



KORINJI RINZAI ZEN MONASTERY

臨濟宗・祖的山光林禪寺

Residence at Korinji: Information for Applicants

Thank you for your interest in residential Zen practice at Korinji. Residence here is open to all who sincerely desire to follow the Zen path.

The foundation of our Zen monastic life here is a daily schedule including *zazen* (meditation), *sanzen* (individual encounters with the Zen master) *okyo* (chanting/ceremony), *samu* (physical work), internal energetic cultivation practices, and study. Periods of *sesshin* (intensive meditation practice) are frequent. Other practices, including complementary disciplines such as fine arts or physical culture, may be undertaken according to each student's needs and interests. Korinji is also a Shugendo training center, and so that additional practice may be available to interested persons.

In such a situation of total immersion and constant contact with teachers and fellow practitioners, all the activities of one's day are more easily done with full concentration, "in one breath". It is a life lived completely in the spirit of the words often found brushed on the *han*, a wooden sounding board used to signal events in the monastic day:

生死事大 *The Question of Birth and Death is great;*

無常迅速 *How swift is impermanence!*

時不待人 *Time waits for no one.*

慎莫放逸 *Be careful not to indulge in idleness*

Since Korinji is a *senmon dojo*—a formal training monastery—some of the persons residing here are ordained or may be training in preparation for ordination. But interest in ordination is not a requirement to practice at Korinji: laypersons are welcome to practice here and train side-by-side with ordained persons.

Please read the following information carefully before emailing to apply for residence.

1. Eligibility

Due to the rigor of Zen monastic practice it may not be appropriate for beginners. Applicants ideally have an established practice, including the ability to engage in a minimum of four hours daily of *zazen* (formal seated meditation). Mental and emotional stability and resilience, and a reasonable degree of physical health are required to thrive in this environment. Please inquire if you have questions about the suitability of this training for you.

2. Minimum Stay

Laypersons (and persons already ordained) wishing to reside at Korinji may request to stay for a minimum of 30 days, and a maximum of one year. At the conclusion of a stay, the trainee may reapply for further residence if desired.

Persons wishing to train for Zen ordination at Korinji must commit to a minimum period of residence to be determined in consultation with the abbot (generally, one year). At the conclusion of this period, the trainee may reapply for further residence if desired.

Shorter visits as guests in our home are possible. Please inquire.

3. Annual Schedule

Monastic training at Korinji is divided into two training periods called *ango*, each of approximately 3.5 months in length. In between these are two less formal periods of practice called *seikan*.

Summer Training Period (*Ge-ango*) runs from the beginning of April to mid-July.

Seikan runs from mid-July to the end of September.

Winter Training Period (*Setsu-ango*) runs from the beginning of October to mid-January.

Seikan runs from mid-January to the end of March.

Please see our website for the exact dates of this year's schedule.

4. Monastic Life: What to Expect

Zen monastic life is a type of intensive, long-term retreat. It is marked by a spirit of mutual support, communal unity, and tireless effort. It is not an environment in which individual desires and comforts are much acknowledged. Self-expression and egoistic attachment are continually challenged.

Visitors and residents at the monastery must as a minimum observe the five lay Buddhist precepts against killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and use of intoxicants. Romantic display and sexual activity, use of alcohol or recreational drugs, and possession of weapons by trainees are not appropriate on the Korinji grounds.

One's best effort and total energetic commitment are expected in all activities, and residents may expect to be corrected frequently. The ability to take such instruction from others is crucial, even when it may seem sharp in tone or given without regard for one's feelings. The abbot is the final arbiter of all aspects of life at the monastery.

We do not differentiate here between "work" and "free time." There is only practice. The time allotted for sleep is less than that to which many people are accustomed.

The general rule for residential training is that one should use all situations—even difficult ones—to refine oneself. In normal society people often react to difficult situations by blaming the environment or others. Our way is different: when a situation seems difficult, we look to see what we ourselves lack, and how we can use the situation to grow stronger.

Korinji sits within 17 acres of beautiful forested ravines, surrounded by farmland. It is very quiet here, and we value our participation in the rhythm of the seasons. This also means that we live with the elements. When it is hot, we are sometimes hot. When it is cold, we are sometimes cold.

Part of our activity is cutting wood for heat, growing vegetables to eat, shoveling snow, and other such tasks. You will be expected to participate in physical labor of all kinds, with allowances made for your physical condition.

Modern conveniences, including entertainment, are largely lacking here. You will not have daily access to (or time for) the internet here. Mobile phones, personal computers, and other such devices are not permitted. You will be permitted to keep up with periodic correspondence using the monastery computer.

Korinji is a place above all dedicated to Buddhist practice. All other concerns, relationships, and activities should be set aside during the time you are here. If you can do this, and devote yourself to Zen practice with all your energy, then you will be able to realize a great freedom within this life.

5. Offerings

Korinji survives solely through contributions to the Korinji Foundation, a non-profit charity. The following minimum offerings for residence help us to provide food, pay our expenses, maintain the monastery buildings, and continue our life of practice. We are grateful to all our donors.

Summer or winter *ango*: \$2450.

***Seikan*:** \$850.

Single month stay during *ango*: \$750.

Single month stay during *seikan*: \$450

Note: no one will be disqualified from residence solely for financial reasons. If you are not able to donate the amounts above, please let us know what you can do. It may also be possible for residents to leave the grounds to work, or to leave the monastery entirely during parts of the year to do so. Please discuss your situation with us.

TO APPLY TO RESIDE AT KORINJI:

Please email to info@korinji.org. We will send you an application form to begin the discussion. If we have not yet met you, a personal interview and/or participation in a sesshin or Korinji will likely be required.

If you are interested in applying to train for Zen ordination, please also read that information on our website.