Magiczny Kraków

In Search of Wisdom and Inner Peace

2026-11-12

Nearly 1,500 people attended the 13th Global Buddhist Conference, held from 6–8 November at the ICE Kraków Congress Centre. It was the first event of this scale ever organized in Poland. Previous editions of the conference had been hosted by countries including India, Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and the United States. On behalf of the Mayor of Kraków, Łukasz Gibała, participants were welcomed by Artur Buszek, the Mayor's Plenipotentiary for Non-Governmental Organizations.

One of the most prominent guests at this year's gathering was Ajahn Brahm, abbot of Australia's Bodhinyana Monastery, author of numerous publications, and mentor to meditation centres in many countries. Widely regarded as one of the world's most popular Buddhist teachers, he visited Poland for the first time.

The conference also featured many other Buddhist teachers, primarily representing the Theravāda tradition. Among them were Ajahn Sona from Canada, Ayya Canda from the United Kingdom, Venerable Vimala from Belgium, and Grzegorz Polak from Poland. The programme included lectures, meditation sessions, and film screenings, creating opportunities both to deepen participants' understanding of Buddhism and to engage in shared practice.

The event was organized by the Theravāda Foundation of Warsaw and the Polish Association of Early Buddhism.

The conference took place under exceptional circumstances. On Saturday, 7 November, participants gradually learned of the tragic events unfolding in central Kraków. In response to the situation, the organizers and attendees decided to honour the victims together. At 8:00 p.m., monks and nuns gathered on stage to chant the Metta Sutta, one of Buddhism's most important texts, dedicated to loving-kindness and goodwill toward all beings.

This symbolic gesture gave the conference a particularly profound dimension. In the face of tragedy, Buddhist teachings on compassion, peace, and non-harm took on a very concrete and immediate meaning.

Buddhism remains a relatively small yet diverse religious community in Poland. It is estimated that around 15,000 to 20,000 people identify with this tradition. Various schools are represented, including Theravāda Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Zen. The Kraków conference provided an opportunity for representatives of these traditions from around the world to meet, exchange experiences, and reflect on how Buddhist wisdom can help address the challenges of the modern world.