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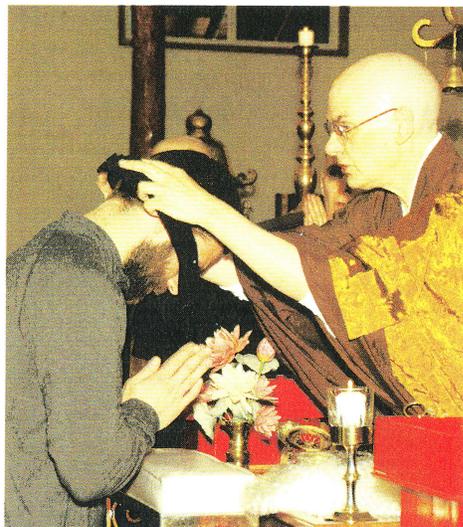
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Becoming a Buddhist



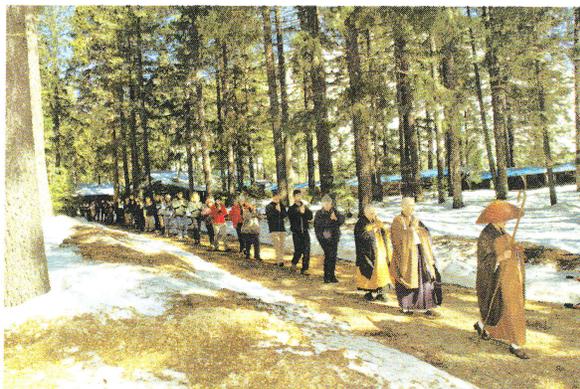
Taking
the Precepts:
Jukai at
Shasta Abbey

Becoming a Buddhist

The fundamentals of Buddhist practice are meditation and keeping to the Buddhist Precepts. To have a regular meditation practice, and to do our best to follow the Precepts in everyday life, helps us to stop creating suffering for ourselves and others by being willing to change ourselves. This in turn helps us to find true compassion and wisdom, and to live in harmony with our True Nature. To do this is to live the Buddhist life.

If one wishes to deepen one's commitment to the path of Buddhism, one may formally take the Precepts and thereby become a Buddhist. Here at Shasta Abbey we hold a week-long Precepts Retreat (Jukai) each year, at which those who attend take the Precepts. Very few temples in the West give the Precepts in this ancient, traditional way (sometimes called "Dai Jukai," or "Great Precepts Retreat"), in which participants stay in the temple and focus on the Precepts for a whole week, and attend the five beautiful, profound ceremonies of Jukai, each of which shows different aspects of our training within the Precepts. There are Dharma talks and discussions on the Precepts and how to apply them to our daily life, as well as meditation and work periods, and times to rest, read and reflect on the Precepts. One can attend Jukai more than once; some people come every year in order to participate in this special retreat and renew their commitment to the Precepts.

If someone truly wishes to take the Precepts and is unable to come for the Precepts Retreat, they may ask to receive them individually at another time. It is still recommended, however, that they attend Jukai when they can in order to study the Precepts deeply, participate in the Jukai ceremonies, and experience the fullness of this retreat.



Within these Precepts dwell the Buddhas, enfolding all things within their unparalleled wisdom: there is no distinction between subject and object for any who dwell herein. All things, earth, trees, wooden posts, bricks, stones, become Buddhas once this refuge is taken. From these Precepts come forth such a wind and fire that all are driven into enlightenment when the flames are fanned by the Buddha's influence: this is the merit of non-action and non-seeking; the awakening to True Wisdom.

Great Master Dogen: Shushogi

The Buddhist Precepts

The Three Refuges:

I take Refuge in the Buddha
I take Refuge in the Dharma
I take Refuge in the Sangha

The Three Pure Precepts:

Cease from evil
Do only good
Do good for others

The Ten Great Precepts:

Do not kill
Do not steal
Do not covet
Do not say that which is not true
Do not sell the wine of delusion
Do not speak against others
Do not be proud of yourself
and devalue others
Do not be mean in giving either
Dharma or wealth
Do not be angry
Do not defame the Three Treasures

Further Reading

“Shushogi” in *Zen is Eternal Life* by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, 4th ed., pp. 94-103.

“Kyojukaimon and Commentary” in *Serene Reflection Meditation*, pp. 66-76; can be downloaded from our website.

Receiving the Buddhist Precepts booklet; a few copies are in the Vimalakirti Hall library.

“Precepts: The Everyday Acts of Buddhas” in *Roar of the Tigress* Vol. I, by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, pp. 125-136.

“The Kyojukaimon, Part I” by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett in *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Winter 2002, pp. 4-7.

“The Kyojukaimon, Part II” by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett in *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Spring 2003, pp. 5-9.

“Morality, the Precepts and Zen” in *Sitting Buddha* by Rev. Master Daishin Morgan, pp. 59-66.

“Where Precepts Lead” by Rev. Master Daizui MacPhillamy in *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Spring 2000, pp. 4-21.

“Notes on the History of our Tradition: I. Precepts” by Rev. Master Daizui MacPhillamy in *The Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives*, Winter 2002, pp. 48-65.

Dharma Talks on the Precepts, along with the above writings, are available on our website at:
www.shastaabbey.org/teaching-becoming.html.