

# Lion's Roar Dharma Center

## General Buddhist Etiquette

- ☞ **Entering the Temple:** When you enter the Temple, if possible, do three prostrations either standing or full. Come in and take your seat. Sit silently or do mantras until the service or teaching begins. If you have a temple job to do, do it quietly and then take your seat. The time before services is quiet time and is not for visiting.
- ☞ **Greetings:** With reference to a teacher or monastic, for a traditional greeting or parting, stand with the body slightly bowed and the hands folded at the heart. An unfurled white scarf can also be held in the hands (Tibetan custom). Stand when a teacher enters or leaves a room.
- ☞ **Shoes:** Shoes are generally left outside the door of a shrine room or temple.
- ☞ **Appropriate Dress:** Revealing clothing, such as tank tops, short skirts, shorts and the like may be inappropriate attire in some temple or shrine room settings. Within Buddhism, appropriate attire is flexible and based on the polite and inoffensive social custom of each country.
- ☞ **Legs Outstretched:** It is considered disrespectful when seated on the floor or a cushion to outstretch the legs and direct the soles of the feet toward the shrine, teacher, monk or nun.
- ☞ **Stepping Over:** When moving through a crowded shrine room, make every effort not to step or pass over the top of another person's body, i.e., leg, knee or foot. When seated, if others are passing by, raise the knees to afford a pathway so they are not forced to step over. Stepping over is considered disrespectful and rude.
- ☞ **Religious Materials:** Do not place Dharma books, meditation texts, or prayer beads (mala) on the floor or carpet. Do not step over Dharma books and articles.
- ☞ **Turning Pages:** When turning the pages of Dharma books or meditation texts, do not wet the fingers with the tongue.
- ☞ **Teachings:** Face toward the Guru-teacher when receiving instructions, not the shrine. When receiving formal teachings, ask if it is permissible to take notes or make tape recordings.
- ☞ **Mala Beads:** Do not place them on the ground, the floor or on a bed. During teachings and initiations, do not recite mantras or count beads unless told to do so

as part of the teachings and initiations. When wearing the mala about the neck, place the head bead at the top (resting against the neck).

- ☞ **Indicating:** When pointing to a teacher, monastic, or fellow Dharma companion, a painting (thangka) or temple mural, indicate with the right hand open, fingers extended and the palm up. Do not point with the index finger: this is considered very rude.
- ☞ **Incense:** When lighting incense, after the stick has ignited with a glowing ember, do not blow the flame out with the breath, but rather wave with the hand to extinguish.
- ☞ **Candles & Butter Lamps:** to extinguish – use a candle snuffer or wave gently with the hand to extinguish, do not blow the flame out with the breath.
- ☞ **Offerings:** Having placed offerings on a shrine, such as fruit and cookies; when replacing the offerings – do not eat them oneself, but rather give them away to others.
- ☞ **General Conduct:** Do not stand with the arms akimbo in the presence of the Teacher. Do not chew food loudly or with an open mouth. Do not spit where other people walk. In the presence of a teacher, monastic, or in a shrine room, cover the mouth when yawning, coughing – or laughing with a wide gaping mouth.