

The Seven Factors of Awakening - Retreat Information Sheet

This document hopefully answers all the questions you may have about this retreat. Topics include, Dates and Times, Location and Directions, Pricing, Payment Schedule, Scholarships, Refunds, Transportation, Yogi Jobs, What to Bring, Food, Health Issues, Phones and Emergency Contact, Practice Notes, The Five Precepts, Dana and the Retreat Schedule.

Dates and Times

The Retreat starts at 5:30pm on Tuesday, Oct. 19 and ends at 1:00pm on Sunday, Oct.24. Registration and move in will be from 4:00 - 5:00pm on the Thursday.

Location and Directions

The retreat is being held at the Rocky Mountain Ecodharma Retreat Center (RMERC), 8941 Overland Rd., Ward, CO. It is about ¾ of a mile east of the Peak to Peak highway and ~7 miles west of Jamestown, CO. Here's a Google Maps Link.

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/8941+Overland+Rd,+Ward,+CO+80481/@40.1252763,-105.4657222,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x876bdc51e65da4a9:0x94103c6e809b5d08!8m2!3d40.1252722!4d-105.4635335?hl=en>

Pricing

Pricing is based on accommodation type. This payment covers the cost room, food, and helps defray the cost of scholarships for students who simply can't afford the full prices. All of it goes to RMERC and the cook. There will be a teacher Dana bowl put out at the end of the retreat. More information on the tradition of Dana can be found below.

Accommodation	Price
Single Room	\$400
Double Room	\$375
3 rd Floor Cubby	\$350
Tent Space	\$350

Note: Unfortunately we cannot offer dorm space at this time, due to RMERC policies.

You can register here: https://www.barryhgillespie.com/Oct_2021_retreat.html

Scholarships

I want to share some thoughts about scholarships for my retreats at RMERC.

I recently had a conversation with someone that went like this.

Student: I'd really like to go to your retreat, but I can't afford the money.

Me: That's OK, we have scholarship funds to make it affordable for you.

Student: Oh, I couldn't do that, scholarships are for people who really need one.

I tried to explain that if she sincerely wanted to go but couldn't financially afford to, she was "someone who really needs one".

Another reason I've heard in the past is "I had a scholarship last year it's someone else's turn this year". There is no need to "take turns".

Let me explain where scholarship money comes from. Perhaps it will make you and other people like these students feel more comfortable asking for a scholarship.

In my case scholarship funds come from 2 sources.

- 1) I set my prices so that some people pay a little extra, beyond the actual cost of food and lodging. This "extra" money goes into the scholarship pool.
- 2) RMERC has a "matching" scholarship fund that will cover 25% of the cost of the retreat.

There is plenty of money available for scholarships. No one who has a sincere desire to go on retreat will be turned away, whether you just need something off the price to make it affordable for you, or you need a scholarship for the total cost, that's just fine. It is VERY important to me that no one hesitates to come and sit with me because they "can't afford it".

To apply for a scholarship to my RMERC retreats just e-mail me briefly at barryhgillespie@comcast.net explaining your circumstances and how much of a scholarship you need. We'll make it happen. Feel free to share this with friends who might be interested as well.

Payment Schedule

Everyone, except perhaps a fully funded scholarship student, pays a non-refundable \$50 registration fee when they sign up for the retreat. The remainder of the cost (ie. the price above minus the \$50 registration fee) is payable by check and is due Sep. 6. Send check, payable to Barry Gillespie, to 2267 Nicholl St., Boulder, CO 80304. If paying by check is inconvenient/difficult contact Barry for electronic alternatives.

Refunds

Refunds will be given if at all possible, based on the following schedule.

Before July 15. Full refund less \$50 registration fee.

Between July 16 and Sep. 6. 50% of full refund minus \$50 registration fee.

After Sep. 6. No refunds, except perhaps in cases of serious illness or injury, or if the retreat is full and someone is available to take the place.

Transportation

There is no public transportation available that takes you anywhere near RMERC. Participants are responsible for arranging their own transportation. However every attempt will be made to arrange car pools/shuttle buses to minimize our collective impact on the environment. There is a section on the Registration Information form that you will fill out once you have registered. You'll be sent a link to this form.

If you are flying to/from Denver airport to attend the retreat, the airport is ~1.5 hours away. Please consider that when booking your flights, so you won't arrive late or have to leave early.

Yogi Jobs

One of the ways that the prices for retreats is kept low is asking all of the participants to take on some small amount of work each day, typically $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour, to help with simple domestic tasks; cleaning, doing dishes, chopping vegetables, etc. When you register you will be assigned a particular job and you will be told where and when to do it.

What to Bring

1) Your own cushions, zafus, zabutons, blankets, rugs, etc. if you prefer to use your own things when you sit on the floor. These will be provided by RMERC if you prefer. There will also be a number of straight back chairs for people who would rather not do all (or even any) of their sitting practice on the floor. A thin cushion for extra seat padding would be helpful.

2) Layers of clothing, so you can keep comfortable. Sitting for long periods you often cool down, so a shawl is a good idea. Also, to encourage alertness, we will probably keep windows open a crack if possible, so we have lots of fresh air.

3) Clothes for walking outside. Once again, depending on the weather this may mean rain gear and boots or a t-shirt, shorts and sun screen, etc. Be prepared. If the weather is really bad we'll make other arrangements. Walking inside will be possible, for those who feel walking outside in the hot sun is just too much.

- 4) Enough clothes for the entire retreat. There are no laundry facilities available.
- 5) Your own toiletries; soap, shampoo, tooth paste, etc. Towels and bedding are provided.
Please do not bring or use any perfume, cologne, after shave or scented personal hygiene products, including any products that use “natural” scents. This may mean you will have to find and bring products other than the ones you normally use.
- 6) A Yoga Mat, if you plan to do the daily optional gentle yoga class. RMerc has a few donated mats for those who don't own one.
- 7) Extra Blankets/sleeping bag. Two sheets, a blanket, a pillowcase, and a bath towel are supplied for each lodge guest. Nights at 8500 feet will be cool, even cold at night. Be prepared.
- 8) What not to bring. Cell phones, pagers, watches that "bing", lap top computers, etc. All of these will just be distractions.

Food

Three simple vegetarian meals will be served every day. Option for people who are vegan or require a gluten-free diet will be offered. Food will be labelled so that those with allergies can take care of themselves. This should meet the requirements of most people. Following the precept of “taking only what is offered” you may have to live with eating food that is not exactly what you would normally eat or want.

Participants may not cook their own food and there is no refrigeration space available for participants to store their own food. Limited cupboard space is available for storing snacks that don't require refrigeration. This is NOT an invitation to bring whatever you think you might need, unless you have specific dietary requirements that cannot be met by the above.

Health Issues

Retreat life is physically and mentally demanding. If you have physical or mental health issues that may make it difficult for you to participate fully in the retreat make sure you consult with your doctor(s) before coming, **and that you continue to take any prescribed medication.** Also please let me know about these issues before the retreat starts.

In general, part of retreat life is being extra careful with your own personal hygiene; always washing your hands after using the washroom, using the hand sanitizer provided before you eat a meal, and always covering your mouth/nose if you cough or sneeze.

RMERC is located 8500 feet above sea level. It is important that you pay extra attention to keeping hydrated and that you protect your skin from the sun.

Phones and Emergency Contact

Cell phone service at RMERC is extremely spotty, so please do not expect that your cell phone will work if you have plans to call someone just before the retreat starts or right after it ends. There is land line at the lodge which is for emergency use only, 303-459-1012. If you give this number to family/loved ones make sure they understand what “emergency” means.

Practice Notes

In the Theravada tradition the practice of Right Speech, one of the eight steps of the Buddha's eightfold path, takes on special significance. In the context of these workshops Right Speech becomes what is known as Noble Silence. From the start of the retreat on Friday Sept.1 until near the end of the retreat you will be asked not to talk to each other, not to read, except for material we will hand out, and not to write. The idea is to as much as possible take the mind away from its usual habits of discursive thought.

People like to take notes during retreats. **We strongly urge you not to do so.** You will remember what is important. Writing notes breaks your continuity of practice by taking you out of the present moment. This doesn't mean you won't talk at all. We will regularly ask for questions and sometimes ask you to share what you are experiencing. There will also be 1-on-1 meetings if desired. Please take care of personal matters before entering silence, including any telephone calls, so that you can have an uninterrupted retreat. We will move from Noble Silence into mindful speech at the end of the retreat.

Part of the practice will be done walking instead of sitting. This serves two purposes. It allows the body to move, to not get cramped, and it allows the practitioner to experience the practice in a controlled way "off the cushion". You will be encouraged to do some of the walking practice outside, regardless of the weather, so please make sure to bring appropriate clothing.

It is important that you arrive promptly, on the Thursday, October 3, to give you time to find your room and settle in. It is also **very** important that you plan to stay until the end of the retreat. People leaving early create a distraction for those who remain.

The Five Precepts

A core aspect of the Buddha's teaching is the importance of living by certain ethical guidelines. On this retreat these guidelines – known as the Five Precepts – form an integral part of daily life, and are adopted by everyone, both retreatants and teachers.

A commitment to undertake training in these precepts helps ensure our retreat environment of safety, refuge and non-harming.

While on retreat, all participants undertake:

- 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 and recreational drugs that cloud the mind and lead to heedlessness. (**Important Note: This does not apply to prescription medicines.**)

Dana

The price you pay covers the cost of your room and meals. None of the money goes to teacher. I teach because I think it is important that Buddha Dharma is taught as widely as possible. However, I support myself partly through Dana.

Dana (pronounced "dah-na") is a Pali word meaning generosity. Dating back to the time of the Buddha an inter-dependence has existed between those who offer the teachings and those who receive them. The teachings are given freely, since they are considered priceless.

According to the Buddha, generosity, or sharing what we have, is one of the central pillars of a spiritual life. In the act of giving we develop our ability to let go, cultivate a spirit of caring, and acknowledge the inter-connectedness that we all share. The Buddha created a system to develop this quality of open-handedness whereby those who share the teachings are dependent on those who receive them.

It is the practice of Dana that has kept the Buddhist tradition alive for more than 2,500 years in Asia, where committed supporters have given generously to establish networks of monasteries and retreat centers providing for millions of teachers and practitioners. In the west, where most teachers are householders like me, the idea of the Dana bowl has been established. If you are unfamiliar with the concept of Dana and wonder what is appropriate you might consider the following things, which I have listed in order of importance:

- 1) How much can you afford?
- 2) How valuable was the retreat for you?
- 3) How important is it to you that Buddha Dharma continues to be offered?

A Dana bowl will be put out in the dining area on Sunday, Oct. 6 after breakfast.

US Funds (checks or cash) only please.

Retreat Schedule

Tuesday (Oct. 19)

4:00-5:00pm – Register - Move in to Rooms – get settled.

5:30-6:45pm – Light Dinner and clean-up.

6:45-7:15pm - Introductions – Talk on how things will work, noble silence, process questions.

7:15-8:00pm – Taking Refuge - brief sitting instructions – sit

8:00-8:15pm – break

8:15-9:00pm – Dharma talk, chant sharing of blessings, dedicate the merit.

9:30pm – Bed time

10:00pm – Lights out

Wednesday thru Saturday (Oct. 20-23)

5:45am – Wake-up Bell

6:05am – Second Bell

6:15-7:00am – Sit

7:00-8:45am – Breakfast, clean up and free time

8:45-9:30am – Sit with instructions

9:30-9:45am - questions

9:45-10:15am – Walking practice

10:15–11:00am – Sit

11:00-11:30am –Walking practice

11:30am-noon – Sit

Noon-1:45pm – Lunch and free time

1:45-2:30pm – Sit with Instructions

2:30-3:15pm – Gentle Yoga Class or Walking Practice

3:15-4:00pm – Sit

4:00-4:30pm – Walking Practice

4:30-5:00pm – Sit

5:00-6:45pm – Dinner, clean up and free time

6:45-7:15pm – Sit

7:15-7:45pm – Walking Practice

7:45-8:45pm – Dharma Talk

8:45-9:00pm - Walking Practice

9:00-9:30pm – Sit with Chanting, Dedicate the Merit

9:30pm – Bed time

10:00pm – Lights out

Sunday (Oct. 24)

5:45am – Wake-up Bell

6:05am – Second Bell

6:15-7:00am – Sit

7:00-8:45am – Breakfast, clean up and free time

8:45-9:30am – Sit with instructions

9:30-10:00am – Walking practice

10:00–10:45am – Sit

10:45- noon – Silence ends, Questions and Answers, Discussion & Sharing, Chanting, Dedicate the Merit

noon-1:00pm – Lunch, final clean-up, heading home.