

Services Offered by Sakya Monastery
Spiritual Practices, Blessings & Ceremonies

Compiled by: His Holiness Jigdal Dagchen Sakya (1929-2016)



Sakya Monastery of Tibetan Buddhism

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SAKYA MONASTERY OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

Introduction

Sakya Monastery of Tibetan Buddhism has compiled this spiritual practices guidebook to assist people who are interested in integrating Buddhist beliefs into their daily lives. For further information or to request any of the practices outlined in this guidebook, please contact monastery@sakya.org or call Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to noon at (206) 789-2573.

Note: Please make suggested donations to Sakya Monastery of Tibetan Buddhism. Give at the level at which you are able.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Becoming a Buddhist.....	5
Maturing Your Mind through Vajrayana Practice.....	6
<i>Deity Initiations</i>	<i>6</i>
Blessings for New Life	7
<i>General Baby Blessing.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Baby Blessing Which Includes Hair Cutting Ceremony and Bestowal of a Dharma Name: For the Child of a Buddhist Practitioner.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Blessings for Weddings	8
<i>Wedding Registration Form.....</i>	<i>9</i>
Blessings & Consecrations for Places.....	10
<i>Land, Home, Business or Store.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Statues, Stupas, Thangkas, Malas, Prayer Flags, and Religious Objects.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Practices for Healing, Relieving Suffering & Mourning	12
<i>Dedication of Merit at the Monastery.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Vigil of Volunteers</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Elaborate Dedication of Merit at the Monastery with Samantabhadra Prayer and Food Offering (Mang-cha)...</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Medicine Buddha Prayer Circle</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Phowa</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Shitro Practice: Prayers for the Deceased</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Sur: The Complete 49-Day Spiritual Practice as Described in “The Tibetan Book of the Dead” (Bardo Thodol) for Loved Ones Who Have Passed.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Practices for Removing Obstacles: Green Tara Prayers.....</i>	<i>20</i>
Divination – “Chak-Mo”.....	21
Retreats.....	22

Becoming a Buddhist: Taking Refuge

What is taking refuge?

Taking refuge is the gateway to the Buddhist path of liberation. It is a formal ceremony during which one becomes a Buddhist. One takes refuge in the Three Jewels or the Triple Gem: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Taking refuge involves a wholehearted commitment to your spiritual path as well as a desire to benefit all sentient beings. If you are interested in learning more about taking refuge, please see our Virupa Educational Institute (VEI) catalogue for the date of the next “Significance of Taking Refuge” class.

Why does one take refuge?

There are a variety of valid reasons for becoming a Buddhist (traditionally referred to as “taking refuge”). The reasons can be reduced to three motivations. The first is fear of being trapped in samsara (the endless round of births and deaths) as well as the fear of ignorance, desire and aversion. The second reason is faith or supreme confidence in the Three Jewels: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. The third motivation is compassion, benevolence, and the desire to alleviate all beings’ suffering.

The refuge ceremony procedure

Please feel free to invite your family and friends to watch this auspicious event.

We show our appreciating for the gift of refuge by making the following offerings:

1. At the beginning of the ceremony, you will offer to the Shrine (representing the Buddha) one ceremonial scarf (katag) and either flowers, incense, candles or a monetary offering (monetary offering may be of any amount that you feel comfortable giving).
2. When you receive your blessing cord, you will offer a ceremonial scarf (katag) and a monetary gift offering of appreciation to the Lama. The Lama will trim a small piece of your hair, which symbolizes renunciation. At this time you will receive your new Dharma name from the Lama.
3. At the conclusion of the ceremony, please present monetary offerings of appreciation to the Ordained Attendant(s).

The refuge prayer is repeated in Tibetan after the Lama during the ceremony; its meaning is as follows: *All the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, please pay attention to me, (say your new Dharma name). Until enlightenment is attained, I take refuge in the Buddha, the best of bipeds, I take refuge in the Dharma, free of desire, and I take refuge in the Sangha, the accumulation of merit and wisdom.*

If you wish, after the refuge ceremony you are welcome to join in the following:

- ❖ A group photograph is taken with the Lama, the monks, and your newfound Dharma brothers and sisters.
- ❖ Meet with Sakya Monastery ambassadors to ask questions and learn more about the Monastery.
- ❖ You, your friends and family, and the ambassadors may meet downstairs in the Tibetan Tibetan Cultural Hall to enjoy tea and fellowship.
- ❖ Usually within the next week there will be a Sunday morning follow-up class, “Life After Refuge,” at 8:30am in the Library. Check our calendar for the specific date.
- ❖ Join the Potluck after Refuge in the Tibetan Cultural Hall.

If you have questions about the refuge ceremony, want to sign up for the next refuge ceremony, or have any questions after the ceremony, contact Sakya Monastery’s office.

Maturing Your Mind through Vajrayana Practice

Deity Initiations

What is a Deity Initiation?

Initiations are special ceremonies in which the Lama acts as a conduit between yourself and the deity. He or she transmits blessings and authorizes you to perform meditational practices specific to that deity.

Why does one request an initiation?

Certain practices require an initiation as a prerequisite. For example, at Sakya Monastery each month we do practices such as Mahakala, White Tara, Medicine Buddha, and Shitro which all require a deity initiation. Even if a practice does not have an initiation prerequisite, having an initiation strengthens the practice and enables one to practice it at home. To see examples of past initiations please feel free to peruse the initiation binder in the Sakya Monastery Tibetan Cultural Hall.

Procedure for requesting an initiation

1. A request and offering for an initiation or teaching may be made by an individual or group.
2. A note with your request and offering should be in an envelope accompanying the katag.
3. Offer the katag to the Lama to indicate a request for an initiation.

Responsibilities for an initiation

1. Offering to Accompany Request – A \$100 monetary offering with a katag is offered to the Lama when requesting the initiation.
2. Cho Do – A monetary offering of \$20 is required one week before the initiation so that the Monastery assistant can buy materials: candles, incense, tormas ingredients, etc.
3. Fruit – The evening before the initiation, a bowl of fruit is required for the Lama's table, to establish the coming of an auspicious event.
4. Initiation Deity's picture, mantra, and/or Sadhana – Make copies of the deity picture, mantra and/or Sadhana for the initiates, or provide funds for the Monastery to make copies.
5. Gratitude – To express appreciation, at the conclusion of the initiation, katags and monetary offerings are made to the Lama (\$150), each of the assistants (\$30, usually three assistants) and the translator (\$75-120).

Blessings for New Life

General Baby Blessing

Who performs the baby blessing?

The Lama performs the baby blessing. He/she will recite prayers and give the child a sacred blessing cord and a long life katag.

Why should one have a baby blessing?

A baby blessing is beneficial for the following reasons: it brings about family happiness, ensures long life of the child, and decreases obstacles for the child.

The following dana (donation) is suggested:

\$50 to Lama + flowers, incense, candles or monetary offerings to the Buddha

Baby Blessing Which Includes Hair Cutting Ceremony and Bestowal of a Dharma Name: For the Child of a Buddhist Practitioner

Who performs the baby blessing?

The Lama performs the baby blessing. He/she will recite prayers, cut a lock of hair from the child's head (which is symbolically offered to the Buddha), give the child a sacred blessing cord, Dharma name, and a long life katag.

Why should one have a baby blessing?

A baby blessing is beneficial for the following reasons: it brings about family happiness, ensures long life, and decreases obstacles for the child. After this ceremony the child becomes a Buddhist and receives a Dharma name.

The following dana (donation) would be appreciated:

\$100 to Lama + flowers, incense, candles or monetary offerings to the Buddha

Blessings for Weddings

Background Information & What to Bring

Couples (Buddhist or non-Buddhist) can arrange to have their wedding ceremony officiated by our Acting Head Lama H.E. Jamyang Dagmo Kusho. Wedding ceremonies are held in the lower Shrine Room (Tibetan Cultural Hall). If desired, ceremonies can also be held offsite.

For all weddings:

1. Complete a Registration Form.

On the Day of the Wedding:

2. Bring your Marriage License
3. Bring offerings for the Buddha Shrine (i.e., flowers, fruits, incense or candles, etc.)
4. Bring offerings for the Lama and two attendants
5. Bring three or four katags
6. If the marriage is at Sakya Monastery, as part of your wedding ceremony, Sakya Monastery will provide auspicious Long Life rice and tea for the couple.
7. If a reception is held at Sakya Monastery, bring your own plates, cups, utensils, napkins, etc.

Additional items required for an onsite wedding ceremony at Sakya Monastery:

1. Fill out a Facilities Use Agreement.

Additional items required for an offsite wedding ceremony:

1. Buddhist shrine or altar at the site*
2. Transportation to and from the site, for the Lama and two attendants.

*If you don't have an altar, the Lama's attendant will bring altar objects for use in the blessing. Please inform us in advance if this is the case.

Wedding Registration Form

Today's Date: ____/____/____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: (____) _____ - _____

Wedding Location and Address: _____

(If at Sakya Monastery, please fill out the Facilities Use Agreement)

If you have not already chosen a wedding date, the Lama can determine an auspicious date for you using Tibetan astrology (If you have already chosen a date, please skip this step):

1. ____/____/____ (Your Birthday)
2. ____/____/____ (Your Partner's Birthday)

Please provide 3 possible dates on which you would like your wedding, ranked from first choice to last choice. Also, indicate the desired time. If the ceremony is held at Sakya Monastery, we will check our calendar to make sure the Tibetan Cultural Hall is not already in use at that time.

Date	Time:
1. ____/____/____	_____
2. ____/____/____	_____
3. ____/____/____	_____

Fees:

H.E. Dagmo Kusho Sakya: \$250

Attendant Monk: \$50/each

Offsite wedding: Add 20% of total (Lama + attendant fees) for Monastery Administrative fee

Onsite wedding: Add Sakya Monastery Facilities Use fee

Blessings & Consecrations for Places

Land, Home, Business or Store

Why should I have my land, home, or business blessed?

The benefit of having a location blessed is that it creates harmonious energy, and generates happiness, long life, enjoyment, and good health.

Where is the blessing performed?

The blessing is performed at the site which shall be consecrated.

Who performs the blessing and what is the suggested donation?

The blessing can be performed by any of the following individuals;

- H.E. Sakya Khöndung Avikrita Rinpoche and one attendant: \$420 (includes 20% for Monastery Administrative Fee)
- H.E. Jamyang Dagmo Kusho Sakya and one attendant: \$300 (includes 20% for Monastery Administrative Fee)
- Khenpo Jampa Rinpoche and one attendant: \$240 (includes 20% for Monastery Administrative Fee)
- Monk or nun and one lay attendant: \$180 (includes 20% for Monastery Administrative Fee)

For the blessing ceremony you need to provide the following items:

1. Transportation for the Lama or ordained performing the blessing.
2. An altar or a picture/statue/thangka of Buddha*
3. Items to be placed on the shrine or in front of the picture of Buddha: flowers, candles, bowl of fruit, incense, etc.
4. A clean bowl filled with uncooked rice
5. Sticks of incense for the individual performing the blessing
6. At the end of the blessing, please give the monetary offering to those who officiated.

*If you don't have an altar, the Lama's attendant will bring altar objects for use in the blessing. Please inform in advance if this is the case.

Blessings & Consecrations for Objects

Statues, Stupas, Thangkas, Malas, Prayer Flags, and Religious Objects

Why should I have my statue or religious object blessed?

It is not appropriate to leave “empty” religious objects such as statues or stupas on a shrine. Therefore, they must be filled. They are filled with “Tsung-Shu” which is a combination of blessed and valued items such as relics, mantras, jewels, medicines, grains, etc. Other religious objects (such as your thangkas, malas, or solid statues) should be blessed to turn these objects into sacred objects.

What is the procedure for having my statue or religious object blessed?

You can bring your items to Sakya Monastery and leave them with the office staff anytime Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM – Noon. Provide the office staff with your religious objects and the appropriate donation amount, and make sure to fill out the proper form (see below). You will be notified by phone or e-mail when the blessing is complete. Sakya Monastery is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Date: ____/____/____

Number of statues: _____

Religious objects description: _____

Name: _____

Contact phone or e-mail: _____

For office use only

Tsung Shu Fee Rcvd.: _____ by (staff): _____

Donation to Lama Rcvd: _____

Donation to Monk Rcvd: _____

The following dana (donation) is suggested:

Total	Statue/Stupa size	Lama’s portion	zushug (filling) portion	monk’s portion
\$250-300	19”	varies*	\$100	\$100
\$170-220	13”	“	\$60	\$60
\$95-145	8”	“	\$15	\$30
\$95-145	6”	“	\$15	\$30

\$50 minimum donation for only a blessing

*\$100 Head Lama fee, \$50 Acting Head Lama fee

Practices for Healing, Relieving Suffering & Mourning

Dedication of Merit at the Monastery

What is a dedication of merit?

When one does spiritual practices, one accumulates merit from having done that practice. Every spiritual practice concludes with a dedication of merit. One can choose to dedicate that merit to a specific individual's benefit and the benefit of all sentient beings.

Why do you do dedication of merit?

Dedication of merit can be done to celebrate auspicious events or to relieve suffering. It can also be done as a mourning practice to help those who have passed away so that they might accomplish a quick and successful re-birth (for other mourning practices, please see the Shitro or Sur practices).

Who do you do dedication of merit for?

Dedication of merit can be done for anyone! You can dedicate merit to your loved ones, including pets or other animals.

When is dedication of merit done?

Dedication of merit prayer requests for an individual can be done during Thursday or Sunday Chenrezi.

What is the suggested donation and what items are suggested for dedication of merit?

According to Tibetan Buddhist tradition, in order for a blessing to be complete, one must make an offering to establish a personal connection with the Three Jewels and the recipient of the merit.

1. Offering to altar (any amount) with a katag
2. Offering to the Lama (any amount) with a katag
3. Photograph of your loved one
4. (Optional) \$30 for rack of 100 candles to be lit on the day of the dedication of merit. A Tibetan tradition is to light candles or butter lamps for the removal of obstacles. Candles are also symbolic of the removal of the "darkness of ignorance"
5. (Optional) Flowers or incense (symbolic of the removal of defilements)

When you arrive, inform a greeter that you wish to dedicate merit. He/she will let you know toward the end of the practice when it is time for you to take your offerings to the altar.

How to dedicate merit

1. You will do three prostrations to the Buddha
2. Place a katag and your offering on the altar table
3. Make an incense offering provided by an ordained or Monastery practitioner
4. Make your katag and monetary offering to the Lama & show the picture of your loved one
5. State who we are dedicating our merit to and pass the picture around for the congregation to view
6. Return to your seat to join in the prayers that will follow

What should I do if I cannot come to Sakya Monastery in person, but still want to dedicate merit?

You may make an out-of-area dedication of merit request. The prayers will be done at the conclusion of one of the meditational practices within a week from the time we receive your offerings. In lieu of your presence, a monastery representative will make your dedication of merit request according to the in-person procedure.

Please do not send an original photo of your loved one. You can send a photo copy or email a digital image to the office (monastery@sakya.org). You may make your offering payment by Paypal or check.

The Aspiration of Samantabhadra Prayer (The King of Prayers)

The meditational prayer that H.H. Jigdral Dagchen Sakya Rinpoche (1929-2016), founder of Sakya Monastery, recommended for anyone who is ill, dying, or deceased is called the Aspiration of Samantabhadra Prayer.

At Sakya Monastery, the Aspiration of Samantabhadra Prayer can be added as a prayer in the Dedication of Merit at the end of regular practices. It is beneficial for family members or Sakya Monastery volunteers to recite the prayer many times over the ill, dying or deceased person.

Copies of the prayer are available in the Sakya Monastery Dharma Shop.

Vigil of Volunteers

Volunteers from Sakya Monastery are available to recite The Aspiration of Samantabhadra and other prayers. Volunteers can come offsite to the loved one's bedside and perform continuous recitations in shifts for as long as necessary. The vigil service includes a portable shrine if needed.

Suggested Donation

The Vigil of Volunteers is a service freely given by the lay members as part of their practice. You are welcome to make a donation to the Monastery on your loved one's behalf if you would like.

Elaborate Dedication of Merit at the Monastery with Samantabhadra Prayer and Food Offering (Mang-cha)

One week advance notice required.

What is an Elaborate Dedication of Merit ceremony?

An elaborate dedication of merit ceremony consists of the standard dedication of merit, as well as the recitation of the Aspiration of Samantabhadra prayer and a Mang-cha.

What is a Mang-cha?

A Mang-cha is a food offering to the Three Jewels and the Lama(s) for their blessings and to the entire congregation in appreciation for their prayers.

When and where does the Mang-cha take place?

After Sunday Chenrezi service, everyone is welcome to come downstairs to our Tibetan Cultural Hall and enjoy the food offering (Mang-cha).

Note: If you are bringing your own food for the Mang-cha, please contact Sakya Monastery.

What is the suggested donation?

1. Offering to altar (any amount) with a katag
2. Offering to the Lama (any amount) with a katag
3. \$200 for food offering (food for Mang-cha purchased by the Monastery). Please give this donation to Adrienne Chan. Alternatively, you may bring your own food, but please ensure that there is enough for 75 – 100 people.
4. (Optional) \$30 for rack of 100 candles to be lit on the day of the dedication of merit
5. (Optional) Flowers or incense (symbolic of the removal of defilements)

What should I do if I cannot come to Sakya Monastery in person, but still want to do an Elaborate Dedication of Merit ceremony?

You may make an out-of-area Elaborate Dedication of Merit ceremony request. The prayers will be done at the conclusion of one of the meditational practices within a week from the time we receive your offerings. In lieu of your presence, a Monastery representative will make your dedication of merit request according to the in-person procedure.

Please do not send an original photo of your loved one. You can send a photo copy or email a digital image to the office (monastery@sakya.org). You may make your offering payment by Paypal or check.

Medicine Buddha Prayer Circle

Who is the Medicine Buddha?

The Medicine Buddha is a transformation of Shakyamuni Buddha, who manifested as the Medicine Buddha in order to give Medicine teachings.

Why request Medicine Buddha prayers?

Medicine Buddha blessings alleviate suffering, sickness and injury, thus prolonging human life and improving the human opportunity to attain enlightenment. You can request Medicine Buddha prayers for a loved one or yourself.

Who does the Medicine Buddha prayers and when does it take place?

Medicine Buddha prayers are done on each new moon. The prayers are done by either a group of lay practitioners who have taken the Medicine Buddha initiation or an ordained at the Monastery.

What is the procedure for requesting Medicine Buddha prayers?

E-mail the person's full name, a description of what the prayers are for, and a digital photograph or photocopy of a picture of your loved one so the group can visualize your loved one. Send your request to: monastery@sakya.org. Put "Medicine Buddha Prayer" in the subject line.

Suggested Donation

The Medicine Buddha prayer circle is a service freely given by the lay members as part of their practice. You are welcome to make a small donation to the Monastery on your loved one's behalf if you would like.

Special Requests

You may also request that one of the ordained perform these prayers.

Phowa

What is Phowa practice?

This Meditation practice is designed to help the consciousness naturally leave the body. This practice is performed as quickly as possible after the person has passed (preferably before being touched.)

Phowa is performed by a qualified Lama and can be done in person or over the phone. Since it is time-sensitive, a person close to the dying person should have the contact information of the Lama who will be performing the practice, and have shared in advance the dying person's name and photo.

It is always better late than never so Phowa may be performed anytime after death but the preference is as soon after death as possible.

The following dana (donation) is suggested:

Lama - \$100 Monastery - \$20

Shitro Practice: Prayers for the Deceased

What is Shitro practice?

Shitro is meditation and practice for those that have passed away.

Why request Shitro practice?

In Buddhism, helping someone to die well is one of the most important gifts we can give another person. If you have loved ones who have passed away, you can help them (even if it has been many years since their death), by having the Sunday morning Shitro group do prayers for them.

Who does Shitro and when does it take place?

Shitro is done on Sunday mornings at 7:00 a.m. by a group of lay practitioners who have received the Shitro initiation. A Buddhist practitioner requesting the practice for a loved one can participate in the Shitro practice without the initiation.

How long are Shitro prayers done for?

The Shitro prayers are held for 8 consecutive Sundays. When the practice is concluded, the pictures or cards with the name and date of passing are burned and the ashes are placed in a stream.

What is the procedure for requesting a Shitro practice?

E-mail the person's full name, their date of passing, and a photograph (optional) so the group can visualize your loved one. Send your request to: monastery@sakya.org. Put "Shitro Prayer" in the subject line.

Suggested Donation

The Shitro practice is a service freely given by the lay members as part of their practice. You are welcome to make a small donation to the Monastery on your loved one's behalf if you would like.

Sur

The Complete 49-Day Spiritual Practice as Described in “The Tibetan Book of the Dead” (Bardo Thodol) for Loved Ones Who Have Passed

What is “Sur” and why does one request these prayers?

Sur is the complete 49-day spiritual practice as described in “The Tibetan Book of the Dead.” Having Sur prayers done for someone who has passed away can be very beneficial for them in the following ways;

1. Facilitates person’s passage through the bardo.
2. Purges attachment to objects.
3. Helps to achieve harmony with local deities, nagas, formless spirits, and the spirits of your loved ones, including pets.

Who performs this practice?

Monk or nun

Where do the prayers take place?

The prayers take place at Sakya Monastery.

What do I need to provide?

When making your request for this practice, please provide the deceased individual’s full name, age, date of passing, and a photograph. In addition, please provide 1 stick (¼ pound) of butter and a ½ pound bag of barley flour which will be used as an aromatic offering during the prayers.

The following dana (donation) is suggested:

Monk - \$150

Monastery Administrative Fee - \$30

Special Kun Rik Puja Services for the Deceased

Kun Rik Puja services greatly benefit the deceased. In Tibet, Nepal and India, the Kun Rik Puja is the primary puja requested for those who've died. This is a very elaborate three-hour practice that includes 37 deities and mudras. *Note: You can prepay Kun Rik ceremonies for yourself so that loved ones don't need to worry about the Kun Rik costs.*

Please contact the office (monastery@sakya.org) for details.

Practices for Removing Obstacles: Green Tara Prayers

What is the purpose of requesting Green Tara prayers?

This practice is very useful and can help remove obstacles and negative forces for important events like a business meeting, a trip, an exam, etc. It can remove obstacles and help to “clear the path” for property, home, business, or an individual.

Who is Green Tara?

Green Tara is a Tibetan Buddhist deity who embodies wisdom and compassion. Green Tara represents enlightened activity and is the essence of all the 21 Taras of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. She is the mother of all beings, goddess of the Earth and the heavens, connected on the outer level with the worlds of plants, animals and humans.

Who performs these prayers?

The practice is performed by a Lama, monk, or nun.

The prayers can be performed by any of the following individuals and the following dana (donation) is suggested:

Head Lama, H.E. Sakya Khöndung Avikrita Rinpoche + one attendant + Monastery

Administrative fee = \$350 + \$50 + \$80

H.E. Jamyang Dagmo Kusho Sakya + one attendant + Monastery Administrative fee =

\$250 + \$50 + \$60

Khenpo Jampa Rinpoche + one attendant + Monastery Administrative fee =

\$200 + \$50 + \$50

Monk or nun + one lay attendant + Monastery Administrative fee = \$150 + \$50 + 40



Divination – “Chak-Mo”

What is Chak-Mo?

Chak-mo (or Mo) is a divination technique used in Tibetan Buddhism using a mala or dice. You may bring important yes or no questions to the Lama who will find a direct answer for you.

Questions may range from issues surrounding the purchase or sale of a house to business, travel, marriage, or relationship decisions. Any doubt that you may want to resolve can be addressed through divination. In situations where there is sufficient information for an individual to make his/her own decision, Mo should not be used as a way of avoiding responsibility.

Who performs the divination?

The divination is performed by the Lama.

The following dana (donation) is suggested:

\$100 + Katag

\$20 Monastery Administrative fee

Retreats

Why do a retreat?

In Tibetan Buddhism, there are two broad areas of formal religious activity. The first is teaching and the second is application. Usually, the teaching takes place at a Monastery and the application is performed during a retreat. The purposes of doing a retreat are as follows;

- ❖ Purification of body, speech, and mind,
- ❖ Practicing a deity for spiritual accomplishments and removing obstacles
- ❖ Alleviating trouble during an obstacle year (once every twelve years)
- ❖ Alleviating periods of bad luck
- ❖ Practicing Nyen Nay (fasting).

Where does the retreat take place?

The retreat takes place at Tara Meditation Center at Earth Sanctuary on Whidbey Island. Please see http://earthsanctuary.org/retreat_house.html for more information about the center.

What is the procedure to go on a retreat?

Look at the Earth Sanctuary calendar for availability:

http://earthsanctuary.org/retreat_house.html

Once you have chosen your dates, fill out the application and release form on the website.

--Members of Sakya Monastery:

Fill out the application and release form located here:

<https://www.sakya.org/retreatcenter/ratesandreservations.html>

Email them to monastery@sakya.org

All retreats for monastery members need to be reviewed by H.E. Dagmo Kusho Sakya.

--Non-members:

Fill out the Application Form and Submit your Reservation Request located at:

http://earthsanctuary.org/retreat_house_reservation.html

How much does it cost *members* to go on a retreat?

For monastery members, the cost is as follows;

Day retreats: \$25/day/person

Overnight stay: \$35/night/person or \$210/week/person

How much does it cost *non-members* to go on a retreat? Overnight rates are \$80 for one person and \$40 for each additional person. 10% off for a five night or more stay. Add sales tax of 10.7% to the total. For more information and to make a reservation, visit the Earth Sanctuary website: http://earthsanctuary.org/retreat_house.html