

Your Pets at Tashi Choling

How to help them make a powerful, virtuous connection to Tashi Choling, while protecting them from accruing negative karma.

Our animal companions are each endowed with a precious buddha nature and have the potential to achieve the state of enlightenment. It is our duty to support these special beings by allowing them to connect with the Dharma in positive ways and helping them to accrue merit and avoid negativity.

There are many ways in which pets can connect with all the blessings of Tashi Choling, such as:

- ★ Pets can be led on a leash or carried in circumambulation around the temple, statue garden (on the korwa path outside the fence), or around our other shrines. When we circumambulate, we gain vast merit, purify obscurations, and make a strong connection with all of the objects of refuge that are within our path.
- ★ There are many outdoor statues and shrines at Tashi Choling that allow animals to connect with liberation through seeing; just by seeing the statues and the form of the temple itself, this plants a seed in their mindstream for their future liberation.
- ★ They can receive blessings from lamas in an outdoor setting as well as by eating blessed substances or tsog food from our ceremonies.
- ★ When they are sick, pets' names can be placed on the prayer list; and when they pass, they can be included in the Neydren Ceremony for Guiding the Consciousnesses of the Deceased and their ashes or hair scattered at the Amitabha site.
- ★ As well, if pet owners recite mantras to their furry friends on a daily basis at home, this has inconceivable benefits of liberation through hearing.

How to protect our pets from accruing non virtue in relation to the Three Jewels:

Ven. Gyatrul Rinpoche has often expressed concern that pets not be placed in positions where they could accrue negative karma in relation to our shrines and objects of refuge.

For example, since the statue garden is a sacred offering shrine, if a dog steps on, digs, or chews a plant, or pees or poops in the garden, they are harming the garden which is an offering of flowers to the Three Jewels; hence, they inadvertently accrue negative karma through their actions. Similarly, if a pet sheds hair in the temple that ends up in the water bowls, on the altar, or on the brocades, or if they track dirt into the temple, they are also accruing negative karma. Based on these kinds of concerns for the welfare of the animals, Rinpoche made the rule that only human beings are allowed inside our temple, Guru Rinpoche shrine, statue garden, and other shrines.

At the same time, some people have allergies or phobias around pets. For this reason, pets are also not allowed inside any of our public buildings or overnight lodgings, such as the East Wing, Pyramid House, or Tsa Tsa House.

Also, since the local wildlife are also connecting with the blessings of the temple and sacred monuments, it is negative for a pet to scare or chase away these other animals. For this reason, dogs are not allowed to run around unleashed anywhere on Tashi Choling property and must always be under the direct control of their owners.

If you would like to bring your pet to Tashi Choling, please take care to follow these guidelines:

1. Never leave a pet in the car if it is too hot, too cold, or if the animal is making noise or showing any signs of distress.
2. Pets should be on a leash or carried in a person's arms or carrier at all times—please do not let them run loose anywhere around Tashi Choling.
3. Please bring bags with you and pick up and remove all pet droppings from the property.
4. You are welcome to sit outside with your pet during an event as long as they are leashed or in a pet carrier and you are with them at all times.
5. Please remember that pets are not allowed indoors in any of the public spaces, temples or lodgings, or in the statue garden.
6. If you are staying overnight at Tashi Choling, please do not bring a pet with you.
7. We reserve the right to ask a pet owner to remove their pet from Tashi Choling grounds at any time.

Thank you for helping us keep our discipline and allow all beings to connect with Tashi Choling in a positive and auspicious way!