

Yogi Guide to Cloud Mountain

1. Welcome!

We are pleased to have you join us on retreat at Cloud Mountain. This booklet will answer many of your questions, so please take a few minutes to review the contents, and please keep it handy as a reference guide. Enjoy your stay with us.

2. Community Service – Cloud Mountain, a forest refuge

For thousands of years spiritual communities have gathered to live, share, and work in support of their common spiritual values and practices. Each retreat at Cloud Mountain is a gathering together of practitioners who continue this deep work of practice and mutual support. We thank each of you for your part in serving and in adding your energy to the ever deepening atmosphere of practice that is generating the Buddha fields in this place of refuge for all suffering beings.

3. The 5 precepts:

These precepts are offered to guide the ethical behavior of the Cloud Mountain community. Retreatants, staff, teachers, board members, and volunteers are all expected to do their best to cultivate these precepts while at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center. They are intended as standards we can internalize as a foundation for our practice, as the Buddha intended. Living by the precepts is an act of great generosity to all beings we encounter.

1. Refraining from Killing: Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I will cultivate the precept of not killing. In undertaking this precept, I acknowledge the interconnection of all sentient beings.

2. Refraining from Stealing: Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, injustice and stealing, I agree not to take anything that does not belong to me **or has not been freely offered**, and to respect the property of others. I will be honest in my dealings with money.

3. Refraining from Sexual Misconduct: Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I will avoid creating harm through sexuality, and will refrain from all sexual activity while on retreat.

4. Refraining from False Speech: Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful and untrue words, I will undertake the training of Noble Silence for the duration of this retreat. I will cultivate deep listening in individual or group interviews, and I will attempt to speak with kindness and honesty. In writing notes or feedback to teachers, staff or other participants I will be kind and honest.

5. Refraining from the Use of Intoxicants: Aware of the suffering caused by the consumption of intoxicants, I will refrain from using them while on retreat, including non-medicinal drugs and alcohol.

We also ask that you bear in mind the principles of stewardship and generosity while at Cloud Mountain: I will refrain from wasting the resources upon which other

beings depend. I will not be possessive of people or things, but will undertake to give of myself for the alleviation of suffering and the well being of all.

4. Retreat Etiquette

The goal of these guidelines is to address some common concerns regarding behavior and dress while on retreat. Each tradition within Buddhism has its own guidelines for courtesy. The courtesy guides offered here are respectful, but not required. Please, let your inner wish and intention be one of respect for all beings seen and unseen. May all beings be well and happy!

Meditation Hall:

- Arrive at all sessions 2 to 5 minutes prior to the meditation bell
- It is respectful to stand when teacher(s) arrive until they take their seat
- It is respectful to **stand and wait** until the teacher(s) leave the hall
- It is respectful to bow, honoring Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha when entering the hall
- Do not enter after a sitting session bell has been rung
- Remain in the hall until the bell at the end of the sitting session has been rung
- It is respectful to **not** point the soles of your feet toward the teacher(s) or the alter
- Moderate stretching to ease back and legs is ok between sitting sessions, however do not perform yoga routines, qigong and other practices in the meditation hall. Utilize Mithaven, or outdoor areas.
- It is disrespectful to lie down or to nap in the meditation hall. Please alert the teacher(s) if a medical condition requires you to lie down in the hall

Silence:

- Please be mindful when opening/closing doors , and when moving about indoors and out, especially in and around the meditation hall.
- Limit eye contact with other participants.
- Leave cell phones and pagers in your car unless you are on emergency call in which case you need to use the "vibration" mode only. Any calls on cell phones should be made in the parking lot, or off site.

Staff Privacy:

- Don't approach the staff quarters except in emergency. You can leave a note for staff on the bulletin board in the Dining Hall for requests, or facility repairs.
- Don't ring the wake up bell at staff quarters.

Clothing:

- It is respectful to wear clothing that is not too tight or revealing, especially when monks and nuns are present on retreat

Dhamma books and other printed Dhamma materials:

- It is disrespectful to place Dhamma written materials or Dhamma objects directly on the floor. Place them on your cushion, a cloth or a proper sutra bench.

Food and Drink:

- Covered water bottles are permitted in the Dhamma hall, all other food or beverages are not permitted in the hall, or your rooms

5. Parking

We have room for approximately 35 cars in our parking lot. Fire and emergency vehicle codes no longer permit us to use the upper graveled areas for parking. There is a designated, “**Load and Unload**” area at the upper side of the dinning hall building where you can leave personal bags and cushions, then move your vehicle to the lot below the garden. Please park mindfully so that we can fit as many cars in the lot as possible.

6. Carpooling

Please carpool when possible by noting on your registration form that you are willing to offer, and/or share a ride.

7. Pets

No pets are allowed at the retreat center. If someone is dropping you off and there is a pet riding along, **it must remain in the vehicle** no matter how friendly or docile.

8. Smoking

Smoking is permitted in the lower parking lot only. Please be sensitive to the presence of others, and please, carry your butts to a trash can.

9. Tenting

There are a limited number of tent sites available. You must have your own tent as we do not provide camping tents, pads, tarps, etc. Please let us know if you intend to bring your tent. Tents placed in grassy areas **must be moved every 5 days** so as not to kill the grass.

10. Room assignments

We understand that it is everyone's preference to have a single space while on retreat. Over the years, in order to be fair and equitable about assigning our limited number of singles, we have evolved the practice of assigning rooms on a first-registered, first-housed basis. First we fill the singles, then the doubles, and on very full retreats the last people on the list sometimes are assigned to triples. If a cancellation opens up a single room, the next person on the list based on their registration date automatically would be assigned to it. Additionally, whenever we offer a retreat that has a short option structured into it, for example, a weekend option on a 6-day retreat, we offer housing priority to those attending the long portion.

11. Walking meditation etiquette

Walking meditation is permitted in many places on the property.

- During rain you can:
 - a. Borrow one of the umbrellas located outside the dinning hall entrance.
 - b. You can use Mithaven.
 - c. You can walk under one of the building overhangs.
- If you walk on the lawns, be mindful not to damage the grass. Move your location periodically.
- **Do not** walk in the dining hall

- **Do not** walk on the staff residence deck. If you walk on the lawn in front of the staff residence, please stay out nearer the driveway.
- **Do not** walk in the path by Diamond hall that leads to the teacher's cottage.
- **Do not** walk where you will block the normal flow of passage for other participants and staff. **Rule of thumb:** if there is no space to let others by, then please walk somewhere else.

12. Conservation

We urge everyone to be good stewards of the resources at Cloud Mountain. Please be mindful by turning off lights, closing doors and windows and using CM supplies wisely and taking only what you can consume or use. Thank you.

13. Telephones

We do not have any public phones available. In case you have an emergency, contact one of the staff to make arrangements to use one of our phones. Please have a calling card ready, or be able to call collect.

14. Walking off site

If you chose to take a walk off the Cloud Mountain property, we have included area maps and some guidelines. Please be aware that these guidelines were established in order to maintain good relationships with our neighbors, and are not in place to hamper your enjoyment of the area.

- Walk only on the roads and trails indicated on the maps provided.
- Stay on the roads, and do not stray into fields, and do not approach or cross fences.
- If you encounter or see dogs, horses, other animals or pets, **do not stop to pet or play with the animals.** Do not approach roadside fences to pet horses. Dogs are unpredictable and on occasion follow participants back to the retreat center leaving the staff to deal with the wayward animal.
- Do not cross our next door neighbor's boundaries on the south which runs from the top of the hill by Mithaven to the bottom past the sauna area, and on the west boundary line along the top of the hill. You will see the metal posts along both borders. Please refer to a property map. You will find all maps in the dining hall.

15. Water Usage and septic ecology

Water from all taps is safe to drink. The water comes from our well and is tested regularly. We have a solid carbon filter located in the downstairs bathroom of the dining hall if you prefer to use filtered water.

All of our sinks, toilets and showers empty into septic systems. Only toilet paper and human waste should be flushed down the toilets. Other items like tampax, tampons, paper towels, Q-tips and so forth, are disastrous to the system as they do not decompose clogging the tank and drain lines.

16. On-site first aid supplies

There are several locations in the dining hall for first aid supplies. There is one box in the downstairs bathroom on the cabinet by the sink which includes aspirin, antacids, Band-Aids, etc. There are additional supplies in the upstairs bathroom on the shelves by the toilet. If you have an emergency, contact a staff member.

17. Toiletries

We have some toiletry items like toothpaste, shaving cream, cough drops, etc in an “honor box” on the bottom shelf beside the registration desk. Look there to see if we have what you need. If you do not find what you need, then leave a note for staff, and we’ll see if we can get the item for you. We’ve marked the price on most items in order to cover replacement costs.

18. Forgotten items

If you forgot something like a towel or pillow you can leave a note for staff. We may be able to loan you what is needed. Return these borrowed items to the dining hall shelf below the bulletin boards at the end of the retreat unless otherwise directed by staff.

19. Blankets and cushions

We have a supply of cushions and blankets located in the furnace room at Diamond Hall (meditation hall.) Use what you need for the duration of the retreat, and then return items to where you got them. **If you are using a cushion as a foot rest when sitting in a chair, we ask that you use one of the towels found in the furnace room to cover the cushion to help us keep them clean for others.**

20. Chairs

Chairs are located in the furnace room at the back of the meditation hall. We offer green, high backed patio chairs that most people find to be quiet comfortable. Whether you use one of our chairs, or have brought one of your own: **Please put one of the mats or towels provided under your chair to prevent damage to the bamboo floor.** You will find them in the furnace room along with the chairs, cushions and blankets.

21. Candles and incense

It is **not** permitted to burn candles or incense in any of the rooms. You may place and light these offerings only at the (outdoor) Naga shrine which is the red brick, round shrine outside behind the dining hall by the small upper pond.

22. Scents and fragrances

Please be sparing with the use of all products with a fragrance. Many teachers and attendees, we have learned, are allergy sensitive and have strong reactions to perfumes and even strong natural scents. Please minimize or eliminate the use of all scented products. Many noses will thank you.

23. Notes and feedback

Noble silence also applies to note writing. Limit notes as much as possible. Be mindful and kind in all communications. Helpful and kindly expressed feedback is welcome and encouraged. Feedback forms can be found in the registration area.

24. Electrical outlets

Many of the rooms have electrical outlets, but not all of them do. If you have a medical need for an outlet please contact staff

25. Safety: Cloud Mountain is a forest retreat environment, so be mindful and careful

- **Flashlights:** Please use your flashlights after dark when walking outside. Even lighted trails and paths can be difficult to navigate at night. If you forgot to bring

a flashlight, then borrow one of ours to use while you are here. The loaners are located in the dining hall, in the sitting area on the mantel above the gas stove.

- **Paths:** Please be mindful and careful when walking the paths, and watch for rocks that may have tumbled from a bank, or limbs and fir cones that may have fallen onto the path. If you see a hazard, please remove it yourself if possible, or report it to staff.
- **Decks and trails** can be slippery at any time, especially after a rain, so please walk with care at all times.
- **Shoes:** Please put your shoes on the shoe racks, or against the wall under the benches. Do not leave shoes outside the main door of the meditation hall, or in general out where others can stumble on them.

26. Cloud Mountain Books (library)

We have a library of books located in the main dining hall building. The shelves with books are in the sitting area where the blue couches are located. If the curtains are closed, then the teacher has asked that there be no reading during the retreat and we have respectfully closed the library. If reading is permitted, these curtains will be open and you may borrow these books while you are here. **Please do not take these books home with you.**

27. Items for sale

We have Tee shirts, sweat shirts, mugs, journals and pens for sale. They all have the Cloud Mountain logo on them. The prices are listed on the main bulletin board. If you do not see the item you are interested in, please leave a note for staff letting us know what you would like to see, or purchase.

28. Local resources

Emergencies: medical, fire, police
Castle Rock Pharmacy

911
360-274-8211

29. Retreat Requirements

Arrival and Departure:

- Retreats begin in the evening of the first day. The confirmation letter will specify exact times. Participants are asked to make every effort to arrive on time, as the spirit and continuity of the retreat is greatly facilitated by starting together.
- Retreats end in the afternoon of the last scheduled day. Participants are asked to stay until the scheduled end of the retreat. This consideration supports the continuity of the environment and minimizes disruptions caused by packing and departure activities while others are still in retreat. Late arrivals and early departures of a non-emergency nature fall outside the retreat center guidelines and can result in suspension of retreat participation at Cloud Mountain.

Daily and Final Center Service:

- Participation in daily and final chores is a part of the retreat structure at Cloud Mountain. Unless there is a physical limitation or some compelling reason to be excused from these activities, all participants are expected to participate.