

BODHICHARYA MEDITATION CENTER

INFORMATION FOR GUESTS (March, 2010)

PLANNING YOUR VISIT

Visits must be approved by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche or his brother Pema Namgyal (pomrahotel@yahoo.com), who will also confirm availability of rooms, etc. The duration of visits is normally limited to two months, which is currently the maximum duration of the Inner Line permit required for foreigners visiting Sikkim (initial two weeks plus three two-week extensions).

ARRIVAL IN INDIA

International flights to Delhi or Kolkata (Calcutta), followed by a domestic flight to Bagdogra Airport in Siliguri, West Bengal, and a 3-4 hr taxi or jeep ride to Gangtok, Sikkim. If one arrives in Siliguri before 1 or 2 pm, it is possible to travel directly to Gangtok by private taxi on the same day.

HOTELS IN SILIGURI

Saluja Residency, Hill Cart Road, 91-353-2431-682/683/701, salujaresidency@rediffmail.com, non a/c: from Rs 750; a/c: from Rs 1500.

Hotel Saluja, Hill Cart Road, 91-243-1684/89/90 non a/c: from Rs 300, a/c: from Rs 850

There are about five hotels, including the **Ranjit Hotel**, with entrances in the courtyard of the Saluja Residency / Hotel Saljua. Several restaurants serving standard Indian fare are on the main road. Also see the Lonely Planet guide for more options.

SILIGURI TO GANGTOK

Sikkim Permit: Foreigners require an Inner Line permit to enter the state of Sikkim. These are available at the border, usually for a period of 2 weeks. This can be renewed during your visit, usually for up to 2 months total (this situation is constantly changing, please check for updates).

Reserve Taxi: A private taxi from the Bagdogra airport or the Siliguri NJP train station should cost about Rs 1500 (set a price before starting the journey; check for prepaid options in the terminals). Ask to go to Pomra Hotel in Gangtok (located on Secretariat Road on the upper edge of town).

Share jeeps (budget alternative): depart from the north end of Siliguri (and possibly from the rail station and airport); the fare is Rs 130. They arrive in Deorali, about 2 km outside of Gangtok center and about 3 km from the Pomra Hotel (about Rs 80? for a private taxi to Pomra Hotel.)

In Gangtok, go to the Pomra Hotel and check in with Ringu Tulku or his brother Pema.

BODHICHARYA MEDITATION CENTER

The meditation center is located about 20 km from Gangtok and about 3 km before Rumtek Monastery (near the Waterfall Resort). It is best to arrive with someone who knows the way. The center is a 1 km walk on an uneven, hilly path. Bags are carried by porters (a tip is customary, e.g. Rs 50).

Menu: The Meditation Center provides a vegetarian fixed menu – special requests are difficult to fulfill; if you have special needs, it is best to work these out before your arrival, e.g. bringing necessary supplements (e.g. cheese, peanut butter, biscuits, chocolate). A typical menu:

Breakfasts: milk tea, tsampa (barley cereal), butter, banana/apple, and one of the following: oat porridge, wheat porridge, rice pancakes, roti (Indian bread).

Lunch: rice, dhal (lentils), 2 vegetable dishes.

Dinner: soup and one of the following: Indian breads, samosa, momos, steamed dumplings, chow mein.

Black tea, instant coffee, sugar and milk are available.

Supplies: There is a weekly shopping trip to Gangtok by the retreat manager (usually on Saturday) when you can request items to be purchased. Consider bringing with you:

Toilet paper (not provided); Laundry power; Snacks and any special food needs (e.g. biscuits, peanut butter); Lighter

Facilities: There is a small library, yoga room (some mats available), and a washing machine. Electrical power is generally reliable, although outages of several hours or more are not uncommon (one fixture in each room is connected to a backup battery system). The nearest internet facilities are in Gangtok. Cell phone service at the center is generally reliable.

Climate:

December-February – cold and dry (above freezing, but rooms are not heated)

March-May; October-November – pleasant days, cool evenings (some rain, but not much)

June-September – warm and wet (monsoon season)

To Bring: sleeping bag, practice items, meditation cushion, torch, candles, [...more...]

Currency Conversion (March, 2010): Rs 45 = \$US 1; Rs 60 = Euro 1.