

"Speech at the 19th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebration"

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Association of China

Date: May 19th, 2024

Location: Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU),

Ayuthaya, Thailand

Honorable Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Bhramapundit, Chairman of the ICDV and Respected Former Rector of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand; distinguished guests and delegates:

We are today in Bangkok, Thailand, for the grand opening of the 19th United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) Celebration, an important annual event for Buddhists all around the world. On behalf of the Buddhist Association of China, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations on the successful convening of this conference. We deeply appreciate the

unwavering efforts made by the Thai government and MCU in organizing this event. What's more, we would like to convey our sincere greetings and best wishes to His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand; the Thai people; His Holiness Somdet Phra Ariyavongsagatayana, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand; the Thai Sangha; President Phra Brahmpundit; and all the esteemed guests and representatives attending this event.

The theme of this year's event is "The Buddhist Way of Building Trust and Solidarity." People today are relying more and more on material goods, technology, and information; in contrast, their power for self-knowledge and self-awareness is weakening. Secularization erodes the pursuit of faith. There seems to be an irreconcilable divide between faith and technology, the transcendent and the secular, and the spiritual and the material. Lack of initiative for spiritual awakening means that people nowadays have to keep up with the pace of the fast-changing world— which is a race without an end.

Basically, the development and progress of human society cannot be achieved without the pursuit of spiritual peace and liberation. Everyone seeks happiness, but what is the ultimate happiness? Right mindfulness, the first of the Buddhist Eightfold Path, is the answer. From the perspective of our

Buddhist, only the joy derived from practicing meditation, compassion, and wisdom is the ultimate happiness in the world. This means that through inner awakening, the attainment of prajna wisdom, and the practice of altruism, we Buddhists can achieve Chan bliss and Dharma joy at a personal level and help all humanity achieve spiritual enlightenment.

Theravada Buddhism teaches followers to elevate their lives, starting from the exploration and training of their minds. Followers are encouraged to reveal the inherent purity of their minds and dwell in unconditioned phenomena, which will lead to the attainment of liberation. Chinese Chan Buddhism keeps reminding us, "The nature of Bodhi is inherently pure. With Bodhi mind, one can attain Buddhahood right away." Therefore, Buddhism promotes spiritual awakening through the practice of right mindfulness. The practitioners should understand their own mind, behold the Buddha-nature within themselves, and penetrate the reality of the universe. The wisdom of the Buddha illuminates the darkness in the minds of sentient beings and bring light to this world.

Right mindfulness is the path of enlightenment pursued by all Buddhists worldwide. Such pursuit of the reality of life and the universe is the everlasting beacon of innate nature, pointing

the right way for human development. Because Buddhism recognizes the reality of this world, Buddhist practitioners are encouraged to develop “altruistic” aspiration: Ask not for their own happiness but wish everyone to be rid of suffering. With this spirit of altruism, Buddhists constantly connect with sentient beings through various skillful means. They spread the Dharma to enhance physical and mental health of human beings, improve interpersonal relationships and social harmony, promote national prosperity and development, and advance world peace.

Finally, I wish this conference a great success! May it have all the causes and conditions for success! May all merits be achieved!