

NITARATHA INSTITUTE ETHICAL CONDUCT AGREEMENT

Nitartha Institute 2022 Online Courses, Programs and Events

SUMMARY

General statement

Nitartha Institute students, faculty and staff are expected to, and shall, treat each other with dignity and respect and abide by basic Buddhist principles of not harming others. Specifically, any form of harassment, sexual or otherwise, and any form of abuse, physical or verbal, has no place at the Institute and will not be tolerated. This applies to one and all, for in person or online participation

Students

Any student who feels that she or he has been subject to abuse or harassment by another student or faculty or staff member, or feels that they have witnessed same, is encouraged to report the violation of Nitartha's Ethical Conduct Agreement to either the administration (Brigitte Lause at blause@nitarthainstitute.org) or the Compassion Council (Susan Stewart [click here](#)), which has been specifically established to look into and resolve claims of abuse and harassment.

In summary:

- Students are expected to conduct themselves following the principles of a Buddhist practitioner to create and maintain a harmonious environment for the teachings of the Institute.
- Should a member of the Nitartha community be accused of misconduct and harming others through speech or body, the instance shall be reported to the Compassion Council.
- The Compassion Council will request the person accused of misconduct to meet with the Institute's Compassion Council program of mediators to discuss the accusation. This might entail a meeting with other members of the community to resolve the issue through mediation.
- For a serious incident of misconduct, or repeated instances of misconduct, the Compassion Council will make a recommendation to the Executive Council on actions to take, including being expelled from the program.

The Nitartha Institute Ethics Policy can be found at <http://nitarthainstitute.org/ethics-policy/>.

AGREEMENT

We wish to create a harmonious environment conducive to hearing and reflecting on the teachings, an environment which is kind, peaceful, respectful, gentle, and pleasing. To do so, the Institute requests our students to manifest the qualities one would expect of a Buddhist practitioner in performing their duties and in relating to others.

By being mindful of our conduct and respecting everyone's cultural and personal backgrounds and sensitivities, we can create a strong culture of kindness, compassion, and wakefulness conducive to hearing and reflecting on the teachings.

Specific guidelines for online courses:

- In the event one of your courses allows for using the chat feature, this is to be used mindfully. Your use of the chat feature should add to your own learning experience and that of others.
- Do not use chats to sell services or merchandise.
- Use language that is in accordance with the agreement herein.
- If the course you are taking allows for student video, keep in mind that other students as well as teachers will be able to see you and your surroundings when your video is turned on. Wear attire that is appropriate to attending the Summer Institute with teachers and other students. And keep the area appearing in your camera frame appropriate to a retreat environment that is held with others. If you wish to eat or move around during a teaching, please turn off your video.
- Downloading or sharing of recordings or screenshots with others is not permitted.
- To maintain a secure environment, do not share login information with others. If someone asks you for login information, ask them to contact our registrar at eweiss@nitarthainstitute.org
- When logging into a live online course, your login name must match the name you used when you registered.

I hereby agree to abide with this Agreement.

The Eightfold Noble Path: Addendum to Ethical Conduct Policy

** Quotes of Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche taken from unpublished transcripts of Rinpoche's teachings entitled "Profound View, Fearless Path" (Seattle, WA., December 2000).*

The Noble Eightfold Path encompasses Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings on the Fourth Noble Truth, the path out of suffering. Without this path, the first three Noble Truths (life is suffering; clinging to phenomena and "self" as the cause of suffering; and the cessation of suffering by letting go of clinging) would be merely theoretical. What follows is a summary of the eight principles of the Noble Eightfold Path.

1. Right View: Right View is about seeing our experiences as they are as they arise, without trying to change them. Right View begins with an understanding of karma – cause and effect. We are constantly presented with causes and conditions, and we choose our responses in body, speech and mind, moment by moment. Each action we choose to take results in the arising of the next cause and condition. If we choose a beneficial action, the next moment of karma will be beneficial, and if we choose a harmful action, the next moment will cause harm. Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche has said, "Right View is the right understanding, and the right understanding is the only way we can begin our journey."^{*}

2. Right Intention: Right Intention (or Right Thought) arises directly from Right View. We generate the intention that we and all beings be free of suffering, and speak and act in accordance with that intention, with the heart of compassion and concern for others. As Ponlop Rinpoche said, "Freedom from suffering happens only when there is mutual communication happening between...two hearts.... The only way we can do that is by... seeing the other beings' suffering clearly...without our projections of what they should have or should not have, but clearly seeing what they really desire, or how they desire to be free from such suffering."

3. Right Speech: Right speech is direct and honest. Right Speech refers to speaking the truth, not slandering others, not engaging in gossip or rumors, not using speech that creates schisms in the sangha or in our relationships, and not speaking words that are abusive or harsh, that would otherwise cause pain in others. Right speech communicates Right View and Right Intention. According to Rinpoche, "When those two are reflected in our speech, right speech, then it becomes more profound, becomes more beneficial [and] causes us to develop harmonious relationships in our world."

4. Right Action: Right Action (or Right Discipline) is the manifestation of Right View and Right Intention through our actions. Right Action is action that creates benefit and avoids harm, pain or disharmony. According to Ponlop Rinpoche, "it can be basically understood as not causing suffering to others, and not harming others, and bringing some kind of benefit, insight and joy in others' life through your action."

5. Right Livelihood: Right Livelihood involves bringing the dharma path into our work lives and our interactions in daily life. As Rinpoche has said "We have a whole eight hours [a day] to work on our spiritual journey.... Right Livelihood is working with...[our] living situations in a most direct and profound way and turning them around into a most positive, spiritual, sacred and profound way of living."

6. Right Effort: As Rinpoche has said "Right Effort ...is connected to the idea of developing this sense of joy within us, a joy, a delight, in the path that we are pursuing here." We take delight in engaging in the natural development of our effort to be of benefit that arises on our Buddhist path, the path of the Fourth Noble Truths.

7. Right Mindfulness: Right Mindfulness involves a sense of precision. We bring the precision of the present moment to noticing our habitual tendencies and story lines that keep us stuck in samsara, so that we can transform them. According to Ponlop Rinpoche, "in this case, you're looking at...developing a positive tendency to transform, to transcend the negative tendencies [and].... noticing the flow of things in our everyday experience."

8. Right Meditation: Right Meditation (also called Right Samadhi or Right Absorption) is the direct experience of mind, moment to moment. According to Rinpoche, "This experience of Right Samadhi or Right Meditation is being grounded in the present moment, to relate with awareness of the moment and to develop a certain sense

of trust, confidence and joy in experiencing the moment of nowness.... Right Samadhi combines the relationship [and experience] in our ordinary world with a deepening understanding of [our] own mind.”