

The Garchen Buddhist Institute Retreat Agreement

At the request of His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche, in order to create and maintain a supportive environment for individuals and to develop loving kindness and compassion, we ask everyone staying at the Garchen Buddhist Institute to abide by the following rules of conduct:

1. Protect all life
2. Refrain from discursive speech & creating discord in the Sangha.
3. Refrain from sexual misconduct
4. No drugs, alcohol, or smoking cigarettes are allowed on the property.

In addition, for the duration of this retreat:

I vow to abide by my samaya with His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche to seclude body, speech and mind during my retreat.

I will not engage in ordinary speech, except written messages to the staff, which I will begin and end with OM and SVAHA to keep them within the stream of mantra. (Seclusion of speech)

I agree to remain in the retreat boundaries (personal hut, retreat village, Tashi house, etc.) except when taking a walk, cooking meals in my assigned kitchen, taking care of personal hygiene in my assigned bathroom. I will make all bookstore purchases prior to going into retreat. If I am a healer, I will not offer treatments to others during retreat. (Seclusion of body)

I understand that I may not go to town for the duration of my retreat, except for medical emergencies. All shopping for my food, personal hygiene items, medications, etc. will be done for me by Institute staff. If I bring a vehicle, I will park it in the space designated by the staff for the duration of the retreat. (Seclusion of body)

I agree to abide by the Bodhisattvic Conduct Guidelines and will work to maintain mindful awareness to the best of my ability. (Seclusion of mind)

I agree to provide cash, or debit/credit card, with my list each week to cover my food-shopping expenses. I understand that I am responsible for paying for my own food, medications, hygiene items, etc. for the entire duration of my retreat.

I agree to use only biodegradable *unscented*, dye-free laundry detergent and not to use chlorine bleach of any kind. I also understand that many people use the washing machine and clothesline, and I commit to removing my clothes in a timely manner.

I understand that I must cooperate in conserving electricity and water, because the Garchen Institute is completely off the grid and must generate all its own power. Electricity is generated by solar panels and generator, and the generator must run to pump every gallon of water. I understand that *absolutely no* hair dryers, heating pads, electric heaters or other high-wattage electrical items may be used at any time at the Institute.

I agree NOT to burn incense or candles in my room/hut.

I agree to keep my room/hut and any/all common spaces I use in clean and orderly condition, and I agree to clean any common spaces immediately after use.

I agree not to feed feral cats or any other wild animal including birds (we have a bird feeder by the stupa which is filled daily at Rinoche's request; this is the only bird feeding allowed)

I will follow the retreat activity schedule and practices given to me by the Retreat Master, and I will let the Retreat Master and/or staff know if I am having difficulty in retreat and/or feel I need to leave the Institute for any reason during the scheduled retreat period.

I will be honest in discussing problems, as well as any need I feel I have to deviate from the specified retreat schedule.

I understand there is no fault if I have to end my retreat early, and the Retreat Master and staff will lovingly support me in making the transition. I understand that there is no refund if I leave the retreat early.

I understand that if I fail to keep any of the above agreements, I will be reminded twice, and will have to end my retreat and leave the Institute if a third reminder is required.

