

THE HISTORY OF THE GUATUAMA BUDDHA (FROM HIS BIRTH TO DEPARTING)

PERCEPTION:

During the 6th century B.C., Aryans dominated India and classified the Indies into 4 classes as follows:

1. The Brahmin: Composed of all the intellectualists and elites.
2. The Ksatrya: Composed of the royalties and emperor's descendants.
3. The Vaisya: Composed of business people.
4. The Soudra: Composed of slaves.

There was also another class named Pariahs. This class was composed of all countryside and uncivilized people. The three upper classes had all rights in practicing religions as well as doing things from which the lower two classes were prohibited.

I. PRINCE SIDDHARTA'S EXISTENCE:

In the year the King Suddhodana was 50 years old and his wife, Queen Mahamaya was 45 years old, the queen had a dream. In her dream she saw a white elephant with six tusks enter on the right side of her body. That night she conceived Prince Siddharta. He was born on the full moon day in February, Indian calendar, which is the same as the full moon day in April on the Lunar calendar, 624 B.C. He was born under the Asoka Tree, in the Lumbini garden of the Kapilavastu City. His full name was Kausala Sakya Siddharta. Sakya was his last name, and is a branch of the Kausala royal.

II. PRINCE'S CHARACTERISTICS:

He was born with many special features and was beautiful. The prophet Asita had predicted that Prince Siddharta would either be an invincible ruler or a Buddha. Asita had mixed emotions about the prophecy. He was happy to know that more than likely Siddharta will become a Buddha, yet he was sad he would not be around to see the Buddha.

III. PRINCE'S LIFE:

Seven days after his birth, queen Mahamaya took her last breath. His aunt, Queen Pajapati, also married to the king, raised him. He was very intelligent and well trained in the martial arts, yet he remained calm and well mannered, which earned him a very good reputation. In his teenage years, he proved to be an over-achiever. He married princess Yasodhara at the age of 17 and had a son named Rahula.

IV. PRINCE'S ENCOUNTERS IN LIFE:

The Prince asked for his father's permission to visit the city to learn about life on the other side of the Palace. On the first occasion, he saw a deaf old person with wrinkles all over his body and a hunch back. On the second occasion, he saw an ill person who was crying about his illness. On the third occasion, he saw people carrying a dead body, followed by grieving relatives. At this moment, he realized the true sufferings all beings must undergo which he had never been told of before. The last time he visited the city, he saw a Brahmin monk with a profound appearance. He knew then the only solution to save all living creatures was to become a monk. He made a decision to seek to end sufferings and lead all beings to it.

V. PRINCE'S DETACHMENT FROM THE PLEASURE WORLD:

One night, after a royal party, when everyone was in a deep sleep, he took a last look at his family, Then the prince and his charioteer Channa rode his horse Kanthaka towards the Southeast. They stopped at the Anoma river. Prince Siddharta cast off his royal garments and ornaments, cut off his long hair and took off his sword. All this he gave to Channa and told him to return to the palace. The prince alone was on his way to seek a true religion.

CONSIDER:

1. The Prince always thought about suffering which all living creatures face and sought for the solution to end the suffering.
2. The prince cared less about his reputation, wealth, and self happiness. He would rather seek for a true happiness.
3. His determination and courage helped him to bypass all his troubles
4. His existence was not a miracle or fantasy. History has proven that he was an actual human being.

PRACTICE:

- Stop having overwhelming desires.
- Stop spending lavishly.
- Stop sleeping long hours.
- Have sympathy for the troubles of other people.
- Love everyone as you love yourself.
- No possessiveness or clinging.
- Help those who need help.
- Stand up for the rights of everyone.
- Don't be afraid to look at the facts.
- Persevere in school as well as in work.

MEANING OF REPENTANCE CHANT

BÀI SÁM HỐI

**Đệ tử kính lạy
Đức Phật Thích-Ca
Phật A-Di-Đà
Mười phương chư Phật
Vô lượng Phật Pháp
Cùng Thánh Hiền Tăng.
Đệ tử lâu đời lâu kiếp
Nghiệp chướng nặng nề
Tham giận kiêu căng
Si mê lâm lạc.
Ngày nay nhờ Phật
Biết sự lỗi lầm
Thành tâm sám hối.
Thề tránh điều dữ
Nguyện làm việc lành.
Ngừa trông ơn Phật
Từ bi gia hộ
Thân không tật bệnh
Tâm không phiền não
Hằng ngày an vui tu tập
Phép Phật nhiệm màu
Để mau ra khỏi luân hồi,
Minh tâm kiến tánh
Trí tuệ sáng suốt
Thần thông tự tại
Đặng cứu độ các bậc Tôn Trưởng
Cha mẹ anh em
Thân bằng quyền thuộc
Cùng tất cả chúng sanh
Đồng thành Phật Đạo.**

I. DEFINITION:

Repentance is to confess previous wrongdoings, and to vow not to repeat them. It's a form of strict self-review and judgement of bad behaviors.

II. VOCABULARY EXPLANATIONS:

1. *Đệ tử*: A student, a disciple, a son. It is a name a Buddhist refers to himself when associating with teachers (monks, Buddhas).
2. *Kính lạy*: Kính means to honor, to respect. Lạy means to bow low with forehead, elbows and knees touching the ground. Kính lạy means showing respectful gesture to the Three Jewels (Tam Bảo), or to bow respectfully to the Three Jewels.
3. *Đức Phật Thích Ca*: Sankya Buddha, the Buddha of Ta-Bà (Samsara) world.
4. *Phật A Di Đà*: The Buddha of Pure Land (Tịnh Độ) world.
5. *Thập phương Chư Phật*: Buddhas exist in all 10 direction (East, West, South, North, Southeast, Southwest, Northeast, Northwest, above, and below).
6. *Thánh Hiền Tăng*: The Bodhisattvas (future Buddhas), The Arahats (Ones who are free from all craving, defilements and rebirth), the Sanghas (An Assembly of Buddhist monks).
7. *Nghiệp chướng*: Karmas: bad thought, speech and action.
8. *luân hồi*: samsara: cycle of life and death.
9. *si mê*: ignorance.
10. *Minh tâm kiến tánh*: pure mind - Clearly see one's identity and attitude
11. *Thần thông*: Supernatural powers which only the enlightened one can understand and attain.
12. *Tự tại*: Mindfulness. One does not get tied down and controlled by obstructions.
13. *Thần thông tự tại*: unlimited supernatural power.

III. DESCRIPTIONS:

The Repentance Chant can be divided in three parts as follow:

1. **Part 1**: From "**Đệ tử kính lạy...**" to "**Thánh Hiền Tăng**" describes the Buddhists' respectfully bowing to the Three Jewels.
2. **Part 2**: From "**Đệ tử lâu đời...**" to "**Thần thông tự tại**" describes one's confession of wrong doings that he/she has done from the past lives. He/she now vows to be good and live by Buddha's Teachings to attain enlightenment.
3. **Part 3**: From "**Đặng cứu độ...**" to "**đồng thành Phật Đạo**" describes a Buddhist's vow that once he/she becomes Buddha, he/she will assist his/her ancestors, relatives, friends, and other beings to also attain enlightenment.

IV. MAIN MEANINGS:

- The main meanings of the Repentance Chant are described as follow:
- One respectfully bows to the Three Jewels and repents the wrongdoings accumulated from the past to present lives.
- One practices the Buddha's Teachings, vows to do good things and avoid bad things.
- One prays for his/her ancestors, parents, brothers, sisters, friends and all other living beings to attain enlightenment.

The Repentance Chant is very meaningful and understandable. The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association chooses it as a main part of the weekly ceremony. To make the Chanting more meaningful and beneficial, one should understand and practice it.

QUESTIONS:

1. When can the Repentance Chant be used?
2. What is repentance?
3. Whom do we repent to?
4. What are the main meanings of the Repentance Chant?
5. How does one act when chanting the Repentance?
6. What can one do to ensure that one's is practicing the meanings of the Repentance Chant?

THE THREE JEWELS

DEFINITION: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha are the three precious jewels which are matchless (unsurpassable).

I. **BUDDHA:** It has three meanings:

1. To awake oneself: Self understanding of Buddhism.
2. To awake other: To awake all living beings as you have awakened yourself.
3. To awake completely: To completely achieve the above tasks.

Shakyamuni Buddha is the enlightened one, who brought his teachings to this world. Due to his practicing good conducts, he possesses 32 special features. Some of the special features are as follows:

1. Special features on his head: represent the highest level of intelligence.
2. A bright light appearing around his head: represents the master of wisdom.
3. Two long ears: represents longevity.
4. Two bright eyes: represents sharpness of the mind.
5. There is a white hair between his eyebrows.
6. A symbol on his chest: represents perfection.

Buddha has 5 morals of conduct: diligence, forgiveness, purity, wisdom and compassion.

1. **Diligence:** He had persevered in seeking ways to end all sufferings even though there were many obstacles along the way. (His perseverance was exhibited when he spent 6 years practicing self-mortification, 49 days of meditation under the Bodhi Tree, and more than 49 years of preaching the religion). Through him, we learn to improve ourselves and never give up when facing obstacles.
2. **Forgiveness:** Buddha sacrificed himself to search for a true religion to help all human beings attain happiness.
3. **Purity:** Buddha always spoke the truth, and never said harmful things by using peaceful words.
4. **Wisdom:** Buddha had complete knowledge of all matter.
5. **Compassion:** Buddha had unlimited compassion. He loved and cared for all beings unconditionally.

II. DHARMA: Dharma is Buddha's teachings or the Bodhisattvas' words that were preached to the public in accordance with Buddha's teachings. It speaks of the truth. All beings depend on the Dharma to verify the truth, to end all sufferings, to obtain happiness, and to attain enlightenment.

Dharma consists of 3 categories:

1. **Buddha's teachings:** Buddha's teachings in his own words
2. **Buddhist Laws:** The rules set by Buddha for all disciples to follow.

3. **Ultimate doctrine:** Discussions of the Dharma by Buddha's first disciples in order to simplify Buddha's teachings.

III. SANGHA: These are groups of four or more people who have renounced the material world to practice Buddhism. As role models, they have to live by the Six Rules of Unity and follow Buddha's precepts.

Different levels of Sanghas:

1. **Male novice:** Beginning Buddhist monk who practices 10 precepts.
2. **Female novice:** Beginning Buddhist nun who practices the 10 precepts
3. **Buddhist monk:** Monk who vows to practice 250 precepts.
4. **Buddhist nun:** Nun who vows to practice 350 precepts.

CONCLUSION: Buddha-Dharma-Sangha are the three precious jewels. They are the true guidance for all Buddhists to follow in building morals and values.

TAKING REFUGE IN THE THREE JEWELS

- I. **"Take Refuge in the Buddha, the one who shows the way in this life"**: To dedicate your life and lead it towards Buddha's path. Do not worship other religious outside of Buddhism.
- II. **"Take Refuge in the Dharma, the way of understanding and love"**: To live by Buddha's teachings as the true and penetrating path.
- III. **"Take Refuge in the Sangha, the community that lives in harmony and awareness"**: To live a life similar to the Sangha's, a group of 4 or more Buddhist monks. Do not associate with groups that could have bad influence on speech, thoughts and behaviors.
- IV. **The ceremony of taking the 3 Refuges**: In front of the 3 Jewels - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, one vows to develop compassion in order to love and protect life, which includes the lives of people, animals, and plants. One vows to develop an understanding in order to be able to love and live in harmony with all beings. These vows are witnessed by the Sangha. During the ceremony one also is given a Buddhist name.

Conclusion: Taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is a very important gesture to reconstruct your life completely in the right direction.

VEGETARIANISM

I. Definition:

Eat only fruits, vegetables and grains, avoid eating any meat products.

II. Why Buddha teaches us to be a vegetarian:

Buddha loves all living creatures; therefore, he teaches us to avoid killing animals for food. He only eats vegetables and wants everyone to do the same.

III. The benefits of being a vegetarian:

1. Fruits and vegetables have more vitamins than meats, and also easier to digest. Fruits, vegetables, and cereals provide a well-balanced diet for the human body.
2. When one's body is healthy, one's mind functions better. Therefore, one can learn everything faster.
2. By not eating meats, one has taken a step towards reaching enlightenment. By realizing that animals have the same right to live as humans, one develops a compassion for all living creatures.
4. By controlling your diet of not eating meats, you learn to live a more simple and meaningful life. This lifestyle shows the code of compassion of a Buddhist.

IV. Different Vegetarian Diets:

1. **Permanent diet:** Never eating meat.
2. **Periodic diet:** Not eating meats on certain days in a month or on certain months in a year.
3. **Most common diet:** Not eating meats on the 1st and 15th of each month.

V. When you make the resolution of following a vegetarian diet:

1. Try to follow the diet consistently. Do not skip it for any reason, unless it is an emergency situation.
2. Eat simple; do not be extravagant in preparations of these meals.
3. Follow the vegetarian diet on Buddhist holidays and on the camp trips of the youth association.

VI. Conclusion:

One of Buddha's teachings is to love all living creatures by being a vegetarian. Therefore, this will make one closer to Buddha.

PRINCIPLES OF TEENAGE AND ADULT MEMBERS AND THE LEADERS OF THE BUDDHIST YOUTH ASSOCIATION

COMPASSION - WISDOM - BRAVERY

Compassion means sympathetic concern for the suffering of another being. A Buddhist living by the principle of compassion will be affected by the sufferings of others, including all living animals. A Buddhist will not perform actions that cause the suffering but bring happiness to all beings.

Wisdom means understanding that which is true and right. Ignorance will not be accepted by a Buddhist. Everything must be clearly understood. Also, a Buddhist needs to help others cultivate their wisdom so they too can learn to understand what is true and right and skillful.

Bravery means courage and diligence. Do not be fearful or cowardly. A member of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association must overcome problems to attain enlightenment. One must always try hard to conquer all internal and external challenges and hardships; and one must remain calm when facing dangers. Do not be frustrated by failure; instead, learn from them to build confidence in practicing and enforcing Buddhism.

These three virtues, Compassion - Wisdom - Bravery, are inseparable. If there is compassion without wisdom to judge, compassion might have been expressed improperly. If there is wisdom without compassion then the person's thoughts might be harmful.

Having compassion and wisdom but lacking the bravery to complete a task makes the combination useless. Without bravery, one does not have the ability to overcome the adversity to express one's compassion and use one's wisdom to accomplish any task. On the other hand, there can not be bravery without compassion and wisdom, for bravery alone may be displayed incorrectly due to thoughtless actions and shallow understanding. These actions may be cruel and drift away from the path of virtue. Therefore, to rescue all beings from suffering, one needs to be able to correctly understand and recognize the problems, and to be brave in any situation in order to accomplish the deliverance of happiness.

As a member of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association, one needs to practice the principles of compassion, wisdom and bravery in your everyday life.

Questions:

1. What is the principles of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association?
2. What can one do when one practices Compassion?
3. What is the difference between compassion and feebleness?
4. How does one define true Wisdom?
5. What is true Bravery?
6. How do compassion, wisdom and bravery relate?
7. What does one do when practicing Compassion, Wisdom and Bravery?

RECITING THE BUDDHAS' NAMES

I. Definition:

Reciting to Buddha is one method of practicing Buddha's teachings and to get closer spiritually to him. By doing this, one can be at peace with oneself and also become a future Buddha.

1. Reciting to Buddha is accomplished by chanting Buddhist scriptures, Buddha's titles, and future Buddhas' titles.
2. Reciting to Buddha is accomplished by thinking and remembering Buddha and his teachings. From this, one can apply his teachings into one's everyday life.
3. Reciting to Buddha is accomplished by repenting all of one's mistakes and vowing to follow Buddha's teachings to do good deeds.
4. Reciting to Buddha is accomplished by focusing on the special features of a particular Buddha. By practicing his teachings one will possess similar special characteristics in future lives.
5. Praying to Buddha is accomplished by practicing his ways to help lessen one's sufferings and help one overcome obstacles.

II. Why do you pray to Buddha:

Praying to Buddha helps change unfavorable attitudes, and lessen one's sufferings and misfortunes. Praying helps one gain merits and attain true happiness. Sometimes, one is overtaken by ignorance; thus, by praying to Buddha one returns to the right path.

III. What are the benefits of praying to Buddha:

By sincerely praying to Buddha one, will gain these benefits:

1. Be closer spiritually to him and be protected by him.
2. Improve one's personality and attain the 5 morals of conduct or the five precepts.
3. Gain some of the same respect people have for Buddha.
4. Lessen the sufferings in one's life and attain true happiness.

IV. How to recite to Buddha:

1. **Verbal chanting:** Standing in front of Buddha, thinking of him, and chanting out loud along with the bell and the wooden drum.
2. **Chanting to yourself:** This is usually done before one sleeps and after one wakes up. Chanting to oneself, either softly or silently.
3. **Situational chanting:** Chanting the titles of Buddhas and future Buddhas when encountering any mishaps and sufferings.
4. **Visual chanting:** Chanting in front of the statue of Buddha and feeling his presence.

5. *Diligent chanting*: Always chanting and thinking of Buddha while performing any task.

V. Conclusion:

Through reciting to Buddha, one will be closer to him and his teaching methods. Furthermore, by praying, one can feel the presence of Buddha within oneself.

THE FIVE RULES

I. FOREWORD:

The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association Code of Conduct states the following five rules for youth and adult members:

1. **A Buddhist takes refuge in the Three Jewels and practices the precepts one has vowed.**
2. **A Buddhist widely expresses his compassion and respects the lives of all beings.**
3. **A Buddhist must cultivate his wisdom and respect the truth.**
4. **A Buddhist must live in purity in material, spirit, speech, and behaviour.**
5. **A Buddhist must be understanding, forgiving, and diligent in practicing Buddhism.**

Above are the five rules established for members to obey to prevent wrongdoings, and to build up values and morality.

II. DEFINITION:

1. **Taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha** means to have the Three Jewels as guides for one's daily activities. As a Buddhist, one needs to believe and respect the Three Jewels, and not in God nor supernatural power.

Practicing the precepts that one has vowed: Precepts are the rules set by Buddha. We, as Buddha's lay disciples, practice the five precepts according to our capability and suitability. If the rules are violated, one needs to repent and vow not to repeat the same mistake.

2. **Always expressing one's love and respecting the lives of all living creatures:** A Buddhist practices Compassion by loving himself, his family and all other living beings. A Buddhist should respect the lives of all living creatures even a tiny insect by not killing them. Furthermore, one should find ways to protect them. Avoid killing and only eating vegetables are ways of practicing this rule.
3. **Cultivating the wisdom:** Wisdom is one's intelligence. Wisdom is one's knowledge. A Buddhist should not be superstitious. One should use his/her intelligence to understand, learn, or evaluate something. A Buddhist must use his/her impartial opinion on all matters, accept what is right, and does not believe something that is ambiguous. Before practicing Buddha's Teachings, one should understand and analyze it. Only through practicing and living by Buddha's Teachings can one accumulate knowledge.

Respecting the truth means accepting that which is right. A Buddhist never says misleading words that are not the truth. A Buddhist should not distort the truth to profit from it or to defend his/her pride.

4. **Living in purity in materials, spirit, speech and behaviour:** A Buddhist practices the Purity code (the lotus symbol) to keep his/her body, speech, thoughts and actions clean. A Buddhist says only truthful and peaceful words; a Buddhist should not think and act evil; instead, he/she should think and act only in ways benefiting himself/herself and others.
5. **A Buddhist must be understanding and forgiving, and be diligent in practicing Buddhism:** A Buddhist must practice the Forgiveness and Diligence codes. The forgiveness code means always being joyful and happy even when encountering adversity. A Buddhist is willing to sacrifice for all living creatures. He/she should not be jealous and resentful. The diligence conduct means to always improve in whatever one is pursuing. A Buddhist diligently practices Buddha's teachings, and perseveres until the task is complete. When encountering adversity, a Buddhist does not withdraw or step back, but perseveres to overcome the problem.

III. PRACTICE:

As a member of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association one needs to practice the followings:

1. Do not hunt, capture or kill animals because in doing so one will hurt them and violate the precepts (Rules 1 and 2). Không nói dối vì nói dối là làm trái với sự thật. (Rule 2)
2. Always cultivate one's intelligence and respects the truth. (Rule 3)
3. Try not to be easily frustrated. Do not insult others. Do not use harmful words. (Rule 4)
4. Study diligently, participate in group activities, and maintain one's goal consistently. (Rule 5)

In your daily life, each thought, word and action need to be guided by the above five rules. Therefore, to be a good member of the Vietnamese Buddhist Association, one needs to practice these rules regularly.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the advantages of the five rules?
2. How does one practice the precepts which one has vowed to obey?
3. Why does one have to respect the truth?
4. What is the benefit of cultivating one's wisdom?
5. What does it mean by to be forgiving and diligent in practicing Buddhism?
6. What are the advantages of examining one's behaviour, thoughts and actions?

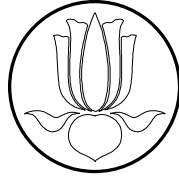
THE MEANING OF THE GRAY COLOR

To foster unity in an organization, the members usually are asked to wear uniforms. Depending on the goals of the organization, the uniform is chosen to represent the spirit of that group. The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Organization is not an exception. The gray color is chosen purposefully to be the color of the shirt to be a part of the uniform.

THE COLOR GRAY SYMBOLIZES:

1. **Equality, No Discrimination:** The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Organization consists of many classes. It does not matter if the person is a six-year-old child or a seventy-year-old person, a blue or a white collar working person, a kindergartener or a professor, he/she will be treated equally. Everyone is welcomed without any discrimination. They share together each other's happiness and sorrow.
2. **Harmony:** Gray is a color which harmonizes with nature and all other colors. When put together with other colors, gray is not bright and does not stand out from the rest. Nor is it a dull color. With a loud color such as red or orange, gray softens its brightness. On a hot summer day, the gray color is a cool color to wear or to look at. In a cold winter morning, gray brings warmth. All these aspects of gray represent the purpose of the Buddhist Youth Organization--Using happiness to reduce the sufferings of all beings.
3. **Diligence and Patience:** Gray is well liked color. A person donning (wearing) the gray uniform shirt should not be temperamental or dispirited but always be patient. He/she should be diligent in learning and practicing Buddhism to help other beings end the cycle of life and death.

The gray shirt of our organization has noble meanings. To be a good member of the Buddhist Youth Organization, one must always strive to keep the shirt, as well as the mind and body pure. One should not defile/disgrace it.



THE LOTUS EMBLEM

The emblem of the Buddhist Youth Association consists of an eight-petaled white lotus on a green background enclosed in a circle. It is important to understand each symbol.

- I. **The circle** represents the completeness and unity of the Buddhist religion.

- II. **The white color** of the lotus represents the brightness of wisdom, complete enlightenment (giác ngộ), and the brightness of pure moral conduct, complete liberation (giải thoát). The lotus is a flower which grows in muddy environments but produces a nice clean fragrance. This represents a Buddhist who lives in a society full of temptations but can distinguish right from wrong and has good ethics.

- III. **The eight petals** of the lotus represent the objectives of the Buddhist Youth Association
 - A. **The top five petals represent the five conducts of a Buddhist.**
 1. **The Middle petal: *Moral of Diligence*.** Always advancing to achieve the objectives of the organization and to practice Buddhism. An example of this conduct is Shakyamuni Buddha (Phật Thích Ca Mâu Ni) who left his family, renounced all rights to the throne and all worldly pleasures to search for truth and peace. He strenuously practiced all forms of austerity for 6 years. He reached enlightenment after 49 days of meditation. From then he went on teaching Buddhism for 49 years. Thus, one who lives by the Diligent Moral must always be diligent in applying the Forgiveness, Purity, Wisdom, and Compassion morals. The opposite of the Diligent Moral is being lazy in practicing Buddhism and in fulfilling one's own responsibility.
 2. **The petal to the left of the middle petal: *Conduct of forgiveness and joyfulness*.** Always be cheerful, forgiving, and strive to make others happy. When confronting mishap, do not be overly grieved or fearful. Be happy for those more fortunate rather than jealous, hateful, and upset. Help others in distress. Use nice words to explain a misunderstanding. Know when to sacrifice for others. Joyfulness does not mean to be unruly and loud. Forgiveness and joyfulness combined is a conduct of a free and clean spirit. It represents a calm and loving person willing to sacrifice for others when necessary. One who lives by this moral always looks young, has bright eyes, a nice smile, and the ability to encourage others to practice forgiveness and joyfulness. Representing

this conduct is the Di Lạc (Maitreya) Buddha who has boundless love for all beings and who always has a smile on his face.

3. **The petal to the right of the middle petal: *Conduct of Purity.*** This means purity in speech, thought, and body. Purity in speech means not to tell lies nor use words that could hurt others. Always speak the truth. Purity in thought means to end the three poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance. Always have nice and clean thoughts. Purity in body or action means to have a simple life and take care of your body. Representing the Purity Conduct is A Di Đà (Amida) Buddha whose longevity is immeasurable through the practice of this conduct. He stays in the Pure Land (Tịnh Độ) world and helps all beings to get there. It is a beautiful and peaceful world.
4. **To the left of Forgiveness: *Conduct of Wisdom.*** Understand all things correctly and thoroughly. A person living by this conduct learns and understands Buddha's teaching correctly and completely. Representing this moral is the Văn Thù Sư Lợi Bodhisattva whose wisdom is greater than all of the Bodhisattvas. He often assisted Shakyamuni Buddha in helping all beings expand their wisdom.
5. **To the right of Purity: *Conduct of Compassion.*** This conduct means to bring happiness and reduce miseries for all beings. A person living by this conduct always tries to help others live happily. Representing the Compassion Moral is Quán Thế Âm Bodhisattva who always listens to the cries of all beings for help and relieves their sufferings.

B. *The three petals on the bottom symbolize the three jewels.* (Looking at the emblem):

1. **Middle petal:** The first jewel -- Buddha. This has three meanings:
 - a. Tụ Giác: Self-awakened.
 - b. Giác Tha: Work together with others so all will attain enlightenment.
 - b. Giác Hạnh Viên Mãn: The above missions are fully accomplished.

There have been many people who have attained enlightenment. Shakyamuni Buddha, A Di Đà Buddha, Dược Sư Buddha, Di Lạc Buddha are examples.

2. **The left petal:** The second jewel -- Dharma. Words from Buddha or the Bodhisattvas's sermons based on Buddha's teachings. These words contain the truth in Buddha's teaching that lead all beings to true happiness.
3. **The right petal:** The third jewel -- Sangha (monks and nuns). People who leave home to devote their life and practice Buddhism. They are a group of at least four people and live by the Six Rules of Unity Inform.

IV. The green color on the emblem represents the youth and the hope for the future.

LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING

I. I HEAR:

I notice that rules 2 and 3 out of the five rules in the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association (VBYA) Code of Conduct emphasize Love and Understanding:

(2) Love: As a Buddhist, I vow to practice compassion and respect the lives of all beings.

(3) Understanding: As a Buddhist, I vow to cultivate wisdom and respect the truth.

Love comprises the intention and ability to bring joy and happiness to those around us. Understanding helps distinguish what to do and what not to do to make others happy. Love and understanding form the basis of my behavior at the personal, family, as well as community level; they are the legacy of my family and spiritual ancestors. I honor my ancestors by practicing Love and Understanding as I contribute to my family, the communities, and myself that I serve in such a way as to cause purity in living, mindfulness in thinking, and true compassion. Practicing Love and Understanding will help reduce suffering and transform this world into present time Nirvana.

II. I CONTEMPLATE:

Why is it so difficult to practice Love and Understanding? One reason is that I do not completely understand the needs of my own body and mind. In order to love others, I have to begin with the foundation of loving myself. When I overeat, I hurt my stomach; when I smoke, I damage my lungs; when I get angry, I cloud my mind. When I succeed in loving myself, I can love others since others have the same needs to their bodies and minds as mine: we all are afraid of death and are vain about life; we all love fun and avoid suffering. In addition, to loving others, I must understand their wants, needs, and what's best for them and not for me.

Unlike a mother expressing her love for her child by controlling her child's life, I vow to practice love with understanding so I can provide to people what's best for them and without attachment or expectation of what I want for them. To love someone without first understanding them, I inadvertently force my self-love and choices upon them and adversely cause pain and suffering to them. On the other hand, to give in to all wants and needs of a person is foolish and may spoil that person since his/her welfare may not be met by my good intentions and deeds.

III. I PRACTICE:

To cultivate the ability to understand, I practice looking deeply and listening carefully so I can see and hear things with mindfulness. This practice is skillful in penetrating below the surface and seeing into and appreciating the true nature of things. I practice recognizing that when my prejudice, expectation, and emotion are present, my ability to approach the true nature of things is compromised.

I practice loving kindness from inside out, from small to large scale. First I practice loving myself by doing all I can so that my body and my mind are fed the proper nourishments: adequate and healthy foods for my body, character building and wholesome learning, entertainment, habit, and association for my mind. Next I project my love to the people near me with tasks small and easy to accomplish such as being respectful to my parents, comforting a friend in pain, or helping a hurt animal. Then I extend my love to strangers so my love is not attached by acknowledgement and payoff in return. Lastly, I offer my love, at least in kind acts, kind words, and prayer, to people who caused me pain and suffering so that they can find peace and happiness in their lives and in turn spill less anger towards me and others.

I INQUIRE:

1. Prove that the 5 rules of the VBYA's Code of Conduct incorporate the Five Precepts.
2. Explain these terms: pure life, mindfulness and true compassion.
3. Why is it necessary to have both love and understanding? Why is there a need for understanding? Give an example.
4. How do I practice daily this vow: "Bring joy to a person this morning, reduce suffering of a person this afternoon?"
5. Should I catch butterflies and preserve them in my book?
6. Should I fish or hunt?

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE BUDDHIST YOUTH ASSOCIATION

After half of a century of changes, the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association was derived from the Đoàn Thanh Niên Phật Học Đức Dục. Even though the name was changed from Đoàn Thanh Niên Phật Học Đức Dục to Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association, it still carries the same objectives, ideals, and mission--to preserve the Buddhist religion, the Vietnamese culture, and peace on earth.

The Vietnamese Buddhist Association is not independent from other Buddhist organizations. Instead, it is a disciplinary organization belonging to the National Youth Committee of the Cultural and Religious Center of Vietnamese United Buddhist Council which is the governing body and principle aspect of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association. Even though it affiliated with the National Youth Committee, the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association has its own process that is advantageous to the youths, and functions within the law and has its own internal order so no one can interfere. All these independent aspects serve the purpose of attaining the following objectives: Training the youths to be true Buddhists and to make contributions to the society in accordance with Buddhism and Vietnamese traditions are the main goals of the association.

The purpose of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association can be stated as follows:

1. Training the youths to be true Buddhists (Constructing the individual).
2. Training the youths to be productive citizens who will make positive contributions to society (Constructing the society).

I. INDIVIDUAL CONSTRUCTION:

The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association strives to produce individuals with three basic yet exceptional qualities/virtues: Compassion, Wisdom, and Courage. Such individuals use compassion as their propelling force, wisdom as their guiding light, and courage as their leading step toward their reaching goals. These people love others as they love themselves. They are forgiving and capable of distinguishing right from wrong.

They do not mind hardships and are not afraid to undertake any hard work. To improve upon these qualities, a Buddhist needs to practice the Five Morals daily: Diligence, Forgiveness, Purity, Wisdom, and Compassion.

1. **Diligence:** Always progress toward the goals of the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association and Buddhism.
2. **Forgiveness:** Always be happy, forgiving, and joyful; try to bring happiness to all beings and know when to sacrifice for others.
3. **Purity:** Always be pure in body, speech, thought, and action. Always lead a simple and modest life.

4. **Wisdom:** Always have a broad knowledge and an accurate understanding of all subjects.
5. **Compassion:** Always brings happiness in order to reduce miseries for all beings. Know how to use only kind words and gracious gestures to bring peace and happiness to all beings. Know how to conduct charity to help all beings.

II. CONSTRUCTING SOCIETY:

In the larger society, we are only one group in the Vietnamese Community. Together with other organizations, the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association strives to form a community, filled with love and harmony, using love as the connection between people, justice as the standard to create friendship, and hard work to improve society.

Living in America, the Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association need to help others to adapt and acculturate to our new home. Adaptability, in this sense, does not mean to abandon the Vietnamese tradition. Rather, it means we adapt by learning new ways while still preserving our Vietnamese heritage. Acculturate, but still show others the uniqueness of our pure Vietnamese tradition. Do not be condescending towards Americans and other non-Vietnamese people. However, do not duplicate their lifestyles to the extent where we forget our origin and who we are.

We are now more confident in the future of our organization than we were in the past. This organization has clear objectives compatible with the younger generation and with the Vietnamese who love their country and the Buddhist religion. The Vietnamese Buddhist Youth Association will train the younger generation into true Buddhists who will contribute to build this society on a foundation of Buddhist values.

THE EYES OF PRINCE CÂU NA LA

Once upon a time in India, there was a King named Asoka (A Dục). He was a good ruler and everyone lived in harmony. His wife, Queen Liên Hoa, was also a very nice person. Together they had one son whose eyes were beautiful and kind like the Câu Na La bird; therefore, they named him Prince Câu Na La. Not very long after prince Câu Na La's marriage to Ma Đa Vi, Queen Liên Hoa passed away.

The King then remarried to Xích Di who was mean and evil. She was always jealous of the Prince. Her hatred towards the Prince escalated after she had a son because she wanted her son to be the one to succeed the throne.

One day the king became extremely ill. When no medicine man in the country could cure him, Xích Di found the cure and King Asoka regained his health. The king was very grateful for her action. When asked how he could express his gratitude, Queen Xích Di replied, "I want to be the successor to the crown." King Asoka pondered on this request. It was impossible for him to grant it to Xích Di because he promised Queen Liên Hoa before she died to pass the crown to their first born - Prince Câu Na La. He told Xích Di of his promise and said, "I can forsake my royal seat but I cannot go back on my promise." She realized that her scheme was not working. With bad intentions, she asked the King to let her be the ruler of the country just for one day and have all the power. King Asoka still had uneasy feelings, but he granted her the wish anyway.

At that time, in Đắc Xô Thi La City, the corrupt, local government officials were taxing people very high. Not being able to withhold their dissatisfaction any longer, the people of that city stood up to protest against the government. Immediately, a messenger informed the King of this situation. All of this occurred on the day Queen Xích Di was the ruler. She suggested to the King to send Prince Câu Na La to handle the situation. King Asoka hesitated to send the Prince for fear of the danger there, but Prince Câu Na La volunteered to go anyway. Therefore, King Asoka could not interfere. Both King Asoka and Prince Câu Na La did not realize that this was part of Queen Xích Di's scheme to get rid of the prince. She had set everything up from the beginning.

The next morning, Prince Câu Na La said good-bye to his father and wife. He then proceeded on his journey to Đắc Xô Thi La City with his horse Mãng Đa La. He did not realize that on the way to the city he was being followed by an unidentified horseman who was on a deadly mission given by Queen Xích Di. When the Prince arrived at Đắc Lô Thi La City, the people were on their knees along the roadside asking forgiveness from the King. After a few days of investigation, Prince Câu Na La changed the tax laws and appointed new local government officials who would work for the people. Relieved and happy, the people celebrated their improved living condition. While everyone was still celebrating, the horseman arrived and delivered a message to the local government which stated: "Must blind the Prince because he is the enemy of the King and has shamed the country. This must be accomplished immediately and no one is allowed to help the Prince nor could his name be repeated from this time forward."

The local government officials were still in a state of shock when the prince asked for the content of the message. After reading the message, only Prince Câu Na La knew it was not from his father but it was Queen Xích Di's scheme. The mission had to be carried out but no one wanted to do it. Finally, one person stepped forward and used a hot metal rod to stab the Prince in the eyes.

The people were still crying and grieving for him when Prince Câu Na La reminded them of the last part of the message. They all stopped and left reluctantly. The Prince crawled to a big tree where his horse Mãng Đa La stood and said, "Mãng Đa La, you heard the message, now go." The horse hesitated at first but then headed toward the palace with a sad expression on its face.

Since the Prince left the palace, his wife Ma Đa Vi waited night and day for his return. She sensed that something had gone wrong but did not know exactly what it was. One day his horse, Mãng Đa La, came back without the Prince. Ma Đa Vi fainted for she knew something had gone wrong. After giving it some thought, she left quietly the next morning dressed in plain clothing.

King Asoka, like Ma Đa Vi, had waited also for the Prince to come back. After hearing about how the horse had returned alone and that his daughter-in-law had left, he sent a messenger to Đắc Lô Thi La City to investigate. The local officials realized that it was not the King who ordered blinding the Prince's eyes. Therefore, they lied that Prince Câu Na La was on his way back to the palace. The messenger was suspicious but the story was the same from the other villagers. He had to go back and tell the King what he heard.

Meanwhile, after he was reunited with his wife, Prince Câu Na La and Ma Đa Vi had to beg for food on the way back to the palace. When they got there, they were not allowed to enter because of their appearance. Instead, they were given lodgings in the horse stable. The next morning, after awakening, they were singing to one another. At that time, King Asoka, who was missing his children, was in his room facing the direction of Đắc Lô Thi La City when he heard singing coming from the stable. He sent people out to check. They brought in two beggars. The King did not recognize at first that they were his son and daughter-in-law until after checking them out. After he realized who they were, they all cried in joy. Neither wanted to tell him the truth, but after insistence, Ma Đa Vi finally told the King of what had happened and how everything was Queen Xích Di's doings.

Since giving out her orders, Queen Xích Di had been worrying the King would find out. When she had learned that Prince Câu Na La had come back and King Asoka wanted to see her, Queen Xích Di knew of the trouble she was in. Therefore, she went to the King quietly awaiting her punishment; she was to be beheaded.

Prince Câu Na La asked for mercy and told the King he had been thinking about what he had done to deserve such consequence. He realized that in his past life he had done many bad actions: "Long time ago, there was a hunter who trapped fifty mountain goats. Realizing he could not sell or eat all of them at once, he blinded all fifty goats. Now he has to face the consequence," he said. The King, moved by his son's love and understanding, still refused to believe the story. To convince his father, Prince Câu Na La sat down and prayed, "If what I had just told was the truth, let Buddha be my witness and let me have my eyes back." Immediately, he regained his eyesight. The King and Ma Đa Vi were joyous.

King Asoka agreed not to behead Queen Xích Di. Instead, he commanded her to go find a peaceful place to think about her actions and repent.

Later, Prince Câu Na La succeeded the throne and his wife Ma Đa Vi became the Queen.

THREE POISONS: GREED, ANGER, IGNORANCE

I. I HEAR:

Hunters in Asia use the following trick to catch monkeys. They put food bait in a coconut which is fixed to a place and has a small enough hole to fit an open hand of a monkey. When a monkey is drawn to the coconut by the smell of the bait, it slides a hand through the hole to grab the bait and gets stuck to the coconut and thus later gets caught. When the hunter approaches, the trapped monkey is extremely fearful but wouldn't let go its hand of the bait to escape.

What keeps the monkey trapped?

Nothing except its greed and ignorance. To escape, all the monkey has to do is let go of the bait but its mind is full of greed and ignorance to even see that! First, the monkey is trapped by greed and ignorance to let go; later when the hunter approaches, the monkey is further engulfed in fear and anger and so it is completely out of its mind.

Greed, Anger, Ignorance are called the Three Poisons by the Buddha because they will lead to destruction and even death. Overcome by Greed, Anger, and Ignorance, I lose the wisdom and freedom to think, speak, and act.

When my greed is not satisfied, I get angry easily. And when my anger arises, my mind is cloudy and full of mean thoughts, my speech is affected and full of unkind words, my actions are wrong and full of hatred. All these upset the peace of my mind and cause me pain and suffering and I in turn will cause pain and suffering to others with my words and actions.

The Zen Master Sogyal Rinpoche said: "Mankind is well conditioned by and for life and death; conditioned to be angry and jealous; conditioned to swear by our ideas and possessions; conditioned to be depressed, hopeless, longing; conditioned to react predictably to stimulation. We are conditioned to respond naturally with such destructive emotions that no further effort on our part is necessary to inspire them."

From this, I see that my thoughts and actions are conditioned by habits and to transform this bad energy, I must stop the Three Poisons from polluting my mind. I can accomplish that if I practice mindfulness in my thinking, action, and speech.

II. I CONTEMPLATE:

The Three Poisons: Greed, Anger, and Ignorance are the worst danger to our welfare since they bring about jealousy, abuse, hatred, and violence. I see that the world is a better place when I stop taking the Three Poisons and others can stop taking them too.

Why am I greedy? And of what?

I'm greedy of material things such as fame and fortune; I'm also greedy of non-material things such as love and acknowledgement. I'd like to eat good food, to have nice things, to have my wants and needs satisfied, and to be loved and appreciated by everyone. And when these things don't happen, I'm not happy and whoever stands in my way to get them is the target of my hatred. There's no prediction of what I think and do when I'm angry because my mind no longer knows right from wrong.

Why do I get angry?

Many things can make me angry or upset. When my expectation of something or someone goes unfulfilled, I get upset. For example, you are my girlfriend and when we are at a party, you're expected to be right by my side. When you run around to talk to other people in the room and not spending much time with me, you make me angry.

Similarly, when there's a message or a communication to be delivered to me and it fails, I get upset. If you make a mistake, I need to hear your apology to me, and right this moment! The longer you wait to apologize, the more angry I get. When I come home with an award or with something to show off, you need to congratulate me. Your being quiet makes me angry as if you don't care about me!

The third mechanism to cause me upset is when someone or something thwarts my intention. I just spent a lot of money and time to get my car washed and that lousy neighbor of mine had to ruin it all with first his lawn mowing and then his lawn sprinkling!

Whether it's unfulfilled expectation, undelivered communication, or thwarted intention, I get upset when things don't go my way.

Why do I sometimes behave in an ignorant way?

My ignorance can be triggered when I'm greedy or angry. These emotions are so strong that they overpower me and I obey them as if they are the grand masters. I also feel ignorant when I'm overcome by other strong emotions such as prejudice, jealousy, or an internal formation; I also am ignorant when my mind is under the influence of drug or alcohol or perhaps a story I read or a movie I saw.

III. I PRACTICE:

To battle the Three Poisons, I need to practice to re-condition my reflexes. I no longer want to respond to life in an automatic way; rather, I want to think, speak, and act in accordance with Compassion, Wisdom, Perseverance and all the lessons that I learn from the Buddha teaching, from the elders, and from friends and books.

Dealing with Greed:

I know that out of bad habit, I quickly respond to life's stimulation in predictable yet destructive manner. The first step out of this is to allow me more time so I can summon all my trainings to work for me. When I'm about to lose control of my temper, I practice breathing until I regain my composure. Only when my heartbeat and my breath are normal again will I ever risk doing or saying anything in response.

In my regular practice, I contemplate Impermanence so I can see this life is like a dream, this body will not last:

*"I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.
I am of the nature to have ill-health. There is no way to escape having ill-health.
I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death."*

Having seen that, I get less attached to my wants and needs and become less greedy. As I get wiser, I see that spending lots of time and effort worrying about fame and fortune is against my spiritual maturity. I can't take fame and fortune with me when I die and they can't help me with my pain and suffering; if anything, they cause some of my pain and suffering. The only things of lasting value are my peace, inner happiness, and the good karma that will follow me to the following lives.

Dealing with Anger:

I deal with anger by contemplating Compassion.

To the people whose actions are not kind but whose words are kind, I do not pay attention to their unkind actions but to their kind words and transform my anger to the love of their kind words.

To the people whose words are not kind but whose actions are kind, I do not pay attention to their unkind words but to their kind actions and transform my anger to the love of their kind actions.

To the people whose actions and words are not kind but there's a little kindness in their hearts underneath, I do not pay attention to their unkind actions and words but to their kind hearts and transform my anger to the love of their kind hearts.

To the people whose actions and words are not kind and there's nothing kind in their hearts underneath, I do not pay attention to their unkind actions, words, and their hearts but to their suffering and transform my anger to the relief of their suffering. To the robber who came to my house and extorted money and abused me physically, I focus on the mindlessness of his actions, words, and heart and see his pain and suffering. Perhaps he was poisoned with greed, anger, and ignorance; perhaps his family suffers from hunger and poverty; or perhaps his mind was very unstable under the influence of drug and alcohol. The Buddha would love such a person and be willing to help him. The Buddha would want me not to hate him but help him or find someone to help him.

Dealing with Ignorance:

I deal with ignorance by meditating to recognize if my thoughts are influenced by greed, anger, prejudice, or internal formation,. Is my mind free from pollutants such as alcohol, drugs, or consumer products such as movies, magazines, music? These pollutants can affect the way I see and hear things.

I INQUIRE:

1. Explain: It is the greed which traps the monkey.

2. What is the energy of habit? Give an example our automatic response to life's stimulations.
3. Explain: Greed is the cause of some of my pains and sufferings.
4. Could anger be cause of some of my pains and sufferings? Give an example.
5. Explain: When anger arises, it burns out much merits.
6. How do I practice to deal with greed?
7. How do I practice to deal with anger?
8. How do I practice to deal with ignorance?

RIGHT MINDFULNESS

I. I HEAR:

Right Mindfulness is:

- ‘Chánh Niệm’ in Vietnamese and means awareness, putting the right things in our mind, our memory;
- ‘Smriti’ in Sanscrit and means remember or remember to come back to the present moment;
- ‘念’ in Chinese (comprising of ‘Now’ above ‘Mind/Heart’) and means having the mind/heart in the present moment.

Thus I’m mindful when my mind is with this present moment. I’m fully aware of what I’m doing here and now and not pursuing the past nor lost in the future.

II. I CONTEMPLATE:

When I’m not mindful:

When something of significance happened to me, it never seems to stop occupying my mind. I keep reliving its memory over and over again.

When something of significance is about to happen to me, it starts having an affect on me the minute I know of its details. I keep daydreaming about it over and over again.

I recognize and bring my mind back to the present moment:

When my mind is pursuing the past or lost in the future like that, I can’t concentrate on and enjoy the present moment. So while the magic and miracles of life are exposing themselves around me, I miss them all since I’m too busy dwelling in the regrets of the past or the anxiety of the future.

When I’m mindful:

When I’m with you, my mind is with you here and now. I see and hear what you say, what you don’t say; I even comprehend your body language because you have my full attention.

I need to bring my mind back to the present moment and enjoy every moment as if it is my last chance. Only when dwelling in the present moment can I experience peace and happiness and fully contribute to the people around me instead of ignoring them.

When I take a walk, I pay attention to my breath and my feet. I also notice the wind and the wild flowers. I’m really in the business of walking so when a thought comes to my mind, it’s an intrusion and I get rid of it by returning attention to my breath and my feet. I can also recall Buddha’s title to return my mind to the present moment.

III. I PRACTICE:

My ability to return my mind to the present moment depends on

- The ability to recognize that I'm pursuing the past or lost in the future.
- A habit built on concentration.

Recognition:

When I practice sitting or walking meditation, I constantly have to deal with intrusive thoughts about the past or the future. Counting my breath is a way to signal distraction; when I forget a count, I know my mind is not here and now. Resuming the count returns my mind to the present moment.

At the end of the day, I recount all the events and evaluate the level of my mindfulness in thinking, speech, and action. Did I let jealousy, sorrow, hatred shake my concentration? I vow to begin anew and do better tomorrow.

Concentration:

When I concentrate on the business at hand, my mind is also focused and not easily lost. I use a number of methods to help me concentrate.

- ***Reading the gathas or mindfulness verses:***

Waking Up

*Waking up this morning, I smile.
Twenty-four brand new hours are before me.
I vow to live fully in each moment
And to look at all beings with eyes of compassion.*

Following My Breath

*Breathing in, I calm my body.
Breathing out, I smile.
Dwelling in the present moment,
I know this is a wonderful moment.*

Before Eating

*This food is the gift of the whole universe - the Earth, the sky, and much hard work.
May we eat in mindfulness so as to be worthy to receive it.
May we transform our unskillful states of mind and learn to eat with moderation.
May we take only foods that nourish us and prevent illness.
We accept this food to realize the path of understanding and love.*

- ***Meditation:***

Meditation has many merits, one of which helps me concentrate. When I meditate well, my mind is sharp and it detects distraction with ease. And this ability is important to me since it helps sound an alarm that my mind is not here and now.

For concentration training, I prefer sitting meditation. I sit cross-legged with back straight and eyes half closed in a room not too brightly lit. I count my breaths and notice distracting thoughts arising (when I miscount) and leaving (when I return to count.) I do it effortlessly; there's no need for me to hurry, rush, or try too hard. I start with 5 minute session then increase until I can meditate successfully for 30 minutes.

In summary, I vow to practice Right Mindfulness in every waking moment. I know this task is not easy and it is vital to my spiritual maturity. I also know I can do it with peace, freedom, and happiness.

I INQUIRE:

1. What is mindfulness? Give an example. Why is it good?
2. How do I detect un-mindfulness?
3. How do I practice to improve mindfulness in me?