

NAMO SAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

GREETINGS TO THE MOST VENERABLES AND ALL MONKS AND NUNS  
A WARM WELCOME TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER RELIGIONS, FRIENDS AND  
SUPPORTERS, COMMUNITY LEADERS, THE MEDIA, AND ALL BUDDHIST FOLLOWERS  
AND MEMBERS OF THE SANGHA  
DEAR RESPECTED VENERABLE PRESIDENT OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE  
DEAR FRIENDS

IN REPRESENTING THE LEADERS OF THE UNIFIED BUDDHIST CHURCH OF AMERICA, I  
AM EXTENDING MY UTMOST RESPECTFUL FEELINGS HERE TODAY IN THE GRAND  
OPENING CEREMONY FOR WELCOMING THE JADE BUDDHA FOR UNIVERSAL PEACE  
TO THIS LOCATION. FIRST AND FOREMOST, WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE  
TOWARD THE BUDDHA WHO HAD OCCASIONED ALL OF US HERE - SO THAT,  
TOGETHER WE SHALL CONTEMPLATE THE WORLD'S SUFFERINGS THAT HAPPEN  
EVERYWHERE IN OUR SOCIETIES TODAY, AND FROM THERE WE SHALL PRAY THAT  
HUMAN KIND KNOWS HOW TO FRESHEN UP THEIR LOVE AND COMPASSION AND USE  
THIS LOVE LIKE COOL WATER TO SPRAY UPON THE FIRE OF HATRED AND  
SELFISHNESS AND ELIMINATE THEM ONE BY ONE OVER TIME.

WE KNOW THAT - FROM GREAT LEADERS OF NATIONS TO BLUE-COLLARED  
WORKERS, EACH ONE OF US NEEDS TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO BRING TRUE PEACE TO  
THIS WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE. BUT UNFORTUNATELY, FROM EONS OF YEARS PAST  
UNTIL NOW, THERE ARE ALWAYS PLENTY OF RESENTMENT, CRIME, TERRORISM, AND  
WARFARE EVERYWHERE. AND THE MAIN REASON WAS THAT PEOPLE ALWAYS THINK  
OF THEMSELVES AND THEIR NEEDS FOREMOST AND BASED THEM ON AMBITION,  
SELFISHNESS, UNRELENTING STUBBORNNESS, OR POLITICAL TENACITY TO STIR UP  
LOTS OF TROUBLES IN SOCIETIES. OUR WORLD FULL OF STRUGGLES AND  
COMPETITION IS SIMILAR TO A GARDEN WITH NOT ENOUGH YOUNG SEEDLINGS BUT  
WITH LOTS OF UPROOTED TREE STUMPS, BECAUSE THE GARDENER IS CUTTING  
THEM DOWN FASTER THAN HE CAN GROW THEM.

ACCORDING TO BUDDHISM, THE WORLD PEACE EXISTS NOT IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS  
TEMPLE WHERE THE JADE BUDDHA SOLEMNLY RESIDES. WE CANNOT GO LOOKING  
FOR PEACE, BUT WE HAVE TO LIVE FOR PEACE RIGHT WHERE WE ARE. IF EACH ONE  
OF US DO NOT HAVE INNER PEACE AND IF WE CARRY HATRED, RESENTMENT,  
SELFISHNESS, EGOTISM, OBSTINACY, AND STEADFASTNESS IN US ALL THE TIME,  
HOW COULD WE FEEL PEACEFUL AND HOW COULD PEACE COME TO OUR WORLD.  
WE PRAY FOR WORLD PEACE – IT IS THE SAME AS PRAYING FOR OURSELVES. WE  
CAN PRACTICE LIVING "PEACE" RIGHT IN OUR FAMILY, OUR WORK PLACE, OUR  
NEIGHBORHOOD, OUR FRIENDS, OUR SOCIETY, AND THAT'S HOW WE CAN  
EXPERIENCE WORLD PEACE. TO LIVE IN PEACE IS AS HARD AS PADDLING A BOAT  
UPSTREAM - BECAUSE THERE ARE VICIOUS TORRENTS ALWAYS READY TO DEFEAT  
AND SINK YOU DOWN. THESE ADVERSITIES ARE YOUR OWN DESIRE, ANTAGONISM,  
EGOCENTRICITY, HATRED, INSENSITIVITY, ETC... WHOEVER CAN GO BEYOND AND  
AVOID THESE NEGATIVITIES CAN CERTAINLY FIND PEACE. BUDDHA WAS GLORIFIED  
AS A PEACEMAKER BECAUSE HE HAD SURPASSED ALL NEGATIVE STRUGGLES OF  
LIFE. LET US ALL HOLD OUR HANDS AND HELP EACH OTHER TO OVERCOME THE  
STRONG CURRENT AND REACH SAFETY. AND LET US THANK OUR BLESSED BUDDHA  
WHO HAD PROVIDED US WITH A SKIFF, AND GUIDED AND DIRECTED US ON A PATH TO  
A PEACEFUL LIFE.

IN THIS SOLEMN AND SACRED MOMENT, LET US ALL TAKE A SHORT SILENT MINUTE TO REFLECT ON THE UNNECESSARY SUFFERING OF INDIVIDUALS FACING WITH WAR TIME, TERRORISM, AND NATURAL CALAMITIES EVERY WHERE IN THE WORLD. LET US ALSO REFLECT AND THINK OF OUR BELOVED VIETNAM AND PRAY FOR THE MANY PEOPLE RECENTLY ENDURE LOSS AND WITHSTAND HARD TIME FROM NUMEROUS INCLEMENT CLIMATE DISASTERS.

WITH THE THOUGHT OF BRINGING PEACE TO THE UNIVERSE, WE GRATEFULLY GIVE A BIG APPLAUD AND APPRECIATION TO MR AND MRS IAN GREEN WHO HAVE MADE POSSIBLE FOR THE JADE BUDDHA TO BE HERE AT THIS SANGHA, TO FURTHER SUBSTANTIATE THE FAITH AND BELIEF OF LOCAL BUDDHISTS, AND HELP COMBINE MORE POWER TOWARD CREATING AND BRINGING PEACE TO THIS UNIVERSE.

WE ALSO WANT TO THANK THE MOST VENERABLE THICH THONG HAI AND THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE IN GIVING US MONKS AND NUNS AND ALL BUDDHISTS LAY MEMBERS THE PRECIOUS OPPORTUNITY TO HONOR AND REVERE THE JADE BUDDHA AND PARTICIPATE IN BRINGING PEACE TO THE UNIVERSE.

WE PRAY THAT ALL OF US HERE AND ALL SENTIENT BEINGS WILL HAVE A FITTINGLY GOOD LIFE, AND THAT WE ALL CAN EXPERIENCE THE WONDERFUL ESSENCE OF PEACE THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES.

NAMO DILIGENT EFFORT BODHISATTVA MAHASATTVA

Translated from Đạo Từ of The Senior Most Venerable Thích Thắng Hoan  
JoAnne Do – Vien Minh