



Scouting in the Buddhist Community

Background

- In 2008, Buddhism was the third-largest religion in the United States behind Christianity and Judaism. (Source: 2007 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, Pew Forum)
- Approximately 2.1 million people practice Buddhism in the United States. Of those, 75-80% are of Asian descent and inherited Buddhism as a family tradition, 20-25% are non-Asians.
- 2010 Boy Scout of America Buddhist membership included:
 - 767 Cub Scouts from 27 packs
 - 803 Boy Scouts from 28 troops
 - 46 Venturers from eight crews

Religious Principles and Key Terms

- *Goal*: Enlightenment through understanding of the reasons and causes of suffering.
- *Essential elements*: Awareness of impermanence and of oneself and compassion toward others.
- Fundamental doctrine of Buddhism is the Four Noble Truths, which are:
 - Noble Truth of Suffering
 - Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering
 - Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering
 - Noble Truth of the Path that leads to the Cessation of Suffering
- The last of the Four Noble Truths is also referred to as the Noble Eightfold Path, and includes the practice of:
 - Right Views
 - Right Thoughts
 - Right Speech
 - Right Conduct
 - Right Livelihood
 - Right Effort
 - Right Mindfulness
 - Right Meditation

Role of Scouting in Buddhism

- Founded in 1899, Buddhist Churches of America is an incorporated religious organization.
 - It administers the religious emblems program for all Buddhist denominations in America.
 - It is affiliated with Jodo Shinshu Hogwanjiha in Kyoto, Japan.
- Buddhist Churches of America is governed by Americans of the Shin Buddhist faith through a Board of Directors comprised of the:
 - Bishop
 - Board President
 - Ministerial Association Chairperson
 - District-level board members
 - Board members-at-large
 - Representatives from the recognized Buddhist Churches of America affiliated organization



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- Buddhist Churches of America National Committee on Scouting works with the community Buddhist religious leaders to develop the Buddhist religious program.

Scouting Youth and Adult Recognitions

- According to P.R.A.Y., in 2007, the Buddhist youth and adult recognitions were used by:
 - 50 Cub Scouts
 - 7 Boy Scouts
- Any registered Scout or Scout leader who has fulfilled all of the requirements can receive the following recognitions.

Youth Emblems



Metta Emblem

Purpose

- Nurtures boys to relate to all things with loving kindness and goodwill

Eligibility

- Buddhist Cub Scouts or non-Buddhist Cub Scouts with parental permission who have been involved in Cub Scouts at least three months

Requirements

- Completion of 12 hours of instruction, normally meeting once a week for an hour over three months



Sangha Emblem

Purpose

- Stresses the importance of both harmonious relationships and the universal brotherhood of all living beings

Eligibility

- Buddhist Boy Scouts or Venturers who are either at least a First Class Scout or have been involved in Venturing at least one year

Requirements

- Completion of 72 hours of instruction, normally meeting once a week for an hour over two years



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Adult Emblem



Bodhi Emblem

Purpose

- Recognizes adults who have demonstrated the highest level of dedication, commitment, and self-sacrifice of the spiritual development of Buddhist members of the Boy Scouts of America

Eligibility

- Adult ministers, Buddhist/non-Buddhist laypersons, and adult leaders in Scouting who have:
 - At least five or more years of outstanding service
 - Rendered noteworthy service to youth
 - Promoted the Religious Awards programs for Buddhist boys and girls, and encouraged non-Buddhists to participate in the Religious Award programs of their own faith
 - Given notable service in promoting Buddhist activities and service projects for the Temple/church and shown willingness to serve on affiliated committees
 - Participated in activities which contribute to the spiritual development of Buddhist members
 - Fostered a good relationship with the Boy Scouts and proven capable of interpreting Buddhist programs to council members
 - Given notable service in initiating Boy Scout programs under Buddhist sponsorship
 - Through Buddhist and other communication media, helped ministers and lay persons have a better understanding of the goals and ideals of the Boy Scout program

Requirements

- Nomination application and letter supporting the nominee from the Temple/church Board of Directors President must be submitted to the Buddhist Churches of America National Scouting Committee



Organization Information

- For more information, contact your local Buddhist temple or:
 - Write the National Buddhist Committee on Scouting, Buddhist Churches of America, 1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109; phone: 415-776-5600
 - Email: info@bcahq.org