



Ambassador of Hungary
Bangkok

It is a honour and privilege to greet the thrice sacred United Nations Day of Vesak, celebrating the Birth, Enlightenment and Passing away of the Sakyamuni Buddha, organized by the prestigious Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University of Thailand (MCU).

Celebrating the UN Day of Vesak for the 8th consecutive year demonstrates an establishing tradition reflecting the important role played by Buddhism in all over the world in the spiritual life of the society as well as the strengthening of the relationship among different Buddhist traditions, countries, individuals and universities. In our rapidly changing world and in the permanent process of facing new challenges, Buddhism offers core and deep rooted moral and human values for people aspiring for inner peace and stability.

When celebrating Vesak Day, tribute should be paid to the hospitality of the people and Government of the Kingdom of Thailand and to the Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University of Thailand under the competent leadership of the most venerable Rector Prof. Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn that made possible the celebration of the Day of Vesak not only this year, but several times in the past as well. As an institution for higher education of Buddhist monks, novices and laypeople, the MCU sustains an ancient tradition, in the pursuit of academic excellence, but at the same time, it continually updates its curriculum in order to keep up with emerging new ideas and modern technology.

Hungary attaches a great importance to the freedom of religion, and that basic principle is enshrined in its Fundamental Law and particularly in the „Law on the Right to Freedom of Conscience and Religion and on the Status of Churches, Religions and Religious Communities” adopted by the Hungarian Parliament last April, recognizing and confirming among others the official status of five Buddhist communities in Hungary.

The popularity and influence of the Buddhism has been growing in Hungary for the last twenty years. Just to name an example, the main mission of the Budapest based Dharma Gate Buddhist College is to open the metaphorical gate of the Dharma to the Hungarian public and to help preserve and propagate the living tradition in Europe. The College provides an opportunity for the study of all Buddhist Schools, their doctrines and histories, languages and practices and aims at discovering a common spiritual background of all Buddhist traditions. In 2010 the Dharma Gate Buddhist College joined MCU's rank of affiliated institutes and in October 2011 the two institutions signed an agreement about setting up an European Buddhist Training Centre in Budapest to enable MCU to run its international doctoral programme in Buddhist Studies in the European Union.

I am pleased to note the development of this kind of relations between the higher education institutions of our two countries that will certainly contribute to the mutual respect and better understanding between our peoples. The UN Day of Vesak in a way has the same mission, and I wish a successful accomplishment of this mission to all distinguished participants of this year celebration.

Dénes Tomaj