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
• 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
**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

Updated April 2014