



# Renee gets LIGHT ON India

## A few words from Shazar Robins – coordinator of the SAGE journey to India

Renee was my one and only Sage Journey participant... but boy did she make up for being only one!!! She did the work and vision of ten I think... it was amazing having her here and such a benefit to all she worked with and played with. She is a teacher extraordinaire.... Trains teachers and teaches anyone from littlest to biggest... with flair and fun all around.

Not only that she has an eye for things that is very astute and sees in a different way to me which is always useful.

If you are on line check out the testimonial she did for me... it was so great!! <http://youtu.be/Zkr11IB3Ujl>

We laughed and joked and had heaps of fun... some of which is already shared in Facebook but I know that you are not all there so will give you it again... sorry if I bore

those of you who are.

We didn't spend much time in Mumbai initially as we both wanted to get up to the shelter as quickly as possible... so one day was enough for us. Poor Renee... the car, supposedly a nice modern AC car, that was to take us to the Shelter broke down before we were even ten minutes away from the start of our trip... three breakdowns later... our patience was gone and we (well Renee really) demanded a new car and a new driver.

I forgot to tell you that we were already very squashed as we were carrying a ton of curtains with us that had been donated from my friend Maya's house (she had just changed to another colour! To match the bougainvillea that was about to flower on her balcony... mmm... get the picture... J that plus our luggage plus Diwali gifts... mainly

sweets wrapped in wonderful wrappings that definitely didn't like being left in the sun!

So the new car finally arrived... mmm.. AC not so good... decidedly smaller... ho hum... squash



in some more... but we managed to fit in a miraculous way!

Finally about four and a half hours later we arrived at our destination, the driver refused to take us on the rough last part of the track to the shelter, so we had to get in an autorickshaw... I am so pleased that Renee is and was a very flexible lady.

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And off to the new site where Renee was to stay in my sumptuous accommodation... there was quite some laughter when she came to her bed.. to find that actually she was sleeping on a table. A couple of days before some of the boys had proudly brought up a new piece of furniture.. (I had been expecting a table as they said they were making one) and there it was .. a table.. um.. no.. um.. "here is the bed".. they proudly proclaimed..

Right .. so bed it was.. I suppose in hindsight.. I could have taken it myself.. and given Renee my bed.. but really it wasn't that much different. Just a little more narrow!!

It became one of our many stock jokes of the visit!

Renee immediately was inducted into teaching English to the young Karate students.. and she taught with so much fun and laughter.. honestly .. you wouldn't believe how quickly those students started speaking English.. not so for my Hindi I am afraid.. but I shall get back into it on my return tomorrow. Trouble is everyone wants to learn English.. and practice with me.. oh well.. no excuses..

will start my study again now.



Our time there flew past... days were spent waking early at 5.30 and going to the meditation –then exercise.. we were even taught some pretty wicked Karate defence moves by the master himself!! - English classes... our morning coffee addiction which also became a true source of amusement when my coffee plunger was broken.. and we ended up straining our coffee grounds out of the pot using the next best thing.. the net that was in my sponge bag!! See the pic!!

We went for some fabulous walks.. in the early morning..



such great times to take photos.. so much so that I became laughingly known as One Photo Mad-am!!

And we also did an epic Road Trip.

I think if either of us had known or even dreamt of the possibilities that were to occur we would never have said yes to the road trip!!

We went off to Ajanta Caves... said to be a 6 hour journey.. in a mini van type vehicle.. which we were to stay in for hours and hours and hours!! Actually we left at 3.00 am and arrived at Ajanta Caves about 10.30 only to find they were closed on Monday! So we back tracked 2 half hours to Ellora caves.. where we spent most of the rest of the day..

Did I mention we were 5 adults and 4 kids!!! Here we all are in the caves....



What a trip.. could take ten pages to describe this journey of epic nature!! Suffice it to say that the caves were stupendous and worth every minute of the travel.. and that is sure saying something. The kids were amazing.. no way I would have lasted in a car for that many hours with four Aussie kids.. these kids are really something else.. so caring and easy to be around. Particularly for me as I forgot to mention that the day before we left I fell over and sprained my ankle and grazed a whole heap of skin off it.. so I was in a fairly fragile state to be climbing up and down steps.. and at almost each moment one of the kids was taking my hand to care for me.. and suggesting that I go slowly!!

After to full day at Ellora.. we went to a one of the teachers houses.. who teaches here at the school.. his wife had just had a baby.. and we were all welcomed as honoured guests.. fed an incredible meal in their roadside restaurant... which they insisted we not pay for.. and then put up in a friend's

house for the night. Mmmm that was very welcoming of them. However the bed left a little to be desired.. mats spread on a concrete floor don't do much for my bones these days .. and to make matters even a little more challenging, I got my first dose of an upset belly in the middle of the night and had to take off for the toilet a few times more than I would have liked!!

Nonetheless we arose at 6 to head off again for Ajanta caves.. both Renee and I just a little frayed around the edges. And not quite prepared for the long hot walk to the caves.. we made it.. miracles.. it was wonderful.. and now we are really exhausted.. so back into the car for the journey home... we left about 3 and got home at 11.00. even the "table" was welcome that night!!!

A couple of days of rest was needed before we headed down to Mumbai on the bus.. for a round of teaching engagements for Renee and some well deserved R&R at a

friend's very luxurious apartment .. and some excellent food ..and very wonderful conversations. The contrasts of India are incredible.. one moment roughing it at the site, cold water bucket baths, power failures a regular occurrence.. to sitting in the office of my friend drinking tea, surrounded by the energy of hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of diamonds.. as he is in the diamond industry .. making fine jewellery.

And on Thursday evening I dropped Renee at the airport.. and she headed home

**THE END**

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