

Shasta Abbey Retreats and Information 2017

Introductory Retreats

An Introductory Retreat introduces guests new to Shasta Abbey to the Serene Reflection (Soto Zen) practice in a monastic setting. It provides down-to-earth help for taking this practice back into daily life outside the monastery gates. Introductory Retreats offer meditation instruction, periods of seated meditation, Dharma talks and informal discussions about meditation, mindfulness and the basic teachings of Soto Zen. The retreat concludes with an informal tea for retreat guests, monks and our local congregation.

INTRODUCTORY RETREAT DATES

- February 10–12
- April 7–9
- June 2–4
- July 14–16
- August 11–13
- November 10–12

Continuing Practice Retreats: *These retreats are offered for anyone who has been to at least one Introductory Retreat at Shasta Abbey.*

Stillness in Activity; Activity in Stillness March 3–5

As we learn to sit still in our meditation practice by not grasping after or pushing away anything, we become gradually able to take that stillness into the activity of our daily lives. During this retreat we will explore the question of how to live a spiritual life and train in this world of patience as a Buddhist: how do the Precepts work together with meditation practice, particularly in providing a vehicle for taking stillness into responsible action.



*“Spirituality might be described as activity in stillness and stillness in activity.”
Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett in Zen is Eternal Life*

The Great Merit of Meditation July 27–30

Serene Reflection meditation is the core and foundation of our Buddhist practice. When we meditate, we are turning towards our Buddha Nature, towards the Unborn. No matter how our meditation seems to us, there is always great merit in doing it. During this three-day retreat, we will have more periods of formal meditation, as well as Dharma talks and discussions on the importance of meditation practice.

*“...and then the Treasure House will open naturally and you will enjoy it fully.”
Great Master Dogen in “Rules for Meditation”*

Feeding of the Hungry Ghosts Retreat Oct. 26–29

The importance of offering merit, particularly for those who have died in distressing circumstances or unsettled states of mind, is at the heart of this retreat. Dharma talks examine what it means to offer merit, how we can truly help those who are suffering, and how we can convert our own craving and greed through the practice of the Dharma. In the Feeding of the Hungry Ghosts Ceremony, we offer the food of the Dharma to all beings who have died under painful, difficult or despairing circumstances.

Shasta Abbey *A Temple in the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives (O.B.C.)*

Shasta Abbey, located on sixteen forested acres near Mount Shasta in northern California, is a training monastery for Buddhist monastics and a place of peace and practice for lay Buddhists and interested visitors. It was established in 1970 by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, who was Abbess until her death in 1996. Our current Abbess is Rev. Master Meian Elbert, a senior disciple of Rev. Master Jiyu. Buddhist training at Shasta Abbey is based on the practice of Serene Reflection (Soto Zen) Meditation and the keeping of the Buddhist Precepts. The monastery is home to 25 ordained male and female monks. The monastery schedule provides a balance of seated meditation, working meditation, and ceremonial, which allows the mind of meditation to be cultivated in all aspects of daily life.

Please see our website at www.shastaabbey.org for more information on any of the events, services and offerings listed on our calendar, for downloadable audio Dharma talks and texts, and for Morning Service and other liturgical music.

Residential Training

Lay trainees who have attended an Introductory Retreat and would like to spend more time at the Abbey sharing in our meditation and training are welcome to come for anything from a few days to several months. Lay trainees join in the daily activities of meditation, working meditation, ceremonies and Dharma talks.

Residential training provides the opportunity for an individual to deepen his or her practice by coming for an extended stay at the Abbey: to step back from the usual engagements of life in the world in order to train within the refuge of the monastery and the monastic schedule. As well as the usual daily activities, lay residents participate in focused Dharma discussions and have the opportunity to meet regularly with a senior monk to reflect on their experience and ask questions about their meditation and training.

Silent Meditation Retreats

Throughout the year (see calendar for dates), the monastic community holds three-day meditation retreats. The focus is very much on meditation: there are eight periods of seated meditation each day. Meals are eaten in silence. There are no Dharma talks or spiritual counseling. Those who have spent time at the Abbey may consult the Guestmaster about attending one of these retreats. Arrivals are on the afternoon before and departures the day following these retreats.

Celebratory Retreats: *Celebratory Retreats offer a more relaxed schedule and provide an opportunity for monks and laity to spend informal time together.*

Wesak Celebratory Retreat

May 19–21, B.E. 2560

“On this Glorious Wesak Day...” we commemorate with gratitude the birth, life and teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha. In the Buddhist world, Wesak marks the beginning of the New Year and is the most significant and joyous event of the Buddhist calendar. During this retreat we will reflect on examples from the Buddha’s life of training and the timeless teaching He passed on to His disciples. Dharma talks and discussions will offer opportunities to explore how we can apply His Dharma more deeply to our own daily lives. This retreat also includes the usual daily meditation and services, as well as the special ceremonies celebrated during Wesak. We end the retreat with the traditional ringing of the Temple’s great bell and a picnic for all.

New Year Celebratory Retreat

Dec. 29–Jan. 1

Year-end is traditionally a time for both reflection and celebration. This 3-day retreat offers opportunities to do this together as members of the Buddha’s family. Dharma talks explore ways to deepen our resolve and our practice in the coming year. Meditation, ceremonies, and celebration offer opportunities to bid farewell to the old and welcome the new. On New Year’s Eve we hold a Vigil for Maitreya, as well as the midnight New Year’s Ceremony, followed by ringing in the New Year with the great bell. The retreat ends on January 1, and guests are welcome to stay overnight and leave on January 2.

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guestmaster@shastaabbey.org; Retreat applications
available at www.shastaabbey.org

Week Long Retreats

Jukai: The Ten Precepts Retreat

March 19–26

The Ten Precepts are at the heart of the tradition of Serene Reflection Meditation. The Ten Precepts Retreat is the doorway through which those who wish to become lay Buddhists make their commitment to the Precepts. It is also a time for those who have previously made this commitment to reaffirm it. Through the five traditional ceremonies, as well as in Dharma talks and daily practice, this retreat explores the fundamental aspects of receiving and living the Precepts. Those who have attended an Introductory Retreat, and those who have participated in training at a Priory of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, are welcome to apply. We invite people who wish to take the Precepts for the first time and those who wish to deepen their understanding of, and resolve to keep, the Precepts to share this joyous week with us.



The Ceremony of Lay Ordination

Shobogenzo Retreat: The Everyday Practice of the Buddhas and Ancestors June 18–25

*All sentient beings have Buddha Nature through and through,
And the Tathagata continually dwells therein, ever constant.*

During this retreat, led by Rev. Master Meian, we will explore chapters of the *Shobogenzo: the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching*, Great Master Dogen’s famous work renowned for its profundity and beauty, as well as its excellent practical advice and encouragement for all those who follow the Way of the Buddha. Rev. Master Meian will offer Dharma talks and discussions as well as private spiritual counseling for each participant. This retreat is open to those with some experience of Soto Zen meditation and practice.

Teachings of our Tradition Retreat

AUG. 20–27

This retreat, which will be led by several different senior monks of our Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, will look at various facets of the profound Teachings of the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition. Each monk will bring their unique



experience and understanding of the Dharma and will offer Dharma talks, Dharma discussions, and private spiritual counseling upon request. This retreat is open to those with some experience of Soto Zen meditation and practice.

“The practice of serene reflection meditation, the keeping of the sixteen Precepts, the principle that all beings are at heart Buddha, and gratitude” – the primary teachings and practices of our lineage as stated in the Bylaws of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives.