



Dharma Gates Code of Conduct

Preamble

As a community rooted in Dharma, we recognize that our actions—on retreat, online, in service, and in daily life—have consequences. The Dharma Gates Code of Conduct affirms the shared aspiration of our community, including teachers, volunteers, participants, staff, and board members to reduce harm, support awakening, and relate to one another with respect, honesty, and care.

The Dharma Gates community especially commits to observing the Code of Conduct for the duration of Dharma Gates retreats and teaching activities, including during informal periods before or after them, and when working for or volunteering for the organization.

Principles of Ethical Conduct

We commit to the following principles, adapted in spirit from the ethical teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and rooted in the Buddhist path:

1. Undertake the precept of refraining from harming living beings.

We acknowledge the interconnection of all beings and maintain a reverence for all life. We will refrain from all forms of violence. We will develop our understanding of non-harming.

We recognize that meditation and spiritual practice can bring forward vulnerabilities. Because of this, retreat spaces carry both immense potential for healing and real risk of harm if trust is violated. Everyone—teachers, facilitators, coordinators, and participants—shares responsibility for helping ensure that these spaces remain safe, respectful, and conducive to practice.

We agree to cultivate a stance of humility, honesty, respect, and open communication related to Dharma Gates events. This involves a deep receptivity to feedback, ongoing self-inquiry about one's own defilements, and an ongoing willingness to learn and grow from one's mistakes. In this way, we affirm our shared commitment to safeguarding Dharma Gates retreats and endeavors.

2. Undertake the precept of refraining from taking that which is not offered.

We agree not to take what belongs to others unless it is freely given. We will bring mindfulness and care to the use of the earth's resources, seeking to act in ways that are respectful and ecologically sensitive.

We recognize that Dharma Gates events are offered on a donation basis and that generosity takes many forms; we are grateful for the donations and generosity that makes them possible. We affirm the importance of honesty in all matters, including the use of money and resources

connected to retreats and Dharma Gates activities. We acknowledge that Dharma Gates is a vegan organization and cannot purchase or provide non-vegan products.

Together, we commit to choices—actions and non-actions—that reduce unnecessary consumption, support the wise use of resources, and honor the generosity of others.

3. Undertake the precept of refraining from sexual misconduct.

Every member of the Dharma Gates community—teachers, facilitators, coordinators, staff, volunteers, and participants alike—share responsibility for creating a community of integrity, where trust is honored and where Dharma Gates spaces remain safe for deep practice. We recognize that retreat settings can involve deep vulnerability and trust, and that these conditions require clear boundaries to protect safety and dignity.

We agree to refrain from engaging in sexual or romantic relationships with Dharma Gates community members, especially during retreats and teaching activities (including during informal periods before or after them) and when working for or volunteering for the organization. We understand that sexual contact at retreats is strictly prohibited. We agree to avoid speech or action that suggests or implies sexual interest toward a participant or other Dharma Gates community members. We agree to remain mindful of the potential for projection or transference in retreat relationships, and seek consultation and support when these dynamics arise.

We agree that teachers, staff and facilitators must consult the Dharma Gates Board for guidance if romantic or sexual interests arise with a current or past participant. As a general principle, we agree that teachers, staff and facilities should avoid any appearance of or actual romantic or sexual relationship with participants, contractors, and volunteers except in rare exceptions (e.g., prior consensual relationship from a different context in which unequal power dynamics were not at play).

Together, we commit to avoiding harm through sexual conduct, to refraining from any form of sexual exploitation, and to safeguarding a non-violent container for any Dharma Gates events or activities.

4. Undertake the precept of refraining from false and harmful speech.

We aspire to speak in ways that are increasingly inclusive and respectful of all people and that stand true and useful to the current situation, making our speech beneficial, gentle, and harmonious.

We will speak what is honest and helpful, refraining from harsh speech, divisive speech, and disparaging speech. We will not yell or commit verbal attacks for any reason. We commit to preserving the privacy of information in our care, whether that be a personal anecdote shared in the retreat container or a medical diagnosis shared with staff.

Together, we commit to conscious and clear communication and the quality of loving-kindness as the basis of our speech in order to support the development of harmony amongst participants at Dharma Gates events.

5. Undertake the precept of refraining from intoxicants that cause heedlessness or loss of awareness, refraining from all drugs other than caffeine.

We aspire to maintain mindfulness and act in loving-kindness by tending to our mindstream and to determine the difference between medicine and poison with clarity and skill.

We agree to refrain from using intoxicants—this includes alcohol and marijuana but excludes properly used prescribed drugs, properly used over-the-counter drugs, and caffeine—before, during, and after all Dharma Gates events, including online offerings. If anyone becomes aware of intoxicant use at a Dharma Gates event, we agree to communicate this appropriately to Dharma Gates staff.

We agree that suddenly changing or stopping prescription drugs prior to or during a retreat may not be advisable and will be discussed with Dharma Gates staff prior to arrival.

Together, we commit to keeping Dharma Gates programs, gatherings, and retreats free from intoxicants so that the conditions for practice are clear, safe, and supportive for everyone.