Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia

December 29, 2016, to January 17, 2017

“An extraordinary and intense exposure to Southeast Asian culture, economic and political contrasts, and unforgettable beauty.”

—Bev Lorell, ’71, MD ’75, and John Krikorian, MD ’72,
Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, 2013
Experience the exotic beauty and extraordinary history of Southeast Asia as we journey through traditional villages and bustling cities. Along our route, discover the different sects of Buddhism that guide the spirituality of these unique nations. Observe the impacts of Vietnam’s economic reforms while exploring its rich culture and natural beauty, and drift amid the dramatic, sculpted-limestone islets of Ha Long Bay. Explore beautiful gold-tipped Buddhist temples in the forests of Laos and meet with local villagers on the Mekong River. In Cambodia, roam the vast complex of Angkor, a monument to Cambodia’s past and the power of the Khmer Empire. Throughout our journey, enjoy specially arranged visits at embassies, non-profit organizations and local universities.
Faculty Leader

Carl Bielefeldt, former chair of Stanford’s religious studies department and director of the Center for East Asian Studies, served for many years as director of the Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford. During our tour, his lectures will focus on the spread of Indian and Chinese Buddhist cultures in Southeast Asia. “For anyone interested in cultural history,” Professor Bielefeldt observes, “travel through Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia is particularly fascinating because we can see, side by side, the similarities and contrasts between the East Asian cultural traditions of Vietnam and the South Asian heritage of Laos and Cambodia.” This will be the seventh time Professor Bielefeldt has led a Travel/Study tour to Southeast Asia.

- At Stanford: Evans-Wentz Professor of Oriental Philosophies, Religions and Ethics, emeritus
- Formerly at Stanford: director, Ho Center for Buddhist Studies; chair, department of religious studies; director, Center for East Asian Studies
- BA, philosophy, San Francisco State College
- MA, Asian studies
- PhD, Buddhist studies, UC-Berkeley

“Carl is amazing! In addition to his knowledge, he was funny and engaging outside the lectures. Carl’s lectures on Buddhism were excellent and he covered a lot of territory in an interesting and approachable fashion.”

—Dr. Yogen Dalal, MS ’73, PHD ’77 Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, 2016
Itinerary

Thursday & Friday, December 29 & 30
DEPART U.S. / HO CHI MINH CITY (SAIGON), VIETNAM
Depart the U.S. on international flights, crossing the International Date Line en route and arriving in Ho Chi Minh City on Friday. Check in to our hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure. CARAVELLE HOTEL

Saturday, December 31
HO CHI MINH CITY
This morning gather for a welcome orientation followed by a visit to the Presidential Palace and History Museum. Visit Ho Chi Minh City’s baroque-styled Central Post Office, a remnant of past French colonialism. This evening cruise along the Saigon River and enjoy a welcome reception and dinner at a local restaurant. CARAVELLE HOTEL (B,L,D)

Sunday, January 1
HO CHI MINH CITY / CU CHI / HUE
This morning journey through the countryside to the Cu Chi area to explore the vast system of tunnels used by the Viet Cong to infiltrate the city during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Take an afternoon flight to Hue, the capital of the feudal Nguyen dynasty in the 1800s. MORIN HOTEL (B,L,D)

Monday, January 2
HUE
Tour the picturesque former Imperial capital of the Nguyen Dynasty, one highlight being the Citadel, at the center of which stands Vietnam’s “Forbidden City,” once reserved for royalty. Take a boat cruise along the Perfume River to Thien Mu Pagoda, a monastery and center of Buddhist activism, followed by a visit to the tomb of Emperor Minh Mang. Spend the evening at leisure, trying one of Hue’s many restaurants. MORIN HOTEL (B,L)

Tuesday, January 3
HUE / DANANG
Visit the picturesque Tu Duc and Khai Dinh tombs before departing by coach and traveling along Vietnam’s scenic seacoast to Danang through the Hai Van (“Sea of Clouds”) Pass.
the Cham Museum featuring the unique relics of the Cham Kingdom, which dominated this region of Southeast Asia in the 10th century. FUSION MAIA (B,L,D)

*Wednesday, January 4*

**HOI AN / DANANG**

This morning tour the nearby town of Hoi An, famous for its classic Chinese-immigrant architecture and thriving artist colony. Spend the afternoon relaxing at our beachside hotel. FUSION MAIA (B,L,D)

*Thursday, January 5*

**DANANG / HA LONG BAY**

Depart on a morning flight to Haiphong, and drive one hour to Ha Long (“Descending Dragon”) Bay. Board our cruising vessel and, throughout the afternoon and into the evening, enjoy drifting amid the dramatic limestone islets of the bay, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Stay overnight aboard our ship on the peaceful waters of Ha Long Bay. PARADISE CRUISES (B,L,D)

*Friday, January 6*

**HA LONG BAY / HANOI**

Disembark our ship this morning and drive for three hours to Hanoi. Over a thousand years old, this city in the Red River Delta is the cultural and political heart of the nation. Check in to our hotel, located near the city’s traditional center, Restored Sword Lake. Enjoy a cyclo tour of the Guild District with its numerous narrow lanes, each lane devoted to the practice of a single handicraft. This evening enjoy a performance of Hanoi’s celebrated water puppets. METROPOLE HOTEL (B,L,D)

*Saturday, January 7*

**HANOI**

Visit Ba Dinh Square, where Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam’s independence from France in 1945. His austere mausoleum now occupies the site. Tour Ho’s former private residence and the One Pillar Pagoda, which dates from 1049. Next, visit the Confucian academy, Vietnam’s first institution of higher learning and known as the Temple of Literature. This afternoon, venture to the Museum of Ethnology to learn about Vietnam’s minority ethnic groups and their customs and lifestyles. METROPOLE HOTEL (B,L)
Sunday, January 8

HANOI / LUANG PRABANG, LAOS
Spend a relaxing day exploring Hanoi before our evening flight to Luang Prabang, a small town bordered by green mountains and set on the Mekong River, which gives us a glimpse into traditional Laotian life. SANTI RESORT (B,L,D)

Monday, January 9

LUANG PRABANG
Begin the day with a look at Laos’ most traditional wat (Buddhist temple), Wat Xiengthong. Then cruise in a motor canoe along the upper Mekong River to the Pak Ou Caves, an important local pilgrimage site, exploring a village en route. Tonight experience a traditional baci (“spirit-calling”) welcoming ceremony. SANTI RESORT (B,L,D)

Tuesday, January 10

LUANG PRABANG
Today tour the former Royal Palace of the Lanexang Kingdom. Reflecting a combination of French and Lao traditional styles, the palace is the current home of the precious, golden Prabang Buddha figure. Enjoy free time exploring charming Luang Prabang. SANTI RESORT (B,L,D)

Wednesday, January 11

LUANG PRABANG / VIENTIANE
After a morning at leisure, fly to Vientiane, capital of Laos. Enjoy a city tour of Vientiane, which includes a stop at the golden That Luang Stupa and a visit to a fascinating weaving shop. LAO PLAZA HOTEL (B,L,D)

Thursday, January 12

VIENTIANE / PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA
Fly to Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, and tour the National Museum with its priceless Khmer art treasures. Also visit the former high school that became the infamous Tuol Sleng Prison where the Khmer Rouge tortured and executed thousands of people, many of whose pictures now hang on the walls of what is now the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. RAFFLES LE ROYAL HOTEL (B,L,D)

Friday, January 13

PHNOM PENH / SIEM REAP
This morning visit the Royal Palace grounds and the Wat Preah Kaeo, also called the Silver Pagoda. Continue to the airport to board our flight to Siem Reap. RAFFLES GRAND HOTEL D’ANGKOR (B,L,D)

Saturday, January 14
SIEM REAP
Situated just outside of Siem Reap, Angkor flourished from the 10th to the 15th centuries, serving as the capital of the powerful Khmer kingdom. The vast complex of temples that remains today represents a fraction of the city that once thrived here. Tour Angkor Wat, a gigantic, three-level structure built between 1112 and 1152 and a symbol of the Cambodian state. The construction is dedicated to Vishnu and forms a symbolic “temple mountain” set in the center of a vast complex of walls, moats and ceremonial causeways. This afternoon, tour Angkor Thom, royal city of the 12th-century god-king, Jayavarman VII. At the Buddhist temple known as The Bayon, stunning reliefs, towers and giant, carved stone faces make this among the most memorable of Angkor’s constructions. Continue on to visit the Preah Khan (“Sacred Sword”) temple complex. RAFFLES GRAND HOTEL D’ANGKOR (B,L,D)

Sunday, January 15
SIEM REAP
This morning explore one of Angkor’s earliest and most prized sites, Banteay Srei, which displays the most beautifully preserved carvings remaining at Angkor. Depending on the water level, take an afternoon boating excursion on Tonle Sap Lake to observe the unique aquaculture and fishing industry of the region’s “floating villages.” RAFFLES GRAND HOTEL D’ANGKOR (B,L,D)

Monday, January 16
SIEM REAP / BANGKOK, THAILAND
This morning fly to Bangkok and enjoy the day exploring this beautiful, legendary capital city independently. Tonight gather for our farewell reception and dinner at our luxurious hotel on the Chao Phraya riverfront. MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL (B,D)

Tuesday, January 17
BANGKOK / U.S.
Transfer to the airport for flights home, arriving back in the U.S. on the same day. (B)
What to Expect

We consider this program to be a moderately strenuous program that is at times physically demanding and busy. Participants should be able to walk unassisted for extended excursions (typically two to three hours) over uneven, unpaved surfaces, up and down narrow staircases, and over high thresholds in high heat and humidity. In some instances, such as at temples and ancient sites, steps are a necessary part of the tour and may not have handrails. Average temperatures in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia range from the low 50s (°F) to the upper 80s, with humidity at more than 70%. Although all of our hotels and motorcoaches during this program are air-conditioned, other traditional means of conveyance and most of the museums, temples, pagodas and ruins we visit are not air-conditioned. Participants must be physically fit, active and in good health. We welcome travelers 15 years of age and older on this program.
Information

Dates
December 29, 2016, to January 17, 2017 (20 days)

Size
This program is limited to 35 participants, with limited availability for travelers in single accommodations.

Cost*
$9,595 per person, double occupancy
$11,995 per person, single occupancy
*Association nonmembers add $300 per person

Included
- 17 nights of deluxe hotel accommodations
- 1-night cruise on Ha Long Bay
- 18 breakfasts, 16 lunches and 15 dinners
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions
- Bottled water on excursions
- Gratuities to porters, guides and drivers for all group activities
- All tours as described in the itinerary
- Domestic flights within and among Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand as specified in the itinerary
- Visa fees for U.S. citizens to the countries listed in the itinerary
- Transfers and baggage handling for participants arriving on December 30 and departing on January 17
- Minimal medical, accident and evacuation insurance
- Educational program with lecture series and pre-departure materials, including recommended reading list, a selected book, map and travel information
- Services of our professional tour manager to assist you throughout the program
Not Included

- International and U.S. domestic airfare
- Immunization costs
- Meals and beverages other than those specified as included
- Independent and private transfers
- Trip-cancellation/interruption and baggage insurance
- Excess-baggage charges
- Personal items such as internet access, telephone and fax calls, laundry and gratuities for nongroup services

Terms and Conditions

Deposit and Final Payment
A $1,000-per-person deposit is required to hold space on this program. Sign up online at alumni.stanford.edu/trip?vlc2017 or call the Travel/Study office at (650) 725-1093. Final payment is due 120 days prior to departure. As a condition of participation, all confirmed participants are required to sign a Release of Liability.

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

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

Eligibility
We encourage membership in the Alumni Association as the program cost for nonmembers is $300 more than the member’s price. A person traveling as a paid guest of a current member will not be charged the nonmember fee. Call (650) 725-0692 or visit alumni.stanford.edu/goto/membership for more information or to purchase a membership.

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

California Seller of Travel Program Registration #2048 523-50

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Contact Information

Visit us online to reserve space:
http://alumni.stanford.edu/trip?vlc2017

Questions? Call us at (650) 725-1093 or email us at travelstudy@alumni.stanford.edu

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