

UBCV leader Thích Quảng Độ issues Vesak Day Message

PARIS, 10th May 2017 (IBIB) – **The Most Venerable Thích Quảng Độ**, the Fifth Supreme Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) has issued his annual Message on the Anniversary of the Vesak (Birth of Buddha). The most important event in the Buddhist calendar, Vesak is celebrated by hundreds of millions of Buddhists around the world on the 15th day of the 4th Month of the Lunar Year, which this years falls on 10th May 2017.

Most Venerable Thích Quảng Độ, 89, sent the Message from the Thanh Minh Zen Monastery in Saigon where he is under effective house arrest.

RESTORE OUR SPIRITUAL AND MORAL LIFE

MESSAGE OF VESAK 2641 (2017)

By the Most Venerable Thích Quảng Độ,
Fifth Supreme Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam

Since countless eons, innumerable Buddhas, because of their Great Compassion and for the sake of saving sentient beings, have left the sphere of supreme bliss to enter this world, to reveal the truth of enlightenment to all beings in the six realms of existence.

In our homeland, Vietnam, and in the world of today, conflicting bellicose ideologies are threatening to destroy humankind. War, terrorism, and dictatorship have become chronic diseases that afflict and oppress common people. Recalling Buddha's teachings Buddhists understand clearly that greed, hatred, and delusion are the origins of, and motivations for, the insatiable craving that causes so much suffering to our world.

Because of greed, hatred, and delusion, great nations invade and annex small nations. Because governments do not know that “the people are more precious than anything”, they exploit the people and violate human rights. Because many forget the Buddha's

teachings of salvation, they become bandits who plunder members of their own religious community for their own profit and interests.

Greed, hatred and delusion are the three poisons that create suffering, instead of saving all people from suffering.

With the rampage of greed, hatred and delusion, as long as Buddhism is forbidden to freely spread its teachings; as long as our Sangha are not free to use their high moral virtues to serve the Buddhist Church; and as long as Buddhist followers are not able to practice Buddhism and cultivate the Bodhisattva Way, then the social and moral decline that we are witnessing today will destroy the culture and the spirit of Vietnam, a nation that has enjoyed independence and self-reliance for over 4,000 years.

Each year, on the full moon day of the fourth lunar month, hundreds of millions of Buddhists all over the world pay homage to the Buddha. By celebrating the Most Enlightened One's birthday, they express their deepest gratitude to Him who led sentient beings on the road to enlightenment.

Great ceremonies, no matter how spectacular they are, cannot help us fully express our gratitude on the day the Buddha came into being. Rather, our deep gratitude must be transformed into a heartfelt endeavor to restore spiritual and religious life, like a levee that stems the tide of greed, hatred and delusion that is plunging society and humankind ever deeper into the abyss of affliction.

Buddhism is the religion of diligent practice. Liberation through enlightenment is not the accumulation of merits or the acquisition of energy, but a process of developing the Bodhi-vow to attain enlightenment and sweep away all obstacles that obscure the Ultimate Reality.

At this time of adversity when spiritual life is threatened with destruction and morality is overshadowed all over the world, the Day of the Vesak must be our moment of determination to restore spiritual and moral life, so that the two thousand year heritage of Vietnamese Buddhism will always be our handbook and guide to save our people and nation from suffering and harm.

On behalf of the Bicameral Council of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, I offer my sincere greetings to all the Elders, Venerable Monks, Superior Monks, monks, nuns, and Buddhists, both inside and outside the country. In heart and mind let us be united in pledging before the Buddha that we will restore our nation's spiritual and moral life, which has been the eternal foundation for Buddhism and our homeland from time immemorial.

Quê Me

Quê Me: Action for democracy in Vietnam & Vietnam Committee on Human Rights
<http://queme.org/en>

May the Exalted One bless us all.

Namo Shakyamuni Buddha.

Thanh Minh Zen Monastery,
Full moon of the Fourth Month,
Year of the Rooster Đinh Dậu, 2017
Buddhist Era 2561
Fifth Supreme Patriarch of the
Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam
(signature and seal)
Śramaṇa Thích Quảng Độ

** Trans. by Prof. Trần Quý Phiệt and Attorney Nguyễn Thị Thùy Linh, reviewed by International Buddhist Information Bureau.*