



Handbook for Guests

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I. Being a Guest at the monastery

General Information

Address: Herrnschrot 50, 95236 Stammbach, Deutschland, Tel +49 (0)9256 960435, www.muttodaya.org, muttodaya@googlemail.com

The monastery is a place of spiritual practice (meditation, study, Dhamma conversation). It is the dwelling of a community of monks who are to be part of the forest tradition of Theravāda Buddhism.

Day visitors

Day visitors are welcome to use the Dhamma hall and the library any time between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.. Spending time in the Dāna room is only permitted during the meals, at tea time and when work has to be done there (cleaning, preparing food and such). But it is OK to help yourself to the drinks provided there. A drinking water tap is in the kitchen.

Guests and visitors can help themselves to the books and booklets provided on the shelf in the library which has the sign „Texte zur freien Verteilung“ (“Texts for free distribution” one copy per title and person). These publications are not for sale. The other books etc. in the library can be borrowed and read in the monastery (they usually are marked on the back). Please do not remove them from the monastery.

Meeting a monk is possible after the meal. Otherwise, only by appointment.

Staying as a Guest

A limited number of lay practitioners can stay and practise with us at the monastery.

Requirements:

1. Contacting us and discussing the planned period of stay with us via eMail or telephone. This should be done at least two weeks before the intended stay.
2. A confirmed application by eMail or phone.
3. Reading this handbook before arrival at the monastery.
4. Willingness to follow the 8 ethical precepts, the monastery rules and the schedule.
5. Filling in and submitting the registration form (eMail).

Things to bring with you:

A complete set of: bedsheet, pillow case, blanket case or sleeping bag, and towel. (If this is not possible for you, the monastery can provide bedding and a towel.). Please bring your personal toiletry (soap, shampoo, tooth paste etc.).

Comfortable, non-restricting clothes are recommended. Be prepared for cold and rainy weather. In spring and early summer, an insect repellent might be useful to keep the ticks away. An alarm clock and torch (flash light) is also recommended.

It is not permitted to wear shoes inside the house. If you don't want to walk in socks, bring a pair of slippers for indoor use.

Duration of stay

Minimum stay: usually at least three days to avoid disturbance of the quiet life in the monastery.

Maximum stay: First time guests can stay about 4 to 5 days (this may be extendable).

People who have been here before or are personally known to us usually can stay two weeks or according to agreement. The monastic community reserves the right to send people away who act in a way detrimental to a harmonious community life.

Accommodation

If possible, our guests will be accommodated in a room or kuti (hut) on their own. But this can not always be guaranteed. During mass events (Vesakh celebration, entry into the rains retreat, Kathina) we let people stay in the barn for one night (bring sleeping bag and mat). Staying in a tent is not permitted.

If you can't be accommodated at the monastery but still want to participate in the events, you will find inexpensive guest houses nearby, see for example:

www.stambach.de oder

www.yellowmap.de/D_95509_Marktschorgast/0/3789_Pensionen.htm

II. Life in the Monastery

Arrival

During the quiet times it is possible that you won't meet anybody to welcome you and show you around. But you can already do the following things:

Near the entrance you will find a green chalk board with your name and accommodation written on it. Please bring your luggage to your place. Rooms ("Zimmer") are upstairs, the kuti is at the edge of the forest north of the monastery, visible from the gate. Make your bed. Clean bedding and towel should be prepared for you to use, in case you did not bring your own. The pillow and mattress should have a cover already for general protection and should get a second sheet / case from you.

In the info room next to the library you find a white board which shows your daily cleaning chores. The chores are described in detail in the monastery version of the guest handbook (not in the internet version). You'll find a copy in your room or in the library. It is possible that you will swap jobs with someone else during your stay.

In addition to your contribution of doing your daily chores (takes about half an hour) we would like to ask you to help with various work projects in the monastery, for about two hours per day. Most of these jobs are to be done right after the house cleaning. Arranging food from alms round or cooking and cleaning up after the meal etc. will take place later accordingly. If you have certain talents that might be of use in the monastery – gardening, carpentry, car maintenance, cooking, window cleaning and so on – please let us know.

Please find out on the white board: When is the next uposatha day? Who is on office duty ("Bürodienst")? The office monk is the one to talk to in case something is missing or if you haven't been assigned a job yet and such.

During your Stay

The **purpose of your stay** is getting to know monastery life and to live and practise in a monastic environment. It is not a holiday, and the monastery is not a youth hostel. We do not expect that newcomers know everything or are able to do everything. But everyone should try their best to fit into a harmonious being together. Following the daily schedule is part of this.

Morning and evening meetings (pūjā): They usually consist of a short recital of Buddhist texts and a group meditation. There is no peer group pressure to follow along with the ritualistic part of a meeting (bowing and such). But all guests are invited to try these things out. They are an outer expression of a wholesome inner attitude which is practised here. Should there be any doubt about the purpose of these forms, please do ask.

Etiquette: In the Thai tradition monks and novices are usually addressed “Tan” (rhymes with “sun”) and their Pali name. Senior monks who have been ordained for more than 10 years are addressed “Ajahn”. Alternatively you could use the Sri Lankan way of address: “Bhante” which is appropriate in all cases.

Safety, hygiene and ecology:

Please do not light candles or incense in your room, not to speak of cigarettes! Please have someone show you the fire extinguisher and the emergency escape way via the monks quarters.

Please be conservative with our resources:

The capacity of our well is limited (especially during summer), so please do not shower excessively or leave the tap running unnecessarily.

Our heating system has automatic valves which adjust the preselected temperature. It won't get warm quicker if you open them to level 5 (it will get hotter, though). Level 3 is usually sufficient. Please do not turn on the heating if the window or door are open – remember, the valves will open fully until the preselected temperature is reached (with open windows in winter: never!). If you need fresh air, it is better to open the window widely for a few minutes while the heating is shut off. That is ecologically more sensible than trying to adjust the room climate with a slightly open window.

Similar considerations apply to saving electricity. Hot water boilers, coffee machines, lights and so on do not have to be turned on all day. If you happen to see a “forgotten” room light switched on, please feel free to switch it off. Even the light in the aisles does not have to be turned on over night.

The monastery has a biological sewage system. Therefore poisonous or bactericide substances, antibiotics and strong cleaning liquids **must never** go down the drain! The biological detergents we use here, any soap or shampoo should go into the sewage only to a limited extent.

Please keep your room tidy and clean and do not store food in your room (a drink is OK).

Practice environment: Please help maintaining an atmosphere which is suitable for inner development, based on the 8 precepts (see below). Make good use of this opportunity to stay in a monastery, to take a break from everyday's activities, to go inward and grow. Who knows if you will ever get such an opportunity again?

Instruction and guidance by the monks mainly takes place in Dhamma talks and discussions on Saturdays after the evening pūjā, sometimes on other evenings as well. A private conversation with a monk can usually be arranged, but please note that a monk is not allowed to sit or talk in private with one single woman without any other male person present.

We expect our guests to be established and self-reliant in the practice to an extent that they can fill their days with meditation and study on their own. The daily schedule provides a certain structure as a skillful means and framework for formal and non-formal communal practice, which still leaves enough space for individual seclusion and retreat. But the monastery is not a place for a complete personal retreat.

Learn to appreciate silence and quiet. Conversation during meal time or in the Dhamma hall (at any time) is not appropriate. Try to avoid “worldly” topics. Please do not disturb the going inward of others. A good place for suitable noble conversation on the practice, Dhamma, meditation is the library or a walk in the forest.

If the weather is fine sometimes, especially on weekends, day visitors who come to offer food, hang out in some kind of “party scene” in the dāna room or on the verandah around meal time. You don't have to join in. If the weather is fine meditation is great in the forest and you will find suitable places all over, e.g. along the marked hiking trail “KU14” which passes the monastery. Please respect the private sphere of the monks in the monastery part of the forest, too. Please do not enter the surroundings of the forest dwellings without invitation.

Smoking tobacco is an annoyance for others. It is not permitted to smoke in the buildings or the yard. There is a smoker's corner outside the small entrance gate (the one with the bells).

Mobile telephones have to be switched off during your stay! It is OK to recharge them in your room. If absolutely necessary you can check your mail box and SMS or do urgent phone calls **outside the monastery property**. The monastery telephone (home line) and internet connection are available only in case of **emergency** and only after obtaining **permission** from a monk.

It is OK to use your personal **laptop computer** for listening to Dhamma talks, but please do not create manager or office atmosphere if you use it in public (for example it makes a big difference if you close the lid while you are listening to an MP3). **Business affairs** are on **suspension** during your stay at the monastery.

Departure

Before your departure please take off the bed sheet, blanket and pillow case. The lower bed sheet and the inner pillow case remain and are changed only occasionally if they are very dirty. If you have used any “cloth requisites” of the monastery please put them in the laundry basket which you will find in the storage corner in the guests’ area upstairs. You will find fresh bedding and towels there as well. Please replace the things you used and put a complete set of sheet, cases and towel(s) on your bed, for the next guest to use. Sweep and mop the floor, wipe other surfaces, empty the trash bin. Take all your belongings with you! The monastic community can not be held responsible for any damage or loss of private things that you have left behind.

Please give notice if something in your room needs repair or replacement.

Have a safe journey!

All these regulations in the handbook for guests serve the purpose of living together in harmony and support for a meditative atmosphere in which inner growth can take place. Constructive and friendly suggestions for improvement are always welcome but there is no need for any proliferation of views and opinions. We all live together in this monastery in order to change ourselves, not to make the monastery fit in with our conceit and views.

Eight precepts (for lay people staying in a monastery):

1. To refrain from killing any living beings.
2. To refrain from taking what is not given.
3. To refrain from any sexual activity.
4. To refrain from lying and unwholesome speech.
5. To refrain from intoxication with alcohol or drugs.
6. To refrain from eating after noon.
7. To refrain from entertainment and beautifying the body.
8. To refrain from luxurious beds (sleeping too much).

Remarks:

- 1.: This rule applies to bothersome small creatures as well (mosquitoes, ticks).
- 2.: Anything provided in the monastery was intended by the donors for the monks to use first. All gifts (dāna) were dedicated to the monastic community, so please: no self-service. Do not expect more than is offered for the meals. Should something be missing please talk to one of the monks.
- 3.: That includes: no extravagant or indecent clothes (tank top, bare mid riff etc.)

4.: Mindful use of speech is an important aspect of the practice. Lack of respect or aggressive behaviour towards monks or other guests will not be tolerated! The meals take place in noble silence. Suitable conversation may take place during tea time in the dāna room.

5.: If you have to take drugs with heavy side effects please inform the senior monk and mention it in the application form.

6.: It is not permitted to bring and keep food supplies for private consumption (“your own food”). It is OK to bring food and make it available to the entire community. There are exceptions for people with diabetes mellitus or other ailments that require a special diet. If you do need special food please talk to the office monk or to the senior monk beforehand.

7.: That means: no newspaper, music, internet, TV, no perfume ...

8.: That means: not sleeping more than is necessary, no hanging around.

Daily schedule

6.00 a.m.	Morning puja (only on Saturdays and uposatha days)	Dhamma hall
7.00 a.m.	Breakfast	Dāna room
7.45 a.m.	Work meeting, if necessary	Dāna room
8.00 a.m.	30 minutes house cleaning	according to chore
9.00 a.m.	2 hours work period	according to job
11.00 a.m.	Main meal	Dāna room or outside
12.00 a.m.	Dhamma conversation with one of the monks	Dhamma hall
1.00 p.m.	Quiet time for individual practice	room, forest, Dh. hall
6.00 p.m.	Evening drink	Dāna room
7.00 p.m.	Evening puja (on uposatha days followed by a paritta ceremony, on Saturdays followed by a Dhamma talk, sutta reading etc.)	Dhamma hall
after that	Quiet time for individual practice	room, forest, Dh. hall

All guests have to follow the daily schedule and activities (exceptions for health reasons can be discussed with the senior monk).

The Dhamma hall and the library are open to our house guests at any time, monks’ quarters and office only on invitation. The Dāna room and kitchen should not be used during the quiet times.

III. Work in the monastery

(This chapter is not included in the web version of the handbook. Please read it in one of the printed copies. They are provided in your room and the library.)

IV. The Principle of Dāna, Generosity

The economic situation in a Buddhist monastery is based on the dāna principle, the principle of voluntary mutual generosity. The members of the ordained sangha have no income. They give their service, their time and energy, dedicate their whole life free of charge. Lay people who are inspired by this support the monks in return. This symbiosis has been alive for more than 25 centuries. The monastery has no source of income except for the goodheartedness of others.

If you would like to support the monastery there are the following options:

1. Donating money

Monks are not allowed to accept or use money according to their monastic rules. Therefore please do not hand money to the monks. You can put monetary donations into the donation box (it will be emptied by the monastery assistant) or send donations to the bank account of the association "Buddhistische Gesellschaft Frankenwald e.V." (BGFV) which is the financial steward of the monastery:

Name: Buddhistische Gesellschaft Frankenwald e.V. (BGFV)

Bank: Sparkasse Hof

Bank No: 78050000

Account No: 220711444

BIC/Swift: BYLADEM1HOF

IBAN: DE 2978050000220711444

The association takes care of everyday expenses. For building and maintenance purposes of the monastery there is a foundation which collects major donations of 1000 Euro or above. The foundation's rules ensure that its funds can only be used for these purposes. The association and the foundation thus complement each other.

If you wish to donate a large amount to the monastery foundation, please contact our treasurer: Herbert Simon, Tel. +49 (0) 9621 88153.

2. Donating material items

A list of things needed can be found on our website ("information").

3. Donating food

The monks have their daily meal at 11 a.m.

If you wish to contribute to the meal please arrive at the monastery a little earlier in order to have enough time to prepare the offering. It helps coordination if you let us know about your contribution in advance.

If you can't make it to the monastery at that time (e.g. because of having to work during the week), you can also deposit your offering of (cooked) food in the monastery kitchen in the late afternoon. Your gift will be re-heated (or otherwise prepared) by lay people and offered to the monks on the following day.

4. Donating work

Your help with building or maintenance is also greatly welcome, be it a couple of hours during the day or longterm during a stay at the monastery. For arrangements please contact us.