

THE HIERARCHY OF THE VIETNAMESE BUDDHIST YOUTH ASSOCIATION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

I. General Introduction

The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association is an organization, branching from the national level to the local offices, which belongs to the Unified Buddhist Congregation under the Central Buddhist Youth Committee.

The Buddhist Youth Association is under the direction of the National Board of Directors of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in the United States of America. Nearly all the Buddhist Youth Associations in America hold their scheduled activities at local temples; and the local Buddhist Youth Association is placed under the spiritual guidance of local clergyman, regardless of their Buddhist sect.

II. Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America is clearly outlined below:

A. The National Echelon (Level): Provides guidance and leadership to the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America, and includes 2 entities:

1. ***National Board of Guidance and Assessment:*** This is a top-ranked level of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America.
 - a) Five to seven elite members are invited to join this Board, during the National Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association Conference. To qualify, these elite members must be over 60 years of age, possess high-level leadership skills and characters, and have earned the TAN rank or higher.
 - b) These members will elect one person to be the Administrator and one to be the Secretary in managing their work, leaving the remaining people to be Members of the National Board of Guidance and Assessment.

2. ***National Board of Directors:*** Provides leadership and close supervision to all the activities of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America.
 - a) Twenty-eight (28) members will be elected during the National Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association Conference.
 - b) It's composed of the Executive Board and 3 Supervisory Committees, as follows:
 - The executive board:
 - 1 Director
 - 1 Deputy Director of Customary & Public Relations
 - 1 Deputy Director of Administration
 - 1 Deputy Director of Research & (Training) Development.
 - 1 General Secretary
 - 2 Assistant Secretary
 - 1 Treasurer
 - 1 Assistant Treasurer
 - With four (4) Regional Directors

- Supervisory Committee of the Deputy Director of Customary & Public Relations:
 - 1 History & Ceremonial Coordinator
 - 1 Services & Social Coordinator
 - 1 Fund Raising Coordinator
 - 1 Former Leader and Youth Memberships Coordinator
 - 1 External Affairs and Communications Coordinator

- Supervisory Committee of the Deputy Director of Administration:
 - 1 Internal Affairs Coordinator
 - 1 Organizational & Investigative Coordinator
 - 1 Youth Activities Coordinator
 - 1 Arts and Literature Coordinator
 - 1 Educational Coordinator
 - 1 Male Division (members from 13 yrs of age and above) Coordinator
 - 1 Female Division (members from 13 yrs of age and above) Coordinator
 - 1 Male Division (members of 7 - 12 yrs of age) Coordinator
 - 1 Female Division (members of 7-12 yrs of age) Coordinator

- Supervisory Committee of the Deputy Director of Research & Planning:
 - 1 Research and Project/Development Coordinator
 - 1 Training Coordinator
 - 1 Materials Preparation/Development Coordinator
 - 1 Technology Coordinator
 - 1 Buddhism Practice Coordinator

- Replacing Board Members:

For instances when the Board Members cannot fully fulfill his/her position:

 - For the case of the Director of the Executive Board, the Deputy Director of Administration will be next in line to acquire the responsibilities within one (1) month. The Administrator of the National Board of Guidance and Assessment convenes the executive board emergency meeting to nominate one of the three Deputies (Deputy Director of Customary & Public Relations, Deputy Director of Administration, or Deputy Director of Research & (Training) Development) for acting Director of the Executive Board.
 - For other members of the Board, the National Board of Directors will appoint.
 - If 1/3 of the National Board of Directors are not able to fulfill their positions, a brief National Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association Conference will be scheduled to add people for those positions.

Coordinators may request the Board of Directors to provide or appoint 1 or more assistants.

Above the National Board of Guidance and Assessment and National Board of Directors is the Board of Advisory (composed of clergymen).

Alongside the National Board of Directors is the Board of Judiciary and the Board of Sponsors, to provide guidance on rules/regulations, boost morale, and provide needed materials.

B. Regional Echelon (Level):

1. **Organization:** Regions with at least 5 local Buddhist Youth Associations may establish a Regional Board of Directors who oversee and coordinate the activities and training development of the local Buddhist Youth Associations in that region.
2. **Regional Level:** There is a Board of Counseling instead of a Board of Guidance and Assessment. Three (3) to five (5) elite members are invited by the Regional Board of Directors join this Board. To qualify, these elite members must be over 55 years of age, possess high-level leadership skills and characters, and have earned the TAN rank or higher (Senior TIN rank is acceptable).
3. The organizational structure of the Regional Board of Directors is similar to the National Board of Directors.
4. Coordinators may request the Regional Board of Directors to provide or appoint 1 or more assistants.
5. **Replacing Board Members:**
For instances when the Board Members cannot fully fulfill his/her position:
 - For the case of the Director of the Executive Board, the Deputy Director of Administration will be next in line to acquire the responsibilities within one (1) month. The Chair of the Board of Counseling convenes the executive board emergency meeting to nominate one of the three Deputies (Deputy Director of Customary & Public Relations, Deputy Director of Administration, or Deputy Director of Research & (Training) Development) for acting Director of the Executive Board and submits to the National Board of Directors for considerations.
 - For other members of the Board, the Regional Board of Directors will nominate and the Director of the Executive Board will issue the decision.
 - If 1/3 of the Regional Board of Directors is not able to fulfill their positions, a brief Regional Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association Conference will be scheduled to add these positions and submits to the National Board of Directors for considerations.

Above the Regional Board of Directors is the Board of Advisory (composed of clergymen).
Alongside the Regional Board of Directors is the Board of Judiciary and Board of Sponsors.

6. **National Representatives:** The Regional Director is the national's representative at the Region.
7. **Regional Representatives:** Regions with at least three (3) Buddhist Youth Associations may have a representative from the Regional level. The specific region elects this representative (whom currently is holding a position in the Regional Board of Directors).
8. **Currently, there are 4 Regional Echelons:**
 - Quang Duc Region (South Western region of America) is composed of these states: southern California, southern Nevada, southern Utah, Arizona, and Hawaii.
 - Thien Minh Region (North Western region of America) is composed of these states: northern California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, northern Nevada, and northern Utah.
 - Thien Hoa Region (Eastern region of America) is composed of these states: Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi and all toward the eastern side.
 - Tinh Khiet Region (Central region of America) is composed of all the remaining states in central U.S.A.

C. Local Echelon (Level):

1. Each local region may have more than one local chapter (Buddhist Youth Association), regardless of geographical area.
2. Each local chapter must have at least 2 Units.

3. Each Unit must have at least 2 Sub-units and 8 - 32 members.
4. Each Sub-unit has 6 to 8 members (age 13 and above). Children have 4-6 members (7 to 12 years of age).
5. Units definitions:
 - Children 7-12 years of age.
 - Teens 13-17 years of age.
 - Young Adults 18 years of age and above.
6. Organizational structure
 - a. **Staffing**
 - 1 Chief of Staff (can invite 1 assistant)
 - 1 Association Leader (Group Leader)
 - 2 Assistant Association Leaders - 1 for the Male Division and 1 for the Female Division
 - 1 Secretary
 - 1 Treasurer
 - Leaders and assistant leaders of different Units (differentiated by age and gender)
 - If there's an excess number of leaders, the local association may have leaders specialized in areas, such as Music & Literature, News Letters, Sports, and Social & Cultural.
 - Except for the Chief of Staff position, the leaders of the local chapter elect all other positions.
 - The local chapter (Buddhist Youth Association) receives spiritual guidance from the local monk/nun.
 - There is also a Board of Sponsors to support them.
 - b. **Each unit consists of:**
 - 1 Unit Leader
 - 1 or 2 (or more) Assistant Unit Leaders
 - c. **Each Sub-unit consists of:**
 - 1 Sub-unit Leader
 - 1 Sub-unit Assistant Leader

D. The Former Leaders and Members Association:

1. Activities: Immediate operation with all Regional Board of Directors on the aspects of the organization and administration; including 3 Level:
 - a. National: Group (Liên Đoàn)
 - b. Regional: Unit (Đoàn)
 - c. Local: Sub-unit (Chi Đoàn)
2. Mentality: To combine leaders or members new or old regardless of a solid group. Together to continue to maintain confidence in the Organization, loyalty to religion and ethnicity in order to reach the goal of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association.
3. Operating activities: Quite specific, with internal regulations passed by the national Former Leaders and Members Association conference.

III. Administration and Operation

A. The National Echelon (Level):

1. National Board of Guidance and Assessment has these responsibilities and duties:
 - a) Guide and assess that the activities of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America are in accordance with the directions that the National Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association has outlined.
 - b) The National Board of Guidance and Assessment can present solutions and/or make decisions to resolve urgent issues within the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America, in

accordance with the National Board of Directors of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in the United States of America.

- c) They have authority to evaluate whether members of Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association are qualified to earn his/her TAN rank, based on the Board of Director's nominations.
- d) They have authority to create a Board to recognize outstanding accomplishments or condemn wrongdoings of the leaders of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America, per the National Board of Directors recommendations.

2. National Board of Directors:

- a) The National Board of Directors of the Buddhist Youth Association in America provides leadership and directions to the Regional Board of Directors.
- b) Comply with the Guidelines of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America.
- c) Coordinates training camps or classes for the leaders, and camps for all of the members in the country.
- d) Promulgate administrative documents related to all activities, religious education, and training of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association in America.

B. The Regional Echelon (Level):

- 1. The Board of Counseling: Counseling for The Regional Board of Directors when requested. It has duties and powers involved in the Board to recognize outstanding accomplishments or condemn wrongdoings of the leaders of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association of the Region.
- 2. The Regional Board of Directors:
 - a) Implement the directives of The National Board of Directors: control, supervise and investigate local Buddhist Youth Associations.
 - b) The Regional Echelon (Level) or Representative(s) of the region must report quarterly updates of the on-going activities of the local Buddhist Youth Associations in that region to the National Board of Directors.
 - c) Communicates with other Buddhist groups in the region, to better understand current events, especially issues that will impact the Buddhist Youth Association in that region.
 - d) Establishes new local Buddhist Youth Association in the region.
 - e) Coordinates Training Camps (Loc Uyen & A Duc) for the leaders, camps for the Sub-unit (line) leaders, and camps for all the local Buddhist Youth Associations in the region.

C. The Local Echelon (Level):

- 1. **Chief of Staff:**
 - a) This person is a leader, former leader or a Buddhist who is at least 50 years old, has extensive experience and good relations with the Buddhist Vietnamese community, and clearly understands the Buddhist Youth Association. The leaders of the Buddhist Youth Association invite him/her into this position as Chief of Staff.
 - b) If the Association Leader (Group Leader) is at least 45 years of age, has enough capabilities, and has good relations with the Buddhist Vietnamese community in the region, he/she may also task on the responsibility of the Chief of Staff.
 - c) Accepts new members to the Buddhist Youth Association.
 - d) Represents the Buddhist Youth Association in community functions. Complies with the Guidelines of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association, and takes full responsibilities (along with the leaders of the Buddhist Youth Association) in front of the Regional Echelon (Level).

2. Association Leader (Group Leader):

- a) Works with the 2 Assistant Association Leaders in providing directions for the other leaders in the Buddhist Youth Association.
- b) Implement the directives of the Regional Echelon (Level) or the Representative(s) of the region.
- c) Coordinates training camps/classes for the Sub-unit (line) Leaders in the Buddhist Youth Association.
- d) Coordinates ceremonial functions, camps, displays, shows, community services, etc. at the local Buddhist Youth Association, with approval from the Regional Echelon (Level) or the Representative(s) of the region.
- e) Reports the status and activities of the Buddhist Youth Association to the Regional Echelon (Level), at the end of each quarter.

3. Unit Leader:

- a) Implement the directives of the Leaders of the local Buddhist Youth Association; Motivates and leads the Unit, with the help from the Assistant Unit Leaders.
- b) Creates monthly and weekly agendas/schedules for the classes and activities in the Unit.
- c) Coordinates training and field trips for the Unit (with the approval of the Association Leader).
- d) Accepts full responsibilities, along with the Association Leader.

4. Secretary:

- a) Look after, take care and preserve the records administrator of the Association.
- b) Clerical tasks undertaken and the minutes for the meetings regularly and unscheduled of the Leaders of the local Buddhist Youth Association.

5. Treasurer:

- a) Financial management, spending as prescribed.
- b) Managing the assets of Association.
- c) Provide financial report with a review of the Chief of Staff every quarter.

6. Leaders of Sub-Units:

- a) Implement the directives of the Unit Leader, motivates and leads the Sub-Unit, with the help from the Assistant Sub-Unit Leaders.
- b) Draft weekly program activities for Sub-Unit based on the Unit's program activities.
- c) Accepts full responsibilities, along with the Unit Leader.

IV. Conclusion

The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association is clearly structured on the foundation of fundamental principles; the relationship between all levels is defined based on the obligations and responsibilities of each position.

The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association has been presenting over half a century and has gone hand-in-hand with the progression of the Vietnamese history. The teachings of Buddha, the organized structure of law and order, and the Leaders' heart and will to serve, contribute to the birth and continuing existence of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association.

Hence, a leader of today must realize this fact: To commit himself/herself in the organization is to be willing to oblige with the established laws which have the intention of preserving, protecting, and strengthening the association.

