

BYLAWS OF THE SERENE REFLECTION DHARMA ASSOCIATION

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ARTICLE I: CHARTER

SECTION 1. PURPOSE OF THE ASSOCIATION

The purpose of the Serene Reflection Dharma Association (“the Association”) is to preserve and foster the teaching and practice of the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition of Buddhism as Transmitted by Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett.

SECTION 2. THE CHARTER

The Charter of the Association defines the purpose of the Association, the scope of its activities, and its structure and operating principles. The Charter shall not be subject to revision of any kind.

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS

Consensus: In the process of decision-making within the Association, “consensus” indicates either of the following:

- i. Unanimous agreement of the Council on a proposed course of action; or
- ii. Unanimous agreement with the exception of one or more voices that choose to abstain. There are two forms of abstention:
 - ii.a. Normal abstention, which indicates that the member temple does not oppose a proposed course of action, but that it has been unable, or does not wish, to make a choice on the proposal under consideration.
 - ii.b. Abstention by unavailability, in which a member temple notifies the Dean that it is unavailable during the decision-making process. The Dean can also determine that a member temple is abstaining by unavailability if good faith efforts to establish contact with the temple’s representative(s) are ineffective.

Dean: The Association’s chief executive officer and administrator, having spiritual seniority in conducting all business and leading all activities of the Association.

Master-Disciple Relationship: The Transmission from master to disciple is the living heart of the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition. In the Charter, this term applies to the relationship of masters to novice monks, Transmitted monks, and lay disciples.

Temple: An independent community or group of trainees (monastic and/or lay) led by a priest living independently with the permission of his or her master and making whatever offering of the Dharma is good to make.

SECTION 4. GENERAL SCOPE OF THE ASSOCIATION'S ACTIVITIES

Temples are a natural outgrowth of the master-disciple relationship. The Association's membership consists of autonomous temples. The Association is a vehicle by means of which its member temples can offer support and help to one another, as well as to others. The Association is not a certifying, regulatory or disciplinary body and has no authority to intervene in the master-disciple relationship, or in the internal life of member temples, without the permission of the master or chief priest, respectively.

SECTION 5. THE COUNCIL

5.1. Governing Council.

The Dean and chief priests of the temples of the Association shall constitute its Governing Council. The Dean shall preside over the Council. Any chief priest may appoint another qualified member of his or her temple to take his or her place as the temple's representative on the Council. All such appointees shall be priests who have received Dharma Transmission in the lineage of Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett.

5.2. Duties of the Council.

The Council shall make all decisions establishing long-term policies and/or involving the cooperative effort and resources of all member temples of the Association.

5.3. Decision-Making.

Except in the case of the election of a Dean, the Council shall make decisions by a process of consensus. Each member temple counts as one voice. Each temple must determine its own method of arriving at its contribution to the decision-making process. The Dean counts as one voice, independently of his or her temple of residence. The Dean will preside over the decision-making process. If no consensus can be reached, the matter under consideration will rest.

SECTION 6. THE DEAN

6.1. Administration.

The Dean shall have the authority to represent, and act on behalf of, the Association within the limits established by this Charter. The Dean shall oversee the maintenance of a registry that shall include a list of member temples, the names and dates of ordination, Transmission, etc. of monks living in member temples, the names and dates relating to lay ordination and lay discipleship, and the names of disciples who are held by their masters to be no longer in good standing.

6.2. Election of the Dean.

The Association shall elect the Dean from among the masters residing in the member temples. Each member temple shall have one vote in this election. Each member temple shall determine its own method of arriving at its vote. A simple majority vote is required to elect a Dean. Normally, a retiring Dean shall organize and preside over the process of choosing a successor. In the absence of a Dean, the most senior member of the Council available at the time shall preside over the process of choosing a new Dean.

6.3. Term of Office.

The Council shall establish the length of the term of office, and details relating to the election, of a Dean.

6.4. Proposals and Requests.

All proposals and requests for Association action and help shall be submitted to the Dean, who shall decide how best to proceed.

SECTION 7. MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

Any temple meeting the following criteria is eligible to apply for membership:

- i. The chief priest of the temple must be an ordained and transmitted monk in the Transmission lineage of Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett.
- ii. The chief priest must be in good standing with his or her master, and must have that master's permission for the temple to join the Association; OR the chief priest must have been in good standing with his or her master at the time of that master's death and the chief priest must not have renounced discipleship after the master's death. In the rare instances in which there is ambiguity in the standing of a disciple with his or her master, the Council shall come to a determination based on its assessment of the circumstances in the light of the spirit of the meaning of "good standing".
- iii. The chief priest must indicate clearly that he or she understands and is in basic agreement with the purpose, principles and limits set forth in this Charter.
- iv. The Council may establish such other criteria for Association membership as it shall deem appropriate and necessary.

SECTION 8. APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

The chief priest of any temple may make written application to the Dean of the Association requesting his or her temple's admission to membership in the Association. The Dean shall bring the request to the Council, which shall make its decision in accordance with the process described in Section 5.3 of this Charter.

SECTION 9. LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP

9.1. Resignation.

A member temple may resign from the Association at any time by notifying the Dean of its decision to resign.

9.2. Replacement of Chief Priest of Member Temple.

In the event of the replacement of a chief priest of a member temple, the membership status of the temple shall be unaffected unless the temple has ceased to comply with the criteria for membership as described in Section 7 of the Charter.

SECTION 10. THE ASSOCIATION AND THE LAITY

10.1. Role of Chief Priest

The chief priest of each temple is responsible for determining when it is good to bring any proposal or request under consideration by the Governing Council to the attention of the lay trainees associated with his or her temple.

10.2. Meditation Groups

Lay meditation groups participate in the Association through their affiliation with temples.

ARTICLE II: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION 1. BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

The Governing Council is the Board of Directors of the Association. The Dean is the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

SECTION 2. MEETINGS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL.

2.1 Council Meetings and Membership Meetings.

Because the Council is comprised of the Dean and one representative from each member temple of the Association, each meeting of the Council is also a meeting of the membership.

2.2 Place and Time of Meetings.

The Council shall meet at a place and time established by the Dean or the Dean's appointed representative.

2.3 Notification of Place and Time of Meetings.

The Dean will notify Council members at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of a Council meeting. Exception: The Dean may call a special meeting at any place and time, and shall give as much prior notice as possible given the circumstances.

2.4 Person(s) Authorized To Call Meetings.

Only the Dean or the Dean's appointed representative may call a meeting of the Council.

2.5 Quorum.

Persons holding fifty percent of the votes eligible to be cast at a meeting of the Council shall constitute a quorum. No quorum may be constituted without the presence of the Dean or the Dean's appointed representative.

2.6 Proxy Voting.

The Dean shall determine whether proxy voting shall be allowed on any issue being considered by the Council.

2.7 Committees.

The Council may form committees and delegate to those committees any responsibilities that it can legally delegate in accordance with Section 24.03.115 of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act.

ARTICLE III: OFFICERS

SECTION 1. PRESIDENT.

The Dean shall be the president of the Association.

SECTION 2. OTHER OFFICERS.

All officers of the Association shall be Transmitted priests residing in member temples of the Association. The Dean shall appoint persons to the offices of corporate secretary and treasurer. The Dean shall have, but is not required to execute, the authority to appoint a vice-president who shall be called the "Assistant Dean".

SECTION 3. TERM OF OFFICE OF OFFICERS.

The term of office of officers other than the Dean shall be determined by the Dean. The term of office of the Dean is established in Section 6.3 of Article I (the Charter) of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE IV: SHARED PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING AND PRACTICE

SECTION 1: ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP.

This Article describes principles of teaching and practice that constitute additional criteria for membership (see Article I, Section 7, Number iv. of these Bylaws). These principles are recommended to member temples for inclusion in their written rules, guidelines, policies, and/or organizational documents.

SECTION 2: PRINCIPLES.

2.1. Commitment to the Serene Reflection Meditation Tradition.

Teaching and practice in each member temple of the Association shall remain firmly grounded in the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition of Buddhism as Transmitted by Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett. No other way of spiritual training may be practiced in any member temple. Teachings of other religions may only be studied for purposes of comparison.

2.2. The Primacy and Integrity of the Master-Disciple Relationship.

All temples of the Association respect and guard the master-disciple relationship, which is the living heart of the Transmission. Because respect for, and faith in, the master is of paramount importance in the spiritual life of the disciple, no individual who has renounced discipleship may participate in any way in any temple of the Association without the permission of that individual's master.

2.3. Celibacy of the Priesthood.

All monastic trainees shall refrain from sexual intercourse and from sexually enticing, pressuring or harassing any person.

2.4. Confidentiality of Communications Between Priest and Penitent.

Communications made to a priest in the context of confession are confidential. A priest may take refuge in one or more Transmitted priests with regard to a confidential communication without violating the principle of confidentiality. The confidential nature of the communication must be conveyed clearly to the other priest(s) concerned. If a priest to whom an individual has made a confidential communication comes to believe that serious harm could be done to a third party by maintaining confidentiality, the priest is free to follow his or her own conscience, knowing that he or she must accept the consequences of whatever action is taken.

2.5. The Three Masters.

A monastic trainee may have up to three masters: ordination master; Precepts master; and Transmission master, though in practice the first and third (sometimes all) of these roles are often fulfilled by one person. A Transmitted disciple may, with the permission of the Transmission master, study with another teacher, but such study does not constitute a change of masters.

2.6. Certification.

Certification of rank, and authorization to exercise any level of priestly responsibility, derive from the the ordination master prior to Transmission, and from the Transmission master after Transmission.

2.7. Ranks of the Priesthood.

There are three primary monastic ranks: trainees who have received monastic ordination, trainees who have received Dharma Transmission, and trainees who have been named as masters. Within the first two primary ranks there are, or can be, secondary ranks: head novice (under the rank of ordained monks); and parish priest and teacher (under the rank of Transmitted monks). Each primary and secondary rank entails a level of priestly responsibility.

2.8. Naming and Ratification of Masters.

While a priest's Transmission master is alive, it is that master's responsibility to name and ratify his or her disciples as masters. A master can name and/or ratify the disciple of a deceased master on behalf of the deceased master. In such a case, the disciple remains a disciple of the deceased master. The distinction between priests who have been named but not ratified as masters and priests who have been both named and ratified is not a distinction of rank.

2.9. Formal Aspects of Lay Training.

At the time of receiving the Precepts formally for the first time in the ceremony of lay ordination, lay trainees are presented with a token kesa (wagesa). Lay ordination does not constitute a rank of the priesthood, nor does it automatically define a master-disciple relationship between the priest acting as celebrant and the lay ordinee. A chief priest may choose to recognize the deepening training of any lay trainee in his or her own congregation with the presentation of the lay small kesa (rakhusu) or lay kesa. In the case of a lay disciple, this is normally done by his or her master.

2.10. Lay Discipleship.

Any lay trainee may, but is neither required nor expected to, ask a master to be accepted as a lay disciple. Both would-be lay disciples and masters should bear in mind that discipleship is a serious undertaking with very real consequences.