



Carleton

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT
PROGRAMS

BUDDHIST STUDIES

in India & Thailand | Fall 2026



BUDDHIST STUDIES IN INDIA AND THAILAND

CARLETON GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

FALL 2026

FOCUS

Buddhist meditation practice and comparative Buddhist philosophy, culture, and history in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and Bodh Gaya, India

OVERVIEW

The Burmese Vihar in Bodh Gaya has hosted the Buddhist Studies in India and Thailand program for over 40 years, and is a ten-minute walk of the Mahabodhi Temple. It was here, under the Bodhi tree, that the prince-ascetic Gotama became the fully enlightened Buddha. Bodh Gaya is a unique Buddhist pilgrimage center in northern India, and is home to more than 40 Buddhist temples within a largely Hindu and Muslim community.

ESSENTIALS

- The program operates every fall from late August to mid-December
- Applications open in November and are accepted until March 15
- Accepted students must commit to participation by the end of April

ACADEMICS

Director: Arthur McKeown, Associate Professor of Asian Studies

Coursework is accredited and transcripts are issued by Carleton College. Students enroll in five courses for a total of the Carleton-equivalent of 16 semester credits.

Required Courses

- RELG 359: Buddhist Meditation Traditions
- ASST 255: Introduction to Field Methods and Ethics
- ASST 391: Independent Study

Core Courses

- PHIL 318: Buddhist Philosophy
- SOAN 322: Contemporary Buddhist Culture
- ASST 319: History of South Asian Buddhism

Language Courses

- ASST 101-07: Elementary Hindi
- ASST 103-07: Intermediate Hindi
- LCST 101-08: Elementary Tibetan

PROGRAM FEATURES

- Explore Buddhist traditions in Thailand and India
- Live in a Buddhist monastery with a cohort of 20-25 other students
- Study and practice the three major Buddhist traditions with meditation masters: Burmese Vipassana (Theravada), Japanese Zen (Mahayana), Tibetan Vajrayana
- Participate in local religious and cultural festivals
- Design and carry out a three-week independent study project that includes the opportunity to travel to a Buddhist community in India or a neighboring country such as Nepal, Sri Lanka, or Thailand

SITE LOCATIONS

- Chiang Mai, Thailand
- Bodh Gaya, India
- Varanasi/Kolkata, India (optional long weekends)



507-222-4435

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