

ORRS 5:

Dharma Gate Buddhist College *Ethical Recommendation*¹

“He who kills living beings,
utters lies,
takes what is not given,
runs after another’s spouse,
or drinks strong intoxicating liquor,
such a man digs up his own roots.”

(*Dhammapada*, 18. verses 246–247, translated to Hungarian by László Főrizs)

The Dharma Gate Buddhist College is a church-maintained institution of higher education. As stated in its name and *Mission Statement*, its aim is “to open the gate of the Buddha’s teaching to all who are interested. This is manifested in the transmission and the realisation of the Teaching. (...) Faithful to the two-and-a-half-thousand-year practice of Buddhism, we realize the living Teaching under the conditions of the present age (place, era, culture, language, constitution).

As teachers, students, and employees of a state-recognised higher education institution, this realisation also entails an attitude, right effort, right speech, behaviour, and lifestyle aligned with Buddhist values and principles, in full harmony with the relevant Hungarian legislation. In the spirit of the Buddha’s teaching, expressed so concisely and poetically in the cited verses from the *Dhammapada*, we wish to offer guidance below to help ensure that our roots remain intact in this world as well. Our Ethical Code is above all a recommendation for all who feel trust and interest in this teaching, whether they are beginners or seasoned pilgrims on this path.

The Maintainer does not require its members, employees of its institutions, or its students to be Buddhist practitioners—though it considers this decidedly fortunate. Naturally, however, as a church institution, it expects openness, interest, and respect towards the Buddha’s teachings and their indisputable values. This teaching encompasses all that is beautiful, good, and true, uniting them harmoniously. This also means that we turn with respect and open interest towards the symbols and representations of the Triple Refuge: the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha.

The National Higher Education Act requires teachers, students, and employees alike to respect one another’s human dignity.² In Hungarian and European law, human dignity is the mother right of all personality rights—the principle of respecting the human being. The Buddha formulated this as a wonderful gift for all of us, expressed for lay disciples in the form of the Five Precepts (*Snp 2.14 Dhammika-sutta*, *AN 8.39 Abhisanda-sutta*).

The following principles provide **an opportunity** to deepen and realise personal and communal values. Their purpose is not to impose external patterns of behaviour, but to encourage practice arising from proper knowledge, deep insight, and inner conviction. At the same time, it is important to note that these ethical recommendations also help cultivate the natural elegance of conduct. Our posture and bearing are eloquent testimony to our interest, attention, and devotion to our chosen object.

When listing the Five Precepts, and out of respect for the earliest ancestors, the Pali wording of each precept and its Sanskrit designation, together with their Hungarian translations, introduce the lists of things to be avoided, recommended, and practised.

1. I undertake the precept to refrain from destroying life.

Ahimsā: respect for life.

To be avoided

Every human being and all other sentient beings have the right to live physically unharmed. As Buddhists, our aim in this life is to avoid intentionally harming (*ahimsā*) others through our actions, words, or thoughts—including both human beings and other sentient beings.

¹ The Ethical Recommendation was adopted by the Senate on 28 November 2024 by Senate Resolution No. 21/2024 (11.28.).

² Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, Section 35 (2) and Section 43 (2) b).

Recommended

Respect for life—in its most sacred and broadest sense—includes protecting, preserving, nurturing, sustaining, giving, and creating life. Therefore, we abstain from and regard as unacceptable killing, bodily harm, coercion, domestic violence, harassment, and all forms of violence against persons³, as well as the torment of animals.⁴ We strive to contribute to the preservation of human existence and the survival of humanity, together with its languages and cultures that have arisen in countless places and forms. We consider it important to protect, preserve, and care for smaller communities such as peoples, nations, communities, or families. We regard as essential the protection of our fellow human beings' and our own lives. We respect and strive to preserve the lives of all living beings, as well as the natural world in organic connection with them—plants, mountains, valleys, rivers, seas, and both our living and non-living environment. We see it as our task to safeguard, create, sustain, and preserve harmony, concord, and freedom in the world.

To be practised

The true meaning of **ahimsā** is not only that we do not harm what lives, but also that we avoid harmful intentions and learn to deal with the anger and hatred within us. This includes the principle of balance, whereby we must first learn how not to harm ourselves and how to create balance within, so that we can later extend it to ever wider circles in our environment.

2. I undertake the precept to refrain from taking what is not given.

Asteya: respect for possessions.

To be avoided

The precept of not taking what is not given goes beyond abstaining from robbery, theft, looting, extortion, vandalism, or violent offences against property, including crimes against intellectual property rights.⁵ It also means not disturbing others' property and not misusing it.

Recommended

The aim of this precept is to respect the goods that serve to meet the material needs necessary for every human life and, through this, to protect the whole community. As Buddhists, we strive to respect the community in the most sacred and broadest sense, to protect and safeguard others, social life, and communal matters. We respect other people's qualities, opinions, relationships, and freedom. We strive not to deprive them of opportunities or restrict their freedom. We do not wish to take away another's faith, worldview, or property, nor do we seek to undermine their trust. We avoid threats, intimidation, or retaliation. We do not seek to prevent another human being from acting (provided that their actions do not harm or endanger themselves or others), to force them into change or action, to manipulate their abilities or opinions, or to interfere in their relationships. We do not wish to exploit others for our advantage at their expense. We value reciprocity, mutual giving, and consideration for others. We respect equal rights to life, freedom, opinion, and perspective. We abstain from community-destroying deviant behaviour and strive to preserve and maintain values. We respect social life, tradition, and society. We use and maintain the premises and equipment of the Church and its institutions with care and proper purpose, ensuring equal access to them for all members of the community.

³ Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code (Btk.), Section 459 (1) point 26: violent crime against a person:
a) genocide [Section 142 (1)], crimes against humanity [Section 143 (1)], apartheid [Section 144 (1)–(3)],
b) violence against an envoy (Section 148), violence against protected persons [Section 149 (1)–(2) and (4)], other war crimes (Section 158),
c) homicide [Section 160 (1)–(3) and (5)], homicide committed in a fit of passion (Section 161), bodily harm [Section 164 (3)–(6) and (8)],
d) kidnapping [Section 190 (1)–(4)], human trafficking [Section 192 (1)–(6)], forced labour (Section 193), violation of personal freedom (Section 194), coercion (Section 195),
e) sexual coercion (Section 196), sexual violence [Section 197 (1)–(4)],
f) violation of freedom of conscience and religion (Section 215), violence against a member of a community [Section 216 (2)–(3)], violation of the right of association, assembly, and participation in an election meeting (Section 217),
g) violent change of the constitutional order [Section 254 (1)], rebellion [Section 256 (1)–(2)],
h) ill-treatment in official proceedings [Section 301 (1)–(2)], ill-treatment in proceedings by a person performing a public duty [Section 302 (1)–(2)], coercive interrogation [Section 303 (1)–(2)], unlawful detention (Section 304),
i) violence against an official [Section 310 (1)–(3) and (5)], violence against a person performing a public duty (Section 311), violence against a supporter of an official or a person performing a public duty (Section 312), violence against an internationally protected person [Section 313 (1)],
j) terrorist act [Section 314 (1)–(2)], hijacking a vehicle [Section 320 (1)–(2)],
k) robbery [Section 365 (1)–(4)], extortion (Section 367), vigilantism [Section 368 (1)–(2)],
l) aggravated cases of mutiny [Section 442 (2)–(6)] and violence against a superior or service officer [Section 445].

⁴ Criminal Code, Section 244.

⁵ Criminal Code, Chapters XXXV, XXXVI, and XXXVII.

To be practised

Viewed inwardly, the second precept, **asteya**, is about recognising and managing the craving within us. It includes the teaching of the necessary and the sufficient, through which we accept what life gives us and recognise how many unnecessary things we crave. This is the key to realising contentment.

3. I undertake the precept to live a life worthy of a disciple and to avoid extremes.

Brahmacarya: striving for a disciple-worthy life free of extremes.

To be avoided

As the Dhammapada passage chosen as our motto also conveys, the precept of refraining from an immoral life offers wise guidance and support for respecting human dignity within sexual relationships. We are not slaves, helplessly subjected to our desires. We therefore regard all forms of violence, abuse of power or position, coercion, discrimination, the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, child pornography, and crimes against sexual freedom or sexual morality as unacceptable.⁶

Recommended

We strive to enter into sexual relations only with responsibility, respecting our partner's human dignity, age, and freedom, as well as our own and our partner's commitments. We live this part of our intimate life strictly as a matter of private life, and under no circumstances in public within the Church and its institutions. (For example, to prevent potential abuses of power—so-called conflicts of interest—arising from sexual relationships between a College superior and subordinate, teacher and student, employee and student, teacher and teacher, or student and student, we endeavour to avoid such relationships. If such relationships nevertheless arise, the parties voluntarily and without limitation waive the mutual exercise of their official College roles, such as employer's rights, examining, collegiate or committee decisions, mentoring, etc.) Our aim and endeavour in human relationships is understanding in the most sacred and broadest sense, which we respect. We value understanding, striving, learning, exploring the human relationship to the world and its possibilities, commitment to inquiry, self-cultivation, and orientation towards self-transformation. We seek to realise a disciple's attitude towards the world. We strive for understanding, self-understanding, self-transformation, self-restraint, and the practice of the Middle Way, which is realised through moderation. We endeavour to use every situation and opportunity for understanding and learning, to find what is of value and the valuable in everything and everyone. We respect and accept the human spirit, spiritual culture, and spiritual tradition. It is important to us to be able to accept and follow an idea, a worldview, an ideology; to belong to the community of the chosen ideal; to learn from its masters; and to contribute to researching, building, developing, and applying that ideal. We strive to realise the ideal we follow.

To be practised

Through contemplative awareness of our own mind we can distance ourselves from extremes, observe the yoke they create, and recognise their impermanence and emptiness. We can assume responsibility for our existence, refrain from drawing others into the pursuit of pleasures, and from exploiting our own bodies. The third precept, **brahmacharya**, also aims at abandoning an extreme lifestyle, which in truth always stems from competing with others and from a propensity to jealousy. This can be addressed by realising inner harmony, whereby our lives also become orderly.

4. I undertake the precept to speak only the truth and not to slander.

Satya: dwelling in truth.

To be avoided

This precept is a commitment to right speech. It includes refraining from wrong speech—lies and deceiving or cheating others—breach of trust, forgery, plagiarism, slander,⁷ abusive speech and defamation,⁸ as well as idle and meaningless chatter.

⁶ Criminal Code, Chapter XIX: sexual coercion (Section 196), sexual violence [Section 197].

⁷ Criminal Code, Section 226.

⁸ Criminal Code, Section 227.

Recommended

It also includes our intention to tell the truth and to take responsibility for our words, subordinating our personal lives to truth. In doing so, we remove the split we ourselves create in our lives, which most greatly hinders clear seeing for ourselves and others alike. We honour ourselves and others by respecting truth in its most sacred and broadest sense, and by living and acting accordingly. We strive for adherence to truth and for conformity with truth in our way of life and self-expression, expressing ourselves and communicating our message accordingly. Let our valid principles find expression; let us speak and act in accordance with our principles. Let us neither distort nor conceal reality and facts. We strive to be honest and admitting with ourselves, to present our true selves to others, and to be honest with others. We endeavour not to deceive ourselves, not to distort, exaggerate, or mislead, and not to construct a false image of ourselves. We aim to renounce advantages gained through insincerity or scheming. We strive to keep reality and truth in harmony.

To be practised

Satya does not mean telling the truth ruthlessly at all times, for that can also cause harm; rather, it means relating skilfully to truth—especially our own sense of being right. Seemingly, everyone has their own truth, yet everyday truth is highly relative and always dependent on a point of view. The Truth of the Teaching stands above this; it sees and understands things in accordance with reality. This precept in fact concerns the pride within us, from which it directly follows that we are unable to be honest with ourselves and with others: we not only believe we know the truth, but presume to know it better than others. If we can acknowledge our limitations, we will refrain from slandering others and from forcing our opinions upon them unasked. In positive terms, this is beautiful, good, and truthful speech.

5. I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxication and heedlessness.

Surāmatta: keeping the mind clear.

To be avoided

This precept aims at keeping our mind clear. Abstaining from mind-altering substances (including alcohol, narcotics, and similar substances) and from the intoxication and drunkenness they cause within the premises of the institution of higher education is both a Buddhist ethical requirement and a legal one.⁹

Recommended

We respect the clear mind in its most sacred and broadest sense—the mindfulness we seek to establish and sustain. We strive to create, realise, and maintain impartial cognitive capacity, unbiased judgment, and unconditioned thinking and intellect; to protect, preserve, and care for them. We seek to ensure the unfolding of our original mental capacities. We therefore endeavour to protect ourselves from external tools that influence, manipulate, or diminish awareness. We regard as important respect for our own mind, mental hygiene, sobriety, objectivity, the capacity for thought, and the strength of emotion. We wish to develop attention and the ability to remain in readiness. We seek to realise the freedom from influence of all kinds of mental processes.

To be practised

The fifth precept, **surāmatta**, aims at realising mental purity and at dealing with the dullness, distraction, doubt, and wrong views within us. Substances that induce stupefaction, such as narcotics, lead towards obscurity rather than alertness and are therefore emphatically to be avoided; moreover, they greatly harm our energetic system. Thus we commit to the practice of continuous presence, which must be grounded in insight.

Sources

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⁹ See: trafficking or dealing in narcotics [Criminal Code Section 176 (1)–(4) and (6), Section 177 (1) b), c) cb), and (2)–(3) and (5)], cultivation or production of narcotics, import, export, or transit across the territory of Hungary [Criminal Code Section 178 (1)–(5) and Section 179], aiding in the production of narcotics [Criminal Code Section 182 (1)–(4)], placing on the market, transporting, or acting as intermediary with narcotic precursors [Criminal Code Section 183 (1) a)], production, import, export, transit, marketing, or dealing in new psychoactive substances [Criminal Code Section 184 (1)–(3) and (5), Section 184/A (1) b) and c) cb), (2)–(3) and (5), Section 184/B (1) a), (2)–(5), Section 184/C (1) a) aa), b) ba), (2)–(5)].

