

Welcome
to the
Monastery

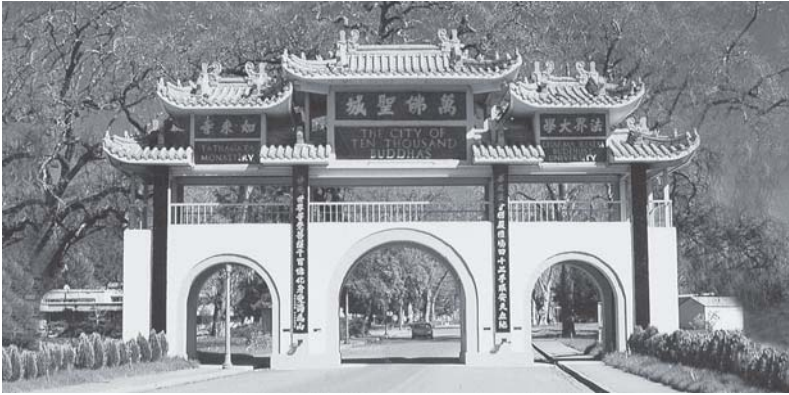
A Guide for New Visitors

DHARMA REALM BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

2005

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Welcome

Welcome to a Buddhist monastery. You have entered an extraordinary place that is devoted to spiritual practice and personal transformation. It is a place you can let go of worldly concerns and focus on some of the deeper questions in life: “Who am I? Where am I going? And, how can I selflessly benefit others?”

The monastery is also the home of monks and nuns who have dedicated their lives to following the Buddhist path to awakening. Their lives are simple allowing them to focus on the study and practice of Buddhism. There are many lay people and visitors that frequent the monastery as well. Some are regular supporters of the monastery, while others are simply curious of the lifestyle here.

We welcome you and hope your visit is meaningful and worthwhile. This booklet hopes to provide some background and basic information for new visitors, who might be unfamiliar with the customs of a monastery. This introduction also hopes to give you a glimpse of what life is like in the monastery.

Buddhism: A Historical Perspective

Several thousand years ago, Siddhartha Gautama was born as a prince into a small kingdom. Upon his birth, a seer foretold that he would either become a spiritual guide or a great ruler. His father wanted his son to be the next ruler to carry on his family line, so he attempted to shield his son from all the unpleasantness of life. However, when Prince Siddhartha turned twenty-nine, he witnessed sickness, old age, and death, and resolved to find an answer to these universal sufferings.

He left the palace and studied under meditation masters of his time, but after mastering their techniques, he found that he had not answered his fundamental questions. He then practiced strict ascetic practices, to a point where he was near death, but found himself still no closer to liberation. Reflecting on his previous experiences, he realized that the path consisted of the Middle Way, which avoided the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification.

He then made a vow that he would sit under the Bodhi tree until he attained complete liberation. During the very first night, Prince Siddhartha awoke to the Dharma, the way things truly are, and became known as the Buddha, “The Awakened One.”

Upon his awakening, Prince Siddhartha realized that all living beings have the capacity to be fully awake, but their inherent potential is covered by deluded thinking and worldly attachments. Hence, his teachings over the next forty-five years aimed at helping people return to their original enlightened nature.

Over the millennia, the teachings of the Buddha have spread across many parts of Asia. In Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand, a form of Buddhism is practiced known as the Theravada tradition, or “The Teaching of the Elders.” In China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, and Tibet, the Buddha’s teachings are widely practiced in a tradition known as the Mahayana, “The Great Vehicle.”

In the last one hundred years, all of these different cultural expressions and Buddhist traditions have come to America. Since Buddhism has always adapted itself to the cultures of the countries in which it was taught, it still awaits to be seen how Buddhism will develop in America in the future.



A discussion among monastics from many Buddhist traditions at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.



Introduction to the Founder

The Venerable Master Hsuan Hua (1918-1995), founder of this monastery, was born into a poor family in a small village in Manchuria. He attended school for only two years before he had to return home to take care of his ailing mother. At home, he opened a free school for both children and adults who had even less opportunity than he did. Also as a young boy, he had his first encounter with death and became aware of the impermanence of life. Upon learning that Buddhism had a method for ending the cycle of death and rebirth, he resolved to become a monk.

His mother died when he was nineteen, and he then spent three years in solitary meditation beside his mother's grave. He then entered the monastic life at Three Conditions Monastery in Harbin. Seeing firsthand the hungry and impoverished, he began to practice eating one meal a day wishing that the food he did not eat would go to feed others. He also diligently studied the Buddhist scriptures, while maintaining a vigorous practice. He felt that both were needed to gain a balanced understanding of Buddhism.

In 1962, Master Hua came to the United States, and by 1968, he had established the Buddhist Lecture Hall in San Francisco where he taught many young Americans. In 1969, five Americans resolved to become monastics and began the Buddhist monastic tradition in America. During the subsequent years, the Master trained and oversaw the ordination of hundreds of monks and nuns who came from all over the world to study with him.

Believing in the importance for Buddhists to ground themselves in traditional scriptures, the Master spoke straightforward and practical commentaries to the Sutras. He also encouraged the translation of the Sutras into Western languages.

Master Hua had a lifelong commitment to education. He established a number of schools and exhorted educators and students to think of school not only as a place to learn a skill, but as a place to develop moral character.

With an open heart, the Master welcomed people of diverse religious faiths and backgrounds. He once asked the exiled Roman Catholic leader Paul Cardinal Yubin if he would be “a Buddhist among the Catholics,” adding, “and I’ll be a Catholic among the Buddhists. If we work together we can bring peace among our religions.” Cardinal Yubin subsequently helped the Master found the Institute for World Religions. As a guest speaker at interfaith gatherings, the Master exhorted people to be true followers of their religious founder’s vision and not fight amongst themselves.

Master Hua was a wonderful storyteller with a great sense of humor, a kind father figure who gave encouragement when times were hard, and a strict teacher who held his disciples to high standards. Throughout his life, he hoped to serve as a bridge for others to walk on, so that they could go from confusion and suffering to wisdom and happiness. His energy still continues in the monastery.





Ceremonies:

The Heartbeat of the Monastery

The ceremonies can be considered as the heartbeat of the monastery because they provide a structure and rhythm for daily life. They are also times when the community gathers together to practice, thus bringing a sense of cooperation and harmony to the monastery. Numerous visitors are often surprised to find that their most meaningful memories of their visits are of participating in ceremonies. One college student, after attending a bowing ceremony, commented that she felt like she was connecting to an ancient practice that her own background never gave her. A few more benefits are described in an article “Introduction to Buddhist Ceremonies.”

- 1. Ceremonies satisfy the human spirit’s need to find an anchor, a refuge with a higher and purer vision beyond human imperfection.*
- 2. Ceremonies put us in touch with our roots, as we take part in a ritual observance that has been handed down for generations, spanning many successive cultures, languages, and musical patterns. They*

put us where we belong between heaven and earth. Bowing, in particular, sets the mind in balance and subdues the body.

3. Ceremonies can open one's inherent wisdom, and can lead to an elevated state of clear seeing and keen insight.

Ceremonies are a way to transform our body, mind, and spirit, and the best way to find out how this transformation occurs is to participate in one and experience it for yourself. Here are some basic tips on how to participate in the ceremony. (Another way is just to observe or follow people who look like they know what they are doing.)

First, the ceremony begins with three and a half bows. **Bowing** is a practice in humility, as well as a gesture of respect. Bowing in Buddhism is often misunderstood in the West as bowing to idols, but it really is a method for overcoming one's egoism and finding one's true nature. The Buddhas are not thought of as beings separate from oneself, but are symbolic of one's potential for awakening. When you are mindful as you bow, the seeds of humility and respect in your heart are nurtured and watered.



You begin with your palms together, and as you bend down, put your right hand in the center of the cushion (or directly in front of you on the ground), and then as your body rocks forward, your left hand goes to the upper left corner of the cushion along with your knees at the bottom of the cushion. With your weight now primarily on your knees, you move your right hand to the upper-right corner of the cushion and place your head in between your two hands. As your head touches the cushion, you turn your hands palm up. Coming up from the bow is the same process in reverse. You turn your hands palm down, while lifting your head from the cushion, then place your right hand in the center of the cushion. Push firmly to bring yourself back into a standing position with your palms together again. You have completed a full bow.

We hope you will find that bowing is something easy to learn and meaningful to practice. Since this is probably your first time in the monastery, you should refer to a *Daily Recitation Handbook* to follow along through the ceremony. Try not to put the book on the ground between bows, which makes the bowing awkward and is considered disrespectful.

Chanting is an important part of the cultivation in the monastery. To get a full experience of chanting, it is important to be single-minded and concentrated. You'll find that if you chant in a concentrated way, then at the end, you will feel recharged and energized in body and mind.

If the chanting is in English, it should be pretty easy to follow, but if it is in Chinese, it takes a bit more effort (unless you know Chinese).

Don't be discouraged if the first few times you get lost or don't know where you are because it is actually quite difficult the first few times. Fortunately, there are some things that can help to orient you in the *Handbook*. First, the resounding thump on the "wooden fish" (a block of wood that is shaped like a fish) gives the rhythm and pace of the chant. Each knock of the wooden fish is one Chinese character (or syllable of sound). Sometimes, on the page, there is a symbol that is a circle within a circle, which denotes the striking of the big bell. These are helpful markers in case you get lost. Also, people are usually very happy to point out where you are in the *Handbook*. If you can't follow or keep up, you can simply concentrate on the sounds or read the English translations of the chants.

There are **three main ceremonies** that occur in the monastery: morning ceremony, the meal offering, and evening ceremony. All three of these ceremonies are chances for the community to practice together. Just as many different kinds of medicines are needed to heal different types of illnesses, the ceremonies include many distinct practices to give each person something that they find meaningful and transformative. We will describe some of these different practices in the next section.





Daily Life in the Monastery

The clapping of boards at 3:30AM wakes everyone up for **morning ceremony**, which takes place from 4-5AM. At four in the morning, the stars are still out and the world is asleep. Since our thinking processes have not started full force yet, it is a little easier to concentrate. In fact, it is often quite insightful to see what is going on in our minds this early in the morning.

The ceremony begins with the recitation of the *Shurangama Mantra*, one of the longest and most powerful mantras in Buddhism. The effects of this mantra are many, such as protecting the world from disasters, eradicating past negative karma, and ultimately developing an unshakable concentration.

The ceremony continues with the *Heart Sutra*, which is considered as the essence of the Buddha's wisdom that transcends all dualities. Since the *Heart Sutra* speaks on the emptiness of all phenomena, it serves as a reminder for the practitioner to not get attached to the merits and benefits accrued from participating in the ceremony.

Accessing this transcendent wisdom requires a concentrated and sincere mind; hence, in the monastery, memorizing and reciting Sutras is a way of focusing the mind. In Buddhism, wisdom does not come from gathering more information (which is endless), but rather by uncovering your inherent wisdom (which is complete already).

The morning ceremony ends with the *Bowing to the Patriarchs*. Each of the patriarchs has an inspiring story showing how they underwent considerable hardship and difficulty to keep the Dharma alive. Without their hard work and dedication, the teachings that lead us out of suffering would not be available to us now. And so mindful of their hard work, we bow in gratitude.

After morning ceremony, people either stay for the ceremonies that continue in the Buddha Hall or begin their work for the day. Working in the monastery is considered a blessing, because we can create stronger affinities with the Dharma. Also this is planting blessings for the future because good actions reap good results. By supporting the monastery and others cultivating a spiritual path now, we will be supported by others in the future.



The next major ceremony is the **meal offering** before the lunchtime meal. The food is offered to the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and all living beings wishing that they can also partake in what we have. In the monastery, the simple act of eating becomes a chance to practice the Dharma. During the meal, people are encouraged to be mindful of the five contemplations, which are given below in verse:

- 1. This offering of the faithful is the fruit of work and care.*
- 2. I reflect upon my conduct; have I truly earned my share?*
- 3. Of the poisons of the mind, the most destructive one is greed.*
- 4. As medicine cures illness, I take only what I need*
- 5. To sustain my cultivation and to realize the Way,*
So we contemplate in silence on this offering today.

All the food that we eat in the monastery comes as offerings from the generosity of others. The food, then, is taken with a sense of gratitude and thankfulness. To cherish one's blessings, no food is wasted. People are encouraged to take as much as they like (going back for seconds or thirds if need be), but make sure they finish all they take.

The food is also **vegetarian**, and for those who choose, vegan as well. There are many reasons people in the monastery are vegetarian: compassion for animals, protecting the environment, and personal health and well-being. We try to minimize the amount of suffering we create through our lifestyles and eating habits. Buddhism also teaches that food has a profound connection with our thoughts and desires, and being vegetarian helps us have clearer minds and more compassionate hearts.

In Buddhism, the monastics traditionally give a **Dharma talk** at the end of the meal. There is a mutual relationship between laity and monastics, where the laity provides sustenance and material support (traditionally: bedding, clothing, food, and medicine), and the monastics give teachings to the laity. Depending on the monastery, there is sometimes a Dharma talk or often a taped lecture of Master Hua instead. His instructions remind everyone to practice diligently and vigorously. For many, because of the immense respect they have for the Master, his words carry special weight and have the power to inspire and encourage.

After the noon meal, there is the **Great Compassion Repentance**, which is a ceremony focusing on Avalokiteshvara (Chinese: *Guan Shi Yin*), the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion. Repentance is a central practice in Buddhism because it allows us to turn a new leaf—to recognize what we have done wrong, to repent of our mistakes, and to reform for the better. The ceremony gives a form to the very personal act of repentance. Doing this in a communal setting also adds to its power. Many people report that the ceremony leaves them feeling cleansed in body, mouth, and mind. More specifically, the body is purified through bowing, the mouth through chanting, and the mind through positive intentions and concentration.

Evening ceremony is the next time the community gathers. The ceremony begins with the *Incense Praise* and is followed by either the *Amitabha Sutra* or the *Eighty-eight Buddhas Repentance*. The *Amitabha Sutra* is a teaching about Amitabha Buddha and his Pure Land, the Land of Ultimate Bliss. The Sutra gives a description of the radiance of the Land of Ultimate Bliss, which is adorned with many different

treasures. In addition, the music and scenery causes its inhabitants to always be mindful of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. This is an ideal place for cultivation, and the people who go there are assured irreversibility on the path to Buddhahood. Then, with the steadfast resolve of a great Bodhisattva, the inhabitants can return to this world to help others awaken to the Way and let go of all greed, anger, and delusion.

Another way of approaching the Pure Land teaching is to see it applying to every thought. Every kind, compassionate, and selfless thought is like being in the Pure Land, and every greedy, angry, and deluded thought is like being stuck in the world of suffering. The Pure Land, then, exists in the present state of our minds.

In the middle of the ceremony, the entire congregation recites the *Four Great Vows* of the Bodhisattva. They are:

- 1. I vow to rescue the countless living beings.*
- 2. I vow to eliminate the inexhaustible afflictions.*
- 3. I vow to learn the innumerable Dharma-doors.*
- 4. I vow to realize the unsurpassed path of the Buddha.*

These Four Great Vows relate to the Four Noble Truths taught by the Buddha. The first noble truth of suffering becomes the Bodhisattva's vow to free all beings from suffering. The second noble truth identifies ignorance and craving as the source of suffering, and accordingly, the Bodhisattva vows to transform all afflictions. The third vow of learning all the Dharma-doors (i.e. methods for ending suffering) relates to the fourth noble truth of following the Eightfold Path.

And finally, the third noble truth that suffering can cease becomes the Bodhisattva's fourth vow which is to become a Buddha, who is able to lead all beings to complete awakening.

The evening ceremony is followed by a **Sutra lecture**, which is a chance to hear the words of the Buddha explained in a traditional setting. The lecture begins with a *Dharma Request*, where one person (sometimes more) formally requests the Dharma by circumambulating the speaker three times. This period of silence is a chance to settle the mind before listening to the teachings. The lecture itself actually varies considerably depending on the Sutra, the speaker, and the audience. In general, the Sutra lecture is a chance to use the Dharma as a tool for reflecting on the day and developing one's wisdom. At the end of the lecture, there is the *Dedication of Merit*:

May the merit and virtue accrued from this work

Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,

Repaying four kinds of kindness above

And aiding those suffering in the paths below.

May those who see and hear of this

All bring forth the resolve for Bodhi

And, when this retribution body is over,

Be born together in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.

This dedication is a form of Buddhist prayer where all our merit is transferred for the benefit of all living beings.

The last ceremony in the monastery brings together all the energy and work of the day. In the beginning, the *Heart of the Shurangama Mantra* is recited 108 times at a fairly rapid pace (memorizing it

makes it much easier to follow). Finally, the day in the monastery ends with the *Verse of Exhortation* that encourages the assembly to be vigorous and mindful of impermanence. Who knows if this day will be the last day one can cultivate and practice? With that thought, everyone files out of the Buddha hall chanting “Namo Amitufo.” The day is over, but the next day is just around the corner ready to start at 4AM the next morning.



Guidelines for Your Visit

Separation of Men and Women

Usually the first thing people notice when they visit is that men and women are separated. The reason for this separation is to allow everyone to focus on the practice with fewer distractions.

Comfortable and Modest Clothing

Clothing in the monastery should be comfortable and modest. Comfortable clothing is ideal for meditation and cultivation because it allows you to bow and sit cross-legged unimpeded. Modest clothing is important because it causes fewer distractions for other people. As a visitor, please refrain from wearing clothing such as mini-skirts, shorts and sleeveless shirts. (If you already are wearing them, don't worry about it. We are very happy to have you, but please try to be more careful next time you visit.)

Cherishing All Forms of Life

Please refrain from killing any living creatures in the monastery, including even small insects such as spiders, ants, flies, or mosquitoes. Buddhists practice non-harming in order to cultivate a heart of compassion and empathy for others. In Buddhism, all life forms are interconnected, and all creatures are considered “family.”

Respecting Buddhist Sutras and Texts

Buddhist Sutras and texts are the words of the Buddhist sages that give instructions on how to become awakened, and for this reason they are treated with utmost care and respect. Furthermore, our attitude toward a sacred text affects our ability to access the teachings contained within it. Hence, people are encouraged not to put Buddhist books on the ground or bring them into the bathroom. Other customs in the monastery are keeping Sutras in good condition and making sure one’s hands are clean before reading them. In general, the intent of all these customs is the same—to show one’s respect for the text.

Things Not to Bring into the Monastery

Please do not bring alcohol, meat (including fish & poultry), eggs, illicit drugs, or cigarettes into the monastery.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What do the different colors of robes and sashes signify?

A: The yellow robes with a brown or yellow sash are reserved for fully ordained monks and nuns. The grey robes with the brown sash signify novices, people who have made the resolve to begin the training to become a monastic. The lay people who have taken refuge and the five precepts wear the black robes with the brown sash, and the black robe without a sash can be worn by anyone.

Q: What does it mean to take refuge or take the five precepts?

A: Taking refuge with the Three Jewels (explained in “Helpful Buddhist Terms”) is a formal ceremony whereby one becomes a Buddhist. After taking refuge, one takes the Buddha as one’s spiritual teacher and ultimate place of refuge, the Dharma as the teachings that provide the methods to end suffering, and the Sangha as the ordained monastic community that embodies the practice.

The five precepts are: no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no lying, and no intoxicants. These precepts are thought of as guidelines for life. The Buddha, through seeing the workings of karma, taught these precepts as a way to help people to stop planting the seeds of suffering in their lives. Solid moral conduct is also the foundation for any spiritual growth. A person who takes the precepts makes a lifelong commitment to uphold them.

Q: Why are there swastikas in the Buddhist monastery?

A: This question has to be answered by giving a short history. The *swastika* is an ancient symbol that is shared by many different cultures: Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Europeans, and Native Americans, among others. This symbol represents life, prosperity, good luck, and strength; and in Buddhism, it is one of the marks of the Buddha symbolizing the perfection of virtue. In World War II, however, Adolf Hitler took the *swastika*, flipped it around, and made it a symbol of the Nazi regime, which now becomes associated with fascism, hate, and death. The corruption of this symbol is truly tragic for many Buddhists who see it in a positive light. In a way, this is a good chance to see how our minds create our realities, since two groups of people can have opposite interpretations of this symbol.

Q: When should I visit the monastery?

A: Please check when the monastery is open to the public. There are also a number of weekend retreats, week-long sessions, and days to volunteer or attend ceremonies. The front desk has a schedule of events at the monastery, and you are welcome to participate in any event you find interesting. Also, events are posted at www.drba.org/events, but still check with the person in the front office to be sure, because sometimes the dates or times may change.

Q: Where can I go if I have more questions?

A: Please ask the person in the front office. There is usually a person there answering the phone and greeting visitors. Answers to common questions can also be found online at the Dharma Realm

Buddhist Association (DRBA) website, www.drba.org, and the Dharma Realm Buddhist Youth/Young Adults (DRBY) website, www.drby.net. You can also send your questions by email to info@drba.org or info@drby.net.

Q: Where can I learn more about Buddhism?

A: *Words of Wisdom: Beginning Buddhism* and *Dharma Talks in Europe* are good places to start to read some of the teachings by Master Hua. For Chan (Zen) meditation, *The Sixth Patriarch Sutra* contains the records of the life and teachings of Chan Master Hui Neng in China. If you would like some instructions in meditation and recitation, please refer to *Listen to Yourself, Think Everything Over, vol two*. To get an explanation of the Buddha's conception of reality, please read *The Ten Dharma Realms Are Not Beyond a Single Thought*. Another popular text that gives a first-hand account of two American monks on a bowing pilgrimage up the California coastline is *News From True Cultivators* (by Heng Sure and Heng Chau). These books can be found in the monastery or online at the Buddhist Text Translation Society (www.bttsonline.org). Audio and video files, as well as a live webcast, can all be found at www.dharmaradio.org.

For the study of Theravada Buddhism, we recommend *The Four Noble Truths* by Ajahn Sumedho, an American monk trained in the Thai forest monastery tradition. Abhayagiri Monastery also has a website filled with Dharma talks and meditation instructions (www.abhayagiri.org).

Other resources abound in the United States, and we encourage

you to join a retreat or meditation/recitation session held at the various monasteries (information at www.drba.org and www.drby.net).

It is said that if you only read about Buddhism without actually applying it to life, then it is like reading the directions for taking medicine without actually taking it. Hence, you never get better or see the benefits. In other words, the best way to learn about Buddhism is to practice it!



A Sutra lecture at Berkeley Buddhist Monastery that is broadcast around the world.

Helpful Buddhist Terms

Amitabha Buddha (Chinese: *Amitufo*) is the Buddha of Limitless Light. In the past, Amitabha Buddha was a cultivator who, after seeing how difficult it was to cultivate in this world, made forty-eight vows to create a Land of Ultimate Bliss where people can cultivate more easily and progress on the spiritual path. By being mindful of Amitabha Buddha, people have the opportunity to go to his Land of Ultimate Bliss after this life. Although less well known in America, the Pure Land practice is very popular in Asia. In fact, in the monastery, people often greet each other with palms together saying, “Amitufo.”

Bodhisattva can be split into two parts—*Bodhi* means “awakened” and *sattva* means “being.” Together, a Bodhisattva means an “awakened being” or “a being who awakens others.”

Bodhi Resolve is the resolve to become a Buddha for the sake of all living beings.

Buddha refers to someone who is completely awake and sees things as they truly are. The Buddha has put an end to the three poisons: greed, hatred, and delusion.

Buddha-nature is the innate, inherent potential to become a Buddha that resides in the mind of every living being.

Cultivation essentially means “practice.” Spiritual practice is very similar to cultivating and tending a garden. One first needs to prepare the soil, clear out the weeds, plant the seeds, water them everyday, and finally after some time the seeds grow. Cultivation captures the

principle of patience and everyday hard work required in gaining the fruits of Buddhist practice.

Dharma refers to the teachings of the Buddha. Another meaning is the reality that the Buddha realized upon enlightenment.

Dharma Realm encompasses the entire universe ad infinitum. Buddhist cosmology does not speak simply of one world, or one universe, but rather speaks of world-systems upon world-systems extending beyond the bounds of space and time. Yet this infinite reality is not beyond a single thought in the mind.

Dharma Protectors are beings who dedicate themselves to protecting the Dharma. Many lay people who support and “protect” the monastery are considered Dharma Protectors. Dharma Protectors can also refer to spiritual beings, who protect the monastery and people who are sincerely cultivating the Way.

Eightfold Path consists of right understanding, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

False Thinking is having scattered and random thoughts that cover up our inherent wisdom. By developing a single-pointed mind from practice, we can penetrate through the myriad false thoughts and see reality as it is.

Karma refers to mental, physical, and verbal deeds, each of which are causes that will bring about a corresponding results in the future. Ultimately, there is no fate and each person can mold their own destiny. Karma implies a radical responsibility for our lives and actions.

Namo has multiple meanings, two of which are “homage” or “I return to.” This is often used in chants such as “Namo Amitufo.”

Sangha literally means “community,” and in the context of Buddhism, it refers to the ordained monastics.

Shakyamuni Buddha is the name of the historical Buddha who lived in India. Shakyamuni literally means sage (muni) of the Shakyan clan.

Sutras are the teachings of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas. or other awakened beings certified by the Buddha.

The Three Refuges / Triple Jewel refers to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. They are refuges in the sense that they are dependable guides that one can rely on in life. They are also called jewels because they are considered rare and precious.



Conclusion

We hope this booklet has been useful to you in getting acquainted with life in the monastery. We would like to end with another Buddhist principle—"nothing is fixed." Don't worry if you feel awkward or unsure how to act. That's how we all start out. Many of us come in the door spurred on by curiosity, a spiritual quest, or simply seeking a safe haven from the busyness of modern life. We couldn't possibly list all the different reasons people come to the monastery, but simply put, the monastery is a place where we can let go of worldly concerns and possibly find answers to the deeper questions in life. We hope this booklet has helped you understand a little bit of the spirit and purpose of this monastery. Please enjoy your visit.



Directory of Monasteries

The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

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Gold Sage Monastery

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The City of Dharma Realm

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Gold Wheel Monastery

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Long Beach Monastery

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Blessing, Prosperity, & Longevity Monastery

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