



Hôrin-ji Charter

*The Wheel (Rin) of the Dharma (Hô) **

** or any other name we choose together*

The aim and values which underlie the project

Hôrin-ji's purpose is to bring people together to purchase and create an exemplary place of life: it will put together all the generations, in monastic or lay life; it will be open to any person or group who wish to develop, experience or promote the highest human aspirations and thus contribute to collective good and to human dignity.

“An exemplary place of life” means unconditionally questioning ideas of communal living which are based on old schemes of fear, selfishness, personal profit or survival. The founding of an intergenerational space includes, naturally, any who wish to be included in a pure journey of communal life. Communal sharing is a natural expression of our lives. It is inherent in our humanity and in our relationships with others.

Community implies a simplification of our lives and our relationship with the Whole (expressed by “Buddha Nature” in the Buddhist tradition and which is not separate from the “Original Source” of our humanity).

The community should be “loving” - without falling into any utopian or dream-like altruism. It should explore some basic underlying questions: how does practice fit into everybody's daily life?, how are decisions made?, how is money divided, used or kept?, how are young people educated?, how do we care for the elderly or sick?, how do we help those in need (food, shelter, and more fundamentally the need for relationship)? and how do we restore self-confidence ?

Hôrin-ji is founded in action based on Buddha's teachings and on the values which are transmitted by the Soto Zen School (and as taught by Master Deshimaru): the practice of meditation, compassion, generosity, personal non-profit, and assistance to the disadvantaged, suffering or dying.

Hôrin-ji will encourage any activity which will allow its members to participate in a budding of awareness in harmony with the human and ecological environment and to feel and respond to the authentic needs of others.

Within the context of “altruism”, this living community will promote actions which meet its Charter and respond to the spirit of ownership and the ignorance of basic human values that plague the world today.

Following objectives are considered, this list is not exhaustive:

- To promote Zen meditative practice (zazen) in simplicity, providing a place conducive to meditation and silence. Hôrin-ji will be organized such as to promote retreat sessions (sesshin) Zen, seminars, creative arts workshops, body work or any other activity likely enrich the spiritual experience.
- To welcome any person who sincerely wishes to practise Buddhist values and to share daily tasks according to his/her financial means and personal abilities.
- To provide a monastic life for of those who would spend longer periods of time, investing in this life, and participate in its functioning and its development.
- Preserve land, park, woods, natural areas, paths or trails with respect to the natural world, as part of an ecologically conscious life in all its forms, preserving the natural quality of space and its resources in an efficient, clean and creative manner.
- Preserve water quality and commit to a clean wastewater policy without introducing pollutants to the environment; have a routine recycling practice.
- To preserve the quality of the night sky by using well-adapted lighting inside and outside with respect to preserving darkness.
- Maintain buildings acquired by choosing the most suitable materials and adopting solutions to generate well-being, comfort and savings, the simplest and most cost effective solutions to be studied.
- To maintain high standards in conditions (accommodation quality, sanitary facilities, heating, recreation areas, disabled access etc ...) for receiving members, friends and groups, as well as visitors and people wishing to reside longer.
- Propose environmental solutions and construction of new buildings (for both residential and operational use) created on site asking for assistance from people competent design, implementation, logistics and other needs that would arise;
- Assist the local authorities and departmental and regional authorities in implementing structures which are in line with our objectives such as: home (s) for the elderly (including medical and hospice care if possible), Buddhist University and library , “Zen” art house, crafts, food product development...
- Promote a diet consistent with the principles of health and lifestyle with an emphasis on organic and biodynamic products. Make use of the arable land available for the production of vegetables, cereals or other crops without the use of pesticides, herbicides or other harmful products.
- To inform, publish, distribute anything which will serve our objectives and fulfil our aims.

- Manage capital which becomes available transparently, ethically, free from the influence of fluctuating financial markets by using co-operative banks or fair-trade financial institutions. To start any economical activity allowing the fulfilment of its non-lucrative objectives.

The people involved

- **Founding members and investors**

Founding members provide the necessary start-up capital for purchase. They may or may not live on the premises as they wish.

Within five years, they may decide to withdraw (by selling their contribution in capital to a member of the Sangha or to the SCI (*Société Civile Immobilière - A civil company in France, frequently used to own properties for the purposes of management and preservation of assets*)). After 5 years, they may also donate their contribution to the legal entity owning the financial capital – either the “religious association” or the “endowment”.

The residing founding members live in independent housing according to their needs and availability offered by the existing buildings (occupancy to be decided in consultation). They pay a monthly fee (TBD) to cover the daily needs of the collective (food and expenses incurred in the management of their homes: taxes, energy etc..)

Investors or long-time residents can donate, directly or through legacy, to the legal entity of the association, for a specific purpose such as building a residence or any other project approved of by the Spiritual Council. Residing founders pay a monthly fee (TBD) to cover daily needs and common charges. Any donation (or bequest after their death), will become the property of the religious association or congregation, or of the endowment fund.

- **Residents**

- **Monks and nuns**

Whatever their age, they may decide to live in the centre for the community service for a long-time stay (from 1 to 5 years or more) and respect their commitment not to leave the centre before the expected date. They will live in the Monks or Nuns quarters and will follow rules of the moral, ethical code of practice and behaviour which they agree to upon arrival.

They will be in charge of the different tasks connected with the practice of Zen in the dojo and the practice areas, welcoming visitors with zazen introduction, supervise daily meditation or during sesshin, ceremonies. They may also visit other dojo and nearby centres.

They will manage the daily community life: administration, cooking, cleaning, gardening and maintenance; in which they may be assisted by visiting lay persons.

They will be in charge of the care for the elderly, helping them with their practice and daily activities (cleaning, moving, washing, leisure...) and with other age-related problems. Given this, they will receive specific training with health/old age professional trainers.

This service for the elderly may be a paid for under a “religious” statute covered by a special fund (Cavimac) which ensures health and social protection and the right to retire

- **Lay persons**

Some lay persons who sympathise with the objectives of Hôrin-ji and zen practice may come and invest in the project, live in a studio or a house and make it their primary or secondary residence. This home will be the property of the SCI or the endowment to which they donate the capital. In return, this person will have the right of use throughout the year (or less, depending on the decisions of the persons in charge)

- **The elderly**

Some people and Zen practitioners who are at retirement age can come when they wish to continue their Zen practice among the Sangha community. Fees will depend on their financial means.

- if they have personal funds and an old age pension they can invest in a residence for their own use which will become the property of the religious association or of the endowment when they die.
They can reside at Hôrin-ji paying a monthly fee which reflects the expenses related to their presence and their support. Participation in the activities in the community (according to physical or intellectual abilities) will be welcome.
- for those with only a pension, a portion of it will be assigned to the community (to allow those assisting them to be paid - the amount will be determined on a case-by-case basis). They also participate the daily activities of the community according to their abilities.
- those with no significant income may also become residents under conditions to be determined by the individual responsible.

Hôrin-ji centre, in short, envisions in its medium-term objectives, the setting up of a structure suitable for those with mobility impairment, diminished capacity or requiring hospice care.

The structure will be an adapted building, which adheres to statutes governing nursing homes and will be supported as far as possible by the community of monks and nuns. In case the latter are insufficiently skilled, external qualified staff - doctors, nurses or carers - will be required local and regional authorities may be approached for financial and logistical help (aid / grants). Reception and entertainment/activities will remain the chief concerns of the nuns and monks and of the other persons of the community.

- **Visitors**

All persons who will adhere to the objectives of Hôrin-ji and Tenbôrin will be welcome. Visitors will participate in collective tasks and organisation of daily life organisation according to their abilities and pay a fee (monthly or daily) decided by the persons in charge.

Events and reception will be supported/organised by the Tenbôrin association (accommodation and scheduled activities)

Other concerned Persons:

- the friends of the permanent residents (partners, family members, relatives - including non-practitioners)
- Those who come for retreats (sesshin) or other activities organised by Horin-ji (seminars, training, workshops ...)
- those who wish to come for a personal retreat for a certain period of time.

This charter will be made more complete at a later date with Rules of Procedure specifying the relationships between the different legal entities and individuals.

It will be particularly important to define further the composition and scope of the Spiritual Council (the religious association or congregation or the endowment) , the body which will chair the guidelines and safeguard the continuity of life at the centre, as well as ensuring membership renewal, operational procedure, rules about decision making and maintaining links between the SCI , the cultural (Tenbôrin) and religious association or the congregation (Hôrin-ji).