



T: 020 8901 7630
E: enquiries@soulofindia.com

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ESCORTED GROUP TOURS

In the Footsteps of St...
Roots of Meditation...
A Cultural, Social, Spiritual...
Encountering Religions
Sikhism & Sikh Shrines...
A Pilgrimage to South India
Namaste India
The Open Secret

» Escorted Tours

The Open Secret

Group Tour led by Claude Diolosa and Ina Diolosa

14 - 30 November 2015

16 nights - 17 days £1,545 / US\$2,503



Claude and Ina Diolosa, French, living in Assisi/Italy, naturopaths and teachers of Traditional Chinese Medicine, are students of His Holiness the XVII Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje. The 17th Karmapa currently lives in Dharamsala and is the head of the Karma Kagyu lineage. Claude was authorized by HH Karmapa and other masters of the Kagyu lineage to teach and explain the meditation of Medicine Buddha - Sangye Menla.

The Medicine Buddha (Sangye Menla) combines relative medical knowledge with precise instructions about the nature of mind. This precious doctrine was given by the Medicine Buddha (Sangye Menla) itself and this meditation is practiced worldwide by many therapists, traditional doctors and yogis.

We as dharma teachers and therapists of TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) see it as our task to unify skillful means and the path of wisdom in order to fulfill the two aims. It gives us great pleasure to see how many medical students and therapists attend the annual retreats in Assisi and other countries in Europe.

Relative medical skillful means are important but limited. Despite extensive knowledge, our human form is ephemeral and the timing of disease and death is uncertain. Therefore, to recognize the unborn and non-conceptual nature of the mind, is the best way to help others.

It is not our intention to make retreat participants "Buddhists" — all concepts must eventually be abandoned! Also, all forms of "ism" is part of it. The psychological death is a condition for the free unfolding of the unborn mind!

There are no prerequisites knowledge for participation in a retreat. But it is essential to have a deep devotion in one's timeless self and an intimate yearning for truth. If we do not have this basic trust, we remain trapped in the diverse phenomena of life and its futility and meditation will be worthless.

Direct meditation on the meditator is the highest practice and not maintaining an ego illusion or the grasping to an individual "spiritual self" through rituals, concentration, mantras and prayers. All kinds of practices which maintain or reinforce the sense of duality are doomed to fail.

We have chosen to live in Assisi, because the timeless presence of Saint Francis and Saint Claire is still present there. At this blessed christian place the timeless and unborn spirit is still alive. Everyone who knows this enchanting place can attest how rewarding and beneficial it is to pray and meditate there.

We would like to thank our beloved teacher the XVII Karmapa for his timeless presence, his blessing and encouragement.

Optional Extension of Golden Triangle

The Itinerary

Delhi - Bodhgaya - Nalanda - Rajgir - Varanasi - Sarnath - Dharamsala - Delhi

**Nov 14
Saturday**

To Delhi

Departure from your home country for Delhi.

**Nov 15
Sunday**

Delhi

Meeting, assistance on arrival and transfer by private coach to Hotel Shangrila for two nights.

An afternoon orientation tour of Delhi. Visit of Old Delhi, a rickshaw ride to **Jama Masjid** — India's largest Mosque, followed by visit to **Humayun's Tomb** built in 16th Century and a precursor to the Taj Mahal and **Qutub Minar** — the oldest Muslim monument in India. It is a 72 meters high tower believed to be the most perfect tower of the Persian world. The iron pillar in the same complex has not rusted over 1500 years.

Delhi has seen the rise and fall of many empires and each dynasty of Kings has left behind monuments and memories to commemorate the grandeur of bygone days. Very few cities in the world offer such diversity in architectural styles as Delhi. The Old city of Delhi today stands as an epitome of the whole history of Indo-Islamic architecture.

**Nov 16
Monday**

Delhi

After breakfast, visit Tibbia and Unani College in Delhi for a meeting/conference (TBC).

Afternoon at leisure or visit of the Shrine of Sufi Saint, **Hazrat Nizam-ud-din**, who believed in growing closer to God through renunciation of the world and service to humanity.

**Nov 17
Tuesday**

To Bodhgaya

Morning at leisure to rest and relax.

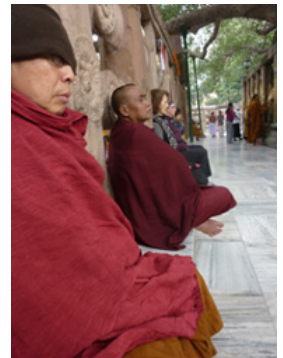
Afternoon transfer to New Delhi railway station for your overnight train to Gaya in First Class air-conditioned sleeper coach. Overnight on board train (Rajdhani Express, departure 1630, arrival 0530). Bodhgaya is the holiest spot of Buddhism is the place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment under the Mahabodhi tree. The tree that stands today is believed to have grown from the original one under which Lord Buddha meditated. For Buddhists, Bodhgaya is the most important of the main four pilgrimage sites related to the life of Gautama Buddha, the other three being Kushinagar, Lumbini, and Sarnath.

**Nov 18
Wednesday**

Bodhgaya

Early morning arrival in Gaya at 0350. Meeting, assistance on arrival and transfer to Mahayana Guest House for 2 nights.

Afternoon visit **Mahabodhi Temple** include tall stone lotuses, figures of Buddha sitting in different postures on the walls, his footprints on the stones and a colossal golden Buddha in the sanctum sanctorum. The **Bodhi Tree**, situated in the premises of the temple, is the one under which Buddha attained illumination.



**Nov 19
Thursday**

Bodhgaya

Day at leisure in Bodhgaya for **Meditation**. Optional visit to **Barabara Caves**.

Every year, millions of Buddhist pilgrims, mainly from Asian countries, flock to Bodhgaya to be inspired, dissipate negative karma and earn merit by visiting the holy site where the Buddha became the **Buddha** ("Enlightened One").

**Nov 20
Friday**

To Nalanda and Rajgir

After breakfast drive to visit Nalanda and Rajgir. Visit archaeological museum which houses the **Nalanda University**. In Rajgir visit **Griddhkuta**, the "Hill of Vultures", where Buddha delivered some of his most famous sermons. On the top of hill can visit **Vishwa Shanti Stupa**. Visit **Saptarni Caves** where first Buddha Council was held which is also the source of Rajgir's hot springs. visit **Venuvana**, first Buddhist monastery ever given to Buddha by King Bimbisara. Overnight stay at Hotel Hokke in Rajgir.



**Nov 21
Saturday**

To Varanasi

Leave Rajgir after breakfast by coach for Ram Nagar (Varanasi). **Boat** transfer from Ramnagar to Hotel. Meeting, assistance on arrival.

Varanasi is the holiest Hindu City sprawling along the banks of river Ganga. With its array of shrines, temples and palaces rising in several tiers from the water's edge, Varanasi is one of the most fascinating cities of the world in the East. It is a city of fairs and festivals (celebrating about 400 of them in a calendar year). Since times immemorial Varanasi has been the seat of learning. It is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, where pilgrims and yogis line the banks of the river Ganges. Check-in at Hotel Ganges View for 3 nights. Evening **Aarti** ceremony at **Sasumedh Ghat**.



**Nov 22
Sunday**

Varanasi and Sarnath

Leave for an early morning boat ride on Ganges River to see meditating sadhus and the life on the ghats of Varanasi. The



people of Varanasi perform yoga asanas, offer flower and incense to river and take a ritual dip.
After breakfast, leave for Sarnath (8 kms from Varanasi) which has the 2000 years old **Buddhist Stupa** and the deer park where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after enlightenment usually referred to a **Dharmachakra**. Pilgrims find the deer park a place of peace and reflection.
Return to Varansi. Evening at leisure.



**Nov 23
Monday**

Varanasi

Meeting, conference at **Rasa Shahtra Institute of Medical Sciences**, Benaras Hindu University (TBC).

**Nov 24
Tuesday**

To Delhi

Morning at leisure. Afternoon transfer to airport to board the flight to Delhi (SpiceJet 119, departure 1530, arrival 1640).
Meeting, assistance on arrival and transfer to Hotel Welcome Dwarka for overnight.

**Nov 25
Wednesday**

To Dharamsala

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to airport to board the flight to Dharamsala in the Himalayan foothills, home to HH Dalai Lama and worldwide centre of Tibetan culture in exile (SpiceJet 2191, departure 1200, arrival 1330).
Meeting, assistance on arrival and transfer to Chonor House for 3 nights.

**Nov 26
Thursday**

Dharamsala

After Breakfast leave for full day monastery visits, adventures in Tibetan culture, opportunity to walk in the forests and foothills of the Himalayas, and a visit to the hermitage where Martin spent 3 years living and studying with his first teacher.

**Nov 27
Friday**

Dharamsala

Day at leisure.

Dharamsala has a spectacular setting along a spur of **Dhauladhar** range. It is the most attractive part of the town that attracts bulk of visitors. Surrounded by forest of Chir pine, rhododendron and Himalayan oak, it is set against a back drop of highest peaks on three sides, with superb view of Kangra valley and Shiwaliks, and of the great granite mountains that almost overhang the town.



**Nov 28
Saturday**

Dharamsala

Day at leisure in Dharamsala. Possible activities...*

- Private audience with HH Karmapa
- Meeting and conference at the Tibetan Medical College
- Visit of Nunery of Tenzin Palmo

* These activities are subject to confirmation for the respective authorities. We will keep you informed of confirmations of these activities.

**Nov 29
Sunday**

To Delhi

Morning at leisure. Afternoon transfer to airport to board the flight to Delhi.
Meeting, assistance on arrival and transfer to Hotel Shangri La for a night stay.

**Nov 30
Monday**

International Departure or Optional Extension to Golden Triangle

Transfer to Delhi International airport for International departure.

Extension to Golden Triangle covering Agra and Jaipur

30 November - 05 December 2015

05 nights - 06 days £545 / US\$883

**Nov 30
Monday**

To Agra

Leave Delhi after breakfast by private car for Agra via the new Taj Express Way. Arrive Agra in the afternoon. Check in at Taj Gateway Hotel for 2 nights stay.
In the afternoon visit **Agra Fort** and the **Tomb of Itimad ud Daulah**.

**Dec 01
Tuesday**

Agra

Sunrise visit of **Taj Mahal**. Return to Hotel for breakfast and a day of leisure. You may wish to visit Taj Mahal again in the afternoon, or visit the interesting local markets of Agra or visit the bear rehabilitation centre near Agra.

**Dec 02
Wednesday**

To Jaipur

Leave Agra after breakfast for sightseeing of the deserted capital city of **Fatehpur Sikri**. Continue your journey to Jaipur and on arrival check in at Shahpura Bagh (Heritage Hotel).

Dec 03 Thursday	Jaipur Visit Amer Fort in the morning and then continue visiting the Pink City of Jaipur including Jantar Mantar (observatory), the City Palace & Museum , and Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds).
Dec 04 Friday	To Delhi After breakfast drive back to Delhi. Overnight at Hotel Welcome Dawarka.
Dec 05 Saturday	International Departure Transfer to Delhi International airport for International departure.

The cost:

Per Person sharing a twin or double room accommodation **£1,545 / US\$2,503**
 Single room supplement **£595 / US\$964**

Extension to Golden Triange:

Per Person sharing a twin or double room accommodation **£545 / US\$883**
 Single room supplement **£186 / US\$301**

The cost includes:

- Internal Flight from Varanasi to Delhi and Delhi to Dharamsala in economy class
- Meals on Half Board basis (Breakfast and dinner). Extension tours are on daily breakfast basis
- Accommodation in a sharing twin or double room or single room with en-suite facilities (Check-in is 1400 hrs and checkout 12 noon. Early check-in late checkouts are subject to availability)
- All arrival/departure transfers, long drives and sightseeing by a chauffeur driven private air-conditioned coach. Extensions tours will be serviced by small coach or private cars.
- Services of a local English-speaking representative for all arrival and departure transfers to assist you at the airports and railway station
- Services of English speaking guide during sightseeing as specified in the itinerary
- Train reservations as shown in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to all monuments during sightseeing as specified in your itinerary
- Mediation, meetings visits with trip directors Mr Claude Diolosa and Mrs Ina Diolosa

The cost does not include:

- International flights to India
- India visa fee. For British passport holders current visa fees is £92.20 per person and we offer a visa handling service for £32.80 per person
- Any expenses of a personal nature like laundry, telephone calls, beverages, gratuities etc.
- Camera fees at monuments and other places of interest
- Travel Insurance

Enquiries: If you have any enquiries about this tour or you need help with international flights to India from your home country please contact us at: enquiries@soulofindia.com

How to Book this Tour:

If you wish to book this tour, please complete the booking form, sign and e-mail it to us. A non-refundable deposit of £200.00 per person is needed at the time of booking. Balance payments will be due 8 weeks before departure. You can make the deposit payment by debit card or electronic transfers to our bank. Credit card payment will be charge at 2% extra. Our Bank details are on the booking form. Bookings are confirmed on first come first served basis. When the tour is full we will take about 5 additional names on the waiting list to replace their booking with any cancellations etc.

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