

Information for Meditators

Chanmyay Myaing Meditation Centres
Yangon & Pyin Oo Lwin

Please read this sheet carefully - most of your questions will be answered!

Doing a meditation retreat

There are generally no formal meditation retreats, meditators can begin their retreat at any time. However, as there are periods when foreign meditators cannot be accepted at the centre it is crucial that you contact us beforehand. The minimum stay is ten days, there is no upper limit. If you want to stay longer than one month, your practice and behavior will be evaluated. Depending on this, you can stay on, or not. Meditators are asked to follow the guidelines of the centre and the instructions of the teacher.

Suitable times for doing a retreat at the centre in **Yangon**:

For **beginners** and **experienced meditators**: October (limited space), November, December, early January

For **experienced and self-reliant meditators**: July, August, September, October (limited space), November, December, early January

Suitable times for doing a retreat at the centre in **Pyin Oo Lwin**:

For **beginners** and **experienced meditators**: late February, March, May, June, July, August, September, November, December

Location

The main centre in Yangon is situated at the outskirts of Yangon, about a 45 minutes' drive from the Yangon International Airport.

The Pyin Oo Lwin Forest Branch of the Chanmyay Myaing Meditation Centre is in the Shan Hills east of Mandalay, about a 2 hour drive from the Mandalay International Airport. It is in a quiet rural area about 900 meters above sea level. As a result of the higher elevation, it is cooler than Yangon and Lower Myanmar. The weather at the centre in January-February is typically warm and sunny during the days and cool at night; at this time of the year rain is very rare.

What to Bring

General

Foam zabutons (large square mats, about 5 cm high/2.5" high) are provided by the centre; if you need other cushions or meditation benches it is

important that you bring your own; we cannot provide these; in Burma bed pillows should not be used as sitting cushions.

The centre in Pyin Oo Lwin is quite remote, so it is essential to bring whatever toiletries, medications, or other special items that you anticipate needing. Laundry soap for hand-washing your clothing will be provided by the centre; it is strong and highly scented, so bring your own if you find this to be problematic.

Medicines

Non-prescription medications for colds and flu and pain relief, as well as common antibiotics, are generally easily available in Burma. Please ensure that you have adequate supplies of health-related items for your entire stay. It also a good idea to bring sticking plasters (band aids) and a small first aid kit for your personal use. There are mosquitos, Yangon is said to be malaria-free.

Do bring your own mosquito repellent.

Warm Clothing

Meditators should come prepared for chilly nights and early mornings in December and January, especially at the centre in Pyin Oo Lwin where the temperatures can drop to 8 degrees Celsius or about 45 degrees Fahrenheit at night. So please bring enough warm clothes: **A warm jacket, meditation shawl, woolen hat, long underwear, and socks are essential**; please bring enough warm clothes if you are particularly sensitive to cold.

Yogi "Uniform"

In Burma, yogis are asked to wear the traditional longyi (sarong) and plain white long- or short-sleeved shirts or blouses. Plain T-shirts or polo shirts are okay, but out of respect for local etiquette and for the monastics at the centre, please do not bring sleeveless or spaghetti-strap blouses. The centre will provide longyi for all yogis, but if you would like to get your own they are inexpensive and available anywhere in Burma; women wear plain brown and men wear understated plaid patterns.

Accommodation

Rooms at the centres are single occupancy mostly with private attached baths. Some rooms have hot water for bathing, and all rooms are simply furnished with a bed, table and chair. The following bedding is supplied: pillows, blankets, a bottom sheet, and a relatively thin foam mattress. Some people find a camping mattress useful to provide a little extra padding.

Food and Water

The centres provide healthy meals (breakfast and lunch); vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals are available. All yogis are expected to follow the eight training precepts, which requires not eating after the mid-day meal. However, juice is offered in the late afternoon and filtered hot and cold water is available at all times. Coffee and tea offered at breakfast are quite sweet

and no herbal teas are available; please bring your own supplies of herbal tea or unsweetened beverages if you wish to have them.

Dāna

As is usual in Burma, a stay at the meditation centre is offered on a *dāna* (donation) basis: all teachings, accommodation, and other expenses will be provided freely by the centre. At the end of the retreat you are welcome to offer donations in support of the centre and of the teachers. In addition, you can offer a meal or all the meals on a specific day as an act of generosity.

All donations need to be in cash: Myanmar Kyats, or new USD or Euros (old or torn bills are difficult to change in Burma). In the past it has been necessary to bring all needed currency into the country, as traveler's cheques and credit cards have not been accepted. Now, ATMs are available for major credit cards and debit cards, but it is still a good idea to bring enough cash as they are not always reliable. There is no ATM near the centres. Traveler's cheques are not negotiable.

Contact

For a meditation stay, please contact:

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