



## **The Buddhist Union of Finland, standing orders**

### **1. Name and residence**

The name of the society is Suomen Buddhalainen Unioni SBU ry, Buddhistiska Unionen i Finland rf, later in the orders called: Union. In international connections the English unofficial name The Buddhist Union of Finland can be used. Residence is Helsinki.

### **2. Goal and activities**

The goal of the Union is to act as an umbrella organization for the Buddhist societies in Finland. It aims to promote and maintain Buddhist values and Buddhist practices. And it aims to act for the harmonic cooperation between different worldviews and for tolerance.

Union represents equally all the different Buddhist schools and supports the permanence of the different views both in teachings and in practices. Union supports equally all the activities of different Buddhist schools and groups.

Union cannot represent any particular Buddhist school, and it cannot become an independent Buddhist group with one certain doctrinal base and one view about the practice. Union will not arrange such courses on Buddhist doctrine or practise, that belong to only one school or group. Union does not take a biased stand to any schisms of different schools or groups.

Union cannot be politically organized or support a certain political view.

*To achieve this goal the Union:*

- will gather the Buddhist organizations in Finland under a holding organization and promote cooperation between the organizations,
- will represent the Buddhist member organizations in relation to public authorities, academic societies, and different organizations both on national and international level,
- will follow, explore and strive to remove possible shortages and unequalities towards Buddhist activities in Finland; will try to affect that public funds are headed to benefit Buddhism,
- will publicise Buddhism in Finland and participate in the discussions on world views,
- will try to affect that the religious needs of Buddhists are taken into account on different sections of society, especially at schools and health care,
- will disseminate information about Buddhism and convey lecturers,
- will organize and coordinate help in crises,
- will organize meetings, seminars, courses, educational gatherings and celebrations,

- will be engaged in information services and produce data and material,
- will organize and take part in Buddhist and other religious visits as well as in projects of cooperation, culture and charity work.

*To support its activities the Union:*

- can build, buy, rent, own and uphold premises,
- can receive funds, grants, course fees, member fees, joining fees, donations, testaments and other payments,
- can own properties and personal estates,
- can be engaged in publishing and translating activities, however not in publications of a single school or organisation,
- can arrange lotteries and collect money with an appropriate licence.

### **3. Members**

As a regular member of the Union can be accepted any of such registered Buddhist associations, communities or foundations, that has been active in Finland at least three years; that accepts Gautama Buddha as the origin of the entire Buddhist religion and its different traditions; that takes refuge in Three Jewels, Four Noble Truths and five ethical precepts; that has proved to be an association, that practises Buddhism seriously.

A private person or an association of full capacity, who wants to support the goal and activities of the Union, can be accepted as a support member.

Membership applications for a regular and support member the board of the Union will accept with a majority of  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

As an honorary chairperson or honorary member the board of the Union can invite with an unanimous decision a person, who has notably promoted the understanding and appreciation of Buddhism in Finland or supported and promoted the activities of the Union.

### **4. Resignation and discharge of a member**

A member has the right to resign from the Union by informing the board or the chairperson in writing or in a board meeting of the Union to be put on record.

The board can discharge a regular or support member with a majority of  $\frac{2}{3}$ , if the member has not paid the matured membership fee or has not fulfilled other duties, which the member has undertaken by joining the Union; or has notably harmed the Union either inside or outside; or does not any more fulfill the prerequisites mentioned in the constitution of the Union or in the law.

### **5. Joining fee and membership fee**

The annual autumn meeting will make the decision about the joining fee and the yearly membership fee for the regular and support members. When the member joins the Union, he needs to pay both the joining fee and the membership fee for the instant year. Honorary chairpersons or honorary members do not pay membership fees.

## **6. The board**

The common errands of the Union will be run by the chairperson and the board of minimum 4 and maximum 15 members and their personal substitutes. The term of the board is two calendar years so that half of the board will change every year (or an amount nearest to it). The first year the turn to resign will be elected by a scratch card.

## **7. To sign the name of the Union**

The name of the Union can be signed by the chairperson, the vicechairperson, the secretary or the treasurer, two together.

## **8. The accounting period and the audit**

The audit of the Union is one calendar year. The financial statement with the necessary documents and the annual report need to be given to the auditors latest three weeks before the annual spring meeting. The auditors need to give their written statement to the board latest two weeks before the annual spring meeting.

## **9. The annual meetings of the Union**

The Union has two regular annual meetings. The annual spring meeting will be held in January–May and the annual autumn meeting will be held in September–December on a day set by the board.

An extra regular meeting will be held, if an annual meeting of the Union so decides; if the board makes a point of it; or if at least 1/10 of the members entitled to vote demands it from the board in writing for a specified issue. The meeting has to be held within thirty days after the demand of the meeting has been presented to some member of the board.

Each regular member can send two representatives to the annual meetings of the Union. Both representatives of a regular member have one vote in the meeting. An honorary chairperson and an honorary member have the right to be present and to speak. The resolution of the annual meeting will be, if there are no other instructions in the constitution, the opinion that has 2/3 of the given votes.

## **10. To convene the annual meetings of the Union**

The board has to convene the annual meetings of the Union latest fourteen days before the meeting with a letter posted to the members or by Email.

## **11 The regular annual meetings**

*In the annual spring meeting of the Union following issues will be discussed:*

1. opening of the meeting,

2. selecting a chairperson, a secretary, two scrutinizers for the minutes and two tellers if needed for the meeting,
3. finding the legality and quorum of the meeting,
4. accepting the agenda for the meeting,
5. presenting the financial statement, annual report and the statement of the auditors,
6. determination about the approval of financial statements and freedom from liability for the board and other responsible,
7. discussing other issues mentioned in the notice of the meeting.

*In the annual autumn meeting of the Union following issues will be discussed:*

1. opening of the meeting,
2. selecting of a chairperson, a secretary, two scrutinizers for the minutes and two tellers if needed for the meeting,
3. finding the legality and quorum of the meeting,
4. accepting the agenda for the meeting,
5. confirmation of the plan of action, budget proposal and the extent of the fees for joining and membership for the next calendar year,
6. electing the chairperson of the board and other members in the place of those with a turn of residing,
7. electing one or two auditors and their viceauditors,
8. discussing other issues mentioned in the notice of the meeting.

If a regular member of the Union wants to get some issue to be discussed in the annual spring or autumn meeting of the Union, he or she has to inform the board in written latest 30 days before the meeting.

## **12. Language**

The administration language of the Union is Finnish. Other languages can be used in the intern activities of the Union as well.

## **13. Changing the constitution and dissolution of the Union**

Resolution about changing the constitution and dissolution of the Union has to be adapted in a meeting of the Union with a majority of at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the given votes. In the notice of meeting the change of the constitution or the dissolution has to be mentioned.

If the Union is dissolved, its resources will be used to promote similar activities as the Union, in the manner instructed by the meeting, which adapts about the dissolution.