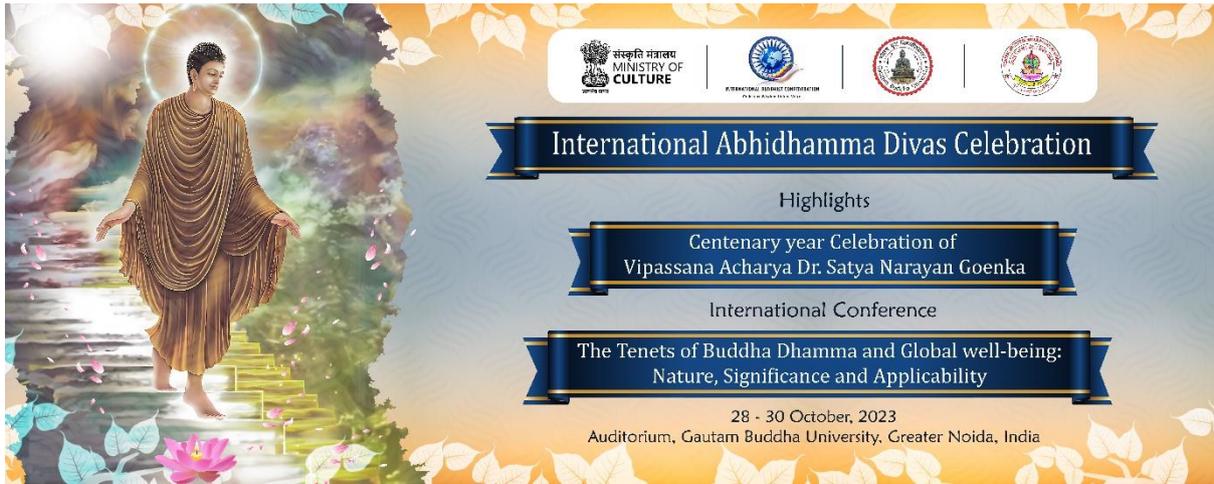


International Abhidhamma Divas Celebration



The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India in collaboration with Gautam Buddha University organised the International Abhidhamma Divas celebration on 28th October 2023 at Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida on the full moon day of Sharada Purnima.

The Abhidhamma Divas marks the descent of the Buddha from the celestial domain of the heaven to Sankassiya, presently known as Sankisa Basantapur, Farrukhabad district of Uttar Pradesh state of India. It is depicted in the Buddhist texts that after teaching Abhidhamma to the Devas and his mother as witness, he descended here. The event is marked by two more celebrations, first, the Centenary year of Vipassana Acharya Dr Satya Narayan Goenka, and second the International Conference on ‘The Tenets of the Buddha Dhamma and Global Well-Being: Nature, Significance and Applicability’.



The Chief Guest at this event was Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Former President of India. The Special Guest was Most Venerable Senior Professor Kottepitiye Rahula Anunayaka Thera, (Deputy Prelate) Supreme Sangha Council of the Kotte Chapter Sri Lanka.

Former President Ram Nath Kovind, stated that it was on the basis of his own experience and the benefit he got from the practice of Vipassana that he had suggested the introduction of Vipassana amongst the trainees at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie. He also suggested that Vipassana should be added to the curriculum at Gautam Buddha University, NOIDA. Speaking at the University he said that Vipassana will assist value based education among young minds to create a new India.



Speaking about his own experience, he said, "I am fortunate that I was introduced to the Dhamma by none other than Revered Goenka ji. Through the practice of Vipassana Meditation, he made me experience that the teaching of the Shakyamuni Buddha, if applied in our daily life is the panacea for all the present day problems". He further added that "Here I would like to say that in the modern time the contribution of Guru ji in the systematic presentation and practice of the Dhamma has been significant. As a result, we see that number of practitioners of Vipassana is increasing day by day, not only in India but throughout the World,".



Prof. R. K. Sinha, Vice Chancellor, Gautam Buddha University in his welcome address focused on the significance of Uttar Pradesh as a cradle of Buddhism, a place where "the teachings of the Buddha" were evolved and nurtured. He said that "UP is a land that resonates with the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha. Today, we stand in a state that holds profound significance in the history of Buddhism". He went on to say that "Here, I would also like to draw your attention that out of the Eight Great Sacred Places in Buddhism, it is truly remarkable that four are situated right here in Uttar

Pradesh. These sacred sites namely; Sarnath, Kushinagar, Sankissa and Sravasti are not just geographic locations; they are repositories of spiritual enlightenment and historical significance".

Special Guest from Sri Lanka Venerable Kottepittiye Rahula Anunayaka Thero said "India has made tremendous contribution to human knowledge with Buddha's teaching and we all in the Buddhist world revered this holy land of the Buddha".



Ven Dr. Dhammapiya, Secretary General International Buddhist Confederation said that "at a time the world is facing violence in the name of religion, the human mind is full of hatred, anger and causing pain resulting in mutual destruction; it is only Buddha's teaching that will bring peace and stability in the society". He further said that "In the spirit of this heritage, it is indeed pious occasion that we have gathered here, where the legacy of Gautam Buddha thrives.

Prayer for World Peace



As the world goes through turbulent times and conflict is visible all around, the Buddhist Scholars and academicians from different countries who had gathered at the GBU were in deep discussion and thought on how would this contribute in any way towards spreading the message of world peace based in the teachings of Dhamma.

This exercise led to the creative idea of those international monks from Russia, South Korea, UK, Canada, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Brazil, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar gathering together on the Abhidhamma Divas at Gautam Buddha University and carrying out a Candlelight March. This march was not just a ritualistic event but a powerful expression of a shared commitment to the cause of world peace.

Participants walked together, transcending national, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, and it was a visual representation of unity and solidarity for a more peaceful world. It was a silent yet resolute message that the teachings of Buddhism offer a path towards reconciliation and compassion in a world too often torn apart by division and discord.

The sight of participants holding candles in the fading light served as a poignant reminder of the essence of Buddhism—illumination in the dark. The candlelight cutting through the darkness envisioned the hope and wisdom that Buddhism imparts to its followers.

The Candlelight March was a significant highlight of the Abhidhamma Day and the International Buddhist Conference of 2023, serving as a testament to the power of collective consciousness, shared aspirations, and a shared commitment to the betterment of humanity. It was a symbol of hope, peace, and a brighter future, leaving a lasting impression on the hearts and minds of all who participated and witnessed it.



International Buddhist Conference

The International Buddhist Conference 2023 held from 28-30 October, 2023 at the Gautam Buddha University was a resounding success, uniting scholars, practitioners, and Buddhism enthusiasts worldwide, fostering a remarkable exchange of ideas and knowledge. Collaboration between the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) and Gautam Buddha University (GBU) formed the conference's foundation, ensuring a diverse academic perspective.

Esteemed International institutions, including Dongguk University, Dhammaduta Chekinda University, and the Dhammachai International Research Institute, contributed to the event's academic richness. With global participation and Ambassadors from seven countries, this conference embraced a diplomatic dimension. It showcased 187 research papers in 24 academic sessions, spanning diverse aspects of Buddhism, including Vipassanā practice, which Former President Shri Ram Nath Kovind was the Chief Guest at the inaugural Session which Ms. **Prof. Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, Vice Chancellor, JNU** attended the closing ceremony as the Chief Guest.



In her valedictory address, the Chief Guest, Prof. Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, Vice Chancellor of JNU recalled her deep association with Buddhism and commended the organizers for organising the event. Prof. Pandit underscored that Buddhism and Advaita do not have western equivalents that means, they are unique and universal. She mentioned that India's tradition of valuing dissent, rooted in Gautam Buddha's teachings, influenced

her during her studies at Presidency College in Madras. She mentioned that the Madras Museum holds Amravati relics and every monk should visit it. She further mentioned that it's a place which produced one of the greatest thinkers and philosophers of all time – Nargarjuna, Ms Pandit's academic work is on Nargarjuna's teachings, like the Middle Path, non-alignment, India's foreign policy, and Shunyata the doctrine of emptiness. She added that in academia, JNU introduced a Pali certificate course last year and this year they are emphasising to add MA in Hindu and Buddhist studies, demonstrating the commitment to these traditions.

The Chair of the session, Prof. Ravindra Kumar Sinha lauded the tremendous effort put in by the Gautam Buddha University and the International Buddhist Confederation in organising a major conference as this which was a monumental success. Excellent papers were presented and spirited discussions took place with the practitioners, both monks and nuns, and the scholars which was a spiritually energising experience for all, he added.





In his valedictory speech, the DG IBC emphasized the critical global phase marked by enmity, conflicts, and wars driven by human greed for power and revenge. He advocated introducing Vipassana in educational institutions, inspired by the concerns of former President Mr. Ram Nath Kovind.

- This monumental event united scholars, practitioners, and Buddhism enthusiasts from around the world. Notable participants included representatives and scholars from various countries and India-based Ambassadors.
- The event featured research papers, an open dialogue on Goenka ji and Vipassana, and discussions on Vipassanā practice's significance. A member of vipassana experts shared their experiences at the event.
- Guests included a delegation from the Russian Foundation for the Promotion of Buddhist Education and Research, emphasizing the importance of unity for world peace.
- Discussions covered topics from Buddhist philosophy to sustainable development, history, archaeology, art, and the nature of Vipassana.
- Buddhism's emphasis on interconnectedness offers a path to a happier, compassionate, and progressive world, transcending borders, religions, and cultures. Participants left with shared experiences, spiritual enrichment, and academic lessons to foster a peaceful future. The conference proceedings in the form of a book is forthcoming.