

# Po Lam “Monastery Experience”

## Eligibility & Guidelines



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### 1. Eligibility

We welcome your interest in spending time with our community. Please dedicate some time to reading and understanding these guidelines. The Monastery Experience is intended for those who wish to strengthen their practice in a monastic environment, supported by the Triple Gem, and are happy to participate in all daily activities. As such, the minimum pre-requisites are:

- a) Prior completion of a 5-, 7-, or 15-day residential mindfulness meditation course with Venerable Yin Kit
- b) Active participation in at least 3 events at Po Lam Buddhist Association in Chilliwack, BC within the last calendar year (this may be waived for applicants who live out of province)
- c) Fluency in at least one language (English, Cantonese, Mandarin)

If you fulfill the above pre-requisites, you may:

- a) Fill out the online “Monastery Experience” form
- b) Send an email to [info@polam.ca](mailto:info@polam.ca) with your request to participate in the program – please ensure you use the same name as you used on the application form.

## 2. Interacting with *Sangha* (Monastics)

Po Lam is a place of religious and spiritual practice with a resident community of monastics, novices, as well as layperson students. “Po Lam” means “Precious Forest.” Many of the interactions and routines may be unfamiliar to you, and we encourage everyone to use this unique opportunity to develop their practice.

Some of the precepts that the monastics follow will affect interactions with laypeople. For example:

- Monastics will not generally shake hands or make physical contact with others. Please greet members of the *sangha* with your palms together.
- Please do not bring gifts intended for one particular monastic. Offerings of food are made to the triple gem first and then shared equally amongst the *sangha*. Material offerings that are made to Po Lam are distributed equally and according to need.
- The monastic *sangha* can be addressed as “\_\_\_\_ Sze Fu” or “Sister / Brother \_\_\_\_.”

## 3. Creating Serenity and Harmony

These guidelines help to create a harmonious and serene community of practice:

- Dress modestly. Please wear capris, pants, or long skirts. No shorts or skirts above the knee, no tank tops, no tight / revealing clothing.
- No overnight stay of the opposite sex within the same lodging.
- Limit your use of personal electronic devices – only use them when necessary and not for entertainment or surfing.
- No photo or video recording inside the chanting and meditation halls. Please ask prior to taking any photos or videos in other areas.
- No smoking or vaping.
- No alcohol, drugs, medicinal marijuana, or mind-altering substances.
- No meat or meat products, or anything in the onion / garlic family on the property – this includes inside vehicles.
- Observe all signs posted. For example, “no admittance,” “noble silence,” etc

## Five Training Rules, or Precepts

Everyone staying at Po Lam is required to agree to the following training rules while they stay at Po Lam. These are not rigid rules; they are the basis of spiritual development.

1. Refrain from harming or taking the life of any living creature
2. Refrain from taking that which is not given
3. Refrain from any sensual or sexual contact with others
4. Refrain from lying, harsh words, divisive speech, and idle chatter
5. Refrain from using any intoxicants

## **4. Gratitude**

All the lodging and material resources at Po Lam arise from the generosity of others to support the monastic *sangha*.

- When using any resources such as power, water, heat, paper products, etc. please conserve so that we care for the world in which we live, and to ensure that the generosity of others is not taken for granted.
- Please have respect and gratitude for what is given. Keep the facilities clean and tidy.
- Understand that the lodging situation may change and you may be asked to move as the composition and needs of the community change.
- Do not invite others onto the property. If you would like to invite guests or neighbors, please ask the reception nun or her representative for permission.
- Nothing should be taken or borrowed without the prior consent of the reception nun or her representative.
- If you are serving on the farm, please do not consume any of the harvest, whether vegetables or fruits. All food is first offered to the triple gem, and only then can be distributed by the kitchen / dining room staff.
- No contacts made during your stay should be used for personal or professional gain.

## 5. Work

Working in a monastery – any monastery – is a form of practice and an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the Buddha’s teachings. If we look at service as “helping” the monastery, we are not viewing it correctly.

- Work with awareness of both the task, and the mind you carry while performing any tasks.
- Work in harmony with others. If you encounter conflicts or difficulties, speak with your team leader.
- Work using noble speech and only speak as is necessary for the task at hand.
- Take good care of your body.
- Only do what you are asked. Please go to your team leader for additional tasks once yours are completed.
- If you have been assigned a task that is new to you, please ask for instructions or a demonstration.
- Do not put anything on altars, tables or pedestals in the Meditation Hall and Chanting Hall.
- Take great care with items: lift furniture with a partner. Never drag furniture across the floor.
- Lift items or use sliders – do not slide things across a table or altar surface.
- If you have any questions, or require supplies or tools, please ask the team leader.

## 6. Meals

Please find appreciation for the food available and do not waste anything that is given to you, even a grain of rice.

- Taking smaller portions and going back for seconds and thirds is a good strategy.
- The nutritious vegetarian food is prepared with care. We are unable to accommodate any special diets.
- Lunch is the main meal of the day. If you require dinner, please sign up in the dining room.
- Arrive 5 minutes early for lunch, with your hands washed.
- In a monastic setting, the monastics are served first, then the laypeople.

## 7. Vihara Care

Before you leave, please care for the room and the vihara so that the next students will enjoy a clean and welcoming space.

- Sweep and mop the floor with hot water.
- Dust all surfaces.
- Wipe down door handles, window handles, and light switches with a disinfectant spray.
- If you have borrowed linens or towels, please put them into the designated hampers.
- Dispose of any garbage or recycling in the appropriate bins – located across from the Building C main doors.
- Take all your belongings with you. Any items left behind will be donated to the local community.
- Take note of any repairs required and inform the coordinator.
- Join a clean-up team to help with general cleaning of the vihara.

## 8. What to Bring

- Comfortable and appropriate clothing for meditation, and for outdoor wear during service periods. Please keep in mind the season and weather; we can have extreme heat in the summer, snow in the winter, and wet soggy days in the fall and spring.
- Bring enough clothing for your entire stay. There is limited hand-washing available.
- Hat
- Toiletries – please bring unscented products.
- Towels
- Water bottle or thermos
- Bedding: A fitted bottom sheet and duvet cover for a twin size mattress, and pillowcase. Sleeping bags are permitted. Freshly laundered only please.
- Indoor slippers
- Personal meditation supplies: cushion, shawl, bench etc.
- Po Lam does not provide computer or internet access during your stay. Please make all travel arrangements prior to your arrival.

## 9. Generosity

Po Lam follows the tradition set out by our Teachers who always gave the Teachings freely without asking for anything in return. Po Lam never charges fees for programs or retreats or for staying with the community. The Buddha's teachings are so precious that a price can never be placed upon them. Everything that is here has been offered by the kind generosity of others that have come before you.

For a frame of reference, the cost for a visitor/student staying one night is approximately \$100 (CDN) each night. Any amount of donation given with your volition to support the monastery is greatly appreciated.

No one is ever turned away due to lack of funds.

To continue to provide "Monastery Experiences," retreats and other learning opportunities at Po Lam, your generous donation is very necessary. You may contribute a monetary donation by e-transferring to [polam@polam.ca](mailto:polam@polam.ca), leaving a cash donation, or using a credit card. To donate via credit card, please follow this [link](#) or email [polam@polam.ca](mailto:polam@polam.ca)

**We rejoice in your wholesome act of generosity!**

## 10. Daily Schedule

Please examine the daily timetable below. Everyone staying at Po Lam is expected to participate fully in the daily schedule, as it is an integral part of the practice. Please determine for yourself if you are willing to abide by the schedule. Those who do not fully participate may be asked to leave.

每日時間表 Daily Schedule (如有變更，以實際安排為準 Subject to change)		
請於每節開始之前，提早 5 分鐘到達 Please arrive 5 minutes before the official start time		
時間 Time	活動 Activity	注意事項 Notes
上午 5:30 – 6:15 AM	Morning Meditation 1 (Optional) 早晨禪坐 共修 1 (自由選擇)	OR personal practice 這段時間也可用於個人自修
上午 6:30 – 7:00 AM	Breakfast 早餐	Please make sure to put your dishes away for kitchen staff to clean 用餐後請把用過的餐具放進盆碗，方便廚房員工清洗
上午 7:50 – 9:00 AM	Morning Meditation 2 早晨禪坐 共修 2	
上午 9:10 – 10:00 AM	Sutra Recitation in C Chanting Hall 讀經 在 C 樓下佛堂	During summer retreat
上午 10:10 – 11:20 AM	Work Period 出坡	Please see bulletin board for task list 請參閱公告板的工作清單
上午 11:30 – 12:00 NN	Lunch 午餐	
下午 12:15 – 1:00 PM	Lunch Clean-up / Work Period 午餐後清潔 / 出坡	Please see bulletin board for task list 請參閱公告板的工作清單
下午 1:00 – 2:00 PM	Community Meeting / Rest Period 集體會議 / 休息	
下午 2:00 – 3:30 PM	Flexi / Work Period 彈性 / 出坡	Please see bulletin board 請看公告板
下午 3:30 – 4:15 PM	Evening Service 晚課	Optional 自由選擇
下午 5:00 – 5:30 PM	Light Dinner (Dining Room) 藥石 (五觀堂)	Please check the Dining Room board 請看五觀堂公告板
晚上 5:50 – 7:00 PM	Evening Meditation 3 晚上禪坐 共修 3	
晚上 7:00 – 8:30 PM	Flexi / Personal Care 彈性 / 梳洗	Please see bulletin board 請看公告板
晚上 8:30 – 9:30 PM	Lights Out, Rest 關燈，休息	