

VIET WAKEUP 2015, MISSION STATEMENT

The **International Wake Up Movement**, in its present form, was initiated in 2009 by our teacher Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh and his young monastics; and before that in Vietnam, during the war, as the School of Youth for Social Service. The Wake Up movement has become an international force that inspires young people throughout the world to choose a different path of living. It is not a Buddhist movement but one that is open to all backgrounds and creeds. Please visit wkup.org to learn more about its history and its current activities.

The initial inspiration for **Viet Wake Up** came from the insight that our young Vietnamese Americans are being left behind and not benefiting from the teachings as creatively offered by Thầy and the Plum Village community; and most of them are oblivious to the International Wake Up movement. It also came from our deep love and care for the Vietnamese community as it tries to adapt and evolve in the American culture. As Vietnamese American ourselves, we are filled with deep gratitude to Thầy and the Sangha for having helped each one of us find our roots and discover meaning for our lives. We feel that it is important for us to reach out to these young people and share with them the inspiration of Wake Up and a new form of Buddhism that is more applied and evidence based and less ritualistic and devotional.

As a result, in the Spring of 2014, a group of seven Plum Village monastics from France and centers in the United States traveled around to Toronto, Houston, Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles for a total of six weeks to reach out for the Vietnamese youths in North America, sharing about the Wake Up Movement and offering the mindfulness practice to this sector of the young people. At each state, we had a public talk and a 3-day retreat. The response was overwhelmingly positive. We had 100-200 Vietnamese young adults attended at each retreat. After these retreats, many of them formed Viet Wake Up groups in their own universities and communities. A number of them went to Plum Village and other centers in the US to attend more retreats or to do a one-year internship program.

Viet Wake Up makes special efforts to reach out to Vietnamese youths (17-38 years old) who have non-Buddhist background or who have little or no connection to their Buddhist roots or to their Vietnamese heritage. Our sharing is from a non-religious perspective, emphasizing on the practice of mindfulness as a tool to train the mind. During our tour last year, the guitar was our Dharma instrument, and the song “Living in the Moment” by Jason Mraz was our main scripture. The young adults who attended the retreats discovered the practice to be joyful and pragmatic. Happiness opened their hearts, and they felt more deeply connected to their blood ancestors and spiritual ancestors than ever before. They also touched genuine friendship, brotherhood and sisterhood with those in the retreats. People were holding hands, dancing, hugging each other and crying when it was time to depart.

To continue this wonderful movement, our Viet Wake Up group will be hosting our events in Northern California, Florida, Houston and Toronto during the entire month of March, 2015.

Many friends from Viet Wake Up from local temples, local Sanghas as well as the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA), Vietnamese abroad social networks, and other university Vietnamese student associations are willing to help us research, plan, and organize for this Viet Wake-Up Tour. Our hope is to raise funds to support the traveling expenses of the monastics and to help the young people attend the retreats with minimal costs. The expenses will include: -Plane tickets for the 8 monastics and travel expenses (around 20,000 USD) –Flyers, pamphlets, booklets (up to 1000 USD) –Scholarships for youths with financial needs (variable). Please help us make our dream possible by your generous donation and by sharing with others about this Viet Wake Up Tour 2015. *To you our deep gratitude, Sister Dang Nghiem, Sister Boi Nghiem, Brother Phap Uyen and Brother Phap Khai.*