



**A Volunteer's Guide to the Annual  
International Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony  
December 2<sup>nd</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>**

**Honoring the Year of Buddha's Enlightenment  
in Bodhgaya, India**



## Program Schedule

December 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>,

6:00 - 6:45AM	Breakfast at Kalachakra Grounds
7:00 - 9:00 AM	Chanting (Temple)
9:00 - 9:15 AM	Tea Break (Temple)
9:15 - 11:00 AM	Chanting (Temple)
11:00 - 1:00 PM	Lunch
1:30 - 3:30 PM	Chanting (Temple)
3:30 - 3:45 PM	Tea Break
3:45 - 5:00 PM	Chanting (Temple)
6:00 - 9:00 PM	Dhamma Talk (Under Bodhi Tree) See schedule at Information Center.





### **Dharma Talks December 3-11, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

Evening Dharma talks have become an important feature of the chanting ceremony, offering both lay and ordained members of the sangha the opportunity to hear learned and eminent Bhantes from all traditions of the Theravadin world give discourses under the Bodhi Tree itself.

We shall have nine dharma talks every night from 3-11 December, under the Sacred Bodhi Tree from 6 p.m. until 9p.m.

These talks will be translated into English or Hindi to reach as wide an audience as possible.

All talks will be related to the text that will be chanted by the sangha during the International Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony.

There are many areas where you can make a difference:

**Kitchen Team (India or International Kitchen)**  
(Experience in cooking or food preparation necessary)

**Registration**  
(Experience in Office Work, computers and word processing, translators into English)

**Tea and Beverage Offering**

**Publicity**  
(Experience in working with media relations)

**Decoration**  
(Experience working with flower decorations, and design)

**Clean Up Team**  
(Working with public toilets and cleaning up)





*Examples of Decoration of Temple-Starts on November 30th, 2011*





*Serving Tea to the Sangha and preparing badges.*





*Supervising the storage room, preparing food.*





*Public Relations, Information Center, Registration Center*





*Flower decorations (team to create a beautiful space)*



## General Information about Bodhgaya

Bodhgaya is a small but rapidly expanding village 12 km outside of Gaya, Bihar. The Mahabodhi Mahavihara is its focal point. The Mahabodhi Stupa and Bodhi Tree, surrounded by other important landmarks from the Buddha's enlightenment, stand at the center of the complex. Over a dozen temples representing all the Buddhist cultures of Asia line the streets away from the main bazaar. During tourist/pilgrimage season, from December through February, "an average of 2,000 tourists visit Bodh Gaya every day. From March to October an average of 500 visitors travel to Bodh Gaya each day. Thus, approximately 400,000 tourists visit Bodh Gaya every year. It is estimated that 30% of these are foreigners and the remaining 70% are domestic visitors." (From UNESCO World Heritage nomination papers, 2002).

First-time visitors to India who come to Bodhgaya experience much of India's idiosyncracies right away- haggling over taxi fares, dusty roads, wallas selling overpriced trinkets, and the sight of poverty. Economically, Bihar is one of India's poorest states. Many beggars converge on the tourist-saturated village of Bodhgaya, especially during festival season (November thru Feb). It is best practice to avoid giving money to individual beggars. One rupee clinking in a bowl can cause a swarm of people towards the giver. In addition to the beggars from outlying areas, many of the local people of Bodhgaya are impoverished; the children can be crafty when soliciting money, food or "school supplies" from first-time tourists. Most likely any gift bought will be returned to the shop-keeper for money back. Many charities exist to help with feeding and schooling the local community and can be contacted to arrange donations; however care must be taken with these as well to be sure money goes where a donor intends.

# Map of Buddhagaya and Vicinity



## What to Bring:

### 1. Clothing

Wearing white as lay people is recommended. White comfortable skirts/pants with white tops. It signifies that we are lay practitioners to the monks. This is entirely optional. Comfortable shoes with good tread.

A sweater and outer jacket are recommended since temperatures can drop in the later evening.

To respect local customs, shorts and tank tops should be avoided.

Socks/ Sock slippers for the temple (To wear in dirty/dusty shoe-free locations. e.g. inside temple grounds)

### 2. Luggage

Luggage locks are strongly recommended.

A carry-on bag or daypack. International flights may only allow one piece of carry on luggage.

If carrying along expensive electronics or photography equipment, declare before entering India.

### 3. Supplies

Extra pair of glasses and/or your prescription in case of theft or loss.

A flashlight (power can go out several times a day).

A small pocket-knife for peeling fruit.

An electrical coil for boiling water.

An India wall plug adapter for electrical equipment. Also India has 220V/50Hz power so you might need a converter.

Money belt for passports, credit cards, cash etc.

For your own protection, please have a photocopy of the first 2 pages of your passport and the page with Indian Visa.

We recommend that you bring some light food with you for snacks.

Ex. Granola bars, power bars, powdered protein drinks, instant oat meal, nuts, herbal tea, hot chocolate and dried fruits.

You may need mosquito repellent. Mosquito nets are usually provided by guest houses. Enclosed, zipped net tents are available in Bodhgaya for ~300 Rs

Please carry hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

You may also need hand gel/liquid hand soap, disposable face masks, rags/antibacterial cleaning liquid, plastic sheet/cushion for meditation, sleeping bag for overnight stay and medicines as necessary.

#### **4. Medical Kit:**

Suggested contents are: band aids, a sterile gauze bandage, antiseptic cream, cotton wool, a thermometer, tweezers, scissors, antibiotic cream, a mild pain killer, insect repellent, and multi-vitamins. For the stomach we recommend Immodium, Pepto-Bismol, Maalox, and a mild laxative. Many travelers take acidophilus, garlic pills, the Wellness Formula, Echinacea, golden seal mix, and lots of vitamin C. A fungicide can be helpful for your feet. Cough drops and acidophilus are available in Bodghaya (Koflet, Lactobac).

- Toiletries such as saline solution for contact lenses, sunscreen, lip balm, laundry line, pre-moistened towelettes, necessary feminine hygiene.
- Items such as meditation cushions, metal cups, incense, coughdrops, herbal soaps and shampoos, single-ply toilet paper, electrolytes, laundry detergent can be found in BG market if interested.
- Decongestants, nasal sprays, and cough drops. A light scarf can also be helpful for filtering out dust.

#### **Money:**

You must declare cash in excess of \$5,000 currency brought into the country. Further customs information can be found at:

<http://www.cbec.gov.in/travellers.htm>

ATM is available at State Bank of India along main road in Bodhgaya.

Traveler's cheques in small amounts are recommended so that you do not end up with huge wads of rupees every time you cash one. Always count your money before leaving the exchange counter. Never take any torn bills because no one will accept them.

Use small change for tips: Usually a few rupees.

Bargain for everything: the starting price is usually twice as high as it could be.

#### **Water:**

Do not drink tap water throughout India. Use bottled water even for brushing teeth. When buying bottled water, check plastic seal and date on bottle. Filtered and boiled water to fill canteens can be purchased from OM Café (opp. Kalacakra field).

#### **Medical Information**

Vaccination Information from Center for Disease Control Website

Before visiting India, you may need to get the following vaccinations and medications for vaccine-preventable diseases and other diseases you might be at risk for at your destination: To have the most benefit, see a health-care provider at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for your vaccines to take effect and to start taking medicine to prevent malaria, if you need it.

Even if you have less than 4 weeks before you leave, you should still see a health-care provider for needed vaccines, anti-malaria drugs and other medications and information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

CDC recommends that you see a health-care provider who specializes in Travel Medicine. Find a travel medicine clinic near you. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with any doctors you are currently seeing for other medical reasons.

If your travel plans will take you to more than one country during a single trip, be sure to let your health-care provider know so that you can receive the appropriate vaccinations and information for all of your destinations. Long-term travelers, such as those who plan to work or study abroad, may also need additional vaccinations as required by their employer or school.

Although yellow fever is not a disease risk in India, the government requires travelers arriving from countries where yellow fever is present to present proof of yellow fever vaccination. If you will be traveling to one of these countries where yellow fever is present before arriving in India, this requirement must be taken into consideration. See [Yellow Fever Vaccine Requirements and Information on Malaria Risk and Prophylaxis, by Country](#) for more information.

Be sure your routine vaccinations are up-to-date. Check the links below to see which vaccinations adults and children should get. Routine vaccines, as they are often called, such as for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) are given at all stages of life.

#### **Vaccine-Preventable Diseases**

Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.

Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG) Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in countries with an intermediate or high level of hepatitis A virus infection where exposure might occur through food or water.

#### **Hepatitis B**

Recommended for all unvaccinated persons traveling to or working in countries with intermediate to high levels of endemic HBV transmission, especially those who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment.

### Typhoid

Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in South Asia, especially if visiting smaller cities, villages, or rural areas and staying with friends or relatives where exposure might occur through food or water.

### Rabies

Recommended for travelers spending a lot of time outdoors, especially in rural areas, involved in activities such as bicycling, camping, or hiking. Also recommended for travelers with significant occupational risks (such as veterinarians), for long-term travelers and expatriates living in areas with a significant risk of exposure, and for travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats, carnivores, and other mammals.

### Japanese encephalitis

Recommended if you plan to visit rural farming areas and under special circumstances, such as a known outbreak of Japanese encephalitis, see country-specific information.

### Polio

Recommended for adult travelers who have received a primary series with either inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) or oral polio vaccine (OPV). They should receive another dose of IPV before departure. For adults, available data do not indicate the need for more than a single lifetime booster dose with IPV.

### Malaria

Areas of India with Malaria: All areas throughout country, except in areas >2,000 m (>6,561 ft) in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu, Kashmir, and Sikkim. Present in cities of Delhi and Bombay (Mumbai).

If you will be visiting an area of India with malaria, you will need to discuss with your doctor the best ways for you to avoid getting sick with malaria.

Ways to prevent malaria and other mosquito-borne illness include

- Taking a prescription antimalarial drug
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 on exposed skin.
- Wearing long pants and sleeves to prevent mosquito bites
- Sleeping in air-conditioned or well-screened rooms or using bednets

All of the following antimalarial drugs are equal options for preventing ma-

laria in India: Atovaquone/proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine. For information that can help you and your doctor decide which of these drugs would be best for you, please see Drugs to Prevent Malaria.

Note: Chloroquine is NOT an effective antimalarial drug in India and should not be taken to prevent malaria in this region.

Medical care in Bodhgaya:

Doctors in town can provide diagnostic services if necessary (lab work). There are pharmacies to fill needed prescriptions. (Do bring whatever you need for your usual medications). Also there are a variety of homeopathic and ayurvedic options in town.

Gaya Hospital 12km away, for serious concerns

Shakyamuni Buddha Community Health Care Center, Root Institute, is open weekly for travellers.

Please go to [www.tipitakachantingcouncil.org](http://www.tipitakachantingcouncil.org)  
to register online:

We appreciate very much if you would like to help with various parts of the ceremony. We are entirely supported by volunteers who wish to serve the precious Mahasangha.

Please fill out the volunteer registration form and let us know if you are interested in volunteering. Volunteers will be provided lunch and breakfast during the ceremony. All volunteers will be given a volunteer badge so please bring 2 passport size pictures with you. Following are some of the ways to help.

- Food Team
- Registration Team
- Tea and Coffee Serving
- Cooks
- Decoration Team
- Clean up Team
- Medical Team
- General Information Team

Thank You!

*Next Annual  
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*May we have the great fortune to  
meet again under the  
Most Sacred Bodhi Tree.*