

Vietnam Buddhist Family: A Buddhist Contribution

*Most Ven. Thich Dat Dao
Secretary General, Vietnam Buddhist Sangha
Heavily Edited by Mr. Dion Oliver Peoples*

Vietnam Buddhist Family is educating young men and boys on Buddhist doctrine and fundamental principles. Most Venerable Thich Minh Chau clearly declared the Buddhist Family guideline: “Buddhist Family is an organization not only conscious to propagandize Buddhism in order to attract Buddhist believers, but also to build legitimate and beneficial lives for young men and boys, for themselves and for all people.

Buddhist Family also introduces legitimate ways for agreeing with reason or conferring to the young men, while hoping they develop compassion, wisdom and courage. Mr. Vo Dinh Cuong added “Buddhist Family is not an organization with political aim, or a disguised cult organization. It only borrows a few methods from youth and scout organizations, but its spirit is always Buddhist.

Viet Nam Buddhist Family originated from the Phat Hoa Pho conference held on April 24-26, 1951 - at Tu Dam Hue Temple. Dr Tam Minh Le Dinh Tham was the first person to head the Buddhist Family. The Buddhist Family is currently headed by Mr Vo Dinh Cuong. Some additional important people are: Most Venerable Thich Thanh Kiem, and Most Venerable Thich Minh Chau. The conference supported 5 chapters and passed 15 articles. Most Venerable Thich Tri Thu - Chairman of Phat Giao Trung Phan, reviewed the ‘organizational’ status on April 26-1951, concluding:

Name: Buddhist Family

Training Aim: develop wisdom, virtue and physical education in young men – as a basis to be a better trained Buddhist.

Precepts: Compassion, Wisdom, Courage, Harmony, Trust, Gladness

Badge: Eight petal white lotus on a young leaf green background

Official Song: White lotus.

Rules:**A - For young men and women**

- 1) *Buddhist believers take refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha and observe precepts.*
- 2) *Buddhist believers enlarge their love and respect life.*
- 3) *Buddhist believers polish up their wisdom and respect the truth.*
- 4) *Buddhist believers are clean from words to deeds.*
- 5) *Buddhist believers live in joyful-giving in order to advance in the religious way.*

B - For children

- 1) *I remember Buddha*
- 2) *I esteem parents, brothers and sisters*
- 3) *I love humanity and animals*

The Buddhist Family has organized many conferences, seminars and camps to train order brothers. According to the founders: the purpose of the Buddhist Family is to form a group of true Buddhist, making a bridge between the lay-life and religious; and between individuals and society by leaning on Buddha doctrine. In other words: to create a person who lives and acts according to three virtues: Compassion, Wisdom and Courage – while embodying the spirit of Buddhism for serving true dhamma and building a happy society. Buddhist Family aims to instill compassion as a motive for all the actions for all living beings, having wisdom as the root in order to dispel ignorance and having courage in mind as strength in order to win over all inside and outside obstacles.

I wish I could contribute more than a few suggestions so that The Vietnamese Buddhist Family could publish their own reports and statements that our Most Venerables wish to propagate forward.