

Vimutti Guest Information

Vimutti Buddhist Monastery is located on 150 acres of beautiful forests, green rolling hills and streams near the small town of Bombay, New Zealand, 30km south of Auckland. Vimutti is a monastery devoted to the training of monastics and lay people in the Forest Tradition of Theravada Buddhism. It is not a retreat center, as such, however periodically we do hold residential retreats and offer meditation workshops. Vimutti is not the right place to come and do an individual private retreat, but guests are welcome to visit for the day or arrange to stay for a period of time, sharing in the lifestyle of the monastic community.

Dana

In keeping with our tradition, there is no charge for staying at Vimutti, but we operate on a system of mutual generosity (dana). The monastery is supported entirely by voluntary donations in the form of food, supplies, materials, money, books and work. While there is no obligatory charge to stay, guests may want to consider how they might contribute to the needs of maintaining the monastery. Developing the virtues of generosity, gratitude and kindness are essential qualities that support the practice of mental cultivation. The current facilities exist because of the generosity of people in the past. Generosity in the present creates the opportunity for others to practice the Dhamma in the future.

The Eight Precepts

Lay guests who stay at Vimutti Buddhist Monastery abide by the traditional ethical standard known as the eight precepts:

1. Harmlessness: To refrain from intentionally harming any human or animal, including insects.
2. Trustworthiness: To refrain from stealing or taking anything that is not given to you. This includes making use of supplies in the monastery unless they have been specified for your use, for example, taking food from the kitchen outside the mealtime.
3. Celibacy: To refrain from all romantic and sexual behavior. Please avoid any physical contact with, or going on private walks with people who you are sexually attracted to.
4. Honesty: To refrain from lying. It is encouraged to speak sparingly and mindfully, saying that which is true, beneficial, kind, meaningful and

harmonious.

5. Sobriety: To refrain from alcohol, recreational drugs and other intoxicants that cloud clarity.
6. Renunciation: To refrain from eating after midday. The monastery's practice is to eat one main meal a day plus a light breakfast. After midday, some drinks and other items are allowable (see below). This practice frees time for meditation and enhances simplicity of life.
7. Restraint: To refrain from entertainment, beautification and adornment; for example, music, dancing, playing games, jewelry, make-up or perfume. This encourages focusing your attention inwards towards the Dhamma.
8. Alertness: To refrain from using luxurious beds, in order to encourage wakefulness and contentment with simplicity.

These training precepts are guidelines for good conduct in body and speech. They provide a moral foundation for the development of mindfulness and clear comprehension in meditation and in every activity throughout the day. The precepts also serve to promote harmony within the community through restraining unwholesome speech and action. These fundamental principles of training cultivate the self-discipline and purity of action necessary for spiritual development. Our Dhamma practice includes all aspects of daily life, however simple and ordinary, as opportunities to develop mindfulness and other spiritual qualities: kindness, respect, effort, joy, contentment, faith, and patience. In time, the virtuous qualities that grow within such training gather strength and contribute towards deeper inner peace. This in turn fosters insight: a gradually deepening understanding of the nature of reality, our place within it and the causes of pain and happiness. The Buddha's path then culminates in the liberating wisdom of enlightenment.

Daily Schedule

Guests must participate in all aspects of the daily routine, including the morning and evening group meditations, Dhamma instruction, chanting, chores, a three-hour work period and days of silent retreat. The daily schedule changes throughout the week and year, but a typical day would include:

Morning meditation and chanting

Breakfast

Main meal, clean-up and Dhamma discussion

Work period

Tea

Evening meditation and chanting

Dhamma reflection

Coming and Going

A monastery is a sanctuary from the usual worldly concerns for those who have dedicated themselves to spiritual practice. Guests at Vimutti share the lifestyle of the community, so it is not appropriate to come and go without notice or to engage in external business during their stay. We ask guests to take care of all business and travel arrangements prior to arrival and agree to stay in the monastery for the duration of their visit.

Food and Lodgings

As Vimutti Monastery survives solely on the donations of others, we accept whatever food is offered on any particular day with gratitude. Because of this we are not able to accommodate special dietary needs. However, there is usually an abundance and variety of healthy food. If you need to eat in the afternoon for health reasons, it may not be suitable to stay at the monastery.

One of the traditions in Forest Monasteries is to accept whatever lodging one is offered with an attitude of contentment and gratitude. At Vimutti, the guest lodgings are simple huts with bathing facilities located in the central area. Men and women stay in separate areas of the monastery. Under no circumstances should a guest go into the dwelling of a person of the opposite sex without express permission of the senior monk.

Recommended Items to Bring

- jandals/flip flops/sandals for taking on and off easily when entering indoor spaces
- a sleeping bag or blankets
- a set of sheets if not bringing a sleeping bag
- pillow case
- towel and face cloth
- toiletries
- torch/flashlight
- alarm clock
- sturdy work boots/shoes
- white shirts and black pants/skirts for the meditation hall
- work clothes
- warm clothing and rain gear for Autumn through Spring.
- it is helpful but not necessary to bring work gloves, a sun hat and sunscreen; and a plastic cup for brushing your teeth and a plastic bowl to place in the sink for washing your face.

- meditation cushion, bench or meditation mat for use in your dwelling. The monastery has these items, but they are for use in the meditation hall only.
- Most importantly, please bring an attitude of being easy to look after, not fussy or complaining, but content and grateful for the opportunity to practice the Dhamma.

Technology

To help maintain the monastery as a haven of tranquility, simplicity and solitude, guests are asked to leave their laptop computers or tablets at home and to refrain from using their cell phones for calls or email during their stay. This policy encourages peace and contemplation. It may also expose addiction to electronic devices. If it is absolutely necessary to use a monastery telephone or computer for a departure arrangement or an emergency, first ask the guest monk or a senior monk for permission.

Appropriate Dress and Appearance

A Buddhist monastery is a sanctuary of spiritual devotion where we have the rare opportunity to focus our minds on the path leading towards the highest happiness. Out of respect for this noble aspiration as well as the traditional customs of Asia, we request that you dress modestly when visiting. Loose fitting, comfortable clothing is recommended. Please do not go bare-chested or wear revealing, tight fitting or suggestive clothing: including shorts, short skirts, low cut neck lines, halter-tops or tank-tops.

- When not working, and especially inside buildings and dwellings, please wear clothes that are clean and presentable.
- Men should shave regularly.
- Men or women with long hair are asked to tie it back.
- Please remove your shoes before entering the main buildings and your dwelling.
- Please do not wear any jewellery, including that for piercings.
- When not working, we request that guests wear the traditional monastic dress of a white top and black bottoms. The reasons for this are:
 1. To conform to the contemporary and ancient standard of forest monasteries.
 2. To de-emphasise external expressions of self and ego. Clothes can be one way of reinforcing personal identity, so in monasteries people wear clothes appropriate for taking the emphasis off of sensuality and individuality.
 3. To help to differentiate between visitors and lay guests.
 4. As a test of letting go. If we cannot let go of the relatively minor attachment to clothes for a period of time, then it will be very difficult to let go of the deeper attachments that create suffering in our lives.

It is best to be prepared for a variety of weather conditions, with the emphasis on comfort and appropriateness, rather than fashion. In the meditation hall, please wear

quiet fabrics (for example, cotton instead of nylon). Make sure you have enough clothes to stay warm at night, bring at least one set of clothes suitable for working outside and be prepared for rain if it comes.

Afternoon Allowables

There are some food items that are allowable to eat in the afternoon if you find that your energy is getting too low: cheese, dark chocolate, candied ginger and licorice are some of the popular ones, in addition to juice, tea, honey and coffee. We suggest that you bring your own afternoon allowables (and maybe some to share with others). There is a communal supply of tea, coffee and cocoa, but guests are also welcome to bring their own. No food, drinks or afternoon allowables are permitted in dwellings; however, they may be stored in the communal kitchen area. The concept of 'no dinner' is always more intimidating than the reality, and it can actually feel much better and lighter to have little or nothing in one's belly in the evening than to have it too full of the 'allowables'.

Smoking and Fires

Smoking or lighting fires of any kind, including candles, are prohibited due to the risk of fire. The only exceptions to this are the candles that are lit in the meditation hall.

Arranging Transportation

Vimutti Monastery is located near the small town of Bombay. If you are driving, please see the directions below. If you plan to take a bus from Auckland or Hamilton, you can get off at the Bombay Service Centre, exit #471, on the Southern Motorway (Hwy 1). If you inform the monastery in advance of your arrival time, it is often possible that someone from the monastery can pick you up. Guests have also had good luck hitch-hiking.

If you are arriving at the Auckland airport, you can take a public bus to Manukau and there change to another bus to Bombay (on the way South towards Hamilton). If you let us know what time your bus is arriving, it is usually possible for someone from the monastery to pick you up from Bombay.

Directions to Vimutti Buddhist Monastery

- Take the Southern Motorway between Auckland and Hamilton
- Get off at Bombay exit # 471 and go left onto Mill Rd.
- Proceed through a roundabout until a 'T' of Razorback & Bombay Roads,
- Go left on Bombay Rd.
- Take the next sharp right curve into Paparata Rd.
- Stay on Paparata 7km until you pass Lynd Rd on your left.
- Then turn right onto Nibbana drive and continue down to the monastery.