

cloister | boundaries

MANDALA CLOISTER BOUNDARIES

With the exception of personal cloister inclusions below:

- 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
- Internet off except for instruction and private sessions at all times
- 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 on integrative practice that are the focus of each weekend. The only external input should be the instruction sessions, your notes on the instruction sessions, up to one Dharma book which supports the practice (approved by Yeshe), and practice prayers/sadhanas.

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 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
- Approved Dharma reading