

PREFACE

The history of mankind records how the Buddha achieved enlightenment and showed a path which not only leads but also guides the world till date. That is solely to emanate wisdom and offer insights which help us to overcome numerous challenges and foster wellbeing for all of humanity.

Recognizing the Buddha's pragmatic approach, as well as the values and contributions of Buddhism to society, the United Nations in a resolution in 1999 decided to celebrate the Triply Blessed Day of Vesak (Birth, Enlightenment and Passing Away of Gautama), falling mostly in a lunar calendar in the month of May. The first celebration was held way back in the year 2000 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and subsequently the day has been celebrated remarkably in different countries.

Today our planet is confronted with a number of crises and unprecedented natural disasters. The paramountcy of mitigating imminent threats of terrorism and ethnic violence, tackling poverty, providing education, and ensuring sustainable development leads us to strive for social justice. There is an urgent need for concerted and constant planning and right effort at an international level to foster permanent peace in societies and in the lives of individuals.

Against the backdrop of such widespread misery and strife leading to complex issues and crises, Buddhism with its rich heritage of tolerance and non-violence can contribute immensely and inspire people with the Buddha's message of loving-kindness, peace and harmony in today's world. The United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) 2019 is a testimony to this fact.

Vietnam got the opportunity and responsibility to host this international Buddhist event in 2008 and 2014, respectively. The event proved to be an amazing spectacle of religious and

spiritual festivity, with thousands of Buddhists from around the world converging in Vietnam, to spread the Buddha's message of peace, love, and harmony.

This is the third time that Vietnam is hosting this important international event which is viewed by Buddhists as an opportunity to spread the Buddha's message and values of love, peace, non-violence, tolerance, and compassion across the world.

It is a great honor for Vietnam, the Vietnamese people, the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and Buddhists all around the world to participate in the UNDV celebrations and spread the rich Buddhist heritage, especially its teachings of equality, social justice, respect, and understanding for the benefit of all humanity. Buddhists around the world and Vietnamese people in particular are thrilled about their country hosting this auspicious and important event for the third time. This international religious, cultural, and academic event would also certainly promote interactions and exchanges of Buddhist cultural and intellectual values among diverse countries.

The international Buddhist conference with the main theme of "*Buddhist Approach to Global Leadership and Shared Responsibilities for Sustainable Societies*" during the celebrations could not have been more befitting and timelier. The present book contains conference papers pertaining to the first sub-theme of the conference, that is, "*Mindful Leadership for Sustainable Peace*." Other sub-themes of the conference include: (i) Buddhist Approach to Harmonious Families, Healthcare and Sustainable Societies, (ii) Buddhist Approach to Global Education in Ethics, (iii) Buddhism and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and (iv) Buddhist Approach to Responsible Consumption and Sustainable Development. This international conference aims to foster co-operation among Buddhist communities and institutions, and to develop Buddhist solutions to the global crisis.

Papers selected for this volume are those that combine thematic relevance, familiarity with the main theme or sub-themes, significant research in primary and secondary sources, innovative theoretical perspectives, clarity of organization, and accessible prose. Accepted

articles in this volume are determined by the Academic Peer-Review Committee.

UNDV 2019 certainly is an opportunity for Buddhists around the world, the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, and all the members of the international community to benefit from the rich traditions, values, and spiritual ideals of Buddhism. The pragmatic path shown by Buddha can make the world a better, safer, and more peaceful and harmonious place to be cherished and enjoyed by all sentient beings.

As the Chairman of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2019 in Vietnam, on behalf of the Vietnamese people and the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, I extend my warmest welcome to all respected Sangharajas, Sangha Leaders, Buddhist Leaders, Sangha members and Buddhist Scholars from 115 countries and regions, participating in this international celebration and conference. Let me thank all of you for your contributions to this celebration and conference.

I take this opportunity to express here my profound gratitude to Most Ven. Prof. Brahmapundit for his continuous support of Vietnam to host this international event. I also profusely thank all members of the International Council for Day of Vesak (ICDV), the Conference Committee, and the Editorial Board for their devotion.

I am grateful to Mr. Xuan Truong for his generosity and other donors, sponsors, volunteers and agencies from the public sector and the private sector for their excellent contributions.

This publication could not have been possible without the persistence, hard work, and dedication of Most Ven. Dr. Thich Nhat Tu. Special words of appreciation are due to him for his experience and continuous assistance in ensuring the successful coordination of the conference and celebration.

I extend my warmest and best wishes to all the delegates and participating countries on this special occasion which strengthens our resolve to improve the world by walking the path shown by the Lord Buddha.

Whatever merit there is in publishing this book may be dedicated

to the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings. May all sentient beings be happy and released from suffering.

We wish the celebration of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2019 in Vietnam every success.

Most Ven. Thich Thien Nhon

President of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

Chairman of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2019 in Vietnam