



BOEDDHISTISCHE UNIE BELGIË  
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Rue Capouillet 35 – 1060 Brussels - Belgium

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## **Vesak Goodwill Message**

Eminencies, Venerables, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

On this auspicious occasion of the commemoration of Lord Buddha Shakyamuni's appearance in this world, his Enlightenment and his Parinirvana, on behalf of the Buddhist Union of Belgium and of the European Buddhist Union, I am extremely pleased to be able to express wishes for this 19<sup>th</sup> United Nations Day of Vesak Celebration 2024. My main wish is that this exceptional event may concretely contribute to lasting peace between the peoples of this earth. Thus, I make strong wishing prayers for the governments of all nations to find the means to avoid conflicts with each other, to peacefully resolve all long-standing disagreements between them, to find the means of cooperating in order to create the conditions for their citizens to live in peace, harmony and prosperity for all.

Since it's recognition in 1999 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, I sincerely thank the organizers of this highly auspicious Vesak celebration to create on a yearly basis the conditions for so many eminent representatives of both the Pali traditions and the Sanskrit traditions to meet, to exchange and to work together in order to preserve the precious teachings of the Buddha, to make the voice of Buddhism being heard all over the world and to contribute in this way to promote world peace. The presence at the opening ceremony of His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand and of so many eminent venerable scholars and Dharma practitioners of different Buddhist countries is a sign that the teaching of Lord Buddha is still flourishing and will continue to do so in many parts of this world.

The coronavirus pandemic has not only highlighted the fragility of life on our planet, but it also demonstrated the interdependence and interconnectedness of everything, of all phenomena, which is one of the fundamental characteristics of this world, as underlined by the teachings of Lord Buddha. The unpredictable armed conflicts that have followed the pandemic in different regions of the globe have created new divisions and uncertainty within the delicate balance between the big world powers, with the danger of the United Nations being less united and more and more divided. Therefore, such initiatives as the United Nations Vesak Celebration are increasingly relevant in contributing to preserving world peace and harmony.

I also make wishing prayers that the three panel discussions of this year's Vesak celebration, taking place at the famous and oldest Buddhist University of Thailand in Ayutthaya, will produce concrete and lasting results. The topic of the first panel on applying Buddhist mindfulness for health and wellbeing is indeed essential, not only after the lessons learned from the Covid pandemic, but also through the solutions given by Buddhist meditation methods regarding the new sicknesses of modern society such as burnouts, depressions, and various addictions. The second panel discussion on building trust, global partnership and

solidarity between all Buddhist traditions is crucial in preserving the message of the Buddha and making it available to all who are in search of spiritual development, without trying to convert anybody, without proselytism. The third panel discussion about the relevance of Buddhist education for creating harmonious society is fundamental because harmony can only be reached if the teachings on such Buddhist values as loving kindness, right conduct, compassion, and wisdom are passed over to the younger generations.

It is also extremely symbolically auspicious within the context of the role of Buddhism in world peace that the second day of the United Nations Vesak is celebrated at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, seat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Not only will during this extraordinary event the Prime Minister of Thailand give a speech, moreover, the Opening ceremony will be honoured by the presence of His Majesty the King of Thailand.

On behalf of the over five million European Buddhists, I would like to sincerely thank the organizers of this exceptional 19<sup>th</sup> United Nations Vesak Day Celebration, as well as the Sangha and all the eminent speakers. Many thanks to the audience for your attention and your patience.



Carlo Luyckx  
President of the Buddhist Union of Belgium  
Vice-president of the European Buddhist Union