



GIÁO HỘI PHẬT GIÁO VIỆT NAM THÔNG NHẤT HOA KỲ
VIETNAMESE AMERICAN UNITED BUDDHIST CONGREGATION
HỘI ĐỒNG GIÁO PHẨM

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The Message of Tet

The Year of Snake - 2025

Nam mo Shakyamuni Buddha

Dear Elders, Master Monks and Nuns,

Dear Male and Female believers,

Dear Buddhist Youth Families, Compatriots, ladies and gentlemen,

Tet is a very lovely and affectionate word to our Vietnamese people, especially to those living overseas. In the United States Tet usually falls in the cold winter season. Snow covers the ground and the air is cold. Therefore, the imagination of children, parents and relatives gathering by the fireplace makes the New year days warm, comfortable and peaceful. Tet is also an opportunity for us to remind our children and grandchildren about their true nature. The United States is the country of nearly two hundred ethnic migrants united in a convergent culture. From this meaning, we as Vietnamese people must preserve our unique identity culture to affirm where we come from and also to contribute to this multicultural country.

As we reflect giving and asking for fortune at the beginning of the year is a habitual tradition to us especially the fortune coming from a Buddhist temple. In Buddha tradition the Maitreya Buddha's birthday falls on the first

day of January on the lunar calendar. Bodhisattva Maitreya represents compassion, kindness, benevolence, love, friendship and goodwill. On the first day of the new year we go to the temple to receive the fortune from the Buddha, wishing for the whole year, we will live in peace and joy . Affirming that the first step of the year is a shadow that follows us all year round. This true fortune is wrapped from our own heart helping us overcome all adversities. Let keep this ultimate luck as well as this mindful belief every day and perhaps especially when there is much despair and darkness.

It has been 50 years since the first Vietnamese people came to the United States since 1975, this is a big milestone. Half of a century has passed. Many lessons, many challenges, many pains in the new land could be overwhelming us sometimes but we have distilled the fragments of humanity to create a loving, self-respecting and victorious Vietnamese community. We overcome our self-conscious complex. We always strive to embody, aim forward to the welfare of our family, the future of our children and focus on the well being of this new homeland. Our best gratitude to America is our dedicated hard work and positive energy that we are proud of, the contribution that overcomes many challenges and still continue to thrive and shine. Is there any tear that does not contain the salty taste and the sweetness behind!

Reflecting back to Buddha tradition the temple is a refuge for many villagers. In the United States, Vietnamese people live everywhere. Being aware that some of us could live in unfortunate, unsympathetic and lonely circumstances or just simply displeased conditions like our children cannot speak Vietnamese and so far and so on. In that context, a Buddhist temple in this new homeland is a place to return of expatriate souls and a place to comfort the pain of human destiny. Therefore, over the past fifty years, the temple has not been ashamed of itself and its ancestors. May the Sacred Soul bless us as always.

On the very first day of the New Year, the year of Snake, on behalf of the Council of the Vietnamese American United Buddhist Congregation, I sincerely pray to the Buddha, our ancestors, and the national spirits to bless all of us. We wish to plant and spread the seeds of the Buddha's spirit to everyone and everywhere in our new homeland.

Nam Mo Boddhisattva Maitreya

Buddhist calendar 2568, California, January 1, 2025,

The Head Master Monk of Sangha Council.



Translated by Thien Tuong