

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Daw Penjo,
Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Bhutan to the United Nations
on the Occasion of the Baisākh Day May 23rd 2008**

Venerable Members of the Sangha, Your Excellency Ban Kin Moon, Excellencies, and Distinguished Guests,

Bhutan was honoured to host the function last year, and I take the opportunity to thank everybody for their support in making it a meaningful and rewarding ceremony. I take this opportunity to thank my good friend, H.E. Ambassador Madhu Raman Acharya, and his colleagues at the Permanent Mission of Nepal for the excellent arrangements made for this year's Vesak Day Celebration.

I have the honour, and the pleasure, of taking the felicitous opportunity, to extend the good wishes, and prayers, of His Holiness the Je Khen-po, and the people of Bhutan, to the brotherhood of nations in commemorating the Buddha's message of compassion and devotion to the service of humanity.

I have the honour to convey a message from His Holiness the Je Khen-po, and I quote:

“It gives me great pleasure to send my best wishes on the occasion of this auspicious international observance of the Day of Vesak. On the occasion of this most sacred and blessed day that celebrates the birth, the enlightenment, and the ascension of the Buddha, we are reminded that the teachings of the Buddha are all encompassing, and the message inherent in the philosophy of his teachings is perhaps more relevant today than ever before. It provides us with an opportunity to reflect that the teachings of Buddhism are universal in nature, and stand for non-violence, peaceful coexistence, and tolerance.

Since its introduction into Bhutan around the 7th century A.D. Buddhism has blessed the country by permeating every aspect of our lives. Bhutan has continually applied the principles of Buddhism in the social, cultural, economic, and political development of the country, and in defining our national philosophy of Gross National Happiness to meet the inherent need of the people's well-being. From the fountainhead of Buddhist ideals has flown the necessary action to address the multi-facet challenges that the country faces, such as the need to implement innovative solutions that address the persistence of poverty, protection of the natural environment, and the ever-increasing imperative for peace and prosperity for all people.

The benevolent ideals of the Most Compassionate are manifest in the world's spiritual traditions and in the Charter of the United Nations that seek to ennoble the lives of millions of people all over the world. On this most sacred of days, we are confident that the time is near when all people shall share a common perspective from which the well-being of the human community becomes synonymous with personal well-being.

On this most blessed of days, let us unite in single minded purpose to generate peace and loving kindness in our hearts for the benefit of all sentient beings. Let our individual actions adjust to that common dream. Let us all share a peaceful, prosperous, and happy future. On this day, we reflect on the Buddha's teachings and apply them in our own lives as we constantly, search for peace within ourselves and beyond. It is a day to pray for peace and harmony in the world." END QUOTE.

I wish you a wonderful celebration of the Day of Vesak. TASHI DELEK.

