



Winchester Centre of Religions for Reconciliation and Peace
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**The 9th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations 2012/B.E 2555
Congratulatory message from the Winchester Centre of Religions for
Reconciliation and Peace**

The thrice sacred day of Vesak celebrating the birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha is a special time for Buddhists all over the world, and an opportunity to remember and reflect on the wisdom and teachings of the Buddha.

Given the turbulent events which have occurred throughout the world over the last year again great credit must go to the organisers for ensuring that the theme for the 2012 celebrations, 'The Buddha's Enlightenment for the Well-Being of Humanity', is highly relevant and thought provoking. Even a cursory glance at our daily newspapers and television brings home to us the horrific violence, oppression, injustice and poverty that many human beings experience on a daily basis. Whilst most religions possess rich resources for enhancing the well-being of humanity, the wisdom and knowledge required for this kind of difficult and vital work is very clearly exemplified in the Buddha's life and teachings. On a personal level cultivating the positive qualities espoused by the Buddha such as kindness, compassion, love and selflessness can bring about a profound change in the way we see and treat our fellow human beings. On a political level decisions and policies founded on a more compassionate, empathetic philosophy can ultimately lead to a more caring and peaceful world. The life, achievements and teachings of the Buddha should be seen as a great inspiration to us all, and the Buddha as an embodiment of the virtues required for alleviating violence and injustice and building peace and security throughout the world.

On this the 9th International Celebration on the Occasion of United Nations Day of Vesak 2012/2555 I would like to extend my sincere thanks and warm congratulations to the International Council for Day of Vesak (ICDV), the Royal Thai Government, and particularly to everyone at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU) for their hard work in making this such an excellent occasion, and for their great kindness and hospitality.

On this day let Buddhists throughout the world pledge to work tirelessly to overcome suffering and violence wherever it exists in the world today.

In loving kindness,

Dr Mark Owen
Director – Winchester Centre of Religions for Reconciliation and Peace