

Retreat Life

Noble Silence

- Once the retreat begins, you will be asked to honor “noble silence” – a quieting of the body, gaze, and voice that helps cultivate a calm and peaceful retreat environment. Noble silence includes not reading (other than retreat communications from teachers or staff), writing, keeping a journal, receiving mail, using the telephone, or otherwise keeping busy and distracted. By leaving at home the activities and communications that worldly life entails, you offer yourself the gift of stillness.
- Noble silence also includes avoiding eye contact with other retreatants, which supports the tranquility of the retreat container. Most, but not all, retreats include this practice. The decision is up to the teacher.
- Silence is broken at the end of the retreat, in time to allow you to talk and share your experience with other retreatants.

Five Precepts

While on retreat, all participants undertake the following ethical guidelines:

- To refrain from harming any living, sentient beings – not to kill or intentionally hurt any person or creature, even an insect.
- To refrain from taking what is not freely given – not to steal or “borrow” without the consent of the giver; to accept what is offered and not try to change it or get more.
- To abstain from sexual activity.
- To practice noble silence and to refrain from harming by one's speech – not to lie, gossip or use harsh or hurtful language.
- To abstain from using alcohol, recreational drugs and other intoxicants that cloud the mind and harm the body. (This does not apply to prescription medicines.)