

GUIDELINES FOR GUESTS

staying at Dhammapala Monastery

Dhammapala is a sanctuary for spiritual development and a monastic community in the tradition of early Buddhism (Theravāda). Our house is dedicated to the practice of meditation. The resident community has its roots in the Thai forest tradition, in the lineage of Ven. Ajahn Chah, and its Western branches.

Being a Buddhist monastery Dhammapala primarily is a residence for monks, novices and, occasionally, nuns. The monastic community organises group events for lay people and also welcomes individual lay men and women as temporary guests, provided they are willing to abide by the monastic discipline and participate in work, meditation and other communal activities during their entire stay. (Special agreements can be made on request for elderly people or those who have to follow a special diet for health reasons.)

The Eight Monastic Principles

These rules are understood as guidelines for practice and constitute the ethical foundation for living together in a monastic community and for its relationship to a broader environment.

1. Peacefulness: not to intentionally hurt or kill living beings.
2. Trustworthiness: not to take what has not been given.
3. Chastity: complete sexual abstinence.
4. Right speech: not to lie; to abstain from coarse and malicious speech and idle talk.
5. A clear, sober mind: not to take alcohol, drugs or other substances which dull the mind.
6. Renunciation: not to eat after noon (1 pm. during periods of daylight saving time, dst).
7. Sense restraint: to abstain from dancing, singing, music, games and other dispersing activities; to avoid intrusive personal outfit and improper clothing.
8. Moderation: not to indulge in too much sleep.

Modesty and Restraint

Being a sanctuary for spiritual development the monastery cultivates an atmosphere of going inwards; this is supported by the mutual respect and considerateness among the members of the community and its guests. We ask our visitors to dress and behave accordingly. Proper dress means: not shorts, no mini skirts, no bare shoulders, no bare mid rifts. Considerate behaviour in communal rooms means: no martial art practices, no noisy exercises, no other activities that might be offensive or intrusive. The shrine room on the 3rd floor is reserved for meditation practice only. We appreciate personal cleanliness but at the same time would like to ask you not to use perfume, cosmetics and jewellery. Monks, nuns and novices avoid physical contact with the opposite sex as a part of their monastic discipline; we request that our guests respect this and try to avoid physical contact with the opposite sex, too.

Heedfulness

All things you see in this monastery came about dependent on the generosity of donors. Please apply heedfulness, mindfulness and care when you use them. Keep things tidy, especially in rooms which are used communally. Please keep your room clean and use the bed sheets, pillow cases and blanket covers in order to protect the bedding. Prior to departure please clean your room thoroughly, give used bed sheets and so on to the laundry basket (walk through the kitchen back door and turn left), empty the trash bin and replace the plastic lining, close the windows and turn off the heating.

We count on your help, especially with the daily chores and dish washing. In case you notice anything which needs repair, maintenance, refilling etc. please inform the guest monk.

If you have to smoke, please do it outside, out of sight and outside smelling distance, so nobody in the monastery will be affected. Smoking inside the house (even on the balconies or with windows open) is prohibited. Due to a heightened fire hazard you should light candles or incense only in communal rooms, not in the bed rooms. Please acquaint yourself with the site of the emergency exits and read the fire safety notes posted at the door inside your room. Please be aware that talking or playing tapes etc. might disturb your neighbour.

Following the Daily Routine

Keeping a daily routine is an integral part of the spiritual practice. Please make a sincere effort to follow the schedule (which may be subject to change). Especially important is participation in the group meditation sessions, the work meeting in the morning, and the work periods. If you are unable to follow your daily duties due to sickness or for some other reason please inform the guest monk. The monastery is a place of contemplation and introspection, a place of retreat and seclusion; it is meant to be a refuge from worldly busy-ness and concern. It is therefore not appropriate to do external business while you are our guest and participate in our life. If you have to run errands while you are here please report your comings and goings to the guest monk.

Duration of Stay

First time visitors usually are permitted to stay a maximum of one week, preferably after participating in at least one week-end retreat. Exceptions can be made only by arrangement with the guest monk.

Application by phone, mail or eMail (including an option for us to call or write back) is required in any case. The community reserves the right to ask uncooperative persons to leave, and to deny accommodation to people who show up without prior application.

How Guests Can Support the Monastery

Dhammapala monastery is economically run on the principle of *dāna* (Pāli language, lit.: a gift), i.e. voluntary donations. It is an old tradition in Buddhism that unordained people take care of the material needs of monks and nuns who, living according to their monastic code, have no income, don't use money and possess only few personal items. And it is a tradition that monastic communities supported in this way provide a space for deepening the practice of the Buddha's teaching to those who are interested, and offer teaching and guidance to them – be they day visitors, guests or participants in our meditation retreats.

At Dhammapala we provide a meditation hall, a reception room for communication and interaction, a library with books, magazines and audio material, and simple accommodation for our visitors. These are for you to use, no matter if you are a newcomer, someone dropping in to get some information on Buddhism, or an old hand, a long time practitioner who comes regularly.

The expenses of the monastery – the basic needs of the monastic community, costs of using and maintenance of the building, all items for use and consumption, including the obligatory insurances – all this is covered by your donations. We are not going to charge you for your stay or participation in a retreat and simply ask you to keep in mind that the financial efforts which make the existence of this monastic community possible (and thus your stay here with us) are considerably high. We need and appreciate your contribution. If you would like to support us on a regular basis, you could do so through banker's orders payable to the Dhammapala trust (further information is available on request).

May these guidelines help to make your stay here as fruitful as possible. We encourage you to make good use of your visit, for your own well-being and benefit and for the well-being and benefit of the other guests and the monastic community.

We wish you a pleasant and edifying time at Dhammapala.