

**Oxford  
UK**

**12<sup>th</sup> May, 2024**

**Venerable Sirs, Distinguished Guests and Friends,**

It is a great pleasure to be here once more in Bangkok for the United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations, and on this occasion to be able to bring greetings and best wishes from the UK.

It seems particularly fitting at the present time to reaffirm the possibility for different nations and their peoples to be united – in our case, through our shared experience, understanding and appreciation of the example provided by the Buddha.

Very much in that spirit, the organisers of this day of celebration have kindly provided us with a theme which is also very relevant to present-day circumstances. As you know, that theme is ‘The Buddhist Way of Building Trust and Solidarity’. At a time when perhaps all of us can think of examples – whether near to home or in some other part of the world – where good things which we may have come to take for granted are now being challenged, it is a timely moment to strengthen our trust in those things that bring us together rather than divide us.

So I am sure that we can all be particularly grateful to all those who have helped to organise today’s celebrations for this opportunity to come together at such an auspicious time of year. You have provided us with the chance to renew our sense of trust and to strengthen our confidence to remain true to those ways of being and ways of doing things that will be to the lasting benefit of ourselves and of others.

**Charles Shaw**

**Trustee, The Samatha Trust**

**Trustee, Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies**