

The Contemporary World and the Buddhism

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On behalf of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU), I congratulate the Association of the East - Asia Buddhist Culture for holding the international Conference on “The situation and the Task of Contemporary East - Asia Buddhism” on September 23, 2006. At the same time, you invite us to present paper on “Buddhism in Contemporary world.”

I. Two wings of Buddhism

Thought Buddhism was divided into two wings: Theravada and Mahayana, but these two wings can be compared with two wings of bird. The bird can fly to the place in need with two wings. Therefore, one topic of International Conference on Theravada as Mahayana Buddhism in Bangkok on 16-20, 2004, we use his slogan that: Working As one: Buddhist unity and cooperation. The impact of this conference is that, we start to cooperation on Vesak Day collaboration, Buddhist Education, Propagation of Buddhism, Social Welfare, Buddhist Meditation and Protection of Buddhist Cultural Heritage.

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II. International Recognition of the Day of Vesak

On the 13th December, 1999 at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Session No.54, agenda item 174, the representative from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Chile, Cyprus, Grenada, Greece, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Public, Lesotho, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Seychelles, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United States of America proposed to the General Assembly that it recognize the Day of Vesak as an international day, and make appropriate arrangements for international observance of Vesak at the United Nations Headquarters and at other the United Nations offices.

The General Assembly of the United Nations took into consideration, the fact that Buddhism is one of the worlds oldest religions and that for over two and a half millennia, it has made, and still continues to make, a significant contribution to human spirituality, and therefore, resolved that appropriate arrangement to made for international observance of Vesak at the United Nations Headquarters and at other United Nations Offices.

As a consequence, sixteen Buddhist countries jointly agreed to organize activities on the Day of Vesak at the United Nations Headquarter, New York, and USA from 2000 onwards. Each country acted, in turn, as co-ordinator in organizing celebration of the Day of Vesak, Thailand was honored to act as co-ordinator for celebration of the day of Vesak at the country, subsequently invited more than 40 countries to jointly organize

celebration of the Day of Vesak at the United Nations Regional office for Asia and Pacific in 2005, and 2006 which is the years of 60 th Annivesrary Celebration of His Majesty, the King Bhumipol's Ascession to the Throne. Since the recognition of Vesak as international Day all Buddhist countries are active in manage the international program conference and forum on Buddhism. China, for example had supported to hold World Furum on Buddhism in April 12-14, 2006.

III. Reviewing Buddhism in Contemporary World

1. World Buddhist Organization

After the second world war (1945), all followers of Buddhism have organized world organization such as World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB), Asian Buddhist Conference of Peace (ABCP), World Buddhist Sangha Association (WBSC), and World Buddhist Conference for Propagation Buddhism (WCPB) ect. Even in the new generation, we organized World Young Fellowship of Buddhists (WYFB), Buddha's Light International Association (BLIA) ect. Howevers, we need more world organization to be active in working as one Buddhist unity and cooperation.

2. World Buddhist Education

According to the information of various Buddhist countries there are many Buddhist Colleges, Buddhist Universities, but these Buddhist educational institutes, have no relationship among them. We should have more academic, exchange cultural exchange and professorship exchange.

3. Buddhist Practice

As all known Buddhist meditation is popular in the western world. Zen meditation, Vajrayana meditation Vipassana Meditation are the way of practice for peace and bliss. How can we improve the management for the citizens of the modern world in the 21st century for meditation practice

4. Dissemination of Buddhism

From the experiences of our friends in Australia, Europe and Taiwan, they can communicate Dharma of the Buddha by mass media as TV channel, internet, Satellite ect. The message of the Buddha is broadcasted to all over the world. How can we raise the funds and manpower to work together as one as Catholic media and Muslim media.

5. Protection of Buddhism

Buddhist person, Buddhist Doctrine, Buddhist Monuments, and Buddhist Tradition are disturbed and destroyed in a large scale. How can we awaken concertization of the Buddhist world to preserve and protect Buddhist World Cultural Heritage ?

Violence in many forms is known as “misconcept” in the world of the Buddha. We should change then wrong concept as ill-will violence into good-will, non-violence. The peace will be in the hand and heart of human beings.

Let the people of the world chant the sacred mantra

“ Bhuddha - Claiming (Peace)

Dho - Smiling (compassion)”

By the way, the terrorism definitely goes to the end. The bliss and peace come to the world.