



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Japan and Its Buddhist Traditions introduces students to Japanese society and culture through the lens of Buddhism with its more than 1,500 year history in Japan. Acting as participant-observers, students study those aspects of Japanese society and culture that have been deeply influenced by Buddhism, particularly Buddhist meditative and cultural expressions. There is an optional opportunity to learn the Japanese language at all levels as well as explore students' own academic interests through a directed research project. Students experience Japanese campus life through classes located at Buddhist-affiliated Ryukoku University while living as 'lay pilgrims' in a nearby temple hostel. Director Brian Victoria, Ph.D. (pg. 3), assisted by professors, practitioners, and local on-site experts, leads students on this journey that provides a unique opportunity to encounter the people and culture of Japan in what has been, for many students, a life-changing experience.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Students spend the majority of their time living in temple hostels, primarily Koshoji, headquarters temple of a sect of True Pure Land Buddhism in central Kyoto. They live in Japanese style rooms and participate in daily temple life. Students also visit and practice for shorter periods in other temples and monasteries for Soto Zen, Rinzai Zen, and Shingon.

*Explore Japan through the study of its society, cultures, and religions.*

## Kyoto, Japan

# 11 Japan and Its Buddhist Traditions

FALL



<b>Monday - Friday</b>	
5:30 AM	<b>Meditation</b>
7:15 AM	<b>Breakfast</b>
8:00 AM	<b>Classes</b>
12:15 PM	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>AFTERNOONS FREE</b>	
5:00 PM	<b>Meditation</b>
6:30 PM	<b>Dinner</b>
7:00 PM	<b>Individual Study</b>

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience temple and monastic life, while participating in meditation and chanting.
- Complete an Independent Study project related to some aspect of Japanese culture and religion that follows your interests.
- Study at Buddhist-affiliated Ryukoku University enjoying full access to its facilities, including computer lab, library, and student cafeteria.
- Visit the great Buddhist-related sights in the ancient capitals of Kyoto and Nara including Zen gardens, paintings, and architecture.
- Undergo esoteric Buddhist practices in Japan's mountains, including waterfall purification rituals.

**"In a second I would tell others to go on this program. I've learned more than I could have in the typical study abroad experience, and I wouldn't trade any of my experiences here for anything." - Jiná Ashline, Vassar College**

## LOCATIONS

Kyoto is a twelve-hundred year-old city with charm, mystery, and a feeling of timelessness. The city sits in a valley, which is surrounded by three mountains and intersected by two rivers. It was the spiritual and political capital of Japan during the Heian Period (794–1185 CE), a time of flowering in Court and Buddhist aesthetics. Kyoto remains the center of traditional culture in Japan.

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH PROJECTS

- Buddhist-Christian Dialogue
- Medical Effects of Meditation Practice
- Japanese Calligraphy & the Influence of Zen
- Buddhist Meditation and the Emotions
- Women in Mahayana Buddhism
- Pilgrimage in Japan
- Buddhism and Healing
- Bodhisattva—Compassion in Action
- Esoteric Buddhism and the Divine Female

## COURSES

Each course is 4 semester credits. Full course descriptions online.

*No previous Japanese experience needed.*

### REQUIRED COURSES

- ARELS 352 Practice /Theory of Buddhism in Japan**  
This course will complement students' understanding of Buddhist thought and culture through the study and practice of traditional Japanese Buddhist disciplines.
- ABUDJ 396 Field Research: Selected Topics**  
The focus of this course is an independent research project in which the student has the opportunity to select a subject of special interest and pursue it in depth.

*Students must take 1 or 2 of the following 3 courses:*

- ALLCJ 161 Japanese Language**  
**ALLCJ 280 Intermediate Japanese or**  
**ALLCJ 300 Advanced Japanese**  
Japanese Language (161) is intended for students with no previous knowledge of the Japanese language who wish to develop communication skills in Japanese.



**Experience**



**Engage**



**Explore**

### 2. ARELS 351 Japanese Religions: Buddhism, Shinto and the New Religions

This course provides students with a broad introduction to religion in Japan, focusing on Buddhism but also including Shinto and Japan's so-called "New Religions." Interpretations of persistent themes through Japan's three major historical periods are presented together with the changing patterns of the various religious traditions.

### 3. ASSC 331 Japanese Society and Cultural Traditions

This course introduces the most intriguing aspects of Japanese culture and society through both intellectual exercises and hands-on experiences, thereby supporting the study of Buddhism by providing vital cultural contexts. It compliments participants' study of historical and traditional Japan by emphasizing contemporary topics from popular culture and current trends in Japanese society.

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