



# PROVIDENCE ZEN CENTER

## Information for Kyol Che Participants



The Providence Zen Center annually holds a three-month Winter Kyol Che meditation retreat and a four-week Summer Kyol Che meditation retreat at the Diamond Hill Zen Monastery.

The entire Providence Zen Center community feels inspired by people doing the Kyol Che retreat and is grateful for your hard training. We all look forward to seeing you.

Kyol Che is a time of intensive group practice. The following guidelines will help us to practice together harmoniously and make the best use of this opportunity to realize our true nature. Please keep them in mind during your retreat.

If you have any questions before you arrive, please contact the Providence Zen Center director at [director@providencezen.org](mailto:director@providencezen.org). If you have any other questions, please ask them at the orientation meeting when you enter the retreat.

Please bring this information with you to the retreat;  
you will need it at the orientation meeting.

# What to Bring

You will have a bed to sleep on. (During high attendance there may be mattresses or stacked futons on the floor.) Bedding, pillows and towels will be provided. (You may bring your own if you wish.)

Also please bring:

- a small flashlight and an alarm clock unrelated to a smart device.
- if you snore, you will probably be staying in a separate building (and please always let us know in advance if you snore)
- your bowing robe and kasa if you have one or both, and if you are a dharma teacher your long robes
- seasonally appropriate clothing including loose clothing that is comfortable for sitting (please see the note on clothing on page 7). Also, warm slippers for Winter Kyol Che
- for Winter Kyol Che walking meditation and outside work, please bring a hat, coat, gloves, insulated waterproof boots, long underwear (tops and bottoms), extra socks, rain gear and work clothes
- for Summer Kyol Che walking meditation and outside work, please bring rain gear, a hat, shoes suitable for walking, and clothes and shoes suitable for work
- bring sufficient quantities of clothes: if you are staying more than one week, laundry will be done weekly

Please do not bring (or if you must travel with, plan to leave them with the head dharma teacher):

- cell phones, cameras, tape recorders, MP3 players, CD players. PDAs, laptops, smart devices or journals
- personal food or beverages; hot pots, thermoses, etc.
- jewelry, perfumes, or any personal care products which are strongly scented

There are plenty of cushions, chairs and kneeling benches but if you need a special kind then please bring your own.

Also, please bring everything else that you think you may need for the duration of your retreat. Coming prepared with the supplies you need to sit the retreat is an important part of making your commitment to do this practice.

We supply toilet paper and soap, but you must bring all other toiletry and personal care articles. Other items that people have needed in the past include:

- aspirin and cold remedies
- vitamins
- shampoo, conditioner, styling gel, hair-brushes and combs
- toothpaste, dental floss, spare toothbrushes
- tampons, pads, shaving cream, razors
- earplugs
- odorless Ben Gay, cortisone creme, poison ivy medication
- facial tissue
- sunblock, insect repellent

Emergency shopping will be done for you as long as your purchases are in keeping with retreat guidelines, and are requested through the head dharma teacher. Please bring some petty cash for this purpose.

- Do not make your own shopping arrangements with anyone else, including staff or residents.
- No purchases of gum, cigarettes, or extra food will be made.
- Shopping is done only at local stores in Cumberland (usually CVS), so no “health food store” brands or items can be purchased. If you want to have alternative remedies available (homeopathic, herbal, flower essence, etc.) you must bring your own.

It can take up to a week between the time you request something and the time you receive it.

# Office Information

## Arrival and Orientation

If you are sitting at least a week, you are welcome to stay at Providence Zen Center the evening before you enter the retreat, at no additional charge; please arrange this at least three days in advance. You will then enter Kyol Che at the regular time the following morning.

If you are driving to the Zen Center, when you arrive please park your car in the visitor parking lot, in the back left area. Feel free to drop off your bags closer to the building before parking. In the winter, you may be asked to leave a key with the Zen Center housemaster so your car can be moved for snowplowing.

Late arrival may cause you to be refused entry to the retreat. It is important to be on time.

If forecasted inclement weather will prevent you from traveling safely and being on time, please call during office hours the day before your scheduled arrival. Usually in such instances, you'll be instructed to come to the Zen Center as early as you safely can, and special arrangements will be made for an additional group entry to the retreat for all late arrivals.

Participants will check in at the registration desk at the Zen Center (not at the monastery). Please arrive at the lobby in the main building at 8:00 am:

- There will be a very important orientation meeting one hour later - 9 am - at the monastery; all retreatants must be there regardless of previous retreat experience.
- If you stay overnight the night before at Providence Zen Center, please remember that the schedule is tight to attend morning practice, pack, eat breakfast, and be at check-in on time.
- If check-in is at the Zen Center, once everyone has been registered they walk together up to the monastery, carrying their belongings with them. (Rides can be arranged to the monastery if assistance is needed.)

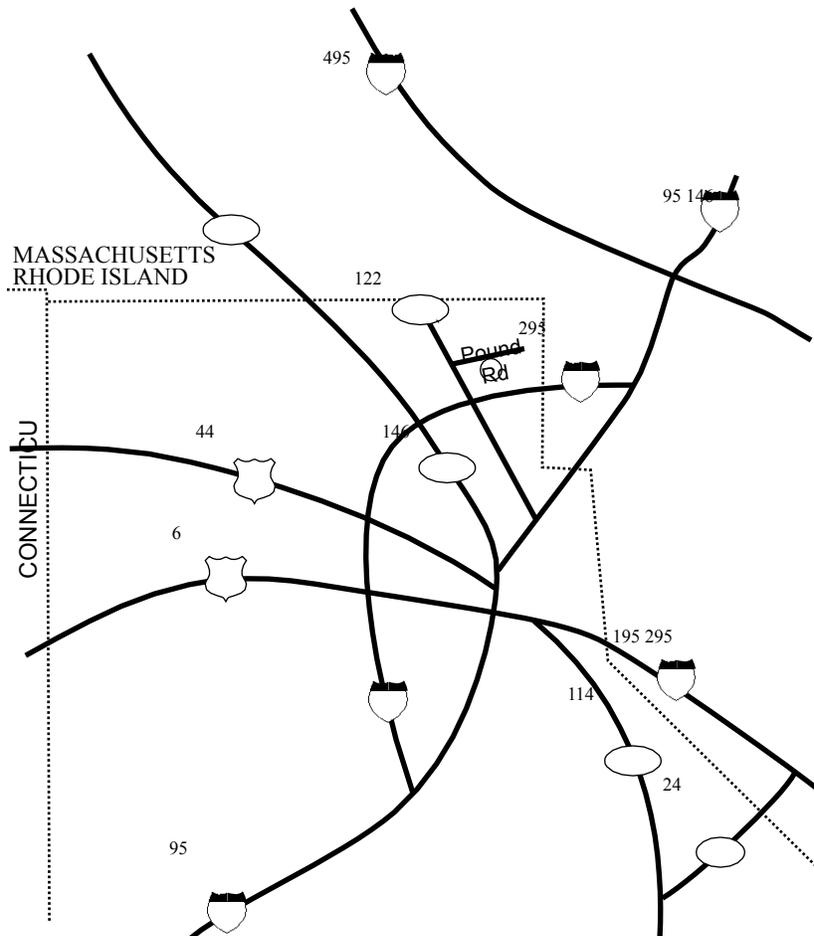
## Driving Instructions

Providence Zen Center is located fifteen miles north of Providence. Follow the directions below to get to I-295, then take I-295 to Exit 20 (Route 122.) At the traffic light at the end of the ramp turn right, and go 1.5 miles on that road. After you pass under the high school's footbridge, take the next right onto Pound Road. (If you pass an auto repair shop, you have gone too far.) Drive three-quarters of a mile to 99 Pound Road.

Providence Zen Center is on the right, with a 65-foot pagoda in the front yard. When you arrive, please park in the visitor parking lot, in the back left area. You may unload your bags first.

To get to I-295:

- From Providence, take Route 146 North to I-295 North
  - From Cape Cod, take I-195 West to I-95 North to Route 146 North to I-295 North •
- From Boston, take I-95 South to I-295 South.
- From Worcester, take Route 146 South to I-295 North
  - From western Massachusetts, take the Massachusetts Turnpike to exit 10, to Route 20 East, to Route 146 South, to I-295 North.
  - From New Hampshire, take I-495 South, to I-95 South, to I-295 South
  - From New York City or southern Connecticut, take I-95 North to I-295 North.



## Public Transportation

Providence Zen Center does not offer a ride service. We are accessible by cab, Lyft or Uber.

Arrival: You are welcome to arrive the previous day. If you are sitting at least one week of retreat, there is no extra charge for staying at the Zen Center the night before you enter the retreat. If you are sitting for a period of less than one week, our Guest Stay Fees are listed on the website at [providencezen.org](http://providencezen.org).

If you plan to arrive the same morning as you enter the retreat, you are responsible for being here on time.

If you fly into Logan Airport in Boston, you will take the Peter Pan bus shuttle from the airport terminal to the Providence Peter Pan bus terminal. Check out the bus schedule in advance at [www.peterpanbus.com](http://www.peterpanbus.com). Or you may take the MBTA to the South Attleboro station and take a cab, Lyft or Uber.

If you are flying internationally, please arrange a connection to Providence (or Boston; see previous paragraph). If you fly into New York without having made further arrangements in advance, it is complicated and your responsibility to get yourself to Providence. You should research schedules and fares before leaving home. There are shuttles from JFK Airport ([www.nyairportservice.com](http://www.nyairportservice.com)) and Newark International Airport ([www.olympiabus.com](http://www.olympiabus.com)) to the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan, where you can go to the Trailways counter and buy a ticket on Peter Pan Bus ([www.peterpanbus.com](http://www.peterpanbus.com)) to its Providence terminal.

Departure: Please observe the departure times on page 6, and plan on allowing at least 3 hours for your plane departure and 2 hours for bus and train departure after your exit from retreat.

## Retreat Fees

Please make certain that you understand the retreat fees before you arrive. Unless other arrangements are requested and approved well in advance from the Zen Center executive director, you will be expected to pay the fees for your planned stay in full not later than your arrival. Please make checks payable to "Providence Zen Center." All fees may also be paid by cash or credit card.

If you hope to stay for a certain period but are unsure whether you will have to leave earlier, upon entering you will pay for your maximum planned stay. This is so that neither you nor the head dharma teacher will have to handle money matters while in the retreat.

If you arrange through the head dharma teacher to leave earlier than originally planned, a refund will be issued for the unused retreat time. The minimum charge for Winter Kyol Che is for one week, and for Summer Kyol Che is three days.

If you have paid for all of Winter Kyol Che and leave the retreat early, the retreat fee is not prorated. Your fee will be the total of the weekly fees for all full and partial weeks sat, with a maximum fee equal to the full-retreat rate.

## Departing the Retreat

Retreatants exiting before the last day of the retreat will leave following breakfast on the day they have scheduled to depart. If it is absolutely impossible for you to stay through breakfast, you will leave the retreat at 9:40 pm the previous evening. You are welcome to sleep at the main Zen Center building.

Both Kyol Ches end on Friday with an 11:00 a.m. circle talk and an informal lunch at the Monastery. If you have left the Kyol Che before the last day of the full retreat, you are invited to return for the circle talk and lunch.

## Sangha Weekends

The Buddha's Birthday weekend (last weekend in March or first weekend in April) immediately follows Winter Kyol Che, and you are encouraged to stay for all or part of that celebration at no additional charge.

Summer Kyol Che ends Friday morning of the Founder's Day weekend (last weekend in July or first week-end in August). Again, you are welcome to stay for the Founder's Day celebration for no additional charge.

Please inform the office staff if you do plan on attending the Sangha Weekends so we can have an accurate count for meals and rooms.

## Communication with the PZC Office

Before you enter the retreat, any communication you need to have with the Providence Zen Center office should be conducted directly with the office staff. If you discuss your registration, transportation, or other needs with the retreat leader or other temple officials, it is your responsibility to also communicate that information directly to the office.

Once you enter the retreat, any and all communication you need to have with the Providence Zen Center office is conducted by note through the head dharma teacher. Office personnel will help support the retreat by not talking to retreatants or conducting any business directly with them.

## Books and tapes

Selected copies of Zen Master Seung Sahn's books are provided at the Monastery for reading during the retreat. If you want to order copies for your personal use, you must call your order in ahead of time for pickup when you arrive.

- There will be no purchases of any books, tapes, meditation supplies, etc. from the Providence Zen Center Pagoda Gift Shop or from other vendors once you have entered the retreat.

# Practice Information

## Silence

Kyol Che is held in absolute silence. It is of great importance to uphold the rule of silence for this retreat. By observing the silence, you not only help your own practice, you also help others.

## Interviews and dharma talks

The retreat leader will give interviews and talks on a regular basis. Some interviews and talks may be given by guest teachers. If you wish to schedule a private time with the retreat leader, please let the head dharma teacher know.

## Outside Communication

Please tie up all your personal business before you arrive. Having to pay bills, etc. during Kyol Che distracts you from giving yourself up totally to the retreat. In general:

- You will not make or receive phone calls, texts or emails, unless essential and arranged with the head dharma teacher. If you bring a cell phone, you will leave it with the head dharma teacher.
- The only mail you can send is essential business mail - through the head dharma teacher.
- The only mail you will receive is essential business mail that you have advised the head dharma teacher that you are expecting.

Please tell people who might want to send things to you that you will not be able to receive personal letters, postcards, or food shipments. These, and any other items that arrive for you, will be kept by the head dharma teacher in the Zen Center office until the end of your retreat.

## Robes and Clothing

If you have a short gray bowing robe, please bring it. If you don't have one, you can borrow a guest robe. If you have a 5 precepts kasa, please bring it.

- You may prefer to buy a bowing robe in advance by contacting the Kwan Um School of Zen director ([director@kwanumzen.org](mailto:director@kwanumzen.org) 401-658-1476) to have a properly sized robe ready when you arrive. The price is \$85 due to the Kwan Um School of Zen. If you need to pay by credit card, you must do that when you order your robe with the KUSZ director.
- If you are a dharma teacher in the Kwan Um School of Zen, please bring your robes and kasa.

With your robe, plan to wear ankle-length pants in subdued, neutral colors. You may wear sleeveless shirts under your robe, but when in the dharma room without a robe (e.g. meals) please plan to wear T-shirts or other shirts with sleeves.

## Reading

Community copies of five of Zen Master Seung Sahn's books are provided at the Monastery for reading during the retreat: *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*, *Only Don't Know*, *Ten Gates*, *Compass of Zen* and *Whole World is a Single Flower*; plus his translations of the *Blue Cliff Record* and the *Mu Mun Kwan*. These are also the only personal books you can bring to the retreat. No televisions or radios are allowed. No diaries or journals may be kept during the retreat.

## Gift to Teacher

It is traditional to leave a gift for the teacher and if you wish for the staff. Before leaving the retreat, you may sign the provided thank-you cards, and if you wish, offer a donation. Gifts can be in the form of cash or check.

## House Information

### Living situation

You'll live at the monastery, apart from the Zen Center community. Retreatants, including those who are Zen Center residents, do not go into the Zen Center buildings unless assigned to as part of their work, and do not leave the Zen Center grounds.

Retreatants don't speak to, greet, or otherwise establish contact with other Kyol Che participants—or with Zen Center staff, residents or guests—anywhere in the Zen Center or on the grounds at any time during the retreat.

### Work period

Everyone will have a job during the work period each day, which may be cleaning the temple, working in the kitchen, or working on the grounds.

### Medical

Before entering Kyol Che, it is a good idea to try to take care of any health matters that you think might need treatment during the retreat. Especially, have a dental check-up if you haven't had one in a while.

### Laundry

For those staying more than one week, your laundry will be done once a week - usually Sunday. You may handwash your socks and underwear yourself. Please pack accordingly.

## Kitchen Information

All meals are vegetarian and eaten in silence in a traditional temple style with four bowls.

- The meals are part of the practice in a retreat, so everyone must come to all of them. If you do not wish to eat a meal, please come and have tea.
- There will be no eating between meals.
- If you have any special dietary needs, please let the Providence Zen Center office know at least one week in advance of your arrival.

The only caffeinated beverages available are black and green teas. Otherwise there will be an assortment of herbal teas available.

# Orientation Information

## Practice

- 1) Please observe complete silence at all times. Silence helps not only your practice—by being silent you also help others cultivate their practice. There will be functional announcements made as needed by the Head Dharma Teacher.
- 2) All communication should be by note. Pens and paper for notes are in the head dharma teacher's box on the kitchen counter. Direct all comments and suggestions about the retreat to the head dharma teacher. If you need to send a note to the Providence Zen Center office, leave it in the head dharma teacher's box; all notes to the office are first checked by the head dharma teacher.
- 3) Be on time for all practice periods and meals. Go to the dharma room right after the moktak is hit.
- 4) Everyone should come to all practice periods, including meals and work period. If you are sick and cannot attend, or have any problem with practice, please notify the head dharma teacher in advance.
- 5) Do not shift positions during meditation, including your hands. If you are sleepy or your legs hurt, please bow quietly and then stand behind your cushion.
- 6) Please do not leave the dharma room during practice unless it is your turn to have an interview. If you need to use the bathroom, wait until walking meditation to do so. If you must leave during sitting (other than for an interview) or are late, when you return sit in the hall area until the next walking meditation.
- 7) Walking meditation is a part of practice. It is not a break time. Leave the dharma room only to use the bathroom or get a drink of water. When re-entering the dharma room, do so at your proper place in the line. When we do walking meditation outside, don't break off branches or pick up anything.
- 8) Please use your hands, not your feet, to adjust your cushions or mats. Always bow to the Buddha when passing in front of it (except when serving meals or during walking meditation).
- 9) Please walk softly at all times on the stairs and in the dharma room. At night and during breaks, be aware that others may be resting in the bedrooms below.
- 10) If you are doing extra practice at night or during breaks, please use the hallway behind the altar at the head dharma teacher's side, the hallway outside the kitchen, or the deck.
- 11) Do not go into the Zen Center buildings unless assigned to. Do not hang around the outside of the Zen Center buildings. Do not interact with Zen Center residents. These rules apply to you even if you yourself are a Zen Center resident. Always stay on the Zen Center grounds during retreat. Please respect our neighbors' privacy; the stone walls to the east and north mark the property line.

- 12) If you need any emergency shopping done, put money and a note describing what you need in an envelope in the head dharma teacher's box. Purchases may take up to a week, so please plan ahead.
- 13) There is no reading during the retreat, except selected copies of Zen Master Seung Sahn's books, which will be provided.
- 14) There will be no mail or phone communication during the retreat, except essential communication arranged with the head dharma teacher. If you have brought a cell phone with you, please leave it with the head dharma teacher.
- 15) Do not wear jewelry or scents. If you use any ointments, please use the odorless varieties.
- 16) In the dharma room, with your robe please wear ankle length pants in subdued, neutral colors. Please do not wear bright colors, pajama bottoms, or shorts.
- 17) Cameras, tape recorders, MP3 players, CD players, PDAs, laptops and smart devices are not permitted. No diaries or journals may be kept during the retreat.

## House

- 18) The monastery has two showers available (in Bathroom B and Bathroom C.) Times to take showers are reserved on sign-up sheets on these bathroom doors; please finish your showers on time. Because Kyol Che puts heavy demands on the well and septic system, please don't use the monastery showers more than every other day. During Summer Kyol Che, the sauna showers at the Zen Center may also be used during posted times.
- 19) Please use the bathroom quickly, especially in the morning before bows. Please don't leave personal toiletries or towels in the bathrooms.
- 20) Work period begins at 8:15 am and lasts an hour. Please be at your work assignment ready to start at that time. If you finish your job before the end of the period, see the work master. If you are asked to do any work which is inappropriate for your body (for example, heavy lifting) or to use a tool or equipment which is not working correctly, report that to your work supervisor.
- 21) There are ticks and poison ivy on the grounds; please be sure to wear gloves and a long sleeve shirt if you will be working in the brush. You need to be careful even if you are just walking on the grounds or trails. Information about poison ivy and ticks is posted on the bulletin board during Summer Kyol Che.
- 22) Laundry will be done once a week on Sundays as someone's work period job. Laundry is done only for those who are in the retreat for more than one week. When the washing machine is in use, showers cannot be used. Underwear and socks may be done by hand and hung on the clothesline.
- 23) Do not adjust any thermostats, fans, or windows in the dharma room and other common areas. If you have a problem with heat or cold, notify the head dharma teacher.
- 24) There is a limited supply of commercial analgesics and diarrhea and constipation medications

provided for occasional use. Retreatants must purchase their own vitamins, and their own supplies of medicines they use regularly.

- 25) If you need medical treatment, let the head dharma teacher know promptly; please do not wait until an emergency has developed. If you need to leave the retreat for medical treatment, a temple official will drive you. If you need a prescription or other medication, the office staff will get this for you. If you miss a meal while away from the retreat, food will be provided for you when you return to the monastery.
- 26) The designated smoking area is beyond the tool-shed. Please smoke only in this area. There is a receptacle there for the disposal of cigarettes.
- 27) Please clean up after yourself at all times, particularly in the bathroom. Be careful not to get the floor wet.
- 28) Please turn off the lights if you are the last to leave your bedroom and after using the bathroom.
- 29) There is no swimming in the pond. It is not safe to walk on the ice in winter.

## Kitchen

- 30) At the beginning of each meal, go to the kitchen and bring a dish back to the dharma room, thus helping set up for the meal. After the meal, take a dish from the mat and return it to the kitchen, then come back to the dharma room and remove your bowls.
- 31) Personal food must not be brought into the retreat. There is no eating between the meals. If you have any special dietary needs, let the office know at least one week in advance.
- 32) Please stay out of the kitchen unless you are specifically assigned to be there during work period or for clean-up after meals.
- 33) Don't take food or drinks out of the kitchen or food storage areas. The exception is that there is a hot water urn and tea bags available in the kitchen for personal use during breaks.
- 34) Please don't use the kitchen sink for personal hygiene, except to wash your hands just prior to a kitchen assignment.

# Schedule

4:30 am	Wake-up bell
4:45 - 5:00 am	108 bows
5:15 - 6:00 am	Chanting
6:00 - 7:30 am	Sitting Zen
7:30 - 8:00 am	Breakfast
8:15 - 9:15 am	Work period
10:00 am - 12:00 pm	Sitting Zen
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:30 - 3:30 pm	Sitting Zen
3:30 - 4:00 pm	Walk Outside
4:00 - 4:30 pm	Sitting Zen
5:00 - 5:30 pm	Dinner
6:30 - 7:30 pm	Chanting
7:30 - 8:05 pm	Sitting Zen
8:05 - 8:50 pm	Movement
9:00 - 9:30 pm	Sitting Zen
9:30 - 9:40 pm	Chanting
9:45 pm	Sleep (or optional extra practice)

SUNDAY 1:30pm Dharma Talk

During the Intensive Week of Winter Kyol Che, there is  
midnight practice:

12:00 am	Wake-up bell
12:15 - 12:30 am	Bows
12:45 - 2:00 am	Sitting Zen