THAI PLUM VILLAGE

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Already having a path, I am no longer afraid
(Wishing a happy Vesak to everyone)

In just one more day, the Buddha's children will welcome the Vesak Festival. Normally, every year, we rejoice to celebrate the great anniversary day that is manifested in this world. This year is different because humanity is struggling against an epidemic. While we cannot celebrate the Vesak Day with what we call the festival, we must not forget this great day in the life of our great Buddhist family.

In the Sutras, there is a sentence that says, "Oh bhikkhus! There is a person who can bring a lot of benefit to many others in the world. Who is that person? That person is the historical Buddha. In the historical dimension, we have a historical Buddha that appeared in India in the 5th century BC as a young prince. His name was Siddhartha. In his search to understand life and suffering and how to end suffering, he practiced meditation and continued to practice meditation and prayer to end suffering, and to attain bliss, happiness, and fearlessness in this present life and in the life to come.

These teachings are found through the teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path in the Buddha's Sutta. Through the Buddha's Sutta, we understand the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, the path to the end of suffering, and the development of the path to the end of suffering. The teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path are, therefore, the true path to the end of suffering. These teachings are the heritage of the Buddha which has been left for us, and the Sangha is the masterpiece of the Buddha. Through the True Sangha, we touch the Dharma.

So the Buddha's Day is also the day all the Buddha's followers come to express their gratitude to the Buddha. We light the torch of mindfulness, concentration and right understanding, and we bring the Buddha within our hearts and invite him to manifest. After the moment of enlightenment, the Buddha declared, "How strange, all beings have Buddha nature within!" During his teaching, the one thing the Buddha did was to awaken the Buddha nature in everyone so that everyone can be like him, so that everyone can become a Buddha. He said that
misunderstand that life is suffering, everything is suffering; Covid-19 humanity is struggling with, fighting it, being worried and panicking are those who do not fully understand the teachings of the Buddha. To prove that life is miserable. Thinking like that, we try so hard to prove the afterlife where (we are taught and believe that) there is absolutely only happiness. With this kind of misunderstanding, we believe with mind, and, therefore, we do not need to care about this mundane world to irresponsible behavior towards the environment. This kind of knowledge is nurtured in us from generation to generation.

- Now, we’ve learned the Buddha’s teachings, and we understand, that retribution, nature and nurture inter-are. They co-manifest, and all problems come from the mind. We’ve learned, that this body with five sense organs, the environment are the manifestation of the mind. Buddha and ignorance, are all manifestations of the mind. The mind here, according to Only Study, is known as Alaya. Alaya has the capacity to store and (life potentialities), and manifests everything to be perceived. The mind is miraculous, always shining. This shining mind is the perfect wisdom, neither impurity nor purity, no birth and no death, no coming and no going. Manifested from the mind is miraculous, containing suchness where emptiness and the nature of interbeing. This is why the Buddha teaches the wonders of life present in us and around us. The elements of joy are available. Suffering is not enough. The Buddha himself lived in that time can learn to do and be like the Buddha. We try not to run and search in a far distance future. That is the spirit of the teaching, living present moment.

- Second, as a good disciple of the Buddha, we also practice the art of. We have been taught by the Buddha that suffering is a holy truth. Why is holy? Because suffering contains in itself the substance of happiness, it is the lotus to be. If we run away from suffering, we lose our opportunity to practice looking at things with an interdependent, non-dual eye to see suffering and its value. If we have never known what hunger is, we do not enjoy something to eat. If we have never experienced failure, we do not understand suffering is an indispensable material for the production of happiness.

- Third, to be a true disciple of the Buddha, we need to practice re-evaluating relationships between ourselves and our loved ones, between ourselves and our colleagues. The Buddha teaches the art of communication through two techniques
This is how we genuinely respect, worship, and prostrate to the Buddha in each one of us.

- Fourth, like the Buddha, one who practices according to the Buddha’s teaching is free from contact with the Pure Land, to touch Nirvana right in the here and now. Nirvana is in the Here and Now, meaning that Nirvana can be touched and experienced in the here and now. Nirvana, first of all, means the coolness of lust (craving), the cooling of misunderstanding; the other meaning is the silence, the extinction, of all concepts, such as the concept of being and nonbeing, birth and death, coming and going, self and other, pure and impure, inside and outside etc. In the realm of ideas that are mentioned above can be applied. For instance, on the one hand, there is high and low, big and small, strong and weak, coming and going, beautiful, birth and death. Looking deeply, however, we can reach the ultimate dimension, the reality of no above, no below, of no coming and going, small, of no inside, no outside, of no high, no low, and no birth, no death of water. Waves are subject to up and down, high and low, coming and going, death... but water is free from all of these notions. Water transcends and is above water itself. The wave does not need to go anywhere to find water. Water transcends the concept of time and space, before and after, in and out. This is the concept of interbeing and true emptiness. This is Nirvana, suchness, the reality of coming and no going, no pure no impure, no inside no outside... Having reached Nirvana, the ultimate reality. Then all worries and fears disappear right away, like Nirvana in every moment. We see that we and the Buddha inter-are.

Dear friends, we are fortunate to be born into the spiritual family of the Buddha. If we are born into other faith traditions, we are fortunate to have somehow met a teacher who can teach us the Buddha’s teachings. The Buddha has offered us the path, one that is practiced in our time, the teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, all of which can be experienced through the foundational meditation sutras, such as the Sutra on Breathing and the Four Establishments of Mindfulness. These teachings have inspired the Five Mindfulness Trainings by our Teacher, Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. By practicing the Five Mindfulness Trainings more realistic, vivid, effective, and relevant, people can reach Nirvana in every moment of life. Everyone is a Buddha, each and every one of us. Our teacher has said, that if one practices the Five Mindfulness Trainings deeply, he or she can also reach Nirvana in the present. This is because they bring about true understanding, love, freedom, peace and long lasting happiness.

Let us celebrate the Buddha’s Day in this spirit, in a way which we can share forever within each one of us, so that we can touch the nature of no birth and no death, no coming and no going, no birth and no death.