For further information, please contact:
The Guestmaster
Shasta Abbey
3724 Summit Drive
Mount Shasta, CA 96067 USA
Phone 530-926-4208
Fax 530-926-0428
e-mail: guestmaster@shastaabbey.org
website: www.shastaabbey.org

©Shasta Abbey
July, 2015
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 unparallelled 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


“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.


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