

Concluding Statement

By

Prof. Dr. Phra Dharmakosajarn

Rector, MCU

29th May 2007

UNCC, Bangkok

Your Holiness, Your Excellencies, Respected Members of the Sangha, and Friends in the Dhamma,

We have been gathered for four memorable days at this, the Fourth International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak 2007, held in conjunction with the Celebrations on the Auspicious Occasion of H.M. the King's 80th Birthday Anniversary.

This meeting has become a historical event in that it has been attended by 5,258 participants from 61 countries and regions. Among these participants about 1,400 have come from

overseas and the rest are local participants. Therefore it is the biggest international Buddhist gathering of the year.

After 4 days of deliberation, we have made great achievement which will become a milestone in Buddhist history.

Our achievements are recorded in the Bangkok Declaration which I will read to you as follows.

Bangkok Declaration
The Fourth International Buddhist Conference
on The United Nations Day of Vesak
May 26- 29, 2007 (B.E.2550)
At Buddhamonthon, Nakhon Pathom and
The United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand

We, the participants from 61 countries and regions of the International Buddhist Conference on the United Nations Day of Vesak at Buddhamonthon, Nakhon Pathom and at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok from May 26-29, 2007 (B.E. 2550), gratefully acknowledging that the Conference has been generously supported by the Royal Government of Thailand and the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand when the entire Kingdom of Thailand is joyfully celebrating the 80th Auspicious Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, have unanimously resolved the following:

With full reference to the resolution approved on 15th December 1999 at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Session No. 54, Agenda Item 174, a joint proposal by representatives from 34 countries, that Vesak, which falls on the Full Moon day in the month of May, be internationally recognized and observed at the United Nations Headquarters and its Regional Offices from the Year 2000 onwards, the United Nations Day of Vesak will be jointly celebrated by all Buddhist traditions;

Furthermore, to consolidate mutual understanding and cooperation amongst all Buddhist traditions, organizations and individuals through ongoing dialogue between Buddhist leaders and scholars,

It has been decided to disseminate the following message of peace based on the Buddha's teaching of wisdom and compassion.

Having explored the issues concerning Buddhism and the World, the Conference has agreed upon the following:

- (1) to further enhance cooperation between all schools of Buddhism to strengthen unity and solidarity among Buddhists;
- (2) to acknowledge the generosity of and the crucial role played by the Kingdom of Thailand in hosting the United Nations Day of Vesak in the past four years, and to approve and support the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as the host for 2008;
- (3) to re-affirm Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University as the permanent venue of the International Secretariat for the International Organizing Committee for the United Nations Day of Vesak;
- (4) to promote through Buddhist principles socially engaged actions and urge the Buddhist leaders to take a leading role on moral and ethical issues, in particular, on social justice, respect equal opportunities, good governance and transparency;
- (5) to acknowledge the inspiration that many countries and regions, and in particular, the Buddhist world and the UNDP, have towards His Majesty the King of Thailand on good governance and development throughout His Reign over sixty years;
- (6) to support the 2nd World Buddhist Forum to be held in China in 2008;
- (7) to continue the electronic Buddhist library project, started initially last year as a partnership between Buddha Dharma Education and BuddhaNet and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, and to record the strong interest in the project by the many Buddhist Higher Institutions present at this conference;
- (8) to continue the project of compiling an informed work on Buddhism to be freely distributed to hotels worldwide;
- (9) to reiterate the appeal to all parties, the United Nations, UNESCO and concerned governments and agencies to preserve both the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Buddhists, and to encourage visit to Buddhist holy sites as part of their revitalization;
- (10) to record the historic formation at this conference and support the function and growth in every means possible of the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU), comprising over eighty Buddhist Higher Education Institutions from twenty-two countries and regions;

- (11) to hold the 2nd symposium of the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU) to be hosted by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in 2008 in Bangkok and to rejoice in the generosity of the same university for undertaking to fund, at least for one year, the International Secretariat of the IABU; and
- (12) to highlight at every level the effective and scientific values of Buddhist meditation in human development, and to encourage both traditional means and modern technology in dissemination of the teaching of the Buddha, and to also raise awareness of on using the Buddha images.

Dated: May 29th 2007/2550.

Our success is a result of support given to us by various persons and organizations of to whom I would like to express my vote of thanks.

First of all, we are grateful for the presence of Her Royal Highness, Princess Siriwannawari Narirat, at the Opening Ceremony at Phutthamonthon, on behalf of the Crown Prince, and to Her Royal Highness, Princess Somsawali, for presiding over the chanting ceremony at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

We are thankful to the Prime Minister of Thailand, H.E. Surayud Chulanont, for delivering his speech here.

We are also very fortunate in having His Holiness Somdet Phra Phutthachan, the President of the Executive Committee for the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, for presiding over both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

I would like to thank H.E. Mr. Kim Haksu, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP for allowing us to use the UN Conference Center and delivering his welcome address.

The preparations for this Conference took many months to complete. My staffs in MCU have been working very hard for the success of the Conference. All my staffs of MCU and volunteers deserve our special thanks. To express your appreciation, please give them a big applause.

My special thanks go to all the members International Organizing Committee (IOC), who have all worked hard, day and night, throughout the entire meeting for the sake of Buddhism. Without them, we could never have achieved the result we have.

Friends in the Dhamma,

After we have celebrated the United Nations Day of Vesak here in Thailand for the last 3 years, we have made a brand-name of UN Day of Vesak. It has become a common platform of Buddhist Unity where Buddhist leaders and scholars come here to celebrate the Buddha's threefold sacred event and to work hard together. I am certain that the spirit of a Buddhist unity will continue to grow in the years to come. We thank to Vietnam Government and the Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam for being the host of next year Vesak celebrations.

We have established the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU) as a worldwide network of all Buddhist universities and colleges. I am personally thankful to founding members for selecting MCU to be its headquarters.

For the detail of the International Association of Buddhist Universities, may I now invite Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami as the Executive Secretary of the Association to take the floor and present a brief report on this matter.