

# TEACHING ENGLISH AT BUDDHIST MONASTERY



Teaching English at a Buddhist monastery or nunnery through Volunteers Initiative Nepal (VIN) offers volunteers a unique opportunity to gain insight into Buddhist culture and practice. The volunteering Buddhist monastery project aims to be an exchange between devoted practitioners of Buddhism and those from other cultures, who can share language and other skills. You will have one thing in common; a desire to learn. This project is a great way for international volunteers to learn about Buddhist culture and have a platform to teach English to Buddhist monks or nuns.

Nepal is home to both Nepali and Tibetan monks. Thousands of Tibetan monks have lived in exile in Nepal since Tibet was invaded by China in 1959. While the Tibetans are now free to practice their religion and express their culture and heritage, they remain an underprivileged and marginalized group within the society.

Historically, education in Buddhist monasteries in Nepal has focused on scriptures and beliefs. Despite a more recent expansion in the scope of subjects, which now include English and Computer Science, teaching remains rudimentary and standards vary dramatically between institutions.

As a volunteer you will help provide basic conversational English to monks and nuns, who range from children to adults, in our partner institutions. You will work up to four hours a day, six days a week, teaching English to Buddhist monks or nuns and arranging creative activities, such as games and painting. You are welcome to share any other area of expertise you may have with them; medicine, science, business or similar. These are all subjects that will be of benefit, as even Buddhist monasteries need to be run efficiently.

In return, you will become a part of everyday life while living in a monastery; living among the residents, taking part in rituals and gaining a rare and unforgettable insight into spiritual life. Your placement will last between one and five months, during which time you will live at the monastery; or, where space is in short supply, you will live with a nearby host family or at a guesthouse. Wherever you are located, the experience should be one of total immersion in both Nepali and Buddhist culture.

VIN works with 13 partner institutions (monasteries/nunneries) which are in or on the outskirts of Kathmandu.

Teaching English at Buddhist  
Monastery  
01/02/2018 to 28/02/2018

Volunteer Testimonial: Elisa Pira



My volunteering at the monastery was great but very challenging. I never had expectations, I just let it flow. But I have to admit that my idea of a monastery was very far from reality. So I experienced cultural skills at the beginning considering too the hard living conditions (cold room, dirty bathroom, cold water) and the lack of all sort of organization about the classes. That was challenging, but very rewarding after some days I needed to adjust. I appreciated co-operating with other volunteers, which was very natural for everybody, above all the time, spent with the small monks, teaching but playing too (English games of course). To live at the monastery was great for a full immersion in the local culture. It was a challenging experience, but very rewarding!

