

**India  
and  
Myanmar**

**November 2006**

**Jim Russell**



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# Itinerary

## India and Myanmar – November 2006

Day	Date		Tour Day	Location	
1	3-Nov-2006			<b>Melb – Sin QF9 1710 – 2130</b> <b>Sin – Delhi QF3955 2300 - 0220</b>	
2	4-Nov-2006	Sat		1 Arrive Delhi 0220	HOTEL GOODTIMES 8/7 W.E.A. Karol Bagh (opp. Ramjas School, Pusa Rd) New Delhi 110001 Tel 011 51005140 – 42 / 51006011 – 2
3	5-Nov-2006	Sun		2 Delhi then board overnight train	
4	6-Nov-2006	Mon		3 Arr Mizapur. Board boats. Overnight camping	
5	7-Nov-2006	Tue		4 On Ganges arrive Varanasi	
6	8-Nov-2006	Wed		5 Varanasi	
7	9-Nov-2006	Thu		6 Varanasi	
8	10-Nov-2006	Fri		7 Varanasi to Bodhgaya	
9	11-Nov-2006	Sat		8 Bodhgaya. Evening board your overnight train	
10	12-Nov-2006	Sun		9 Arrive Kolkata	
11	13-Nov-2006	Mon		10 Kolkata	
12	14-Nov-2006	Tue		11 Kolkata board overnight train	
13	15-Nov-2006	Wed		12 Arrive Darjeeling	
14	16-Nov-2006	Thu		13 Darjeeling	
15	17-Nov-2006	Fri		14 Darjeeling to Delhi (flight included)	HOTEL GOODTIMES 8/7 W.E.A. Karol Bagh (opp. Ramjas School, Pusa Rd) New Delhi 110001 Tel 011 51005140 – 42 / 51006011 – 2
16	18-Nov-2006	Sat		1 <b>Delhi – Bangkok AI348 – 0845 – 1400</b> <b>Bangkok Yangon TG305 – 1800 - 1845</b>	Yoma 1 Hotel 146 Bogyoke Aung San Street Yangon Ph. +95 1 297725
17	19-Nov-2006	Sun		2 Early morning flight to Mandalay. Bus to Maymyo – We arrive in the morning into Mandalay and head up the plateau to the cool hill station of Maymyo. We have a chance to ride the "stagecoaches" and enjoy the colonial feel of this old British haunt	
18	20-Nov-2006	Mon		3 Maymyo to Hsipaw – We head north in our bus and jump off to board the train before	

				it heads over the famous Goitek Viaduct. A tribute to British engineering and persistence. The views are breathtaking. Further on we arrive at our base in Hsipaw. Once the centre of a Shan Kingdom this sleepy backwater will mesmerize you. Amongst the air of colonial small town there is a feel that you have stepped back in time. Days can drift by here as they did for Inge Sargeant, the last of the Shan princesses of this region	
19	21-Nov-2006	Tue		4 Hsipaw – We plan to visit some tribal northern Shan villages and enjoy the pristine countryside dotted by waterfalls and monasteries. There may be options to stay overnight in a local village. Alternatively there are numerous day walks and the possibility of 'tubing' down a local river	
20	22-Nov-2006	Wed		5 Hsipaw – We will maximize our time in the area with walks, swims and afternoons whiled away in local tea shops. An unforgettable stay	
21	23-Nov-2006	Thu		6 Hsipaw to Mandalay – A travel day takes us through lush plateau farmlands back to the cultural capital of Burma. We share a wonderful BBQ meal on the sidewalks of town with locals and the night air	
22	24-Nov-2006	Fri		7 Mandalay (depart on train) – Our train north is an adventure all of its own. We endeavour to snare some sleeper cabins however no matter from which vantage the journey will keep you mesmerized. The clunky old train rolls through timeless villages all the way to the Kachin hills	
23	25-Nov-2006	Sat		8 arrive Myitkina – The train arrives in Myitkina the capital of Kachin state. Historically significant as an outpost of various empires and a hub for the distinctive tribes of northern Burma. We take a short journey north to the confluence of the Mayhka and Malihka rivers. The great Irrawaddy begins here in this crystal clear merging of two streams	
24	26-Nov-2006	Sun		9 Myitkina	
25	27-Nov-2006	Mon		10 Myitkina to Bhamo – Departing Myitkina we hope to catch a fastboat for the journey through the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy. We will arrive in Bhamo an old river settlement important in river trade for many a long year. We will spend time here and make plans to depart downriver on our private and spacious river boat	
26	28-Nov-2006	Tue		11 Irrawaddy Boat – Drifting down river through the 'defiles' of the Irrawaddy is a journey few people experience. Steep rocky cliffs are common and the vegetation is thick with bamboo. Sleeping on board and pulling into towns and villages we observe, up close and personal, river life as it has existed for many years	
27	29-Nov-2006	Wed		12 Irrawaddy Boat – During the journey south we will stop into the town of Katha. Orwell was posted here in the 1920's and based his portrayal of a river town on Katha for his novel "Burmese Days". A few of the sights from the novel are still here. In the evening we will enjoy dinner on the river bank or on board followed by a campfire and a nightcap as required	
28	30-Nov-2006	Thu		13 Arrive Mandalay – We arrive into Mandalay in the morning and have time to enjoy more of the sights and sounds on offer in the city of Mandalay. Perhaps a visit to the sprawling Zegyo market or sunset at the Mandalay Hill	
29	1-Dec-2006	Fri		14 Mandalay to Yangon - A morning flight to Yangon (not included). We have time today to stroll around the 'downtown' district near Sule Pagoda or perhaps even a visit to the astonishing Shwedagon Pagoda. The spiritual heart of Burmese Buddhism. We enjoy a farewell dinner and toast our amazing journey on the backroads of Burma	Yoma 1 Hotel 146 Bogyoke Aung San Street Yangon Ph. +95 1 297725
30	2-Dec-2006	Sat		<b>Yangon – Bangkok – PG702 – 1345 – 1530</b> <b>Bangkok – Sydney – QF2 – 1725 – 0625</b> <b>Sydney – Melbourne – QF415 – 0800 - 0930</b>	
31	3-Dec-2006	Sun			

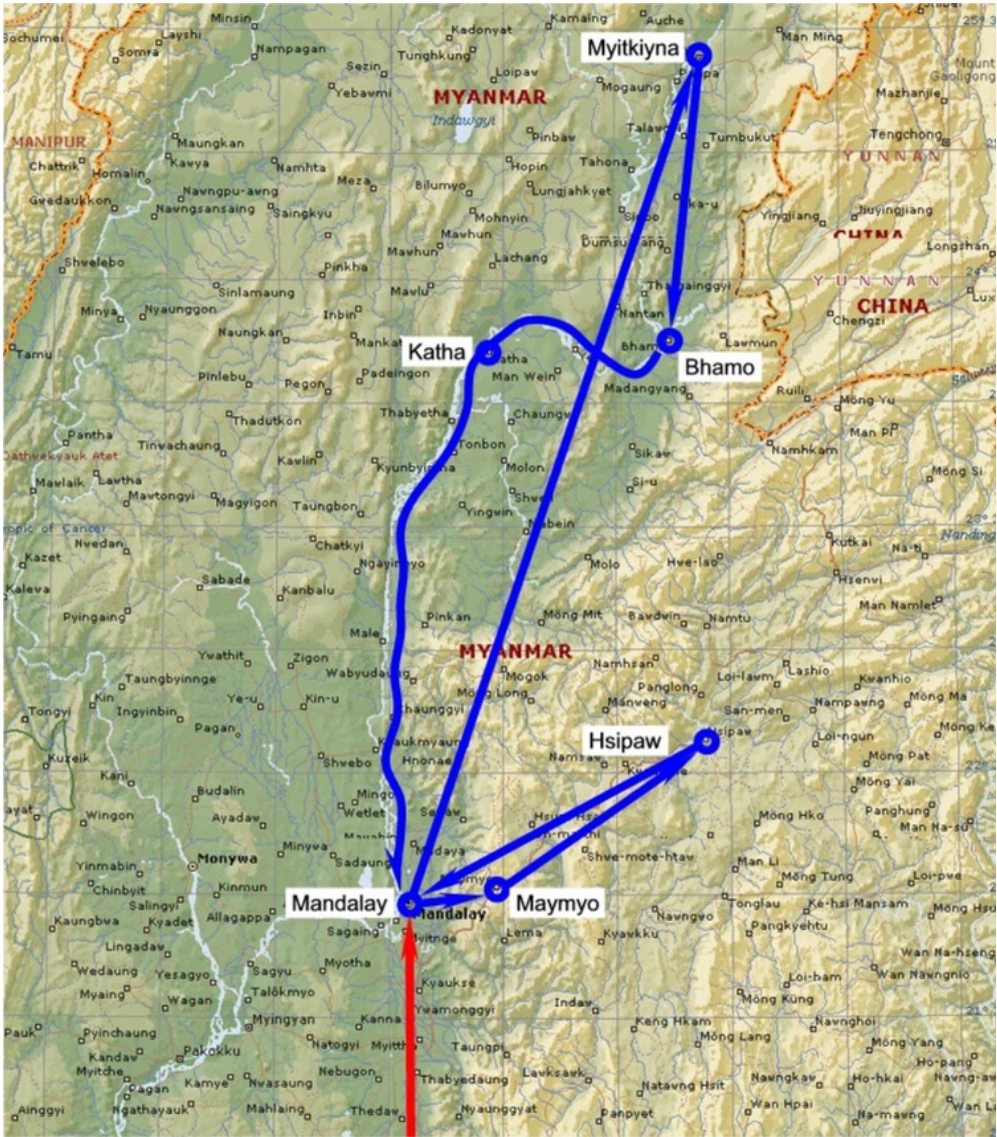
# MAPS

## India





# Myanmar North





# India

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2006 - Melbourne to Delhi**

**Days 01/02**

Due to an equipment problem the departure of QF9 was delayed a half hour until 17:40, however the pilot made up some time and we arrived in Singapore in plenty of time for the 23:10 departure of the Jet Airways flight, which departed on time, for Delhi.



**Barber - Karol Bagh**



**Karol Bagh**



**Karol Bagh**

The flight was far from full and I was able to get 3 seats together on the Boeing 737 and lie down and get some sleep during the 5½-hour flight to Delhi.

On arrival I was surprised to see Anne Turner from New Zealand board the airport bus. She had been with the group in Myanmar in 2005 and was doing both the India and Myanmar tour having also been booked to Sri Lanka and Myanmar. The organizer, Ian Marsh, canceled Sri Lanka as he considered it too dangerous to proceed given the deterioration of the security situation in Sri Lanka.



**Maintenance - Karol Bagh**

As it was 02:30, Anne had considered staying in the airport until daybreak before going to the Goodtimes Hotel in Karol Bagh. Instead we shared a prepaid taxi and arrived at the hotel just before 04:00. As I had

arranged to share Neville Collin's room for the balance of the night I had a bed to catch a few hours sleep. Anne had to wait in the hotel lobby until morning. However when Neville and I were both up we invited her to leave her bags in the room and wash up while she waited for a room to come available after midday.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karol\\_Bagh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karol_Bagh)

Anne, Neville and I spent the morning exploring the neighborhood looking

for a replacement for the jacket Anne had lost somewhere between her Singapore hotel and the airport.

Karol Bagh (Gardens) is a residential part of Delhi but the area around the hotel is mainly commercial with many small hotels and shops. Close to the hotel the shops sell accessories for cars and motorcycles. A few blocks away clothing and household goods predominate.

Our search was successful.

After a snack we decided to visit the Qutb Minar complex some distance from central Delhi. Finally after waiting an hour a taxi arrived and we started the journey through the Delhi traffic. It took over an hour to reach the site.

Qutb Minar is a victory tower nearly 73m high. This fine example of Afghan Islamic architecture was commenced by Qutub-ud-din, conqueror of the last Hindu empire, in 1193. Only the first of five stories was completed when he died. Firoz Shah finally completed the tower in 1368.

It is the tallest brick [minaret](#) in the world.

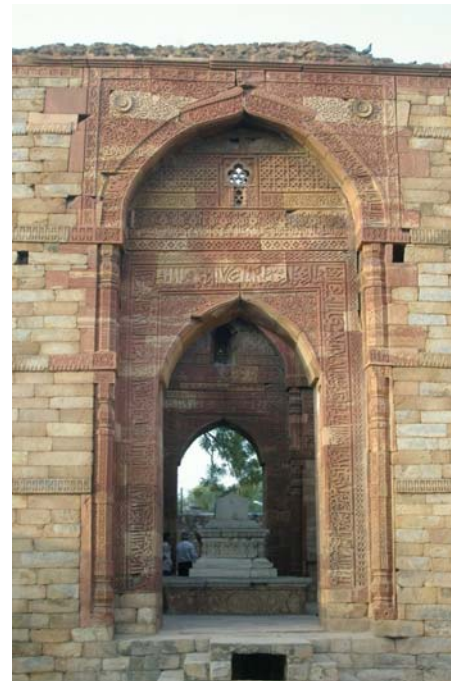
In 1803 an earthquake brought down the Cupola. A replacement by an Englishman was considered inappropriate and later removed.



Shrine - Karol Bagh



Qutb Minar



Gateway - Quwwat-ul-Islam  
Masjid



Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid



Around the tower are the remains of many fine buildings. The Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid was the first mosque built in India. Qutub-ud-din commenced building in 1193 on the site of a Hindu temple.



**Iron Pillar - Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid**

Altamash, Qutub-ud-din's son in law, surrounded the original Mosque with cloisters between 1210 and 1220.

Ala ud din Khilji started building the Alai Minar, which was conceived to be two times higher than Qutub Minar. The construction was abandoned,

however, after the completion of the 24.5 meter high first storey; soon after death of Ala-ud-din. The first story of the Alai Minar still stands today.



**Alai Minar**

An Iron Pillar stands in the centre of the Mosque. Originally located in a Vishnu temple to the memory of Chandragupta II (375-413AD) the quality of the iron is such that it shows little sign of rust. It is not known how this tower was cast as technology for producing this quality iron was not believed to be available nearly 2000 years ago.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qutb\\_complex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qutb_complex)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qutub\\_Minar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qutub_Minar)  
<http://www.delhi-tourism-india.com/forts-monuments/qutub-minar.htm>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi\\_iron\\_pillar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi_iron_pillar)

After 45 minutes exploring the site it was time to rejoin our taxi and make our way back through the traffic to meet the rest of our fellow travelers.

Qutub Minar is well worth a visit for the historical importance of the site and the elegance on the buildings.

Unfortunately many visitors pass it over because of the time it takes to get there and back.



**Cloisters - Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid**



**Column - Cloisters - Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid**



**Goodtimes Hotel - Karol Bagh**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi>

The morning is spent in Old Delhi, a place of colour and bustling activity that one can return to over and over.

Since Suzanne and I were in Delhi in 2001 the Metro has been completed and we are able to ride in comfort quickly from Karol Bagh to Old Delhi. The result is that we arrive as stalls are being set up and business is starting for the day.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi\\_Metro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi_Metro)  
<http://www.delhimetrorail.com/index.htm>  
<http://www.india4world.com/india-tour/india-transportation/railway/delhi-metrodream.shtml>

Our walk takes us past the Town Hall, Fatephur Masjid and along Chandni Chowk to the Sikh Temple, Sisganj Gurdawara, where we stop to visit the temple and inspect the kitchens that prepare 3000 charity meals a day.



**Town Hall - Old Delhi**

## Town Hall

Built in 1869-65, this Heritage building was amongst the first British Buildings in Shahjahanabad, after uprising. The present building was constructed on the site of Begum KI Sarai and Bagh which was demolished during the Mutiny Period.

Earlier known as the Institute Building, the purpose of this impressive building was to "improve" the local minds and "to forward intercourse between Europeans and Natives".

This double storied building is built around a courtyard with arched openings and accessible from porches on north and south ends. The Town Hall is flanked by similar structures on the east and west and also across the road which were earlier a part of the main complex. Over the years, the structure has undergone many additions and alterations.

Heritage Plaque



**Snake Charmer - Chandni Chowk - Old Delhi**

## Sisganj Gurdawara

Located on the main Chandni Chowk road, just opposite Baptist Church, before Sunheri Masjid lies one of the sacred places of Sikhs in the capital, Gurdwara Sisganj. The gurdwara commemorates the site where on the orders of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb Guru Tegh Bahadur; the ninth guru of the Sikhs was beheaded. He was martyred here in 1675 under a banyan tree because



he objected to emperor's use of force against the Hindus, who refused to renounce their faith and religion.

<http://www.indfy.com/places-to-see-in-delhi/old-delhi/gurudwara-sisganj.html>



**Chandni Chowk - Old Delhi**

Then it is on through the narrow streets of Old Delhi to Jama Masjid, the huge Mosque that can hold 25,000 people at prayer.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jama\\_Masjid,\\_Delhi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jama_Masjid,_Delhi)

<http://www.indiaprofile.com/monuments-temples/jamamasjid.htm>

<http://www.indiaplaces.com/india-monuments/delhi-jama-masjid.html>



**Inside Gurdwara Sisganj - Old Delhi**



**Kitchen - Gurdwara Sisganj - Old Delhi**

## Jama Masjid

Just 500 meters west of Red Fort lies the largest mosque of India, Jama Masjid. Originally called Masjid-i-Jahanuma or 'The Mosque commanding a view of the World', the Masjid is the last architectural work of Shah

Jahan. Jama Masjid is also known as Friday Mosque as 'Jama' means Friday, which is the holy day of the Muslims. The construction of the mosque began in 1650 and was completed after six years, in 1656. The mosque stands on a rock or a high platform and has three imposing double-storeyed gateways on the north, south and east to reach the courtyard. The eastern gateway, the largest of all was reserved for the emperor and the royal ladies. Tourists can enter the Masjid from the North or South gate and it is mandatory for both men and women to remove their shoes and cover themselves modestly, from head to toe.



**Chandni Chowk - Old Delhi**

The architect of this magnificent mosque was Ustad Khalil. Built of red sandstone, the main features of the mosque are its four-storeyed tapering minarets, which are 130 feet high, the full bulbous domes shaped like a drum at their base and the use of alternating stripes of black and white marble in all the three domes. Enclosed by pillared corridors with domed pavilions at the corners, the courtyard of the mosque measures around 100 square meters and has a capacity of 25000 people. In the center of the courtyard is an ablution tank, Hauz and in front of it is a raised platform called Dikka. The mosque is so big that muballigh (the second cleric), used to stand

on the Dikka and relay the chants of the Imam (the chief cleric) to the devotees who were unable to hear him. This practice was stopped when loudspeakers were introduced at prayer services in the Jama Masjid.



**Jama Masjid - Old Delhi**

In the northeast corner is a small pavilion containing relics of Prophet Mohammed, which is considered very sacred. Pilgrims from all over the world throng the place to see the precious contents like two very old copies of the Quran on deerskin, one long hair from the Prophet's beard, his sandals and a footprint of the Prophet in marble. It is said that in 1766, a worshipper had a vision here of the

Prophet standing by the celestial tank in paradise. It is believed that he will appear again here on Judgment Day. Though not mandatory it is advisable to offer some rupees here, as an offering, in good faith.



**Jama Masjid - Old Delhi**

On the west is the rectangular prayer hall, which measures 61 meters by 27.5 meters. It has a splendid façade of eleven arches decorated with marble frames. Panels with inscriptions in black and white marble are placed above the arches. The central arch of the façade is higher than the rest giving it a perfect proportion. The inscriptions inform visitors about the history of the structure, the cost of building the mosque (one million rupees), the architect and the builder (Nur Allah Ahmed). Three domes surmount the prayer hall, which is two-bays in depth with the western bay having only seven arches.

The special feature of this mosque is that the current chief cleric, Imam Bukhari, is the direct descendant of the Mullah who came from Bukhara to inaugurate the Jama Masjid, on 23rd July 1656, at the invitation of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan.

<http://www.indfy.com/places-to-see-in-delhi/old-delhi/jama-masjid.html>



**Market - Old Delhi**

By now it is lunchtime and we dine at a Karim's shaslik restaurant. After lunch Ronale and Geoff Jones and I head off to the nearby Red Fort. Time has prevented a visit here on previous visits.

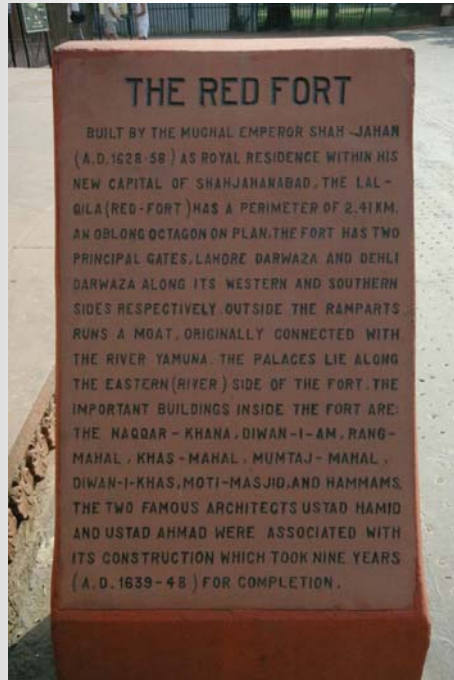
The Red Fort (Lal Quila) is an enormous complex surrounded by red sandstone walls up to 30m high and over 2km around.

Shah Jahan commenced building the fort in 1638 and it was completed in 1648. Many of the major buildings remain displaying the workmanship of the artisans who constructed them. The imposing Hall of Public Audiences with its elevated for the Shah and the delicate Hall of Private Audiences provide a glimpse of what this palace was like at its height with fountains playing and streams of water flowing through them to cool them. The gardens must also have been spectacular with ponds and formal streams. They are still a very pleasant park for Delhi residents to visit.

<http://www.frommers.com/destinations/delhi/A33215.html>



<http://www.delhi-tourism-india.com/forts-monuments/red-fort.htm>  
[http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.tcl?site\\_id=3232](http://archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.tcl?site_id=3232)



Red Fort

## Red Fort:

Originally known as Qila-e-Mualla, Red fort or Lal Qila was **built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan** after he transferred his capital to his newly planned city of Shahjahanabad (Delhi) from Agra in 1638. The foundation stone of this massive citadel was laid in 1639 and it was completed after

nine years in **1648**. Designed by the Mughal architects Ustad Hamid and Ahmad, Red Fort is an important symbolic monument in India even today. Every year on Independence Day (15th August) the Prime Minister of India hoists the national flag and addresses the nation, from the ramparts of Red fort.



Street Stall - Old Delhi



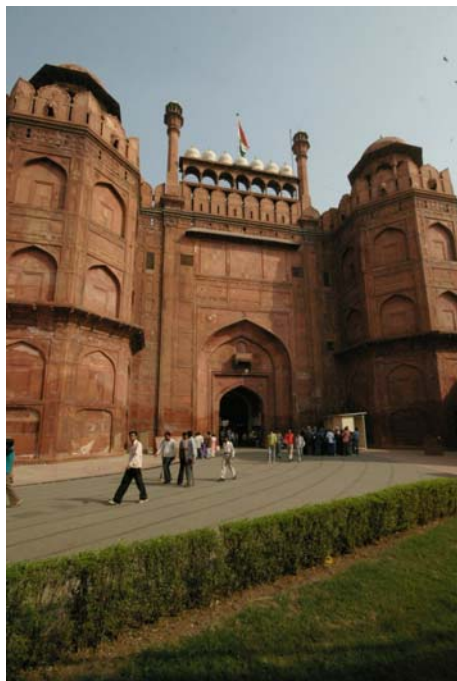
Hall of Public Audience - Red Fort

Built of red sandstone, the fort has an irregular octagonal shape. Its rampart walls cover a perimeter of 2.41 kilometers and rise to a height of 33.5 meters on the town side and 18 meters on the riverside. The Yamuna River used to flow on the eastern side of the fort when it was built, filling the moat that runs outside the ramparts. The moat was thus a considerable obstacle for an enemy army. However, the moat today remains empty as the river has moved, over 1 kilometer to the east.

To the north, a bridge of 900 meters by 550 meters, connects the fort with Salimgarh. It is said that the cost of construction of the whole fort, including the magnificent palaces and other buildings that the fort contains, was around one crore rupees in the Mughal period. However, during the First War of Independence of 1857, the British army occupied Red Fort, and demolished more than 75 percent of the fort. A number of palaces and other structures were razed and massive barracks for soldiers were constructed inside the fort, thereby diminishing the overall elegance and beauty of this imposing stronghold. Though much has changed after 1857, the remaining structures in the fort still reflect the zenith of technical excellence of the craftsmen of Mughal times. Until recently the Indian army was stationed within Red Fort but now the Archaeological Survey of India maintains the entire complex. The remaining palaces lie along the eastern side of the fort, with two three-storeyed main gateways located at the center of the western and southern walls. These gates are known as **Lahore Gate** and **Delhi Gate**. There are three other entrances on other sides but they are now closed and entry through them is restricted.

**Lahore Gate:** The **main entrance to the Red Fort** is through this imposing gateway flanked by semi-octagonal towers. The gate is named thus because it faces West, towards Lahore in Pakistan. The North-facing gate from where one enters and the fortifications before the original Lahore gate were built later by Aurangzeb to make it more difficult for an attacking army to enter. It is here, at the top of the fortification that the Prime Minister of India

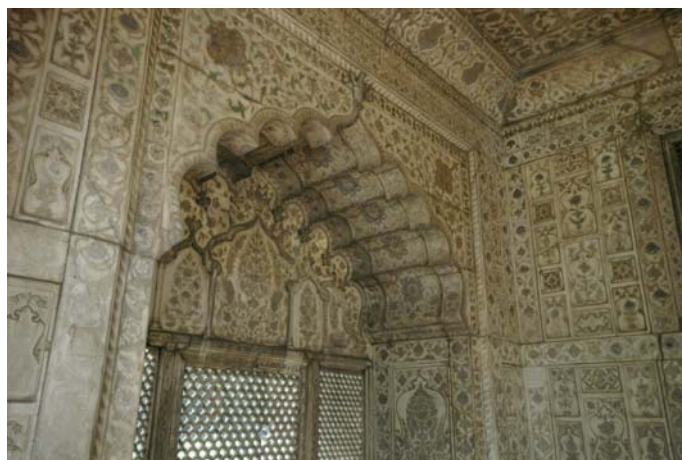
hoists the national flag on Independence Day every year. Other senior Indian leaders are seated on either side of the flagpole along the length of the balcony.



**Entrance to the Red Fort -  
Lahore Gate**

In 1986 for security reasons all the windows of Shah Jahan's gateway were blocked with red sandstone. There is also a lift just before the Lahore Gate, built in 1965, which is used on Independence Day. Lahore Gate has several apartments inside it and it is said that the huge bronze-covered wooden door of the gate was so heavy that elephants were used to

close and open the door. Across the road from Lahore gate is Chandni Chowk, one of the fascinating markets of Old Delhi.



**Decoration - Khas Mahal - The Emporer's Residence  
- Red Fort**

**Chatta Chowk:** As you enter the Lahore Gate, arcaded apartments flank the passage, which is known as Chatta Chowk. Also known as **Meena Bazaar**, this was **one of the first covered bazaars of the 17th century**. The shops of that era sold pure silks, jewellery, gems, silver ware and other artistic objects and catered primarily to Mughal courtiers and noble families. It is said that there were also teashops here, where nobles used to meet and discuss the latest court gossip and news of the kingdom. Today the shops in the Chowk sell souvenirs and eatables and drinks. They are now located only in the lower arcade whereas in Mughal times the shops were located on the upper as well as lower arcades. These vaulted arcades are made up of natural sandstone. The shops in the lower arcade had cusped arches. In the middle of the Chatta Chowk, there is also an open section for the sunlight and fresh air to enter. From the end of the bazaar, the view of Drum House was picturesque as the large square courtyard and water tank, provided a clear view, unlike later when much was

altered with the British occupation. They destroyed the elegance of the monument by building multi-storey barracks north of the courtyard.

**Naubat or Naqqar Khana:** The next structure after the Chowk is the Naubat or Naqqar Khana. Also called **Drum House**, it was used for playing music five times a day. The music galleries contained large musical instruments like kettledrums, hautboys (shehnai) and cymbals. It was also called Hathipol as everyone, except for the royal princes, had to dismount from their elephants here. It was here that the arrival of royalty was heralded as well as the festivities were announced. Built with red sandstone, the structure is rectangular in shape. It is said that the carved designs on its walls were originally painted with gold. In the interior different layers were painted with a combination of colors. The first floor of the Naubat Khana now houses a **War Memorial Museum**. The museum contains arms and armaments used by the rulers of Mughal times. It also has paintings of various kings and rulers and their activities. It includes a brief description of India's First war of Independence in 1857.



**Diwani Khas - Hall of Private Audience - Red Fort**





**Throne - Hall of Public Audience -  
Red Fort**

### **Main structures in Red Fort:**

**Diwan-i-Am:** Raised on arches supported by pillars and with a façade of nine engraved arch openings, the Diwan-i-Am is the next structure, which one comes across, inside the fort complex. It is the **Hall of Public Audience** where the emperor received the general public and listened to their complaints. Justice was carried out at once and various methods were used to punish the convict, including beheading! It houses a marble canopy or baldachin

under which stood the throne of the Emperor. The marble throne canopy was also known as 'The Seat of the Shadow of God'. It also had once a gold-plated railing that surrounded the throne canopy. The hall was covered by a thin layer of white plaster to create the effect of white marble and was ornamented with gilded stuccowork. The marble dais below the throne is where the prime minister heard the complaints and conveyed them to the emperor. At the back of the throne were the inlaid panels with multicolored stones, representing flowers and birds. It is said that Austin Bordeaux, a Florentine jeweller, made the panels but some are of the opinion that the intricate floral inlay work was done by Indian craftsmen. The central panel has the figure of the Greek God Orpheus, unusual in Islamic buildings and is the only example of such imagery in the whole complex. These panels were damaged during the War of Independence of 1857 and were removed to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. However they were restored in 1903 at the instance of Lord Curzon. The hall originally had a courtyard at the front which extended upto the Drum House. Silver plated poles covered the courtyard, where minor officials and the crowd stood and watched the proceedings of the day.

**Mumtaz Mahal:** Mumtaz Mahal is the southern end of all the palaces along the eastern wall of the Fort. Originally, along the riverfront, there were six main palaces and the Stream of Paradise or Nahr-i-Bihisht flowed through them. Mumtaz Mahal is one of them and it was **the residence of Jahanara Begum, Shah Jahan's favorite daughter** and the head of the royal harem. The Mahal had six apartments divided by arched piers and was the part of the imperial seraglio. The interesting feature of the Mahal is that only the lower half of its walls and pillars are built with marble. Today the Mahal houses a **Museum of the Archaeological Survey of India**. The museum contains souvenirs, weapons, paintings, scenes of courtly life and carpets, largely belonging to the Mughal period.

#### **Diwan-i-Khas:**

*Agar firdaus bar rue zamin ast  
Hamin ast o hamin ast o hamin ast.*

(If there is paradise on earth. It is this, it is this, it is this)

The inscription of the great poet Amir Khusrau over the corner arches of the northern and southern walls in the hall very aptly describes the beauty of Diwan-i-Khas. The emperor used Diwan-i-Khas or the **Hall of Private Audience** for holding private meetings with selected courtiers and visitors. Surrounded by aisles of arches rising from piers, the hall consists of a rectangular central chamber made of white marble. The lower parts of the piers were carved with floral designs while the upper portions were artistically gilded and painted. The hall was so designed that the 'stream of paradise' or Nahr-i-Bihisht used to flow through the center of the hall. In the center of the hall over the marble pedestal once stood the famous **Peacock Throne**, which was looted by Nadir Shah in 1739. The Peacock Throne, also known as Takht-i-Taus, was made of pure gold and measured about 6 feet long and 4 feet wide. There were twelve gold gem-studded columns attached to the base of the throne, supporting a gold canopy lined with diamonds and pearls. On the top of the canopy stood the gold peacock with its sapphire studded tail. It is said that the throne was the most expensive throne of the world and was made at a cost of 10 billion rupees. Diwan-i-Khas is where Bahadur Shah II held court during the First War of Independence in 1857 after he proclaimed himself the Emperor of India. The Marathas also destroyed some parts of the hall and took away some precious gems in 1760. In 1788 the Rohilla leader, Ghulam Qadir, blinded the Emperor Shah Alam within the Diwan-i-Khas, in an attempt to extract treasure from him.

**Khas Mahal:** Khas Mahal was the private palace of the Mughal Emperor. It consists of different sets of rooms, which were used by the emperor for sleeping, worshipping and living. 'Tasbih Khana' was a set of three rooms, which was used by the emperor for his private worship. Also known as 'Chamber of Telling beads', these rooms faced the elegant Diwan-i-Khas. The three rooms of the Khwabgah or the 'sleeping chamber' were behind the Tasbih Khana. On the southern arch of the

Khwabgah is an inscription, which tells visitors that the building was constructed in 1639 and was completed in 1648. The 'sitting room' or the Baithak Khana was the long hall to the south of sleeping chamber. This hall that once had beautifully painted walls and ceilings and a perforated screen on its western side is also said to be the Tosh Khana or the 'robe chamber'.



**Decoration - Hall of Private Audience - Red Fort**

Crossing the Stream of Paradise in the northern end of these rooms lies the beautiful marble screen or jalis depicting the celestial bodies and a

'Scale of Justice'. There is also a gate beneath the Khas Mahal known as Khirzi Mahal. Though today it is difficult to make out but the gate was an important entrance for the emperor himself and his most senior nobles.

**Muthamman Burj:** Muthamman Burj is the octagonal tower, which lies near the eastern wall of the Khwabgah. The Emperor appeared before his subjects at this tower, every morning. It is said that if for some reason the Emperor didn't appear, there was near panic in the city. This ceremonial appearance was known as Darshan. Later Akbar II constructed a balcony in 1808-09, which projected from the center of the Burj. There is an inscription over its arches that records the year of its construction. The balcony is historically important as King George V and Queen Mary appeared here before the public in 1911.

**Rang Mahal:** Rang Mahal, also known as the Palace of Colour, is built on a basement, and consists of a large hall. The hall derives its name from its painted interior, which was wholly defaced after the War of Independence in 1857 when the British army occupied and used it as an officer's barrack. Rang Mahal was either the common room of the Royal ladies or the residence of the emperor's chief wife and is said to be the place where the emperor took most of his meals. The main hall is divided into six apartments by arches built on piers. The walls and ceilings of these apartments were embedded with tiny mirrors and the hall is also known as Shish Mahal or the Hall of mirrors. In the center of the main hall is a beautifully carved marble lotus, which was originally surrounded by fountains. The ceiling above this lotus pool was made with silver and decorated with golden flowers, which reflected in the pool making it a wonderful sight. The hall was part of the imperial seraglio and the Stream of Paradise flowed along its length. In the basement of the hall are rooms, which were used by the ladies during the summer. The rooms were also beautifully decorated and were designed in a such a manner that they stayed cool during the hot summer months.

**Hamam:** Located to the north of the Diwan-i-Khas, the Hamam housed the royal baths. It consisted of three apartments separated by corridors and surmounted by a dome. The floors of the apartments are built with marble and featured pietra dura work (inlaid floral patterns of multicolored stones). The eastern chamber was used as the dressing room. It housed three fountains, one of which is said to have emitted scented rose water. The western chamber was used for hot and vapor baths. The central chamber also had a fountain basin in its center. Visitors can take a look at the baths from outside as the Hamam is closed to the public.

**Moti Masjid:** This small mosque lies on the west of the Hamam and is also known as Pearl Mosque. Aurangzeb built the mosque in 1659 for his private use. The mosque took five years to complete. The prayer hall of the mosque was built in black marble and stands at a higher level than the courtyard. The hall is covered by three domes, which were originally copper plated. It is said that the royal ladies of the seraglio also used the mosque. However it is still not known why the mosque was called 'Pearl Mosque'. The mosque is closed to the public.

**Hayat Bakhsh Bagh:** Hayat Bakhsh Bagh or the Life-Giving Garden is located to the north of the Moti Masjid. The real gardens were all uprooted during the First War of Independence in 1857 by the British. Only the general outline of the original garden can be seen today as the rest was destroyed and replaced with simple lawns. The original gardens were laid out in the pattern of Mughal Gardens. They were divided into squares, with water channels, pools and pavilions between them. The garden had two marble pavilions in the center of the northern and southern sides called Sawan and Bhadon, the two principal months of the rainy season. There was also a tank with niches for candles as well as gold and silver flowerpots on the sides of the northern pavilion. Bahadur Shah II built the red sandstone pavilion in the center of the garden in the 19th century. The pavilion is known as

Zafar Mahal. To the west is Mehtab Bagh, which has a baoli (step well) to its northwest.



**Ceiling Decoration - Hall of Private Audience - Red Fort**

**Shahi Burj** Located on the northeastern corner of the garden is the royal tower or Shahi Burj. The dome of the tower was destroyed during the War of 1857. The tower is said to be the emperor's private working area, where the emperor also organized private gatherings. The roof of the tower is said to be one of the

hallmarks of Shah Jahan's architectural design. The tower was octagonal in shape and had three storeys. The Stream of Paradise or Nahr-i-Bhisht flowed from here along the Royal Terrace through the Hammam, Diwan-i-Khas, Khas Mahal, and the Rang Mahal. The lower storey of the tower contained a water tank from which water was released to flow into the gardens and palaces. The pavilion adjoining the tower on the south is said to have been built during Aurangzeb's reign.



**Lawns - Red Fort**

### **Other structures in Red Fort:**

**Asad Burj:** Located on the southeastern corner of the fort stands the Asad Burj tower. This tower was also damaged during the War of 1857. It has a similar design as the Shahi Burj but is not so elegant.

**Moti Mahal and Hira Mahal:** Bahadur Shah II built these two Mahal or palaces along the eastern wall of the fort. The palaces or Mahals were built on raised land. The northern Mahal was known as the Moti Mahal (Pearl Palace) while the southern Mahal was known as Hira

Mahal. However, the palaces were also damaged during the War of 1857 by the British.

**Delhi Gate:** Delhi Gate was the other important gate of the Red Fort. Equally elegant, massive and similar in structure to Lahore Gate, Delhi Gate is now closed to public. The emperor used this gate when he led his ceremonial procession every Friday to the Jama Masjid. The area beyond Delhi Gate is known as Daryaganj, another famous market place of Delhi.

**Swatantra Sangrahalaya:** As one enters Red Fort from Lahore Gate, you will find a museum on the left side after crossing Chatta Chowk. The museum presents the brief history of Indian Independence, highlighting the main incidents of the struggle and contributions of prominent leaders of the country. It houses the idols of the leaders, chronological pictorial representation of the struggle and maps of India in different centuries. The museum also contains souvenirs, tokens and relics of historical importance.

<http://www.indfy.com/places-to-see-in-delhi/old-delhi/red-fort.html>

<http://www.indfy.com/places-to-see-in-delhi/old-delhi/red-fort1.html>

The three of us return to the hotel by motor rickshaw for the ride. The Metro would have been more reliable; nevertheless the return took about 30 minutes and apart from a near collision with a motorcycle that ran a red light we arrived safely.

At 21:00 we left the hotel to catch the 22:30 overnight train to Mizapur where we will start our river cruise.





**Drifting under sail**

The overnight trip in the two tier, aircon, sleeper carriage has been reasonably comfortable and we arrive at Mizapur at about 10:00 where we are met by our guide for the river trip and two Ambassador taxis. We pile in and in about 30 minutes we are at the bank of the Ganga where there is a long pontoon bridge.

Except for our leader, Claire, none of us have any idea of the boats we will travel down river to Varanasi in.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganges>  
<http://www.cs.albany.edu/~amit/ganges.html>



**Boatman carrying our bags to the boats**



**Pontoon bridge at Mizapur**



**Waiting to board**



**Our Boatmen**

Beside the bank are three small boats with colorful canopies. Our group splits and three of us board one boat and four another; the third boat is the kitchen boat and will accompany us down the Ganga to Varanasi.





**Concentration**

Our luggage is soon on board and we follow, settling ourselves onto the mattresses and rugs spread out on the bottom of the boat. Each boat has two boatmen who we soon find will row us to Varanasi and if the wind is favorable set a square sail to help us on our way.



**Underway**

We are soon on our way and after passing between the pontoons the bridge set sail and are gliding down the river.



**Colonial Cemetery - Chunar**



**Chunar Fort**



**Chunar Fort**



**Chunar Fort**

It is hot, very hazy and humid and apart from the riverbanks alongside it is difficult to see what is ahead and what is behind. Occasionally we pass little fishing boats and villages on the bank. In the distance we can

hear traffic on the bridge and sometimes a train. Eventually we are too far from the bridge and we are drifting in silence broken only by the sounds of our voices, the dipping of oars and flapping of the sail in the very light breeze. Sometimes the surface of the river is like a mirror and the other boats cast sharp reflections on the water.



**Chunar Fort**

Soon after departure the kitchen boat comes alongside with morning tea as we drift along.

The river is well below peak height reached during the monsoon, but it is still flowing quite quickly in the

narrower parts and we are moving along fairly quickly. The wind is fluky and from time to time the sail has to be lowered and the boatmen row.



**Children at Chunar**



**Cow Dung drying for fuel**

We often cannot see the villages behind the high banks, however their presence is revealed by boats on the bank, women washing clothes and children playing; many of whom wave and greet us as we pass.

It is soon lunchtime and the kitchen boat comes alongside again with salad, rice and a selection of vegetable dishes; all delicious, but far too much for us. No worries the boatmen polish off their lunch and our leftovers.

Around 15:30 Chunar Fort comes into view and around 16:00 we land and walk through the village to this fort, built by the Mogul Emperors and used by the British.

The fort first became important in the fights between the Pathans and the Mughals in the 11<sup>th</sup> C. After several attempts it was stormed by the British in 1765 and seven years later was handed over to the East India Company. (Slowly Down the Ganges – Eric Newby)

There is now a small garrison of Indian Army soldiers. The fort has commanding views up and down the river and must once have been an important strategic position.

## Chunar Fort – History

Basically the fort of Chunar was established by Maharaja Vikramaditya the King of Ujjain to commemorate the stay of his brother Raja Bhartihari who had taken his Samadhi in alive stage and still that Samadhi Sthal is worshiped.

As per Alha Khand in 1029 AD. King Sahadeo made this fort as his capital and established the statue of Naina Yogini in a cave of Vindhya hill and put the name as Nainagarh. King Sahadeo built a stone umbrella based on 52 pillars in the memory of the victory on 52 other kings, inside the fort which is still preserved. He had a brave daughter who got married with Alha the then King of Mahoba whose marriage place is still preserved with the name of Sonya Mandap. Beside this some other stories are also related with the fort as Magna- Deogarh, Ratan Deo's Burj (tower) and King Pithaura who named it Patthargarh as well.





**Setting Sun at Chunar**

It has got much importance due to the stay of the founder of Mughal Dynasty Babar in 1525 AD. Later on Shershah Suri obtained the possession of the fort by marrying the wife of Taj Khan Sarang-Khani, the Governor of Ibrahim Lodi. In 1531 AD. The second king of Mughals Humayun done an unsuccessful effort to capture this fort. In 1574 AD. Akbar the great captured this fort and since that very time it was in the Mughal region upto 1772 AD. Once emperor Jahangir appointed one Iftikhar Khan as Nazim and in the regime of Aurangzeb one of his Governor's Mirza Bairam built a mosque in 1663 AD. near the Bharo-Burj.



**Round the Campfire**

In 1772AD this fort was captured by East India Company who established in it a depot of Artillery and ammunition. Later it was taken by Maharaja Chet Singh of Benaras temporarily and after Chet Singh out break in 1781AD. Warren Hastings retired for safety to Chunar where a force was collected by Major Phophan, which expelled Chet Singh from his strong hold in his neighbourhood. Hastings liked the situation and climate, his residence is still standing. Near it, there is a Sundial bearing the inscription.

"Erected by order of the Hon'ble Warren Hastings. Esq. Governor General c & e in 1784". Latitude 25' 07' 36' N and Longitude 83' 09' 15" E , from Greenwich. James S. Ewart Lieutenant."

At present it is the training centre of Provincial Armed Core (PAC).

<http://varanasi.nic.in/tourist/tourist8.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chunar>

After inspecting the fort and a little banter with the children of the town we continue, passing through another pontoon bridge to a large sandbar that will be our campsite for the night.

The boatmen quickly set up tents and a latrine shelter and set about preparing the evening meal. Again vegetarian and delicious!

We sit around the campfire for a while and then retire to our tents. The sand is hard and the mattresses are not very effective and most of us do not get a very good night's sleep



**Rising Moon over the Ganga**

In the morning we are all up very early. It was quite cool and jackets were needed for a while.



**Rising Sun through the haze - Ganga**



**Camp on the sandbank - Ganga**

Our cook served a breakfast of cereal, porridge and toast and jam. Breakfast over, the camp was struck and by 08:00 we were on our way again. The wind is unfavourable and the boatmen must row.



**Breakfast by the Ganga**



**Beside the Ganga**

Around midday we reach the small town of Sharpur and go ashore to visit the little school. We are welcomed and proudly shown the school, but it was depressing to see the state of the buildings and the non-existent facilities.



**Multiplication Table in Hindi - Sharpur School**



**School Children with Anne and Claire - Sharpur**





**Man making a plough - Sharpur**



**Ram Nagar Fort**



**Monkeys on the Ghat - Varanasi**



**Assi Ghat - Varanasi**

On our way again and we are soon approaching the abandoned Fort Ram Nagar. This once magnificent building stands high on a bluff on the southern bank of the Ganga a short distance upstream from Varanasi. It is the ancestral home of the Maharajah of Banaras and houses a museum testifying to the opulence of life in the fort in the days of the Maharajahs.

<http://www.varanasicity.com/ramnagar-fort.html>

During the trip we have seen many Ganges Dolphin, small and large.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irrawaddy\\_Dolphin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irrawaddy_Dolphin)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganges\\_River\\_Dolphin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganges_River_Dolphin)

About 14:00 we land at Assi Ghat and make our way to the Hotel Temple on the Ganges, the same hotel that I had spent all my time in bed in 2001.



**Ghat - Varanasi**

Situated at the confluence of Ganga and Asi rivers, Assi Ghat is the southernmost Ghat in Varanasi, where pilgrims bathe before paying their homage to Lord Shiva in the form of huge lingam situated under a peepal tree. Assi Ghat also constitutes the southern end of conventional city. Another lingam worshipped here is the Asisangameshwar lingam representing the lord of confluence of the Asi, enshrined in a small marble temple near the Assi Ghat. It was at the Assi Ghat where the famous Indian poet saint, Tulsi Das had written the much-celebrated Ramcharitmanas.



**Intake for Varanasi water supply**

There are numerous references of Assi Ghat in early literature of the Hindus. We find the mention of Assi Ghat in matsya purana, Agni purana, kurma purana, padma purana and kashi khanda. According legends, Goddess Durga had thrown her sword after slaying the demon, Shumbha-Nishumbha. The place, where the sword had fallen resulted in a big stream, known as Assi River. Assi Ghat is located at the confluence of River Ganga and Assi River. In Kashi Khand, Assi Ghat is referred as Assi "Saimbeda Tirtha" and according to it one gets punya of all the Tirthas (religious places) by taking a dip here.

Thousands of Hindu pilgrims take holy dip here in the months of Chaitya (March/ April) and Magh (Jan/Feb) and other important occasions like solar/ lunar eclipse, Ganga Dussehra, Probodhoni Ekadashi, Makar Shankranti etc.

<http://www.varanasicity.com/assi-ghat.html>



**Ghat - Varanasi**

Whilst we had not done much strenuous activity for a couple of days we had also not had a great deal of sleep so we retired to our rooms until 16:45.

At 16:45 we gather for a walk along the Ghats, stairs leading to the water, from Assi Ghat to Dasaswamedh Ghat where we stop and watch the spectacular Ganga Aarti ceremony.

Dasaswamedh Ghat is one of the most important Ghats of Varanasi. Dasaswamedh literally means the Ghat (river front) of ten sacrificed horses. According to legends ten horses were sacrificed by Lord Brahma to allow Lord Shiva to return from a period of banishment. In spite of the fact that Dasaswamedh is one of the oldest Ghats of

Varanasi, dating back to many thousand years, the Ghat has remained unspoilt and clean.

Dasaswamedh provides a beautiful and colorful riverfront view. A large number of Sadhus can be seen performing religious rites on this Ghat. Devotees must not miss the opportunity of visiting the Dasaswamedh Ghat in the evening when after Aarti, thousands of earthen lamps are immersed in the waters of the holy Ganges and the floating lamps give a divine look to the river at dusk.

<http://www.varanasicity.com/dasaswamedh-ghat.html>

<http://www.webindia123.com/city/up/varanasi/attr.htm?cat=Places%20of%20Interest>

<http://varanasi.nic.in/default.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varanasi>

At around 19:00 we walk towards Old Varanasi and catch cycle rickshaws to a Lebanese restaurant near the hotel for dinner.



**Ganga Arti - Dasaswamedh Ghat**





Ornate Doorway - Varanasi

## History

The information as to how and from whom the city was founded is still unknown. According to legend, the city was founded by the [Hindu](#) deity [Shiva](#). The "jyotirlinga" named Vishweshwara or Vishwanatha is the presiding deity of Varanasi, making Varanasi one of the eight most sacred places of pilgrimage for the Hindus.

Many references to the city of Varanasi are found in many ancient texts, leading to more mystery. It has been suggested that the city is as old as 5000 years old, though other claims may push the date further into history. Some believe that Varanasi is the [oldest continually inhabited city in the world](#).



Painting of Benares in 1890.

Varanasi was a commercial and industrial centre famous for its muslin and silk fabrics, perfumes, ivory works, and sculpture. During the time of [Gautama Buddha](#) (born circa 567 BCE), Varanasi was the capital of the [kingdom of Kashi](#). Buddha gave his first sermon at the nearby town of [Sarnath](#). The city remained a centre of religious, educational, and artistic activities as attested by the celebrated Chinese traveler [Xuanzang](#), who also said that the city extended for about 5 km along the western bank of the Ganges.



Some is our laundry - Varanasi



Vegetable stall - Varanasi

After the Muslim occupation, Varanasi subsequently declined during the following centuries. A symbol of Hinduism, the city was pillaged and destroyed several times by the Muslims, first by the hordes of [Mahmud of](#)

[Ghazni](#) in [1033 CE](#), all Hindu temples being destroyed. The material was used to build mosques. Although some relief was brought by Mughal emperor [Akbar](#) in the start of 16th century CE, another destruction was led by the Mughal emperor [Aurangzeb](#) in end of the 16th century CE, who renamed the city Mohammadâbâd. In these years of Muslim rule, learned scholars fled to other parts of the country. Later the [Marathas](#) came to rescue the city.



**Colours of Old Varanasi**

Varanasi became an independent kingdom in the 18th century CE, and under subsequent British rule it remained a commercial and religious

centre. In 1910 CE the British made Varanasi a new Indian state, with Ramnagar as headquarters but with no jurisdiction over the city of Varanasi. Kashi Naresh (Maharaja of Kashi) still resides in the fort of Ramnagar.



**Varanasi (Benares) in 1922.**

It is also said that [Ayurveda](#) was originated at Varanasi. References to Varanasi can be found in age-old Indian scriptures and hymns. One such reference is found in one of the hymns written by [Sri Veda Vyasa](#):

*Ganga-taranga-ramaneeya-jataakalaapam,  
Gauri-nirantara-vibhushita- vaamabhaagam.  
Narayanapriyam-Ananga-madaapahaaram,  
Varanasi -pura-patim bhaja Vishwanatham.*

Famous American writer [Mark Twain](#) once wrote, "Benares is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together!"

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varanasi>

To Hindus Varanasi is one of the most sacred cities in India and pilgrims come to wash away their sins in

Mother Ganga. It is also an auspicious place to die as to die here releases one from the cycle of life and death.



### Contrasts

After breakfast at the nearby Bread of Life bakery we head for the Old Town in cycle rickshaws. Out of consideration for the rickshaw boys and the local economy we now travel one to a rickshaw.

The Old Town is a maze of little streets and alleys filled with small shops and stalls filled with goods for the visiting tourists, mainly Indian Hindus visiting Varanasi to worship in the Vishwanath Temple and beside the banks of the Ganga and bath in the river. Faith in the holiness of the river is essential. Water for Varanasi is drawn from the Ganga near Assi Ghat upstream from the many sewage discharge points along the river amongst the nearly 5km on Ghats. The water is heavily polluted with human waste. At Assi Ghat the water is technically unsafe for swimming and it is worse downstream.

The Vishwanath Temple is the main temple dedicated to Shiva in Varanasi. The city is considered Shiva's city. Located in the heart of the old town it is closed to non-Hindus and heavily guarded against possible attack by



Muslims seeking revenge for the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque by Hindu mobs.



**Claire in earnest discussions**

## Kashi Vishwanath Temple - History!

This temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is popularly known as the 'Golden Temple' due the gold plating done on its 15.5 meter high spire. One tonne of gold donated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh has been used in the gold plating of the spire. The temple was destroyed by various

invaders and was rebuilt in 1776 by Rani Ahilyabai of Indore. Today, due to security reasons, metal detectors are placed throughout the temple.



**Ronaele and Anne outside the Bread of Life Bakery**



**Fabric shop - Varanasi**

The Vishvanath temple was, however, destroyed by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb who built the Gaynvapi Mosque in its place. Even today the western wall of the mosque show the remnants of a temple which had very

intricate and fine artwork on it. Both the Kashi Vishwanath and the Gyanvapi mosque are adjacent to each other.



**School Children - Old Varanasi**

Standing on the western bank of India's holiest river Ganges, Varanasi is the oldest surviving city of the world and the cultural capital of India. It is in the heart of this city that there stands in its fullest majesty the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in which is enshrined the Jyotirlinga of Shiva, Vishweshwara or Vishwanatha. Here gravitate the teeming millions of India to seek benediction and spiritual peace by the darshan of this Jyotirlinga which confers liberation from the bondages of maya and the inexorable entanglements of the world. A simple glimpse of the Jyotirlinga is a soul-cleansing experience that transforms life and puts it on the path of knowledge and bhakti. Vishweshwara jyotirlinga has a very special and unique significance in the spiritual history of India. Tradition has it that the merits earned by the darshan of other jyotirlinga scattered in various parts of India accrue to devotee by a single visit to Kashi Vishwanath Temple. Deeply and intimately implanted in the Hindu mind, the Kashi Vishwanath Temple has been a living embodiment of our timeless cultural traditions and highest spiritual values. The Temple has been visited by all great saints-

Adi Shankaracharya, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekanand, Goswami Tulsidas, Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, Gurunanak and several other spiritual personalities. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple attracts visitors not only from India but abroad as well and thereby symbolises man's desire to live in peace and harmony with one another. Vishwanath being a supreme repository of this spiritual truth thus strengthens the bonds of universal brotherhood and fellow feeling at the national as well as global levels.

Pradesh and its management ever since stands entrusted to a Trust with Dr. Vibhuti Narayan Singh. Former Kashi Naresh, as president and an Executive Committee with Divisional Commissioner as Chairman. The Temple in the present shape was built way back in 1780 by Late Maharani Ahilya Bai Holkar of Indore. In the year 1785 a Naubatkhana was built up in front of the Temple by the then collector Mohd. Ibrahim Khan at the instance of Governor General Warren Hastings. In 1839, Two domes of the Temple were covered by gold donated by Punjab Kesari Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. Third dome but was remained uncovered, Ministry of cultures & Religious affairs of U.P. Govt. took keen interest for gold plating of third dome of Temple.

<http://www.kashivishwanath.org/>



**Assi Ghat**



**Musicians - a tabla player and a sitar player**

The ancient city - it was ancient even when Buddha preached there in 530 BC - is home to over a million people. Mark Twain visited over a century ago and commented that Varanasi was 'older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together'.



**Narrow Street - Old Varanasi**

On January 28, 1983 the Temple was taken over by the Govt. of Uttar

Pradesh. Several of the ghats are reserved for the burial rites of Hindus. Known as Burning Ghats because the dead are cremated on funeral pyres beside the river. The ashes are scattered in the river. The whole process seems to have become a spectacle sport for tourists with local urchins directing visitors to them.

## Varanasi's Burning Ghats, India

Varanasi - on the western banks of the sacred Ganges River in Uttar Pradesh - is one of the holiest cities in India. There's no better way to hedge your bets on that next incarnation than to die in Varanasi, where your body can be cast into the holy river for a watery burial.

The Ganges cleanses all sins and ensures a release from the Hindu cycle of rebirths: it's an instant passport to heaven. Many elderly and ill people come to Varanasi to die, and old Sadhus (men who have given up their worldly possessions for a life of absolute religious devotion) congregate along the river banks.





**In Old Varanasi**



**Temple sinking into the Ganga mud**

Varanasi is best known for its ghats - there are over 100 of the riverside structures. While most of the ghats are used for sacred bathing by pilgrims, it is the few burning ghats - easily accessible to visitors - that really grip the ghoulish.



**Candles**

Burning ghats, such as the auspicious Manikarnika Ghat, are where the dead are cremated. First thing in the morning is the best time to observe the death rituals in Varanasi; the light is at its most striking, draping a honey glow across the buildings rising steeply from the river.

In India death - like defecation - happens in public: funeral pyres are open to everyone, and there's little of the fear or squeamishness everpresent in Western funeral parlours. Little kids rummage through the ashes for valuables that the owners will no longer be needing, while only metres away the devout cleanse themselves in the (slightly ashy) waters of the Ganges.

To begin the ceremonies, the shrouded corpse is carried through the streets by outcasts known as *chandal*, followed by the deceased's family, chanting and praying. Funeral pyres are built and tended to all day, and cremations regularly take place simultaneously on the

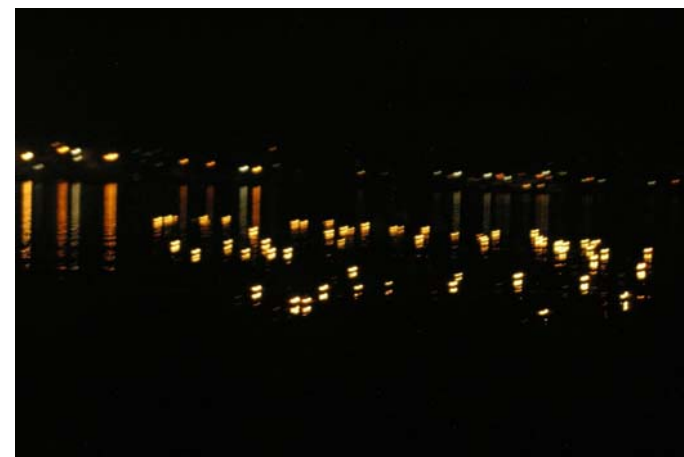
same ghat. The Dom Rajas are keepers of the sacred fire - which is never allowed to be extinguished - and cremators of the dead. Armed with wooden sticks, they poke at the fires, keeping things moving along.

Some 250 corpses a day are dealt with at the burning ghats. Once the cremation is complete, the remains are scattered to the four elements, with most of the ashes ending up in the water, floating merrily on their way to *moksha*.

[http://www.lonelyplanet.com/theme/fatal\\_attractions/fatal\\_varanasi.htm](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/theme/fatal_attractions/fatal_varanasi.htm)

<http://www.ralphmag.org/burning-ghatT.html>

It is now mid afternoon and some of us head for a nearby rooftop where we understand we can get a beer. The others head off to look at fabrics.



**Floating Candles**

At 17:00 we all assemble at the hotel for a sunset excursion on the river. The boat is waiting for us at Assi Ghat complete with a tabla player and a sitar player. A large supply of candles is on board for us to light and float on the river.

The boatman rows us out onto the river and drops anchor and from this position we are able to watch the action on the shore. The musicians play a bracket of classical Indian

music, Indian folk music and music from film scores. Although a percussion instrument the tabla player can produce a variety of notes from the two drums in harmony with the playing of the sitar. The sitar has 21 (22?) strings; the musician plays 7 of them and the other strings resonate in harmony. After about 20 minutes of

the performance we start launching the candles onto the river in their little saucers. This is a Hindu tradition and as the candles drift away from us they make a colourful display.

**Thursday 9 November 2006 - Varanasi**

**Day 07**



**Early Morning Worshippers and Bathers - Ganga - Varanasi**



**Digpatya Ghat - Varanasi**



**Laundry drying on the Ghats**



**Early Morning Tourists - Ganga - Varanasi**



**Dasaswamedh Ghat - Varanasi**



**Dhobi Wallahs replace worshippers - Ghats - Varanasi**



We are up early for a 06:00 Sunrise trip on the Ganges. Again we embark at Assi Ghat but this time we head down river past the ghats where devout Hindus are performing their morning Puja and bathing in the river. There are also a few swimmers from the swimming club who are swimming across the river. There are quite a few bathing but not as many as I expected until we came to Dasaswamedh Ghat where there are quite

a few bathers. We continued onto the Burning Ghats, which were quiet at this time of morning and landed for chai at a street stall. Returning to the boat we started back up river. By now many had finished their devotions and ablutions and were being replaced by dobhi wallahs washing laundry and spreading it on the ghats to dry.

We disembarked at ghat close to the Bread of Life Bakery and headed there for breakfast.

After breakfast we returned to the hotel for a pitstop before squeezing into motor rickshaws for the trip to Sarnath, 10km northeast of Varanasi.



**Damikh Stupa - Sarnath**

Sarnath was where Buddha preached his first sermons, after receiving enlightenment at Boghdaya, describing the middle way to nirvana.

## Mulagandha Kuti Vihar

This is a modern temple built by the Mahabodhi society in 1931. The entrance of the *vihara*, is dominated by a huge bell, a gift from Japan, and the interior contains a beautiful life-size golden image of the Buddha, and

colourful murals and frescoes painted by a Japanese artist Kosetsu Nosu. One can also see the bodhi tree whose sapling was brought from a tree in Sri Lanka, which in turn originated from the original tree under which Buddha sat in Bodh Gaya and gained enlightenment 2,500 years ago.

<http://www.visitlordbuddha.com/cities/sarnath.htm>

<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/sarnath.htm>



**An Oasis of Green - Park near Assi Ghat**

## Sarnath

Sarnath is one of the four most important Bhuddhist pilgrimage centres of India. Bhudda, the great sage, after attaining enlightenment (Bhudda-hood) at Bodh Gaya came to Sarnath and delivered his first sermon to five disciples (i.e. Kaundinya, Bashpa, Bhadraka, Mahanaman and Ashvajit) for redeeming humanity. It is this place where foundation of a new order of monks (Sangha) and a new order of religious doctrine (Dhamma) was laid. Sarnath is also sacred to the Jains because they look upon it as the site of asceticism and death of Shreyamshanath, the 11<sup>th</sup> Trithankara.



**Sarnath**

In ancient Bhuddhist literature the place finds mention as Rishipatna and Mrigdava or Mrigadaya. The place

was called Rishipatna, as it was here the bodies of five hundred Pratyeka Buddhas or Rishis (Sages) fell after their attainment of nirvana (Salvation). According to the Jataka, in one of his previous births Buddha as a leader of a herd of deer, for saving life of a doe, appeared before the king of Benaras who relished on the flesh of a deer everyday. On being moved by his sacrificial zeal the king made the place a free roaming ground, thus it was known as mrigadava (deer park). The inscriptions of early medieval period found from Sarnath referred to this place as Dharmachakra or Sadhamachakra pravartana vihar.



**Mulagandha Kuti Vihar - Sarnath**

The modern name Sarnath seems to be a contraction of Saranganath (Lord of deer) still borne by the Lord Shiva enshrined in a temple nearby.

Sarnath passed into oblivion in the 13<sup>th</sup> cent. and veil was lifted in 1798 when Mr. Duncan, the resident of Benaras gave an account of a casket of green marble inside a stone box exposed by the workmen of Jagat Singh, Dewan of Raja Chet Singh of Benaras while dismantling the Dharmaralika stupa in order to procure building materials. This discovery had created wide interest about Sarnath.



**Deer - Sarnath**

Later on excavations were conducted at the site by Sir Alexander Cunningham (1835-36), Major Kittoe (1851-52), Mr. C. Horne (1865), Mr. F.O. Oertel (1904-5), Sir John Marshall (1907), Mr. H. Hargreaves (1914-15), and Mr. Daya Ram Sahni (1927-32).

Archaeological excavations have brought to light about a dozen carved railing pillars ascribable to the Shunga period (2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> cent. B.C.).

With the advent of the Kushana (1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> cent. A.D.) in north India Buddhism witnessed a new phase of

Religious and artistic activities. Though Mathura was the centre of this renaissance, but Sarnath also flourished and new monuments were raised. The colossal image of Bodhisattva imported from Mathura in the 3<sup>rd</sup> regnal year of Kanishka is now exhibited in the museum.

During the Gupta period (4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.). Sarnath became a main centre of structural and artistic activities. Several structures including Mulgandhakuti, the chief shrine of the Buddha were erected during this period. The Dhamekh stupa is the best preserved and most impressive edifice at Sarnath. It is a cylindrical tower 28.50 mts. in diameter at base and 33.53 mts. in height. Fa-Hien the Chinese pilgrim visited Sarnath at the time of Chandragupta II (376-414 A.D.) and saw here four stupas and two monasteries.



**Japan Temple - Sarnath**

The reign stupas and Harshavardhan (606-47 A.D.) must have initiated fresh religious activity and restorations of the earlier building at Sarnath. Hiuen-Tsang visited Sarnath during the time and left a vivid description of its monuments.

This place continued to flourish during the reign of the Pala kings. But the monuments of Sarnath experienced a



reverse, when Benaras suffered under the spearhead of Mahmud Ghajni's invasion which is inferred from a record of the time of Mahilala, datable to 1026 A.D.

Kumar Devi, wife of Govindchandra (1114-1154 A.D.) of the Gahadavala dynasty built a large monastery at Sarnath which is probably the last impressive monuments raised here and after which the architectural and artistic activities came to a halt. The glorious heritage remained hidden for a larger period and waited for the archaeological spade to uncover it.

<http://varanasi.nic.in/history/ams1.html>

On the way back to the hotel we were offered the opportunity to visit the Muslim Silk Factory. Situated in the Muslim area of Varanasi, the factory turns out to be a labyrinth of small workrooms with one or two looms.

Lighting is appalling. After viewing a few of these and a visit to the dye house we made the inevitable stop at the showroom.



**The Group - Sarnath**  
**Neville, Claire, Anne, Ronalee, Geoff, Steve**

Varanasi is famed for silk scarves and saris. The silk thread comes from many parts of India and thus many qualities of silk cloth are produced. We were shown silk

scarves with gold thread and very fine pashmina scarves woven from silk from Kashmir. Several of the group bought the very light pashmina scarves as gifts for friends at home.



**Dyehouse - Muslim Silk Factory - Varanasi**

**Friday 10 November 2006 - Varanasi - Bodhgaya**

**Day 08**

Today is a travel day and as our train to Gaya does not leave until 10:50 we do not have to leave the hotel until 09:30. We make our way by taxi to catch our train at Mughal Serai. This is fairly exciting ride through the back streets and along a short section of the Grand Trunk Road.

The train arrives on time from Delhi, however departure was delayed for about an hour. Once underway we

travelled through the rice fields of the Ganges and as we moved away from the river the crops changed and wheat was interspersed with the rice.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaya,\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaya,_India)

We arrive at Gaya around 15:00, jump into rickshaws for a 20minute ride to the bus station. The bus station turns out to be a roadside stop with several large auto rickshaws waiting for passengers. Claire engages one to take the seven of us and our luggage to Bodhgaya.

We piled in, filling all the space and with the luggage on top we were probably 700kg all up. Fortunately there were no hills. The one small one we encountered as we entered Bodhgaya was almost too much.

Bodhgaya was where Prince Siddhartha Gautamo gained enlightenment and transformed himself into the Buddha.

## **Bodh Gaya – Place of Enlightenment**

"Bodh Gaya is the place where Gautama Buddha attained unsurpassed, supreme Enlightenment. It is a place which should be visited or seen by a person of devotion and which would cause awareness and apprehension of the nature of impermanence".



**The Maha Bodhi Temple at night**

Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha-to-be, had been dwelling on the banks of the Nairanjana River with five ascetic followers for six years practicing austerities. Realising that austerities could not lead to realisation he abandoned them. His five ascetic companions disgusted at his seeming

failure, deserted him and left for Sarnath.



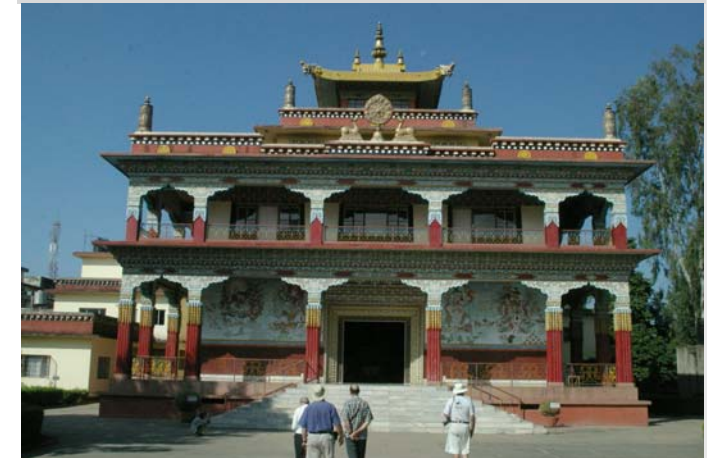
**Thai Temple - Bodhgaya**



**Buddha - Thai Temple - Bodhgaya**

He then moved towards the village of Senani where he was offered rice milk by a Brahmin girl, Sujata. Accepting from a grass-cutter a gift of kusa grass for a mat, the Bodhisattva took a seat under a pipal tree facing east. Here he resolved not to rise again until enlightenment was attained.

"Here on this seat my body may shrivel up, my skin, my bones, my flesh may dissolve, but my body will not move from this seat until I have attained Enlightenment, so difficult to obtain in the course of many kalpas".



**Tibetan Temple - Bodhgaya**



**Japanese Temple - Bodhgaya**





**Buddha Image - The Maha Bodhi Temple**

As Gautama sat in deep meditation, Mara, Lord of Illusion, perceiving that his power was about to be broken, rushed to distract him from his purpose. The Bodhisattva touched the earth, calling it to bear witness the countless lifetimes of virtue that had led him to this place of enlightenment. When the earth shook, confirming the truth of Gautama's words, Mara unleashed his army of demons. In the epic battle that ensued, Gautama's wisdom broke through the illusions and the power of his compassion transformed the demons' weapons

into flowers and Mara and all his forces fled in disarray.



**Buddha - Japanese Temple - Bodhgaya**



**Road to Sujata Bridge - Bodhgaya**

## **The Maha Bodhi Temple**

The historical place at which the Enlightenment took place became a place of pilgrimage. Though it is not

mentioned in the scriptures, the Buddha must have visited Bodh Gaya again in the course of his teaching career.



**Rice fields - Sujata**



**Sujatagarh Stupa - Sujata**

About 250 years after the Enlightenment, the Buddhist Emperor, Ashoka visited the site and is considered the founder of the Mahabodhi Temple. According to the tradition, Ashoka, as well as establishing a monastery,



erected a diamond throne shrine at this spot with a canopy supported by four pillars over a stone representation of the Vajrasana, the Seat of Enlightenment.



**Inside Tibetan Temple - Bodhgaya**

The temple's architecture is superb but its history is shrouded in obscurity. It was constructed with the main intention of making it a monument and not a receptacle for the relics of the Buddha. Several shrines were constructed with enshrined images for use as places of worship.

The basement of the present temple is 15m square, 15m in length as well as in breadth and its height is 52m

which rises in the form of a slender pyramid tapering off from a square platform. On its four corners four towers gracefully rise to some height. The whole architectural plan gives pose and balance to the observers.

Inside the temple there is a colossal image of the Buddha in the "touching the ground pose", bhumisparsha mudra. This image is said to be 1700 years old and is facing east exactly at the place where the Buddha in meditation with his back to the Bodhi tree was enlightened.



**Threshing Rice - Sujata**

## The Bodhi Tree

For seven days after the Enlightenment, the Buddha continued to meditate under the Bodhi tree without moving from his seat. During the second week he practiced walking meditation. A jewel walk, Chankramanar, was built as a low platform adorned with nineteen lotuses which are parallel to the Maha Bodhi temple on its north side. For another week the Buddha contemplated the Bodhi tree. In this place a stupa was built called Animeschalochana situated to the north of the Chankramanar.



**Bags of Fuel (Dried Cow Dung) - Bodhgaya**

On the back of the main temple situated to the west (see picture) there is an ancient pipal tree *Ficus religiosa* or Bodhi tree. It was under this tree that Gautama sat for enlightenment. The present tree is considered only as the descendant of the original tree. There is a tradition that Ashoka's wife had it secretly cut down because she became jealous of the time Ashoka spent there. But it grew again and a protective wall was also built at the time. Many sacred trees in India and other countries are originally raised from seeds brought from the ancient Bodh Gaya tree. A shoot of the original Bodhi tree was taken to Sri Lanka in the 3rd century B.C. by Bhikkhuni Sangamitta, daughter of Ashoka, where the Lankan king Devanampiyatissa planted it at the Mahavihara monastery in Anuradhapura where it still flourishes today. While the Vajrasana was the specific site of the enlightenment, the Bodhi tree, closely linked to the Buddha's accomplishment, became a central focus of devotion early in the history of the Sangha. Pilgrims sought the Bodhi Tree's seeds and leaves as blessings for their monasteries and homes.





**Inside Tibetan Temple - Bodhgaya**

Around the Bodhi tree and the Mahabodhi temple there are quadrangular stone railings around 0.2m high with four bars including the top piece. These are of two types and can be distinguished from each other in style and material used. The older set is dated to about 150 BC and made of sandstone while the latter set is probably of the Gupta period (300-600 AD) and constructed from coarse granite. The older set has a number of designs representing scenes from the purchase of Jetavana by Ananthapindika at Sravasti, Lakshmi being bathed by elephants, Surya riding a chariot drawn by four horses, etc. On the latter set there are figures

of stupas, Garudas, etc. In most of these railings lotus motifs are commonly used.



**Two Man Wood Plane**

### **Bodhgaya Revitalised**

Since 1953, Bodh Gaya has been developed as an international place of pilgrimage. Buddhists from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, Tibet, Bhutan and Japan have established monasteries and temples within easy walking distance of the Mahabodhi compound. The site of the enlightenment now attracts Buddhists and tourists from all over the world.

<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhistworld/bodhgaya.htm>

<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/bodhgaya.htm>

<http://www.sacredsites.com/asia/india/buddhist.html>

The Mahabodhi Temple is adjacent to the spot where Buddha formulated his philosophy of life.



**Pigment Seller - Bodhgaya**



**Monks Everywhere - Mahabodhi Temple**

At dusk we walk to the temple to experience the atmosphere of the most holy of Buddhist sites. Surrounding the temple are many Buddhist monks from different countries. There are many exiled Tibetan monks and the Dalai Lama visits every two years and conducts services in a large field for the Tibetan refugees.



**The Mahabodhi Temple**

Mahabodhi Temple is a World Heritage Site. The temple was constructed in the 6<sup>th</sup> C atop the site of temple erected 800 years before by Emperor Asoka. The temple was razed by the Muslims in the 11<sup>th</sup> C and subsequently restored, most recently in 1882. Restoration work is under way at the present time.

Little remains of the first temple and the Bodhi tree under which Buddha received enlightenment was killed by Asoka's wife. Fortunately a cutting

had been sent to Sri Lanka and a cutting from that tree was returned to Bodhgaya and to Sarnath. It is the tree from that cutting that is beside the temple and the red sandstone slab marking the spot where Buddha received enlightenment.



**The Bodhi Tree - Mahabodhi Temple**

Our morning is spent visiting the temples established by various Buddhist nations, including Thailand, Tibet, Bhutan, Myanmar and Japan.

To complete the morning we crossed the Falgu River by the Sujata Bridge to inspect the remains of a large stupa, Sujatagarh. This brick stupa was constructed to commemorate the residence of Sujata, the maiden who offered milk rice to Lord Buddha. This is where Buddha ended his six years of extreme ascetic practices and accepted the offering from Sujata just prior to his enlightenment

<http://www.angelfire.com/electronic/awakening101/sujata.html>

<http://www.kalavinka.org/pilgrimage/sujpics/sujpics.htm>

The stupa was constructed in three phases from the Gupta to the Pala period

<http://tanmoy.tripod.com/bengal/ancient.html>  
<http://tanmoy.tripod.com/bengal/index.html>



**Meditating Nun - Mahabodhi Temple**

The **Gupta Empire** was one of the largest political and military [empires](#) in [ancient India](#). It was ruled by the [Gupta dynasty](#) from around 240 to 550 CE and covered most of [northern India](#) and what is now eastern [Pakistan](#) and [Bangladesh](#). The time of the Gupta Empire was an Indian "[Golden Age](#)" in [science](#), [mathematics](#), [astronomy](#), [religion](#) and [philosophy](#). The peace and prosperity created under leadership of Guptas enabled the pursuit of scientific and artistic endeavors. The decimal numeral system, including the concept of [zero](#), was invented in India during the reign of the Guptas. At the time of its maximum extent, the Gupta empire was considered a [Great power](#).





**Great Buddha Statue - Bodhgaya**

Historians place the Gupta dynasty alongside with the [Han Dynasty](#), [Tang Dynasty](#) and [Rome](#) as a model of a classical civilization.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gupta\\_Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gupta_Empire)

The Pala Dynasty ruled the eastern [Indian subcontinent](#), including the [Bengal](#) and [Bihar](#) regions, from the [8th](#) to the [12th century](#).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pala\\_Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pala_Empire)

After a leisurely lunch at the Fujia Green we visited the Tibetan Refugee Market. This was the usual market of made up clothing and tourist junk. Nevertheless we enjoyed some interaction with some of the local boys.

We then returned to the Mahabodhi Temple for more photos of the temple and the monks and others worshipping in the temple grounds.

Tonight we are to travel by overnight train to Kolkata.



**Bodhgaya**

Leaving the hotel in Bodhgaya at 21:00 we make very good time to the railway station at Gaya for our scheduled departure at 22:30 only to find the train is delayed. Initially it is only 30 minutes, however as the night progresses the departure time is revised and it is not until about 03:15 on Sunday morning that we finally depart.

## **Sunday 12 November 2006 - Kolkata**

**Day 10**

We finally arrive at Howrah station on the west bank of the Hooghly River and make our way by taxi across the Howrah Bridge to the hotel. Taxi drivers have great difficulty finding the hotel and we are to experience this every time we use them.

By the time we arrive at the hotel in Kolkata it is after midday and most of us are exhausted and choose to have

a light lunch a rest and quick look around the neighbourhood.

Kolkata (Calcutta) existed before the villages of Sutanati, Gobindapur and Kolikata on the banks of the Hooghly River were formally signed over to the British East India Company. Calcutta became the principal port in the East of India. Although the Hooghly is not the main channel for the Ganges: that flows through Bangladesh, it is part of the Ganges estuary and is the Indian channel for the Ganges to the sea.

Under the East India Company and later the British Government Calcutta flourished and became a major trading port.

However the affluence did not spread to the Indian's who served the British Raj and they lived in squalor on the fringes of the 'London' on the banks of the Hooghly.

Calcutta became the capital of India under British Rule.

## History

Main article: [History of Kolkata](#)

The discovery of the nearby [Chandraketugarh](#), an archaeological site, provides evidence that the area has been inhabited for over two millennia. The city's documented history, however, begins with the arrival of the [British East India Company](#) in 1690, when the Company was consolidating its trade business in [Bengal](#). [Job Charnock](#), an administrator with the Company who eventually settled in Sutanuti after invading through [Hijli Kingdom](#), was traditionally credited as the founder of this city (however, recently experts have endorsed the view that Charnock was not the official founder of the city). In 1699, the British completed the construction of old [Fort William](#), which was used to station its troops and as a regional base. Kolkata (then Calcutta) was declared a [Presidency City](#), and later became the headquarters of the [Bengal Presidency](#). Faced with frequent skirmishes with [French](#) forces, in 1756 the British began to upgrade their fortifications. When protests against the militarisation by the [Nawab of Bengal](#) [Siraj-Ud-Daulah](#) went unheeded, he attacked and captured Fort William leading to the infamous [Black Hole](#) incident. A force of Company [sepoys](#) and British troops led by [Robert Clive](#) recaptured the city the following year. Clive himself

described it as *one of the most wicked places in the Universe*.



[Government House](#) in colonial Kolkata — when it was known as the "City of Palaces".

Kolkata was named the capital of [British India](#) in 1772. A contemporary description refers to *the splendid sloth and languid debauchery of European society*, when *great men rode about in State coaches, with a dozen servants running before and behind them to bawl out their titles*. It was during this period that the marshes surrounding the city were drained and the government area was laid out along the banks of the [Hooghly River](#). [Richard Wellesley](#), the [Governor General](#) between 1797-1805, was largely responsible for the growth of the city and its public architecture which led to the description of Kolkata as 'the City of Palaces'. Miss Emily Eden (the sister of the Governor General, who gave her name to Eden Gardens), in 1836 wrote of Calcutta: "Depend upon it, Calcutta is the finest place in the world. I know there are towns with far larger and grander buildings; but then they are not half so clean, and new, and beautiful, as this bride-like city. I have been standing on the roof of the house the last half-hour for air, and, as it was midnight, had an opportunity of seeing all the gay company - returning from an entertainment at the government-

house; and I assure you I never witnessed any thing that could compare with the splendour exhibited."



Kolkata port in 1945. It was an important military port during WW2.

By the early 19th century, Kolkata was split into two distinct areas — one British, one Indian, known as 'Black Town'. Even at the time, the poverty of the 'Black Town' shanties was considered shocking. The city underwent rapid industrial growth from the 1850s, especially in the textile and [jute](#) sectors; this caused a massive investment in infrastructure projects like rail roads and telegraph by British government. The coalescence of British and Indian culture resulted in the emergence of a new class of urbane Indians — [Asia's first middle class](#) — whose members were often professionals, read newspapers, were [Anglophiles](#), and usually belonged to upper-[caste Hindu](#) communities. Throughout the nineteenth century, a socio-cultural reform, often referred to as the [Bengal Renaissance](#) resulted in the general uplifting of the people. In 1883, [Surendranath Banerjee](#) organised a [national conference](#) — the first of its kind in nineteenth century India. Gradually Kolkata became a centre of the [Indian independence movement](#), especially [revolutionary](#)



[organisations](#). The [1905 Partition of Bengal](#) on communal grounds resulted in widespread public agitation and the boycott of British goods (swadeshi movement). These activities, along with the administratively disadvantageous location of Kolkata in the eastern fringes of India, prompted the British to move the capital to [New Delhi](#) in 1911. The city's port was bombed twice by the [Japanese](#) during [World War II](#). As food stocks were being diverted to feed Allied troops, millions starved to death during the [Bengal famine of 1943](#). In 1946, demands for the creation of a Muslim state led to large-scale communal violence resulting in the deaths of over 2,000 people. The [partition of India](#) also

created intense violence and a shift in demographics - large numbers of Muslims left for [East Pakistan](#), while hundreds of thousands of Hindus fled into the city.

Over the 1960s and 1970s, severe power shortages, strikes and a violent [Marxist-Maoist](#) movement — the [Naxalites](#) — damaged much of the city's infrastructure, leading to an economic stagnation. In 1971, war between India and Pakistan led to the mass influx of thousands of refugees into Kolkata resulting in a massive strain on its infrastructure. In the mid-1980s, [Mumbai](#) overtook Kolkata as India's most populous city. Kolkata has been a strong base of Indian communism as West Bengal has been ruled by the [CPI\(M\)](#) dominated [Left Front](#) for three decades now — the world's longest-running democratically-elected [Communist](#) government. The city's economic recovery gathered momentum after [economic reforms in India](#) introduced by the central government in the mid-1990s. Since 2000, [Information Technology](#) (IT) services revitalized the city's stagnant

economy. The city has also experienced a growth in the manufacturing sector.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kolkata>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Kolkata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Kolkata)

<http://www.calcuttaweb.com/history.shtml>

<http://www.kolkatahub.com/travel-in-kolkata/history-of-kolkata.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Places\\_of\\_interest\\_in\\_Kolkata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Places_of_interest_in_Kolkata)

Many fine buildings remain from the British time but many are falling into decay.

For the poor Independence has brought little change. The city now has over 20million people; many are poor, living on the streets and in very poor, almost derelict accommodation.

**Monday 13 November 2006 - Kolkata**

**Day 11**



Market - Kolkata



Market - Kolkata



Market - Kolkata

Claire has engaged a guide to take us on a tour of the city. Our departure is at 08:00 before the traffic becomes too hectic and we make our way past fading colonial homes to the Pareshnath Jain Temple. Built in 1867 by Ray Badridas Bahadur, it is set in garden decorated with figures from classical Greece and Rome. The entire surface of the building is covered with a mosaic of coloured glass and stones and mirrors. The effect is remarkable.

<http://www.kolkata-india.com/travel/pareshnathjaintemple.html>



**Pareshnath Jain Temple - Kolkata**

From there it is a whirlwind tour through streets of North Calcutta, the City Centre and the Madain.



**Pareshnath Jain Temple - Kolkata**

The **Maidan** is [Kolkata](#)'s largest urban park. It is home to numerous stadiums, including the famous cricketing venue [Eden Gardens](#), and to the [Victoria Memorial](#). It is also home to one of the world's oldest turf club - the [Royal Calcutta Turf Club](#), the world's oldest existing polo club - [Calcutta Polo Club](#), and was once home to the oldest golf club outside [Great Britain](#) - the [Royal Calcutta Golf Club](#). It has been referred to as the "lungs of Kolkata", but faces increasing threat from fragmentation by roadways, encroachment by the city and urban pollution. It is bordered by [Chowringhee Avenue](#), [B.B.D. Bagh](#) and [Strand Road](#).

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maidan\\_\(Kolkata\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maidan_(Kolkata))

North Calcutta was the main residential area for the colonists and there are many decaying Victorian houses. In the city centre many of the colonial administration buildings are still in use. Some are being restored but many are sadly neglected. The red brick Writers Building where secretaries wrote the letters that carried

instructions throughout the colony is one that has been restored.



**Howrah Bridge from Outram Ghat**

The Writers' Building was built during the period between 1776 and 1780 to house junior officers of the East India Company. It was one of the most imposing public buildings constructed during that period. Today, the Writers' Building serves as the administrative centre for the state of Bengal. The Chief Minister's office is also located in this building.

<http://www.kolkatainformation.com/calhert/wrbldg.htm>

<http://www.kolkata-india.com/travel/writersbuilding.html>

In the Madain is Eden Park, the main cricket ground and nearby is the Victoria Memorial and St Paul's Cathedral.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eden\\_Gardens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eden_Gardens)

<http://content-usa.cricinfo.com/india/content/ground/57980.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria\\_Memorial\\_%28India%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Memorial_%28India%29)

[http://www.indnav.com/servlet/Browse?mt=goToName&n\\_ame=St+Pauls+Cathedral](http://www.indnav.com/servlet/Browse?mt=goToName&n_ame=St+Pauls+Cathedral)



A visit to one of the markets is interesting. The fish section was a little too much for some but the fruit and vegetables and spices and other items were very colourful.

In 1756, Siraj-ud-daula captured the city and imprisoned 170 of the local gentry in a cramped room below the original Fort William. 40 died and in the next year Clive of India retook Calcutta for the British. The Calcutta GPO is built on the site of the original fort.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General Post Office%2C Kolkata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Post_Office%2C_Kolkata)  
<http://www.straightdope.com/mailbag/mblackhole.html>

Fort William, on the banks of the Hooghly, was constructed in 1758 by Clive of India after the first was destroyed by Siraj-ud-daula.

[http://www.catchcal.com/kaleidoscope/places\\_to\\_visit/fort\\_william.asp](http://www.catchcal.com/kaleidoscope/places_to_visit/fort_william.asp)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort William%2C India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_William%2C_India)

The area is still a military area, as is the surrounding parkland.

In afternoon Neville, Steve and I headed out to the South Park Street Cemetery.

As one of the oldest Christian burial grounds in the city, it bears the testimony of many colonial settlers who lived and died here in Kolkata. In

fact the oldest recorded British grave of a certain Mr. Wood, a "writer" at the [Writers' Building](#), the British administrative headquarters can be still found here.

<http://www.kolkatainformation.com/calhert/cemetery.htm>



**South Park Street Cemetery - Kolkata**

Here many of the colonists, both civilian and military are buried. Many have enormous tombstones marking their graves. For many it was a relatively short life, men died in their forties if they were not killed in action, many young wives died in their mid twenties and the graves of children less than one year old were common.

From there we walked along busy Park Street towards the city centre and as we were entering the parklands we were approached by a gentleman, who turned out to be a retired air force sergeant, who thought we were lost. We walked with him through the parklands to the river near Outram Ghat, after which we went for a drink in the city centre with him. When it was time to leave it was a little difficult to persuade him that our arrangements for the next day did not permit us to accept his offer to show us more of Kolkata.

We ended the day with a drink at the historic Grand Hotel.

<http://www.oberoikolkata.com/index.asp?leftinfo=1&leftitem=1>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand Hotel \(Calcutta\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Hotel_(Calcutta))



**Farakka Bridge - Kolkata**



**Hooghly River - Kolkata**

The day starts with a walk through some of the wholesale market areas near Howrah Bridge. Conditions are pretty squalid, but there are many beautiful flowers on sale and the area is a hive of activity. We take a walk across the bridge and back and then along Mahatma Gandhi Road.



**Fancy Balconies from a past Era -  
MG Road - Kolkata**

It is 97 metres high and 705 metres long. It is a cantilever truss bridge, constructed entirely by riveting, without nuts or bolts. It is currently

used as a road bridge, but previously had a tram route as well.



**Howrah Railway Station - Across the Hooghly -  
Kolkata**



**Flower Stalls near Howrah Bridge - Kolkata**



**Near Howrah Bridge - Kolkata**



**Howrah Railway Station - Kolkata**

Built between 1937 and 1943 it was the first cantilever truss bridge in the world.

<http://howrahbridgekolkata.nic.in/>



Finally we catch the Metro at MG Road Station and head back to our hotel. It is 10:00 and the Metro is packed with people heading to work. The Metro is clean and fast.



**Smiling Faces - MG Road - Kolkata**

In the afternoon Neville and I go looking for a post office, without success so we make our way to the Victoria Memorial.

## Victoria Memorial Hall

The Victoria Memorial was built to commemorate the peak of the British Empire in India. The Victoria Memorial, conceived by Lord Curzon, represents the architectural climax of Calcutta city. Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy specified its classical style but the actual plan of Victoria Memorial was laid down by the well-known architect, Sir William Emerson.



**Crowded flower market - Kolkata**



**Mahatma Gandhi Road - MG Road - Kolkata**



**Lining drums with fireclay - MG Road - Kolkata**



**Wood Turner - MG Road - Kolkata**

The Victoria Memorial blends the best of the British and Mughal architecture. The Victoria Memorial hall was built with white Makrana marbles. The Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone of Victoria Memorial in 1906 and it was inaugurated in 1921 in memory of Queen Victoria. The Victoria Memorial is 338 by 228 feet and a height of 184 feet.

Today the Victoria Memorial Hall is a museum having an assortment of Victoria memorabilia, British Raj paintings and other displays. As night descends on Calcutta, the Victoria Memorial Hall is illuminated, giving it a fairy tale look. It is interesting to note that the Victoria Memorial was built without British government funds. The money required for the construction of the stately building, surrounded by beautiful gardens over 64 acres and costing more than 10 million was contributed by British Indian states and individuals who wanted favors with the British government. At the top of the Victoria Memorial is a sixteen foot tall bronze statue of victory, mounted on ball bearings. It rotates with wind.

At present the Victoria Memorial has notable collection of weapons, sculptors, paintings, maps, coins, stamps, artifacts, textiles etc. The Royal gallery in Victoria Memorial has portraits of the Queen and Prince Albert. There are numerous paintings, illustrating events from Victoria's life. Another remarkable piece in Victoria Memorial is a painting by the Russian artist Vassili Verestchagin, portraying the state entry of the Prince of Wales in Jaipur in the year 1876. In the post independence period a new addition was made to the Victoria Memorial. It was the addition of the National leaders' gallery with the portraits and relics of the freedom fighters.

<http://www.culturalindia.net/monuments/victoria-memorial.html>



**Carriage - the Maidan - Kolkata**



**Victoria Memorial Hall - Kolkata**

This grand building was built to honour Victoria Empress and Queen of India. It was built by public subscription and is situated in well kept formal gardens that are open to the public for a small fee (much more for foreign visitors). Displays include memorabilia of the time of

Victoria's reign, a display of water paintings made by Emily Eden on her journey from Calcutta to the NW Frontier, paintings by colonial and visiting painters and a pictorial history of Kolkata, including the independence.

On our way back to the hotel we visited St Paul's Cathedral. Inside were many interesting memorials to British soldiers and civil servants many of whom were buried on the frontiers of the colony.



**St Paul's Cathedral - Kolkata**

**St. Paul's Cathedral**, [Kolkata](#), [India](#), stands on the "island of attractions" in Kolkata - beside [Victoria Memorial](#), [Nandan](#) - [Rabindra Sadan](#) theatre complex, and the [Birla Planetarium](#). It was completed in [1847](#), after being in construction for 8 years, in Gothic style with stained glass windows and two frescoes in Florentine Renaissance style. A military engineer, [Major William Nairn Forbes](#), designed the cathedral with the assistance of [C.K. Robinson](#), modelling the tower and spire upon the [Norwich Cathedral](#). The tower was rebuilt along the lines of [Bell Harry Tower](#) in [Canterbury Cathedral](#) following the [1934 Calcutta earthquake](#). The Bishop's House across the street is also a very impressive piece of architecture. St. Paul's was consecrated in 1874.



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St. Paul%E2%80%99s\\_Cathedral%2C\\_Kolkata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Paul%E2%80%99s_Cathedral%2C_Kolkata)

Our last visit was to the Kali Ghat Temple. An important Hindu Temple around which is bustling market, I am inclined to share our friend of yesterday's view that it was not worth the effort. Grotty and crowded, it was impossible to see any of the temple interiors.

Kaali is regarded as one of the principal deities of Bengal. There are other temples to Kaali - Sahasrabhuja Kaali, Sarvamangala, Tarasundari and Simhavaahini. Kaali is regarded as the destroyer or liberator and is depicted in a fearful form. Despite the terrifying form, she is considered to deliver bliss to worshippers. The Kalighat temple attracts numerous devotees throughout the year.

Kalighat is regarded as one of the 52 Shakti Peethams of India, where the various parts of Sati's body are said to have fallen, in the course of Shiva's Rudra Tandava.

Kalighat represents the site where the toes of the right foot of Shakti or Sati fell.

<http://www.indiantemples.com/Bengal/kalighat.html>

<http://kalighat.jagaddhatri.com/>

After dinner we are on our way again, this time to New Jalpaiguri near Siliguri on our way to Darjeeling.

Our train departs from Sealdah Train Station at 22.05.

**Wednesday 15 November 2006 - Siliguri - Darjeeling**

**Day 13**



**The Road follows the 'Toy Train' Track**

As with our other train trips in India the train rides smoothly along the broad gauge (5'-6") track to New Jalpaiguri.

[http://www.sikkiminfo.net/new\\_jalpaiguri.htm](http://www.sikkiminfo.net/new_jalpaiguri.htm)



**Mountain Scenery, a change from the Ganga Plain**

It is a three-hour, 90km trip over a rough winding mountain road to Darjeeling. As we climb the temperature drops and it is a welcome relief from the hot, humid weather to date.

One can travel by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (Toy Train) but this takes all day. The 2ft gauge railway made its first trip in 1881 and is one of the few hill railways still operating in the world.



**First sight of the 'Toy train'**

<http://www.dhrs.org/home.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling\\_Himalayan\\_Railway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling_Himalayan_Railway)



**Town Hall - Darjeeling**

Darjeeling is situated at 2134m above sea level and at this time of year it is dry and the temperatures are pleasant (cold at night). There are people from Tibet, Nepal and Bengal as well as tourists from India and all parts of the world. The streets are colorful and free from cows so they are reasonably clean.

The area belonged to the Buddhist Kings of Sikkim until 1780, when it was annexed by the invading Gurkhas from Nepal. After several battles the East India company gained control in 1816. They then ceded most of the land back to Sikkim in return for control over the border areas.

In 1835 the King of Sikkim leased an uninhabited piece of land to the East India Company for a hill station, Darjeeling.



**Two porters carried all our bags up to the hotel!**



**Chowrastra - Darjeeling**



**Main Street - Darjeeling**



**Post Office - Darjeeling**

The town spreads down the western slopes of a ridge. Near the top of the town is an open space called the Chowrastra, the focal point of Victorian Darjeeling. The area is famous for its tea

<http://www.east-himalaya.com/darjeeling/history.htm>  
[http://www.darjeelingnews.net/darjeeling\\_history.html](http://www.darjeelingnews.net/darjeeling_history.html)  
[http://www.darjeelingnews.net/darjeeling\\_tea.html](http://www.darjeelingnews.net/darjeeling_tea.html)



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Darjeeling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Darjeeling)

After our trip from Kolkata a rest is required and in the mid afternoon we head out to explore the town. We are uphill from Chowrasta so we head there to orient ourselves. We have some maps; they are almost useless. Nevertheless we manage to find our way around. By 17:00 the sun is set and it is getting dark.



Schools Out - Darjeeling



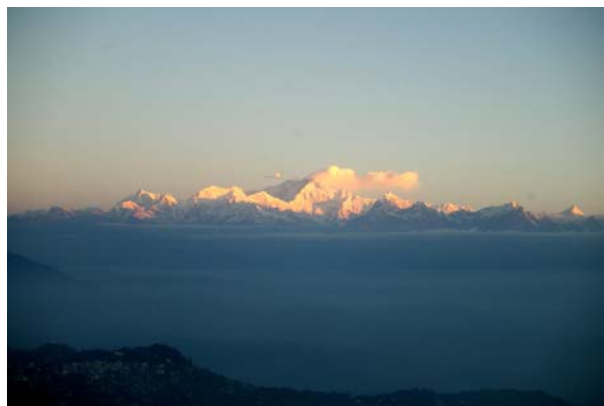
Chai shop - Darjeeling

**Thursday 16 November 2006 - Darjeeling**

**Day 14**



Sunrise at Tiger Hill - Darjeeling



First light on Khangchendzonga



Telescopes at Batasia Loop

This morning we are out of bed at 03:45 for a jeep ride to Tiger Hill (2590m) to watch the sunrise and to

see the first sun on the Himalayas. Sunrise is at 05:54 and we are in position by 04:30, however there is a large

crowd already there and we are fortunate to gain a good observation point.

In the pale moonlight the snow capped Himalayas are a ghostly image. As the sky brightens they become clearer and India's highest mountain Khangchendzonga becomes visible. At 8475m, Khangchendzonga is the world's third highest mountain.



**Colourful Ghorka Costume**

On time the sun appears above the horizon through a layer of cloud below us. It is not a spectacular sunrise but the mountains are now bathed in sunlight and brilliant white in the distance. There is some cloud at the summit of Khangchendzonga, but from time to time it moves away and

there is a clear view. The view is spectacular.



**Ronaele flanked by two Ghorkas**



**Druk Sangak Choling Monastery**

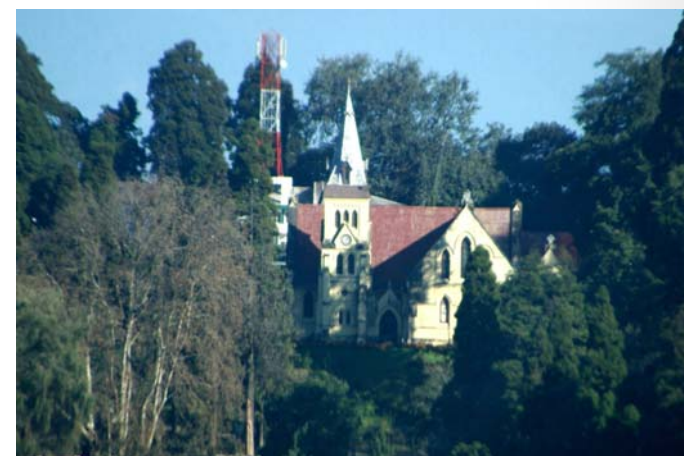
On a clear day Mt Everest can be seen in the distance to the west, but today it is not clear enough.

At around 06:30 the show is over and we commence our descent down the rough winding road to Ghoom on the main road. Some of the group elect to walk the 5km back

to the hotel. Ronaele and I choose to take the jeep back and along the way the driver stops at the Batasia loop in the Toy Railway line. Here the line does a 360° loop, passing under itself as it descends toward Darjeeling.



**Khangchendzonga from the hotel balcony**



**St Andrew's Chirch - Darjeeling**

In the centre of the loop is the Ghorka Memorial to local servicemen who have died in Indian battles since Independence.





**Colourful Ghorka Costume**

Around the train track are stalls, the train isn't due for three hours or so, and one of these had local costumes for tourists to wear and be photographed in. There are also many

guides with binoculars and telescopes to show you the mountains and tell you their names. The half hour stop allows the driver to get some breakfast.

<http://www.go2india.in/wb/darjeeling2.php>



**Toy Train at Ghoom Station**

We then return to the hotel for breakfast.

The huge Druk Sangak Choling Monastery stands beside the road at Ghoom.

About half an hour later the others arrive at the hotel.

The view from the hotel balcony perched high on the ridge above the town provides a vantage point for viewing the mountains and the valley below while the early morning sky is clear. However clouds start to appear while we are having breakfast and by midday the mountains are obliterated and the view of the valley is obscured by the haze.



**Darjeeling**

**Friday 17 November 2006 - Darjeeling - Delhi**

**Day 15**

Today has been a travel day, not much to report except the scenery as we travelled down from Darjeeling through the tea plantations.

Our descent to the airport at Bagdogra is via a narrow, steep, winding road. Fortunately there is very little traffic as the road is one-way except for emergency traffic.

Our Air Deccan flight is uneventful and we are back in Delhi soon after sunset. Anne and Neville are catching a

flight just after midnight for Yangon, the rest of us return to the Goodtimes Hotel in Delhi for a night's sleep before we head to our next destination.

# Myanmar

**Saturday 18 November 2006 - Delhi – Yangon (Rangoon)**

**Day 16**

A 04:30 wake up for a 05:15 departure for the airport! Instead of 45 minutes the trip takes 20 minutes so I am in the airport with plenty of time to spare for the 08:45 flight to Bangkok. Plane is ready on time but the queue for takeoff delays us for nearly and

hour. This seems normal for Delhi airport.

Some time is made up on the flight and there is plenty of time before the hour flight to Yangon at 18:00.

Almost first at the immigration counter, my bag is last to be unloaded. It finally arrives and I am soon in the Yoma

1. The rest of the group are dining across the road as I expected.

<http://www.myanmars.net/myanmar-history/index.htm>

<http://asiatours.net/burma/info/history.html>

**Sunday 19 November 2006 - Yangon - Maymyo**

**Day 17**



**William - Maymyo**

There has been a change of plan. The overnight train to Mandalay has been cancelled and we are now flying to Mandalay on the early morning flight. Departure from the hotel is 04:30. However I have had the best night's sleep for some time so it is not much of a hardship. The taxi driver takes us

on a hair-raising trip through the vacant streets of Yangon to the airport.

The one and a half hour flight to Mandalay in a turboprop aircraft flying at 16000ft is uneventful and as I have a window seat I have a view of the plains below.



**Main Street - Maymyo**



**Horse Carriage - Maymyo**

Mandalay Airport is a modern international airport built about 5 years ago. There are almost no international



flights to Mandalay and the airport has become a white elephant.

The road is good, but before we reach Mandalay we turn onto a bypass to the road to the plateau which we find to be a dual carriage way climbing the escarpment to the Shan Plateau. This is the main trade route between China and Myanmar.



**Purcell Tower - Maymyo**

Around 11:00 we arrive at Maymyo and although it is Sunday it is very busy. There are nearby army training establishments and there are numerous young soldiers walking briskly around the town.

During the British colonial occupation, the British, in 1896, developed it as a

hill station because of its cool alpine climate, especially during the hot season. The colonial government of Burma would move to Maymyo during the hot season to escape from the high heat and humidity of Rangoon.



**Mosque - Maymyo**



**Colonial House - Maymyo**

The name *May myo* means *May Town* in Burmese, and comes from the town's first administrator, Colonel May. As a legacy of the colonial period, the town has

approximately 10,000 Indian and 5,000 Nepali inhabitants, who served in the [British Indian Army](#) (Gurkha Regiment) and settled in Maymyo after the British left, having granted independence to Burma. It was indeed until recently dominated by northern Indian communities.



**Post Office - Maymyo**



**Afternoon Tea at the golden Triangle Café and Bakery - Maymyo**

Maymyo was also an important educational centre during colonial times, with the GEHSs (Government English High Schools), such as St. Mary's, St. Michael's, St. Albert's, and Colgate, all based in the town. It is also home to the Myanmar Defence Services Academy ((DSA)) and the Defence Services Institute of Technology ((DSIT)).



**Temple Stupa - Maymyo**

Maymyo also has a thriving Eurasian community, consisting mostly of Anglo-Burmese and Anglo-Indian communities. Sweater knitting, vegetable plantation, orchards, and cow rearing are the main local businesses, but smuggling from India

and China is also significant. There has been a tremendous influx of Chinese immigrants (especially from Yunnan) in recent years. The city is a resort town for visitors from Myanmar's major cities during the summertime. Established in 1915, the National Botanical Gardens and the adjacent Pyin Oo Lwin Nursery are famous attractions of Pyin U Lwin. The beautifully created national garden is unique. A four acre orchid garden is planned here for 2007

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyin\\_U\\_Lwin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyin_U_Lwin)



**Market - Maymyo**

During the days of the British, Maymyo was a popular hill station in the summer for Britains stationed in Mandalay.

It is evident that this town is still fairly prosperous as many of the houses and buildings of the British era are still in reasonable condition and some are well maintained.

Our afternoon is spent exploring the town and the markets, which is mainly closed, as it is Sunday.

Candacraig, immortalised in Paul Theroux's The Great Railway Bazaar, is now the Thiri Myaing Hotel. The

oldest hotel in Myanmar it was built by the Bombay Burma Timber Company for their expatriates.

We dine at an Indian restaurant. The cool evening is welcome after the heat and humidity of India and Kolkata in particular.



**Candacraig - The oldest hotel in Myanmar - Maymyo**



**Stairway - Candacraig - Maymyo**



We wake to a pleasant cool morning. Today we are heading further into the Shan Plateau to Hsipaw, once the capital of a Shan principality.

Our plan is to join the Mandalay train at Naung Hkio for a trip across the Gokteik viaduct. However we cannot leave Maymyo until we know the train is coming and that there are seats available. We find the train is coming and that it is two hours late so we adjourn for coffee and tea.

[http://www.alumnifriends.mines.edu/fun\\_stuff/twilight\\_and\\_tragedy/Default.htm](http://www.alumnifriends.mines.edu/fun_stuff/twilight_and_tragedy/Default.htm)



**Who lives here? - Maymyo**



**Lady in Charge - Cafe - Naung Hkio**

William returns to the station and is successful in getting seats so we set off, hoping the train will not be too late arriving at Naung Hkio.



**Dhobi Wallahs - Maymyo**



**Monks - Railway Station - Maymyo**



**Shoppers - Market - Naung Hkio**

Our drive takes us through rich agricultural country to Naung Hkio. We are not rushing; the road is reasonably good and we arrive at about 13:00 to find the train is

expected around 15:00. If it doesn't come by 15:30 we will have to abort and head on to Hsipaw.

We lunch and explore the market while we are waiting and return to the station where we spend about an hour and a half entertaining the local children. Finally we have confirmation the train will arrive by 15:30 so a bold decision to send the bus on is made by Ian. If it fails to come we are stranded.

Finally the train approaches and we are seated in our first class seats; seats with cushions and slatted backs for the one and a half hour ride to the next station on the other side of the Gokteik Viaduct. Built early in the 20<sup>th</sup> C by an American firm for the British it was once the world's second highest viaduct.

There are a long descent into and a long ascent from the famous Gokteik gorge, which runs athwart the general course of this line, the gorge being a great rift in the limestone formation of the country. Even with 1 in 40 approaches winding down the sides of the gorge, it was not possible for the survey engineers to carry the line below a level of 800 ft, above the bottom of the gorge. Luckily, however, nature provided a natural bridge - or tunnel, as it really is - to help to carry the railway across the abyss. For the river at the bottom of the gorge here burrows through the limestone, which thus, forms a natural arch. To Cross over engineers designed a

remarkable steel trestle viaduct of American pattern and make. The highest trestle, 350 ft. in height, stands immediately above the river on the limestone tunnel. At this point the line is over 800 ft. above the river bed, into which it appears possible to pitch a stone from the bridge towering above it. The whole viaduct is about 2,200 ft. in length. Immediately beyond it the line reaches the precipitous face of the gorge and, after piercing two outcrops of rock in tunnel, clings precariously to it, as it winds up the farther side of the valley.

<http://mikes.railhistory.railfan.net/r019.html>



**Rice - Market - Naung Hkio**

The train rocks and rolls its way along the appalling track and finally the viaduct comes into view. As usual photos are difficult because of trackside trees and shrubs. However we do get a few clear shots and when the train stops just before the viaduct to allow another train to pass we are able to get some good pictures. Finally we are creeping across the viaduct; pictures are prohibited while the train is crossing the viaduct. As the train winds its way up from the viaduct there are a few more clear shots and then we are travelling through the country side.



**At Last, the Train! - Naung Hkio**



**Gokteik Viaduct**

When we disembark the sun is setting so our drive into Hsipaw is in the dark; not a desirable thing on these roads.

Once settled into Mr Charles Guesthouse we head downtown for dinner.



See Appendix for more information on the history of Hsipaw

<http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/Perspective/persp2000/2-2000/hsipaw.htm>

[http://www.alumnifriends.mines.edu/fun\\_stuff/twilight\\_and\\_tragedy/Default.htm](http://www.alumnifriends.mines.edu/fun_stuff/twilight_and_tragedy/Default.htm)

## Tuesday 21 November 2006 - Hsipaw

Day 19

Today is a trekking day. Unsure when we started the trip as to whether or not we could make an overnight trek to one of the local villages we discovered last night that a 2 day trek to the palaung village of Pan Kam.

<http://www.peoplesoftheworld.org/text?people=Pal-aung>  
[http://www.khrg.org/khrg92/92\\_07\\_03.html](http://www.khrg.org/khrg92/92_07_03.html)



**At the start of the trek - Hsipaw**

We have been given some statistics about the trek:

*Pan Kam: Altitude 1150M  
7.01 km (14008 steps)  
577.6 kilocalories used  
10.352 km (18822 steps)  
776.4 kilocalories used*

This data was obtained from someone's pedometer, an unreliable instrument at the best of times and we are later told at the village that it is 9-10 miles to Hsipaw (15-16km)



**Farm House**

We set off in the bus at 09:10 for the starting point at the cemetery just out of town. At first it is fairly easy going, climbing slowly through the picturesque rice paddies and other fields. After about 2 hours we stop for a drink, noodles and a rest.

Our guide tells us it is about two and a half hours to the village. As we continue on the path becomes steeper and it is getting hotter. Despite the fact that the group is not a bunch of 40 year olds everyone is keeping a steady pace.



**On the easy part of the trail**



**Cutting stubble in the fields**





**Rock Outcrop - we will climb well above it**



**Father and Son - Pan Kam**

We continue upwards past small villages, people working in the fields and on the hillsides cutting corn and picking tea. We are skirting a large valley and as we climb higher we have a fantastic view of the valley and the mountains beyond.



**Mini Hydro-Electricity Plant**



**Bogged Truck along the way**

Our guide keeps reassuring us of the number of ups and how long we have to go. The trouble is a number of these

ups are very long and quite steep and it is getting hotter and there is less shade as we get higher.



**Pack Horses carrying tea to Hsipaw**



**Chai Break**

Eventually we are told; one more up and thank goodness because we are all slowing down.





**Ian - Pan Kam**

We reach the village after five and a half hours walking. We have walked about 15 km and climbed over 600m since we left Hsipaw. A respectable days walking!

A gentle down hill into the village past several huge banyan trees and we are at our destination.

We will stay the night in the village headman's house before walking back down in the morning.

The headman's house is built on stilts with stalls for packhorses underneath and a boiler for heating water to

steam the green tea leaves before drying them in the sun.



**Mountain View**



**Drying Tea - Pan Kam**

On our arrival we are entertained with tea in the main room which has a continually burning fire in the centre. Smoke escapes through an opening in the roof so the room is very smoke and as there are few window openings it is rather dark.



**Welcome Chai - Headman's House - Pan Kam**



**Pan Kam**

We then set off on a walk through the village that is quite large with about 700 inhabitants.

By the time we returned to the house it was starting to get dark and as the toilet was out the back along a very rough path there was something of a rush to use it before it was dark.





**Palaung Woman - Pan Kam**

It was obvious where we were going to eat; in the main room of the house beside the cooking fire and by the light of a couple of oil lanterns.

The meal of vegetables, rice and omelet was quite pleasant.

We had been shown our sleeping quarters earlier, a room over where the tea was going to be steamed and by now there was a raging fire and

smoke permeated the room through the gaps in the floor and walls.



**Chillies Drying - Pan Kam**



**Monastery - Pan Kam**

Five of us were to sleep on mats on the teak floor in this room and two in the main room.

The two in the main room were the unlucky ones; the smoky fire burnt all night. The rest of us were luckier; as soon as the tea was steamed the fire was doused and by the time we went to bed at about 19:00 the smoke had cleared.



**Little Monk - Pan Kam**





**Headman - Pan Kam**



**Daughter in Law - Pan Kam**

The mats on the floor were thin, the covers were quite warm and by the time the cock crowed for the first time at 04:00 everyone was stiff and sore

and had had very little if any sleep. It was of course still dark and risking life and limb to go to the toilet was out of the question, so everyone hung on until it was light around 06:00.



**Neville thanking Headman - Pan Kam**



**Downhill!**

Preparing breakfast is a major operation as besides breakfast the food for the day in the fields is prepared at the same time.

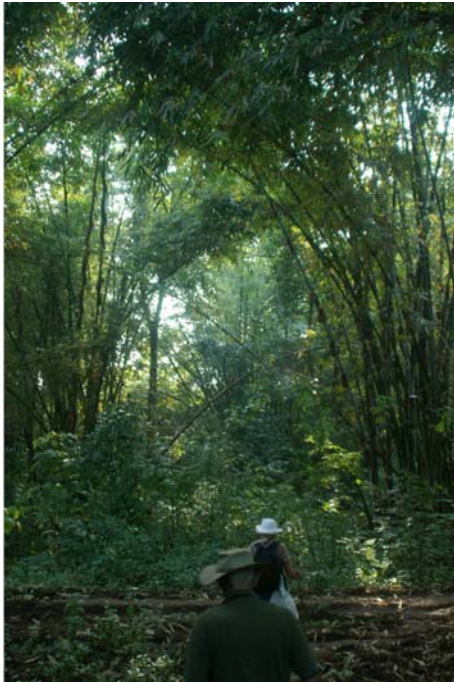
After almost two hours we were at the teahouse we had stopped at yesterday. After 20 minutes we were on our way again. Another short cut took us along some fairly uneven paths through fields, but we were assured it would cut 30 minutes off the trip.

Shortly before 12:00 we encountered William waiting for us and another few minutes walking saw us at the waiting bus.

A rest was the order of the day for most of us until 15:00 when we assembled to visit the Black House Tea Room on the riverbank run by an Australia named Maureen.



**Dokhtawaddi River - Hsipaw**



**Bamboo glade on the way down**

Breakfast consisted of rice, green vegetables and pumpkin slices cooked in a wok with raw sugar. It was very tasty.



**Black House Tea Room - Hsipaw**

Breakfast over we departed at 08:00 for the walk back to Hsipaw. We started back the way we came but soon turned off onto a shortcut. A less used path this path plunged into the valley on the opposite side to our climb yesterday. As usual it was easier on the lungs but became harder on the legs as we continued down into the valley. There was less to see as we were hidden in the trees.

Excellent coffee and a relaxing place to sit watching the activity on the Dokhtawaddi river for the rest of the afternoon.

We dined again at Mr Food, an excellent Chinese Restaurant. This time service was very slow. However the food was worth waiting for.



**Warehouse - Hsipaw**

**Thursday 23 November 2006 – Hsipaw - Mandalay**

**Day 21**

Today is a travel day. At 08:00 we take our leave of Mr Charles Hotel and apart from stops to photograph the standing Buddha as Hsipaw, the road winding down into the Gokteik gorge near the Gokteik Viaduct and a view of the viaduct, we make good time to our lunch stop at Maymyo.

An hour for lunch and we continue our way to Mandalay arriving at 14:15.

## Mandalay History

Founded on [23 May 1859](#) by King [Mindon Min](#), Mandalay was the last capital ([1860–1885](#)) of the last independent Burmese Kingdom before annexation by the [British](#) after the [Third Anglo-Burmese War](#) in [1885](#).

Unlike other Burmese towns, Mandalay did not grow from a smaller settlement to town proportions although there did exist a village by the name of *Htee Baunga* nearby.



Mandalay was set up in an empty area at the foot of 236 meter Mandalay Hill according to a prophecy made by the [Buddha](#) that in that exact place a great city, a metropolis of [Buddhism](#), would come into existence on the occasion of the 2,400th jubilee of Buddhism.



**Standing Buddha - Hsipaw**

King Mindon decided to fulfil the prophecy and during his reign in the Kingdom of [Amarapura](#) he issued a royal order on [January 13, 1857](#) to establish a new kingdom. The Ceremony of Ascending the Throne was celebrated in [July 1858](#) and the former royal city of [Amarapura](#) was dismantled and moved by elephants

to the new location at the foot of Mandalay Hill.



**Winding Road into Gokteik Gorge**



**Gokteik Viaduct**

With the Ground-breaking ceremony, King Mindon laid the foundation of Mandalay on the 6th waning day of Kason, Burmese Era 1219 ([1857](#)). The King simultaneously laid the foundations of seven edifices: the royal city with the battlemented walls, the moat surrounding it, the *Maha Lawka Marazein* Stupa

([Kuthodaw Pagoda](#)), the higher ordination hall named the *Pahtan-haw Shwe Thein*, the *Atumashi* (Incomparable) monastery, the *Thudhama Zayats* or public houses for preaching the Doctrine, and the library for the Buddhist scriptures.



**Mahamuni Pagoda - Mandalay**

The whole royal city was called *Lei Kyun Aung Myei* (Victorious Land over the Four Islands) and the royal palace, *Mya Nan San Kyaw* (The Famed Royal Emerald Palace). The new royal capital was called *Yadanabon Naypyidaw*, the Burmese version of its [Pali](#) name **Ratanapura** which means "The City of Gems". It then became Mandalay after the hill; the name is a derivative of the [Pali](#) word "Mandala", which means "a plains land" - Mandalay is said to be as flat as the face of a drum - and also of the [Pali](#) word "Mandare", which means "an auspicious land."

Mandalay would be captured just 29 years later and the palace would become the [British](#) headquarters, known as Fort Dufferin, of [Upper Burma](#).

During [World War II](#), the [Japanese](#), seeking to cut [China's](#) supply line, occupied [Indochina](#). However, a new supply line via Burma had already been opened in

January 1939. This came to be known as the [Burma Road](#) and started from [Rangoon](#) to [Chongqing](#) via Mandalay, [Lashio](#), [Baoshan](#) and [Kunming](#).



**Mahamuni Buddha - Mandalay**

Tens of thousands of tons of war [materiel](#) reached the [Chinese nationalists](#) by this route, creating difficulties for the Japanese army, which became desperate to cut this supply line. Thus, Japan sought the support of local nationalist groups and helped found the [Burma Independence Army](#) (BIA) led by the [Thirty Comrades](#) under their command, invaded [Burma](#) and captured Mandalay on [May 2, 1942](#).

The fort which contained the palace was turned into a Japanese supply depot and was heavily bombed by the British prior to their liberation of the city in March 1945 as part of an overland operation to recapture the capital and port of [Rangoon](#). The palace burnt down to the ground and only the masonry plinth of the palace complex with a couple of masonry structures such as the royal mint and the hourdrum tower remained until a faithful replica was built by [Ne Win](#) in the [1980s](#).



**Bells - Mahamuni Pagoda - Mandalay**

In 1948 independence from Britain was declared, and with the formation of the [Union of Burma](#), the city became the capital of Mandalay Division.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandalay>

<http://www.allmyanmar.com/new%20allmyanmar.com/myanmar%20mandalay.htm>

At 15:00 we are in the bus again for a visit to the Mahamuni Pagoda and Shwe In Bin Kyaung a wooden Pagoda built by two wealthy jade merchants.



**Pool - Mahamuni Pagoda - Mandalay**



**Repair Shop - Shwe In Bin Kyaung Monastery - Mandalay**



## Mahamuni Pagoda



**Bronze Figure - Mahamuni Pagoda - Mandalay**

Mandalay's most famed pagoda is the Mahamuni Pagoda built in 1784 by King Bodawpaya to house the Mahamuni Image. But it was destroyed by fire in 1884.



**Shwe In Bin Kyaung Monastery - Mandalay**

The highly venerated Mahamuni Image was transported by elephant from Rakhine in 1784. The image is about 38 metres (12 feet 7 inches) high. The seated image is cast in bronze. In a separate building to the north of the main pagoda are six bronze Khmer statues. There are

lions. Two are male warriors and one is Erawan, the three-headed elephant. Originally these figures stood sentry at Angkor at in Cambodia, then were taken from Angkor by the This in 1431. King Bayinaung of Bago had taken them from the Siamese capital of Ayuthia in 1564. In 1663 King Razagyi from Rakhine removed these very same statues from Bago. These Khmer figures were brought back from Rakhine along with the Mahamuni Buddha image. Devout Buddhists have completely covered the Mahamuni statue in a thick layer of gold leaf.

## Shwe In Bin Kyaung (Monastery)

This large and elegant teak building was constructed by wealthy chinese jade merchants in 1895. The wood carved ornamentation along the balustrades and roof cornices corniches is of exquisite quality.

<http://www.tawwintravel.com/mandalay.htm>

We dined at the Mandalay barbeque. Newcomers to Mandalay went to the puppet show.



**Carved Panels - Shwe In Bin Kyaung Monastery - Mandalay**

**Friday 24 November 2006 –Mandalay - Myitkyina**

**Day 22**

This afternoon we will catch the afternoon train to Myitkyina in Kachin State in the north of Myanmar.

For most it is an opportunity to catch up on some sleep before heading to the market to get supplies; others head out to U Bein's bridge for the sunrise. This 1.2 km long foot bridge was built by U Bein, the 'mayor' at the time of

the shift from Ava. He salvaged material from the deserted Ava Palace to build the bridge and it remains the longest teak span in the world.

After a rather later than usual breakfast we head off to the market to get some food and water for the 24 hour train trip to Myitkyina.



**Catholic Cathedral - Mandalay**

Once the task is accomplished we spend the couple of hours walking around the neighbourhood. We have all been to Mandalay before so there is nothing that we particularly want to see.

At 12:00 we all assemble for the ride in small blue taxis to the Mandalay train station; a grand place, far larger than needed for the number of trains. Nevertheless our train and our sleeping compartments are waiting at

the platform so we board and get ourselves settled.

The carriage is pretty basic and rather grubby, but the seats are not too bad in our Upper Class Sleeping compartment.



**Machinery Shop - Mandalay**



**Market - Mandalay**

All starts well with an on time departure and we first head south to the Ava Bridge and Sagain Hill where we cross

the Irrawaddy River before heading towards our destination about 700km to the north. This is not going to be a fast trip.



**Market - Mandalay**



**Typical Public Transport - Mandalay**

The vast structure which replaced the wagon ferry across the Irrawaddy at Sagaing near Mandalay is called the Ava Bridge, taking its name from an ancient and now deserted capital of Burma near at hand. This bridge



consists of nine spans, each 350 ft. in length, one span of 250 ft., and six spans of 60 ft. The structure carries two roadways as well as the railway. Each of the 350 ft. spans weighs 1,020 tons. The foundations consist of steel caissons 59 ft. long and 29 ft. wide. These are anchored in rock at varying depths down to 104 ft. below bed level. There is a 40 ft. seasonal rise and fall in the river level, and a 40 ft. headway is allowed for steamers passing under the bridge in high flood. The piers are heavily reinforced to resist earthquake shocks.

<http://mikes.railhistory.railfan.net/r044.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ava>

We are soon to find out what travelling on the Myanmar Railways is really like. Our short excursions to date have just been an introduction.

A pre 1935 history of the system states:

All the railways in Burma, with the exception of under 100 miles of narrow-gauge, privately-owned lines, form one system at present both

owned and worked by the Government, the Burma Railways. Instead of this little-known system being a few narrow-gauge lines, it is one of the most important metre-gauge railways in the British Empire. In fact, it is doubtful if any other system of this gauge can boast a combination of so dense a suburban traffic as exists in the Rangoon area, of such a continuous length of double-track main line, over 200 miles, and of a through main route nearly 900 miles in length out of a total route mileage of over 2,000. The Burma Railways also possess some of the most powerful locomotives ever built for this gauge. The rolling stock can be built to within 9 in. of the width allowed on British 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge lines - 8 ft. 6 in. as against the standard 9 ft. 3 in. Bogie coaches up to 56 ft. in length are used. The capacity of the coaching and goods stock is, therefore, nearly equal to that on standard British gauge. It is also obvious that Burma Railways 100-ton locomotives, capable of developing a tractive effort of 41,000 lb., and hauling trains of 200 tons up long 1 in 25 gradients with almost continuous 330 ft. radius reverse curves, can be run only on a line that is well laid, equipped and maintained. And, indeed, the general standard of the lines in Burma is comparable with that of many systems of wider gauge.

<http://mikes.railhistory.railfan.net/r044.html>

The third arch of the new Ava bridge that we had passed under last year is now closed.

Before we have gone very far we have to cross a causeway crossing a large lake. The lake is in flood and the water level is to the top of the track in places and the

train creeps across the lake. Eventually we reach high ground and the train speeds up to maybe 30km per hour. We will be lucky to exceed this for the rest of the trip. We make several stops, sometimes waiting for trains from the opposite direction, as it is a single track.

We are travelling through the flat rural landscape of the Irrawaddy River. On both sides there are distant mountains.

By 18:00 it is dark and as the lights in the compartment don't work we decide the best thing to do is to get into our bunks and hopefully go to sleep.

This proves very difficult. The track is terrible and the carriage rolls violently from side to side. In addition the carriage suspension resonates with the bumps caused by the joints in the track that are about one carriage length apart. Consequently the up and down motion is sometimes so violent that you can be parted from the mattress. That is not all, as sometimes there is longitudinal resonance that means you are shaken back and forth in the bed.

Lying on one's side was impossible; lying on one's back was the only option. Around 22:30 the train came to a prolonged halt. None of us seem to know exactly when it occurred or for how long, but it seemed to be for over 2 hours. During this period we got a little sleep.

**Saturday 25 November 2006 – Mandalay to Myitkyina**

**Day 23**

Eventually we resumed our agony, creeping on through the night towards our destination. When daylight comes

we have climbed into the hills and the scenery has changed to a mixture of jungle and cultivated land. It is

very misty and the hills and valleys are shrouded in the mist.



**Ian - Mawlu**

At 10:40 we come to an unscheduled stop at Mawlu. Apparently there is a problem with the train ahead. The time is spent entertaining the local children and what ever else we can find to do, including sleep. Five hours later we are on our way with an estimated arrival at Myitkyina of midnight, and believe it or not we arrive close to that time, only 12 hours late and 36 hours since we left the hotel.

Not much time is wasted in getting into our hotel and into bed.



**Freight Train Passengers - Mawlu**



**Young Woman - Mawlu**



**Neil and Glen with local boys - Mawlu**



**Waiting? - Mawlu**



Myitkyina the capital of Kachin state, about 800km north of Mandalay!



**Nuns - Myitkyina**

It is the northernmost river port and railway terminal in Myanmar.

It is quite a large town and unlike the rest of Myanmar is predominantly Christian and there are many Christian Churches. It is also the hub for the distinctive tribes of northern Burma. We are now in the foothills of what become to the north the Himalayas. The mist-shrouded mountains surround the valley of the Irrawaddy River which starts at the confluence of the Maykha and Malikha rivers, at Myit Sone a short distance to the north.



**Petrol Station - Myitkyina**



**Confluence of the Maykha and Malikha rivers**

During [World War II](#), Myitkyina fell to the Allied forces under General [Joseph Stilwell](#) after a prolonged siege and heavy fighting between [Nationalist Chinese](#) divisions and [Merrill's Marauders](#) of [NCAC](#) and the besieged

elements of the 33rd [Imperial Japanese Army](#) under General Masaki Honda. The town was strategically important not only because of its rail and water links to the rest of Burma, but also because it was on the planned route of the [Ledo Road](#).

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myitkyina>

[http://www.my-myitkyina.com/mh\\_html/mka.htm](http://www.my-myitkyina.com/mh_html/mka.htm)



**Riverside Cafés**

After much needed sleep it is a lazy start for the one and a half hour drive to the start of the Irrawaddy, this great river that runs through the heart of Myanmar to Andaman Sea and is the Road to Mandalay of Kipling's poem.

The Maykha and Malihka rivers are both large rivers and at the confluence the waters swirl and boil as the join into the one great river. While few western tourists come here, many Burmese come to see the start of their most important river so there are some basic tourist facilities, including boats to take visitors out onto the three rivers.





**Refuelling - Myitkyina**



**Boatman**

We elect to take the trip, about 30 minutes, to experience the fast flowing waters.



**Swirling Water**



**Bathing Buffalo**

After the boat trip some chose to swim in the clear, cold waters. Near the bank the river was shallow and the current manageable but the water soon became deep and fast flowing and great care was needed.



**Bathers in the Irrawaddy River**



**Working Elephant**

After a snack and a drink at one of the cafés we head back towards Myitkyina as fast as the driver can go. Requests to slow down are soon ignored and he returns to form, driving like hell until something is in his way and then slowing violently. The road is typically Burmese, a few good sections, a few more fair sections and the rest a nightmare.





**Dragonfly**

On one of the better sections of road we suddenly come to a stop as two working elephants are spotted beside the road. We stop for pictures, however the riders are anxious to be on their way and soon have their charges ambling off down the road.

We also make a visit to a reclining Buddha, donated by an ex Japanese WWII soldier in memory of Japanese and others who died in Burma in WWII. The donation was made in 2002.

We have a couple of hours to explore Myitkiyna before dark. It is a busy, relatively clean town and the people are very friendly toward visitors.



**Reclining Buddha - Myitkyina**



**Butcher - Market - Myitkyina**



**Teak Lounge Suite - Myitkyina**



**Boys - Market - Myitkyina**



**Fish for sale - Myitkyina**

Today we travel to Banmaw from where we will start our leisurely cruise down the Irrawaddy River to Mandalay. A trip by fast boat had been proposed, but that option turned out to be unavailable so we traveled by road instead.

The 160m trip was reported to be very rough and likely to take up to 10 hours.

We had a celebrity farewell from the Aye Chan Tha Inn as we were the first foreign group that had stayed there.



**Pagoda - Nam San**



**Baptist Church - Nam San**



**School - Nam San**



**Nam San**

Soon after we left Myitkyina the road deteriorated into a boulder strewn track and it certainly looked like we were in for a bone-jarring day.



Then we crossed the bridge across the Irrawaddy to the eastern side and miraculously for the next few kilometers the road was as good as one could wish for.



**Human Cargo (1) - Nam San**



**Street Scene - Banmaw**

This good section of road soon ended to be replaced by a cobbled road surface made by laying moderately large stones with at least one flat surface to create a durable road surface on which we could travel fairly quickly. As a result we were making better time than we expected and by the

time we made our first stop at Namsan we were well along the way. This surface continued for some time, but in Myanmar good roads come to an end for no good reason and eventually we were on the predicted rough road and crawling along in some places.



**Human Cargo (2) - Banmaw**



**Monastery - Banmaw**

The road is close to the Chinese border and in an area where not long ago there was rebel fighting. The road has not long been open to foreign tourists. We expect many checkpoints, but are only

required to show our papers at two places. We do notice several army posts on hill tops beside the road.



**Port - Banmaw**



**Pots - Port - Banmaw**

The route winds through the foothills of the mountains on the border with China. We follow river and creek valleys, cross over and climb the opposite ridge, winding our way above the Irrawaddy River flood plain. It is not until we are approaching Banmaw that we finally descend to the plane.

The trip has only taken 6 hour, much less than expected and certainly much more comfortable than expected. There had been a possibility of two other people joining us in Myitkyina. It was perhaps fortunate that their plane arrived in Myitkyina tool late for them to come with us, as the little bus would have been very crowded. They came by car and caught up with us in time for dinner.

Our unexpectedly early arrival enabled us to have a look around the very busy market and port town. After India these northern Burmese towns are clean and pleasant to wander about, talking to the local people and poking our noses into their shops and market stalls. As few foreign visitors have come to this area we are also of interest to the local people.

The Friendship Hotel was new, clean and certainly the best hotel we had stayed in. We decided to dine in the hotel. In retrospect this was a mistake. The meal was excellent, but it took forever to come and by the time it came from the ground floor kitchen it was stone cold.

## **Tuesday 28 November 2006 – Irrawaddy Cruise Day 1**

**Day 26**

We were up and ready to leave by 08:30 to join the boat that would take us lazily down the Irrawaddy River to Mandalay.



**Unloading chicken feed - Banmaw**

We all thought the boat would be at the loading area in the centre of town; wrong, the boat was down river at a much busier loading area and the bus had to bump its way over the sandy road to where the boat was. After several days of bumpy trains and roads this was almost too much. Fortunately we were soon at the boat; a much larger one than the one we had had last year for the trip from Mandalay to Bagan.



**Temporary Farmhouse - Irrawaddy River**

The lower deck was set up with our beds and the upper deck was sheltered from the sun. Two European style toilets (and a shower) made this boat like a luxury cruise boat. We had expected a prompt departure but the boat alongside had a flat battery and our crew lent a hand to get it going.

The river that had been clear and clean only about 300km upstream now looked as polluted as the Ganges.

Few stops are planned but we do hope to make Katha before dark.



**Laden boat heading upstream - Irrawaddy River**

The delayed start makes this a difficult objective as the river is low and in some places very shallow so navigation is difficult.



At first it is quite cool and misty but as the sun rises the mist is burnt off and it becomes quite warm and very pleasant lazing in the sun enjoying the passing scenery; farmers working in the fields, villagers going about their business on the river banks, fishermen on the river and the passing river traffic carrying goods up and down the river.



**First Defile - Irrawaddy River**

When the river recedes after the wet season, fishers and farmers set up temporary dwellings on the banks and the farmers cultivate the rich soil.

Teak logs are very dense and cannot be floated down the river without extra

buoyancy. This is achieved by placing long beams across a boat and then suspending the almost submerged logs from the beams, or, by suspending the logs below rafts of bamboo. We see both during our trip down river.



**Riverbank Village - Irrawaddy River**



**Fisherman - First Defile - Irrawaddy River**

During the day we pass through the first defile where the river passes through a range of hills. The river is much narrower and deeper here and the currents stronger.



**Parrot Beak - First Defile - Irrawaddy River**



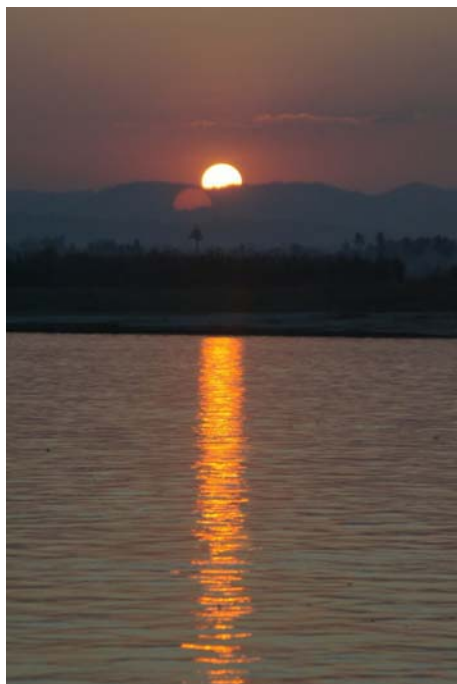
**River Traffic - Irrawaddy River**

The sun has set by the time we reach Katha, nevertheless we pull in and go ashore for a quick visit to the town where Gorge Orwell was post by the British army in the late 1920's. His book 'Burmese Days' was based on his experiences here.

Orwell spent five years during the 1920s as a policeman in the British colonial service, which Larkin argues "was

the beginning of [his] uncanny and prophetic trilogy which told the history of present day Burma", through the novels *Burmese Days*, [Animal Farm](http://netcharles.com/orwell/articles/co-l-readingtealeaves.htm) and 1984.

<http://netcharles.com/orwell/articles/co-l-readingtealeaves.htm>



**Setting Sun - Irrawaddy River**

A local guide took us to house believed to be one of several that George Orwell had stayed in. It is by no means certain that we had the right house, but we took some pictures anyway.

Katha is the largest river town between Banmaw and Mandalay.



**Government Ferry - Irrawaddy River**



**Riverbank Pagoda - Irrawaddy River**

We quickly returned to the boat and continued on our way for another three hours in the dark. Navigation is now more difficult and occasionally the boat slows while the crew feel their way through shallow water. They do a good job and after dinner we tie up beside a village and with the aid and company of some of the villagers we enjoy a bonfire on the bank. Although we have quite a

large fire it does not seem to have enough heat to overcome the cold night air and the breeze. Most of us soon decide to retire to the boat and bed.



**William, Glen, Ian and Neil on the Poop Deck**



**Raft of Teak Logs - Irrawaddy River**





**House where Orson Wells lived -  
Katha**

We have with us some simple hot air balloons made of very thin plastic and fuelled by burning sticks of bamboo. Several of these are inflated and let fly into the night sky. They rise very quickly and drift downwind. The flames can be seen in the sky for quite a long time.



**Neil Relaxing**



**Our Boat at Katha**



**Nun on the Riverbank - Irrawaddy River**



**Ox Cart on the Riverbank - Irrawaddy River**

We are woken well before sunrise by the roosters crowing and the villagers starting their daily business, not to mention chanting from the nearby temple. Most of us manage to stay in bed until there is enough daylight to see (at about 06:00).



**Ghostly Boats in the Morning Mist - Irrawaddy River**



**Raft aground on a sandbank - Irrawaddy River**



**Heading to the fields - Irrawaddy River**



**Sunken Boat - Irrawaddy River**

Departure time is uncertain, as the crew needs to obtain supplies for our meals. By about 08:30, and after several coffees we are on our way again. Although it is clear early in the morning the rising sun causes a river mist and visibility is limited to the river until the sun rises high enough to burn off the mist. This it eventually does and we are able to

shed our fleece jackets and once again enjoy the sunshine and the views.



**Firewood being loaded - Irrawaddy River**



**Riverbank Pagoda - Irrawaddy River**

During the morning I spotted two dolphins swimming upstream. These were the only ones we saw.



They were probably Gangetic Dolphins, Irrawaddy Dolphins are coastal and unlikely to be seen so far up river.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irrawaddy\\_Dolphin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irrawaddy_Dolphin)

No stops are scheduled for the day, but during the afternoon the beer runs out and the whisky is

getting low and so we stop at an opportune village so that William and the crew can replenish supplies.

This done we continue on after sunset until we find a suitable sandbank to tie up at and spend the night.

Another campfire and again several balloons are released. Again the evening is chilly and bed seems to be the best place.

We have made sufficient progress today to be able to visit Mingun, a former capital of Burma, before we arrive in Mandalay tomorrow.

**Thursday 30 November 2006 – Irrawaddy Cruise Day 3 - Mandalay**

**Day 28**



**Buddha - Hsinbyume Pagoda - Mingun**

This morning we are awakened, not by the sounds from a village but by very noisy passing boats and one playing very loud music.



**Early morning cuppa - Irrawaddy River**

The crew are up and about well before it is light and we are underway before 06:00. Again it is cool until after 10:00 when the sun finally burns through the mist. Around 09:30 the base of the enormous unfinished Pagoda at Mingun comes into view and by 10:15 we are ashore, surrounded by young girls and boys trying to sell us fans and postcards. These boys can be a hazard as they distract you while you are trying to negotiate steep, sometimes rough stairs in bare feet. This time I spend more time at the Hsinbyume Pagoda and give climbing the Mingun Pagoda a miss.

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**Heading upstream - Irrawaddy River**

Old peoples homes are rare in Myanmar and one of them is located at Mingun. The oldest man in residence is 99 and the oldest woman is 92.



**Mingun Bell**

After about an hour and a half at Mingin we rejoin the boat for the short leg to Mandalay.

After the cooling influence of the river the return to land and the heat of the Mandalay streets is quite a shock.

However the prospect of a shower and a change of clothes more than compensates for the short trip through the city streets in a little blue taxi.

The afternoon is an opportunity to catch up on the diary in the cool of an air-conditioned room.



**Pagoda - Irrawaddy River**

Two villages make a substantial part of their income from tourists and there is a clear demarcation along the road between the two selling areas.



**Village - Irrawaddy River**

In addition there are 1500 monks in the monasteries at Mingin. They are supported by the villagers and donations from Mandalay and further a field.



**Small Bamboo Raft - Irrawaddy River**



**Teak Barge - Irrawaddy River**





**Old Peoples Home - Mingun**



**Monastery Pagoda - Mingun**



**Mingun Pagoda**



**Hsinbyume Pagoda - Mingun**



**Parasols - Mingun**



**Pagoda on the riverbank - Mingun**

**Friday 01 December 2006 – Mandalay to Yangon**

**Day 29**

Our Air Bagan flight departs on time at 08:30. We have lost three of the group as they are heading to other destinations and we will lose another at Heho, near Inle Lake, before we reach Yangon.

We are in the Yoma Hotel by 11:30 and at 12:30 we are lunching across the road at the now familiar street restaurant.

For family reasons Ian Marsh is leaving early and at 14:30 we see him off before everyone sets off to do some last minute shopping.

Tomorrow, three of us will be on our way and on Sunday the rest will leave for home.

Departure from Yangon at 13:45 is pretty much on time for the short flight to Bangkok where I find QF2 is delayed and I am rebooked Sydney – Melbourne on an international flight and will not clear immigration in Sydney.

This is OK if my bag is re-routed to Melbourne. Nothing I can do about it, except hope!

QF2 finally takes off for Sydney a couple of hours late. My connecting flight is also delayed for the same reason as QF2; the auxiliary engine won't start.

Finally I am in Melbourne about 4 hours late; no bag. Report it missing and go home, arriving about 15:30.



**Reducing a large stump to firewood - Mingun**

Monday the bag is located. It had not made the connection in Bangkok. Finally late Monday evening I have my bag.

As usual the airlines are full of apologies but there had been plenty of time for the transfer in Bangkok.



**Mingun Pagoda**



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# Appendix

## Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

### A Brief History of The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

<http://www.dhrs.org/home.htm>

#### 1879

Construction is started by the Darjeeling Steam Tramway Company. The track is a narrow gauge of only 2ft (610mm). The purpose of the new railway is to reduce the haulage rates of essential commodities (such as rice) to Darjeeling and to improve the economic viability of local industries such as tea production. The line closely follows the route of the existing Hill Cart Road - the Government supports the scheme as the railway will reduce the cost of maintaining the road.

#### 1880

Eight steam locomotives arrive from the works of Messrs Sharp Stewart, Manchester, England. In March Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India visits the line which opens to the public between Siliguri and Kurseong in August.

#### 1881

On 3 July the line is officially opened to Darjeeling. It is 51 miles (82km) long and climbs from only 400ft (120m) at Siliguri to the summit at Ghum (7407ft/2257m) before descending to Darjeeling (6812ft/2075m). The Company is renamed the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Co. In its first full year of operation the line carries 8,000 passengers and 380 tons of goods.

#### 1882

Four loops and four reverses (zig-zags) are constructed between Sukna and Gayabari to ease the gradient.

#### 1885

A short extension for goods traffic is opened to the bazaar at Darjeeling.

#### 1891

Darjeeling station is enlarged and rebuilt.

#### 1896

Kurseong gets a new station (previously the Clarendon Hotel had been used for this purpose) and storage sheds.

#### 1897

Many homes in Darjeeling and Kurseong are damaged by an earthquake and tremors. DHR service is maintained.

#### 1899

A devastating cyclone hits Darjeeling on 23 September - 4,000ft of mountainside slips into the valley causing much loss of life and damage to the DHR. Twenty five gold medals are awarded by the Lt. Governor to those who risked their lives to save others.

#### 1905

Traffic on the line continues to grow with 29,000 passengers and 31,570 tons of goods. In addition to rice, flour and coal the line is bringing increasing numbers of tourists to the region. The shareholders in the Company are benefiting from dividends of 11-14%.

#### 1909-10

Growth continues with 174,000 passengers and 47,000 tons of goods. The first bogie carriages enter service, replacing very basic 4 wheel carriages.

#### 1914-15

A branch line of the DHR opens from Siliguri (Panchanai) to Kishanganj. At Tindharia the railway works are relocated from behind the loco shed to a new and extensive site created from removing the summit of Selim Hill. The line is now carrying 250,000 passengers and 60,000 tons of freight (flour and rice 17,804 tons, tea 5,354 tons, potatoes 3,824 tons, salt 1,634 tons, sugar 894 tons and metals 915 tons). With the continued growth in staff and business, the headquarters of the railway moves from Darjeeling to more spacious accommodation at Kurseong.

#### 1915

Another branch - the Teesta Valley Line - is opened from Siliguri to Kalimpong Road (Gielle Khola).

#### 1919

The loop at Batasia is constructed, eliminating problems by creating easier gradients on the ascent from Darjeeling. But the first sign of competition for the railway comes with the introduction of a bus service, making the journey in 3 ½ hrs - 1 ½ hrs faster than the trains. The railway retaliates with a railcar in 1920 but it can carry only 9 passengers and is soon out of service.

#### **1919/22/24**

The DHR and the Teesta Valley line are used to transport men and equipment for attempts to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

#### **1930**

Despite increasing competition from private cars and buses, the line continues to prosper with 258,000 passengers and 80,000 tons of goods, although earnings from both sources are declining.

#### **1934**

A serious earthquake in Bihar shakes all of Northeast India. Many buildings in Darjeeling are heavily damaged and the railway is also badly affected, although it soon recovers and plays a vital role in transporting repair materials.

#### **1936**

The line is running three through trains a day in each direction, taking 5 ¼ hrs and two local services running from Tindharia and Kurseong.

#### **1939-1945**

The effect of World War 2 dramatically increases traffic on the DHR which plays a vital role transporting military personnel and supplies to the numerous camps around Ghum and Darjeeling. The line now has 39 working locomotives and Tindharia Works, employing almost 400 workers, constructs extra rolling stock including a five vehicle ambulance train for the wounded. A Walford diesel locomotive arrives in 1942, but the trials are unsuccessful. In the year 1943-44 the line carries 311,000 passengers and 76,000 tons of goods.

#### **1947**

The old wooden station at Darjeeling is replaced by a modern concrete building.

#### **1948**

On 20 October the DHR is purchased by the Indian Government and is absorbed into the Indian Government Railways organisation.

#### **1950**

As Partition has severed the main line railway link with Assam, the Kishanganj to Siliguri and Siliguri to Sevoke sections of the two DHR branch lines are replaced by metre gauge track as part of the new Assam Rail Link Project. After heavy damage from flooding the remaining section of the Teesta Valley branch from Sevoke to Guelle Khola is abandoned. The DHR comes under the management of the Assam Railways organisation.

#### **1952**

Assam Railways including the DHR become part of the North Eastern Railway zone.

#### **1958**

The DHR and other Assam lines are transferred to the new North East Frontier Railway Zone.

#### **1962**

At Siliguri the line is re-aligned and extended by approx 4 miles (6 km) to New Jalpaiguri (NJP) to meet the new broad gauge line there. It opens for freight that year and for passengers in 1964. The loco shed and carriage depot at Siliguri Junction are relocated to NJP.

#### **1984**

The once important railway mail services on the line end - beaten by road competition.

#### **1988/9**

The line is closed for 18 months due to civil unrest.

#### **1993**

Competition from road haulage and the interruption to services in previous years finally ends the freight services.

#### **1999**

The DHR is awarded 'World Heritage' status by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). At that time it is only the second railway in the world to get such status. UNESCO describes the DHR as "An outstanding example of the influence of an innovative transportation system on the social and economic development of a multi-cultural region which was to serve as a model for similar developments in many parts of the world".

#### **2000**



Two diesel locomotives are introduced into service. The initial pattern is to use them on the service trains below Kurseong, with steam being retained on the Kurseong-Darjeeling section and for tourist specials.

## 2002

Steam locomotive No 787 is converted to oil-firing for trials. 2003/4 More re-alignment of the line takes place at Siliguri and New Jalpaiguri because of the conversion of the Assam line from metre gauge to broad gauge. The DHR gains a new island platform at NJP and the locomotive shed and carriage servicing facility are relocated to a new depot at Siliguri Junction.

## 2005

Two new oil-fired steam locomotives Nos 1001-2 arrive for trials. The new appointment of Director, DHR is a move to increase local control over the line's operation. Tourist traffic shows a welcome increase - 82 steam-hauled charter trains compared with only 20 or less in previous years.

Notes compiled by Paul Whittle, Public Relations Officer DHRS with the help of Terry Martin, Archivist DHRS. February 2006

# Darjeeling - History

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Darjeeling](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Darjeeling)

**History of Darjeeling**, a town in the [Indian](#) state of [West Bengal](#) in the [Shivalik Hills](#) on the lower range of the eastern [Himalaya](#) is intertwined with the history of [Bengal](#), [Nepal](#), [Bhutan](#), [Sikkim](#) and , of course, the [British East India Company](#).

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## Early days

Nepal by a treaty of Sugauly in 1816 ceded 4000 sq. miles of its territory to [British India](#). On 10th of February 1817 the British India made the land over to the Rajah of Sikkim on the basis of a treaty signed at [Titalia](#). The Raja of Sikkim restored the country between [Mechi](#) and the [Tista](#) rivers. Ten years after the

treaty, disputes on the Sikkim-Nepal frontiers arose and the then Governor General sent two Officers — Captain Lloyd and Mr. Grant to help control the dispute. Sikkim, including Darjeeling was then a buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan. After settling the discord, the two representatives found the area around present Darjeeling suitable to establish a [sanitarium](#) for the British troop.

## The lease

Captain Herbert, the Deputy Surveyor General was sent to the area to examine the country. The court of Directors of the British East India Company approved the project. General Lloyd was given the responsibility to negotiate a lease of the area from the [Chogyal](#) of Sikkim. The lease was grant on 1 February, 1835.

This deed of grant, which is commendably short, runs as follows:-

" The Governor-General having expressed his desire for the possession of the hills of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the

servants of his Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages, I the Sikkimputtee Rajah out of friendship for the said Governor-General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India, that is, all the land south of the Great Runjeet river, east of the Balasur, Kahail and Little Runjeet rivers, and west of the Rungpo and Mahanadi rivers." This was an unconditional cession of what was then a worthless uninhabited mountain; but in 1841 the government granted the Raja an allowance of Rs. 3,000 as compensation, and raised the grant to Rs. 6,000 in 1846." (Ref. Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling by L S S O'Malley)"

## Establishing the sanitarium

In 1835, a member of the Indian medical Service, Dr. [Arthur Campbell](#), was appointed Agent of the tract leased, and Lieut. Napier (later [Lord Napier of Magdala](#)) set to work improve the area and lay the foundations of the hill station of Darjeeling. Dr Campbell became the first superintendent of the sanitorium in 1839. The road connecting Darjeeling with the plain was constructed in 1839.

## Beginning of tea plantation

Dr Campbell brought China tea seeds in 1841 from [Kumaon](#) region and started to grow tea on an experimental basis near his residence at Beechwood, Darjeeling. This experiment was followed by similar efforts by several other British. The experiments were successful and soon several tea estates started operating commercially.

## Annexation into the [British Indian Empire](#)

The rapid growth of Darjeeling excited the jealousy of the Maharaja of Sikkim. When Dr. Campbell and the eminent explorer Sir [Joseph Dalton Hooker](#), were touring in Sikkim in 1849, they were suddenly seized and imprisoned. This detention continued for weeks. An expeditionary force was sent by the Company to Sikkim. However, there was no necessity for bloodshed, and after the Company's troops had crossed the [Rangeet](#) river into Sikkim hostilities ceased.

Consequent to this trouble, and further misconduct on the part of the Sikkim authorities a few years later, the mountain tracts now forming the district of Darjeeling became a portion of the British Indian Empire, and the remainder of kingdom of Sikkim became a protected State.

## Further development

The [Darjeeling Municipality](#) was established in 1850. Tea estates continued to grow. By 1860s peace was restored in the borders. During this time immigrants, mainly from Nepal, were recruited to work in construction sites, tea gardens, and on other agriculture-related projects. Scottish missionaries undertook the construction of schools and welfare centres for the British residents: [Loreto Convent](#) in 1847, [St. Paul's School](#) in 1864, [Planters' Club](#) in 1868, [Lloyd's Botanical Garden](#) in 1878, [St. Joseph's School](#) in 1888, Railway Station in 1891, Town Hall (present Municipality Building) in 1921. With the opening of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in 1881, smooth communication between the town and the plains below further increased the development of the region. "Darjeeling disaster" was an earthquake in 1898 that caused considerable damage to the young town and the native population.

## Administration

Darjeeling Municipality took the responsibility of maintaining the civic administration of the town from as early as 1850. From 1850 to 1916, the Municipality was placed in the first Schedule (along with Halna, Hazaribagh, Muzzaferpur etc. in which commissioners were appointed by the local govt.) and second Schedule (along with Burdwan, Hooghly, Nadia, Hazaribagh etc.) in which Chairman was to be appointed by local government. The Darjeeling District was a "Non-regulated area" (where acts and regulations of the British Raj did not automatically apply in the district in line with rest of the country, unless specifically extended) prior to 1861 and from 1870-74. It was temporarily a Regulated Area from 1862 to 1870. The term Non-regulated area was changed to Scheduled District in 1874 and again to Back Ward Tracts in 1919. The status was known as Partially Excluded Area from 1935 till the [independence of India](#).

## Development as a tourist destination

Darjeeling's elite residents were the British ruling class of the time, who visited Darjeeling every summer. An increasing number of well-to-do Indian residents of Kolkata (then Calcutta), affluent [Maharajas](#) of [princely states](#), land-owning [zamindars](#) and barristers of [Calcutta High Court](#) also began visiting Darjeeling. The town continued to grow as a tourist destination, becoming known as the "Queen of the Hills." The town did not see any significant political activity during the freedom struggle of India owing to its remote location and small population.



However, there was a failed assassination attempt by revolutionaries on Sir John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal in the 1930s.

## After Independence of India

After the independence of India in 1947, Darjeeling was merged with the state of West Bengal. A separate district of Darjeeling was established consisting of the hilly towns of Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong and some parts of the Terai region. When the People's Republic of China annexed Tibet in 1950, thousands of Tibetan refugees settled across Darjeeling district.

The population rose by leaps and bounds. growth in population has been more rapid from the 1970s onwards exceeding the growth rates at the district level. The growth rate has touched the sky height of about 45% in the 1990s and thus is far above the national, state, and district average. The colonial town of Darjeeling was designed for a mere population of 10,000. So the population spurt has made the town more prone to the environmental problems in recent decades as the region is geologically relatively new with hosts of environmental problems and hence unstable in nature. The rise in tourism also affected the ecological balance of the area. A diverse ethnic population gave rise to socio-economic tensions, and the demand for the creation of the separate states of Gorkhaland and Kamtapur along ethnic lines grew popular in the 1980s. The issues came to a head after a 40-day strike called by the [Gorkha National Liberation Front](#), during which violence gripped the city, causing the state government to call in the Indian Army to restore order. Political tensions largely declined with the establishment of [Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council](#) under the chairmanship of [Subash Gishing](#). The DGHC was given semi-autonomous powers to govern the district. Later the name of DGHC was changed to Darjeeling Gorkha Autonomous Hill Council (DGAHC). Though Darjeeling is now peaceful, the issue of a separate state still lingers.

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# Delhi

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi>

For the capital of India, see [New Delhi](#).

For other uses, see [Delhi \(disambiguation\)](#).

**Delhi** [pronunciation](#) ([help](#)·[info](#)) ([Hindi](#): दिल्ली, [Urdu](#): دہلی or دلی, [Punjabi](#): ਦਿੱਲੀ) is a [metropolis](#) in [northern India](#). The name Delhi also refers to the [National Capital Territory of Delhi](#) (NCT), which is a special [union territory](#) jointly administered by the [Central government](#), the NCT elected government and three municipal corporations. The metropolis of Delhi and the National Capital Territory of Delhi are coextensive and for most practical purposes they are considered to be the same entity. [New Delhi](#), an urban area within the metropolis of Delhi, is the seat of the [Government of India](#).

With a population of 15.3 million people (2005 figure), Delhi is the [seventh most populous](#) metropolis in the world. Delhi's [metropolitan area](#), informally known as the [National Capital Region](#) (NCR), comprises the NCT, the neighbouring satellite towns of [Faridabad](#) and [Gurgaon](#) in [Haryana](#), and [NOIDA](#) and [Ghaziabad](#) in [Uttar Pradesh](#). Altogether, the NCR is the [world's sixth most populous agglomeration](#) with a population of 19.7 million.

Delhi was the capital of several empires in [ancient India](#) and has over 60,000 recognized monuments erected over several millennia. Delhi derives its historic importance from its position in [northern India](#) between the [Aravalli Hills](#) to the southwest and the [Yamuna River](#) to the east. This enabled it to dominate the old trade routes from northwest India to the [Gangetic Plains](#). As a result, it has long been an important cultural, political, and intellectual centre. Due to a high migration rate, Delhi registers as one of the fastest growing cities in Asia. As a consequence, it faces key issues like [environmental degradation](#), [air](#) and [water pollution](#), [traffic congestion](#), and acute power and water shortages.

## Etymology

The name "Delhi" is of uncertain [etymology](#). One suggestion is that its [eponym](#) is "Dhillu", the name of a [Mauryan maharaja](#). However, some historians believe that the word Dilli, another name for Delhi, originated from the [Persian](#) word

dahleez ([Urdu](#): دہلیز), meaning "[frontier](#)" or "threshold". Another theory suggests that the city's original name was Dhillika. The [Persianized](#) surname Dahelvi is also related to residents of Delhi. The [Hindi/Prakrit](#) word dhili ("loose") was also used for the locality, gradually morphing into the local name "Dilli".

## History

Main article: [History of Delhi](#)



The [India Gate](#) commemorates the 90,000 [Indian soldiers](#) who died in the [Afghan Wars](#) and [World War I](#)

Delhi is believed to be the site of [Indraprastha](#), capital of the [Pandavas](#) in the Indian [epic Mahabharata](#), founded perhaps as long ago as [5000 BC](#).<sup>[citation needed](#)</sup> Ancient Hindu texts describe a city in North India called [Indraprastha](#), which means "city of [Indra](#)" (God). In later years, according to the ancient texts, parts of the city came to be known as [Hastinapur](#) or "the city of [elephants](#)". Archaeological evidence suggests that Indraprastha once stood where the [Old Fort](#) is today. The earliest architectural [relics](#) date back to the [Maurya](#) Period (c. [300 BC](#)); since then the site has seen continuous settlement. The famous [Iron pillar](#) near the [Qutub Minar](#) was commissioned by the emperor [Kumara Gupta I](#) of the [Gupta dynasty](#) (320-540) and transplanted to Delhi during the 10th century. Eight major cities have been situated in the Delhi area. The first four cities were in the southern part of present-day Delhi.

The [Tomara Rajput](#) dynasty founded the city of Lal Kot in 736 A.D. near the Qutub Minar. The epic [Prithvirajaso](#) names the [Rajput Anangpal](#) as the founder of Delhi. The [Chauhan](#) Rajput kings of [Ajmer](#) conquered Lal Kot in 1180 A.D. and renamed it Qila Rai Pithora. The Chauhan king [Prithviraj III](#) was



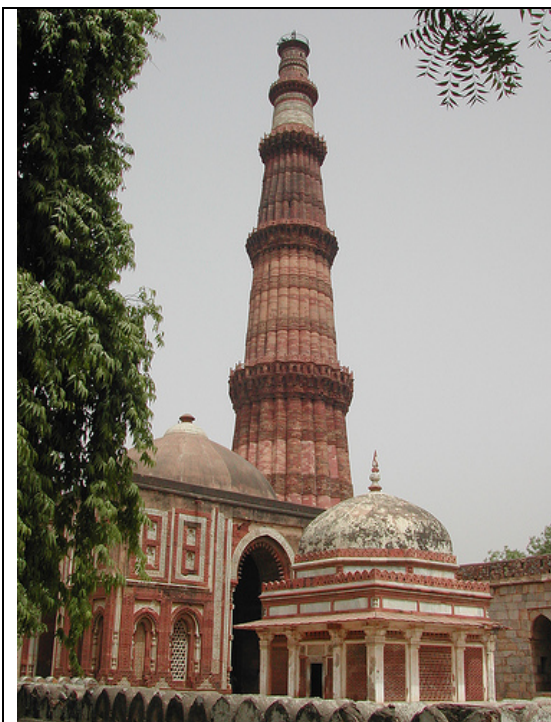
defeated in 1192 by the [Afghan Muhammad Ghori](#). From 1206, Delhi became the capital of the [Delhi Sultanate](#) under the [Slave Dynasty](#).

The first [Sultan](#) of Delhi, [Qutb-ud-din Aybak](#) was a former [slave](#) who rose through the ranks to become a general, a governor and then [Sultan](#) of Delhi. Qutb-ud-din started the construction the Qutub Minar to commemorate his victory but died before its completion. In the Qutb complex he also constructed the [Quwwat-al-Islam](#) (might of Islam), which is the earliest extant [mosque](#) in India. After the end of the Slave dynasty, a succession of Turkic and Central Asian dynasties, the [Khilji dynasty](#), the [Tughluq dynasty](#), the [Sayyid dynasty](#) and the [Lodhi dynasty](#) held power in the late medieval period and built a sequence of forts and townships that are part of the [seven cities of Delhi](#). In 1526, following the [First Battle of Panipat](#), Zahiruddin [Babur](#), the former ruler of [Fergana](#), defeated the last Lodhi sultan and founded the [Mughal](#) dynasty which ruled from Delhi, [Agra](#) and [Lahore](#).

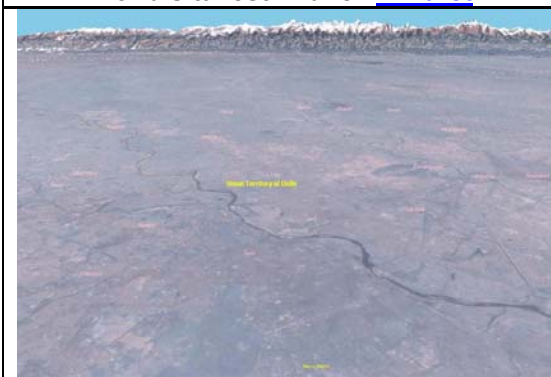
In the mid-sixteenth century there was an interruption in the Mughal rule of India as [Sher Shah Suri](#) defeated Babur's son [Humayun](#) and forced him to flee to [Afghanistan](#) and [Persia](#). Sher Shah Suri built the sixth city of Delhi, as well as the old fort known as [Purana Qila](#) and the [Grand Trunk Road](#). After Sher Shah Suri's early death, Humayun recovered the throne with Persian help. The third and greatest Mughal emperor, [Akbar](#), moved the capital to [Agra](#) resulting in a decline in the fortunes of Delhi. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Mughal Emperor [Shah Jahan](#) (1628-1658) built the seventh city of Delhi that sometimes bears his name ([Shahjahanabad](#)), and is more commonly known as the old city or old Delhi.

The old city served as the capital of the later Mughal Empire from 1638 onwards, when Shah Jahan transferred the capital back from Agra. [Aurangzeb](#) (1658-1707) crowned himself as emperor in Delhi in 1658. In [1761](#), Delhi was raided by [Ahmed Shah Abdali](#) after the [Third battle of Panipat](#).

Delhi passed to [British](#) control in 1857 after the [First War of Indian Independence](#). Shortly after the First War of Independence, [Calcutta](#) was declared the capital of [British India](#) and Delhi was made a district province of the [Punjab](#). But in 1911, Delhi was again declared as the capital of India. Parts of the old city were pulled down to create [New Delhi](#), a monumental new quarter of the city designed by the British [architect Edwin Lutyens](#) to house the government buildings. New Delhi, also known as Lutyens' Delhi, was officially declared as the seat of the [Government of India](#) after [independence](#) in 1947. During the [Partition of India](#) thousands of [Hindu](#) and [Sikh](#) refugees from [West Punjab](#) and [Sindh](#) migrated to Delhi.



At 72.5 metres, the [Qutub Minar](#) is the world's tallest <sup>[3]</sup> brick [minaret](#).



The [Great Gangetic Plains](#) cover most of Delhi, as can be seen in this [NASA](#) image.

[altitude](#) of 293 above [sea level](#), the ridge forms the most dominating feature in this region. It originates from the [Aravalli Hills](#) in the south and encircles the

In 1984, the assassination of then Prime Minister of India, [Indira Gandhi](#), led to a [violent backlash](#) against the Sikh community, resulting in more than two thousand seven hundred deaths.

In 1991, the [Parliament of India](#) passed the National Capital Territory Act which gave Delhi its own [legislative assembly](#), though with limited powers. On February 16, 2006 the [Delhi High Court](#) passed a notice to the [Municipal Corporation of Delhi](#) (MCD) to [remove all commercial ventures](#) within residential areas in the city.

## Geography

Delhi is located at 28.38° N and 77.13° E and lies in [northern India](#). It borders the Indian state of [Uttar Pradesh](#) on the south and [Haryana](#) on the west. Delhi can be divided into three major geographical regions: the [Yamuna](#) flood plain, the [ridge](#) and the [Gangetic Plains](#). The low-lying Yamuna flood plains provide fertile [alluvial soil](#) suitable for [agriculture](#). However, these plains are prone to recurrent [floods](#). With an average

west, northeast and northwest portions of the city. The Great Gangetic Plains are located in the south of the city and cover most of Delhi.

Yamuna, one of the most sacred rivers in Hinduism, is the only main river flowing through Delhi. Most of the city, including New Delhi, lies west of the river. East of the river is the urban area of Shahdara.

### Climate

Delhi has a semi-arid climate with high variation between summer and winter temperatures. Due to Delhi's proximity to the Himalayas, cold waves from the Himalayan region dip temperatures across Delhi. Summers are long, from early April till October, with the monsoon season in between. Extreme temperatures have ranged from -0.6 °C (10 January 1935) to 47 °C. Winter starts in November and peaks in January. Delhi is notorious for its heavy fog during the winter season. In December, visibility is reduced to near zero disrupting road, air and rail traffic in the city.. During the summer season, the city faces extreme power and water shortage when the demand for these utilities is at its peak. Every year, the heat wave in summer claims several lives in Delhi. The city, however, has a pleasant climate from February to April and from August to November.

The average annual rainfall is approximately 670 mm (27 inches), most of which falls during the Monsoons, in July and August. Traditionally, the Monsoons are supposed to touch Delhi by June 29 every year.

#### Climate Table

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mean daily maximum temperature (°C)	21.1	24.2	30.0	36.2	39.6	39.3	35.1	33.3	33.9	32.9	28.3	23.0
Mean daily minimum temperature (°C)	7.3	10.1	15.4	21.5	25.9	28.3	26.6	25.9	24.4	19.5	12.8	8.2
Mean total rainfall (mm)	20.3	15.0	15.8	6.7	17.5	54.9	231.5	258.7	127.8	36.3	5.0	7.8
Mean number of	1.7	1.3	1.2	0.9	1.4	3.6	10.0	11.3	5.4	1.6	0.1	0.6

#### rain days

Source: [World Meteorological Department](#)

### Urban structure

Main article: [Urban structure of Delhi](#)



Map showing the nine districts of Delhi

Most of the Delhi metropolitan area lies within the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT). The NCT has three local municipal corporations: Municipal Corporation of Delhi, New Delhi Municipal Council and Delhi Cantonment Board. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is one of the largest municipal corporations in the world providing civic amenities to an estimated 13.78 million people. The capital of India, New Delhi, falls under the administration of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). The chairperson of the NDMC is appointed by the

Government of India in consultation with the Chief Minister of Delhi.

The National Capital Territory of Delhi is divided into nine districts. Each district is headed by a Deputy Commissioner and has three subdivisions. A Subdivision Magistrate heads each subdivision. All Deputy Commissioners report to the Divisional Commissioner. The District Administration of Delhi is the enforcement department for all kinds of State and Central Government policies and exercises supervisory powers over numerous other functionaries of the Government.



Delhi has four major [satellite cities](#) which lie outside the National Capital Territory of Delhi. These are [Gurgaon](#) and [Faridabad](#) in Haryana and [NOIDA](#) and [Ghaziabad](#) in Uttar Pradesh.

## Government and politics

In 1991, the sixty-ninth amendment to the [Constitution of India](#) granted Delhi the status of a special [union territory](#) and officially changed its name to the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT). Delhi has its own [Legislative Assembly](#), [Lieutenant Governor](#), [Council of Ministers](#) and [Chief Minister](#). The legislative assembly seats are filled by direct election from territorial constituencies in the NCT. However, the Union Government of India and the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi jointly administer New Delhi. New Delhi, an urban area in Delhi, is the seat of both the State Government of Delhi and the Government of India. Delhi has always been a stronghold of the [Indian National Congress](#), locally known as the Congress Party. The trend started to change in the 1990s when the [Bharatiya Janata Party](#) (BJP) under the leadership of [Madan Lal Khurana](#) came into power for the first time. However, in 1998 [Sheila Dixit](#) of the Congress Party defeated Madan Lal Khurana in state elections and has remained in power since then.



**Tall buildings in the downtown area near [Connaught Place](#), the commercial hub of Delhi.**

power production was only 405 MW. The DVB meets rest of the electricity demand by drawing power from India's Northern Region Grid. As a result, Delhi

The per-capita electricity consumption is about 1,000 kwh but actual demand is much more.<sup>[11]</sup> In 1997, Delhi Vidyut Board (DVB) replaced Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking which was managed by the MCD. In 2002, the annual demand for electric power in Delhi touched 3250 MW while DVB's own electric

faces a huge power shortage resulting in frequent [blackouts](#) and [brownouts](#). Several industrial units in Delhi rely on private [electrical generators](#) to meet their electric demand. The Delhi government invested 149.2 billion [INR](#) in the city's energy sector and privatised Delhi's energy distribution system. However, the city continues to face acute power crisis especially during the summer season when energy demand is at its peak. Power theft is worse in Delhi than in any other major Indian metropolitan city. According to a report by BSES, Delhi's main electricity distribution company, 35% of Delhi's power is stolen.

Water supply in Delhi is managed by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB). In 2001, 731 MGD of water was consumed by various households in Delhi out of which 609 MGD was supplied by DJB while the rest 122 MGD was met by private and public [tube wells](#) and [hand pumps](#). Illegal water tapping in Delhi is very common. At 250 MGD, the Bhakra storage is the biggest water source for DJB followed by river Yamuna and [Ganges](#). Due to the falling level of ground water in Delhi, DJB is constructing several [dams](#) across river Yamuna, water treatment plants and water reservoirs. PWD and DJB have also implemented schemes for harvesting rain water. In 2002, the DJB had a water treatment capacity of 497.4 MGD.

## Economy



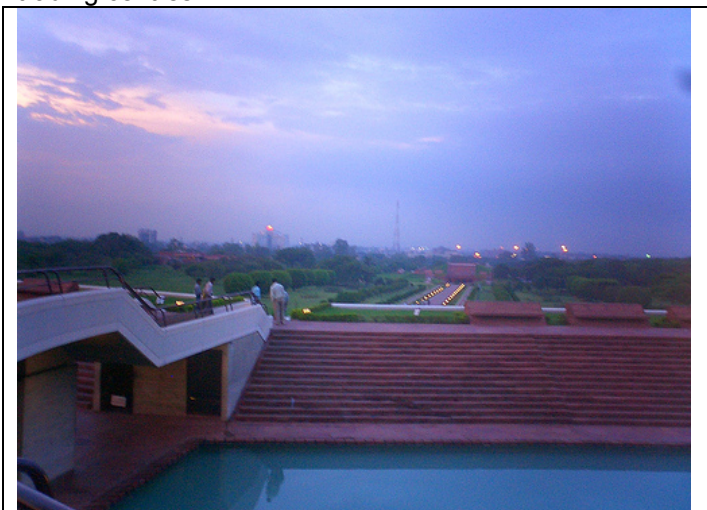
**The [North Block](#) in Raisina Hill, New Delhi houses the Indian Home Ministry and Ministry of Finance.**

With an estimated Gross Domestic Product of 478 billion [INR](#) (2005 figure), Delhi is an important commercial center in South Asia. According to the economic survey of Delhi, carried out in 2000–01, Delhi had a per capita income of 38,860 [INR](#) and recorded an annual economic growth rate of 9.9%. In 2001, the tertiary sector contributed 78.4% of

Delhi's GDP followed by Secondary and Primary sectors with 20.2% and 1.4%

contribution respectively. The city enjoys a considerably high literacy rate (81.7%). Delhi's workforce constituted 32.84% of the population showing an increase of 51.9% between 1991 and 2001. This massive increase in the workforce was primarily due to migration of unemployed people from neighbouring states. As a consequence, Delhi's unemployment rate increased from 5.7% to 12.7% during the period 1992 to 2000. In December 2000, 991,000 people were registered with various employment exchange programs in Delhi.

Historically, Delhi has always been the economic capital of northern India. In early [19th century](#), it started to gain importance in arts and craft, textile and handloom. Many small-scale industries expanded, including the handloom and Copper utensils industry. By the end of the 19th century, Delhi was northern India's manufacturing hub. Delhi lies along the important trade route between [Punjab](#) and the [Gangetic plains](#) making it one of [ancient India](#)'s most important trading centres.



**Urban Delhi at Dawn**

In recent years, Delhi's service sector has expanded exponentially due in part to the large skilled English-speaking workforce that has attracted many [multinational](#) companies. Key [service](#) industries include [information technology](#),

[telecommunications](#), [hotels](#), [banking](#), [media](#), [tourism](#) and [life sciences](#). Delhi's manufacturing industry has also grown considerably as many [consumer goods](#) industries have established manufacturing units and headquarters in and around Delhi. Delhi's large consumer market, coupled with the easy availability of skilled labour, has attracted a lot of foreign investment in Delhi. In 2001, the manufacturing sector employed 731,000 workers (24.6% of Delhi's workforce) while the number of industrial units increased by 48.4%. However, the contribution of the manufacturing sector to Delhi's GDP declined from 25.4% in

1994 to 20.2% in 2001. Construction, banking, power, telecommunications, health and community services and real estate form integral parts of Delhi's economy. Tourism is also a significant contributor to the economy of Delhi. Other key industries include government administration and defence. In 2001, the Union government had a total workforce of more than 212,000 in Delhi while the State government employed more than 114,000 people. Other local government bodies in Delhi employ as many as 298,000 people. In comparison, organised private sector employed only 217,000.



**Auto rickshaws are one of the most popular means of public transportation in Delhi.**

Delhi's relatively high [per capita](#) income, better living standards and high economic growth rate has attracted a lot of people from rural areas in neighbouring states such as [Rajasthan](#), [Punjab](#), Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and [Bihar](#). Due to this high migration rate, Delhi registers as one of the fastest growing cities in the world. According to a United Nations report, Delhi will be the third largest [agglomerate](#) in the world after [Tokyo](#) and Mumbai by [2025](#).

## Transport

Main article: [Transport in Delhi](#)

Public transportation in Delhi is provided by [auto rickshaws](#), buses, [rapid transit](#) system, taxis and suburban railways. Buses are the most popular means of transportation catering to about 60% of the total demand. Major bus service providers include state-owned [Delhi Transport Corporation](#) (DTC), BlueLine Transport Corporation and several other private concerns. Private vehicles account for 30% of the total demand for transportation while the rest of the demand is met largely by auto-rickshaws, taxis, rapid transit system and railways.\*

Transportation in Delhi is largely dependent upon road. Railways, including rapid transit systems like [Delhi Metro](#), serve only 1% of the total demand. Major



railway stations are [Old Delhi](#), [Hazrat Nizamuddin](#) and [New Delhi Railway Station](#). Road transportation in Delhi is maintained by MCD, NDMC, Delhi Cantonment Board, Public Works Department and Delhi Development Authority. At 1749 km of road length per 100 km<sup>2</sup>, Delhi has one of the highest road densities in India. Major roadways include the Ring Road and the Outer Ring Road which had a traffic of 110,000 vehicles per day in 2001. Delhi is well connected to other parts of India by 5 [National Highways](#): NH-1, -2, -8, -10 and -25. In 2001, more than 3.45 million vehicles were plying on Delhi's roads and the demand for transportation rose by 6.7% while the number of [motor vehicles](#) in Delhi rose by 14.7%.

Delhi's high population growth rate, coupled by high economic growth rate has resulted in ever increasing demand for transportation creating excessive pressure on the city's existent transport infrastructure. Like many other cities in the developing world, the city faces acute transport management problems leading to air pollution,



**Most of the people in Delhi follow [Hinduism](#). Shown here is the popular [Laxminarayan Temple](#) of Delhi**

congestion and resultant loss of productivity. In order to meet the transportation demand in Delhi, the State and Union government started the construction of an ambitious mass [rapid transit](#) system, known as [Delhi Metro](#). As of 2005, the metro operates 3 lines with a total length of 156 km and 150 stations while several other lines are under construction. The MCD and PWD also launched several traffic decongestion programmes. In 2001, the MCD alone started the construction of 21 flyovers at busy intersections throughout Delhi.



**A completed portion of the still-in-progress [Delhi Metro](#).**

[diesel](#) and other hydro-carbons. The DTC now operates the world's largest fleet of environmentally friendly CNG buses. Though pollution due to road transportation has decreased in recent years, it remains alarmingly high. The [World Bank](#) has ranked Delhi as the world's most polluted city. Besides expanding the Delhi Metro, the government is currently considering several other means such as [Trolleybus](#), [Monorail](#) and Integrated Freight Complexes to meet transport demand and reduce traffic congestion and pollution levels in the city.

[Indira Gandhi International Airport](#) (IGI) serves Delhi for both domestic and international connections, and is situated in the southwestern corner of the city. In 2005-2006, IGI recorded a traffic of more than 16.2 million passengers (Both Domestic and International), making it one of the busiest airports in South Asia. Two other airports are Palam (now part of the IGI complex) and Safdarjung Flying Club.

## Demographics

Delhi is a very cosmopolitan city due to the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural presence of the vast Indian bureaucracy and political system, and now expanding economy. There are more than 160 [embassies](#) and an ever-growing expatriate population. In [2003](#), the National Capital Territory of Delhi had a

Due to high traffic congestion, Delhi's pollution levels increased drastically during the mid-1990s. In 1998, the [Supreme Court of India](#) ordered all public transport vehicles, including buses, taxis and auto-rickshaws, to use [compressed natural gas](#) as fuel instead of

population of 14.1 million people making it the second largest [metropolitan area](#) in India after [Mumbai](#). This figure includes about 295,000 people living in [New Delhi](#) and 125,000 in [Delhi Cantonment](#). There are 821 women per 1000 men; the [literacy rate](#) is 81.67% and approximately 91% of the population is urban. Delhi is the most densely populated state in India with 9294 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. In 1999, Delhi recorded a [birth rate](#), [death rate](#) and [infant mortality rate](#) (per 1000 population) of 22.15, 6.06 and 23.18 respectively. According to the Economic Survey of Delhi held in 2001, 2.6 million people were living in [slum](#) designated areas across Delhi while 1.7 million and 3.3 million were living in regularised and planned colonies respectively.

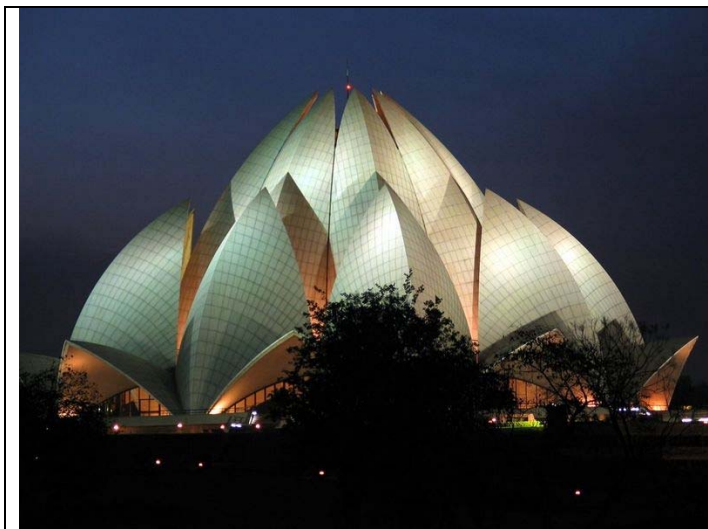
[Hinduism](#) is practised by 82% of Delhi's population. There are also large, vibrant communities of [Muslims](#) (11.7%), [Sikhs](#) (4.0%), [Jains](#) (1.1%) and [Christians](#) (0.9%). Other minorities include [Buddhists](#) and [Jews](#).<sup>[26]</sup> [Hindi](#) is the principal spoken and written language. Other commonly spoken languages are [English](#), [Punjabi](#) and [Urdu](#) (English being an associate official language, and Punjabi and Urdu being second official languages). Since Delhi is the capital, linguistic groups from all over India are well represented including [Tamil](#), [Kannada](#), [Telugu](#), [Bengali](#), [Marathi](#) and many others.

Delhi has one of the highest living standards in India with a per capita [income](#) of (at current prices for the year 2000-2001) 38864 [INR](#). Due to relatively high employment opportunities and better living conditions, Delhi has attracted millions of people from rural areas in neighbouring [Haryana](#), [Punjab](#), [Uttar Pradesh](#) and [Bihar](#). As a consequence, Delhi's demographics has changed drastically in the past few years. In 1999, the population of Delhi increased by 259,000 due to migration whereas the natural increase in population was 209,000.<sup>[27]</sup> [Punjabis](#), [Gujjars](#) and [Jats](#) are large ethnic communities, however a collage of peoples from almost every Indian state inhabits the city. According to the [United Nations](#), by 2015, Delhi will be the 3rd largest [agglomeration](#) in the world after [Tokyo](#) and Mumbai, with an estimated population of 20.1 million people.

## Culture

Delhi was the capital of several [Hindu](#), [Mughal](#), [Rajput](#), [Turkic](#) and [Afghan](#) empires in [ancient India](#). As a consequence, Delhi has a unique history of blending itself with several different cultures. After Delhi was declared as the capital of the Republic of India, several people from every corner of the country have made Delhi their home, adding to its cultural diversity. Delhi's art and crafts industry is as diverse as the city's culture. Delhi is the home of Zardozi, an embroidery done with gold thread and Meenakari, the art of enamelling.

Delhi has several art and crafts museums like the Pragati Maidan and Dilli Haat. Pragati Maidan showcases rare and exquisite pieces of art and craft from all over India and hosts a 13-day long International Trade Fair every year in November.



The [Bahá'í House of Worship](#), also known as [Lotus Temple](#), is an example of modern Indian architecture.

represent a blend of North and [South Indian](#) architectural styles. The [Archaeological Survey of India](#) recognises more than 172 monuments in Delhi as national heritage sites. Two [World Heritage Sites](#), the 72.5 meters tall [Qutab Minar](#) and [Humayun's Tomb](#), are located in Delhi. Other famous monuments include the [India Gate](#), the [Jantar Mantar](#), an 18th century astronomical observatory, and the [Purana Qila](#), a 16th century fortress. The [Lotus Temple](#), a symbol of Delhi's religious tolerance and unity, is the most visited edifice in the world with more 50 million visitors annually. Delhi offers a glimpse of India's religious diversity. The largest [mosque](#) in India, the [Jama Masjid](#)<sup>[30]</sup> and one of the most visited [Vaishnavite](#) temples in the world, the [Birla Mandir](#), are located in Delhi. New Delhi, a spacious, well-designed district of Delhi, houses several government buildings and official residences reminiscent of the [British](#) colonial architecture. Important structures include the [Rashtrapati Bhavan](#), the [Secretariat](#), the [Rajpath](#), the [Parliament of India](#) and the [Vijay Chowk](#).

Delhi is a noted centre of [performing arts](#). Several theatres and cinema halls are located here. However, the [cinema](#) industry in the city is virtually non-existent. The [India Habitat Centre](#) provides a physical environment which

A direct consequence of Delhi's rich history is its magnificent monuments. The Old City is the site where the Mughals and the [Turkic](#) rulers constructed several architectural marvels like the [Jama Masjid](#) and [Lal Qila](#) while the Birla Mandir and [Chattarpur Temple](#)



would serve as a catalyst for a synergetic relationship between individuals and institutions working in diverse habitat related areas.



**The Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi**

Muslim festivals like [Eid](#) and Bakrid are also celebrated with great fervour. Diwali, also known as Deepavali, is by far the most popular cultural and religious festival in Delhi during which millions of Hindus and Sikhs lit traditional lamps, known as [diyas](#), and make [rangolis](#), a colorful pattern drawn on floor. [Fireworks](#) (Hindi: Patakhas) are also an integral part of Diwali festivities. [Buddha Jayanti](#), a festival celebrating the birth of [Gautama Buddha](#) is also a popular festival in Delhi. Several other famous events such as Kite Flying Festival, International Mango Festival and Basant Panchami or Spring Festival are held every year in Delhi. The Qutub Festival is a cultural event organized by Delhi Tourism Department every year in October during which performances of musicians and dancers from all over India are showcased at night, with the 12th-century [Qutub Minar](#) as the chosen backdrop of the event.

Spicy and oil-rich [Punjabi cuisine](#) is popular throughout the city. [Bengali](#) sweetdishes like Rossogulla and Sandesh can be found in most sweet shops in Delhi. Mughlai delicacies like [Kababs](#) and [Biryanis](#) remain popular in several

Due to Delhi's lively and colorful religious and cultural diversity, several events are held in the city throughout the year. Being the capital of India, several national events such as [Republic Day](#), [Independence Day](#) and [Gandhi Jayanti](#) are celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm in Delhi. Most of Delhites celebrate the Indian Independence Day by flying [kites](#) as they are considered a symbol of freedom. The [Republic Day Parade](#), held on [26 January](#), the day India became a [republic](#), is a large cultural and military parade showcasing India's cultural diversity and military might. Every year on [15 August](#), the day India achieved independence from [Britain](#), the [Prime Minister of India](#) addresses the nation on Delhi Fort. The Hindu religious and cultural festivals like [Durga Puja](#), [Diwali](#), [Holi](#), [Lohri](#), and Shivratri and



**Sweet Pan, Betel leaves stuffed with Indian spices and sweeteners, is a popular mouth freshener in Delhi.**

parts of Delhi, especially the Old City. Due to Delhi's large cosmopolitan population, cuisines from every part of India, including [Rajasthani](#), [Maharashtrian](#) and [Hyderabadi](#) cuisines, are very popular. Local delicacies includes [Chaat](#) and [Dahi-Papri](#). South Indian food items too, like [Idli](#), [Sambhar](#) and [Dosa](#) have a huge following in Delhi. There are several food outlets in Delhi serving [Italian](#), [Chinese](#) and other foreign cuisines. Fast food has also become very popular in Delhi. One can find fast food chains like

[McDonald's](#) and [Pizza Hut](#) in every part of the city.

Historically, Delhi has always remained an important trading center in northern India. [Chandni Chowk](#), a three century old shopping area, is perhaps the most famous commercial area in India. [Connaught Place](#), a major commercial center in the heart of New Delhi, is not only a shopper's paradise but also offers a glimpse of Colonial-era architecture. The central market of [Lajpat Nagar](#) offers quality Indian handicrafts and garments. Other major shopping areas include [Sarojini Nagar](#), Sabzi Mandi, [Karol Bagh](#) and [Greater Kailash](#) market. [Dilli Haat](#) and Hauz Khas village offer a variety of cultural Indian handicrafts and handlooms. Delhi's retail industry is one of the fastest growing industries in Delhi. Several western-style [shopping malls](#) have opened across Delhi's metropolitan area. The main market in South Delhi offers quality garments and footwear and have outlets of almost all the top international brands. Many travellers view Delhi as a bargain hunter's paradise, as the city offers a wide variety of quality products available at a fraction of the cost in Europe and the United States.

See also: [Entertainment in Delhi](#) and [Markets in Delhi](#)

## Education

Schools and educational institutions in Delhi are either run by the NCT government or by private organizations. According to the economic survey of Delhi in 2001, there were a total of 2416 primary, 715 middle and 1576

secondary schools in Delhi while there were 131 colleges including 5 medical colleges and 8 engineering colleges. In addition, Delhi has four universities, seven deemed universities and one open university. Delhi has a literacy rate of 81.2%.

The [Directorate of Education of the National Capital Territory of Delhi](#) operates state schools in Delhi.

Private schools in Delhi typically use [English](#) or [Hindi](#) as the medium of instruction and are affiliated to either the [Indian Certificate of Secondary Education \(ICSE\)](#) or the [Central Board for Secondary Education \(CBSE\)](#). In 2001, about 1.47 million students were enrolled in primary schools, .32 million in middle schools, while 1.31 million students were enrolled in secondary schools across Delhi. During the fiscal year 2000-01, the Delhi government spent 30.1 billion [INR](#) on education. Females represented 51% of the total enrollment. <sup>[31]</sup>

The top 5 universities in Delhi are [Delhi University](#), [Jawaharlal Nehru University](#), [Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University](#), [Jamia Millia Islamia](#) and [Indira Gandhi National Open University](#). Delhi attracts students from all over India. A number of government and private [colleges](#) offer quality education in science, engineering, medicine, arts, law and management. The government sponsors as many as 40 Delhi University colleges. The prestigious [All India Institute of Medical Sciences](#) is among the best medical institutions in India. Other notable educational and research institutes include [Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi](#), [Delhi School of Economics](#), [Hansraj College](#), [Shri Ram College of Commerce](#), [Lady Shri Ram College for Women](#), [Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology](#), [Delhi College of Engineering](#) and [St Stephen's College](#). In 2001, Delhi University had 220,000 students, making it one of the largest universities in Asia. It has 14 faculties, 86 academic departments and 79 colleges spread all over the city.

See also: [Educational Institutions in Delhi](#)

## Media

New Delhi being the capital of India, is the main center of Indian political reportage. Several media agencies in India, including state-owned [Press Trust of India](#) and [Doordarshan](#), are based in New Delhi. [New Delhi Television](#) (NDTV) is among the largest television media networks in India. Doordarshan



**With falling ground water level and rising population density, Delhi faces acute water shortage. Children taking baths at various ponds and lakes across the city is common in Delhi.**

and several other television networks regularly broadcast Indian parliament sessions. Delhi is center of media coverage in India during the Budget Session in the Parliament and during India's Republic and Independence Day celebrations. The state-owned television broadcaster Doordarshan provides two free terrestrial channels, while several MSO provide a mix of Hindi, English and other regional language channels. [Satellite television \(DTH\)](#) is yet to gain mass acceptance due to high installation costs. Delhi households receive over a hundred television channels via cable.

Delhi has a large print media industry. [Hindustan Times](#), with over a million copies in circulation, is the single largest English daily in Delhi. Other major English newspapers include the [Times of India](#), the [Indian Express](#), [the Hindu](#), [the Pioneer](#) and the [Asian Age](#). However, most of the newspapers in

Delhi are in Hindi. Hindi-daily [Dainik Jagran](#) is by far the most popular newspaper in Delhi followed by Hindustan, [Dainik Bhaskar](#) Navbharat Times and Punjab Kesri. A major reason for the popularity of print media in Delhi is the lack of popularity of electronic media. Even though a number of [internet cafes](#) have opened throughout Delhi, newspapers continue to dominate Delhi's media industry. Another reason for the wide popularity of newspapers in Delhi is their low cost. Major newspapers in India don't cost above 1.5 [INR](#) (4 US cents); they cover most of their costs from advertisements.

A number of state-owned and private radio stations broadcast in Delhi. All India Radio (AIR), one of the world's largest radio service providers, is based in New Delhi. AIR offers six different radio broadcast channels in more than 10 different languages. Other radio stations include Radio Jamia, Radio FM, Radio Mirchi, Gyan Vani and Radio City. Radio, however is not a popular mean of mass media communication in Delhi. Part of the reason for this is the late entry of private radio service providers in Delhi due to government regulation. In



2004, more than 93% of private radio operators' revenue went towards government license fee alone.

## Sports



The [Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium](#)

Cricket is the most popular sport in the city. There are several cricket grounds (locally known as [maidan](#)) across Delhi. The local [Delhi cricket team](#) is one of the top cricket teams in the [Ranji Trophy](#), India's top domestic cricket tournament. One of the oldest cricket grounds in India to be granted international status, the [Feroz Shah Kotla](#), is situated in Delhi. But other sports, particularly [soccer](#), [tennis](#), [golf](#), [badminton](#), [swimming](#), [kart racing](#), [weightlifting](#) and [table tennis](#) are becoming more popular. [Field Hockey](#) is also popular, even though cricket has overtaken it by a long way in terms of popularity.

Delhi has hosted several domestic and international sporting events. New Delhi was the venue of the [First](#) and the [Ninth Asian Games](#). The city is known for its excellent sports infrastructure. The Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium are one of the largest sports complexes in [South Asia](#). Delhi will be the site for the next [2010 Commonwealth Games](#), the largest multi-sport event ever held in the city. The Delhi Development Authority and the Indian Olympic Association are constructing several stadiums and other sporting facilities across the city for the event at a cost of 1.15 billion [USD](#).

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## See also

### Delhi-related topics

**[History](#)** [History of Delhi](#), [Indraprastha](#), [Hastinapur](#), [Tomara](#), [Rajput](#), [Chauhan](#), [Prithviraj](#), [Islamic invasions of India](#), [Delhi Sultanate](#), [Slave dynasty](#), [Khilji dynasty](#), [Tughluq dynasty](#), [Sayyid dynasty](#), [Lodhi dynasty](#), [Sher Shah Suri](#), [Mughal dynasty](#), [British East India Company](#), [Bahadur Shah Zafar](#), [Indian rebellion of 1857](#), [British Raj](#), [Viceroy of India](#), [Indian independence movement](#), [Partition of India](#), [New Delhi](#)

**[Government and Localities](#)** [Areas And Zones of New Delhi](#), [Urban structure of Delhi](#), [New Delhi](#), [Municipal Corporation of Delhi](#), [Delhi Development Authority](#), [New Delhi Municipal Board](#), [Delhi Cantonment Board](#), [Connaught Place](#), [Lajpat Nagar](#), [Chanakyapuri](#), [NOIDA](#), [Ghaziabad](#), [Chandni Chowk](#), [Palam](#), [Delhi Cantonment](#), [Faridabad](#), [Gurgaon](#), [Chief Minister of Delhi](#)

**[Buildings and Landmarks](#)** [Parliament of India](#), [Rashtrapati Bhavan](#), [Teen Murti Bhavan](#), [Baha'i House of Worship](#), [Qutub Minar](#), [Jama Masjid](#), [India Gate](#), [Vijay Chowk](#), [Raj Ghat](#), [Rajpath](#), [Humayun's Tomb](#), [Jantar Mantar](#), [Purana Qila](#)

**[Economy and Transport](#)** [Economy of Delhi](#), [Delhi Stock Exchange Association](#), [Transport in Delhi](#), [Delhi Transport Corporation](#), [Indira](#)

### [Culture](#) [Sports](#)

and [Independence Day \(India\)](#), [Republic Day \(India\)](#), [Punjabi cuisine](#), [Hinduism](#), [Sikhism](#), [Islam](#), [Ferozshah Kotla](#), [Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi](#), [1951 Asian Games](#), [1982 Asian Games](#), [2010 Commonwealth Games](#)

### [Education](#)

[Delhi Public School](#), [University of Delhi](#), [Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium](#), [Indian Institute of Technology Delhi](#), [Indian Institutes of Management Delhi](#), [Jamia Millia Islamia](#), [Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University](#), [Indira Gandhi National Open University](#), [All India Institute of Medical Sciences](#), [Netaji Subhas Institute of Technology](#), [Delhi School of Economics](#), [Shri Ram College of Commerce](#), [Lady Shri Ram College for Women](#), [Delhi College of Engineering](#), [St. Stephen's College, Delhi](#)

### Other topics

[Famous people from Delhi](#), [List of cities in India](#), [Buildings and structures](#), [Educational institutions](#)

## External links

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[Government of Delhi](#)  
[Municipal Corporation of Delhi](#)  
[Delhi City Guide](#)  
[Delhi Weather](#)  
[Photographs from around old Delhi](#)  
[Delhi travel guide](#) from Wikitravel  
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[Interactive map of Delhi using Google Maps API](#)  
[Voice of people on Delhi Sealing](#)

### The [National Capital Territory of Delhi](#)

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**Satellite cities:** [Gurgaon](#) | [NOIDA](#) | [Faridabad](#) | [Ghaziabad](#)

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## **Delhi Iron Pillar**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi\\_iron\\_pillar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delhi_iron_pillar)

The **iron pillar** of [Delhi](#), the capital city of [India](#), is one of the world's foremost metallurgical curiosities, standing in the famous [Qutb complex](#). The pillar—almost seven metres high and weighing more than six tonnes—was erected by [Chandragupta II](#) [Vikramaditya](#). It is the only piece of the [Hindu](#) temple remaining, which stood there before being destroyed by [Qutb-ud-din Aybak](#) to build the [Qutub Minar](#) and [Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque](#). Qutub built around it when he constructed the mosque.

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**The iron pillar of Delhi**

The pillar is made up of 98% [wrought iron](#) of pure quality, and is a testament to the high level of skill achieved by ancient Indian iron smiths in the extraction and processing of iron. It has attracted the attention of [archaeologists](#) and [metallurgists](#) as it has withstood [corrosion](#) for the last 1600 years, despite harsh weather.

### **Description**

The pillar, almost seven metres high and weighing more than six tonnes, was erected by [Chandragupta II](#) [Vikramaditya](#) (375 AD–414 AD), (interpretation based on careful analysis of archer type Gupta gold coins) of the [Gupta dynasty](#) that ruled northern India 320–540. The pillar with the idol of [Chakra](#) at the top was originally located at a place called [Vishnupadagiri](#) (meaning “hill with footprint of Vishnu”). This place has been identified as modern [Udayagiri](#), situated in the close vicinity of [Besnagar](#), [Vidisha](#) and [Sanchi](#)

These towns are located about 50 kilometres east of [Bhopal](#), in central India. There are several aspects to the original erection site of the pillar at Udayagiri. It must be worth noting that Vishnupadagiri is located on the [Tropic of Cancer](#) and, therefore, was a centre of astronomical studies during the Gupta period. The Iron Pillar served an important astronomical function, when it was originally at Vishnupadagiri. The early morning shadow of the Iron Pillar fell in the direction of the foot of [Anantasayain Vishnu](#) (in one of the panels at Udayagiri) only in the time around summer solstice (June 21). The creation and development of the Udayagiri site appears to have been clearly guided by a highly developed astronomical knowledge. Therefore, the Udayagiri site, in general, and the Iron Pillar location in particular, provide firm evidence for the astronomical knowledge that existed in ancient India around 400 AD.



Inscriptions have survived the **test of time on the iron pillar.**

. The pillar bears an inscription which states that it was erected as a standard in honour of the [Hindu](#) god, [Vishnu](#). It also praises the valor and qualities of a king referred to simply as Chandra, who has been identified with the Gupta King [Chandragupta II](#) Vikramaditya (375-413). Made up of 98% [wrought iron](#) of pure quality, it is 23 feet 8 inches (7.21 m) high and has a diameter

of 16 inches (0.41 m) at the bottom which tapers down on going up. The pillar was manufactured by forge welding and the temperatures required to form such of pillar by forge welding can be achieved by combustion of [coal](#). The pillar is a testament to the high level of skill achieved by ancient Indian iron smiths in the extraction and processing of iron.

A fence was erected around the pillar in 1997 because people were damaging the pillar. There is a popular tradition that it was considered good luck if you could stand with your back to the pillar and make your hands meet behind it.



**Translation of the inscription in English.**

growing ever so slowly since then. This information was wrongly flashed by the news media based on an article that appeared in Current Science (see further). In the original article in Current Science, it has been mentioned that after 1,600 years, the film has grown just one-twentieth of a millimetre thick, according to R. Balasubramaniam of the IIT. In a report published in the journal [Current Science](#), Balasubramaniam suggests that the protective film was formed catalytically by the presence of [high amounts of phosphorus](#) in the iron — this [phosphorus](#) is as much as one per cent against less than 0.05 per cent in today's iron. There are three stages identified in the protective passive film formation, as outlined in detail in the detailed article on the corrosion resistance of the Delhi Iron Pillar in Corrosion Science, one of the reputed journals in corrosion science and engineering. The high phosphorus content would be a result of the iron-making process practiced by ancient Indians, who reduced [iron ore](#) into [iron](#) with low carbon content by solid state reduction by employing [charcoal](#) as the reducing agent. Modern [blast furnaces](#), on the other hand, use [limestone](#) in place of charcoal, yielding molten [slag](#) and [pig iron](#) that is later [converted into steel](#). In the modern process most phosphorus is carried away by the slag. Since lime was not used in the ancient furnaces, a higher amount of phosphorus remains in the material.

Balasubramaniam states that the pillar is "a living testimony to the skill of metallurgists of ancient India". An interview with Balasubramaniam and his work can be seen in the recent article by Veazy.

## Scientific analysis

Metallurgists at [IIT Kanpur](#) have claimed that a thin layer of "[misawite](#)", a compound of [iron](#), [oxygen](#), and [hydrogen](#), has protected the cast iron pillar from [rust](#). According to them, the protective film took form within three years after erection of the pillar and has been



Another theory suggests that the reason that the pillar resists rust is due to its thickness, which allows the sun to heat the pillar sufficiently during the day to evaporate all rain or dew from its surface. The accumulated heat also keeps the surface dry at night. For a detailed review of all theories proposed to explain the corrosion resistance of the Delhi Iron Pillar see the article in Corrosion Science by Balasubramaniam.

It was claimed in the 1920s that iron manufactured in [Mirjati](#) near [Jamshedpur](#) is similar to the iron of the Delhi pillar. Further work on Advasi (tribal) iron by the National Metallurgical Laboratory in the 1960s did not verify this claim.

## See also

[Ayas](#)

[Wootz steel](#)

[Dhar pillar](#)

[Heliodorus pillar](#)

[Wolfsegg Iron](#)

[Nine Unknown Men](#)

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For a detailed list of publications on Delhi Iron Pillar by Balasubramaniam, see [\[5\]](#)

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## External links

[Detailed list of Publications on Delhi Iron Pillar by Balasubramaniam, IIT Kanpur](#)

[Corrosion resistance of Delhi iron pillar](#)

[Nondestructive evaluation of the Delhi iron pillar](#) *Current Science*, Indian Academy of Sciences, Vol. 88, No. 12, 25 June 2005 (PDF)

[The Delhi Iron Pillar](#)

# Emily Eden Exhibition – Victoria Memorial Hall – Kolkata

[http://www.victoriamemorial-cal.org/ex\\_eden06.html](http://www.victoriamemorial-cal.org/ex_eden06.html)

LAST UPDATED ON 05 JUL 2006 2006

**EXPLORING INDIA**  
**The Travels of Emily Eden**  
**1837 - 1840**

An Exhibition of 75 water colours by Emily Eden  
At the Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata  
Inaugurated on 5th July 2006  
by  
**Smt. Ambika Soni**  
Hon'ble Minister, Tourism & Culture,  
Govt. of India



*Hon'ble Miss Emily Eden*

[Also checkout Hon'ble Smt. Ambika Soni's visit to VM - A photofeature](#)

## Emily Eden - the person behind the artist

Emily Eden (1797-1869) was the 7th daughter of the 14 children of William Eden, 1st Baron of Auckland. Her eldest sibling was George Eden, better known to students of Indian History as the 1st Earl of Auckland, Governor-General of India (1836-1842). She was born into a blue-blooded family of achievers and in early life was inspired by her mother, who was an independent-minded woman, who travelled extensively with her highly placed husband and took an active interest in public affairs along with him.

Emily grew up to be a versatile and gifted woman and became a successful novelist, a painter and a writer of a book entitled "Up the Country" (pub. 1866) that described through her letters, her journey with her brother and his retinue, from Kolkata to Shimla. Besides "Up the Country" she wrote two novels "The Semi-Detached House" (1859) and "The Semi-Attached Couple" (1860). All of her books were received well by the reading public.

But it is as a painter that she is being re-introduced to the public consciousness through the current exhibition. J. Dickinson published her paintings for the first time in 1844 in a collection called "Princes and People of India". Her paintings were executed in watercolour and depicted, as the title suggests, the entire cross-section of Indian society of that day: at least to the extent of her knowledge. Twenty-three sketches of Ms. Eden were published in that volume as lithographs.



## The Epic Journey - Calcutta to Shimla

On October 21st, 1837 Lord Auckland accompanied rather reluctantly by his sister, set out from Calcutta on board the 'Megna' a flat or long barge towed by a steamer. They alighted at Benares and went on foot to Shimla. In November 1838 he went from Shimla to Lahore to meet the Maharaja and returned to Shimla in mid- March 1839. At the end of October he reached Benares from Shimla by land and thence took the riparian route once more to reach Calcutta in March 1840 after a two and a half year absence.

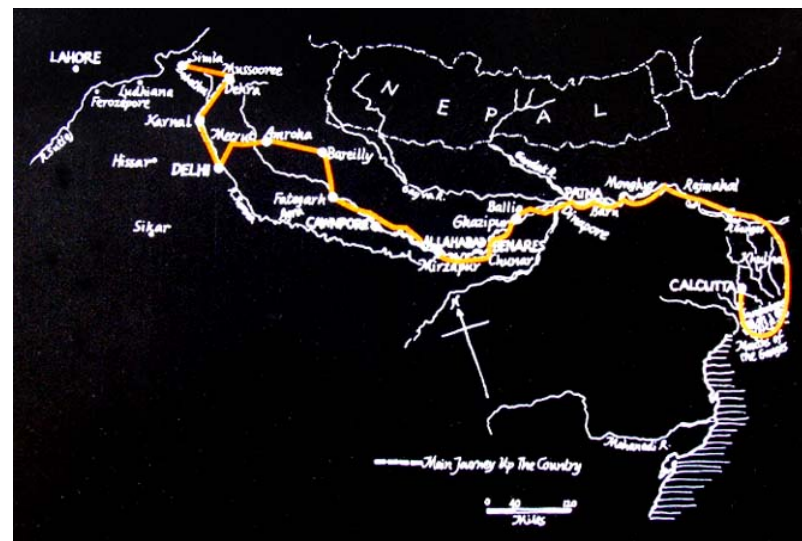
Emily Eden travelled from Kolkata to the Sundarbans to Khulna and from there to Patna, Ghazipur, Benaras, Allahabad, Fatehpur Sikri, Kanpur, Bareilly, Meerut, Delhi, Panipat, Massoorie, Nahun and Shimla. From Shimla she went to Ropar, Ludhiana, Ferozpur (where the Eden met Maharaja Ranjit Singh for the first time), Amritsar and thence to Lahore. She returned to Kolkata via Shimla following more or less the same route. When the time came to leave Shimla Ms. Eden groaned "...if I am to be in India I had rather be here than anywhere."  
(4)

## Emily Eden's Art

This exhibition reveals the artistic sensitivity of Ms. Eden, her eye for detail and for the way she kept her wits and her sense of humor about her during a gruelling journey in a land whose climate can be trying to the hardest of constitutions.

The present exhibition is based on an acquisition of Ms. Eden's artwork consisting of 193 sketches in watercolour made by Victoria Memorial way back in 1911. They are mounted on folio-sized paper and bound in three large volumes. All the twenty-three sketches published by J. Dickinson mentioned earlier are represented in Victoria Memorial's collection.

There is no point in comparing Ms. Eden to Rembrandt or Van Gogh as she is obviously an amateur. As far as the technicalities of her painting are



The Route

concerned, she painted on drawing paper imported from England. The initial sketch was made by pencil and that was later on invigorated by ink and reed or quill pen. The watercolours she used also came from Europe.

The interesting feature of her watercolours is that her human and animal figures are not drawn with any well-defined background and wherever it is present it is treated rather cursorily. Her focus is, therefore, on the figure itself and she has dispensed with what, she felt, is peripheral.



**A group of five heads Calcutta 1837**

- 1) Rosina, Miss Eden's old Ayah, a Muslim.
- 2) A very old Hurkam belonging to Lord Auckland.
- 3) Himmud Khan, Miss Eden's Chopdar or silver stick bearer.
- 4) Myrah- A Portuguese Ayah of Miss Eden.
- 5) A Portuguese child.

**31.9 x 22 cm**

Ms. Eden's medium of choice was watercolour. Her art can be thematically classified under several headings like a) servants and their relatives, b) professional castes and entertainers, c) hill people, d) people of foreign extraction, e) diviners and fakirs, f) people in the official and semi-official service of the East India Company, g) princes and their retinue and objects, h) the Sikhs, j) monuments, edifices and landscapes and k) miscellaneous topics.



**Maharaja Ranjit Singh in his usual attitude and dress during his interviews with the Governor General of India in November and December, 1838**

**25.2 x 22.8 cm**

Thus she painted not only the high and mighty but also the commonest of people. Not even the retinue of servants accompanying the entourage escaped her notice. One notices the sympathy and humaneness with which she paints the servants and their relatives. This is in contrast to other painters of European extraction who visited India in the 18th and 19th centuries with the possible exception of F.B. Solvyns the Belgian printmaker and artist.





**Durbar in which Lord Auckland received  
the Rajah of Nahun  
21.9 x 31.5 cm**

In general, it must be said, that she is not at her best as a portrait painter but rather she excels in painting landscapes. However, among the attempts at human portraiture her depiction of the Sikhs catches the eye. She was evidently impressed by the dashing Sikhs and managed to capture their debonair quality in her sketches of them. On a more superficial level, she did portray their dazzling costumes and well-decorated horses rather well. Her admiration is testified by her description as well as her sketch of Maharaja Ranjit Singh - "...he has made himself a great king; he has conquered a great many powerful enemies; he is remarkably just in his government; he has disciplined a large army; he hardly ever takes away life...and he is excessively beloved by his people." (5)

It was not just the Sikhs but also the hill people as well who caught her sharp eye. She painted non-Indian Asians like the "...Thibet Tartar..." (6) People more than once. Nowhere do we find any trace of prejudice against those and other people in her utterances and her drawings - she was remarkably free from the prevalent racism of the time.



**Cheetas belonging to the king of Oudh  
sent to accompany 'us' on the march.  
A shuter-sawar or messenger  
mounted on a camel.  
24 x 34.2 cm**



**One of the horses of Ranjit singh  
ornamented with emeralds  
24.5 x 36.5 cm**



**Raja Heera Singh,  
son of the Rajah Dhyani Singh,  
the Prime Minister of the Punjab  
and a favourite of Ranjit Singh.  
36.8 x 24.6 cm**



**One of the Sikh attendants  
of Ajeet Singh.  
21 x 15.3 cm**



**Sher Singh,  
son of Ranjit Singh  
35.7 x 24.5 cm**

Among the monuments she drew, she preferred to depict not only prominent edifices but also neglected ruins on the wayside. She found the Mughal monuments rather difficult to draw - "...sketching there, for two hours, but it is impossible to make anything of these elaborate Mogul buildings, they are all lines and domes, and uncommonly trying to the patience." (7) That's what she felt about Secundra where Akbar's tomb is located.



**A family of Tartars from Tibet. The goats carried little panniers full  
of salt for sale. 26 x 36 cm**



## The Raison d'etre of this Exhibition

Emily Eden was a woman far ahead of her times: she was highly educated, versatile, self-confident and unafraid to express her opinions through her writings and art. Her vibrancy and sensitivity led her to observe the world in a light-hearted yet penetrating manner that had no bitterness in it.

Obviously her artwork is relevant today as a historical document of early 19th century India under the British and of the British Raj itself. It brings to life an India that is no more and has been no more for a long time. She observed history in the making from close quarters, in fact, from the corridors of power itself. Therefore, her artistic and literary testimony is of great value. It is of even more value because she was an intelligent and educated woman interested in world affairs - it was something rare in that day and age.

## Up the Country and the Watercolours - the Link

The travelogue "Up the Country" describes in a series of letters the grand passage of Emily's illustrious brother the Governor-General of India with an unbelievably pompous retinue of 15,000 people including servants, troops and hangers-on not counting the prodigious number of elephants, camels, horses and bullocks. As she herself writes, "...the men 15,000 (we thought it was only 10,000, but when every regiment we had sent in its full muster-roll, it came to 15,000)." (2)

## The Larger Historical Context - the Reason for the Journey

Britain's obsession with the Russian advance in Central Asia and Afghanistan was behind Lord Auckland's activities in India at that time. His real intention behind embarking upon such an arduous journey to Shimla was to get an audience with the ruler of the Sikh Empire, a man whose legacy has assumed a legendary aura today - Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Dost Mohammed was the Amir of Afghanistan at that time and he had got there by deposing the unpopular Shah Shuja. The British perceived Dost Mohammed to be hostile to them and friendly to the Russians "...our enemy Dost Mahomed..." (3) as Emily Eden calls him - it has been revealed to be a misconception by later historians. Be that as it may, Lord Auckland and the British now wanted a friendly Amir on the throne of Afghanistan and the choice fell upon Shah Shuja.

On the flip side, her account and artwork on the splendours of India would add to the myth of an India of "...barbaric splendours, ablaze with gold and glittering diamonds." (8) Though, to be fair, this may not have been a part of any conscious project.

There is another tidbit of history that Kolkata-dwellers may find interesting and endearing: there is a famous landmark of Kolkata familiar to people all over the Subcontinent, which bears the name of this illustrious lady and her younger sister Fanny - Eden Gardens.

Emily Eden's watercolours were painted on and about that epic journey from the British capital Calcutta (Kolkata) to the perennially favourite haunt of all Raj officials - Shimla.

Lord Auckland's immediate aims were fulfilled - he reached Lahore via Shimla and concluded a Tripartite Treaty on 26th June 1838 binding the Sikhs, the deposed Shah Shuja representing Afghanistan and, of course, the British in an oath of co-operation regarding the future campaign in Afghanistan. Together they invaded Afghanistan, drove Dost Mohammed out and placed Shah Shuja on the throne. Emily Eden wrote rather gleefully of these initial successes and how the wives of the British officers, who were away on the Afghan campaign, were secure in the knowledge that their husbands were feasting on the apricots and sherbets of that country.

Little did they know then, that the 16,500 troops of the British-Indian army posted to keep the peace among the turbulent Afghan tribes were doomed and that only one man, a certain Dr. Brydon, would make it back alive. This would

cost Lord Auckland his job and engender the British policy of Masterly Inactivity regarding Afghanistan.

Soon after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death in 1839 his glittering empire that Ms Eden wrote sometimes admiringly, sometimes critically but always enthusiastically about would descend into infighting, chaos and ultimately, absorption into the British Empire in India.

## An artist's journey through upper India

"These details, therefore, of a journey that was picturesque in its motley processions, in its splendid crowds, and in its 'barbaric gold and pearl', may be thought to be amusing. So many changes have taken place in Indian modes of

travelling, that these contrasts of public grandeur and private discomfort will probably be seen no more, on a scale of such magnitude."

Emily Eden, May 1866 (1)

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2) Ibid, pg. 210.	7) Ibid, pg. 359.
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4) Ibid, pg. 181.	
5) Ibid, pg. 209.	

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Prince Purtub Singh, seven years old- the son of Shahzada Shere Singh (son of Ranjit Singh) - 35.6 x 25 cm



A native woman dressed for a fete. 26.8 x 20.2 cm



An old Fakir at Simla 30.5 x 20.1 cm



A Persian servant who accompanied Major Todd from Herat to Shimla. 22.6 x 17.6 cm



Buxoo Khansama, head servant in the Government House, Calcutta. 34.4 x 24.5 cm



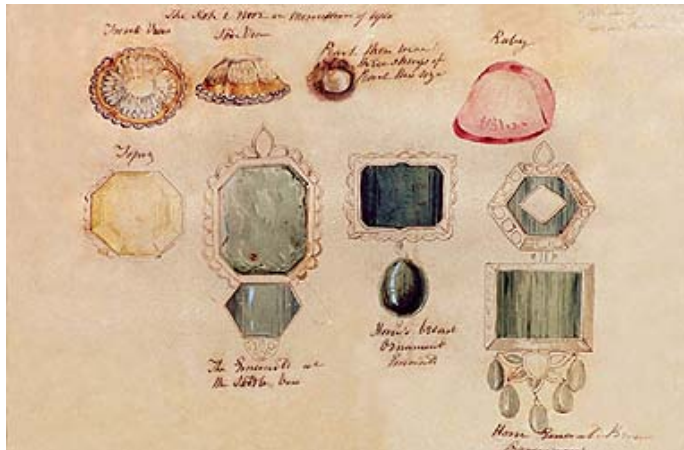
A Cashmere goat given to Miss Eden by Mr. Trower in 1837. Sent by her to Lady Fitzmaurice and living at Bowood (1844) 31.9 x 22.1 cm



Views taken from Col. Young's  
bungalow at Massorie in the Himalayas  
25.4 x 35.8 cm



The Lhat or pillar of  
Prince Firouz Shah among the ruins of Delhi.  
25.5 x 34.5 cm

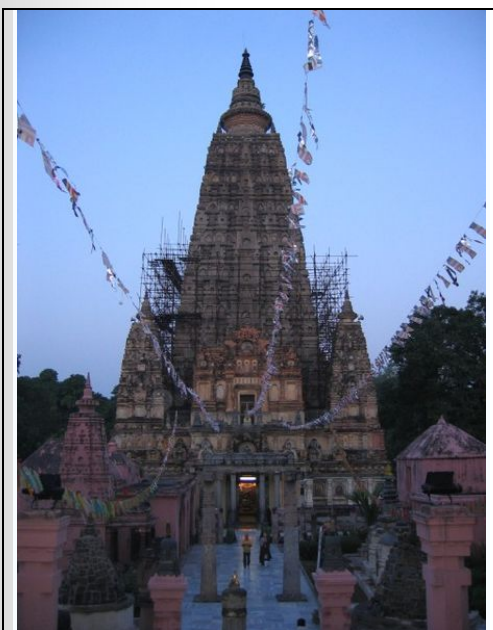


The jewel of Ranjit Singh  
(There are Persian characters engraved on the Ruby).  
24.3 x 36.8 cm



Elephant carriage belonging  
to the Dholepur Rajah  
15.6 x 20.5 cm





[Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhi Gaya](#). The site where [Gautam Buddha](#) got enlightenment.

surroundings, age old buildings and narrow bylanes.

It was a part of the ancient [Magadh](#).

## Gaya, India

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaya,\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaya,_India)

Coordinates: [24.75° N 85.01° E](#)

**Gaya**() is a city in [Bihar, India](#), and it is also the headquarters of [Gaya District](#).

Gaya is 100 kilometers south of [Patna](#), the capital city of Bihar. Situated on the banks of [Falgu River](#) ([Niranjana](#), as mentioned in [Ramayana](#)), it is a place sanctified by both the [Hindu](#) and the [Buddhist](#) religions. It is surrounded by small rocky hills ([Mangala-Gauri](#), [Shringa-Sthan](#), [Ram-Shila](#) and [Brahmayoni](#)) by three sides and the river flowing on the fourth (western) side. The city has a mix of natural

goddesses. These hilltop temples at Rama Shila, [Mangla Gauri](#), Shringa Sthan and Brahmayoni are part of the pilgrimage circuit, and grand staircases have been built up to most of them.



The [Vishnupad Temple, Gaya](#)

Sacred places in Gaya correspond to physical features, most of which occur naturally. [Ghats](#) and temples line the banks of the sacred Falgu River. Trees such as [pipal](#) trees and [Akshayavat](#), the undying [banyan](#), are especially sacred. The [Mangla Gauri](#) shrine is marked by two rounded stones that symbolize the breasts of the mythological [Sati](#), the first wife of [Lord Shiva](#). The most popular temple today is [Vishnupad Temple](#), a place along the Falgu River, marked by a footprint of Vishnu incised into a block of basalt, that marks the act of Lord Vishnu subduing Gayasur by placing his foot on Gayasur's chest. The present day temple was rebuilt by Devi [Ahilya Bai Holkar](#), the ruler of [Indore](#), in the [18th century](#).

Gaya is significant to Hindus from the point of view of salvation to the souls of ancestors (a ritual called [pindadanam](#)). According to Ramayana, when [Lord Rama](#) came to Gaya along with [Sita](#) for [pitru paksha](#) (or to perform pindadanam), Sita cursed the Falgu River following some disobedience on the part of the river. The mythology states that on account of this curse, Falgu River lost its water, and the river is simply a vast stretch of sand dunes.

## History

### Ancient history

Documented history of Gaya dates back to the birth of [Gautam Buddha](#). About 15 km from Gaya town is [Bodhi Gaya](#), the place where [Gautam Buddha](#) got

## Importance to Hindu Mythology

Gaya derives its name from the [mythological](#) demon *Gayasur* (which literally means *Gaya the holy demon*), demon (*asur*, a [Sanskrit](#) word) and Gaya. Over its history dating millennia, the word *asur* got deleted and the name Gaya remained in currency. Lord [Vishnu](#) killed *Gayasur*, the holy demon by using the pressure of his foot over him. This incident transformed *Gayasur* into the series of rocky hills that make up the landscape of the Gaya city. Gaya was so holy that he had the power to absolve the sins of those who touched him or looked at him; after his death many people have flocked to Gaya to perform shraddha sacrifices on his body to absolve the sins of their ancestors. Gods and goddesses had promised to live on Gayasur's body after he died, and the hilltop protuberances of Gaya are surmounted by temples to various gods and

enlightenment. Since then the places around Gaya ([Rajgir](#), [Nalanda](#), [Vaishali](#), [Patliputra](#)) had been the citadel of knowledge for the ancient world. These centers of knowledge further flourished under the rule of dynasties like the [Maurians](#) who ruled from [Patliputra](#) (modern [Patna](#)) and covered the area beyond the boundaries of the Indian subcontinent. During this period, Gaya was a part of the [Magadh](#) region.

## Medieval history

After the attack of the Muslim rulers these centers were severely damaged and along with them the historical city of Gaya lost its glory. But, in the medieval era under the rule of the great [Sher Shah Suri](#) (an Afghan ruler based in the Sasaram district of modern Bihar), Gaya got connected with the rest of India by the famous [Grand Trunk road](#) (passing through [Sherghati](#)) built by the ruler.

## Modern history



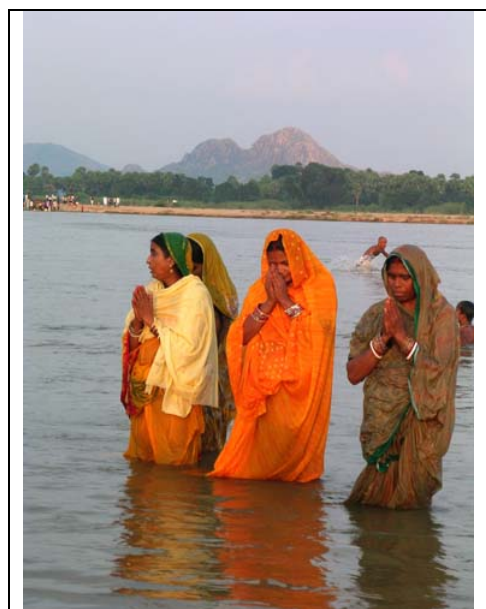
An [incineration](#) ritual being performed on the banks of the [Falgu River](#).

moment [Rajendra Prasad](#) appears to be the sole excuse for a further honest trial of Gandhism to solve a political problem". Also, one of the famous '[Seven Martyrs](#)', the seven young men who sacrificed their lives in the [Quit India movement](#) of August [1942](#), was from Gaya.

Several freedom fighters were lodged in Gaya Central Jail.

In modern Indian history, Gaya played an important role in the freedom movement. Though Gaya may not have produced many great leaders during that era, the common people from Gaya participated in the freedom struggle. Many national level conferences were organized in Gaya during that period. In 1922, the national level meeting of Indian National Congress was held in Gaya. It was in this session that [Chittaranjan Das](#), the President of the Gaya session of [Indian National Congress](#), remarked, "At the

Gaya also played an active role in the famous student movement launched by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) that led to the call for Sampooran Kranti (Total Revolution) later. A well known slogan of the day was 'Sampooran Kranti Ab Naaraa Hai, Bhaavee Itihaas Hamaaraa Hai'. It was a quintessential Gandhian movement where students protested against the government by picketing at government offices. On April 12, 1974 an unknown number of people were killed in a police firing at an unarmed crowd near the Kotwali Police Station. This movement led to unease in the government and led to the imposition of emergency by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who nearly forced the President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed to approve it. It also led to the fall of her government when elections were announced in March 1977. The first non-Congress government at the Centre (Janata government) was formed by a coalition of disparate parties coming together as Janata Party.



Women performing [Chhat Puja](#) in the [Falgu River](#) in Gaya.

[Allahabad](#), [Kanpur](#), [Delhi](#), [Amritsar](#), and to the [Pakistani](#) cities of [Lahore](#) and [Peshawar](#). Although the highway connecting Gaya to Patna is not in a good condition, the railway services between the two stations is up to the mark.

## Railways

Gaya is the second most important station in [Bihar](#) after Patna. It is a [junction](#) and is connected to the three of the four metropolis [New Delhi](#), [Kolkata](#) and [Mumbai](#) through Important Broad Gauge Routes (direct trains), including the Grand Chord line. There is a direct non-stop train, the Mahabodhi Express from

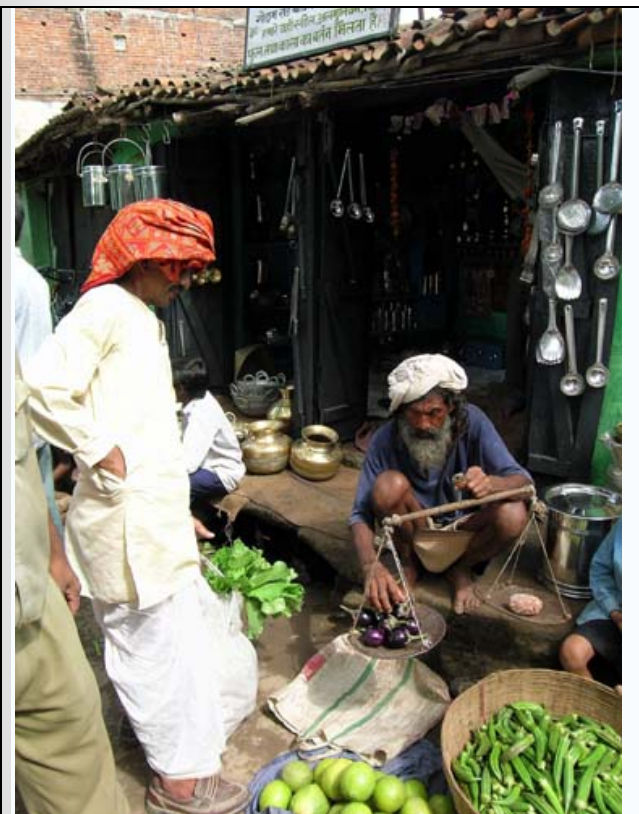
## Transportation

Gaya is well connected to the rest of India and the world by roadways, railways and airways.

## Roadways

The [Grand Trunk Road](#) (NH-2, which is undergoing a revival under [The Golden Quadrilateral](#) project) is about 30 km. from Gaya city. Thus, Gaya is well connected to [Kolkata](#), [Varanasi](#),





**A vegetable grocer in a typical Gaya market.**

gapore, etc.

## Cuisine

The staple food of Gaya is common to the rest of Bihar and [Jharkhand](#). The other special preparations found in Gaya are typically traditional Bihari. The most popular of them include sattu, litti, pittha, pua, marua-ka-roti, bari-dal, sattu-ka-roti, baigan-bharta, sukhaota, etc.

## Sweets

Gaya has been the origin of several sweet delicacies popular in the whole of Bihar, Jharkhand and the rest of India. [Tilkut](#), [Kesaria Peda](#), [Lai](#), [Anarsa](#) are the most popular sweets that bear the trademark of Gaya.

New Delhi to Gaya daily. It takes around 16 hours to reach Gaya from New Delhi through train.

There are direct trains from Gaya to other important stations in India like [Ranchi](#), [Varanasi](#), [Lucknow](#), [Kanpur](#), [Allahabad](#), [Agra](#), [Mathura](#), [Jabalpur](#), [Bhopal](#), [Indore](#), [Nagpur](#), [Puri](#), etc. There are also two smaller train lines from Gaya, one to Patna and the other to Kiul.

### Airways

Gaya has the only international airport in Bihar and [Jharkhand](#) taken together. It is a small international airport connected to Colombo, Bangkok, Sin

*Tilkut* being the most popular of them is prepared using [til](#) or [sesame](#) seeds (*Sesamum Indicum*) and jaggery or sugar. It is a seasonal (winter) sweet and only the *karigars* (workers) from Gaya are believed to impart the real taste of Tilkut. One can find Tilkuts carrying the label "Ramna, Gaya" even in far flung places like Kolkata and Delhi. [Ramna](#) and [Tekari Road](#) are the areas in the city where every other house is a Tilkut factory.

*Kesaria peda* is yet another delicious sweet prepared from [khoya](#) (solid milk cream) and [kesar](#) ([saffron](#)). The [Chowk](#) area of the city specializes in Kesaria Peda production.



The 30 ft. tall [Vishal Buddha Mandir](#), [Bodh Gaya](#).

There are several varieties of *Lai* available in Bihar, including Lai from Gaya. The main component of this Lai is [posta dana](#) or the [poppy](#) seeds. These posta danas are processed and mixed with koya and sugar to give rise to a [disk](#) shaped sweet.

*Anarsa* is also based on khoya, but is deep fried and processed with sugar. Anarsa comes in two shapes 'thin disk' and '[spherical](#)'. The sweet is finally embedded with *til*(sesame) toppings. These sweets are dry and hence easily packagable, preserved, and transported, unlike the [bengali](#) sweets which are soaked in sugar syrups. There is a tradition among the residents to gift the visitors with these sweets when they depart, as a token of love.

## Snacks

The people of Gaya are fond of spicy-soury traditional snacks. There are certain snacks that are found only in Gaya. The most popular among them are *Alu-Kachalu* and *Sabudana-Badam* [Bhoonja](#).

*Alu-Kachalu* is a wet and sour snack prepared from *aloo* ([potato](#)) and *imli* ([tamarind](#)) mixed with black salt, chilly powder, [jeera](#) (cumin seeds), etc. This snack is popular among the students returning from schools in the day time. One can find herds of *thelas* (vendor's vehicle) standing outside the schools during the closing hours.

*Sabudana-Badam Bhoonja* is a dry snack that is unique to the Gaya city. It is a mixture of fried [sabudana](#) (sago) and fried *badam* (groundnut or [moongfali](#) is called *badam* in Bihar) along with salt (both white and black), chilly powder and jeera (cumin seeds) powder. The mobile *bhoonja* vendors shouting humorous slogans can be found in every bylane of the Gaya city during the twilight hours.

## Education

Most of the government-run schools in Gaya (notably Zila School, Haridas Seminary - also known as Town School, Theosophical Model School, Gaya High School, Mahaveer School, and Hadi Hashmi School, Government Girls High School) are affiliated to [Bihar School Examination Board](#). There are two Central Schools (Kendriya Vidyalaya) affiliated with the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, New Delhi. Most of the private schools are affiliated to [ICSE](#) and [CBSE](#) boards. The major ones being Gyan Bharti Public school, Nazareth Academy, D.A.V Public School, Greenfield Public School and many more. The government-run public schools lack many facilities, but are the only options for the poor who cannot afford the fees in private schools. Gyan Bharti Public School is one of the best schools in Gaya and produced some of the finest students who had made many contribution for the welfare of the humanity.

The only university at Gaya is Magadh University located near Bodhgaya. Gaya has several colleges with graduate and post-graduate courses offered in sciences, arts, commerce, and management. The well known ones include Gaya College, Anugrah Memorial College, Jagjivan College, Mirza Ghalib College. Gautam Buddha Mahila College (GBM College) is exclusively meant for women. Magadh Medical College and Hospital (MMCH) is a key medical school of Bihar. There are also some private engineering colleges.

Gaya has an Industrial Training Institute for vocational education located on Bodhgaya Road.

## External Links

- [Gaya, India travel guide](#) from [Wikitravel](#)

## Hindu Holy Cities in India



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[Dwarka](#) • **Gaya** • [Guruvayur](#) • [Haridwar](#) • [Hrishikesh](#) •  
[Kalahasti](#) • [Kanchipuram](#) • [Kedarnath](#) • [Kollur](#) • [Mathura](#) •  
[Mayapur](#) • [Nashik](#) • [Nathdwara](#) • [Puri](#) • [Rameswaram](#) •  
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# Hsipaw

<http://www.myanmar.gov.mm/Perspective/persp2000/2-2000/hsipaw.htm>

## Some Facets of Hsipaw's History

- Hsipaw, or as it is called in Myanmar Thibaw, is one of the oldest of the northern Shan States and throughout history the Sawbwa or Shan Chief of Hsipaw had close relations with the Myanmar kings. King Thibaw, the last king of Myanmar who reigned in Mandalay from 1875 to 1885, got his title as a Prince when his father King Mindon gave Thibaw State to him to govern during a period when the state was without a Sawbaw chief.
- It is located on the west bank of the Namtu River which in its lower reaches is known as Myitnge, or under its classical name Dokhtawaddi; the river eventually joins the great Ayeyawady near the ancient Myanmar capital Innwa or Ava. It is navigable only in short reaches because of rocks and rapids.
- By road Hsipaw is only 129 mile from Mandalay and 46 miles from Lashio. From Mandalay the road and railway go past the spectacular Gokteik Gorge (between 80 and 93 miles from Mandalay to Hsipaw) and on to Lashio and Muse where the China border is reached. The road is now heavily used for the Myanmar-China border trade.
- The legendary history of Hsipaw says that it was founded in BC 58 by Sao Hkun Hkam Saw. The first name of the town was Ong Pawng or Ohn Baung in Myanmar and we often find this name in the Myanmar chronicles when the Sawbwas of Hsipaw helped Myanmar kings in the various wars of the monarchical age.
- It is said that the site of this city shifted more than three times since its founding, but all in the same area near the Dokhtawaddi River, because it was a fertile valley where paddy, fruits (tangerine oranges especially) and vegetables were extensively grown.
- The present town of Hsipaw was founded in AD 1636 nearly 400 years ago. Shwe Yoe ( Sir George Scott) wrote that the lines of the old wall and moat long mouldered away into grass undulations and jungle-

grown, could easily be traced in his time (late 19th century) between the present town and the hills to the north.

- It is said that the first Sawbwa was the fourth son of Sao Hkun Lu, the Sawbwa of Mong Mao. The first Sawbwa ruled in Ong Pawng (Hsipaw) for 35 years and died in BC 23. The Hsipaw Chronicle gives a list of 92 Sawbwas who ruled over this town from BC 23 to AD 1962, so the town has a long history of about 2,000 years.
- Even during the time of the Pyu kings at Thayekhittaya (Srikshestra) there were close relations with Hsipaw. The 8th Sawbwa of Ong Pawng, named Sao Hkun Hkaw Kyaw (Kio) sent on hundred of his *amat* (ministers) with a hundred followers for each minister to the Ayeyawady valley and they established an outpost which is just outside the later city of Mandalay. Each *amat* minister built a hundred houses. It is known today as Madaya which is supposed to be from the original name Amattaya meaning "a Hundred Ministers."
- When Thayekhittaya was attacked by foreign forces, the Ong Pawng Sawbwa, Paw Ai Pyao sent troops to repulse the invaders, and Pyu King Thamoktarit regained his throne.
- During the Bagan period Sao Hkun Hso the 43rd Sawbwa, from AD 1162 to 1209 extended the frontiers of his state to Mong Mit in the northwest, to the Wa states in the northeast and to Hsitsaung-panna in Yunnan in the southeast.
- Sometimes there were quarrels and fighting between Myanmar kings at Innwa and Hsipaw as in AD 1400 during the time of King Mingaung the first of Innwa. But on the whole friendly relations existed with Hsipaw for most of the time.
- The Myanmar chronicles and Hsipaw Chronicle even say that a Sawbwa of On Pawng (Hsipaw) became a king at Innwa (Ava) for about two years until his death in AD 1545. Sir Arthur Phayre gives his name as Khun Mhaingnge but some chronicles give his name as Sao Hkun Mong. It was at the time of King Tabin Shwe Hti (AD 1531-50) when the Myanmar capital had been moved south to Hanthawaddy Bago (Pegu) and a Shan chief of Mohnyin had seized the Innwa throne. This was Sao Hung Hpa whom the Myanmar call Thohanbwa.

He was assassinated because everyone detested his cruel nature and the On Pawng chief was requested to fill the vacant throne.

- From the time of King Bayinnaung who reigned in Hanthawaddy from AD 1551-81, Ong Pawng became a tributary state of the Myanmar kings. Hsipaw also transferred to Myanmar proper, control of Mogok, the ruby mines area, Kyatpyin and Ka-hse.
- Hsipaw and the Shan States though they were tributary states of the Myanmar kings, still retained local autonomy; so long as they remained loyal they were left in peace. Many marriage alliances took place with the Myanmar Royal families and the Sawbwa families right up to the end of the Myanmar dynasty in 1885.
- For example in AD 1767 the Myanmar King Bodawpaya married Nang Thiri Aung Hsung, the daughter of the Hsipaw Sawbwa Sao Myat San Te.
- Sons of Shan Sawbwas were sent to the Myanmar Court to be brought up with the Myanmar princes and the Sawbwas became known as Naywin Bayin or "Lords of the Sunset"
- In AD 1853 Hsipaw Sawbwa Sao Kya Htun sent his Shan troops to fight on the side of King Mindon when he deposed Pagan Min and seized the throne.
- In AD 1866 when some of King Mindon's sons raised a rebellion, the Hsipaw Sawbwa not only sent a force of 3,000 men to assist Mindon, but came down personally to help restore peace and security in Mandalay. He died on his way back to Hsipaw and King Mindon appointed his son, Sao Kya Hkeng, to succeed him. This Sawbwa of Hsipaw later changed his title to Sao Hkun Hseng, and after the Annexation he agreed to acknowledge the suzerainty of the British who confirmed his appointment. In 1890 he married one of the wives of King Thibaw who had been left behind, when the King was exiled to Ratagiri in India. When the Sawbwa died in 1902 he was succeeded by his son Sir Sao Hke.
- Born in 1872 Sao Hke was brought up in the Royal Palace at Mandalay to acquaint him with the royal administrative system of the Myanmar kings. So when the line of Myanmar kings was abruptly ended many of the Shan Sawbwas, and especially the Sawbwa of Hsipaw carried on

the Court Traditions of the Myanmar kings. They encouraged Myanmar musicians of Mandalay to come and reside in their states and gave protection and sponsorship, preserving many of the old Myanmar traditions.

- From the time of Sir Sao Hke who had accompanied his father on a trip to England, the later Hsipaw Sawbwas had further education in U.K. or U.S.A. At the age of 40 in 1912 he went to England accompanied by his daughter Sao Siri Mala, to get treatment for tuberculosis. He returned to Hsipaw in 1915 and died in May 1928.
- He was succeeded by Sao On Kya who was educated at the famous Rugby School and Brasenose College in Oxford. He also studied agriculture at a college at Wye in Kent. He was the Sawbwa of Hsipaw between 1928 and 1938. He had married his first cousin Sao Thu Nanda on 9th November 1922. Sao On Kya died in July 1938. All the Sawbwas of the Shan States gave up their traditional feudal titles in 1959.
- Hsipaw, is thriving now as a trade centre on the old Burma Road which has been leased out to a private company to upgrade and maintain. The truckers stop there in town and also many visitors come both from Myanmar side and from China side. Especially in March each year where the nearby pagoda of Baw-gyo has its annual festival, the various tribal people dressed in their colourful costumes come to trade, to buy and sell, and to see the all night theatrical shows.
- Tourists are also visiting Hsipaw from Mandalay and Yangon.
- Hsipaw is really worth visiting because of its natural beauty: surrounded by blue hills with a peaceful river flowing through its fertile valley; also because of its long and interesting history, its historical ties with the Myanmar kings of bygone days.

## Thaw Kaung

*This record from the Myanmar government web site fails to report the last ruler of Hsipaw, **Sao Kya Seng**, who disappeared in mysterious circumstance after the coup, led by General Ne Win, in 1962*



## Mines Magazine

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### Twilight and Tragedy Over Burma

*A Mines Alumnus and his Princess Bring Hope to a Troubled Land*

*by Charles Warren*

At opposite ends of the globe stand two Lookout Mountains—one above Golden and the other overlooking the green teak forests of the Shan state of Hsipaw in Burma.

The Burmese Lookout Mountain was named for the place near Golden where **Sao Kya Seng, E.M. '53** and his Austrian born wife, Inge, shared some of their happiest times together before their marriage in 1953.

At the time, Sao was a mining engineering student at Colorado School of Mines. Secretly, he was also the ruling Prince of the Shan state of Hsipaw, a territory the size of Connecticut.

The mountain in Burma was in the kingdom where Sao and his wife ruled as prince and princess. Shortly after arriving in her adopted country, Inge went to the mountain. Standing on top, overlooking the beautiful valley below, she was suddenly crippled by a terrible premonition that her fairy tale life with her husband would shortly end in tragedy.

Her terrifying premonition became real eight years later when Sao vanished following a military coup in 1962. The princess and her two daughters were placed under house arrest and held captive for two years. The military regime responsible for Sao's disappearance, and for the abolishment of the democracy he cherished, remain in power today.



Their love story, their struggle to improve the quality of life for their people, and the chilling tale of imprisonment and death are the subjects of Inge Sargent's 1994 book, *Twilight over Burma: My Life as a Shan Princess* (published by University of Hawaii Press). The book is focusing international attention on Burma's oppressive regime.

"The main reason I wrote this book was a memorial to Sao," said Sargent, who is remarried and living in Boulder. "He deserves to be remembered for what he did and what he stood for. He was extremely brave and believed that it was his calling to help his people connect with the 20th Century economically and politically."

The story begins in Denver in 1951 when Inge was a Colorado Women's College exchange student and Sao was a junior at Mines. "As an exchange student, I gravitated towards other foreign students," Sargent remembered.

She met her husband to be at a foreign student party and thought he was an ordinary Burmese exchange student. The two shared common interests and childhood experiences of World War II. They would take picnics in the mountains and explored Denver's museums and theaters.

Sao was most interested in history and political science, but knew that his people needed help developing their agricultural and mineral resources. He chose to study at CSM because of its excellent reputation in mining engineering and because it provided an opportunity to observe the political system in the United States.

"It was his experience at the Colorado School of Mines where he learned to treasure freedom of speech, freedom of association and the idea that everyone was equal, and that no task was below anyone's dignity," said Sargent. "Sao really believed that, although no system was perfect, the United States was the best."

Sao came to Mines after he had been chosen ruling prince of Hsipaw over his elder brother in 1947.

At Mines, only the school's president, John W. Vanderwilt, had been informed of Sao's princely status. The president had been requested to keep this information strictly confidential. As a result, Sao was able to lead the life he wanted as an ordinary foreign student at CSM.

Sao's days at Mines were among the happiest and "the most carefree years of his life," Sargent added. "He was just another student." Nobody knew of his true identity, not even his future wife.

She still did not know the truth when the two were married in Denver one year later. After graduation and a short trip to Austria, the couple boarded a freighter ship to Rangoon, Burma. It was not until the ship entered Rangoon harbor that Inge learned about Sao's secret.

Hundreds of Shan citizens in small, brightly colored boats held welcome signs for someone important onboard. Looking uncomfortable at his curious newlywed, Sao said, "There is something I have to tell you, my dear."

He then told her that the welcome was for them and that she would be a princess. Although shocked and hurt, she put her feelings aside and participated in the welcome. "He did not want me to marry him for the wrong reasons," she said.

The couple traveled 800 miles north to their home in Hsipaw, where they lived in a two story manor house. For the next nine years, the couple would enjoy the privileges and bear the responsibilities for leading their people.

Burma was in state of political and economic chaos when the couple arrived in January 1954. The country is comprised of many nationalities, and Shans were commonly seen by Burmese as citizens of a foreign land with a different language.

Burma proper and its surrounding Shan states had agreed to unite in 1948 to create a Union of Burma following the withdrawal of the British. Under the terms of a new constitution, the autonomous states had the right to succeed in 1958 if they were not satisfied with the union. This was the country's first attempt at democratic rule.

Unfortunately, Burmese leader Gen. Aung San, whom the Shan people trusted and admired, was assassinated. The result was a politically weak union. The Chinese KMT Army then invaded Shan territory, resulting in a military intervention by the Burmese Army.



Though Hsipaw was not directly affected, the unrest in the surrounding states threatened their traditional way of life with the increasing anxiety caused by the buildup of Burmese troops nearby.

Sao wasted no time taking charge. He implemented a series of social, agricultural and economic reforms. According to Sargent, he felt the heavy burden of responsibility to lead his people to a better life and to govern under democratic, rather than feudal, principals. "We wanted the people to believe in themselves, giving them independence and self worth," Sargent added.

She learned the Shan culture and language, and devoted herself to improving child welfare and health, nutrition and education. She opened a tri lingual school, attracting many Shan, Burmese, Chinese, and Indian children who wanted to learn Burmese, Shan and English languages.

As a mining engineer, Sao recognized that mining practices were inefficient and wasteful in his state. He committed himself to helping his countrymen explore and develop their rich deposits of lead, silver, antimony, zinc and gold, as well as precious gems like rubies and sapphires.

He established the Tai Mining Company and hired an Australian geologist to uncover promising ore deposits and purchased modern mining equipment to extract their mineral finds. Sao also developed a salt plant to provide the compound so desperately needed by his people.

Recognizing the need to produce better crops with less harm to the land, Sao taught the nearby hill people to replace their traditional slash and burn agriculture with new methods of planting and rotating crops. He also imported cows from India and Rhode Island Red chickens to improve the country's stock. Orange, tangerine, pineapple and coffee plantations were also established, according to Sargent's book.

He gave away his rice paddies to farmers and refused to accept feudal payment of the land. These reforms helped the people of Hsipaw achieve self sufficiency. It also infuriated his neighboring rulers and was met with distrust on the part of the Burmese government, Sargent wrote.

A serious concern to Sao were the annual gambling festivals, called pwes, which had been held in the Shan states for centuries. The gambling deprived people of their wealth, which usually ended up in the hands of princes. Sao created a charitable trust with income to assist his people.



Sao refused to permit the Burmese Army to hold a special gambling festival in Hsipaw to raise money for the military. When his chief minister told him that the army was not used to having requests turned down, Sao replied: "Don't forget we have our Constitution, and I am willing to die defending it." As his minister left, he muttered that his country was not the United States.

"He was incorruptible and very ethical," responded Sargent proudly. "At the time, the Burmese military was getting a stronghold in Rangoon and they could not stand a feudal prince like Sao who believed in democracy. He was the only one in the country who told them what he thought. "

So highly regarded were the young couple that it was common to see their official wedding picture beside Buddha images in family homes. Some people still display their picture, but hide them when the military is near.

As the years passed, the army became a greater threat to the Shan people. "Hardly a day passed without someone from the state coming to Sao with a complaint against the Burmese army," Sargent wrote in her book. "Villagers were intimidated and forced to provide free labor, women were harassed and sometimes raped, and elders who tried to protect their people were arrested and taken away."

According to Sargent, Burma's central government was also taking revenue from trade with the Shan states and diverting funds to Burma proper—leaving the minority states impoverished. Students, local leaders and villagers urged Sao to consider leaving the Union of Burma at the end of the 10 year trial in 1958.

Military visibility in the Shan states increased as the time for the decision to secede or stay in the Union of Burma approached. Despite his frustrations, Sao wanted to stay in the union because he believed in the democratic process they had built.

General Ne Win of the Burmese Army did not believe in the constitution which assured the Shan states their right of autonomy, according to Sargent.

While Sao was away at parliament in Rangoon in early March 1962, General Ne Win staged an overnight coup. He placed most of the rulers and the entire government of Burma in jail.

Sao had left parliament in Rangoon a day earlier upon news that his sister, who lived in Taunggyi in the Shan state, was dying. He planned to visit her on his

way home but was unaware of the coup taking place in Rangoon. The army arrested him at a roadblock. "They suspected that he knew something, they thought he was going over to the rebels," Sargent said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Burmese soldiers surrounded the residence of the princess, where she was unaware of events unfolding. She was questioned by military officers as to the whereabouts of Sao, who she thought was in Rangoon.

The princess made numerous attempts to get news about her husband, and at one point even risking gunfire as she drove out of her compound seeking answers from the commanding colonel who was 24 miles away. "The military was not expecting me to be so defiant," replied Sargent. "I was contemptuous of them."

Finally, a message came to the princess in the form of a note from Sao: "I am writing this secretly. I am being locked up in the army lockup at Ba Htoo Myo at Lawksawk... Miss you all. Conditions here are not clean. Hope to see you soon. Cheer up yourself! I am still OK. Love, Sao Kya Seng." This message was his last.

The Burmese Army never accepted responsibility for his arrest, imprisonment or his disappearance. Hoping to get closer to the truth, the princess requested and was permitted to move to Rangoon after eleven months of house arrest at her manor house.

She spent one remaining year with her two daughters, Mayari and Kennari, in the Burmese capital under house arrest, having to tolerate constant surveillance by the military. As time passed and as evidence of his death mounted, she became convinced she needed to move on.

"After two years, I decided to leave the country," Sargent said, remembering the request of her husband if something happened to him. "I accepted his death intellectually, but not emotionally."

She managed to get her daughters illegally entered on her Austrian passport and quickly boarded a plane out of the country.

Once she arrived penniless in her native Austria, Inge continued her unsuccessful search for Sao. She said she remained convinced that General Ne Win was responsible for her husband's death.

Sargent finally settled in the United States, completing teaching degrees from the University of Denver and a masters degree from the University of Colorado.

Encouraged by her second husband, Howard Sargent, she spent two years writing *Twilight over Burma*. Today, she speaks out about the continued human rights abuses of the Burmese military regime, who have renamed the country Myanmar. Among the most shocking of abuses occurred in 1988, when Burmese soldiers massacred as many as 10,000 people protesting for democracy.

"Sao died because he stuck to his principles," concluded Sargent. "I want people to remember what he did."

**Mines Magazine**  
July/August 1996

## Kolkata – History

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Kolkata](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Kolkata)

Main article: [Kolkata](#)

**Kolkata** (Bangla: [ˈkolkata] ([help](#)·[info](#)); formerly named [Calcutta](#) ([help](#)·[info](#))) is the capital of the [Indian state](#) of [West Bengal](#). It is located in eastern India on the east bank of the [River Hooghly](#). The city is a colonial city developed by the [British East India Company](#) and then the British Empire. The city was the capital of the British Indian empire till 1911 when the capital was relocated to [Delhi](#). Kolkata witnessed a fast rise as the second city of the British Empire in the 1800s accompanied by the development of a culture that was a coalescence of European philosophy with Indian tradition. The city is also noted for its revolutionary history, ranging from [Indian struggle for independence](#) to the leftist [Naxalite](#) and trade union movements. Labelled the "Cultural Capital of India", "The City of Processions", and the "[City of Joy](#)", Kolkata has also been home to luminaries such as [Rabindranath Tagore](#), [Subhash Chandra Bose](#), [Mother Teresa](#) and [Satyajit Ray](#). Problems related to rapid urbanisation started to plague the city from 1930s and still the city is an example of an urban hotbed of the developing nations.

## Name and origins

The rent-roll of [Akbar](#), a sixteenth-century [Mughal](#) emperor, and the work of a Bengali poet, [Bipradas](#), of the late fifteenth century, both make mention of the city's early name being *Kolikata*, from which Kolkata/Calcutta are said to derive.

There is lot of discussion on how the city got its name. There are different views on the issue. The more popular one is that the city got its name from the Hindu goddess [Kali](#) and the original name was *Kalikshetra*, meaning the place of *Kali*. Other theories abound like:

- The name derived from the location of the original settlement beside a *khal* ( which means canal in [Bengali](#))
- According to another theory, the place was known for the manufacture of shell-lime. And the name derived from lime (*kali*) and burnt shell (*kata*).
- Another opinion is that the name is derived from the Bengali term *kilkila* (meaning, "flat area"), which is mentioned in the old literature.



The area where the city is now located was originally inhabited by the people of three villages— *Kalikata*, *Sutanati* and *Gobindapur*. However, the boundaries of the three villages gradually became less distinct, and before the [battle of Plassey](#), the city could be divided into four different sub-areas – European Kolkata (Dihhi Kolkata), a residential village with some sacred spots (Gobindapur), a traditional Indian market (Bazar Kalikata or Burrabazar) and a riverine mart concentrating on cloth trade (Sutanati). After the battle of Plassey in 1757, the British started rebuilding the city with the notions of making it the capital for their Empire.

The city High Court recently ruled that Job Charnock, the Englishman generally believed to be the founder of the Calcutta is not the founder of the city and that hence Calcutta has no birthday. According to the Court, the city owes its genesis in the [Maurya](#) and [Gupta](#) period and it was an established trading post long before the Slave Dynasty of the [Delhi Sultanate](#), the [Mughals](#), the Portuguese, the French or the British established a modern township there. References to the existence of an ancient riverine port (named Kalikata) exist in the travel journals of Chinese scholars and Persian merchants dating from centuries [BCE](#) <sup>[citation needed](#)</sup>. The Hindu epic [Mahabharata](#), lists the King of “Vanga”, as having fought alongside the Kauravas in the great war.

In spite of the High Court ruling, the growth of the present city can be dated from [1690](#), when [Job Charnock](#), an agent of the [English East India Company](#) chose the place for a trade settlement. In [1698](#), the East India Company bought three villages (Sutanuti, Kalikata and Gobindapur) from a local landlord. The next year, the company began developing the city as a [Presidency City](#). In [1727](#), as per the order of [King George I](#), a civil court was set up in the city. The Calcutta municipal corporation (recently renamed as 'Kolkata Municipal Corporation') was formed and the city had its first [mayor](#).

**On 16th may, 2003 the Hon'ble Kolkata High Court has dismissed the name of Charnock as the city's founder and 24Th august 1690 as its birthday. This landmark verdict came after we on behalf of the [Sabarna Roy Choudhury Paribar Parishad](#) and nine other intellectuals of the city filed a public interest litigation. The verdict was based upon the findings of an expert committee report headed by the famous historian late Sri Nemai Sadhan Basu.**

## Journey from British rule to independence

The three villages, in particular *Kalikata*, where Calcutta is located, came into the possession of the [British East India Company](#) in [1690](#) and some scholars like to date its beginnings as a major city from the construction of [Fort William](#) by the [British](#) in [1698](#), though this is debated (see the court ruling in "Name and origins" above). From [1858](#) to [1912](#), Calcutta was the capital of British [India](#). From [1912](#) to India's Independence in [1947](#), it was the capital of all of [Bengal](#). After Independence, Calcutta remained the capital of the Indian state of [West Bengal](#).

## The Fall of Calcutta to Siraj ud-Daula

See also: [Robert Clive](#) and [Bengal Presidency](#)

When the [Seven Years' War](#) broke out, owing to their constant rivalry with the [French](#), and the fall of [Madras](#) to the forces of [Dupleix](#), early in 1756 the British authorities in Calcutta began repairs to the fortifications of old [Fort William](#), which were extremely decayed. This irritated the new [Nawab](#) of Bengal [Siraj Ud Daulah](#), who viewed it as a threat to his sovereignty. Enraged still further when the British granted asylum to one Krishnaballav, who had embezzled money from the dewani of Dhaka, Siraj ud-Daula first attacked and captured [Cossimbazar](#), and then Calcutta, which fell after a short siege on 20th June, 1756), during which the Governor and many other officials escaped down the [Hooghly River](#), leaving the remainder of the garrison and the Eurasian population of Calcutta to their fate. It is said that 123 Britons later died in the [Black Hole of Calcutta](#) after his victory, but recent evidence calls into question the numbers involved, and suggests that the Nawab himself was probably unaware of what transpired. He renamed Calcutta Alinagar after the previous Nawab, and his maternal grandfather, [Alivardi Khan](#). Having installed Manikchand as the ruler of Alinagar, Siraj returned to [Murshidabad](#). Soon (on 2nd January 1757) Watson and [Robert Clive](#) retook Calcutta with a force of Company [sepoys](#) and the assistance of the [Royal Navy](#). Hearing the news, Siraj ud-Daula moved to attack Calcutta, but fearing an attack from [Ahmad Shah Abdali](#), after a few days of war he signed the [Treaty of Alinagar](#) with the East India Company, giving them permission to build the fort.

Although Siraj ud-Daula conceded temporary defeat in the Pact of Alinagar, he once again began scheming with the French against the British. Meanwhile, the [Third Carnatic War](#) was starting in the south. Also at this time, nobles such as Jagat Seth, [Mir Jafar](#), Rai Durlav, Omichand and Rajballav were plotting against Siraj ud-Daula (a principal reason being the Nawab's arrogance, well attested to in contemporary sources) and they invited Clive to take part in their plans. Clive seized on this plan to get rid of two enemies at once. Citing non-

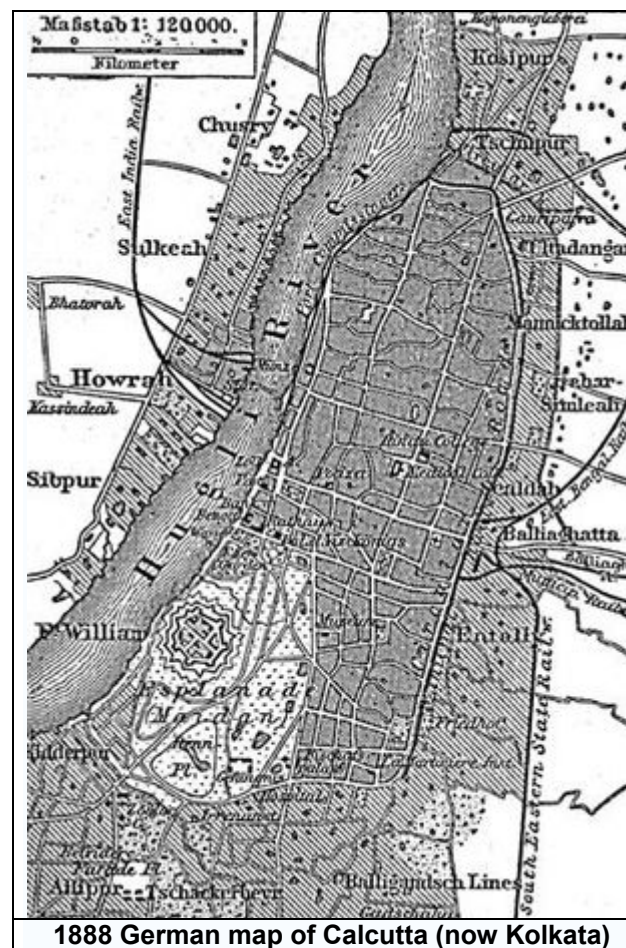
existent reasons, he attacked [Murshidabad](#), having previously reached an agreement with Mir Jafar to install him on the musnud of Bengal. On the fateful day of [23 June](#) 1757, 23 miles away from Murshidabad in the [mango](#) groves of [Palashi](#), the armies met at the [Battle of Plassey](#). The British army consisted of 800 European soldiers and 2,200 Indian soldiers, while the Nawab's army was made up of 18,000 cavalry and 50,000 infantry. At the start of this seemingly impossible battle, generals Rai Durlav and Iar Latif held their armies together, but in an act of treachery [Mir Jafar](#) led his troops away from the battlefield, and the remaining army led by Mirmadan and Mohanlal was defeated. Siraj ud-Daula escaped but was later caught and killed by Miran, the son of Mir Jafar. Mir Jafar was made the new Nawab, and the British had effectively seized control of Bengal. In [1765](#), after defeating the next Nawab, [Mir Qasim](#), the Nawab of [Oudh](#) and the [Mughal](#) Emperor at the [Battle of Buxar](#), there was no one to stand in the way of the British and their dominance in North India. Thus, British imperialism began in India with the conquest of Bengal, a game in which a main pawn was the great city of Calcutta.

Calcutta also had an indirect but important influence on the battles of the [Carnatic Wars](#). When Madras fell to Dupleix, the British were still able to direct the war from another of their strongholds, Calcutta. They also used the wealth of Bengal to defeat the French. As Dr. R. C. Majumdar stated in *An Advanced History of India*, "The Battle of Plassey may be truly said to have decided the fate of the French in India."

## 18th century Scandals

One of the most notorious incidents of the latter part of the century was the trial and execution of "[Nuncomar](#)" or, more correctly, Nanda Kumar (d. 1775), who had been the governor of [Hughli](#) in 1756. In 1764 he had been appointed collector of [Burdwan](#) in place of [Warren Hastings](#), which resulted in a long-standing enmity between the two men. In 1775, when Hastings was [Governor-General](#), Nanda Kumar brought accusations of corruption against him, accusing him of accepting bribes and other abuses of power. These were taken up with enthusiasm by Hastings' rivals on the Governor General's Council, led by [Philip Francis](#). Whilst this matter was still awaiting investigation Nanda Kumar was indicted for forgery of a deed, condemned and executed. There was a strong suspicion that the charges had been invented by Hastings, and that he had put pressure on the judges to pass sentence of death. At this date it was far from clear whether or not English law applied in Calcutta, and it was extremely rare for the death penalty to be applied for forgery even in England. Furthermore, Nanda Kumar was a [Brahmin](#), and his hanging caused widespread dismay and outrage in Calcutta. Warren Hastings and Sir [Elijah](#)

[Impey](#), the Chief Justice, were both impeached, and were accused by [Edmund Burke](#) and afterwards by [Thomas Babington Macaulay](#) of committing a judicial murder.



Five years after this incident, in 1780, relations between Warren Hastings and Philip Francis deteriorated to such an extent that the two fought a duel in the grounds of Belvedere (now the National Library) on the road to the suburb of [Alipore](#). Francis was severely wounded, but Hastings escaped unscathed.

## Social and intellectual life in the 18th century

In [1772](#), Calcutta became the capital of [British India](#), a decision made by [Governor General Warren Hastings](#). In [1779](#), [Hickey's Bengal Gazette](#) or the *Calcutta General Advertiser* became the first newspaper to be printed in India, and is an invaluable chronicle of the social life of Anglo-Indian society in Calcutta. Contemporary memoirs such as those of [William Hickey](#) record the consumption of enormous meals, washed down by copious quantities of claret, port, madeira and other wines, followed by the smoking of [Hookahs](#). After the death of his English wife, Charlotte, (who is buried in [Park Street Cemetery](#)) Hickey married a Bengali girl called Jemdanee, who died in childbirth in 1796,



prompting him to write in his journal that "Thus did I lose as gentle and affectionately attached a girl as ever man was blessed with". Such unions between Europeans, English, French and Portuguese, and local women, both Hindu and Muslim, were common throughout the 18th century in Calcutta, and are the origin of the city's substantial Anglo-Indian (or Eurasian) community today: by the early 19th century, however, increasing racial intolerance made marriages of this kind much rarer.

Calcutta's intellectual life received a great boost in 1784 with the foundation of the [Asiatic Society of Bengal](#) by [Sir William Jones](#), with the encouragement of [Warren Hastings](#), himself no mean Oriental scholar. Jones worked closely with the [pandits](#) of the [Kalighat Temple](#), together with the local [ulema](#), in translating and producing new editions of rare and forgotten texts. His study of [Sanskrit](#) with [Pandit Ramlochan](#) at [Nadiya](#) led him to posit the existence of the [Indo-European](#) family of languages. Many distinguished scholars, English and Bengali, such as [Henry Thomas Colebrooke](#), [James Prinsep](#) and [Pandit Radhakanta Sarman](#) would grace the Society's meetings and publications over the following century, vastly enriching knowledge of India's culture and past.

## The Baboo/Babu Culture and the Bengal Renaissance

See also: [Bengal Renaissance](#)

During the bygone days of the [British](#), as the capital of undivided [India](#) Calcutta was regarded as the second city of the [British Empire](#) (after [London](#)) and was aptly renamed "[City of Palaces](#)" and the Great Eastern Hotel was regarded as the "Jewel of the East". During that bygone era, Calcutta was famous for its "[Baboo Culture](#)" --- incidentally a cross-fertilization of [English Liberalism](#), [European fin de siecle decadence](#), [Mughal](#) conservatism and indigenous revivalism inculcating aspects of socio-moral and political change. This culture was fostered in its wake by the [Zamindari System](#), the [Daebhaga System](#), the [Hindu Joint Family System](#), the [Mitakshara System](#), the Muslim [Zenana System](#), the Protestant spirit of free capitalist enterprise, the Mughal inspired feudal system and the [Nautch](#). This also fostered the [Bengal Renaissance](#), literally an awakening of modern liberal thinking in 19th century Bengal, and which gradually percolated to the rest of India. Like the [Italian Renaissance](#), it challenged orthodox social convention to usher in an era of humanistic idealism.

## Growth

The centre of Company control over the whole of Bengal from [1757](#), Calcutta underwent rapid industrial growth from the [1850s](#), especially in the textile sector, despite the poverty of the surrounding region. Despite being almost totally destroyed by a cyclone, in which 60,000 died, on [5 October 1864](#), Calcutta grew, mostly in an unplanned way, in the next 150 years from 117,000 to 1,098,000 inhabitants (including suburbs), and now has a metropolitan population of approximately 13.2 million.

## Contribution to the independence movement of India



The [Victoria Memorial](#) in downtown Calcutta.

Historically, Calcutta was the centre of activity in the early stages of the national movement of independence. Exactly a hundred years after the fall of Bengal in the [Battle of Plassey](#), Calcutta saw the beginning of what is often called the First Independence Movement of

India. It should be noted here that it is also just as often not referred to as a War Of Independence, and as one historian put it, "The so called First National War of Independence was neither First, nor National, nor a War of Independence". In the suburbs of Calcutta, at the [Barrackpore](#) military barracks, [sepoy Mangal Pandey](#) sparked off a huge revolt that shook the foundations of the British Empire. This movement is sometimes also called the [Indian Mutiny](#), although recent evidence goes against using this name and suggests the Revolt of 1857 as better and less controversial choice.

In 1883, [Surendranath Banerjee](#) organised a [national conference](#) — the first of its kind in nineteenth century India. This conference heralded the birth of The [Indian National Congress](#). The first native president of the [Indian National Congress](#) Sir [Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee](#) and the first Congress president to advocate self rule by Indians, Sir [Surendra Nath Banerjee](#) (referred to by the British as "Surrender Not") were early eminent Calcuttans, who provoked and influenced nationalist thinking in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Other societies based on nationalist or religious thoughts were started, like the [Hindu Mela](#). Revolutionary organisations like the [Jugantar](#) and the [Anushilan Samiti](#) were formed with a goal to use force against the British rulers. Among early nationalist leaders, the most prominent were [Sri Aurobindo](#), Indira devi Chaudhurani, [Bipin Chandra Pal](#). The early nationalists were inspired by [Swami Vivekananda](#), the foremost disciple of the [Hindu](#) mystic [Sri Ramakrishna](#) and helped by Sister [Nivedita](#), disciple of the former. The rousing cry that awakened [India's](#) soul was penned by [Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay](#), now the national song of the nation, an ode to the land of [Bharat](#) (India) as the Divine Mother, [Vande Mataram](#).

The Elgin Road residence of [Subhash Chandra Bose](#) in Calcutta was the place from where he escaped the British to reach Germany during the [Second World War](#). He was the co-founder of the [Indian National Army](#) and the Head of State of the [Arzi Hukumate Azad Hind](#), formed to counter and combat the [British Raj](#) in India and was renamed Netaji by poet laureate [Rabindranath Tagore](#). He is regarded by many as perhaps the most prominent and influential freedom fighter in Indian history and is venerated in many Bengali households even today.

Muslims were also involved in the nationalist movement, most notably Fazl Huq who from Calcutta in the 1930s attempted to organise a non-communal peasant party to agitate against the British and the wealthy Indian landowning class. The fact that many of the Hindus in this latter group were linked to the local Congress organisation and dominated the mainstream nationalist movement in Bengal from Calcutta led to attempts to thwart Huq's activities and fed into the tragic decline in communal relations that savaged Calcutta in 1946 and 1947 (see Kenneth McPherson, "The Muslim Microcosm: the Muslims of Calcutta 1918-1935", Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1973).

## After the Independence

The [partition of India](#) also created intense violence and a shift in demographics - large numbers of Muslims left for [East Pakistan](#), while hundreds of thousands of Hindus would flee into the city.

Over the 1960s and 1970s, severe power shortages, strikes and a violent [Marxist-Maoist](#) movement — the [Naxalites](#) — damaged much of the city's infrastructure, leading to an economic stagnation. In 1971, war between India and Pakistan led to the mass influx of thousands of refugees into Kolkata resulting in a massive strain on its infrastructure. In the mid-1980s, [Mumbai](#) overtook Kolkata as India's most populous city. Kolkata has been a strong base



**Kolkata port in 1945. It was an important military port during the WW2.**

[reforms in India](#) introduced by the central government in the mid-1990s. Since 2000, [Information Technology](#) (IT) services revitalized the city's stagnant economy. The city has also experienced a growth in the manufacturing sector. Following similar moves elsewhere in the country, the state government changed the city's official name from *Calcutta* to *Kolkata* in 2001; this act was seen largely as a political ploy.

Calcutta was the most populous city in India until the [1980s](#), when it was overtaken by [Bombay](#). The population increased further with the partition of [India](#), in August 1947, when it attracted Hindus refugees and other uprooted people and cross border infiltrators from the eastern part of the province of the formerly undivided Bengal, first included in [Pakistan](#), later declaring independence to form the republic of [Bangladesh](#) in [1971](#). Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) was formed in [1971](#). Then came the period of communist government which has been continuing to this time causing West Bengal to be referred to as "...home to the world's longest surviving democratically elected communist government, the Left Front".

## Notes

- [^](#) [1 Britannica entry](#)
- [^](#) [Calcuttaweb article](#)

of Indian communism as West Bengal has been ruled by the [CPI\(M\)](#) dominated [Left Front](#) for nearly three decades — the world's longest-running democratically-elected [Communist](#) government. The city's economic recovery gathered momentum after [economic](#)



[^](#) Mukerji, Dr.S.C. 1991. *The Changing Face of Calcutta: An Architectural Approach*. Government of West Bengal  
[^](#) Ghulam Husain Salim *Riyazu-s-Salatin. A History of Bengal* Ed. & Trans. Maulavi Abdus Salam (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press) 1902 Fasc. IV  
[^](#) *The Memoirs of William Hickey* (London: Hurst & Blackett) Vol.II (1918) pp154-5  
[^](#) H.E. Busteed *Echoes of Old Calcutta* (Calcutta) 1908 pp73-106; H. Beveridge *The Trial of Nanda Kumar* (Calcutta) 1886  
[^](#) Busteed *Old Calcutta* pp107-117  
[^](#) *The Memoirs of William Hickey* (London: Hurst & Blackett) Vol.II (1918) pp136-7 Vol. III (1923) pp205-6, 234-5; Percival Spear *the Nabobs* (Delhi: OUP) 1998 p36  
[^](#) *Memoirs of William Hickey* (London: Hurst & Blackett) Vol. IV (1925) p141  
[^](#) O.P. Kejariwal *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's past* (Delhi: OUP) 1988 pp29-75  
[^](#) ([Gandhi 1992](#), pp. 497)  
[^](#) ([Bennett & Hindle 1996](#), pp. 63-70)  
[^](#) Biswas S. [Calcutta's colourless campaign](#). BBC. Retrieved on [2006-04-26](#).  
[^](#) ([Roy & Alsayyad 2004](#))  
[^](#) Easwaran K. [Politics of name change](#). Retrieved on [2006-04-26](#).  
[^](#) Roy, Ananya. "The Gentlemen's City: Urban Informality in the Calcutta of New Communism". *Urban Informality: Transnational Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America and South Asia*. Al-Sayyad, Nezar and Ananya Roy. ed. 2003. Lexington Books, New York.

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## See also

[British India](#)  
[French India](#)

# Maymyo

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyin\\_U\\_Lwin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyin_U_Lwin)

## Pyin U Lwin



**National Botanical Gardens, Pyin U Lwin**

**Pyin U Lwin** or **Pyin Oo Lwin** ([Burmese](#):

[မြိုင်ဇွန်လှိုင်](#); [MLCTS](#): *prang u: lwang mrui.*) , formerly Maymyo (22° 2'4.38"N 96°27'31.49"E), is a resort town in [Mandalay Division](#) in [Myanmar](#), located some 67 kilometers east of [Mandalay](#), and at an altitude of 1070 meters (3510 feet). It was initially a [Shan](#) village situated on the [Lashio-Mandalay](#) road

between [Naungcho](#) and [Mandalay](#). During the British colonial occupation, the [British](#), in 1896, developed it as a [hill station](#) because of its cool alpine climate, especially during the hot season. The colonial government of Burma would move to Maymyo during the hot season to escape from the high heat and humidity of Rangoon. The name *May myo* means *May Town* in [Burmese](#), and comes from the town's first administrator, [Colonel May](#). As a legacy of the colonial period, the town has approximately 10,000 Indian and 5,000 Nepali inhabitants, who served in the [British Indian Army](#) ([Gurkha Regiment](#)) and settled in Maymyo after the British left, having granted independence to Burma. It was indeed until recently dominated by northern Indian communities. Maymyo was also an important educational centre during colonial times, with the GEHSs (Government English High Schools), such as [St. Mary's](#), [St. Michael's](#), [St. Albert's](#), and Colgate, all based in the town. It is also home to the [Myanmar Defence Services Academy](#) ((DSA)) and the [Defence Services Institute of Technology](#) ((DSIT)). Maymyo also has a thriving [Eurasian](#) community, consisting mostly of [Anglo-Burmese](#) and [Anglo-Indian](#) communities. Sweater knitting, vegetable plantation, orchards, and cow rearing are the main local businesses, but [smuggling](#) from [India](#) and [China](#) is also significant. There has been a tremendous influx of Chinese immigrants

(especially from [Yunnan](#)) in recent years. The city is a resort town for visitors from Myanmar's major cities during the summertime. Established in 1915, the [National Botanical Gardens](#) and the adjacent [Pyin Oo Lwin Nursery](#) are famous attractions of Pyin U Lwin. The beautifully created national garden is unique. A four acre orchid garden is planned here for 2007.

Wherever you go in Pyin Oo Lwin, the natural beauty of this edge of the Shan Plateau is around you. Trees, blossom, flower and fruit farms, stunning landscapes, wide vistas and narrow hidden charms - all surround the visitor without effort. Birds and butterflies dart in and out of the flowering shrubs and bushes along the roads. The bustling markets overflow with vegetable and orchard produce. And everywhere you are in the company of hard working farmers, traders and merchants - many of whom will be happy to practise their English language skills with you, or to teach you a phrase or two of Myanmar or Shan.

Today, Pyin Oo Lwin is particularly noted for four centres of national economic importance. It is the centre of sericulture (silkworm rearing). The Sericulture Research Centre, near the Kandawgyi National Gardens, conducts three distinct roles: the intensive planting and harvesting of mulberry trees (leaves for the silk worms, bark for hand made paper), the rearing of the actual silk worms, and the reeling of the silk from the cocoons. It has a large research centre for indigenous medicinal plants. And it has one of the country's few pharmaceutical production facilities. In addition, Pyin Oo Lwin is the centre of the country's principal flower and vegetable production. The most important flowers grown intensively are chrysanthemum, aster and gladiolus, which are exported to every corner of Myanmar throughout the year. Lastly, Pyin Oo Lwin is the centre of Myanmar's rapidly growing coffee industry. A number of factories in the town process coffee beans for country-wide distribution, with a growing amount now prepared for export.

## External links

[MOF National Botanical Gardens](#)

[The most informative site for visitors to Pyin Oo Lwin \(what to see, where to stay, trekking, shopping, etc\)](#)

[Description of Pyin Oo Lwin Nursery, with photographs](#)

# Mingun

## The Mingun Bell

<http://www.myanmars.net/myanmar-museum/largest-ringing-bell.htm>

The Great Mingun Bell was built by the longest reigning monarch of the Konbaung dynasty King Bodawpaya (1782-1819). In fact, any mention of Mingun would be incomplete without mentioning the two other great deeds. King Bodawpaya's four Great noble deeds also known as the Great Four: the Great Pagoda, the Great Bell, the Great Lake and the Great Lion. All these Great Fours are located in Mingun 19 miles from Sagaing and situated at the west bank of Ayeyarwaddy.

Nine years after the accession to the throne, King Bodawpaya handed over his royal responsibilities to his son the Crown Prince and left the capital to oversee the construction of the Great Pagoda in Mingun. The foundation of the Great Pagoda Pahtodawgyi was laid on BE 1152, 5th day of the waxing moon of Tapodwe (9 January 1791). The pagoda if completed would have risen to the height of 500 feet, the largest one in the whole country and probably the highest in the world. It was left unfinished when Bodawpaya died in 1819. It is the biggest brick pile in the world, the bottom terrace being a square of 450 feet, the basement on which the domical superstructure would rest.

For maximum safety, layers upon layers of brickwork were used internally instead of scaffolding. In order for the brickwork to be symmetrical and smooth, a central pillar 44 feet in circumference was erected to serve as a reference point. Big iron rings were used to reinforce the structure.

Overlooking the Ayeyarwaddy river in front of the eastern face of the Pagoda, two Great Lions, each standing 95 feet in height, were constructed in 1793. Eight hundred thousand bricks were reportedly used for the purpose. The Great Lake measuring 420 feet in width and 31.8 feet in depth was also constructed. However, the Great Lions and the Great Lake do not seem to have received much of King Bodawpaya's attention.

Bodawpaya's best remembered noble deed is the donation of the Great Bell, the Mingun Bell. Bells are known in Myanmar culture as an omnipresent feature of religious affairs. Evidence of bell casting dates back as early as the Pyu Period and throughout the ages, donation of bells to pagodas, shrines, Buddhist ordination halls (Simas) and monasteries have become a tradition. On



every htee of a pagoda the tiny bells made of gold, silver and bronze are hung there to tinkle with the wind. In addition to the delight of the bigger bells ringing in solemn melody, the tinkling of the tiny one at the htee provide a rare pleasure. Myanmar Buddhists have a ritual of striking a bell after saying prayers to call on others within hearing to share the merit arising out of their good deeds. Bells usually have inscriptions as to the name of the donor, the time of donation and the reason for donation. This custom of inscribing on bells has become a source of primary historical evidence invaluable for researchers.

Bodawpaya assigned the task of casting the great Mingun Bell to the Chief of the Metal Works, Nanda Kyaw Swa. The King himself moved to a temporary place on the middle island a short distance to the east of Mingun to supervise the casting of the Bell personally. A mould of clay was first made, smoothed out and then waxed. Elaborate designs were etched on the waxwork and more clay was applied before casting the bronze. The amount of wax used for the Bell reportedly amounted to 45,330 viss.

The casting of the Bell began on the night of 29th April 1808. Bronze weighing 65,877 viss was used in casting the bell. On the girder the Bell were inscribed the words "Cast on 23 March 1810 in the 28th year of the royal reign", indicating a work period of nearly 2 years.

To achieve a pleasant ringing sound the Bell was cast with an alloy of five metals in the ancient Myanmar tradition: gold, silver, bronze, iron and lead. The total expenditure for the Bell amounted to 0.65 million (658,726) Kyats.

The Bell weighs 55,555.55 viss (90.52 tons). The weight varies according to different sources.

Myanmar has a tradition of using mnemonic expression to facilitate memorizing weight. In the expression "Min Phyu Hman Hman Pyaw", used to denote the weight of the Bell, the Myanmar consonants 'M', 'Ph', 'Hm' and 'P' all stand for Thursday, which in turn represents the number 5, yields five 5s, the weight of the Bell in viss.

As for the dimensions of the Bell, the outer diameter of the rim of the bell comes to 16 feet and 3 inches. The height of the Bell is 12 feet on the exterior and 11½ feet in the interior. The outside circumference at the rim is 50.75 feet. The Bell is 6 inches to 12 inches thick and stands 20.7 feet high from the rim to the top.

The giant Bell was cast on an island in the middle of the Ayeyarwady River to the east of Mingun. The transportation from the island across the river to Mingun was challenging. Thus the King ordered anyone who had any idea how to go about it to be brought into his royal presence. After questioning the experts personally, and failing to obtain a practical plan for the project. King Bodawpaya issued a royal order dated 17 September 1808 which stated:

Casting the Royal Big Bell is successfully completed and it weighs 200,000 (viss)/ 730,000 lbs/ 331,120 kg; to move it to the west bank of Ayeyarwaddy river would not be easy and it seems that no one could suggest how it could be done; send Amyauk Wun - officer of Cannons, to Yangon (Rangoon) to ask Myo Wun - Town Officer, Hanthawaddy (Bago) to get anyone there either native or foreign, sailor or engineer who knows any mechanical device in loading and unloading heavy things on or off the (sea going) ships; if such a man were found, Hanthawaddy Town Officer shall bring him here (immediately).

The King sent the Amyauk wun (Minister of the Artilleries) to Yangon with orders for the Hanthawady Myowun to seek and recruit anyone skilled in handling heavy loads, boats and machinery.

Before moving the Great Bell to Mingun a 36-foot canal, big enough for two Karaweik Barges was dug under the Bell. The canal was big enough to be called a Raft Creek. In 1811, the King ordered the immediate preparation of a heavily decorated barge for the Bell.

Upon completion of all the work including the construction and preparation of the double-hulled barge under the Bell, it was necessary to wait for the rainy season when the river water would rise high enough to fill up the Raft Creek, raising the barge which in turn floated upon the waters with the Great Bell on it. It was a time for celebration and the King himself led the happy occasion together with golden barges, boats, and ships that filled up the whole expanse of the river. A flotilla surrounded the Royal Barge bearing the Bell and made their way down westward to the site of the Bell. The festivities were held for days, and the King and the Queen, the Princes and Princesses, Royal Grandsons and Granddaughters, Ministers and the general public joined this happy occasion. Metal casters, carpenters, Ponnas (brahmins), technicians and even labourers who handled the tongs were rewarded with an abundance of cash and coins, cloths and accessories.

A commemoration record of the Great Bell was inscribed and preserved on palm leaf and parabaik manuscripts which constitute invaluable historical

evidence, the most important of which are the biographical glimpses of King Bodawpaya, the prevailing religious and social conditions of the time and Bodawpaya's achievements to foster friendly relations with Assam, Manipur, Ceylon, Calcutta, Bengal, Thailand, Lin Zin, England and China. As a consequence of the friendly and good relation with China, Bodawpaya received the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha from China. The record also mentioned Bodawpaya's effort to cleanse the Buddhist Order and how he resolved the problem of split and controversy among the monks.

The Great Mingun Bell is hung to the north of the Pahtodawgyi on the low circular terrace from a 3-piece wooden beam covered with a metal plate. The beam rests on two brick pillars which are reinforced with two teak posts inside. In the 1838 earthquake, approximately 18 pounds of metal fell off from the bottom of the Bell, while the Bell itself required buttressing with big wooden posts. The bell did not swing free any more as the supports were so much shaken by the earthquake. In 1904 a Scot from the Ayeyarwady Flotilla Company replaced the wooden posts with iron ones. The Great Bell is the world's biggest hanging bell, as well as the world's biggest bell that rings. In conclusion I quote Scott O' Connor wrote:

The Big Bell at Mingun ... it emits a deep, musical, prolonged vibration on being struck with a light wooden post. When one first hears this sound issuing from amongst the trees, one pauses to wonder what it can be, for it is no single note, but a deep tremor which fills the air and one can almost feel the contact of the waves as they come floating as they come in visibly along. It is indeed a great majestic voice, that is heard only in its faint whisperings.

## King Bodawpaya

(1782-1819)

<http://www.myanmars.net/myanmar-history/king-bodawpaya.htm>

King Bodawpaya was one of the greatest king of Myanmar, sixth monarch of the Alaungpaya, or Konbaung, dynasty, in whose reign (1782-1819) the long conflict began with the British.

A son of Alaungpaya (reigned 1752-60), the founder of the dynasty, Bodawpaya came to power after deposing and executing his grandnephew Maung Maung. In 1784 Bodawpaya invaded Rakhine, the maritime kingdom on the eastern coast of the Bay of Bengal, captured its king, Thamada, and deported more than 20,000 people into Myanmar as slaves. When Rakhine

was made a Myanmar province in 1785, the borders of Myanmar and British India were contiguous for the first time. The king's success in Rakhine led him to invade Siam (Thailand) in 1785, but his army was defeated.

Bodawpaya's rule in Rakhine was so oppressive that the people revolted in 1794. When the king sent an army to crush the revolt, thousands of refugees fled to British territory, with Myanmar troops crossing the border in pursuit of the rebel leaders. Conditions on the border became so unsettled that in 1795 the British sent a representative to Amarapura, the Myanmar capital, to negotiate with Bodawpaya. The disturbances continued, however, and Bodawpaya's campaigns in Assam added to the tension. Open conflict was narrowly avoided.

Bodawpaya was a fervent Buddhist who proclaimed himself Arimittya (i.e., noble maitreya), the messianic Buddha destined to conquer the world. He persecuted heterodox sects; made drinking, smoking opium, and killing animals punishable by death; and built many pagodas. His most ambitious project was the Mingun pagoda, which, if completed, would have been 500 feet (150 m) high. During his reign, he made a major economic survey of the entire kingdom (1784).



# Myanmar – History

<http://www.myanmars.net/myanmar-history/myanmar-periodical-history.htm>

## Periodical History of Myanmar

There were mainly 3 main well-known empires in the Myanmar History. The **First Myanmar Empire** was created by [King Anawrahta](#) of the Bagan Dynasty (1044-1077 AD). The **Second Myanmar Empire** was created by [King Bayinnaung](#) of the Taungoo Dynasty (1551-1581 AD). The **Third Myanmar Empire** was led by [King Alaungpaya](#) of the Konbaung Dynasty (1752-1760 AD). These three great kings were well-known in the Myanmar history for their bravery and good leadership. In 1885, King Thibaw, Queen Supaya Latt and the royal family were taken to Ratanagiri, India and Myanmar fell under the British Rule. Myanmar became a British Colony from 1885 until 1948. To see the History of Myanmar more clearly, the following Eras are divided.

The Mon Era  
The Pyu Era  
The Bagan Kingdom  
Inwa and Bago Era  
The Taungoo Dynasty  
The Konbaung Dynasty  
War with British

### The Mon Era

Humans lived in the region that is now Myanmar as early as 11,000 years ago. The first identifiable civilization is that of the Mon. The Mon probably began migrating into the area in about 3000 BC, and their first kingdom Suvarnabhumi, was founded around the port of Thaton in about 300 BC. Spoken tradition suggests that they had contact with Buddhism via seafaring as early as the 3rd century BC, though definitely by the 2nd century BC when they received an envoy of monks from Ashoka. Much of the Mon's written records have been destroyed through wars. The Mons blended Indian and Mon culture together in a hybrid of the two civilizations. By the mid-9th century, they had come to dominate all of southern Myanmar.

### The Pyu Era

The Pyu arrived in Myanmar in the 7th century and established city kingdoms at Binnaka, Mongamo, Sri Ksetra, and Halingyi. During this period, Myanmar was part of an overland trade route from China to India. Chinese sources state that the Pyu controlled 18 kingdoms and describe them as a humane and peaceful people. The Pyu capital of Halingyi fell to the kingdom of Nanchao in the mid-9th century, ending their period of dominance.

### The Bagan Kingdom

To the north another group of people, the Burmans began infiltrating the area as well. By 849, they had founded a powerful kingdom centered on the city of Pagan and filled the void left by the Pyu. The kingdom grew in relative isolation until the reign of Anawrahta (1044 - 77) who successfully unified all of Myanmar by defeating the Mon city of Thaton in 1057. Consolidation was accomplished under his successors Kyazittha (1084-1112) and Alaungsithu (1112-1167), so that by the mid-12th century, most of Southeast Asia was under the control of either the Bagan Kingdom or the Khmer empire. The Bagan kingdom went into decline as more land and resources fell into the hands of the powerful sangha (monkhood) and the Mongols threatened from the north. The last true ruler of Bagan, Narathihapate (reigned 1254-87) felt confident in his ability to resist the Mongols and advanced into Yunnan in 1277 to make war upon them. He was thoroughly crushed at the Battle of Ngasaunggyan, and Bagan resistance virtually collapsed. The king was assassinated by his own son, but the dynasty was soon brought to an end in 1289, when the mongols installed a puppet ruler in Myanmar.

### Inwa and Bago

After the collapse of Bagan authority, Myanmar was divided once again. The Burmans had reestablished themselves at the city of Inwa by 1364, where Bagan culture was revived and a great age of Burmese literature ensued. The kingdom lacked easily defendable borders, however, and was overrun by the Shan in 1527.

To the south, the Mons re-established themselves at Bago, and under their king, Dhammazedi (reigned 1472-92), entered a golden age as well, becoming a great center of commerce and Therinwada Buddhism.

### The Taungoo Dynasty

Survivors of the destruction of Inwa eventually established a new kingdom centered on Taungoo in 1531 led by Tabinshwehti (reigned 1531-50), who once again unified most of Myanmar. By this time, the geopolitical situation in Southeast Asia had changed drastically. The Shan gained power in a new kingdom in the North, Ayutthaya (Siam), while the Portuguese had arrived in the south and conquered Malacca. With the coming of European traders, Myanmar was once again an important trading center, and Tabinshwehti moved his capital to Bago due to its commercial value. Tabinshwehti's brother-in-law, Bayinnaung (ruled 1551-81) succeeded to the throne and proceeded on a campaign of conquest conquering several states, including Manipur (1560) and even Ayutthaya (1569). His wars stretched Myanmar to the limits of its resources, however, and both Manipur and Ayutthaya were soon independent once again. Faced with rebellion by several cities and renewed Portuguese incursions, the Taungoo rulers withdrew from southern Myanmar and founded a second dynasty at Inwa. Bayinnaung's grandson, Anaukpetlun, once again reunited Myanmar in 1613 and decisively defeated Portuguese attempts to take over Myanmar. His successor Thalun reestablished the principles of the old Bagan kingdom, but spent too heavily on religious expenditure and paid too little attention to the southern part of his kingdom. Encouraged by the French in India, Bago finally rebelled against Inwa, further weakening the state, which fell in 1752.

## The Konbaung Dynasty

It did not take long for a new dynasty to arise and bring Myanmar to its greatest power yet. A popular Burmese leader named Alaungpaya drove the Bago forces out of northern Myanmar by 1753, and by 1759 he had once again conquered Bago and southern Myanmar while also regaining control of Manipur. He established his capital at Rangoon. In 1760, he briefly conquered Tenasserim and marched on Ayutthaya, but his invasion failed and he was killed. His son Hsinbyushin (ruled 1763-76) returned to Ayutthaya in 1766 and had conquered it before the end of the next year. Even China took notice of Myanmar now, but Hsinbyushin successfully repulsed four Chinese invasions between 1766 and 1769. Another of Alaungpaya's sons, Bodawpaya (ruled 1781-1819), lost Ayutthaya, but added Arakan (1784) and Tenasserim (1793) to the kingdom as well. In January 1824, during the reign of King Bagyidaw (ruled 1819-37), a general named Maha Bandula succeeded in conquering Assam, bringing Myanmar face to face with British interests in India.

## War with Britain

In response to the continued conquests of Myanmar, the British and the Siamese joined forces against Myanmar in 1824. The First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) ended in a British victory, and by the Treaty of Yandaboo, Myanmar lost Assam, Manipur, Arakan, and Tenasserim. As the century wore on, the British began to covet the natural resources of Myanmar and wanted to secure their supply route to Singapore. As a result, they provoked the Second Anglo-Burmese War in 1852, annexing Bago province and renaming it Lower Burma. The war resulted in a revolution in Myanmar, with King Pagin Min (ruled 1846-52) being replaced by his half brother, Mindon Min (ruled 1853-78)). King Mindon tried to modernise the Burmese state and economy to resist British encroachments, and he established a new capital at Mandalay, which he proceeded to fortify. This was not enough to stop the British, however, who claimed that Mindon's son Thibaw Min (ruled 1878-85) was a tyrant intending to side with the French and declared war once again in 1885, conquering the remainder of the country in the Third Anglo-Burmese War.

## During the British Ruling

Britain made all of Burma a province of India in 1886 with the capital at Rangoon. Traditional Myanmar society was drastically altered by the ending of the monarchy and the separation of church and state. Though war officially ended after only a couple of weeks, resistance continued in northern Myanmar until 1890, with the British finally resorting to a systematic destruction of villages and appointment of new officials to finally halt the guerilla activity. The economic nature of society also changed drastically. After the opening of the Suez Canal, the demand for Burmese rice grew and vast tracts of land were opened up for cultivation. However, in order to prepare the new land for cultivation, farmers were forced to borrow money from Indian moneylenders at high interest rates and were often evicted for failure to pay back the loan. Imported Indian labor ended up with most of the jobs, and whole villages became lawless dens full of the unemployed. While the Burmese economy grew, all the power and wealth was in the hands of several British firms and the Burmese people did not reap the rewards.

A new generation of Burmese leaders arose in the early twentieth century from amongst the educated classes that were permitted to go to London to study law. They came away from this experience with the belief that the Burmese situation could be improved through peaceful protest and negotiations. Peaceful strikes in the early 1920s led to a constitutional reform in 1923 that created a partially elected legislature with limited powers, but some people began to feel that the rate of change was not fast enough and the reforms not expansive enough. Some of these dissatisfied students founded a new group



called Thakin (an ironic name as thakin means "master" in the Burmese language, and this was the term that students were required to use when addressing their British professors, whom they were coming to resent). A peasant rebellion led by Saya San that started in 1930 and lasted for two years gave the Thakin their chance. Though they did not actually participate in the rebellion, they did win the trust of the peasants and displaced the older generation of London-educated elites at the head of the Burmese nationalist movement. They staged a strike in 1936, which was notable because it was during this strike that Thakin Nu and Aung San joined the movement. The British separated Burma from India in 1937 and granted the colony a new constitution calling for a fully elected assembly, but many Burmese felt that this was just a ploy to exclude them from any further Indian reforms. Ba Maw served as the first prime minister of Burma, but he was forced out by U Saw in 1939, who served as prime minister from 1940 to 1942.

Burmese nationalists saw the outbreak of World War II as an opportunity to extort concessions from the British in exchange for support in the war effort, but the British would have none of it, issuing an arrest warrant for Aung San, who escaped to China. The Japanese offered him support, and he briefly returned to Burma to enlist the aid of twenty-nine young men who went to Japan with him to receive military training as the so-called "Thirty Comrades." The Japanese quickly declared Burma independent, and when they occupied Bangkok in December 1941, Aung Sang announced the formation of the Burma Independence Army (BIA) in anticipation of Japanese liberation. The Japanese duly moved into Burma in 1942 and disbanded the BIA, forming the smaller Burma Defense Army in its place with Aung Sang still at the head. Ba Naw was declared head of state, and his cabinet included both Aung Sang and Thakin Nu.

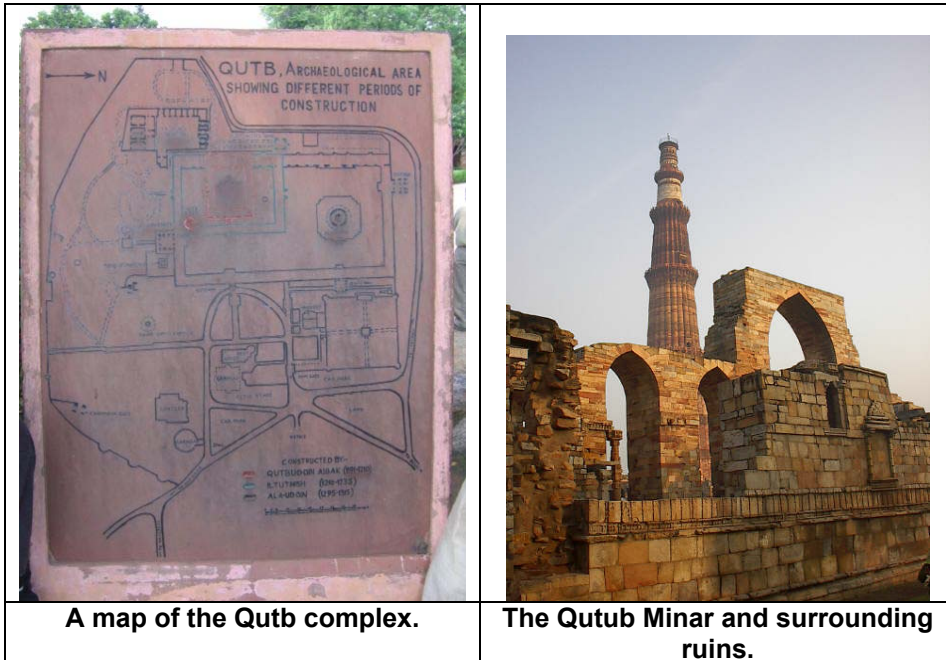
It soon became apparent that Japanese promises of independence were merely a sham and that Ba Maw was just a puppet. As the war turned against the Japanese, they declared Burma a fully sovereign state in 1943, but this was just another facade. Disillusioned, Aung San began negotiations with Lord Mountbatten in October 1943 and officially joined the Allies with his renamed Burma National Army (BNA) in March 1945. During this period, Aung San successfully created a broad-based coalition of political parties called the Anti-Fascist Organization, renamed the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), to govern the country. The Japanese were routed from Burma in May 1945.

The defeat of the Japanese brought a military administration and demands to try Aung San as a traitor for his early collaboration with the Japanese. Lord

Mountbatten realized that this was an impossibility considering San's hold on the BNA and his popular appeal and sent the conciliatory Sir Hubert Rance to head the administration, who was able to win back the trust of both San and the general populace. After the war ended, the former civilian governor returned, and San was duly arrested. This nearly touched off a rebellion, but the British backed off and sent Rance back to restore order and faith. Negotiations began for Burmese independence, which were completed successfully in January 1947. The agreement left both the communist and conservative branches of the AFPFL dissatisfied, however, sending the communists underground and the conservatives into opposition. Another who was dissatisfied by the agreement was U Saw, who felt that Aung San had conceded too much in the negotiations. Consequently, he engineered the assassination of Aung San and nearly his entire cabinet in July. Thakin Nu was asked to form a new cabinet, and he presided over Burmese independence on January 4, 1948.

# Qutb Complex

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qutb\\_complex](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qutb_complex)



The **Qutb complex** is an array of monuments and buildings at Mehrauli in [Delhi, India](#), the most famous of which is the [Qutub Minar](#). This complex was first constructed by [Qutb-ud-din Aybak](#), the first ruler of the [Slave Dynasty](#), and his successor [Iltutmish](#) (aka Altmash) in his new city called the [Qila-Rai-Pithora](#) near [Prithivraj Chauhan](#)'s older city. The complex was added to by many subsequent rulers, including [Iltutmish](#) and [Ala ud din Khilji](#) as well as the [British](#).

The most famous monument situated in the complex is the Qutub Minar; other important constructions in the complex are the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, the Ala-I-Darwaza, the Alai Minar and the iron pillar.

According to John Keay's "History of India," 27 previous Hindu and Jain temples were destroyed and their materials reused to construct the minar and other monuments of the complex.

## Qutub Minar



Main article: [Qutub Minar](#)

Qutub Minar is the tallest brick [minaret](#) in the world, and an important example of [Indo-Islamic Architecture](#). The Qutub Minar is 72.5 metres (239 ft) high. The diameter of the base is 14.3 metres wide while the top floor measures 2.7 metres in diameter. It is listed as a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) along with surrounding buildings and

monuments.

Inspired by the [Minaret of Jam](#) in [Afghanistan](#) and wishing to surpass it, [Qutb-ud-din Aybak](#), the first Muslim ruler of Delhi, commenced construction of the Qutub Minar in [1193](#); but could only complete its basement. His successor, [Iltutmish](#), added three more stories and, in [1368](#), [Firuz Shah Tughluq](#) constructed the fifth and the last story. The development of architectural styles from Aibak to Tughlak are quite evident in the minaret. Like earlier towers erected by the [Ghaznavids](#) and [Ghurids](#) in [Afghanistan](#), the Qutub Mahal comprises several superposed flanged and [cylindrical](#) shafts, separated by balconies carried on [Mugarnas](#) corbels. The minaret is made of fluted red [sandstone](#) covered with intricate carvings and verses from the [Qur'an](#). The Qutub Minar is itself built on the ruins of [Lal Kot](#), the [Red Citadel](#) in the city of Dhillika, the capital of the [Jat Tomars](#) and the [Chauhans](#), the last [Hindu](#) rulers of [Delhi](#).

The purpose for building this beautiful monument has been speculated upon, apart from the usual role of a minaret - that of calling people for prayer in a [mosque](#) - in this case the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. Other reasons ascribed to its construction are as a tower of victory, a monument signifying the might of [Islam](#), or a watch tower for defence. Controversy also surrounds the origins for the name of the tower. Many historians believe that the Qutub Minar was named after the first Turkish sultan, Qutb-ud-din Aibak but others contend that





**At 72.5 metres high, the Qutub Minar is the tallest brick [minaret](#) in the world.**

construction was abandoned, however, after the completion of the 24.5 meter high first storey; soon after death of Ala-ud-din. The first story of the Alai Minar still stands today.

## Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque

Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque (Might of [Islam](#)) (also known as the *Qutb Mosque* or the *Great Mosque of Delhi*) was built by [Qutb-ud-din Aybak](#), founder of the [Mamluk](#) or [Slave dynasty](#). The mosque construction started in the 1190s when Aibak was the commander of [Muhammad Ghori's garrison](#) occupied [Delhi](#). The mosque is said to be built by the parts taken by destruction of twenty-seven [Hindu](#) and [Jain temples](#). It was the first mosque built in Delhi after the Islamic conquest of India and the best surviving example of Ghurid's architecture.

it was named in honour of [Khwaja Qutb-ud-din Bakhtiar Kaki](#), a saint from [Baghdad](#) who came to live in India who was greatly venerated by Akhbar.

Expansion of the mosque continued after the death of Qutub. His successor [Iltutmish](#) extended the original prayer hall screen by three more arches. By the time of Iltutmish, the Mamluk empire had stabilized enough that the Sultan could replace most of his conscripted Hindu masons with Muslims. This explains why the arches added under Iltutmish are stylistically more Islamic than the ones erected under Qutb's rule.

## Alai Minar

[Ala ud din Khilji](#) started building the Alai Minar, which was conceived to be two times higher than Qutub Minar. The



**The incomplete Alai Minar.**



**Many types of structure still stand in the complex.**

The mosque is in ruins today but indigenous corbelled arches, floral [motifs](#), and geometric patterns can be seen among the Islamic architectural structures.

To the west of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque is the tomb of Iltutmish which was built by the monarch in 1235. The construction of this [mausoleum](#) clearly represented a departure from the Hindu custom of cremating the dead.

## Ala-I-Darwaza

The Ala-I-Darwaza is a magnificent [gateway](#) in the complex. The gateway was built by the first [Khilji](#) sultan of Delhi, [Ala ud din Khilji](#). The gateway is decorated with inlaid marble decorations, latticed stone screens and showcases the remarkable craftsmanship of the [Turkish](#) artisans who worked on it.

## Iron pillar

*Main article:* [Delhi iron pillar](#)

The iron pillar is one of the world's foremost metallurgical curiosities. The pillar, almost seven metres high and weighing more than six tonnes, was erected by Chandragupta II Vikramaditya (375–414 AD), (interpretation based on careful analysis of archer type Gupta gold coins) of the [Gupta dynasty](#) that ruled northern India 320–540. The pillar, with an idol of [Garuda](#) at the top, was originally located at a place called Vishnupadagiri (meaning "Vishnu-footprint-hill"), identified as modern Udayagiri, situated in the close vicinity of Besnagar, Vidisha and Sanchi, towns located about 50 kilometres east of Bhopal, in central India. Vishnupadagiri is located on the Tropic of Cancer and, therefore,



was a centre of astronomical studies during the Gupta period. The Iron Pillar served an important astronomical function, in its original site; its early morning shadow fell in the direction of the foot of Anantasayain Vishnu (in one of the panels at Udayagiri) only in the time around summer solstice (June 21). The creation and development of the Udayagiri site appears to have been clearly guided by a highly developed astronomical knowledge. Therefore, the Udayagiri site, in general, and the Iron Pillar location in particular, provide firm evidence for the astronomical knowledge in India around 400 AD.

It is the only piece of the [Hindu](#) temple remaining, which stood there before being destroyed by [Qutb-ud-din Aybak](#) to build the Qutub Minar and Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. Qutub built around it when he constructed the mosque.

The pillar bears an inscription which states that it was erected as a flagstaff in honour of the [Hindu](#) god, [Vishnu](#), and in the memory of the Gupta King [Chandragupta II](#) (375–413). Made up of 98% [wrought iron](#) of pure quality, it is

23 feet 8 inches (7.21 m) high and has a diameter of 16 inches (0.41 m). Also, it was confirmed that the temperatures required to form such kind of pillars cannot be achieved by combustion of coal. The pillar is a testament to the high level of skill achieved by ancient Indian iron smiths in the extraction and processing of iron.

It has attracted the attention of [archaeologists](#) and [metallurgists](#) as it has withstood [corrosion](#) for the last 1600 years, despite harsh weather. Its unusually good corrosion resistance appears to be due to a high phosphorus content, which together with favorable local weather conditions promotes the formation of a solid protective passivation layer of iron oxides and phosphates, rather than the non-protective, cracked rust layer that develops on most ironwork.

A fence was erected around the pillar due to the popularity of a tradition that considered good luck if you could stand with your back to the pillar and make your hands meet behind it.

[\[edit\]](#) See also

[Indian architecture](#)

[Islamic architecture](#)

[\[edit\]](#) External links

[Entry in the UNESCO World Heritage Site List](#)

[Quwwat Al-Islam Mosque](#)

[Corrosion resistance of Delhi iron pillar](#)

[Nondestructive evaluation of the Delhi iron pillar](#) *Current Science*, Indian Academy of Sciences, Vol. 88, No. 12, 25 June 2005 (PDF)

[Photo gallery of the Qutb complex](#)

## Gallery





**The Qutub Minar's size makes it visible from far around.**



**There is a wide range of architecture in the complex, some more ornate than others.**



**Wildlife thrives in the ruins.**



**Tourists flock to the complex daily.**



**Open areas such as this are rarely free of visitors now.**



**Some areas of the complex contain few structures still standing.**



**Parts of the complex are reminiscent of a nature reserve, with no buildings around.**



**The Qutb complex is home to many birds, such as these pigeons.**



# Varanasi

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varanasi>

**Vārāṇasī** [pronunciation](#) ([help](#)·[info](#)) (**Hindī**: वाराणसी, **Urdū**: وارناںسی, **IPA**: [vəɾənəsɪ]), also known as *Benares*, *Banaras*, or *Benaras* (**Hindī**: बनारस, **Urdū**: بنارس, *Banāras*; **IPA**: [bənənəs]), or *Kashi* or *Kasi* (**Hindī**: काशी *Kāśī*), is a famous [Hindu holy city](#) situated on the banks of the river [Ganges \(Ganga\)](#) in the [Indian](#) state of [Uttar Pradesh](#). It is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world, dating back thousands of years and being contemporaneous with [Sumer](#). In Rig-Veda, early periods mentioning Mandals like 6,3,7, Early I mentions Kasi. It is often also referred to as *city of temples and learning*".

The culture of Varanasi is deeply associated with the river Ganga and its religious importance. The city has been a cultural and religious center in [northern India](#) for thousands of years. Varanasi has its own style of classical [Hindustani music](#), and has produced prominent musicians, philosophers, poets, and writers in [Indian history](#), including [Tulsidas](#), [Kabir](#), [Munshi Premchand](#), [Jaishankar Prasad](#), [Pandit Ravi Shankar](#), and Ustad [Bismillah Khan](#). The city has its own dialect of [Hindi](#). Varanasi is also the home of [Banaras Hindu University](#).

## Name

The official name of **Vārāṇasī** is first attested in the [Mahabharata](#), and explained as derived from a [dvandva](#) compound of *varaṇā* and *asī*, the [Varuna River](#), to the north, and the [Assi River](#), to the south, both tributaries of the Ganges. The name Varanasi was spelt *Baranasi* in [Pali](#), which ultimately gave birth to the name *Banaras*. "Banaras" is the Prakrit form of the Sanskrit "Varanasi". The different spellings such as **Benares** and **Benaras** were in active use during the British regime in India, but these forms of the name are now deprecated. The name **Banaras** is still widely used.

Another theory about the origin of the name suggests that the river Varuna itself was called Varanasi in the old times, thus the name of the city. This is generally disregarded by historians though there may be some earlier texts suggesting it to be so.

In literature and scripture, the city is often referred to poetically as Kashi, "the luminous"; an allusion to the city's historical status as a center of learning, literature, and culture.

The city is very commonly referred to as "city of temples," "holy city of India," "religious capital of India," and "city of learning." It is also called "cultural capital of India."

## History



Painting of Benares in 1890.

The information as to how and from whom the city was founded is still unknown. According to legend, the city was founded by the [Hindu](#) deity [Shiva](#). The "jyotirlinga" named Vishweshwara or Vishwanatha is the presiding deity of Varanasi, making

Varanasi one of the eight most sacred places of pilgrimage for the Hindus.

Many references to the city of Varanasi are found in many ancient texts, leading to more mystery. It has been suggested that the city is as old as 5000 years old<sup>[\[citation needed\]](#)</sup>, though other claims may push the date further into history. Some believe that Varanasi is the [oldest continually inhabited city in the world](#).

Varanasi was a commercial and industrial centre famous for its muslin and silk fabrics, perfumes, ivory works, and sculpture. During the time of [Gautama Buddha](#) ([born circa 567 BCE](#)), Varanasi was the capital of the [kingdom of Kashi](#). Buddha gave his first sermon at the nearby town of [Sarnath](#). The city remained a centre of religious, educational, and artistic activities as attested by the celebrated Chinese traveler [Xuanzang](#), who also said that the city extended for about 5 km along the western bank of the Ganges.

After the Muslim occupation, Varanasi subsequently declined during the following centuries. A symbol of Hinduism, the city was pillaged and destroyed several times by the Muslims, first by the hordes of [Mahmud of Ghazni](#) in [1033 CE](#), all Hindu temples being destroyed. The material was used to build mosques. Although some relief was brought by Mughal emperor [Akbar](#) in the start of 16th century CE, another destruction was led by the Mughal emperor [Aurangzeb](#) in end of the 16th century CE, who renamed the city Mohammadâbâd. In these years of Muslim rule, learned scholars fled to other parts of the country. Later the [Marathas](#) came to rescue the city.

Varanasi became an independent kingdom in the 18th century CE, and under subsequent British rule it remained a commercial and religious centre. In 1910 CE the British made Varanasi a new Indian state, with Ramnagar as headquarters but with no jurisdiction over the city of Varanasi. Kashi Naresh (Maharaja of Kashi) still resides in the fort of Ramnagar.



**Varanasi (Benares) in 1922.**

It is also said that [Ayurveda](#) was originated at Varanasi. References to Varanasi can be found in age-old Indian scriptures and hymns. One such reference is found in one of the hymns written by [Sri Veda Vyasa](#):

*Ganga-taranga-ramaneeya-jataakalaapam,  
Gauri-nirantara-vibhushita- vaamabhaagam.*

*Narayanapriyam-Ananga-madaapahaaram,  
Varanasi -pura-patim bhaja Vishwanatham.*

Famous American writer [Mark Twain](#) once wrote, "Benares is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together!"

## Geography

The city of Varanasi is located in the middle Ganga valley of North India, in the Eastern part of the state of Uttar Pradesh, along the left crescent-shaped bank of the Ganga river. The Varanasi City is the district headquarters of the [Varanasi district](#). The "Varanasi Urban Agglomeration" — an agglomeration of seven urban sub-units — covers an area of 112.26 [km<sup>2</sup>](#) (approximately 43 [mi<sup>2</sup>](#)).<sup>[8]</sup> The urban agglomeration is stretched between 82° 56'E - 83° 03'E and 25° 14'N - 25° 23.5'N. Being located in broad plain of [North India](#), (also called as [Gangetic plains](#)), the land can be very much called as plain. Due to yearly low level floods in river, the soil is repeatedly replenished and hence is very productive for agriculture for most of the part of the city.

On a local level though, Varanasi is located on a higher ground between rivers Ganga and Varuna, the mean elevation being 80.71 [m](#). The main land is relatively stony, which with the absence of small distributaries and canals, provides a continuous and relatively dry land, which was perfect for settling down in the ancient times.

It is often difficult to suggest the original geography of Varanasi, due to conflicts between descriptions provided in old texts and city's current status. It is often said that Varanasi is situated between the two confluences: one of Ganga and Varuna and other of Ganga and river Assi. The statement gets its weight from the fact that the distance between these two confluences is around 2.5 miles, and a round trip to between these two places is considered holy by [Hindus](#), and is called *Pancha-kroshi Yatra* (the five mile journey).

On the contrary, though Varuna and Ganga do exist as rivers, Assi also exists but only as a [nullah](#). Also, there is no evidence that Assi was ever a big river.

## Climate

Varanasi has a humid subtropical climate with high variation between [summer](#) and [winter](#) temperatures. Summers are long, from early April till October, with



the monsoon season in between. Cold waves from the [Himalayan](#) region dip temperatures across the city in the winter from December to February. The average temperature is 32 °C–46 °C (90 °F–115 °F) in the summer; 5 °C–15 °C (41 °F–59 °F) in the winter. The average annual rainfall is 1110 [mm](#) (44 [in](#)). Fog is common in winter while hot dry winds called [loo](#) blow in summer. The city is relatively free from the [air pollution](#). Recently due to water pollution, making of dams, and increase in temperature due to global warming etc., the water of river has gone significantly down and small portions of land can be seen in the middle of the river.

## Economy

Varanasi has several small cottage industries, including [Silk sari](#) making, the production of textiles such as hand-woven carpets, and handicrafts. The *Banarasi Pan* (betel leaves) and *Banarasi Khoa* (a milk product, somewhat similar to cheese) sweets are famous, and the related small-scale industries employ many people. [Indian Railways](#) runs a major diesel locomotive factory in Varanasi, [Diesel Locomotive Works](#) (DLW).

## Demographics

The population of Varanasi urban agglomeration in 2001 was 1,371,749; the sex ratio was 879 females every 1000 males. However, the area under [Varanasi Municipal Corporation](#) has a population of 1,100,748<sup>[12]</sup> with the sex ratio being 883 females for every 1000 males. The literacy rate in the urban agglomeration is 61.5% while that in the municipal corporation area is 61%.<sup>[12]</sup> Approximately 138,000 people in the municipal area live in slums. The crime rate in the city in 2004 was 128.5 per 100,000 which is higher than Uttar Pradesh rate of 73.2 but lower than the national rate of 168.8.

## Transport

[Auto Rickshaw](#) and [Rickshaw](#) are the most widely available [public transport](#) within Varanasi. In outer regions of the city, mini-buses are common. Small boats and small [steamers](#) are used to cross the river Ganga.

Varanasi is well connected by air, rail and buses with all the important places of India. Its distance from [Delhi](#) is about 700 kms. The airport is about 25 [km](#) from the city center.



A typical rickshaw

[Auto Rickshaw](#) and [Rickshaw](#) are the most widely available [public transport](#) within Varanasi. In outer regions of the city, mini-buses are common. Small boats and small [steamers](#) are used to cross the river Ganga.

Varanasi is well connected by air, rail and buses with all the important places of India. Its distance from [Delhi](#) is about 700 kms. The airport is about 25 [km](#) from the city center.

One of the major factors for sustainment of Varanasi for such a long time as an inhabited city, is its effective transport between different cities. From ancient times the city was connected to cities like [Taxila](#), [Gazipur](#), [Pataliputra](#), [Vaishali](#), [Ayodhya](#), [Gorakhpur](#), [Agra](#) etc.

The city was connected through a single road from Taxila going through Pataliputra during [Mauryan empire](#). This road was later renovated and extended by [Sher Shah Suri](#) during [16th century](#), which was later to be known as the famous [Grand Trunk Road](#).

## Civic administration and utility services

Varanasi is governed by a number of bodies, the prime being the [Varanasi Nagar Nigam](#) (Municipal Corporation) and [Varanasi Development Authority](#), which is responsible for the master planning of the city. Water supply and sewage system is maintained by Jal Nigam, a subsidiary of Nagar Nigam. Power supply is by the [Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited](#). The city produces about 350 million litres per day of sewer and 425 tonnes per day of solid waste. The solid wastes are disposed in one landfill site. A huge amount of sewer flows into the river Ganga daily. Nagar Nigam also runs a bus service in the city and suburban areas. The city is within the Varanasi range of Varanasi zone of [Uttar Pradesh Police](#). A Special [Superintendent of Police](#) is the highest ranking police officer in the city. The city constitutes one parliamentary constituency. [Indian National Congress](#) won the constituency in [Indian general election, 2004](#).

## People and culture

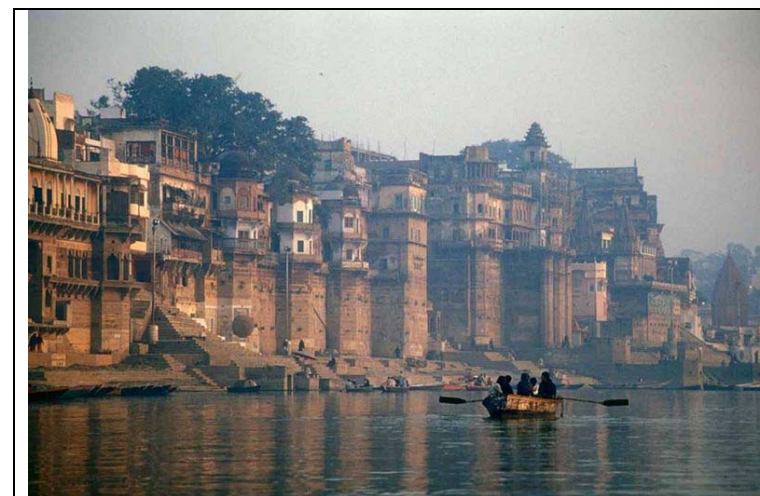
Regions near the banks of river Ganga are extremely crowded and house several Hindu temples, narrow winding lanes and road-side shops. The main residential areas of Varanasi (especially for the middle and upper classes) are situated in regions far from the [ghats](#); they are more spacious and less polluted. Such a place in an Indian city is called a housing colony.

## Holy city

Varanasi is said to be the most holy city in Hinduism. It is considered as the most sacred place of pilgrimage for Hindus irrespective of [denomination](#). More than 1,000,000 pilgrims visit the city each year.

Varanasi is the site of the holy shrine of [Kashi Vishwanath](#) (an aspect of Lord Shiva), one of the twelve revered [Jyotirlingas](#) of the Lord Shiva.

It is believed by Hindus that bathing in the river Ganga results in remission of sins and that dying in the holy city of Kashi (Varanasi) circumvents [rebirth](#).



Situated on the banks of river Ganga, Varanasi attracts thousands of Hindu pilgrims every year.



People performing Hindu ceremony at one of the ghats of Varanasi

This holy city is adored as one of the [Shakti Peethas](#) where Divine Mother [Sati](#)'s earring fell and devotees believe that therein stands the present [Vishalakshi](#) Temple.



In the residential neighborhood of the city lies Sarnath, the site of the deer park where Gautama Buddha is said to have given his first sermon about the basic principles of [Buddhism](#). It is one of the four pilgrimage sites designated by Gautama Buddha, the other three being [Kushinagar](#), [Bodh Gaya](#), and [Lumbini](#). Here the [Dhamek Stupa](#) is a impressive structure marking the spot where the [Buddha](#) gave his first sermon. The [Dharmarajika Stupa](#) is one of the few [pre-Ashokan](#) stupas remaining, although only the foundations remain. Also remaining is the [Chaukhandi Stupa](#) commemorating the spot where the Buddha met his first disciples, dating back to the fifth century or earlier and later enhanced by the addition of an octagonal tower.

Varanasi is also a pilgrimage place for [Jains](#). It is believed to be the birthplace of [Parshvanatha](#), the twenty-third [Tirthankar](#).

[Vaishnavism](#) and [Shaivism](#) have co-existed in Varanasi harmoniously. The city has also been influenced by Islamic culture.

This explains the continuous tension between communities in the city and the fact that really ancient monuments are few. However, Varanasi has kept its sacred position as the Holy City of Hinduism.

## Temples

Varanasi is a city of temples. Almost every road crossing has a nearby temple. Such small temples are the basis of daily local prayers and other rituals. But there are many large temples too, erected at different times through out the history of Varanasi.

[Kashi Vishwanath Temple](#), also called **Golden Temple**, which in its present shape was built in 1780 by Maharani [Ahilyabai Holkar](#) of [Indore](#), is located on the outskirts of the Ganga. This temple makes Varanasi a place of great religious importance to the Hindus, as Vishweshwara or Vishwanatha, the aforementioned Jyotirlinga of the Lord Shiva is enshrined here. It is said that a single view of Vishwanatha Jyotirlinga is considered to merit more than that of other jyotirlingas. A [Naubatkhana](#) was built up in front of the Temple by the collector Mohammed Ibrahim Khan at the instance of Governor General [Warren Hastings](#) in 1785. In 1839, Punjab Kesari [Maharaja Ranjeet Singh](#), the ruler of [Punjab](#) donated gold to cover the two domes of the temple. On January 28, 1983 the Temple was taken over by the government of [Uttar Pradesh](#) and its management was transferred to a trust with Late His Highness Maharaja Dr.

Vibhuti Narayan Singh, then Kashi Naresh, as president and an executive committee with Divisional Commissioner as chairman.

The temple was once destroyed by Aurangzeb who built a mosque on it. It was later resurrected at a location near the mosque, and is many times a cause of local strain among Hindus and Muslims.



**Red coloured Durga Temple**

not the inner sanctum. The father of Bharat Ratna Ustad Bismillah Khan was the official Shehnai player at the temple.

**Durga Temple**, also called **Monkey Temple**, was built at some point of time in 18th century by a [Bengali Maharani](#). The temple got its name as 'Monkey temple' because of the presence of large number of monkeys in the temple. According to legends, the present statue of Goddess Durga was not made by man but appeared on its own in the temple. Thousands of Hindu devotees visit the [Durga temple](#) during [Navratri](#) and other auspicious occasions. Non-Hindus can enter the courtyard of the Durga Temple but

The architecture is of Nagara Style, which is typical of North India. The temple is accompanied by a rectangular tank of water called Durga Kund. The temple has multi-tiered spires and is stained red with ochre, signifying the red colour of Durga. The Kund was earlier connected to the river itself thus refreshing the water. This tunnel was later closed, leading to locked water which is replenished only by rain or drainage from the Temple. Every year on the occasion of [Nag panchami](#), the act of depicting Lord [Vishnu](#) reclining on the coiled-up Shesha Naga, with his consort Lakshmi, seated at his feet; the assemblage resting on the "Kshira Sagar" is repeated in the Kund.

**(New) Vishwanath Temple**, also called **Birla Temple** was built by Raja Birla and the [Birla family of industrialists](#). It was built as a replica of the old Kashi Vishwanath Temple. The temple was planned by [Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya](#), who wanted the temple to stand for national revival. The temple is open to people from all castes and religions.

## Art

A holy city, Varanasi does not take a backseat when it comes to fine arts and literature. Great Indian writers have lived in this city from [Kabir](#) and [Tulsidas](#) to [Bharatendu Harishchandra](#), [Jayshankar Prasad](#), [Hazari Prasad Dwivedi](#) and some have been named after the city, e.g. [Kashi Nath Singh](#).

Art lovers and historians like Rai Krishnadas, his son Prof. [Anand Krishna](#), musicians like Pt. [Omkarnath Thakur](#), Ustad [Bismillah Khan](#), Dagar Brothers, [Siddheshwari Devi](#), Dr. [Lalmani Misra](#), [Dr. N. Rajam](#), Pt. [Anokhelal](#), Pt. [Samta Prasad](#), [Kanth Maharaj](#) and numerous others have kept the city alive to the spiritual aspect of fine arts apart from their ability to entertain. Numerous festivals are celebrated that preserve traditional styles of classical and folk culture. All night, open music concerts like ones organised at [Sankat Mochan Temple](#), [Hori](#), [Kajri](#) and [Chaiti](#) Mela, [Budwa Mangal](#), are annual features that draw connoisseurs from all over.

## Education

*Main article:* [Education in India](#)

Varanasi's schools are either run by the state government or by private (many of which are religious) organisations. Schools mainly use [English](#) or [Hindi](#) as the [medium of instruction](#). The schools are affiliated with the [Indian Certificate of Secondary Education \(ICSE\)](#), the [Central Board for Secondary Education](#)



**Raja Jey Singh's observatory. From a 19th century photograph.**

from one of three streams — [liberal arts](#), [commerce](#), or [science](#), though vocational streams are also available. Upon completing the required coursework, students may enrol in general or professional degree programmes.

Varanasi is the site of three public universities. [Banaras Hindu University](#), which includes Institute of Technology ([IT-BHU](#)), is among the top 3 largest residential universities in the world having more than 128 independent teaching departments. [Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth University](#) and [Sampoornanand Sanskrit University](#) are the other two universities. [Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies](#) at [Sarnath](#) is a [deemed university](#) with a preference for the traditional [Tibetan](#) method of teaching within a framework of modern universities. Varanasi is also noted for many private and public institutes that provide Hindu religious teaching. Since ancient times people have been coming to Varanasi to learn philosophy, [Sanskrit](#), [astrology](#), social science and religious teachings. In Indian tradition, Varanasi is often called "Sarva Vidya Ki Rajdhani" (capital of knowledge).

## Tourism

Probably due to its unique culture, Varanasi is a major tourist destination for foreign tourists in India. A number of 3 and 4 [star](#) hotels are present in the city. All sort of cuisines are available mostly as street food due to rich and

[\(CBSE\)](#), or the [U.P. Board of High School & Intermediate Education](#). Under the [10+2+3 plan](#), after completing their secondary education, students typically enrol in a 2 year [junior college](#) (also known as a pre-university) or in schools with a higher secondary facility. Students usually choose



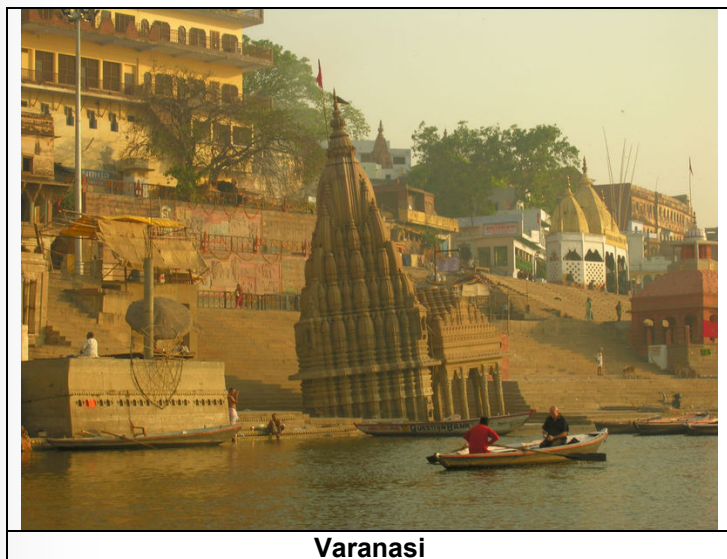
hospitable culture of Varanasi. Guided boat tours on the Ganges are available, as are candid visits to many of the area attractions.

## Terrorist Acts in Varanasi

Main article: [2006 Varanasi bombings](#)

On 7th March, 2006, terrorists planted as many as four explosive devices in Varanasi. Around 20 people were reported killed, and many were injured. One of the bombs was planted in the Sankat Mochan Temple, a shrine dedicated to Lord [Hanuman](#), while another was planted on a platform of the Varanasi Cantonment Railway Station, the main railway station in the city. An unknown Islamic group called Lashkar-e-Kahab claimed responsibility for the terror attacks but investigation led to the Pakistani terrorist outfit Lashkar-E-Tayyaba.

## See also



[Kashi Vishwanath Temple](#)

[Holy cities](#)

[Most holy place](#)

[Vishnu Sarma](#), the author of [Panchatantra](#)

[Ganga Pollution](#)

[Sankat Mochan Hanuman Temple](#)

[Kashi Mutt](#)

[Dhamek Stupa](#) at [Sarnath](#)

[Chaukhandi Stupa](#) at [Sarnath](#)

[edit] External links

[Distric Varanasi Official Website](#) - Website on Varanasi of the National Informatics Centre, Govt. of India

[Varanasi on Department of Tourism - Uttar Pradesh website](#)

[Information on Varanasi from templenet.com](#)

[eVaranasi \(Banaras\)](#) Holy City of India

[Indian temple city hit by blasts](#)

[The religious capital of Hinduism](#)

[Varanasi travel guide](#) from [Wikitravel](#)

[Current time and weather in Varanasi](#)

[Divine Signs in Varanasi](#)

## Notes

^ [a](#) [b](#) [Oldest City in the World By Richard Lannoy](#)

^ <http://voi.org/books/rig/ch4.htm> THE RIGVEDA - A Historical Analysis by SHRIKANT G. TALAGERI

^ [Brief introduction of Varanasi on Banaras Hindu University homepage](#)

^ [Cunningham, Alexander](#) (1924). *Ancient Geography of India*. Munshirm Manoharlal Pub Pvt Ltd, 131-140. [ISBN 81-215-1064-3](#).

^ [History of India](#)

^ [Life and Pilgrimage of Xuanzang](#), Author: M. Julian, Page: 6, 133, 2, 354

^ [\[1\]](#) [Varanasi Vaibhav](#) - A website maintained by Department of Information Technology, [Government of India](#)

^ [a](#) [b](#) Singh, Rana P.B.. [Varanasi as Heritage City \(India\) on the scale the UNESCO World Heritage List: From Contestation to Conservation \(PDF\)](#). *EASAS papers*. Swedish South Asian Studies Network. Retrieved on [2006-08-18](#).

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<sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> <sup>c</sup> [Population, Population in the age group 0–6 and literates by sex - Urban Agglomeration/Town: 2001](#) (PDF). *Census of India 2001 (Provisional)* 53-54. Office of the Registrar General, India. Retrieved on [2006-08-17](#).

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<sup>^</sup> Bhargava, Gopal. "[Scheme for Varanasi](#)", *The Tribune*.

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<sup>^</sup> [Status of landfill sites in 59 cities](#). *Management of municipal solid wastes*. Planning Division, Central Pollution Control Board. Retrieved on [2006-08-18](#).

<sup>^</sup> [UP Police Is divided into following zines consisting ranges & districts](#). *UP Police. NIC*. Retrieved on [2006-08-18](#).

<sup>^</sup> [Vishwanath Temple - Official website of Varanasi](#)

<sup>^</sup> [\[2\] A brief write-up about the New Vishwanath Temple](#)

<sup>^</sup> [Banaras Hindu University](#). SurfIndia. Retrieved on [2006-08-18](#).

<sup>^</sup> [Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies](#). Varanasi City. Retrieved on [2006-08-18](#).

<sup>^</sup> [Educational Institutes in Varanasi](#). Varanasi City. Retrieved on [2006-08-18](#).

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Singh, Rana P.B. [Varanasi as Heritage City \(India\) on the scale the UNESCO World Heritage List: From Contestation to Conservation](#). Swedish South Asian Studies Network.

### Hindu Holy Cities in India



[Allahabad](#) • [Ayodhya](#) • [Badrinath](#) • [Dharmasthala](#) • [Dwarka](#) • [Gaya](#) • [Guruvayur](#) • [Haridwar](#) • [Hrishikesh](#) • [Kalahasti](#) • [Kanchipuram](#) • [Kedarnath](#) • [Kollur](#) • [Mathura](#)

• [Mayapur](#) • [Nashik](#) • [Nathdwara](#) • [Puri](#) • [Rameswaram](#) • [Sabarimala](#) • [Somnath](#) • [Sringeri](#) • [Srirangam](#) • [Tirumala - Tirupati](#) • [Ujjain](#) • **Varanasi** • [Vrindavan](#)

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### Divisions

[Agra](#) • [Allahabad](#) • [Azamgarh](#) • [Bareilly](#) • [Basti](#) • [Chitrakoot](#) • [Devipatan](#) • [Faizabad](#) • [Gorakhpur](#) • [Jhansi](#) • [Kanpur](#) • [Lucknow](#) • [Mirzapur](#) • [Moradabad](#) • [Saharanpur](#) • [Varanasi](#) •

### Districts

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### Major cities

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