



The best thing I've ever done!

Service-Learning Tour Experience

Bodhgaya, India – September 2018

The transformative **Service-Learning Tour, 2018 India, Bodhgaya**, aims to offer a **unique opportunity to embark on a journey of personal and global development** whilst engaging in learning, reflection and reciprocity.

The tour's purpose is to enable participants to experience a **wide range of personal, social, inter- and intra-cultural transformational opportunities** whilst serving the school community of Prajna Vihar School (PV School), Bodhgaya.

The PV School (www.pvschool.in) started in 1990 seeking to offer free education for very poor children who had no access to schooling. The school is made up of interreligious teaching and non-teaching staff. Tour participants will be interacting with the PV school community in various ways through a range of projects. In turn, the staff and students of the school will share their culture via a collection of music, dance and art.

"My girls and I loved our service tour to Bodhgaya. The children at PV school are just delightful and it was a pleasure to help them. We saw and experienced India in its true, wonderful colours – it was a wonderfully valuable and fun two weeks!"

Deborah Winfield

The tour takes place in the September school holidays (Fri 21 Sept to 6 Oct 2018). The group of 12 participants will be guided by Kerstin Liebchen-Meades, Chairperson of the Bodhgaya Development Association and founding member of PV School. We will be staying in a modest

Buddhist temple guest house in Bodhgaya, a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists from all over the world.

Participants will help at PV School during the morning session and the afternoons will be spent enjoying a host of interesting trips to neighbouring villages and places of interest. This tour offers you the opportunity to experience the real India in a safe, guided and enjoyable way.

The last four days of the tour will be spent at the beautiful Krishnamurti Foundation Centre on the banks of the sacred Ganges River in Varanasi.

Total tour cost per person including airfares, accommodation, most meals and transport in India is \$2700 (shared room) or \$2900 (single room). Those wanting to extend their trip may arrange alternative flight dates with our travel agent upon request. **Note:** Visa application and travel insurance will need to be arranged and paid for by each traveller individually. Information about the visa application will be provided.

Contact Kerstin:
kriebchenm@gmail.com or
 phone 0422 041 469



Giving unconditionally while enjoying a life-changing, inspiring, life-giving country! Was one of my most treasured experiences! Would do it all again in a heartbeat !!!

Paul Zillmann

Itinerary

Sharing and having fun playing traditional chasy games at Prajna Vihar School.



We stay at [Diakoyo Buddhist House](#), next to the magnificent 80-foot statue of Buddha!



Travelling in Varanasi – the traditional way – along The Ganges by boat.



Left: the lovely girls at Jeevan Jyoti School for the Visually Impaired. Right: children at an informal village school near Bodhgaya.



A mobile health clinic visiting one of the poorer villages on the outskirts of Bodhgaya.



The Rangoli painting competition at Prajna Vihar School.



Women of the Women's Empowerment Project learning to sew.



DAY 1	Friday, 21/9/18	Depart Brisbane to India via Bangkok (Thai Airways)
DAY 2	Saturday, 22/9/18	Arrive in Delhi and fly to Bodhgaya (Air India). Settle into guesthouse, Afternoon outing to school and local area.
DAY 3-10	Sunday, 23/9/18 to Monday 1/10/18	Stay in Bodhgaya, attend school and participate in service learning. Sunday 30th – travel to historical sights surrounding Bodhgaya.
DAY 11	Monday 1/10/18	Travel to Varanasi/Sarnath from Bodhgaya. Stay at Krishnamurti Centre (KMC).
DAY 12	Tuesday 2/10/18 to Thursday 4/10/18	Stay in KMC – reflect, meditate, enjoy surrounds and library. Wednesday 3rd – Afternoon boat trip along The Ganges to Varanasi. Thursday 4th – Visit school for the visually impaired in Sarnath.
DAY 15	Friday 5/10/18	Depart KMC early morning for sightseeing of Varanasi and travel to airport for flight to Brisbane via Bangkok (Thai Airways).
DAY 16	Saturday 6/10/18	Depart Bangkok for Brisbane (Thai Airways). Arrive in Brisbane Saturday 6/10/18.



Your host

Kerstin Liebchen-Meades is a teacher/educator and Community Development Facilitator who has over 20 years' experience organising student tours abroad. Kerstin has travelled extensively throughout India and has guided annual Service Learning Tours to Bodhgaya since 2015. Each group meets several times prior to departure to get to know each other and to learn all about their exciting tour.



I'd felt some trepidation about traveling to India, however any concerns quickly dissolved! Yes, it could be very noisy with horns blowing incessantly, the sweating was constant and the pollution was shocking, however there were so many more wonderful and memorable experiences. Through Kerstin's expert selection of places to visit, we experienced the diversity of India, the beauty, generosity and resilience of her people and the deliciousness of Indian cooking! We visited a range of schools – those for the wealthy, the poor and the visually impaired – where I learned that, despite the lack of resources, children love to learn.

We visited ancient and spiritual landmarks such as the Ganges river and the Mahabodhi Temple where we watched people performing rituals as they have done for a millennia. The Indian people are implicitly connected to their community. We were welcomed with smiles and shown generosity wherever we went. There were some tests and trials but overwhelmingly it was an experience I would gladly do all over again. Sharon Stott