

About Lions Gate, Daily Schedule, and Directions to the Priory

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We welcome everyone to come to Lions Gate Buddhist Priory for long or short stays. Our priory (small temple/monastery) is situated on 160 acres of forested land on the slopes of Botanie Mountain in Botanie Valley near Lytton BC Canada, which is about four hours drive northeast of Vancouver. We have lived at this location since 2007, having purchased the land in 2003. There are three monks living here and a varying number of lay residents, who come for short or extended stays. Lions Gate is a provincially registered charity, registered in 1985. Our Teacher and Spiritual Director is Rev. Master Koten Benson, who was ordained as a Buddhist monk in 1978 and is a senior Dharma Heir of Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. Our temple is affiliated with the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives (website: www.obcon.org). We practice in the Serene Reflection Meditation Tradition (J: Sōtō Zen; Ch: Ts'ao T'Tung Chan).

Our facilities are somewhat limited and moderately comfortable. We live in a small cabin on a plateau above the valley at an elevation of 980 m. (3000'). The cabin is off-grid, but we do have a primitive solar/generator electric system which provides us with basic lights and power. We have hot and cold running water and a shower. Our toilet is an unheated outhouse. We heat the cabin with firewood. We also have a small log-cabin meditation hall which we use in the warmer months.

There are four distinct seasons here. The winters are generally cold, lasting from about mid-November to mid-March, with daytime temperatures ranging from -10 C (-15 F) to +5 C (40 F), and nighttime temperatures from -20 C (-5 F) to 0 C (32 F). We sometimes get colder snaps, with temperatures as low as -30 C (-20 F), but usually not for long. Snowfall can be considerable, in some years up to 4 ft, and sparse in others. The summers last from mid-June to early September, and some days can be very hot and dry, with temperatures in the mid 30 C (90-95 F), and nights cooling to the mid-teens. Some days can be as hot as 40 C (105 F). Spring and autumn temperatures are generally mild and pleasant, with sometimes heavy rain, especially in the late fall. Nights and mornings can be quite chilly. There is a "mosquito season" from mid-May to early July. There are many bears about, though no grizzlies; and they are generally timid and harmless, although we don't ever approach them. There are some cougars in the area, but they are very rarely seen, and there has never been a known attack on humans in the area. There are also deer, elk, moose, mountain sheep, lynx, bobcats, coyotes, and a vast variety of smaller mammals, birds and insects. We have a phone and access to high-speed wireless internet. **We ask that visitors and guests put away their computers and internet-capable devices while here.** The idea is that this be a place where people can have an opportunity to lay aside their worldly concerns and interests and look inwards through meditation and practice. **There is no cel-phone signal in the valley, but cel-phones work in the village of Lytton.**

While residing with us, we ask that guests follow the monastic schedule and attend all activities, and that they limit their spiritual and religious practices to those that we undertake here. Our daily schedule consists of

formal meditation periods, ceremonies, working meditation periods where we do the work required to live up here, Dharma Talks and discussions, as well as scheduled periods of rest and relaxation. We try to do our activities together as a community. Often things will arise which will pull us out of the schedule; however, we do our best to act within the scheduled activities. We are not on a rule of silence, but we try not to indulge in a lot of frivolous talk. The general atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, based on mutual respect, harmony and compassion, which flows naturally from the mind of meditation. Spiritual counselling is available for anyone wishing it.

Serene Reflection Meditation (J:Zazen; Ch: Cha'an) is the central practice of our training. From the mind of meditation, we cultivate compassion and loving-kindness for all beings. As such, we are vegetarian (not vegan; we consume dairy and eggs). **We are unable to accommodate special diets for guests other than for those who drink soy milk. We also cannot provide storage space for special diet foods. Please contact us with any questions or concerns.**

If you are intending to visit, please let us know ahead of time if you have any health concerns, allergies, etc.

We do not allow weapons, tobacco, alcohol or other intoxicants (including marijuana) at the Priory.

Our Priory is supported entirely through the donations of others. We receive no grants or assistance from any government or other entity, nor

are we financially supported by the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. We do not charge guests for staying here; however, most residents and visitors choose to make a monetary donation to help with the costs sustained in living here. There is no set or suggested amount, and there is no impediment to sincere people with limited or no financial resources. We try to live simply and always within our means. We hold out our begging bowls in faith and accept whatever is offered with gratitude.

We are happy to answer any questions about our practice and our temple.

Daily Schedule

Rising (time varies according to circumstances, usually 6:00 or 6:30 am)

Meditation

Morning Service

Temple Cleanup/Breakfast preparation

Breakfast

Breakfast cleanup

Spiritual Reading

Working Meditation and lunch preparation

1:00 pm Lunch

Cleanup/Rest

Working Meditation

4:30 pm Afternoon Service/meditation

5:30 pm Medicine Meal (light supper)

Cleanup/rest

7:30 pm Meditation or Dharma Talk/discussion or social community tea

Vespers

Retiring for the night

9:00 pm Lights out

Directions to Dragonflower Mountain

To get to our place: once you are in Lytton, take the turn-off onto Highway 12 heading toward Lillooet. This intersection is the first left turn north of the post office. It is well marked with signs and is the only major intersection in the entire village. Drive across the bridge over the Thompson River. On your right you will see a gas station called Gwesep Gas. The turnoff to our road is the first one off to the right, just about 50 metres past the gas station. There should be a small sign that says Botanie Creek Road. You drive up the road for approximately 10 km. There is a short section of unpaved road near the beginning. The turnoff to our land is about 100 metres past the point where the asphalt pavement ends for the SECOND time. The turnoff is to the left. Look for a sign on the left-hand side that says Sointula Greens. It is a fairly large oval sign; however a couple of people have missed it. The driveway takes you right into our neighbour's yard. You will come to a gate. After you drive through, please leave the gate how you find it, either closed or open, and don't let the goats through. You might encounter two large white dogs in the yard. They may seem fierce but they will not harm human beings. Follow the driveway up exactly 1.5 km. (1 mile). It will

take you right to our front door. There is no cel phone service in the valley.