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Law Students Thai One On

Some law students barely leave the library, let alone the country. But a group of students at the [University of Buffalo Law School](#) left that frigid city yesterday for the steamier climes of Thailand, where they will study the Southeast Asian nation's unique legal culture.

Twelve students are traveling with professor [David M. Engel](#) and his wife, Jaruan Engel, according to [UB Reporter](#), a publication for the university's faculty and staff. Early in his career, Engel was a Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand and he has since become an expert on its legal culture. His wife is a professional translator and author. The two recently co-authored a book about Thai legal culture, [Tort, Custom, and Karma](#), due out next month from Stanford University Press.

The trip takes the students to Chiang Mai, a region in the foothills of the Himalayas some 400 miles north of Bangkok. There, they will engage in structured conversations with village chiefs, Buddhist monks, Thai law professors, students, attorneys and representatives of non-governmental organizations. The trip is arranged in cooperation with Chiang Mai University Law School.

After the same trip in 2008 (pictured), two of the students [wrote about their meeting](#) with the abbot of a Buddhist temple. "We actually participated in a dialogue, asking the abbot questions about his life experiences, his role in village society, and his thoughts on justice, law and karma," they recalled. "That alone made it different from other temples and other trips where so often people just pass through, just observing."

"I was so touched by the reactions of the students," [Engel later said](#) of the 2008 trip. "They came back saying their view of everything had changed. When it is another culture, you can see more clearly how the law is linked to its cultural surroundings. And my hope is that they will now see it in their own cultural situation."

Posted by Robert J. Ambrogio on January 8, 2010 at 11:45 AM | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

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