

# **Volunteer Handbook**

City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

DRAFT VERSION 2.5

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Welcome

Welcome to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. 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 volunteers 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 volunteer experience is meaningful and worthwhile. This Volunteer Handbook provides some background and basic information for new volunteers, 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.

## 1.2 A Brief History of the Founder

The Venerable Master Hsuan Hua (1918-1995) 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.

### 1.3 Working in the Monastery – Instructions from Venerable Master Hua

“At the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, which is a place where Buddhism is beginning, you must show your real wisdom, your genuine skills. When there is anything that can be beneficial to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, we shouldn't wait until “wood begins to speak or mud opens its mouth” before we work. Every gesture, every movement is an opportunity to put the Buddhadharma into practice. It's a time to apply all the Buddhadharma that you have learned.

“All of you at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas have your own talents and wisdom, so you should fulfill your responsibilities towards Buddhism. Don't just look for what is beneficial to yourself before doing it, or do it lethargically, going through the motions without being serious.

“Now as I am studying Buddhism with you, you wait to ask your Teacher this thing and that. If you take a step you must ask. If you stand there, you also must ask, can I stand? When you take another step you again have to ask, can I take a step? When you go to the bathroom, you ask, is it ok if I go to the bathroom? What kind of person would you say you are? You are simply too much! This is another way of not taking the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas as your own responsibility. You should see this as your own responsibility because then you will not shirk your duty or do it in a perfunctory way, which will keep things from getting done.

“Now everybody is very busy. The busy-ness is cultivation, in cultivating you should keep yourself busy. If you aren't busy, you get lazy. If you are idle, you begin to daydream. So you should be busy every day, then you are cultivating. Some people, in order to cultivate, need to specially find some work to do, because the mind is like a monkey; where there is no work to do, it wants to wander east, west, south, and north, up and down, it wants to run in all six directions. So you should



keep busy and give this monkey some work to do; at the same time you will be supporting the monastery. You should also regard the matters of the monastery as your own. You should not make distinctions between you and the monastery, thinking: the monasteries belong to the Buddha, while we here are living beings. We living beings help the Buddha's monastery, the Buddha helps us living beings to realize Buddhahood, so no matter what you do, you should do it sincerely. If you are sincere, there will be a response.

“Working is just like meditating; you sit in meditation until you are single-minded. Reciting the Buddha's name is the same way. When you work until you have *samadhi*, you are also investigating Chan, so it depends on how you perform your work. You can practice in our every gesture and movement, in every word and deed. If you know how to practice, then you will be practicing when you walk, stand, sit, and lie down. If you don't know how to practice, then when you walk, stand, sit, and lie down, you will be having false thoughts. All of us should protect this monastery of the Buddha, in order that living beings may realize Buddhahood.”

## 2 The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

### 2.1 Introduction to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas

The City is set among 448 acres of groves and meadows in Mendocino County, California, 110 miles north of San Francisco. The grounds contain approximately 80 landscaped acres on which are found more than 25 buildings and ample parking for more than 300 cars. At the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas are Tathagata Monastery and Joyous Giving House for monks and nuns (Bhikshus and Bhikshunis) respectively, who have been ordained in the Buddhist Sangha. On the grounds, are Dharma Realm Buddhist University, Instilling Goodness Elementary and Developing Virtue Secondary School, a home for the aged, an organic farm, and a vegetarian restaurant.



*Front Gate of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas*

Extensive fields, orchards, meadows, and woods surround the campus. The quiet country landscape, relatively mild climate, and clean air of the beautiful Ukiah Valley give residents of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas an ideal environment for study, spiritual growth, and wholesome fellowship. All residents undertake the work of regulating their conduct and making their hearts peaceful and harmonious. Taking part in a community devoted to pure and unselfish living can itself be the most beneficial and inspiring experience among all the opportunities at the City.

### 2.2 People from All Walks of Life



People from all walks of life live or visit the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas: Asians and Westerners, young and old, conservative and liberal, businessmen and farmers, and so on. This makes CTTB an interesting (and sometimes confusing!) place to stay.

In Buddhism, there are a limitless number of Dharma Doors (ways to practice) because there are countless living beings. Every person has a

different background and hence a different method for approaching, studying, and practicing Buddhism. Some enter in the door of faith, while others enter in the door of logic and reason. Some like devotional practices, while others find an affinity with meditation and study. The principle in the community is to be mindful of the diversity. Often by interacting with people significantly different from our approach to the world opens our mind to an entirely new way of seeing things.

### 2.3 Daily Schedule

As a volunteer living in CTTB, you have an opportunity to participate in a full schedule beginning from 4am until 9:30pm everyday. The tight schedule is one of the unique aspects of living in the Buddhist monastery because it allows one to develop a discipline that gives rise to concentration which develops one's inherent wisdom.

The schedule is as follows:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>
4:00-5:00AM	Morning Ceremony
5:00-6:00	Meditation / Universal Bowing
6:15-6:45	Breakfast
7:00-8:00	Avatamsaka Recitation
8:00-10:00	Community Work / Classes
10:30-12:00PM	Meal Offering / Lunch / Three Refuges
12:30-2:00	Great Compassion Repentance
12:00-4:00	Community Work / Classes
5:15-5:45	Dinner
6:30-7:30	Evening Ceremony
7:30-9:00	Evening Lecture / Discussion / Self-study
9:00-9:30	Mantra Recitation

At first this schedule might seem difficult, but you will find that if you stick to it, you will experience for yourself the benefits. In fact, in Eastern philosophy, people are recommended to wake up before the sunrise, eat early and at regular times, and maintain a regular spiritual practice. All of this naturally occurs in the daily rhythm of life in the monastery.

### 3 Volunteer System

#### 3.1 Support Staff

##### 3.1.1 Volunteer Instructor(s)

The volunteer instructors create a space for volunteers to learn the Dharma through classes, discussions, and Q&A. For instance, there might be a monastic leading meditation in the morning or holding a discussion in the evening.

##### 3.1.2 Volunteer Work Leader(s)

This person is the work leader for a particular department or area and will provide the tools, instructions, and supervision required to get the job done.

##### 3.1.3 Volunteer Coordinator

This person is responsible for making sure that the volunteer is introduced to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas as well as the general community.

#### 3.2 Support Services

To help take care of the essential needs of volunteers, these are the support services that DRBA makes available to volunteers depending on their situation.

##### 3.2.1 Housing and Dining

Housing is provided for volunteers living on campus depending on availability. Three vegetarian meals are provided daily. Breakfast 6:15-6:45, Lunch 11:00-12:00, Dinner 5:15-5:45.



*Accommodations are simple and functional.*

##### 3.2.2 Opportunities to Study and Learn

Opportunities will be setup so that volunteers can learn Buddhism, monasticism, or other possible topics of interest. Dharma Realm Buddhist University ([www.drbu.org](http://www.drbu.org)) also offers classes that are open to volunteers. Please inquire at the University for registration and enrolling in courses.

##### 3.2.3 Phone Calls / Internet / Mail

Two public phones are located on the CTTB campus (please refer to Campus Map) for volunteer use. If you have a personal cell phone, please be mindful and don't disturb others while using it. In general, phone calls should be minimized given the atmosphere of the monastery.



CTTB does not provide internet for volunteers staying at the monastery.

If it is necessary for you to receive mail during your stay here, please have it addressed as follows:

*Your Name*

*CTTB Volunteer Program – Men OR Women*

*2001 Talmage Rd.*

*Ukiah, CA 95482*

#### 3.2.4 Transportation

For volunteers without their own vehicle, we try our best to arrange carpools. Please let the administration office staff and volunteer coordinator know when you are arriving or leaving, and they will inform you if there is a carpool. However, we cannot guarantee there will be a ride. There is a Greyhound Station near CTTB as well.

#### 3.2.5 Health & Medical

Volunteers are encouraged to purchase their own health insurance that covers the duration of their stay at CTTB. Please also sign the medical liability waiver form and turn it into the volunteer coordinators.

#### 3.2.6 Laundry

For the men, a laundry machine and dryer can be found in the bathroom next to the small dining hall (on your right immediately after entering the bathroom).

For the women, the laundry machines are located on the first floor of the Bodhi House in the room directly across from the water cooler.

The laundry machine takes four quarters and the dryer takes two quarters. We encourage you to line dry your clothes in the areas available to save energy and resources.

## **4 Essential Guidelines**

These guidelines are established to help maintain a peaceful, harmonious, and safe environment conducive to spiritual practice and moral development for yourself and the general community. These are the essential guidelines, but for the complete list please refer to the “Regulations for Residents at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas.”

## 4.1 General Grounds

All residents abide by ethical guidelines which are summed up by the five precepts of Buddhism which are: (1) not killing, (2) not stealing, (3) not engaging in sexual misconduct, (4) not lying, and (5) not using intoxicants (drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, tobacco, etc.). By following the precepts, our lives become freer and more peaceful because we avoid the confusion and the negative consequences that come from going against these guidelines.

1. *Separation of Men and Women:* Since the monastery is home to monks and nuns who have taken vows of celibacy, as volunteers we try to be respectful and mindful of their lifestyle; hence, men and women are separated. Please be mindful of the areas designated for men and women. Also in the monastery, please avoid being in a one-to-one discussion with someone of the opposite gender. Many people who visit appreciate this environment because it allows them to concentrate and practice with fewer distractions.
2. *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 more easily. Modest clothing is important because it causes fewer distractions for other people. Thus, it is the custom in monasteries to refrain from wearing clothing such as mini-skirts, shorts and sleeveless shirts.
3. *Cherishing All Forms of Life:* Please refrain from killing all living creatures in the monastery, including even small insects such as spiders, ants, flies, and mosquitoes.
4. *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.



*Peacocks roam freely on campus.*

5. *Things Not to Bring into the Monastery:* Please do not bring alcohol, meat (including fish & poultry), eggs, food prepared with onion, garlic, chives, leeks, or shallots<sup>1</sup>, illicit drugs, and cigarettes into the monastery.
6. *Mindful Etiquette in the Monastery:* The posture of our bodies influences the states of our mind. We should try to be mindful in all postures. The guidelines are that we should “walk like a gentle breeze, stand like a pine tree, sit like a bell, and reclining like a bow.” Also please refrain from lying down on the ground in public areas.

#### 4.2 Buddha Hall

1. Please attend at least the Morning Recitation (4:00-5:00am), Meal Offering & Three Refuges (10:30-10:50 & 11:50-12:00pm), Evening Recitation (6:30-7:30pm), and Evening Lecture (7:30-9:00pm). These ceremonies are the structure and mold for the spiritual practice within the community. Please do your utmost to attend these recitations.
2. You are encouraged to attend the Universal Bowing (5:00-6:00am), Avatamsaka Recitation (7:00-8:00am), Great Compassion Repentance (12:30-2:00pm), and Mantra Recitation (9:00-9:30pm).



#### 4.3 Residences

1. Please maintain an atmosphere of study and contemplation in the residences. Sounds in one room are easily heard in another, so please be mindful and considerate of others.
2. Men and women are not allowed in each other’s residences or surrounding areas.
3. Refrain from carrying on conversations in the residences after 10pm since this may disrupt others who are trying to fall asleep.
4. Do not make any permanent changes to your room or move furniture out of your room without permission from the guest prefect.
5. Please keep your room orderly and clean. Our external environment is often a



*Great Compassion Courtyard in the morning.*

<sup>1</sup> Buddhist practitioners often abstain from eating these plants because they increase anger and lust. Although we are often unaware of it, the food we eat has a strong impact on our physical, psychological and spiritual states.

reflection and an influence on our internal state of mind.

6. Please do not leave food (drinks are okay) out in public areas in the dormitories. This prevents us from having ants and supports people who are trying to practice eating only during mealtimes or just once a day.
7. Please recycle. (Separate bottles & cans, paper, and trash in designated areas.)

#### 4.4 Dining Hall

The food that comes to the monastery is given as an offering for those practicing a spiritual path. The Five Contemplations gives the spirit of how food is eaten in the monastery:

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

We are grateful for the food we receive, and take only as much as we need to sustain the body. By being mindful of the food we eat and regulating our eating schedule, we are developing the discipline and concentration that develops our inherent wisdom.

#### Hours at the Dining Hall

Breakfast 6:15-6:45am (including Offering and End of Meal Chant)  
Lunch 10:30-12:00pm (including Meal Offering and Three Refuges)  
Dinner 5:15-5:45pm

1. Please come to the meals on time so that the kitchen staff does not have to wait for you to finish.
2. Please eat in silence while maintaining proper mindfulness.
3. Please finish all the food you take. (You are welcome to go back for seconds or thirds if you are not sure how much you need in the beginning.)
4. When finished, please throw the organic food in the organic bin and the normal trash in the trash bin, put your dishes and utensils in the buckets for washing, and wipe your table clean.
5. Please do not take any food from the dining hall. This food is an offering and should not be taken for personal consumption.
6. Please refrain from eating the food on the school student's table. These were purchased with governmental funds specifically for the students.

7. Please do not look through the bins or refrigerator yourself. If you have a medical need for a food, please let us know in advance.

#### 4.5 Working

Working in the monastery is an opportunity to continue the practice and be part of the community. Please work in a mindful and considerate manner. As a volunteer, you will be expected to work 30 hours/week in exchange for your Room and Board.



*Buddhist nuns working in the field.*

#### 4.6 Leaving the CTTB Grounds

If you are planning on going off campus overnight, please fill out an “Off-Campus Request Form” and give it to the volunteer coordinator. This lets us know where you are in case an emergency arises or if one of your relatives or friends needs to contact you.

Also please do not leave CTTB Grounds after 6pm unless there it is an absolute necessity.

<p><b>CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS</b> <b>OFF-CAMPUS REQUEST FORM</b></p>
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Person Requesting:	Today’s Date:
Destination:	Departure Date/Time:
Who is the driver?	Return Date/Time:
Who is going with you?	
Reason for going out?	
Signature of supervisor:	

## **5 Emergency Procedures**

### 5.1 Personal Injuries

First Aid Kits are available around campus. Please ask your work leader where the first aid kit is located for your work area. Also, the Administration Office and volunteer coordinator has a first aid kit as well.

For major injuries that require medical help, Ukiah Valley Medical Center is the closest medical facility.

### **Ukiah Valley Medical Center**

275 Hospital Dr. / Ukiah, CA 95482 / (707) 463-7670

Directions: (1) Drive out of CTTB on Talmage Rd; (2) Right onto 101N; (3) Take Perkins Exit; (4) Left at end of ramp; (5) Right onto Hospital Drive.

Note: The Ukiah Valley Medical Center is very expensive (~\$500 a visit).

## **6 Conclusion**



Coming to the monastery, we hope you have the opportunity to develop your spiritual practice, find meaningful work, and learn from good friends and teachers. We hope you have a meaningful stay full of Dharma joy.

Lastly, if you have any questions, comments, and/or suggestions, please email [vc@drbavolunteers.org](mailto:vc@drbavolunteers.org) or contact the volunteer coordinators.

# CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS

