

Most Venerable Sirs of the Maha Sangha,
Distinguished Guests and Lay Devotees,

It is a great pleasure to have been invited to participate in the Wesak Celebrations held in the Great Kingdom of Thailand. First of all, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all the benevolent people who are responsible for organizing this great event and who extended an invitation to me to take part in the Celebrations.

I wish the protection of the Noble Triple Gem for the great Royal Buddhist leader of Thailand His Majesty the King of Thailand and his subjects.

Brothers and Sisters,

It is our greatest duty to convey our gratitude to the late honourable former Minister of Foreign Affairs Laxman Kadiragamar of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

This Wesak day was declared as an international day by the United Nations according to the proposal of him in the year 1998.

This year's Wesak is of great significance to Buddhists in the entire World, because this year marks the 2600th anniversary of the attainment of the enlightenment by our greatest teacher, the Buddha Gautama. Not only that, but also the first sermon known as 'Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta' was delivered to the five ascetics at Isipattana Deer Park. Where Kondanna upon hearing it, attained Arahathood which established the Bhikkhu order completing the three pillars of Buddhism, namely the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Therefore, today we make a strong resolution to pay homage to the Buddha.

Brothers and Sisters,

The main objective of this gathering is to share each other's views and to take appropriate decision to preserve Buddhism and to bring unity among all.

We have to live together. We have to understand each other. The world is ever coming closer together. We can now travel in twenty-four hours distances which we could not have done in a month, a few years ago.

The world today is very close together. We are equal. Ty his doctrine of Samanatmata the Buddha teaches the true equality of man in an age when man is struggling to cast off the fetters of man made and unjust inequalities.

It is important that all Delegates, Observers and guests who are gathered here to follow the teachings of Lord Buddha. It is our noble responsibility to propagate the teaching of the Buddha with the View to develop compassion, unity, harmony and peace.

Brothers and Sisters,

The West, over the last three centuries, even during the time their ideals and philosophies influenced the entire world. The West has also made a significant contribution to the propagation of Buddhism. In other words, the West has already undertaken the task of taking the Buddha Dhamma. But Asia, the cradle of Buddhism, is infected with a Virus of unethical religious conversions. Religious missionaries and fundamentalists who have failed in their own lands are engaged in unethically converting the Buddhists in most parts of the Asian region, into their religions. This is an insult to humanity. This is a disgraceful act, condemned by the civilized world. We must take measures to prevent these activities. If not, we ar edoing a great injustice to our own people and we would one day regret.

Brothers and Sisters,

Today we are living in the most important period of human history at the period when modern Buddhist civilization is crumbling and we are faced with the task of building a new civilization to take its place. For this purpose we should propagate Dhamma.

Buddhism is able to give the religious message once again to a dark and doubting world, as the spirit of the Dhamma is in full accord with the spirit of the New Age.

Thank you.

The Most Venerable Davuldena Gnanissara Maha Nayaka Thera
(Supreme Patriarch of the Sri Lanka Amaraputa Nikaya)
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