

Orientation to Shasta Abbey Retreats

Welcome to our monastery, friends. To help you fully benefit from your retreat at the Abbey, please:

Do your best to be quiet. This greatly aids meditation. Please minimize the distraction of social conversation (there will be an Informal Tea on Sunday at the end of the retreat.)

Please close doors quietly, as sound travels down these hallways. Hold and turn the doorknob as to quietly close the doors to rooms and bathrooms; this helps prevent you from accidentally locking yourself out of your room. Please take special care not to lock yourself out when going to the restroom during the night.

Our Community keeps the "Noble Silence" from after evening Meditation or Tea until after Morning Service on the following day, which encourages stillness and meditative peace during the night. Of course, if you need something please ask.

Assistance: There is a Guest Monk living in the Hall, should you need help any time (see bulletin board in common room for the monk's Room number). You are welcome to use a room key and keep your room locked, in particular whenever the Vimalakirti Hall is empty for longer periods of time, such as during morning and evening meditation and Services, during the Sunday festival, etc. It can happen that you lock yourself out; the Guest Monk can help.

Follow the retreat schedule as wholeheartedly as you can and please arrive on time for each activity. If you feel unwell or are having any problem, don't hesitate to let one of the Guest Monks know. We are always available.

Rising: The wake-up bell is rung at 5:00 a.m. Please rise as soon as you hear the bell, silently straighten your room, make your bed, and use the bathroom. Please be seated for meditation in the Buddha Hall by 5:30 a.m. Please take care; the outside cloister lights are not turned on until about 5:10 a.m.

Spiritual Counseling

You are very welcome to see a senior monk for spiritual counseling during your stay. Feel free to sign up on the list posted for this purpose. Please read our "Confidentiality Statement" relating to spiritual counseling.

Dana Offerings can be placed in one of the Alms Bowls or can be given to one of the Guest Monks. We deeply appreciate your support. Through your kindness, Shasta Abbey is able to continue spreading the Dharma.

Suggested Reading

The following Vimalakirti Hall library books are suggested reading to introduce you to our Buddhist Training:

Serene Reflection Meditation,
An Introduction to the Tradition of Serene Reflection Meditation,
Zen is Eternal Life, and
The Roar of the Tigress

You are welcome to read any other books on these shelves; however, please do limit your reading to what is offered here so that you can focus on the retreat.

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Room Temperature

Feel free to adjust the temperature in your room. In cold weather, if you would like to have your window open, please first turn heat off on the thermostat (found next to the door) in your room.

In hot weather, we keep the Hall cool by opening windows at night to bring in cool air, and then closing them during the day to retain the cool air. (See over)

Phone Usage

To minimize distractions while you are on retreat, please keep any cell phones put away, and turned off, in general. All phone calls, except by arrangement with the Guest Office, are made in the Spiritual Counseling Room. Please check the door sign to be sure that the room is not in use before entering, and is not reserved for the time you will be on the phone. If you use the Abbey phone, please make use of your phone card.

Thank you.

Laptops

We ask people not to bring laptops, if possible, and not to use them, in the event that you are traveling with a laptop; laptops can be kept in your car or in the Guest Office for safekeeping.

Bathrooms and Shower Room

Available times: Showering or bathing is done during rest times after lunch and the evening meal. Please do not shower or take a bath before morning Meditation and after evening Meditation.

Towels can be placed in the bathrooms or in your rooms. Please don't hang them in the shower rooms.

Coffee/Tea/Compost

Coffee and tea are offered in the Vimalakirti Hall after Morning Service and during rest times.

Please wash your own cup and keep it in your room.

A mixed recycling bin is kept under the sink in the kitchenette.

Please put used tea bags (without tags or staples) in the compost tub in the kitchenette.

Lights Out: Please be in your room by lights out time. Please be dressed when going to use the restrooms. The Vimalakirti Hall is locked at Lights Out time and unlocked at wake up. Please do not leave the Vimalakirti Hall between Lights Out and wake up, as you will then be locked out of the building.

We hope you will find the retreat helpful and that you enjoy your stay with us. Always feel free to bring any questions or possible difficulties to one of the Guest Monks.

In Gasshō