

Path of Bliss Retreat Agreement Form (terms & rules)

[Please read these guidelines carefully. Signifying your agreement is a required part of retreat registration]

Covid-19: The organizers will follow State guidelines. Masks are optional. If you have symptoms you will be required to take a rapid test and will be requested to isolate or leave the retreat in case you test positive.

Behavioral Guidelines of Path of Bliss Retreat

Participants at retreats come with a strong desire to delve deeply into the philosophy and spiritual practices of Ananda Marga. The nature of the Collective Meditations (Dharma Cakras), workshops and meals at our sectorial and regional retreats brings a large number of people in relatively close contact. This requires that all retreat participants be aware of their behavior and its effect on others. In addition to being grounded in Yama and Niyama (see list of Yama/Niyama further below in this document) and following the 15 Shiilas (list below in this document), it is expected that, in order to maintain a Spiritual and Safe space at the retreat, participants will not engage in any behavior that could cause a fellow retreat attendee to feel unnecessarily uncomfortable, harassed, discriminated against, treated disrespectfully, or intimidated.

(1) Participants are expected to follow all federal and local laws during the time of the retreat

(2) Participants are expected to follow all rules and regulations of the host site for the retreat

(3) No firearms are allowed on the retreat site.

(4) No use of intoxicants/drugs, alcohol or tobacco products at the retreat site. No smoking anywhere in the retreat site property, including buildings, fields and forest.

(5) Participants are expected to comply with all instructions of the retreat organizers. If you disagree with any instructions for any reason, approach the retreat organizers separately to discuss the reasons for your disagreement.

(6) Participants (male and female) are expected to wear modest clothing that covers the shoulders, chest, and thighs. This means no tank-tops, shorts, etc. Exceptions can be made for young children. We understand that it can be warm at the summer retreats, but as this is a spiritual event and proper decorum is expected—especially at dharma cakra (collective meditation).

(7) Shirts should not display inappropriate messages for a spiritual event

(8) In following what is considered current best practice among organizations in the United States, Path of Bliss will take any reports of harassment, discrimination, disrespectfulness, or intimidation very seriously. Participants who are asked to stop any inappropriate behavior or perceived inappropriate behavior are expected to comply immediately. If a participant engages in inappropriate behavior, retreat organizers

retain the right to take any actions necessary to keep the event a welcoming environment for all participants. This includes, but is not limited to, asking the offender to stop the behavior and to reflect on it, giving a final warning, and expulsion from the retreat, with no refund, if necessary. Retreat organizers may take action to address anything that has the clear impact of disrupting the event or making the environment hostile for any participants.

Reporting Concerns:

If for any reason anyone feels unsafe or unwelcome, they are not required to, but are encouraged to report potential incidents to the designated persons (introduced and identified at the retreat) or retreat organizers. Retreat organizers will take seriously all concerns brought to them. Harassment of any kind lessens the value of our retreat for everyone. We want everyone to be comfortable at our retreats. Reports can be made (a) to the individuals designated at the retreat site, (b) to the organizers, or (c) anonymously through any trusted third individual who brings the situation to the attention of the retreat organizers or the designated individuals.

When taking a personal report, organizers will ensure safety and confidentiality. It will always be the participant's choice in how to proceed. Beyond addressing concerns with the person accused, our team will either contact directly or assist the participant as needed with contacting hotel/venue security, local law enforcement if necessary, local support services if needed and otherwise assist in ensuring safety for the duration of the event.

Helpful reporting information may include:

- Identifying information (name or description) of the participant doing the perceived harassing
- The behavior that was considered in violation
- The approximate time of the behavior
- The circumstances surrounding the incident
- Names of any witnesses

Please see below for additional information on what behaviors may be perceived as harassment, discrimination, disrespectfulness, and intimidation:

Please signify that you have read and agree to follow the retreat behavioral guidelines by checking the "I agree to the rules and terms" box at the end of the registration form.

This applies to all other additional points described below.

Behaviors:

What behaviors are likely to be perceived as harassment, discrimination, disrespectfulness, or intimidation?

*sexual harassment behaviors:

- Unwelcome sexual attention and/or action, including any specific activity for which affirmative consent was not requested and given

- Comments that are lewd, lascivious, or demeaning
 - Unwelcome discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity
 - Sexual images in public spaces and/or on public platforms
 - Unwanted photography or recording (See Retreat Photography Policy)
 - Inappropriate physical contact
 - Intrusive personal questions
 - Stalking or inappropriate following
 - Verbal comments/actions that assert social structures of gender domination
 - Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behaviors

*discrimination behaviors:

- Treating any individual in an inequitable manner based on race, ethnicity, age, disability/handicap, national origin, religion, color, sex, physical appearance, or gender preference.

*disrespectful behaviors:

- insults
- sarcastic comments
- dismissive responses to the comments of the other person

*ignoring

- public humiliation

*condescending comments

*intimidation behaviors:

- threatening others
- invading the personal space of others
- unwanted touching of others (that feels violating)
- shouting at others in a threatening manner

By registering for a Path of Bliss Retreat, my guests and I agree to the following additional terms:

I will behave in accordance with yoga ethics (see below) at the retreat and treat others with respect.

If I need to change rooms I will go back to the Retreat registration desk to request a change.

The bathrooms will be kept in a clean and used in an orderly way with consideration for others guests using the facilities.

Toilet bowls are to be kept free of refuse to avoid clogging. The **cost of servicing** clogged plumbing will be the **responsibility of the person** who left refuse.

Do not move furniture without consulting with the premises manager.

Cost of damage to property will be responsibility of the one who caused the damage.

Cooking is not permitted. If you need special food contact the organizers for the event

I will not leave refuse lying around and will dispose of it in the designated containers.

I will leave the room clean upon my departure.

I understand that I am required to wear clothing that covers the knees and shoulders during Dharma Cakra.

YAMA AND NIYAMA (Yoga Ethics)

YAMA:

Traditional Definitions: (a) Abstinenances (things not to be done) or (b) Guidelines for social interactions

Alternate definition: Actions based on the ideation of oneness with others

AHIMSA

Traditional Definition: non-harming others

Alternate definition: Benevolent actions with the welfare of others in mind; not inflicting pain or hurt on others in thought, word, or deed.

SATYA

Traditional Definition: non-lying

Alternate definition: Benevolent use of words with the welfare of others in mind.

ASTEYA

Traditional Definition: non-stealing

Alternative definition: Not desiring or taking what others currently possess

APARIGRAHA

Traditional Definition: non-indulgence in superfluous material objects

Alternative definition: Using things for their maximum benefit to all, without wasting resources

BRAHMACARYA

Traditional Definition: non-sexuality

Alternate definition: Treating every living being and object as a manifestation of the Divine.

NIYAMA

Traditional Definition: (a) Observances (things to be done)

Alternate definition: Purifications

SANTOSHA

Traditional Definition: mental contentment

Alternate definition: Being content in the present, but fighting for the welfare and progress of all

SHOACA

Traditional Definition: cleanliness

Alternate definition: Internal and external purity

TAPAH

Traditional Definition: undergoing physical penance

Alternate definition: Undergoing discomfort for the welfare of others

SVADYAYA

Traditional Definition: studying scriptures

Alternate definition: Making efforts to understand spiritual concepts

IISHVARA PRANIDHANA

Traditional Definition: Meditation

Alternate definition: Constantly remembering the Divine and surrendering one's ego and desires to the Divine.

THE FIFTEEN SHILAS

1. Forgiveness
2. Magnanimity of Mind
3. Perpetual Restraint on Behavior and Temper
4. Readiness to Sacrifice Everything of Individual Life for Ideology
5. All-Round Self-Restraint
6. Sweet and Smiling Behavior
7. Moral Courage
8. Setting an Example by Individual Conduct Before Asking Anybody to do the Same
9. Keeping Aloof from Criticizing Others, Condemning Others, Mudslinging and All Sorts of Groupism

10.Strict Adherence to the Principles of Yama and Niyama

11.Due to Carelessness, if any Mistake Has Been Committed Unknowingly or Unconsciously, One Must Admit It Immediately and Ask for Punishment

12.Even While Dealing with a Person of Inimical Nature, One Must Keep Oneself Free from Hatred, Anger and Vanity

13.Keeping Oneself Aloof from Talkativeness

14.Obedience to the Structural Code of Discipline

15.Sense of Responsibility