

Congratulatory Message for the 10th United Nations Day of Vesak

By His Holiness Most Venerable Kojun Handa

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I offer my sincere congratulations on the 10th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations and International Buddhist Conference, which celebrate the three blessed events of Lord Buddha, and extend my respectful congratulations to His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara on the 100th Birthday Anniversary.

I also express my profound gratitude and thankfulness to Thai Government and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University for their great efforts to hold these celebrations at UN Convention Center Bangkok.

I would like you to let me say a few words related to this year's theme, 'Education and Global Citizenship: A Buddhist Perspective'.

There are a huge number of children in the world who are deprived of educational opportunities because of poverty. I feel deep sorrow for this fact, for it is through education that human beings can know about the world and sustain their dignity. Buddhists should make every effort to improve this situation as soon as possible.

Nowadays, we can instantly share information and communicate with each other thanks to development of transportation and remarkable progress of communication means. In this sense, we can say we are all global citizens, and it is no wonder that there are various kinds of definitions of what they are. In my opinion, global citizens are 'those who agree that all the people in the world have the right to co-exist peacefully'.

In reality, some nations assert their strong presence by atomic weapons, which makes us easily anticipate the end of the world though no one on the earth wants such tragedy.

When we Buddhists talk about perspective of the future, we have to make it clear that we should not pass 'the risk that the earth may collapse' to the next generation.

The societies of the times when Lord Buddha lived were small. However, they grew larger and larger until they became nations as they are today. In this reality, what is important is, I am sure, 'to help each other and live together'.

Its basis is 'compassion' of Buddhism. I firmly believe that, in order to urge the present national ego and terrorism to reflect and straighten themselves up, we Buddhists should practice 'helping each other and living together'

I heartily hope that these celebrations can help propagate Buddha's wisdom to the world.