

THE BUDDHA-DHAMMA FELLOWSHIP

CONSTITUTION

Original, July 1984.

Amended, February 14th 1999.

Amended, November 11th 2007.

1. NAME

The Association shall be called the Buddha-Dhamma Fellowship (hereinafter called the Fellowship).

2. OBJECTS

To advance Buddhism by the teaching of Buddhism and providing a residential centre or centres for Bhikkhus to teach and practise Buddhism.

In furtherance of these objects but not otherwise the Fellowship through its Executive Committee shall have power:

- (a) To assist and co-operate with other charitable institutions having similar aims.
- (b) To raise funds and invite and receive contributions from any person or persons whatever by way of subscription, donation, or otherwise, providing that the Fellowship shall not undertake any permanent trading activities in raising funds for its primary objects.
- (c) The Fellowship may publish literature including a magazine, books or pamphlets but nothing shall be published in the name of the Fellowship without the permission of the Executive Committee.
- (d) To do all such other things as shall further the objects of the Fellowship.

3. MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership shall be open to all those prepared to support the objects of the Fellowship.

B. Future members on initial application become (unless recommended by the Spiritual Adviser) Associate members before being eligible for Full Membership.

C. Membership shall be of the following kinds:

- (i) Full Membership (voting) For all persons aged eighteen and over having taken the Three Refuges and the Five Precepts given formally by the Spiritual Adviser or by a Bhikkhu of the resident Sangha, or by written affirmation. The Refuges and Precepts must be reaffirmed in writing at least one month prior to each Annual General Meeting.
- (ii) Associate Membership (non-voting) For well-wishers and persons willing to assist the Fellowship in fulfilling its objects yet not willing to be as committed as for full membership and also for persons under the age of eighteen.
- (iii) Honorary Membership (non-voting) The Executive Committee may elect any persons as honorary members for such periods and subject to such conditions as they may think fit.

D. Membership ceases upon receipt of the Executive Committee of the member's written resignation or by failure of the member after due notice to pay the annual subscription. The Executive Committee reserves the right to terminate the membership of anyone whose conduct in its opinion renders that member unsuitable for membership. Such a member shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Executive Committee to state his or her case but the decision of the Executive Committee shall be final.

E. Members are deemed to be cognizant of these rules, a copy of which is to be available for their inspection on request and to be willing to consent to them.

4. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Full and associate Members are expected to support the work of the Fellowship to whatever extent they feel able and to pay such minimum subscription as may be acceptable to the Executive Committee.

5. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. The Fellowship shall be governed by an Executive Committee, consisting of not less than three and not exceeding nine Full Members of the Fellowship as may be elected at the Annual General Meeting, and one ex officio member, being the Spiritual Adviser for the time being.

B. No person other than a member of the Executive Committee retiring at the meeting shall (unless recommended by the Executive Committee at the Annual General Meeting) be elected a member of the Executive Committee at the Annual General Meeting unless not less than twenty-one days before the date appointed for the meeting there shall have been delivered to the Executive Committee.

(i) a notice in writing, proposed and seconded by members of the Fellowship qualified to attend and vote at the Annual General meeting, nominating such person for election, and

(ii) a notice in writing signed by that person indicating his or her willingness to be elected.

C. Three members of the Executive Committee shall form a quorum. The Executive Committee shall meet at least quarterly.

D. One third of the members of the Executive Committee shall retire at each Annual General Meeting but shall be eligible for re-election. Executive Committee members retire in rotation.

E. At least seven days written notice (stating business to be discussed) of a meeting of the Executive Committee shall so far as practicable be given to every member of the Executive Committee.

F. The Executive Committee may fill by co-option any casual vacancy which may occur in their number but the person so filling the vacancy must be a full member of the Fellowship and shall retire at the Annual General Meeting next, following his co-option and shall be eligible for election.

G. The Executive Committee may from time to time make, alter and revoke such bye-laws for the internal management of the Fellowship as they shall deem necessary.

H. Executive Committee Members may resign by notifying the Executive Committee in writing of their wish to do so.

I. The Executive Committee may appoint subcommittees to consider and report on any matter. Members of such subcommittees need not be members of the Executive Committee but at least one member of each sub-committee shall be a member of the Executive Committee. All acts and proceedings of such sub-committees shall be reported to and confirmed by the Executive Committee as soon as possible.

J. Any questions arising at Executive Committee meetings or sub-committee meetings which have to be decided by a vote shall only be decided by an unanimous decision of those present and voting at such meetings with no abstentions being allowed. Except that decisions of the Executive Committee pursuant to Rule Ten (interpretation) and Rule Thirteen (dissolution) shall be by simple majority of those present and voting.

K. The Executive Committee shall invite a Theravada Bhikkhu, with the advice and consent of any resident Sangha, to be the Spiritual Adviser of the Fellowship.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

A. The Executive Committee shall convene an Annual General Meeting to be held at least once in every calendar year being no more than fifteen months nor less than nine months after the holding of the last preceding Annual General Meeting. Notice of such meetings shall be sent to all members in reasonable time and in any event not less than twenty-eight days before the date of such meetings.

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B. At the Annual General Meeting of the Fellowship the following business shall be transacted:

(i) To receive and if approved to adopt an independently examined or audited statement of the accounts to the end of the previous financial year.

(ii) To elect the members of the Executive Committee.

(iii) To elect an Independent Examiner or Auditor.

(iv) To deal with any special matter which the Executive Committee desires to bring before the members and to receive and consider suggestions from the members for consideration by the Executive Committee.

C. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Fellowship may be called at any time by the Executive Committee and shall be so called within twenty-eight days of receipt by the Executive Committee of a request in writing signed by not less than one-third of the Full Members of the Fellowship stating the purpose for which such a meeting is desired and setting out any resolution which is desired to propose thereat. The Executive Committee shall send notices convening such meetings to all Full and Associate Members at least fourteen days before the meeting. The notice shall specify the business to be transacted at such a meeting and no other business shall be transacted.

D. All members may attend and speak at any General Meeting of the Fellowship, but only Full Members shall have the right to vote.

E. Any questions arising at General Meetings which have to be decided by a vote shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting at such a meeting unless otherwise provided.

F. Election of Executive Committee members at the Annual General Meeting shall be by simple majority of those present and voting.

7. PROPERTY

A. The Fellowship through the Executive Committee may receive and disclaim property of any nature whether or not it is subject to any express conditions or trusts. The Fellowship may purchase or otherwise acquire and hold property of any nature and may sell, lease, mortgage or otherwise deal with the same. Any property belonging to the fellowship may be invested:

(i) In the names of not more than four Trustees who may be appointed from time to time by the Executive Committee; or

(ii) In the name of a private company established by and under the control of the Fellowship; or

(iii) In the name of the Official Custodian for Charities,

B. Such investments may be in or upon such shares, stocks, funds, securities, investments and property, real or personal, freehold or leasehold upon such terms or conditions (if any) as the Executive Committee shall in its absolute discretion think and in all respects as if the Executive Committee were the sole beneficial owners thereof. The Executive Committee may from time to time direct the Trustees to sell, vary and transfer such investments and property.

C. The Executive Committee may deal with the said investments as if they were the sole beneficial owners thereof and without prejudice to generality of power may borrow for the general purposes of the Fellowship such sums as may be required by it and may charge such sums upon the property of the Fellowship.

D. The Trustees shall in all respects act as required by the Executive Committee and the copy of a minute of the meeting of the Executive Committee signed by two members of the Executive Committee shall be conclusive evidence of its decision.

E. Any Trustees may be removed from office by a resolution passed at a meeting of the Executive Committee.

F. The Trustees shall be effectually indemnified by the Executive Committee from and against any liability, costs, expenses and payments whatsoever which may be properly incurred or made by them in relation to the Trusts of the property and investments of the Fellowship or in relation to any legal proceedings or which otherwise relate directly or

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indirectly to the performance of the functions of the Fellowship.

8. FINANCE AND ACCOUNTS

A. The financial year shall end on 31st March of each year. The income and property of the Fellowship and all money received by or on behalf of the Fellowship shall be applied solely towards the furtherance, promotion and execution of the objects of the Fellowship and no portion thereof shall be paid by way of dividend, bonus or profit to any member of the Fellowship.

B. All monies belonging to the Fellowship shall (unless invested) be deposited in a banking account in the name of the Fellowship. No sum shall be drawn from this account except by cheques signed by two members of the Executive Committee. Any monies not required for immediate use may be invested by the Executive Committee as herein authorised. The Executive Committee shall cause true accounts of the receipts, expenditures, assets, credits and liabilities of the Fellowship and shall place before the members of the Fellowship at each Annual General Meeting an independently examined or audited statements of account made up to the end of the previous financial year.

9. RECORDS

Records shall be taken and minutes kept of the proceedings at all General Meetings, all meetings of the Executive Committee and all sub-committee meetings and the Executive Committee shall have charge of all minute books and all correspondence.

10. INTERPRETATION

If there should be any ambiguity or difference of opinion concerning the purport or interpretation of any rule and to deal with any matter not provided for in these rules, reference shall be made in writing to the Executive Committee. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be final and binding on all parties.

11. INDEPENDENCE

The Fellowship shall not be affiliated with any political party or organisation and shall not take part in any political activities.

12. ALTERATION OF RULES

The Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the members present at an Annual or Extraordinary General meeting provided that fourteen days notice of the proposal has been sent to all members and provided that nothing herein contained shall have the effect of the Society ceasing to be a charity at law.

13. DISSOLUTION

In the event of a dissolution of the Fellowship any assets remaining after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities shall not be paid to or distributed among the Fellowship but shall be given to such other charitable institutions having similar objects to the Fellowship.

DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THE CONSTITUTION.

THERAVADA -

“The School of the Elders” - regarded as the original orthodox Buddhism as contained in the canon of scriptures preserved in the Pali language which were fixed by the five-hundred holy Elders of the Order at the first great council after the Buddha’s decease and which are commonly known as “The Pali Canon”.

SANGHA -

(Literally) - comprising, congregation - the Community or Order of Bhikkhus. In the Constitution this in all cases means the Theravada Bhikkhu Sangha founded by the Buddha..

BHIKKHU -

An almsman, a mendicant - a fully ordained monk of the Theravada Sangha bound by the Vinaya (Discipline), as contained in the first section of the Pali Canon (Vinaya-Pitaka), as his standard; the fundamental rule being contained in the 227 Precepts of the Patimokkha..

RESIDENT SANGHA -

Members of the Bhikkhu Sangha who have been living at premises maintained by the Buddha Dhamma Fellowship for three months or more.

THE FIVE PRECEPTS -

This implies first taking refuge in the Triple Gem, that is the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha - The Enlightened One, his Teaching or Deliverance and the Community of those who have realised that Teaching. Then comes the determining of the Five Precepts as follows:

- (i) Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami - I undertake the precept to abstain from taking life.
- (ii) Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami - I undertake the precept not to take that which is not given.
- (iii) Kamesu micchacara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami - I undertake the precept to abstain from misconduct in sensual actions (particularly sexual).
- (iv) Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami - I undertake the precept to abstain from false speech.
- (v) Sura-meraya-majja-pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami - I undertake the precept to abstain from intoxicating drinks (and drugs).

SOURCES CONSULTED -

“Buddhist Ethics”	Venerable Dr. Saddhatissa.
“What the Buddha Taught”	Venerable Walpola Rahula
“Buddhist Dictionary”	Venerable Nyanatiloka
“A Dictionary of Buddhism”	Ling