

cloister | boundaries

FULL CLOISTER BOUNDARIES

This is a starting point for full cloister. Before the weekend, specify modifications necessary to suit your personal circumstances. Write them out. Then stick to them.

- Remain within physical cloister space at all times
- Maintain noble silence at all times
- Moment by moment introspection as much as possible
- No physical, verbal, or nonverbal interaction with others, either in person, by phone, or internet at all times
- Unplug: Phone and internet off at all times except for Zoom access
- Cell and landline phone off or switched to do not disturb at all times
- No newspaper, magazines, books, audiobooks or recordings, music, video, or the like at all times, whether Dharma-based or not
- Dharma reading limited to one book approved by Yeshe

Simply put, we are creating a space for incubating the teachings and practice. The only external input should be the instruction sessions, your notes on the instruction sessions, and any Resources provided for the instruction.

Why? Because cloister is the time to put aside the listening and focus on contemplation and meditation. Nowadays, even seasoned practitioners are rarely trained in this single-pointed focus, yet it is vital to making ourselves available for the inward turn that begins with contemplation and is indispensable for meditation.

Put aside preexisting opinions about retreat. Gift yourself the luxury of cloister.

CLOISTER INTROSPECTION

- Note missteps as to boundaries as weekend progresses
- Investigate discomfort, annoyance, and/or resistance as to space or boundary, which may manifest as: “I know what I’m doing;” “There’s no harm in this;” “This is silly” or the like. In connection to what does it arise?
- Stay with your discomfort with caring—not judging, swallowing, or wallowing
- Note cloister adjustments you wish to make going forward
- Note what you itch to do outside cloister boundaries
- Note dominant emotions or mental states throughout weekend

CLOISTER ACTIVITIES recommended between formal sessions

- Prostrations practice
- Walking Meditation
- Yoga, stretching, or similar gentle, grounded physical movement synchronized to breath
- Review and outline your notes on the instruction sessions, your personal intention, or any other program assignments
- Contemplate instruction topics: journal, develop outlines, identify questions, doubts, and uncertainties etc.
- Sing Dharma songs
- Resources reading