

## Hand in Hand for Peaceful Coexistence

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Your Holiness,  
Your Excellencies,  
Respected Members of the Sangha,  
Friends in Dharma,

On behalf of the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand and the International Council for the Day of Vesak, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Chinese government and the Buddhist Association of China for inviting the Buddhist community of Thailand to participate in the Sixth World Buddhist Forum. The longstanding friendship and cooperation between the Buddhist communities of Thailand and China have been instrumental in our mutual efforts to promote Buddhism and strengthen the bonds between our two nations.

Since its inception in 2006, the World Buddhist Forum has evolved into one of the largest and most important platforms for international Buddhist dialogue and exchange, a testament to China's vision and initiative. This year, under the theme "Hand in Hand for Coexistence," Buddhist representatives from around the world have gathered, united by the belief that this forum will foster global peace and strengthen collaboration among Buddhist organizations, scholars, cultural figures, and individuals. It also offers an opportunity to explore the profound teachings of Buddhism on the concept of peaceful coexistence (*samacariyā*). Buddhism, known for its timeless message of *santi* or peace, continues to offer valuable guidance. The Buddha himself urged his followers to spread the Dhamma peacefully, with peace at the heart of his teachings.

The concept of peace in Buddhism encompasses both negative and positive aspects. Negatively, peace refers to the absence of war, conflict, and structural violence, such as social injustice and inequality. Positively, it embodies unity, harmony, freedom, and justice. Thus, peace not only involves the absence of conflict but also the presence of harmony. As the Buddha taught in the *Dhammapada*, "Sukhā saṅghassa sāmaggī, samaggānaṃ tapo sukho," meaning "Happiness is the harmony of the community; the effort of those in harmony brings happiness."

In Buddhism, peace or *santi*, is understood as both inner and outer. Inner peace (*ajjhata-santi*), often referred to as "peace of mind," is a mental state free from troubling

or oppressive thoughts and emotions. Achieving this inner peace is central to leading a good life in Buddhism. As the Buddha declared, “*Natti santiparam sukham*”—“There is no higher bliss than peace.”

Inner peace is essential for outer peace, which is reflected in harmonious interpersonal relationships. Outer peace extends to the communal, national, and global levels. In Buddhism, peace is a concern not only for individuals but for groups and institutions. The inner peace of individuals serves as the foundation for the structure of social peace. A society can only remain peaceful if its members possess true peace of mind. As the preamble of UNESCO wisely reminds us, “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”

The theme of this forum aligns closely with the United Nations Charter, which declares: “We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace as good neighbors.” Achieving peace requires the cultivation of tolerance. As the UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance states, “Tolerance is respect, acceptance, and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures... Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is the virtue that makes peace possible, contributing to the transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace.” In other words, to achieve peace, we must replace rivalry with cooperation, fostering an environment of tolerance. Buddhism places great emphasis on *Khanti*, or tolerance, as key virtues for achieving peace. This is beautifully expressed in Pali:

“Vāyametheva puriso  
yāva atthassa nippadā  
nipphannasobhino atthā  
khantiyā bhiyyo na vijjatīti,”

which translates to:

“A man should strive diligently  
until his goal is reached.  
For goals, once achieved, shine brightly,  
and there is no greater virtue than Khanti or tolerance.”

In the spirit of tolerance, we are moving toward Sustainable Development Goal No. 17: “Partnerships for the Goals.” All 17 Sustainable Development Goals can be encapsulated into five key areas: economic prosperity, people harmony, planet preservation, peace-building, and partnership. These five Ps can only be realized through strong and inclusive collaboration. I believe that this World Buddhist Forum will provide a valuable platform for both Buddhists and non-Buddhists to form partnerships in pursuit of these goals. No one is too great to achieve them alone, nor too small to make a meaningful contribution.

In conclusion, I wish the 6th World Buddhist Forum every success, and I extend my sincere *mettā*, or loving-kindness, to all present. May you all be blessed by the Triple Gem.

Thank you.



