

**Speech by His Excellency U Mya Than,  
Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Myanmar  
at the International Exhibition of Buddha's Relics  
Geneva, 1 March 2003**

Reverends,  
Laity,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to say a few words on this auspicious occasion.

We, the Buddhist devotees in Switzerland, are overjoyed, and are indeed very proud to have this opportunity to view and pay homage to Buddha's relics from Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand. This is the first time that Buddha's relics from Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand come to Switzerland.

It is indeed a rare opportunity for us to admire and pay homage to Buddha's relics at such an international exhibition in Geneva. This opportunity come our way, because of the meritorious deeds we had performed in our past existences. The act of admiring and paying homage to Buddha's relics, which we are now performing, is a great meritorious deed. I am confident that the Buddhist devotees in Switzerland who have gathered here this morning to admire and pay homage to Buddha's relics will surely gain great merits and will attain a better life of well-being.

Reverends,  
Laity,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I firmly believe that the Buddhist activities such as this ceremony of admiring and paying homage to Buddha's relics will contribute to the further propagation of Buddhism throughout the world.

In my view, the time is now opportune for popularizing and propagating Buddhism to the four corners of the world.

Buddhism is unique. All in all, there is no other science or art or system of teachings quite like it.

In the strict sense of the word, Buddhism is not a religion at all. Buddhists do not accept, and it, in fact, rejects the concept of the existence of a creator god. Buddhists believe in the doctrine of *Kamma*. According to this doctrine, one determines one's own destiny. One's own deeds, good and evil, will shape one's destiny, good and evil, accordingly. Nor is Buddhism a faith. Buddhism is, in fact, founded on reason and empirical observation.

The correct and accurate characterization of Buddhism, in my humble opinion, is as follows:- Buddhism is a unique system of science, a unique system of philosophy and a way of life.

There are indeed very striking points of similarities between Buddhism and science and between Buddhism and philosophy. Science employs the method of empirical observation in its inquiry. Buddhism also employs the method of empirical observation in the form of the meditation of mindfulness. In fact, the meditation of mindfulness is nothing but an exercise of inward-directed empirical observation into material and mental phenomena.

Philosophy studies fundamental questions of human interest such as what is matter, what is mind, how do we know the external world, and what are the criteria for determining which actions are right and which actions wrong. Buddhism also investigates into these questions. Lord Buddha's teachings indeed provide insights into these fundamental philosophical questions.

**For these reasons, I firmly believe that, in today's world of rapidly advancing science and technology, Buddhism has a bright and great future.**

**Lord Buddha's teachings have stood the test of time. They are timeless. They can be applied to our daily life and in dealing with the problems we are facing in the world today.**

**The modern people of today with an inquiring mind will find Buddhism very interesting. They will discover that Buddhism is very scientific, and much more than that. They will also find out that the insights provided by Buddhism into the aforementioned fundamental philosophical questions are very instructive and revealing.**

**As such, I am fully confident that the time is now opportune to take great strides in popularizing and propagating Buddhism throughout the world. To this end, let us do our utmost for the propagation of Buddhism.**

**May Buddhism propagate and flourish throughout the world.**

**I thank you very much.**