital. TAJ BENGAL (B,l,D)

SATURDAY, MARCH 4
KOLKATA
Experience the colorful chaos of the Malick Ghat wholesale flower market and explore Kumhar Toli, where clay statues of the goddess Durga, are molded and painted. Visit the ornate Pareshnath Jain Temple and drive by Kolkata’s many colonial-era buildings, stopping to visit the Victoria Memorial, a vast marble edifice constructed to commemorate Queen Victoria. Also visit the Indian Museum—India’s oldest and largest. TAJ BENGAL (B,l,D)

SUNDAY, MARCH 5
KOLKATA / EMBARK / CHANDERNAGORE / BANDEL
Board our river boat and cruise to Chandernagore, a former French colony that retains a particularly Gallic colonial flavor. Stroll along the Strand, a European-style promenade lined with historic French buildings. Visit the Institut de Chandernagor, a museum that houses a collection of rare French antiques, and the Église du Sacré Cœur, with its beautiful stained-glass windows. Continue to Bandel, a 16th-century Portuguese stronghold. RV BENGAL GANGA (B,l,D)

MONDAY, MARCH 6
BANDEL / KALNA
Ride cycle rickshaws to the Basilica of Our Lady of Bandel, one of the oldest Christian Churches in West Bengal. Also visit the Hooghly Imambara, a 19th-century Shiite assembly hall, used for observing the holiday of Muharram. Cruise to Kalna, an important textile production center, stopping to explore a village that specializes in jamdani, a type of weaving where intricate motifs are woven into fine cotton fabric. RV BENGAL GANGA (B,l,D)
Journey to Agra, home of the Taj Mahal, India’s most enduring symbol and one of the world’s great architectural triumphs. Also visit Agra Fort and the Mausoleum of I’timad-ud-Daulah, popularly known as the “Baby Taj.” Details and pricing will be provided to confirmed participants.
Originally built in 1992 and refurbished and redecorated in 2010, Island Sky accommodates all guests in 57 outside suites, each affording sea views and elegantly furnished with a sitting room area, flat-screen TV, safe, mini-refrigerator and an en suite bathroom with robe, slippers, hairdryer and fine toiletries. Several suites have private balconies. Spacious and finely decorated public areas include a large lounge and elegant bar and a library. The dining room accommodates everyone at one seating where house wine, beer and soft drinks are included at lunch and dinner. Wi-fi access is available throughout the vessel (at additional cost and dependent upon satellite reception). The ship also includes a hairdresser, onboard clinic and doctor, elevator serving all passenger decks, top deck with Jacuzzi, gym and rear sun deck with a bar.

Island Sky is served by 75 experienced officers and crew.

The RV Bengal Ganga has 28 outside staterooms on two decks, each finished with brass and teak. All rooms are air-conditioned with individual controls and have windows fitted with insect screens and outdoor sitting areas facing the river. The bathrooms are spacious for a ship of this size, with granite countertops and finished, like the staterooms, in rich brass and teak. Amenities include a writing desk, kimonos, slippers, and personal deck space with rattan chairs and a table for relaxing while enjoying views of the passing scenery. The spacious sun deck provides a pleasant vantage point from which to observe the passing parade of river traffic and shoreline activities. The ship’s executive chefs have developed a fusion cuisine that combines the best of Asian and Western traditions. There’s a choice of Indian, European or vegetarian cuisine, and, wherever possible, produce is obtained locally.

**Program Cost**

Rates are per person, based on double or single occupancy, as specified.

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<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
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<td>Main Deck</td>
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<td>Double Occupancy</td>
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<td>Single Occupancy</td>
<td>$14,385</td>
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<td>Upper Deck</td>
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<tr>
<td>Premium Double Occupancy</td>
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*Association nonmembers add $300 per person.
**Single accommodations may be limited to as few as 2 cabins.

Main Deck and Upper Deck Cabins measure approximately 113 sq. ft. and have fixed twin beds. Premium Cabins measure approximately 185 sq. ft. and have a fixed double bed and a sliding glass door.
DATES
February 25 to March 13, 2017 (17 days)

SIZE
This program can accommodate 34 participants. Single accommodations are extremely limited; please call for availability.

INCLUDED
7 nights of deluxe hotel accommodations □ 8-night cruise aboard the RV Bengal Ganga □ 15 breakfasts, 15 lunches and 14 dinners □ Welcome cocktail reception □ Gratuities to guides, drivers and ship crew for all group activities □ All tours and shore excursions as described in the itinerary □ Internal flights within India between Delhi and Varanasi, and Varanasi and Kolkata □ Transfers and baggage handling on program arrival and departure days □ Port fees and embarkation taxes □ Minimal medical, accident and evacuation insurance □ Educational program with lecture series and pre-departure materials, including recommended reading list, a selected book, map and travel information □ Services of our professional tour manager to assist you throughout the program

NOT INCLUDED
International and U.S. domestic airfare □ Passport and visa fees □ Immunization costs □ Meals and beverages other than those specified as included □ Trip-cancellation/interruption and baggage insurance □ Excess-baggage charges □ Personal items such as internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for nongroup services

AIR ARRANGEMENTS
International and U.S. domestic airfare is not included in the program cost. Round-trip, economy-class airfare on both Etihad and Emirates airlines from San Francisco to Delhi, India, and return from Kolkata, India, is approximately $1,000 as of June 2016 and is subject to change without notice.

WHAT TO EXPECT
We consider this to be a moderately strenuous program that is at times physically demanding and busy. Daily programs involve one to three miles of walking, often on uneven terrain. Our busy daily shore excursions contrast with the relaxed pace aboard ship, time that is enhanced by lectures and leisure time. In many instances, such as ruins, we may encounter stairs or dirt paths. Because of the off-the-beaten-track nature of this journey, many times our boat “docks” alongside the shore where there is no pier and passengers must be able to cross a narrow gangplank and climb the bank of the river to reach flat ground. On many excursions our transportation consists of bicycle rickshaws or tongas (horse-drawn wooden carriages). We expect that participants will be a self-selecting group who are seeking a true adventure and whose interest in the places we visit far outweighs the need for creature comforts. Participants must be physically fit, active and in good health. We welcome travelers 15 years of age and older on this program.

Deposit & Final Payment
A $1,000-per-person deposit is required to hold space on this program. A $200-per-person deposit is required to hold space for the optional pre-trip extension. Sign up online at alumni.stanford.edu/trip?bengal2017 or call the Travel/Study office at (650) 725-1093. Final payment is due 120 days prior to departure. As a condition of participation, all confirmed participants are required to sign a Release of Liability.

Cancellations & Refunds
Deposits and any payments are refundable, less a $500-per-person cancellation fee, until 120 days prior to departure. After that date, refunds can be made only if the program is sold out and your place(s) can be resold, in which case a $1,000-per-person cancellation fee will apply.

Insurance
Stanford Travel/Study provides all travelers who are U.S. or Canadian citizens with minimal medical, accident and evacuation coverage under our group-travel insurance policy. Our group policy is intended to provide minimal levels of protection while you are traveling on this program. You may choose to subscribe to optional trip-cancellation and baggage insurance. Information offering such insurance will be provided to travelers with their welcome materials. The product offered in this brochure includes special benefits if you purchase your policy within 14 days of written confirmation of your participation on the trip.

Eligibility
We encourage membership in the Alumni Association as the program cost for nonmembers is $300 more than the members’ price. A person traveling as a guest paid for by a current member will not be charged the nonmember fee. Families and travel companions may travel on one membership. For more information or to purchase a membership, visit alumni.stanford.edu/goto/membership or call (650) 725-0692.

Responsibility
The Stanford Alumni Association, Stanford University and our operators act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and ship arrangements and exercise every care possible in doing so. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity in connection with the service of any automobile, motorcoach, launch or any other conveyance used in carrying out this program or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the program. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, force majeure or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger as tour rates provide arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to make such alterations to this published itinerary as may be deemed necessary. The right is reserved to cancel any program prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the program. No refund will be made for an unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. Baggage is carried at the owner’s risk entirely. It is understood that the ship’s ticket, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the cruise company. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time that passengers are not onboard their plane or conveyance. Neither the Alumni Association, Stanford University nor our operators accept liability for any carrier’s cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable ticket in connection with the tour. Program price is based on rates in effect in June 2016 and is subject to change without notice to reflect fluctuations in exchange rates, tariffs or fuel charges.

Telephone (650) 725-1093
Email travelstudy@alumni.stanford.edu

California Seller of Travel Program Registration #2048 523-50

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The boat was beautiful, the service wonderful and the food delicious—an excellent respite from the ‘overwhelmingness’ of India!

Bob, ’64, and Mary Beth Wheeler, The Ganges, 2014