



KORINJI RINZAI ZEN MONASTERY

臨濟宗 • 祖的山光林禪寺

### Information for Persons Interested in Rinzai Zen Ordination

***There are two types of ordination in the Korinji Zen Community:***

#### **Lay Ordination: Nyudo**

*Nyudo* (literally, those who "enter the Way") are senior lay practitioners who have taken precepts in a kind of partial ordination. This allows them to remain fully engaged in family life and the pursuit of a "normal" career, but to express a fuller commitment to the Zen path and take an active role mentoring others.

(Note: *Nyudo* ordination is different from *zaiko tokudo*, or *jukai*, i.e. taking refuge in the Three Treasures and receiving the five lay precepts. *Jukai* is available to anyone, so please inquire if interested).

*Nyudo* are not required to undertake a period of intensive residential practice. They do not have the ceremonial and other responsibilities that come with the fully ordained vocation, and do not wear the full robes. They are, however, expected to be able to teach basic practices such as meditation to beginners. They may also be trained to conduct common ceremonies such as weddings, as a service to the community.

#### Requirements to Apply for Nyudo Ordination

1. Enter into formal training relationship with the Korinji abbot through *shoken*.
2. Take refuge in the Three Jewels, and take the five lay precepts (the *jukai* ceremony).
3. Practice in our community for at least ten years.
4. Be active in support of our community's activities.
5. Be able to instruct beginners in basic meditation and other practices.
6. Serve as a worthy example to others of a Zen practitioner, striving to integrate practice within daily life.

#### To Apply

Inquire with the Korinji abbot via email: [info@korinji.org](mailto:info@korinji.org).

#### **Monastic Ordination at Korinji Monastery: *Shukke Tokudo***

*Shukke tokudo* ("leaving home, accomplishing the Way") is the ceremony of monastic ordination in the Zen Buddhist tradition. While training for ordination is not a requirement to live at Korinji, it is one important path of training available there. Before inquiring with us, we ask that persons considering this path read the following information carefully.

## Background

Originally, Zen ordination signified a lifelong commitment to monastic life including celibacy, minimal possessions, and the leaving of one's family. We should note that in Japanese Buddhism since the middle ages, the extensive precepts governing the life of monastics have been replaced by a condensed set of precepts. Furthermore, for several centuries in Japan ordained Zen practitioners have often been given the option to be released from lifetime celibacy, including permission to marry if desired, after the initial years of monastic training are completed. Of course, one may choose not to exercise that option and maintain celibacy. The point is that there is flexibility.

Whatever path an ordained person chooses, however, the essential point is that the Zen Buddhist path must be the practitioner's central priority above other life concerns. To ordain in Zen is to commit to doing Zen study and *shugyo* (intensive training with one's whole being) for one's entire life. Naturally, that commitment can be expressed in many ways, or in different ways at different times of life. But ordained Zen practitioners are expected to make Zen practice their *primary* life focus, integrating other activities into that.

Thus, Zen ordination is a vocation one chooses, not a title one is given. Although ordination is sometimes incorrectly viewed as a rank or position one receives, it actually confers no status above others whatsoever. In fact, it signifies only that one is a servant of others.

For these reasons, persons who bear consuming family and career obligations may not be suited for monastic ordination at Korinji. Such people are encouraged instead to keep their current careers, practice as laypersons, and express their commitment to the path through *jukai* and perhaps *nyudo* ordination. In truth, there is nothing at all lacking in the lay path.

## Requirements to Apply for Monastic Ordination at Korinji

From the standpoint of the fruition of Zen practice, what is required for ordained persons to effectively serve others is a clear recognition of one's true nature (*kensho*), and the ability to express the meaning of that awakening to others in some useful way. This does not mean that one cannot ordain before *kensho*. However, all of the following should be considered without losing sight of that crucial point.

1. Laypersons in our community or elsewhere who wish to take up the vocation of ordained life should make a personal resolution beforehand that, once ordained, they will remain so for a minimum of 10 years. Note that regardless of outside family commitments, monastic trainees at Korinji monastery are required to be celibate while residing there.
2. Interested persons should then apply and be accepted to reside full-time at Korinji for a minimum period to be determined in consultation with the Korinji abbot. If they have not already done so, they will upon arrival at the monastery enter into formal teacher-student relationship with the abbot through the *shoken* ceremony (persons already committed to another teacher must first obtain permission from that person to do so). They will also take refuge in the Three Jewels and the five lay precepts (*jukai*) if they have not already done so.
3. During this period of monastic practice, candidates judged to be suitable may take ordination. Aside from Zen practice, additional training may also be prescribed during this time according to each person's abilities and deficits, for example Buddhist or other religious/historical studies, training in fine arts or physical culture (in the manner of our lineage), ministerial or diversity training, exposure to other teachers, and so on.
4. To be qualified to run a temple or Zen center, ordained persons must in general have extensive experience of Zen practice (in or out of the monastery) and be sufficiently trained to perform various

ceremonial functions, as well as instruct others in basic Zen practices such as meditation. Note that ordination is not certification as a Zen teacher or permission to take disciples of one's own; in Rinzai Zen *inka shomei* ("mind seal") is absolutely required for this.

5. Persons who are already ordained in a legitimate Buddhist lineage are welcome to apply for residence at Korinji.
6. Those who cannot reside at Korinji due to physical or other conditions are not automatically excluded from monastic ordination. In such cases, different practice and retreat requirements may be set according to the applicant's background and special abilities.

*To Apply*

Inquire via email: [info@korinji.org](mailto:info@korinji.org). We will send you an application for residence at Korinji (please also read that information on our website).