

Finding Peace on Mount Shasta

by Andrew Oser

Where can we find peace in these uncertain times? With 2012 approaching and the rate of change accelerating in our personal lives and on the planet, how can we maintain our equanimity?

Ultimately, the peace we seek is within ourselves and we can access it anywhere. But, with so much fear and confusion in the mass consciousness these days, it can be extremely helpful to spend time in a place which supports us in coming home to peace. The most powerful such place that I know of, is Mount Shasta in Far Northern California. Consider taking a Mt. Shasta spiritual retreat this Summer.

This sacred mountain offers us many things, including:

- 1) an abundance of beautiful places to be in solitude
- 2) an energetic amplification of all spiritual practices
- 3) a powerful example of constancy amidst all the changes
- 4) pure energy which helps us to receive clear guidance

Mount Shasta has a rich variety of magnificent environments to be in silent communion with nature. Depending on our preferences, we can be alone in the middle of dense forest, in an alpine meadow with a crystal clear creek or on a butte with awesome views. The only sounds we hear are birds chirping and squirrels scurrying about. Being in such places is deeply relaxing. It's easy to slow down and bring our awareness into the present moment, which allows us to begin to feel a sense of wellbeing and realize that in the present there are really no problems, nothing to worry about.

An experience like the one described above is readily available anytime we seek solitude in nature, whether it be on Mount Shasta or the in woods, beach or open desert close to where we live. Yet, Mt. Shasta offers something special, beyond nature's universal gifts. There is a reason why people come from all over the world to explore there.

My experience is that Mt. Shasta is constantly emitting a powerful vibration which supports our spiritual awakening. I have had the blessing to travel to many stunningly beautiful places. I've had wonderful experiences hiking and camping throughout the United States. Yet, since I first came to Mt. Shasta in 1978, I've kept returning there. Even when I lived in Washington, DC for 14 years, I made an annual Summer pilgrimage to Mount Shasta. I was willing to invest the time and money on the journey because the mountain has an energy I haven't found anywhere else.

Mount Shasta serves as a massive tuning fork. The peaceful, loving vibration that radiates from the mountain helps us to tune into that same vibration within us. When I walk on Mount Shasta's slopes or even look at the mountain from a distance, my heart opens.

I find that any spiritual practice I do is greatly amplified by the energy of the mountain. As I've gone through different phases of my spiritual journey, I've explored all sorts of methods to

connect with God. When I'm on the mountain, whatever I do works remarkably well. A short meditation, a moment of heartfelt prayer, or a few decrees brings me to a place of deep peace that I might not reach after a day-long retreat someplace else.

Native Americans have long been aware of the spiritual power of Mount Shasta. In the past century, people from many other spiritual traditions have been increasingly drawn to come here. Christians, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, I Am students, New Agers and folks with all sorts of other spiritual beliefs come to Mount Shasta from all corners of the Earth. The mountain doesn't discriminate. Its silent transmission touches the hearts of all who come to seek peace.

Mount Shasta embodies, as much as anything can on the physical plane, that which is constant amidst all the changes. As storms come and go, as the summit goes from radiant white to barren brown, as the trees on her slopes are cut down and grow back, the mountain is unshaken. It continues to radiate the same pure vibration.

The key to being at peace in the midst of change is to connect deeply with that which is unchanging. It's easy to get caught up in focusing on the outer dramas happening on the planet or in our own lives. It's easy to have our attention go to the thoughts firing away so continuously in our minds, the emotions pulsing through us, and the physical sensations we may be experiencing in our bodies. There's a natural tendency for our attention to go to that which is moving.

Yet, beneath all of the movement, there is a place of silent stillness that is always present deep in our hearts. In times when everything is going smoothly, we all experience moments, perhaps many moments, of connecting with this peace. The challenge is to find it even in the midst of intense turmoil. In these times, the mountain's example of constancy, is particularly potent.

For these past 33 years, I've always known that no matter whatever is going on in my personal life or on the planet, I can come home to myself on the sacred mountain. I've come to Mt. Shasta for retreats after painful break-ups and financial setbacks. I was here at the outbreak of the Gulf War and while the world economy teetered on the brink of collapse in the Fall of 2008. During such times, the mountain reflects back to me that which is unchanging in myself, and I find peace.

Mount Shasta is a wonderful place to receive clear guidance for our lives. The energy, the air, and the water on the mountain are so pure and pristine. When I go up on the mountain, I have a sense of being filled with this pure energy with every inhalation and releasing fear and residue from the past on the exhalation. If I'm sitting by a stream, I feel that the Life flowing through the water is also flowing through me. When I ask for guidance, I get a strong sense of how Life naturally wants to express through my body. I can see my next steps as obviously as I see the trees in front of me. I come down from the mountain with the confidence that comes from clear vision. In the midst of all the uncertainty and fear that is in the air, I know who I am and what I am here to do.

In these times of rapid change, there is a great need for people who can maintain their equanimity in the midst of any earthquakes, nuclear disasters or bank collapses that may come. Just like the mountain, they radiate a calming energy that impacts all those around them. I invite

you to become such an instrument of peace. If you're struggling to find peace where you are, consider coming to Mount Shasta for a spiritual retreat. This beautiful, sacred mountain will be a powerful ally on your journey home to the stillness that lives deep in your heart.

Andrew Oser has hiked extensively on Mt. Shasta since 1978. He deeply loves and respects the mountain and is passionate about helping visitors from to discover its gifts. Andrew is an expert in experiential learning, having created and facilitated a wide variety of programs which have served many thousands of people. He currently guides retreats and sacred site hikes on the mountain, along with serving as a life coach. He is the author of several books, including the recently published "How Alternation Can Change Your Life."