

Bangkok Declaration



The Eighth International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak

May 12-14, 2011 (B.E.2554)

At the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Main Campus,
Wang Noi, Ayutthaya,

The United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok
and Buddhamonthon, Nakhon Pathom Province, Thailand

On 15th December 1999, representatives from 34 countries proposed to the General Assembly of the United Nations that the full moon day in the month of May be recognized and observed at the United Nations Headquarters and its Regional Offices as the United Nations Day of Vesak. The General Assembly so resolved (Agenda Item 174 of Session No. 54) and accordingly the UN Day of Vesak was instituted in the year 2000 with the support of all Buddhist traditions. In pursuance of that Resolution, we, participants from 85 countries and regions, have come together from May 12-14, 2011 (B.E. 2554) to celebrate the UN Day of Vesak in a conference generously hosted by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University of Thailand and graciously supported by the Royal Government of Thailand under the guidance of the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand.

In meetings at the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Main Campus, Wang Noi, Ayutthaya, at the UNESCAP in Bangkok and at Buddhamonthon in Nakhon Pathom Province, we have explored the topic of "Buddhist Virtues in Socio-Economic Development" consolidating mutual understanding and cooperation between organizations and individuals from all Buddhist traditions. At the conclusion of our meeting we have unanimously resolved as follows:

1. In order to mark the 2600th anniversary of Gautama the Buddha's Full Enlightenment, establishing a world religion serving humanity: we resolve to facilitate and promote academic, cultural and religious activities in a year long Sambuddha Jayanti at both national and international levels;
2. In honour of the 84th Birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand: we promote awareness of His Majesty's exemplary leadership, vision and love for the people as evidenced, in some four thousand royal development projects and we encourage people of all walks of life to follow His example;
3. Further, in commemorating His Majesty the King's auspicious 84th Birthday; we support the convening of the Second International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU) conference in December 2011/2554;
4. To encourage among both the monastics and the laity application of the Buddha's message on social, economic, political and religious leadership, and to educate corporate leadership in the successful Buddhist economic strategies such as the Sufficiency Economic Philosophy of His Majesty the King of Thailand; we urge the business world to give priority to produce essential goods and services over non-essential consumer goods;
5. Acknowledging the interconnectedness of this Planet in that the social and economic problems of one nation are no longer limited to its boundaries but instead affect many nations; we promote a global spirituality that can guide humanity in this critical moment by cultivating Buddhist ethical, meditative and wisdom practices in daily life;
6. Mindful of the urgent need for mankind to preserve sustainable social, economic and natural environments: we reaffirm an urgent need for a balance, based on the Middle Path, between scientific, technological and material progress on the one hand and, on the other, cultural, moral and spiritual advancement;

7. In appreciation of the social, family, economic, religious and political problems confronting our planet and species, and with the belief in humanity's potentials to overcome those challenges: we reaffirm the values of compassion, kindness, love, generosity, tolerance, understanding and trust; for the promotion of mindful speech and reconciliation which build harmony and peace;

8. Observing the dimensions of a harmonious society and calling on the great resources of the Buddha's teachings on mental health, meta-psychological view as well as sociology to improve the society: we pledge to foster friendliness, a culture of mutual respect and cooperation, based on an understanding of interdependence, incorporating the Buddhist virtues of mindfulness in production and consumption;

9. Offering our utmost sympathy to the recent victims of natural disasters such as the Tsunami in Japan, the earth quake in New Zealand and floods and cyclones in many other parts of the World, in consideration of the shared environment of this Planet; being unintentionally damaged placing civilization at risk: we direct that the global Buddhist community institute a sufficient effort to help humanity be aware of pollution, acid rain, the greenhouse effect, the ozone hole, and other environmental challenges, so to turn back from endangering life on Earth; we pledge to work with governments, NGOs and mass media in developing educational initiatives for environmental preservation;

10. Urging the international community and its governments to work towards the elimination of poverty and economic injustices, promoting human solidarity; and, sharing fundamental human values taught by the Lord Buddha; we seek to establish an awakening world where all people are afforded basic human rights and enjoy life and happiness;

11. In order to commemorate the 2600th Anniversary of the Buddha's Full Enlightenment we seek the completion, publication and free and wide distribution of a body of Common Buddhist Texts (CBT) from Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions fostering understanding of Buddhist principles and practices; to include the completion of linking over thirty electronic resources for all the major Buddhist canons into a single online electronic Union Catalogue of Buddhist Texts (UCBT) allowing users to identify all translations available;

12. Further, marking the 2600th Anniversary of the Buddha's Full Enlightenment and acknowledging the important and positive roles they have played: we appeal to relevant governments as well as the UNESCO to put more effort into excavating new Buddhist sites, preserving those already opened, providing proper protections; and, enhancing support services at pilgrimage locations;

13. In order to protect the cultural and environmental integrity of two of the World Heritage sites, Lumbini, the birth place of the Buddha, and Bodh Gaya, where he attained Full Enlightenment: we emphasize the serious concerns of the Buddhist communities worldwide and implore the authorities concerned to prevent further harmful effects of air pollution around those sacred places for the future of humanity.

Done as the Declaration of the Eighth International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak, this 14th Day of May 2011 (B.E. 2554).