



Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies

a project of The Society for the Wider Understanding of the Buddhist Tradition

Wolfson College, Linton Road Oxford OX2 6UD

01865 274 098

www.ocbs.org

Happy and Peaceful Vesak to All!

As we all know, the United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) celebrations originate from the recognition of Vesak by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1999. Since the year 2000, the day of Vesak is annually celebrated at the UN headquarters in New York and other UN regional offices.

Outside the diplomatic circles, the UNDV begins to be celebrated from 2005 at the UN regional headquarters for Asia and Pacific in Bangkok, thanks to the visionary initiative of the Most Venerable Prof. Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn, Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU). This has been made possible with the blessing from the Supreme Sangha Council and the support from the successive royal governments of Thailand. So far, except in 2008 when the UNDV was held in Hanoi and supported by the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the UNDV has taken place in Thailand. This is an evidence of the strong faith in the Buddha and the remarkable generosity of the Thai people under the able leadership of His Majesty the King.

Every year, Buddhist communities from the five continents gather in Bangkok, not just to celebrate the great day but also to engage in beneficial dialogues related to contemporary issues. As a result, networking among Buddhists in the world has never been better; one of the positive outcomes of our collective efforts has been the collaboration between Buddhist higher educational institutions, culminated in the formation during the 2007 UNDV of the International Association of Buddhist Universities (www.iabu.org). The IABU represents some eighty university and colleges from 22 nations.

It has been a great privilege for me to have served as the Secretary General of the UNDV for three and vice chairman for one of the past seven years. and it is heartening to see, under the competent leadership of the Most Venerable Rector of MCU, that the IABU retains the crucial link with the UNDV and generous support from Thailand. The IABU is proud to be given the responsibility to oversee the academic aspect of the UNDV since 2009.

The UNDV has created a common platform for Buddhist leaders and scholars, which I have no doubt, has been and will be for the great benefit of peace within the Buddhist world and beyond.

Venerable Dr. Khammai Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)

Executive Secretary, the IABU &

Trustee & Research fellow, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies,

University of Oxford

Founder: Professor RF Gombrich; Academic Director: Professor VA Wallace; Executive Director Mr GM Bamford
Charity number: 1114960

The OCBS, a Recognised Independent Centre of Oxford University.

is a project of the Society for the Wider Understanding of the Buddhist Tradition (So-Wide)

*Patrons: HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand; HH the Dalai Lama; His Majesty the 5th Druk Gyalpo
Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck of Bhutan; Mr Toshhide Numata, President of the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai*

Charity number: 1104059

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