



Photo trip Proposal: INDIA: Bihar and Sikkim

This trip will give you the opportunity to learn more about photography, interact with the local children and to experience the culture that this beautiful country has to bring!

During this trip you get the unique opportunity to learn the tricks of the trade of photography from Anthony Asael- the founder and executive director of AiA and a spectacular renowned photographer who has had over sixty expositions in ten countries. Anthony has traveled around the world extensively and visited India several times.

100% of benefits from participating to this photo trip will be donated to children project of Art in All of Us (www.artinallofus.org).

Visited Places: Kolkata - Siliguri – Sikkim (Yuksom-Tsokha-Dzongri) –Bihar (Patna-Bodh Gaya)-Kolkata

Day 01: Reach Kolkata (night train to NJP or fly to Bagdogra).

Arrive in the marvelous city of Kolkata. Visit old town and main attraction of the city in function of time of arrival (Kali Temple, Victoria Memorial Hall, Eden Gardens, Belur Math Shrine,...). Calcutta is also a very lively city and is a perfect immersion to India. As many people say, it is the more latino indian city.



A-Sikkim

Day 02: Calcutta – Yuksom - Sachen

Fly from Calcutta to Bagdogra airport. Drive up into the Himalaya towards Yuksom (Sikkim). About 145 km.

We would immediately depart for our first mini trek day in direction of Sachen (2200m). 2 hours walk.



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Day 03: Sachen to Tshoka

After first breakfast in the Himalaya set the trail towards the Tibetan village of Tshoka. It was settle by Tibetan refugees after the Chinese invasion in 1959. It is only a 3 hours hike and therefore we would have time to visit the village and share Tibetan experience.





Day 04: Tsokha – Dzongri

6am start Trek from Tsokha to Dzongri, 9kms., 5 hrs., alt. 4000m. Spend time Dzongri. Overnight at Dzongri camp.



Day 05: Return to Yuksom

Early morning walk to Dzongri top to see the majestic sunrise on Kanchendzonga, the third highest mountain in the world at 8500m and other 7000m+ peaks and walk back to Tshoka-Yuksom.



Day 6: Yuksom

Relaxing day in Yuksom. We can wander around the beautiful setting of Yuksom, visit the colorful market, hike the oldest monastery of Sikkim, or just treat ourself with a good indian massage.... Or do it all ;-)

Day 7: Yuksom to NJP- Train to Patna

B-Bihar

Day 8: Sightseeing in Patna

Patna one of the oldest inhabited places in the world, with a history of 3,000 years. There are numerous stunning archaeological sites in the area.

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We will also try to organize a visit of an orphanage and organize local AiA activities there in the afternoon.

Day 9: Drive to Bodh Gaya – Visit Mahabodhi Temple Complex - In 2002, Mahabodhi Temple, located in Bodh Gaya, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Return to Patna by night.

Day 10: Patna

More sightseeing in Patna and the Ganges area.



Discover also the fascinating Madhubani Art. Madhubani painting is a style of Indian painting, practiced in the Bihar state, and the adjoining parts of Terai in Nepal. Painting is done with fingers, twigs, brushes, nib-pens, and matchsticks, using natural dyes and pigments, and is characterized by eye-catching

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geometrical patterns. There are paintings for each occasion and festival such as birth, marriage, holi, surya shasti, kali puja, Upanayanam (sacred thread ceremony), and durga puja.



Take Sunset Cruise and eat at the new stunning MV Ganga Vihar floating restaurant. If we are luck we can even spot the Ganges dolphins.



Day 11: Fly to Kolkata

Sightseeing in Kolkata and/or orphanage visit



Day 12: Fly out of Kolkata.

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About BIHAR:

The Word "Bihar" has been coined from "Vihara" meaning Buddhist Monasteries. Gautama Buddha attained Enlightenment at BODH GAYA.

The history of the land mass currently known as Bihar is very ancient. In fact, it extends to the very dawn of human civilization. Earliest myths and legends of hinduism the Sanatana (Eternal) Dharma - are associated with Bihar. Sita, the consort of Lord Rama, was a princess of Bihar. She was the daughter of King Janak of Videha. The present districts of Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Samastipur, Madhubani, and Darbhanga, in north-central Bihar, mark this ancient kingdom. The present small township of Sitamarhi is located here. According to legend, the birthplace of Sita is Punaura, located on the west-side of Sitamarhi, the headquarters of the district. Janakpur, the capital of King Janak, and the place where Lord Rama and Sita were married, lies just across the border in Nepal. It is reached via the rail station of Janakapur Road located in the Sitamarhi district, on the Narkatiyaganj - Darbhanga section of the North-Eastern Railway. It is no accident, therefore, that the original author of the Hindu epic - **The Ramayana** - Maharishi Valmiki - lived in Ancient Bihar. Valmikinagar is a small town and a railroad station in the district of West Champaran, close to the railhead of Narkatiyaganj in northwest Bihar. The word Champaran is derived from champa-arnya, or a forest of the fragrant Champa (magnolia) tree.

It was here that Prince Gautam attained enlightenment, became the Buddha- at the present Bodh Gaya- a town in central Bihar; and the great religion of buddhism was born. It is here also that Lord Mahavira, the founder of another great religion, Jainism, was born and attained nirvana (death). That site is located at the present town of pawapuri, some miles to the south east of Patna, the Capital of Bihar., it is here that the tenth and last Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh was born and attained the sainthood of sikhism, that is became a Guru. A lovely and majestic Gurudwara (a temple for Sikhs) built to commemorate his memory - the harmandir- is located in eastern Patna. Known reverentially as the Patna Sahib, it is one of the five holiest places of worship (Takhat) for Sikhs.

The ancient kingdoms of Magadh and of Licchavis, around about 7-8th century B.C., produced rulers who devised a system of administration that truly is progenitor of the modern art of statecraft, and of the linkage of statecraft with economics. Kautilya, the author of Arthashastra, the first treatise of the modern science of Economics, lived here. Also known as Chanakya, he was the wily and canny adviser to the Magadh king, Chandragupta Maurya. As an emissary of Chandragupta Maurya, Chanakya traveled far and wide in pursuit of promoting the interests of the State and dealing with the Greek invaders settled in the northwest of India, along the Indus valley. He succeeded in preventing the further onslaught of the Greeks. Indeed, he brought about amicable co-existence between the Greeks and the Mauryan Empire. Megasthenes, an emissary of Alexander's General, Seleucus Nicator, lived in Pataliputra (ancient name of Patna, the Mauryan capital) around 302 B.C. He left behind a chronicle of life in and around Patliputra. This is the first recorded account by a foreign traveler in India. It describes in vivid terms the grandeur of life in Patliputra, a city established by King Ajatshatru, around 5th Century B.C., at the confluence of the rivers Sone and Ganga.

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About SIKKIM:

Sikkim is located in the Himalayan mountains. The state borders Nepal to the west, Tibet to the north and east, and Bhutan to the east. The Indian state of West Bengal lies to the south. It is traditionally accepted that the Lepchas are the autochthonous tribe of Sikkim. After them came the Bhutias, from Tibet, followed by the Nepalese and finally the Indian business community from the plains. However, before one goes into the ethnic composition of Sikkim, it needs to be said that the Sikkimese, irrespective of the tribe, class or community they belong to, are essentially simple folk. Like most hill-tribes, the Sikkimese are thus far relatively untouched by consumerism. Cliched though it may sound, the Sikkimese truly exemplify how different communities can coexist in peace and mutual. The Sikkimese can be broadly classified into the Lepchas, the Bhutias, the Nepalese and the plainsmen (mostly businessmen from elsewhere in India). Communities, cultures, religions and Customs of different hues intermingle freely here in Sikkim to constitute a homogeneous blend. Hindu temples co-exist with Buddhist monasteries and there are even a few Christian churches, Muslim mosques and Sikh "Gurdwara". Although the Buddhists with monasteries all over the state are the most conspicuous religious group, they are in fact a minority constituting only 28% of the population. The majority, 68% profess Hinduism. The predominant communities are the Lepchas, Bhutias and the Nepalis. In urban areas many plainsmen- Marwaris, Biharis, Bengalis, South Indians, Punjabis- have also settled and they are mostly engaged in business and government service.



Conditions

The price of the trip is of 2990 Euros per person all included (for 2-3 persons). If 4-5 persons are found, the price drops at 2690 per person.

Extra day are possible to organize (in Bihar or Sikkim) at an extra rate of 200 Euros/day.

Prices are based on double occupancy in hotel. Add 30% for single supplement and benefit of single rooms.

50% of the price shall be paid at the inscription and 50% 2 weeks before the start of the trip.

Price includes accommodation, 3 meals/day, and entrances for National Parks, guides, local transportation (4x4, trains, 2 flights), taxes, local guides, and photo classes.

Price does not include international flight, personal expenses, alcohol, insurance, or tips.

The itinerary of the trip and dates could be changed with consultation of all the participants if for reasons beyond our control an activity should be canceled.