



THE EMBASSY OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA
TO BELGIUM, LUXEMBOURG AND THE EUROPEAN UNION
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'Maha Pirith' ceremony in Brussels to commemorate the 2600th 'Sambudhdhathwa Jayanthi'

The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Belgium commemorated the 2600th Sambudhdhathwa Jayanthi (anniversary of the enlightenment of the Buddha) by organizing a 'Maha Pirith ceremony' on 22 May 2011 at the Sri Lanka Residence. The event was attended by over 100 persons, including Ambassadors and diplomatic representatives from Asian countries, representatives of Buddhist Organizations in Belgium, as well as members of the Sri Lanka community resident in Belgium and Luxembourg.

The Chief Adikarana Sanga Nayake for France and Chief Incumbent of the Jetawana Vihara in Paris Ven. Murungasyaye Gnanissara who led the religious observances, in a sermon delivered in both Sinhala and French languages spoke of the importance of Vesak for Buddhists around the world. He also explained to the gathering the essence of Buddhist values that every Buddhist should practice and the significance and blessings accrued from chanting the 'Maha Piritha' in the traditional manner.

Ven. Phra Sudhinanavides, the chief incumbent of the Wat Thai Dharmaram in Waterloo, Belgium who delivered the sermon in English said the teachings of the Buddha is getting more and more relevant to modern day society, which is evident from the expansion of Buddhism in Belgium & in Europe. He commended the Embassy of Sri Lanka for taking the initiative to bring Buddhists in Belgium together to commemorate this sacred event.

Speaking on this occasion, the President of the European Buddhist Union, Mr. Frans Goetghebeur who explained their 40 years of work to spread Buddhism in the Europe, said he was privileged to be associated with Sri Lankan Buddhists at this celebration. He said "we, as Europeans are indebted to this noble gift of Buddhism we received from Asia, particularly from Sri Lanka, which is now the guiding light of our lives".

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU Ravinatha Aryasinha, who described "Buddhism as a way of life" said in organizing this event in collaboration with members of the resident Sri Lanka community, many of them non- Buddhists, the Embassy had sought to re-create in far away Brussels a moment for contemplation from our otherwise busy lives and for our children to cherish their rich cultural heritage inclusive of its associated traditions and festivities. He said the attention the 'Sambudhdhathwa Jayanthi' commemoration events in many capitals had drawn in recent weeks showed that Vesak has become a global event. He also paid tribute to the immense socio-cultural work carried out by the Sri Lankan Buddhist priests living outside Sri Lanka.

The chanting of 'Maha Piritha' was conducted by Ven. Ko Ananda, Ven. Murungasyaye Gnanissara, Ven. Rathmale Punnarathana, Ven. Rathmale Somarathna and Ven. Sigiriye Rathnapala from France, Germany and Sri Lanka, who came to Brussels to attend this occasion.

The 'Maha Piritha' was followed by a colorful display of Vesak lanterns at the Sri Lanka Residence organized by the children of the Sri Lanka community in Belgium.

The Theras were also offered 'daval dana' at an alms giving held at the Embassy Chancery in Brussels on 23rd May 2011.

Embassy of Sri Lanka
Brussels

24 May 2011