



Ligmincha International Code of Conduct

Mission

Ligmincha International (“Ligmincha”) and its affiliated organizations are dedicated to preserving and sharing the Yungdrung Bön spiritual tradition of Tibet: a complete path to enlightenment. In all activities, whether face-to-face or online, we strive to create sacred community—supporting and helping one another with wisdom and compassion, in a safe environment for students to work, study, and practice.

As a support for manifesting sacred community, Ligmincha has adopted a Code of Conduct (“Code”) based on the ten moral precepts of Bön. This Code outlines behaviors of body, speech, and mind to support the well-being of all. Our Spiritual Director, resident and visiting lamas and geshe, officers and directors, authorized teachers, instructors, and *umdzes* [hereafter “Personnel”] are committed to abiding by this Code as a part of their own spiritual path. We encourage all practitioners within Ligmincha to adopt this Code as a part of their practice.

If any Personnel are perceived to have violated one of more of the policies of this Code, a process exists for confidentially receiving allegations and complaints, evaluating them, conducting or directing others to conduct an enquiry, making a determination, and responding to any finding. This Code and the Conduct Council are not a substitute for local and national laws, legal systems, or law enforcement agencies. The promulgation of these guidelines is intended to assist us all in our day-to-day activities and interactions and does not create any liability on the part of Ligmincha International.

Questions, concerns, and issues can be brought in confidence to the attention of the Conduct Council by writing to conduct@ligmincha.org.



The Ten Precepts

Our Code of Conduct is based on the ten basic precepts of Yungdrung Bön: three of body, four of speech, and three of mind. The precepts are foundational practices of Yungdrung Bön. As such, it is important that all of us, and especially all Personnel, be familiar with them.

The Three Precepts of Body

1. One should not kill; rather, one should protect the lives of beings.
2. One should not steal or take what is not freely given; rather, one should practice generosity.
3. One should not commit sexual misconduct or cause others to break their vows; rather, one should keep one's vows and respect the vows of others.

The Four Precepts of Speech

4. One should not lie; rather, one should speak the truth.
5. One should not speak divisively or sow discord; rather, one should speak in a way to reconcile or bring people together.
6. One should not speak harshly; rather, one should speak gently and kindly.
7. One should not engage in gossip or idle chatter; rather, one should use functional speech, say prayers, or recite mantras.

The Three Precepts of Mind

8. One should not covet the possessions or accomplishments of others; rather, one should practice generosity and take joy in others' accomplishments.
9. One should not wish harm to others or hold resentment; rather, one should cultivate compassion and the desire to help others.
10. One should not hold wrong views (such as thinking one's actions will have no result); rather, one should practice the dharma, establishing oneself in a true and authentic view.



Ligmincha Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct contains guiding principles regarding how Ligmincha Personnel and practitioners should aspire to conduct themselves in body, speech, and mind. Appropriate conduct is indispensable for the Yungdrung Bön teachings to thrive in the West. This Code was created in close collaboration with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche by the Conduct Council of Ligmincha International and approved by the Board of Directors. It applies to all Ligmincha centers and sanghas worldwide. In addition to this Code of Conduct, centers and sanghas may add an appendix with additional and/or sangha-specific provisions, provided that nothing in this Code is nullified.

1. **Truthfulness.** In all of our interactions, we endeavor to follow the precepts of skillful speech and the avoidance of pain speech. We refrain from deceptive or untruthful speech, abusive language, harmful or hurtful speech, self-serving talk, slander, gossip, and apportioning blame to others. In this way we develop and engender trust within and among our community without excusing or condoning negative behaviors.
2. **Inclusiveness.** Our sangha is nonsectarian. Ligmincha embraces diversity in all forms, including but not limited to age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, culture, and politics.
3. **Greater Good of the Collective Community:** Ligmincha centers, properties, funds, trademarks, publications, and possessions are for the use and greater good of the collective community and should not be used for personal gain or without appropriate permission. We refrain from misuse of Ligmincha financial, physical, intellectual, and human capital.
4. **Confidentiality.** We may possess information of a private, personal, or confidential nature regarding Ligmincha or members of Ligmincha communities. We only disclose private or confidential information if the safety and/or well-being of Ligmincha or any individual or group is at risk by nondisclosure.
5. **Self-Reflection and Transparency.** We remain alert to potential conflicts of interest. If a conflict of interest unavoidably arises, we are each responsible for dealing with it in an appropriate, wise, and compassionate way, including bringing it to the attention of the Conduct Council for consideration.
6. **Appropriate Boundaries:** It is the responsibility of each individual, and especially all Personnel, to ensure that appropriate physical and emotional boundaries are maintained with other practitioners. We do not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with others when a teacher/student, employer/employee, or other form of asymmetric relationship exists, even if such behavior is invited or encouraged.
7. **Clean Body:** We maintain a clean appearance and dress appropriately.
8. **Clean Speech:** We avoid profanity and foul language.



9. **Clean Mind:** We avoid the abuse of drugs and alcohol.
10. **Promptness:** We are on time for obligations and appointments. Each person's time is of equal value.

Additional Commitments of Teachers (Lamas, Senior Students, *Umdzes*, and Instructors)

Because there is an inherent imbalance of power between Teachers and students, it is incumbent upon Teachers to refrain from using students for personal gain or self-gratification. With increased position comes increased responsibility. Therefore, in addition to the commitments above, Teachers must strive to uphold additional commitments:

1. **Authenticity of the Lineage:** We only teach in accord with our level of certification or authorization, and only topics and in ways approved by our Spiritual Director. We accurately represent our education, training, and experience. We do not mix or combine the teachings of Bön with other traditions when teaching or practicing publicly without the express consent of our Spiritual Director.
2. **Self-Development:** The Yungdrung Bön teachings are vast and profound. We commit to ongoing engagement with holders of the lineage, to the texts, and to self-enquiry. We stay current with the Spiritual Director's approach to teaching and changes to method, style, and emphasis by regularly attending teachings and the study of his publications, transcripts, and recordings.
3. **Duty of Care:** Duty of care requires that we avoid any behaviors or omissions that could reasonably be foreseen to cause harm to others. A primary cause of harm in spiritual organizations arises from dual relationships. Dual relationships are, to the extent practicable, to be avoided. In all cases, dual relationships must be disclosed to the Conduct Council should they arise. The Teacher, as the more powerful party in a dual relationship, bears the primary responsibility for the protection of students by not engaging in such relationships or keeping them within appropriate bounds and always putting students' safety and well-being first.



Foundations of Service for All Personnel

In addition to the ten precepts and the Code of Conduct, above, there are broad considerations essential to our ability to sustain the sacred community and to benefit the well-being of the Ligmincha sangha. All Personnel understand that:

1. All positions in Ligmincha are ultimately related to preserving and transmitting the wisdom and compassion of Yungdrung Bön through service to our community and society at large. Thus, our behaviors or actions must not compromise our own or Ligmincha's ability to be of service or for students to safely learn and practice.
2. We all have personal weaknesses, shortcomings, and blind spots. In our identification with titles or positions we may develop subtle and gross obscurations related to pride, attachment, confusion, and more. We each aspire to cultivate discriminating awareness with regard to how ignorance, attachment, and aversion manifest in our lives. We hold all roles as opportunities for sacred selfless service to others, not for personal power or gain.
3. Personnel who witness violations of this Code of Conduct have an obligation to bring such violations to the Conduct Council.
4. Refusal or failure by Personnel to cooperate with proceedings by the Ligmincha Conduct Council constitutes a violation of this Code. It is an infraction of these guidelines for any Personnel to violate the confidentiality of any filing made to the Conduct Committee, or to release information about any investigation or its results. Only the Conduct Council in consultation with the Board of Directors is authorized to release information regarding such matters. This restriction should not be construed as preventing anyone who files a complaint from seeking legal, health, spiritual, or psychological counseling or support.
5. It is a violation of this Code for any Personnel to retaliate against an individual or individuals for filing a conduct complaint.
6. A lack of familiarity with this Code and/or any misunderstanding or misrepresentation of it does not justify misconduct. Anyone uncertain of how this Code applies to a particular situation is encouraged to contact the Conduct Council.