



## **ESTONIAN NYINGMA**

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### Welcoming Speech

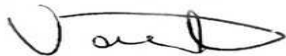
It is a great honor for me to come to Thailand as the representative of Estonian Nyingma. Firstly I would humbly like to address with great honor your Holinesses, Most Venerable Members of the Sangha, Most Venerable Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University Mr. Executive Secretary, All the Excellences' and Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

For those of you that know me and for those that don't, my name is Velo Vaartnou. I am not here to preach or to dictate, I am a simple man who is about to share with you a most profound, spiritual and scientific phenomena. This phenomenon is the teachings of Buddha. I am delighted to be here on the United Nations Day of Vesak .Vesak is a celebration that gives us the opportunity to reflect, and to see, the true value and nature of our Buddha. It marks the birth, enlightenment and passing of the Lord Buddha. It is a well-known fact that there is a long history of Brotherhood between the Buddhists in Thailand and Estonia. About 100 years ago, Monk Karl Tõnisson or Karlis Tennisons from Estonia was the first person who went to Buriatya to study Buddha's Teachings in monasteries, and his purpose was to establish a Buddhist tradition in Estonia. He (Karlis Tennisons) also became well-known as 'The First Buddhist Priest' on the Baltic Coast. When our first Estonian monk appeared into this world from his mother's womb coincidentally in the same year in Panadura, in Sri Lanka a disputation took place where monk Mohottivatte Gunananda won Christian missionary David de Silva and restored the Theravada Tradition. The Estonian monk Karl Tõnisson (Karlis Tennisons) was the first western Buddhist in a 100 years who established Buddhist Congregations in Estonia, Latvia, Lituvenia, and some even in Russia where Buddhism has existed for many centuries. He has been known as many names from Brother Vahindra or Barefooted Tõnisson, Baltic Mahatma to Dharmaduta. Estonian Buddhist roots originate from Buriatia and Estonian Buddhist history has equally its own valuable historical connection to Thailand . In Bangkok these two Estonian monks spend almost two decades in a Royal Monastery between 1932 to 1949. Unfortunately this is where their human lives came to an end and both passed away in old age later in Burma. That's a history of Buddhism in Estonia and such are the ties between Estonia and Thailand. These two Estonian monks spent 17 years in Bangkok and sadly not so much is known about their holy lives here in Thailand . As Vesak celebration commences many Buddhist from different parts of the world gather together, Showing us how Buddha's teaching has reached far and wide globally of becoming a peaceful and spiritual way of life. Many monks, nuns, teachers, gurus, lamas, have for decades spread these holy teachings around the globe. Teaching people to understand the Buddha's valuable ways and thanks to their dedication and effort in traditional teachings about 'The Four Noble Truths' have become infamous amongst Buddhism. In every corner on earth .The first geographical location where Buddhism was born was India; there it blossomed as lotus flower as a symbol of Enlightenment , next ideological period and spread to a wider geographical area where Shakyamuni ideas and path to Enlightenment became well-known within Asia and resulted in the construction of many different schools and ideas

all based on Buddha's teaching. The third period started approximately a century ago and resulted of the expansion of Buddhist ideas. We can see this today by the number of people from all over the world that gathered together to celebrate a United Nations Day of Vesak. Buddhism is often called Indian Buddhism or Asian Buddhism in this new world we call it World Buddhism. This gathering today pays homage to the three refuges or jewels of the: Buddha Dharma Sangha

This is where I would like to pay my sincerity to everyone here today, for attending and most of all listening. I would like to pay my humble respects to all venerable members of the Sangha and participants that have participated from countries all around the world today. The teachings of the Buddha are timeless and remain as relevant as ever. I would like to thank the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University and the Organising Committee, for their excellent preparations. I wish the celebration of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2011 every success, and hope that your endeavors will serve to further spread the Buddha's message of peace and compassion to all of mankind.

I wish you, the Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis of the Sangha, peace, happiness and the accomplishment of your Buddhist duties. In hope I wish for the representatives of Local, State and Federal Governments, the members of Community Associations, the Ethnic Communities, our friends and distinguished guests happiness, understanding, empathy and harmony to be amongst us all. I pray that the wishes of our countrymen and women, the Buddhist disciples show a path of truth, and that you always have peace, happiness and prosperity.



Vello Väärtnõu

Head of Estonian Nyingma