

Congratulatory Message for the 9th United Nations Day of Vesak

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I offer my sincere congratulations on the 9th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations and International Buddhist Conference, which celebrate the three blessed events of Lord Buddha, held in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalay University and the United Nations Conference Center.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt sympathy to the people in Thailand who suffered from the massive floods last year. I heard that they caused extensive damage to 58 provinces in Thailand from Chiang Mai in the north to Bangkok in the middle. In Japan, the deep scars caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake haven't been healed yet. I do re-realize that no matter how much progress our civilization may make, nobody can escape from Shogyo Mujo, the impermanence of all things, which makes it all the more important to have affection toward all living things and always value our families and neighbors.

The main theme of this year is 'The Buddha's Enlightenment for the Well-being of Humanity.' Three sacred events happened in Buddha's life, that is, his birth, his enlightenment, and his passing away. I think that, among them, his enlightenment is particularly meaningful and sacred to us Buddhists.

Under a Bodhi tree in Gaya village, Buddha entered Samadhi with a firm resolution not to leave there alive without achieving enlightenment, dismissed demons' interference, and finally achieved his enlightenment. This was the brightest day in the history of humanity, for we have had the wisdom to live in happiness since then.

However, to our great grief, there are still a great number of people in the world who are fighting and hurting each other driven by selfish earthly desires or three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance.

Moreover, global warming and environmental pollution are being magnified and worsened in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The earth is often compared to a space ship. It can be said that not only humanity but also all plants and animals are crossing the vast universe together on the ship named the earth. No living things can live away from the earth. The earth has been protecting our lives. We have to immediately stop such a stupid act as to destroy the earth, our guardian, driven by human desires or egoism. For this purpose, we must practice the teachings taught to us by Buddha such as 'middle path', 'contentment with a little', and 'co-existence'.

I heartily hope that this celebration can help propagate Buddha's wisdom to the world.