



STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR AJAI MALHOTRA,
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE UN,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FORMAL DEDICATION CEREMONY
OF THE VESAK WORLD PEACE BUDDHIST STUPA TO THE U.N.
ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2006

Venerable Monks, Your Excellency Special Representative of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand and Distinguished Guests.

India is delighted to be a part of today's Dedication Ceremony of the Vesak Day Buddhist Memorial Stupa to the United Nations.

The sacred stupa being permanently installed here is not only an artefact of religious significance, but also a sacred item of peace and goodwill. It is satisfying that the legacy of the Lord Buddha endures and continues to inspire present generations, as it will, no doubt, those to come, to follow the path of righteousness, benevolence and humanism. In a sense, we are today marking an important milestone in the process initiated in the 3rd century B.C. by one of the greatest rulers of India, Emperor Asoka, to spread the Lord Buddha's message of non-violence, peace and compassion across the world.

Lord Buddha's mission in life was also to alleviate human suffering, poverty and ignorance. More than two thousand five hundred years after Lord Buddha's *Parinirvana*, we find the lasting impact of his teachings on the political, social and other priorities of our times. In today's world the path to salvation is not necessarily found through renunciation; it can also be found in action, provided our actions are guided by the best interests of all. The sacred stupa will serve as a constant reminder to all of us to continue to focus our efforts and actions at the international level on the promotion of love, peace and equality and the eradication of ignorance, poverty and human suffering throughout the world.

We are deeply honoured to be a part of this important event and thank all those who made it possible.

Thank you.

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