



Palyul Ling International

2023
Student Manual

WELCOME!

Welcome to the **Palyul Ling International** Summer Retreat.

This manual is to help you and your fellow retreatants get the most out of your time here at the Palyul Retreat Center.

A one-month retreat requires a commitment. We want to take as much advantage of this opportunity as possible. Together we can make this month an experience of a lifetime, benefiting ourselves and others forever.

After reading this booklet, if you have questions about classes, rota assignments, or other retreat policies, please feel free to ask the office staff or the retreat coordinator.

Palyul Retreat Center
359 Hollow Road
McDonough, NY 13801

607-656-9640 - office
607-656-9912 - fax
retreat@palyul.org

607-656-4645 - monk office

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UHS Binghamton General Hospital

<http://www.uhs.net/?id=707&sid=1>

607-762-2200

10-42 Mitchell Avenue

Binghamton, NY 13903

DIRECTIONS (about 41 mins. without traffic):

1. Southeast on German Hollow Rd (past the Monk House) toward Smithville Flats	1.9 mi.
2. Right on onto NY-220 S	1.1 mi.
3. Slight left onto NY-41 S	0.6 mi.
4. Continue straight in Smithville Flats onto County Road 2	6.6 mi.
5. Turn right onto NY-12 S	11.5 mi.
6. Continue onto US-11 S	0.2 mi.
7. Turn right to merge onto I-81 S	3.7 mi.
8. Use the right lane to take exit 4N-4S to merge onto NY-7 toward Binghamton	0.4 mi.
9. Continue onto NY-363 S/N Shore Dr.	1.6 mi.
10. Use the right lane to merge onto NY-434 W/State St. via the ramp to Vestal	0.2 mi.
11. Merge onto NY-434 W/State St. —Continue to follow NY-424 W	0.4 mi.
12. Turn left onto S. Washington St.	400 feet
13. Turn right at the 1 st cross street onto Vestal Ave.	225 feet
14. Turn left onto Mitchell Ave.	0.2 mi.
Destination will be on the right	28.6 mi.

ARRIVAL

Checking in at the office

Please check in at the office directly upon arrival. If your arrival time is later than 9 PM, please call or email ahead. At the time of check-in, you will receive your room or tent assignment, your rota assignment, and a badge.

Your badge contains class, rota, and meal information (vegetarian or meat-eater) and is essential to the smooth running of the retreat. The retreat staff will check badges at mealtimes and at practice and teaching sessions, so please wear your badge. Consider it part of your Dharma wardrobe while you are here.

Dorms and Tents

A map of the dorms and tents is available in the office for the asking.

DAILY RETREAT SCHEDULE

All schedules are subject to change as needed. Please arrive on time as the lamas may arrive earlier than noted below.

7:00 AM	Morning Practice in Temple with Monks
8:00 AM	Breakfast/Rota
8:30 AM	Assemble in Temple
8:40 AM	Morning Meditation—quiet please!
9:00 AM	Guru Yoga practice with the Lamas
10:00 AM	Teachings/practice by Cass Year
12:00 PM	Lunch/Rota
2:00 PM	Teachings/practice by Class (On Weekends: Empowerments)
4:00 PM	Break Time/Rota
5:30 PM	Dinner
7:00 PM	Teachings/practice by Class Year
8:30 PM	Evening Rota
10:00 PM	Lights Out - Goodnight!

Daily Practice Sessions

In addition to Morning Practice and Guru Yoga in the Temple, generally each class has three practice sessions as listed on the daily schedule (10am, 2pm, 7pm). Teachings are given throughout the

retreat to guide the practice, sometimes in the Temple and other times in the practice areas. Students are expected to attend each and every session of class. Sometimes class-specific teachings are not announced, thus attendance to all sessions will ensure that you don't miss any teachings.

Only attend practice or teachings sessions for your own class. Each student is a member of one, and only one, class.

No one may attend teachings or practices in later-year classes for which the requirements have not been completed. For example, in no case would a Ngöndro student be permitted to attend any of the Tsa Lung or Dzogchen teachings or practices. With the teacher's permission, however, students from upper levels may attend teachings of earlier-level classes for review purposes. To minimize disruption to your own class and the one you wish to attend, please notify both your own class coordinator of your absence to class and ask permission of the coordinator of the attended class.

Concluding Circumambulations

At the end of class sessions, each class circumambulates the Temple, chanting the "Mani Mantra" (*Om Mani Peme Hung*) to dedicate that practice session. This "Mani line" is part of the practice session. Out of respect for the power of these activities to liberate ourselves, and all sentient beings, when a class Mani line passes by, most people fold their hands, bow slightly and wait quietly until it passes.

Class Duties

Besides the practices, each class has other duties, such as taking care of their altar, keeping the practice area clean, and so on. Each class selects a coordinator to organize these activities, to meet with the other class coordinators, and to represent the class at certain retreat functions.

Practice Materials

The daily practice is found in our "Namchö Daily Practice" book. This book is available for sale in the office. Mandala plates, statues, shrine and other ritual implements, other books, and any available recordings are for sale in the Gift Shop.

FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If you have a Medical Emergency and need a ride to the hospital or other medical facility, please state very clearly: "I HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY. I NEED A RIDE TO THE HOSPITAL."

Palyul Retreat Center has no nurse or physician on staff. Every year a volunteer with medical training has provided First Aid. This is absolutely not a replacement for consultation with your own medical doctor should you have ongoing conditions or treatments.

Any volunteers will only be able to help with very basic First Aid. For this reason, retreatants must sign a waiver releasing our First Aid provider and the Palyul Retreat Center from liability.

UHS Hospital Walk-In Clinic – Chenango Bridge
<http://www.uhs.net/locations/locations-profile/?id=19>
 607-648-4151
 91 Chenango Bridge Road
 Binghamton, NY 13901

DIRECTIONS (About 30 mins without traffic):

1. Southeast on German Hollow Rd (past the Monk House) toward Smithville Flats	1.9 mi.
2. Right onto NY-220 S	1.1 mi.
3. Slight left onto NY-41 S	0.6 mi.
4. Continue straight in Smithville Flats onto County Road 2	6.6 mi.
5. Turn right onto NY-12 S	11.1 mi.
6. Turn left onto NY-12A Spur E	0.4 mi.
7. Turn left onto Woodland Rd.	
Destination will be on the left.	21.7 mi.

Preparing for the Final Day Picnic

In order to prepare for the picnic lunch with the Heart Sons, tulkus, khenpos, lamas, lopons, monks and nuns on the final day of retreat, and to prepare for the retreat closure, we ask that you help us to do the following by 5:30 PM on the last day of the retreat program:

1. Take all personal items, mugs, etc., from the refrigerators, dining area, porches and Temple (except for practice books/personal cushion). Please remove these items from your room or tent.
2. Organize and clean personal room/or tent area.
3. Clean up any areas that are messy. Pick up trash. Help with trash disposal.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Our retreat website has a private area for those who have been on retreat. It is only accessible with a user name and password. If you have been on retreat and would like a user name and password, please feel free to email retreat@palyul.org.

Web Resources

<http://retreat.palyul.org>

Official Palyul Retreat website. Joining and alerting the Administrator through the Contact Us button that you are a retreatant will open up additional content for you. It will also enable you to make comments that may be of use to other future retreatants.

<http://www.palyul.org>

On Palyul.org you can join our email list for updates about Palyul Activities worldwide.

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/palyulretreat>

Retreat at Palyul USA, Palyul Group

Twitter: @PalyulLing

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/palyul>

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/palyul>

CLASSES

Class Levels

Just like a school or university, our retreat has different levels of practice, eight in all, each building on the previous year.

Graduating to the Next Class

Progression from each year's class to the next depends on successful completion of the previous year's class requirements. These requirements include attending all the course teachings, participating in the regular practice sessions, and graduating to the next class with the approval of our Buddhist professors or *khenpos*. Occasionally a student may be instructed to repeat a class level if it is deemed best, for whatever reason, by the *khenpos* or other *rinpoches* (high ranking Buddhist masters).

Dzogchen Highway and Tsa Lung

Only students practicing Tsa Lung may enter the Tsa Lung area. Only students in third year and above may travel down the "Dzogchen Highway" to the Dzogchen practice area. Even when classes are not in session, individuals may be engaging in practice on their own time and we do not want to distract them.

Dharma Discussions

True practitioners don't talk about their accomplishments because they know that doing so creates obstacles to realization. Don't devalue your experiences by reducing them to the level of ordinary conversation. However, discussing class lessons among students of your own class is encouraged to facilitate understanding. But keep your own spiritual experiences between you and your lama.

The teachings in each class are formulated to prepare the mind for later classes. For example, if you are not prepared through the purification of the Ngöndro practices to hear the Dzogchen teachings, such teachings can be detrimental to your practice. Therefore, focus your efforts on understanding the teachings for your own class and never discuss teachings from your class with students in earlier class levels.

Finding Answers

One of the wonderful aspects of this retreat is the access to qualified masters and highly-trained monks. If you find you and your classmates have questions, please arrange to ask your class teacher in the context of an interview. If you are a new student and have general questions about the retreat and your classes, don't be shy about asking your fellow students and don't hesitate to come by the office. For questions about your practice or the teachings you have received, it is best to sign up for an interview with one of the khenpos or rinpoches. For that purpose, sign-up sheets will be posted in the dining area. Though you may have pressing questions, please be patient if you must wait a few days for an interview. Our teachers are extremely busy during the retreat and your fellow students have questions as well.

If there is an emergency and you really must see a teacher immediately, you may contact the retreat office and explain the situation.

Please do not bother our spiritual teachers with mundane retreat issues, such as room assignments or the quality of the food. Those sorts of issues we should work out amongst ourselves.

Interviews with Teachers

It is a special feature of this retreat that students are able to schedule personal interviews with the high lamas. It will be announced when sign-up sheets for the interviews are to be posted. Please sign up once and only once for each interview and remember that the Lamas' time is extremely limited and precious due to the many and various demands on them. It is customary to dress formally for the interview, arrive early, and offer a white scarf (khatag) and an offering. For other matters, please contact teachers only through the retreat office.

THE PRACTICE OF ROTA

About Rota

"Rota" is an integral part of the practice at Palyul Summer Retreat. A community mandala arises for the duration of the retreat and then dissolves back into society, disseminating its blessings. For our community to function, each one of us forms an invaluable link. There are no employees here, only fellow practitioners. Therefore, it is

RETREAT DEPARTURE

Please help us maintain this beautiful retreat center. Allow enough time to clean your personal space before leaving. The Retreat Center cannot be responsible for or store personal belongs.

If You Stayed in a Tent

1. Remove all litter and food items not only from your tent but also in the area surrounding it.
2. Remove all personal belongings.
3. Bring any center sheets to the hamper behind the office or the hamper in the laundry facility.
4. DO NOT use brooms from the kitchen to sweep your tent. These put grease on the tent floor. Use the soft whisk brooms available in the office.

If You Stayed in a Room

1. If you used Center sheets, strip your bed and place the sheets in either the hamper behind the office or the hamper in the laundry room.
2. Vacuum your room thoroughly. Vacuums are available for each dorm. Please replace the vacuum cleaners where you found them, and do not move vacuums from dorm to dorm, or dorm to Temple.
3. Remove all trash.
4. Remove all personal belongings.
5. Return key/s to office.

Offerings

It is customary to make offerings along with the presentation of the khatag at the conclusion of the summer. We make offerings to the Lamas who have led our classes, the Teachers who have delivered our class teachings, and the Mandala as a whole. Again, students customarily offer as much as they can afford without having any regret afterward. You should only make an offering that leaves you with a sense of gratitude for having the opportunity to make the offering. If you are leaving before the conclusion of retreat, you can make your offerings at that time. Please bring cash for offerings to the retreat center as we have no ATM on-site.

TRANSPORTATION

Uber and Lyft

Uber and Lyft will come to the retreat center from Binghamton.

Bus Service

There are daily buses from Manhattan (Port Authority) to Binghamton. The travel time is four hours.

Coach USA Bus: <http://www.coachusa.com/>

Greyhound Bus: <https://www.greyhound.com/>

Taxis (Fares are subject to change)

Courtesy Cab: 607-723-2000

\$60 from bus station/\$65 from airport, divided by each person in the taxi

Yellow Cab: 607-722-2322 - \$65 from bus station/ \$75 from airport

800 TAXI CAB (800-829-4872)

A service that connects you to a taxi company based on your location.

necessary for each of us to nurture the spiritual and the physical aspects of the retreat. The practice of rota offers us great purification.

What Jobs Qualify as Rota?

A job is considered "rota" when it supports or nurtures the community mandala. Everyone is expected to spend at least eight hours per week on their rota. Special exceptions, if any, must be cleared through the office. At the time of registration, you will be assigned your rota. If you feel that you have the time and energy, feel free to request an additional rota assignment.

Physical Abilities

There is a place in the mandala for everyone and each place has equal value. If a certain condition keeps you from performing certain activities, we respect this when we set up work assignments. If you have skills that match certain needs, the staff will try to make use of your abilities. Please make your skills and your conditions known to us ahead of time on your registration form. If you feel you've been assigned incorrectly, please bring it up with the office staff immediately.

Particular Areas Always Needing Help

Sometimes rota teams are short-staffed. If you find yourself with free time after your rota, please remember your fellow students and join in with these tasks:

- Dishwashing and pot washing
- Temple cleaning on weekends
- Cleanup and garbage pick-up around the dining area

Any additional help with these rotas is greatly appreciated.

About Your Fellow Students

Many of the rota positions are challenging. Please don't treat your Dharma siblings as customer service representatives or hired help. Like the rest of us, they are Dharma practitioners—unpaid volunteers who work hard to keep things running as smoothly as a support for your retreat practice. This includes those cooking in the kitchen, staffing the office, and managing the physical plant.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

Daily Schedule Postings

The daily schedule is posted on the side of the Temple and in the dining room. Variations may happen from day to day.

Announcements

Daily announcements are usually made in the Temple at the end of the 7 AM practice session. It is possible announcements will be made at the conclusion of Guru Yoga.

Bulletin Boards

Look for the bulletin boards in the dining room for announcements, sign-up sheets for interviews, and other communications. Please check the bulletin boards regularly for changes or additions to the schedule.

KITCHEN AND DINING HALL

The kitchen and Dining Hall are central parts of the community at large and a harmonious kitchen leads to a harmonious retreat. Besides the Temple, the Dining Hall is the main common area:

General Rules for the Dining Hall

Please do not be loud or boisterous in the Dining Hall. The north end of the Dining Hall is reserved for retreatants who wish to maintain “noble silence” while eating. Watch for signs on tables indicating that a particular table is reserved for retreatants who are maintaining a vow of silence.

Do not enter the kitchen if you are not on rota. It is a work area.

Please return your dirty dishes promptly. Kitchen workers must finish their rota in time for class. The bell in the Dining Hall will ring five minutes before the final call—another bell—to clear your dishes.

Please clean up your own spills. You may ask kitchen staff for cleaning supplies if necessary.

Refrigerators in Dining Hall

One, possibly two refrigerators are available in the Dining Hall for personal items. Note the following rules:

or leaving behind any containers, packaging, or anything else. Whatever you bring in (even the tie wraps on plastic bags), please take it back out.

Remember that this is not an ordinary campground. This is a precious woodland that His Holiness Penor Rinpoche chose as the location for a Dharma center. Please respect the pristine nature of this forest and the sacred activities that take place here.

Specific Requests

No Pets of Any Kind. Except for animals trained for specific tasks as defined by the American Disability Act, we cannot allow pets of any kind on site, including emotional support animals. We do require you to present the license for your service animal as the expense for the center in cleaning rooms inhabited by animals is quite high. If your service animal presents a threat through growling or lunging at other retreatants, we will require you to remove the animal as is permitted by law.

Deer and Lyme Disease. Our forests are full of deer. With deer, there are deer ticks, which can transmit Lyme disease. Exercise caution by wearing shoes with long socks as well as long pants when possible, and use insect repellent. Always check yourself for ticks when returning from a walk.

Obey the Speed Limit--Watch for Deer and Other Animals. Exercise caution on our driveways and drive very slowly at night. Deer may leap in front of a car suddenly. A herd of deer makes its home in the off-season in the forest between the Center driveway and “Dzogchen Highway” (the road that leads to the practice areas for Third Year and on). There are also small animals that inhabit the area so please drive slowly, especially at night when visibility is decreased.

Respect Community Law. In town, it is also a good idea to stay within the speed limit. It is in everyone’s interest to nurture positive relations between the Retreat Center and the local community.

7. Any behavior on or off Center property, at the discretion of the Center, which the Center deems to be detrimental to the welfare or safety of other retreatants or of Center personnel, including behavior which creates a threat of physical harm to the retreatant themselves or to others at the Center. Harassment of any kind of your fellow retreatants is also not permitted.

Acts Leading to Expulsion after One Warning

1. Any consumption of alcohol or any other intoxicating substance while at the Center. (*Note: Small amounts of alcohol are offered during certain ceremonies. If you have the disease of alcoholism and the receipt of these substances will cause you difficulty, please feel free not to accept them.*)
2. Smoking anywhere on Retreat Center grounds.
3. Bringing pets to retreat. Anyone keeping a pet on the grounds will be asked to leave until other accommodations for the pet are found.
4. Continued skipping of classes, creating distractions and/or disruptions, and otherwise not engaging in retreat activities can also be grounds for one warning and subsequent expulsion at the discretion of the Center.
5. Solicitation for sales, memberships or any other benefits for any person or organization without express permission from the retreat administration.
6. Consistent proselytizing for other religions or against Buddhism.

Please note that all decisions the Center makes for expulsion are final and without recourse to reverse such decisions. Retreatants who have broken Center rules or have a record of rule-breaking or disruptiveness may also not be permitted to return to the Center grounds or for retreat in the future.

Woodland Rules

1. Always dispose all waste, trash, and unused items in the proper receptacle.
2. Please do not throw anything onto the forest floor, trails or roads including biodegradable garbage such as apple peels, banana peels, cherry pits, or food scraps (which can create animal pest problems).
3. Please keep the tents clean. If you spill anything or get any food on the floor, please clean it up as best you can. Avoid dropping trash

One refrigerator (if there are two) is for medicines and for students with food allergies to store their needed supplementary foods. The other is for optional food storage. Refrigerators are clearly marked. In either, please put your food or medical items in a zip lock baggie and put your name on all items along with the date you've placed in the refrigerator.

Refrigerators will be checked regularly by the kitchen staff because of Health Department regulations.

We apologize in advance, but food without dates or with dates more than one week old will be removed and disposed of.

Kitchen Rules

Kitchen rules are based on the need to keep everyone in good health while on retreat. The rules required by the New York State Health Department are made to achieve this goal. The Health Department can make unannounced inspections throughout the retreat. Follow the rules below carefully. This is most important.

1. The basic rule is **KEEP OUT** of the kitchen unless being there is your rota duty. Do not go into the kitchen to retrieve something at any time. Ask one of the Kitchen Rota Team members to get it for you.
2. Children are never allowed in the kitchen at any time for any reason.
3. Snacks will be provided on the counter by the tea area. Do not enter the kitchen to retrieve a snack.
4. Please be sure to promptly return cups, mugs, and any other items to the dish tubs outside the kitchen.
5. If you wish to offer food to the kitchen for retreatants, please call the office ahead of time to notify us or clear it with the kitchen management so that we can incorporate your offering into our meal plans.

Diet

To best support the practice, meals will generally be simple fare, such as grains, vegetables, and meat for those who need it. In keeping with the teachings of the Buddha, many retreatants choose to be vegetarian while at retreat.

No Special Meals. Mealtimes are short and there are many mouths to feed, with few volunteers to prepare the meals and clean up. For these reasons, we cannot meet special dietary requirements.

Do Not Eat Vegetarian Food Unless Registered as Such. Vegetarian and meat entrees are provided at every meal according to the number of retreatants in each category. Please help the kitchen staff; if you did not register as a vegetarian, do not help yourself to vegetarian choices. Vegetarians do not have the alternative to eat meat provided.

Tsa Lung Food for Tsa Lung only. In accordance with their practice, Tsa Lung retreatants cannot eat certain foods. If something is labeled specifically for Tsa Lung, please do not take from those entrees if you are not in the Tsa Lung course.

Kitchenware and Utensils

Return Your Dishes. There are enough cups/glasses to serve everyone as long as they are not removed from the dining area, such as taken to dorm rooms or the bathrooms. Please return your cups, plates, and cutlery to the dish tubs outside the kitchen promptly after using them.

Bring Your Own Cup. We suggest that retreatants bring a non-breakable travel cup for personal use for hot beverages such as coffee, tea, etc. A personal water bottle can also be handy, as summer can get quite hot in upstate NY.

STUPA

The stupa to Migyur Dorje is located in the field near the temple. It contains many holy items including things that were preserved personally by His Holiness Penor Rinpoche for this purpose. The center of the stupa has a Tsogshing, or Long Life tree. By circumambulating 10,000 times, it is said your wishes will be fulfilled. You can prostrate before and after each time you go to accumulate prostrations.

READING ROOM

A library is available for retreatants upstairs on the east end of the South dorm. This room is strictly silent and will be available only if retreatants maintain it as such. Every retreatant has the right and

to when they are permitted to do so. You may cause issues for the lamas, yourself, or others if you live cast a ceremony or teaching without permission.

About Taping. Part of our retreat is the practice of listening, concentrating, and remembering. In the monastery in South India, the monks do not take notes or record teachings. In addition, because of the nature of Dzogchen in general and this Oral Instruction lineage in particular, it is not appropriate to share the teachings with anyone who is not in your class. Our lamas also say that recording teachings encourages laziness. For these reasons, it is better not to record the teachings.

No Tapes Available. Note that the Temple's recording technician does not duplicate any recordings. The official recording in the Temple is for archival purposes.

RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

The Palyul Retreat Center has rules that will result in immediate expulsion if broken. We maintain this policy for the benefit of retreatants and the Center.

Acts Requiring Expulsion without Refund

1. Any violent acts including willful destruction or defacing of Center property, including any attempt to change or modify any physical structure without express permission through the office.
2. The possession, use, or sale of illegal drugs.
3. Possession and/or use of firearms or firearm facsimiles that could be mistaken for a real firearm, BB gun or pellet gun (designed to propel projectiles by spring action or compressed air).
4. Possession of any object, device, instrument, material, or substance, whether animate or inanimate, used or intended to be used to inflict death or serious bodily injury.
5. Breaking of any local, state, or federal U.S. law while on the premises.
6. Repeated interference with the Center's ability to provide its programs to the retreatants. Any ongoing disruptive behavior, including malicious gossiping or otherwise expressing too much of a negative attitude, can be grounds for expulsion at the discretion of the Center.

lama will need to gather these special items, including mantras, precious objects such as gems, medicines, and various herbs, as well as many other specific substances. If you wish to donate any of these items and are familiar with what is appropriate, please make sure they are clean. Otherwise, the filling substances can be provided for you.

It is customary to make offerings to the lama as a sign of appreciation for the time and effort involved in this sacred activity.

The following are suggested donations:

- Small Statue (9" or less) \$55
- Medium Statue (9" – 12") \$125
- Large Statue (12" – 18") \$175

If you wish to make this donation by check or credit card, please see the office.

The Butter Lamp House (“*Chime Lakhang*”)

The Butter Lamp House is the small house located on the lawn in front of the Temple. Butter lamps are a traditional offering to the Three Jewels. According to His Holiness Penor Rinpoche, butter lamps can also be offered to benefit deceased beings suffering from the darkness of the *bardo*—the transition state between death and rebirth. One can make a general offering to all bardo beings or an offering to a specific deceased individual. (The offering need not fall within the 49-day period after death.) The suggested offering amounts are listed in the Butter Lamp House along with a drop box stocked with envelopes. Please write on the envelope the quantity and size of the lamps you wish to have lit, as well as the names of the deceased. If you have extra time and would like to help—an excellent opportunity to learn a useful skill—contact the Temple Rota Coordinator or Lama Sochuk.

ABOUT MAKING RECORDINGS

No Video, No Live Casting, No Flash. Do not bring video recording equipment into the shrine room; video recordings are not permitted. Please only take flash photographs at the end of sessions, not during actual practices or teachings. Certain ceremonies should not be live cast. A crew is assigned to live cast teachings and will be informed as

responsibility while using the reading room to request of anyone talking in there to please be quiet or leave the room. Please also take care to close the dorm doors quietly as you go in and out to reduce disturbance to dorm residents. The reading room will only be open between sessions and will be closed at night. Hours will be posted on the door.

THE OFFICE

Office Hours

Office hours are posted on the office door, but are generally between practice sessions, except on weekends. On weekends, office staff may have to be up late receiving weekend arrivals. It is best to minimize your office needs during the weekends, as there may be many visitors. Please conduct office business in the office during office hours.

Office Equipment and Business Center

To keep the office equipment in good working order, retreatants are generally not permitted to use office phones, copiers, computers, or other equipment, except in extremely special cases such as medical emergencies.

A business center has been established in the South Dorm that may be used on an extremely limited basis for business purposes only. Please do not use the business center for entertainment or any other purpose; it has been established to help those who truly cannot break from mundane activities carry through retreat with the least possible distraction. Please ask the Office step for directions to the center.

Internet Access and Cell Phones

The retreat center does have WiFi on a broadband network. We do not have great cell service for all carriers, but often people find they can get reception in the parking lot. The temple steps also has reception, but please refrain from carrying on conversations there.

We are in a rural area so weather can affect the internet from time to time. In case you have urgent things to handle on the internet, Greene, NY, has free WiFi in their library. Retreatants without a car often request those with a car to help them get to Greene in these cases.

Cell phone service is minimally available at certain spots around the center. Please be extremely mindful of others while using your phone.

Do not use cell phones in the Temple or near the dormitories and tent areas. The parking lot offers the best reception and is an acceptable place to use your cell phone if necessary.

Mail and Packages

Incoming and outgoing mail is held in a designated box in the Dining Hall. If you are expecting a package, it will be kept in the hallway behind the office (door is on the outside of the South Dorm). Please check there for larger pieces of mail/packages, as the staff does not have time to find you. Amazon does deliver to the retreat center.

FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE

Grounds

In case of emergency, such as gas smell or fire, notify staff personnel immediately. To report any non-emergency broken items, please go to the office and make a report during office hours only. Do not fix anything yourself without advance permission, even if you are trained. It's better to make sure that someone else isn't already working on the problem and to gain approval of the monk-in-charge before taking on any projects.

For your own safety and the safety of any children present, please keep out of "Restricted" areas such as utility rooms and the water house.

No barbequing or other open fires. The only open fire permitted is the *Sang* offering, which occurs every morning before 7 AM outside the Temple.

Bathrooms

Though the bathrooms are cleaned by the Bathroom Rota team, there are some general guidelines that we can all follow to keep our retreat a clean environment:

- During rainy times, please mop up after yourself if you track mud into the bath area.
- Do not flush anything down the toilet other than toilet paper. Receptacles are provided for all other hygiene products.
- Use toilet paper moderately. The septic system is fragile and large amounts of paper can clog the drainage system.
- If no one else is present in the bathroom when you leave, please turn off the lights and make sure no water tap is left dripping or running.

Avoid Excessive Noise. Please do not touch the monks' musical instruments except in their presence and with their express permission. Refrain from beating drums, ringing bells, clanging cymbals, etc. during periods other than at tsok or during formal in-Temple practice sessions. (Please do not play any instruments in the dorm rooms or tents.)

Help with Clean Up

To assist in the removal of rice and general cleaning of the Temple area, please be sure to remove your belongings completely from the shrine room after empowerments. Do not stack them on the side of the Temple. Neglected belongings will be placed in the Lost and Found inside of the Dining Hall.

Feast (Tsok) and Flower Offerings

According to the lunar calendar, we have several feast offering practices known as *tsok*. None of your retreat fees go toward tsok offerings of food or flowers. Volunteers collect donations for these special purchases. Flowers are a traditional offering for tsok as well as for general offerings. Please see the Temple rota coordinator or listen for announcements for information on donating money for food or flower offerings. It is best not to purchase tsok food before consulting the tsok coordinator. Simply making a monetary donation to the tsok offering fund is encouraged. This can be done in the offering receptacles in the Dining Hall or directly to the tsok coordinator. Some people find it easiest to make their entire tsok food and flower donations for the retreat at the beginning of retreat.

Statue Consecration

Before placement on an altar, Statues must be filled with prayer rolls, gems, medicine, herbs and many other precious items and then blessed. We have the good fortune of having a Dorje Lupon lama (a monk who has completed a three-year retreat) to fill our statues for us and prepare them for a blessing by the high lama(s).

If you wish to have the Dorje Lupon lama consecrate your statue, please make arrangements with the retreat registration office. Please allow at least 10 to 15 days for this to be done, as there are many requests during the retreat.

To infuse a statue with the blessings of the deity, many hours of preparation of prayers and materials are needed. The Dorje Lupon

Greeting the Ordained. A respectful way to greet an ordained person is with a simple bow with your hands in the gesture of prayer. You are bowing to one who represents the Buddha's Sangha. When the Heart Sons and khenpos enter the shrine room, you should rise and stand in a slight bow until they are seated. The monks and students then offer three prostrations. When the teachers stand at the end of the session, rise and stand in a slight bow until they have left the room.

Empowerments. A ceremony known as an “empowerment” (Tibetan: *wang*) gives us the blessings of our teachers to engage with the practices. Generally, one dresses one's best for an empowerment. It is also good to arrange things so that you do not have to exit the mandala once the empowerment has started. At the conclusion of a *wang*, everyone lines up to offer a scarf (*khatag*) to the Vajra Master. These *khatag* are often hanging for sale in a corner of the shrine room along with empty envelopes for offerings.

It is customary to make an offering to the teacher along with the presentation of the *khatag*, but you should not feel required to do so. Students often ask, “How much should I offer?” but that is really a personal question best left up to each individual. Students customarily offer as much as they can afford without having any regret afterward. You should only make an offering that leaves you with a sense of gratitude for having the opportunity to make the offering.

How to Treat Your Texts. Texts, including prayer sheets, are sacred. Because of their power to bring liberation and happiness, they should never be placed directly on the floor nor stepped over, stood upon or disrespected. Please make way to those who must pass through the shrine room when it is crowded by picking up and holding your text. Also, it is better not to take the *tsok* food by reaching over your textbook. Go around your text. It is best to avoid stepping over *tsok* offering plates as well.

Avoid Distracting Others. In the shrine room we try to offer the most pleasing sights, sounds, and smells and cause the least distraction to His Holiness, the monks and nuns, and our fellow practitioners. For this reason, please keep your belongings to a minimum and neatly contained in the shrine room. Also, please do not eat in the shrine room during teachings (unless given food as part of a ceremony), or engage in any other activity that might distract someone who is practicing.

Laundry

Laundry is available in the tent bathhouse area. All machines require quarters to operate. The cost per machine (washers and dryers) is \$1.50. The office can exchange your bills for quarters.

Hours: Open at 6 AM. Last wash at 8:30 PM. Close at 10 PM.

It is not permitted to use sinks and showers outside of the laundry area for washing clothing.

See the “Local Area Guide” section for the local laundry in Greene.

Parking

These policies are maintained for the safety and security of all retreatants:

1. Please park only in the parking lot.
2. No parking behind dorms. Cars parked behind the dorms, in the woodland campground, or in any other unauthorized place may be towed at the owner's expense.
3. Do not drive to the Dzogchen area; please walk (except for cars authorized to transport people with disabilities or advanced age and monks leading the teachings).
4. Do not drive through tent area unless you are loading or unloading your car. Do not drive through the tent area after dark for any reason.
5. Avoid driving between the office and Dining Hall. Children frequently play here and may be endangered if vehicles pass through this area.

LEAVING THE CENTER DURING RETREAT

This one-month retreat is offered according to ancient Palyul tradition. The greatest benefit to retreatants is gained by maintaining silence and staying within the confines of the mandala. Every effort has been made to supply all one's needs for a simple life while at the center, including on-site laundry, small sundries available in the office for purchase, and so forth. Please try to minimize your trips off-site for whatever reason. If you must go off-site for an extended period of time, please notify the office of your departure time and estimated return, in case of emergency.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Families are always welcome at the Palyul Center. Please note, however, that the Center is not equipped for the responsibility of childcare. Parents or guardians remain the sole responsible parties for the safety of their children. *Children under the age of 12 must be under adult supervision (over 16) at all times and may not be left unattended in dorm rooms or anywhere else during teachings or class times.*

Children's Playroom

A children's playroom is located on the first floor of the South Dorm. There is also an outdoor playground below the main parking lot. Parents are responsible for vetting these areas for safety and must make arrangements to ensure that children are always under adult supervision. Parents might consider taking turns with other parents to monitor children during class times and teachings.

Consideration of Other Retreatants

Please be considerate of other retreatants. Please do not allow your children to play noisily in and around the Temple at any time. Please do not use Ngondro class as a way to babysit your children. Children too young to be ready for Ngondro teachings should not be brought to the Ngondro class. Parents should arrange to take turns watching children under the age of 12.

Children's Rota – keeping the Kid's Room clean

The children's rota is to maintain the children's areas in good order. The "Kid's Room" should be cleaned at the end of each day without fail. Those taking responsibility for the children each day should encourage the maintenance of the children's rota responsibilities.

Children, the Kitchen, the Office, Storage, etc.

For reasons of safety and health department rules, children are not allowed inside the kitchen *at any time for any reason*. Please do not allow your children to enter the preparation and cooking areas of the kitchen, the office, the storage sheds or any administrative area.

TEMPLE INFORMATION

Shrine Room Etiquette

Keep all ordinary conversation to an absolute minimum. It is good to maintain silence in the Temple and practice areas. In other places, please be mindful and practical about conversation, taking care not to disturb others.

Leave Shoes Outside the Door. Please be sure you do not leave your shoes in the way of others entering the shrine.

Dress Code. Please try to look as nice as you can when in the shrine room, while remaining comfortable. Avoid wearing clothes that are ripped, dirty, immodest, or provocative. Hats or other head gear should be removed.

Be Timely. Try to arrive early for teachings. Generally, the teachings are preceded by silent meditation and chanting of the *Vajra Guru* mantra. It is also important to be on time for practice, but if you find yourself running late, try to enter during chanting. If students are meditating, it may be best to wait until chanting resumes so as not to disturb anyone.

Try to Stay the Full Session. Please arrange your schedule so you can stay for the complete teaching session. If you know you must leave before the conclusion, please sit as close to an exit as possible so you can leave quietly. If for health reasons you must get up or move around during the teachings, please sit close to the side or back of the room so others are not disturbed.

Pointing Your Feet Can be Rude. If you find you need to stretch your legs when you are seated in the shrine room, please cover your feet. Try not to point your feet toward the shrine. In many cultures it is considered disrespectful to show the soles of your feet to the teacher (and the teacher is always present in the shrine). A small towel, blanket or even a jacket can be used to keep your feet covered. Consider bringing one of these to a teaching if you have difficulty keeping your legs crossed for long periods.

Restrooms. If you need to use the restroom during a teaching please use those at the Dining Facility. At the door of the Temple you can turn toward the shrine and bow slightly if you wish (or simply exit). Prostrations may be offered upon returning but are not customarily offered when exiting. During an empowerment or certain high teachings, it is best not to have to leave during the ceremony or explanations, but of course you may if it is necessary.