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New nominations to Governing Council

IBC announces the nomination of three new members to its Governing Council. The new members are Semo Chime Wangmo of Bhutan and Ven. Thimiyawela Palitha Thero of Sri Lanka. Most Ven. Pelwathe Seewali Thero, Bhikku incharge Sarnath, Varanasi has been nominated by the Secretary-General to the Executive Committee of the Governing Council.

Buddha set to smile in SE Asian countries



At the inauguration of the three-day seminar on “India’s North Eastern Region and Buddhist Heritage-Bridge between South Asia and South-East Asia” (from L to R) Ven. Athuraliye Rathana Thero, Hon’ble MP from Sri Lanka, Mr Manik Sarkar, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tripura, and Mr Ananda Prasad Pokharel, Hon’ble Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal

Buddha is again ready to smile, this time for peace and prosperity, bringing together the South and South East Asian countries. The international seminar held in Agartala recently representing all these countries and the North Eastern Region of India stressed on an elaborate and deliberate policy for greater regional linkage for ‘Buddhism and Buddhist heritage sites’.

The three-day seminar, ‘India’s North Eastern Region and Buddhist Heritage-Bridge between South Asia and South East Asia’, organised by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), in collaboration with the Asian Confluence, Shillong and the Dhamma Dipa Foundation, Tripura, dwelt extensively on closer engagement between the South East Asian nations and felt that wholesome prosperity, especially the economic prosperity could be

achieved through cultural and philosophical unity grounded in Buddha’s teachings.

Based on the ‘historical role of India’s North East’ as the land bridge between South Asia and South East Asia – “through which philosophies and traditions travelled” – the seminar acknowledged that Buddhism and Buddhist heritage sites of the North East India could be an effective means to promote better links between India and South East Asia. Besides, the speakers argued that goal of sustainable development could be realised if policymakers based the ideas and solutions on the template of Buddhist teachings.

The first step in this regard seemed to have already gained some success as, significantly enough, Hon’ble Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal, Mr Ananda Prasad Pokharel, attended the

seminar in Agartala and suggested that IBC, the Lumbini Development Trust and Lumbini Buddhist University could partner the Government of Nepal in celebrating Buddha Jayanti 2016 in Lumbini.

One of the important points of focus in the deliberations was Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH) model which, the speakers felt, should be studied and used as one of the templates for framing development policies.

Hon'ble Tripura Chief Minister, Mr Manik Sarkar, thanked the organisers for choosing Agartala as the venue for the international conference. He emphasised on the need to implement Buddha's teachings in order to face and fight against the challenges that the world is facing today.

IBC Secretary-General Ven. Lama Lobzang said that through this seminar IBC seeks to re-explore and revive ancient cultural and spiritual linkages for the betterment of the lives of all our brothers and sisters who inhabit the nations that comprise South Asia and South East Asia.

The seminar discussed and resolved to support the IBC-led Buddhist initiative to steer the global discourse on climate change, environment and conservation towards a responsible and sustainable model based on the Buddhist principles and values of interdependence and respect for nature. This was stated in the IBC-led Buddhist



Ani Choying Drolma, better known as the "singing nun", is a Buddhist nun and musician from the Nagi Gomba nunnery in Nepal. She is known in Nepal and throughout the world for bringing many Tibetan Buddhist chants and feast songs to mainstream audiences. She led the celebrations at the cultural evening on December 18, 2015



Agartala Declaration

Asia is regarded, and rightly so, as the cradle of world civilization. It was the East that gave many of the creative ideas and philosophies, making a paradigm shift to the world that witnessed two world wars and which is still grappling with unresolved issues. Buddhism is one such philosophy that offered, and continues to offer, solutions to some of the vexed problems of the world.

With a view to understanding the Buddhist view of the world situation and the relevance of Buddha's teachings, an international seminar on "India's North Eastern Region and Buddhist Heritage: Bridge between South and South East Asia" was held in Agartala, Tripura.

The North Eastern region of India, along with her immediate neighbours, namely Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and the peripheral areas of East and South East Asia, collectively forms one of the most intricately woven yet diverse regions of the globe. Buddhism is one of the common threads that bind the whole region, which indeed is also its cradle and epicenter. As a composite too, the region is strategically placed.

The seminar, attended by representatives of various schools of Buddhism, monks, nuns, lay practitioners, scholars, diplomats, political leaders and officials, unanimously adopted the "Agartala Declaration", which runs as follows:

Growth and Sustainable Development: Relevance of Buddha's Teachings and philosophy

Pursuit of happiness has been the single most

important endeavor, probably since the wheel was invented. While the pro-market protagonists advocated a strong capital intensive free market economy to fuel unbridled consumption, the antagonists of free market advocated total state control on factors and production and distribution. Yet both limited themselves to fulfilling the demands of ever increasing consumption as the only means to eternal happiness. Needless to say, the world is the victim of the failure of their experiments with humanity. To them, consumption and happiness were directly proportional, while Buddhist philosophy suggested that consumption and happiness are inversely proportional. The Buddhist philosophy of sharing, caring, giving and renunciation can hold a valuable lesson to the world torn between the exploitative and the restrictive. The goal of sustainable development can be realized if policy makers base ideas and solutions on the template of Buddhist teachings, which are highly relevant today. Further, the **Gross National Happiness (GNH)** model of Bhutan could be studied further and used as one of the templates for framing development policies.

Buddhist Heritage and traditions: A shared history

History is a window to the future. The shared history of the region, as seen through Buddhist heritage and living Buddhist traditions, cultural vestiges and philosophical richness, can form an important element of political and economic engagement amongst the North Eastern states of India and the immediate neighbouring countries. As Buddhist heritage is spread over a larger



Participants at the seminar, 'India's North Eastern Region and Buddhist Heritage-Bridge between South Asia and South East Asia'

area and in different national boundaries, it is imperative to create an institutional network.

The Hon'ble Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal, Mr Ananda Prasad Pokharel, proposed that the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), the Lumbini Development Trust and Lumbini Buddhist University can partner the Government of Nepal in celebrating Buddha Jayanti 2016 in Lumbini. The Minister also suggested that the proposed international conference on the preservation and promotion of Buddhist Heritage of Nepal by IBC be organized as a part of the week-long Buddha Jayanti celebrations in Lumbini. Besides the celebration in Lumbini, a Grand Buddha Purnima Diwas and the UN Day of Vesak will be celebrated in 2016 in India.

Cultural tourism and pilgrimage: scope and challenges.

The Buddhist community worldwide can promote cultural tourism and Buddhist pilgrimage, and spearhead a movement for creation of Buddha Volunteers or "Volun-tourists" for creating responsible destinations in the North Eastern region of India. Creation of an Annual Buddhist Festival, Grand South Asian Circuits, Sustainable Tourism and Buddhist Consciousness journey can be promoted.

Forging a sub-regional space of prosperity

Sub-regional initiatives such as SAARC, BBIN, BIMSTEC and ASEAN that connect South Asian and South East Asian nation states, may consider being influenced by the principles of Buddhism. As these formations strive for physical connectivity and economic prosperity amongst the

respective nation states, one of the most relevant contributions from Buddhism is the teachings of no-self. While market economy focuses on self as the operating entity, Buddhist teachings posit that there is no real-self that is independent of other conditions. Our happiness and well-being are inseparable from those of our past, present and future generations, our environment, and other sentient beings. We cannot survive in a vacuum.

With this Buddhist perspective, we should abandon a silo mentality to see others' problems as our problems, and share each other's fortunes and misfortunes. We should transform from selfness to oneness. The institutional structure and organizational base for sub-regional cooperation must be based on the timeless principles of an integral humanistic approach.

Solidarity and support to Nepal

The delegates expressed their solidarity and support for the people of Nepal in their crisis in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake.

Environment and Climate Change

The seminar resolved to support the IBC led Buddhist initiative to steer the global discourse on climate change, environment and conservation towards a responsible and sustainable model based on the Buddhist principles and values of interdependence and respect for nature, as stated in the IBC led Buddhist Declaration and Statement to World Leaders endorsed by the most eminent Buddhist masters and leading Buddhist organizations, submitted at the COP 21 in Paris.

Concern for Himalayan Ecology

The seminar expressed its concern and urged for respecting the fragile nature of Himalayan ecology, and the sources of the mighty rivers that flow from it and are the lifeline to the entire South Asian and South East Asian riparian region that is home to more than a billion humans, and the cradle of Buddhism and Buddhist civilisational heritage.

Support for Buddhist communities in North East India

The seminar resolved to support the preservation of spiritual and cultural traditions, including linguistic traditions, of Buddhist communities in the remote regions of India's North East.

Role of women

The seminar appreciated the role of women in the preservation of tradition and culture, especially through their influence on the growth of future generations, and agreed that all support must be extended to their empowerment and greater role in the social, political, economic and spiritual discourse.

Educational infrastructure in India's North East

The seminar agreed that for the overall development of the North Eastern region of India, a sound educational infrastructure is required for imparting holistic education based on timeless values such as those taught by Lord Buddha.

Setting up of a Buddhist University

The seminar agreed that a Buddhist University be set up in North East India, preferably in Tripura.



Declaration and Statement to World Leaders endorsed by the most eminent Buddhist religious leaders and leading Buddhist organisations, submitted at the Paris Climate Change Conference-COP 21.

The seminar also expressed its concerns and urged for respecting the fragile nature of Himalayan ecology, as well as the sources of the rivers that flow from it and are the lifeline to the entire South Asian and South East Asian riparian region.

The seminar was inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tripura, Mr Manik Sarkar, with Governor, H.E. Tathagata Roy being the chief guest at the valedictory.



Ven. Lama Lobzang welcomes the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tripura, Mr Manik Sarkar

Besides Union Minister, Hon'ble Pokharel from Nepal and other eminent participants included Ven. Athuraliye Rathana Thero, MP from the ruling coalition in Sri Lanka, H.E. Mr Sumith Nakandala, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, Dasho Karma Ura, President of the Centre for Bhutan Studies and Gross National Happiness Research, Bhutan, and senior diplomats from Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Laos. A total of 80 outstation delegates from 12 countries attended the seminar.

Delivering the valedictory address, Tripura Governor H.E. Tathagata Roy pointed out that pluralism is one of the key notes, one of the central themes being what is called the idea of India. India is known for its unity in diversity. "We emphasise the unity, but we don't forget the diversity. There is space for all religions, all kinds of people, all cultures within the shores of India, and India is proud to do that," he said.

The two-day seminar discussed issues such as 'Growth and Sustainable Development: Relevance of Buddha's Teachings and Philosophy', 'Buddhist Heritage and



Tripura Governor H. E. Tathagata Roy at the Valedictory function receiving a memento from Secretary General of IBC Ven. Lama Lobzang as Ven. Dr. Dhammapiya, the Founder and Chairman of the Bahujana Hitaya Education Trust and Dharma Dipa Foundation assists

Traditions: A shared history', 'Cultural tourism and pilgrimage: scope and challenges' and 'Forging a sub-regional space of prosperity: Highlighting geographical contiguity'. It concluded with the unanimous adoption of the 'Agartala Declaration' which emphasises that greater engagement and economic prosperity can be achieved through cultural and philosophical unity based on Buddha's teachings. ■

Manas Paul, Times of India, Tripura

'Shared values and democracy in Asia'

Asian countries and democratic societies must work together to preserve and promote non-conflicting traditions and democratic values, Union Minister, Mr Kiren Rijiju said in Tokyo recently.

"We need to resolve our differences through peaceful dialogue, through better dialogue as we would say in India. We need to seek greater convergence in our mindsets. We need to distill the wisdom inherent in our Asian heritage to show us the way forward," Rijiju said, addressing a symposium on 'Shared Values and Democracy in Asia'.

The Minister of State for Home said that when the world is witnessing increasing levels of polarisation in conflict situations, democratic societies must work together to preserve and promote non-conflicting traditions and democratic values.

The Japan Foundation, the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) co-hosted the symposium in collaboration

with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan.

The symposium is a follow up to the 'Hindu-Buddhist Conference for Conflict Avoidance and Environmental Consciousness' that was organised by VIF in collaboration with the IBC and Tokyo Foundation in New Delhi in September, 2015.

This initiative has come from the talks that the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, had with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo



Hon'ble Minister of State for Home, Mr Kiren Rijiju, with the H.E. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

Abe in which they identified conflict and environment as the two major challenges facing the world today.

The Symposium was attended by renowned Asian political, social, academic and religious leaders from a number of Asian countries, apart from India and Japan, including Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore and China.

The Prime Minister of Japan, Mr Shinzo Abe, emphasised the importance of being open to others while imparting mutual respect towards differing opinions and points of view. "It is here I believe we can be optimistic. Asia's democracy has a distinct mark engraved in it from ancient times, reflecting the values we have held dear for generations.

"The statues of Buddha we see in Myanmar and Thailand sometimes lie on their side, truly feeling at ease. Japan's Buddha statues, perhaps because they are in Japan, are quite upright, standing or seated, but

Dhamma mission with a vision

The Dhamma Dipa Foundation and Bahujana Hitaya Educational Trust were founded by Ven. Dr. Dhammapiya, a visionary who was born in the remote village of Suknachari beside the Feni River, a hilly region covered by forests in South Tripura. It is his Trust, which helped to establish the Dhamma Dipa School (DDS) and Dhamma Dipa International Buddhist Academy (DDIBA) for novices and monks in 2007 at Manu Bankul, Sabroom, South Tripura, India. Dhamma Dipa School was established keeping in view to provide value based quality education for the children of the area, deprived because of poverty and isolation. Today the school serves to 710 students from KG-I to Class XII, of which 160 students/novices are from the purely Buddhist monastic school, Dhamma Dipa International Buddhist Academy. The DDIBA is the only of its kind of Buddhist institute of Northeast India, which provides the novices with in-



Ven. Dr. Dhammapiya, the Founder and Chairman of the Dhamma Dipa International Buddhist Academy with novices and young monks

depth knowledge of Buddhism, art and culture, along with the education in regular subjects. Both DDS and DDIBA is seeking to develop the institutes into centres of

excellence to provide quality education to the students in this remote part of India, as well as to students from neighbouring Bangladesh. ■

the features we all think of are invariably those of a kindly face. We have been taught that their's is a face of 'loving kindness'.

“As a child, I was also told that "medicine is a 'benevolent art'." I knew that the Confucian concept of "benevolence" should mean loving attachment and a kind spirit.

“Those of you from Indonesia, Malaysia, or Pakistan will, I believe, say that you find a morality identical to loving kindness and benevolence within the teachings of Islam as well. Japan, too, has a tradition of putting the utmost priority on harmony.

“Mahatma Gandhi himself said, did he not, that for him democracy was something that would give the weak the same chance as the strong.

“I have renewed my belief that, within the veins of water that have run continuously since ancient times under the ground upon which we stand, there is endless nourishment fostering democracy and imparting value to freedom and human rights, namely tolerance and loving kindness.

“The foundation for everything is ensuring due process while promulgating the

rule of law. This is what we ourselves have learned over a long time. And yet, creating and then upholding just, fair, and transparent procedures and making the rule of law absolutely steadfast is also ultimately up to the skills of human beings. Everything starts from making each individual human being wiser and stronger. And it is that awareness post-war Japan has held dear.

“Japan wasted little time after losing the war in beginning its assistance to other Asian countries, acting under the credo that it is human resources development that brings about nation building, and that there can be no nation building without human resources development. This became Japan's approach in carrying out foreign assistance and is the approach we still embrace today.

“Be it loving kindness, benevolence, fraternity, or harmony, I believe that in Asia, there extends an underground rootstock of thinking that supports democracy and values freedom and human rights.

“From there, a beautiful and large-blossomed lotus flower is now coming into

bloom. Coupled with increasingly flourishing trade and investment, it is bringing peace and prosperity to Asia. If this is not something for us to rejoice about, then I must ask, what on earth is?

“As we unmistakably feel the curtain lifting on a new era for Asia, an era in which we make freedom, human rights, and democracy our own and respect the rule of law, Japan reaffirms its determination to continue to be a member of Asia that you can count on,” said the Prime Minister of Japan.

A video message of Prime Minister Modi was played at the symposium where he touched upon the common value system across Asian civilisations which could avoid conflicts among humans and between humans and nature.

Mr Rijiju also travelled to Nara, as part of the Symposium, to visit the Todai-ji Temple, which has a long association with India, where the consecration or eye-opening of the towering statue of Lord Buddha was performed by an Indian monk, Bodhisena, in 752 AD. He also meet the Governor of Nara, Mr Shogo Aria. ■



Conference on Gross National Happiness: Distinguishing between peace & prosperity

The Centre for Bhutan Studies and Gross National Happiness (GNH) Research hosted a large international conference from November 4-6, 2015 in Paro, Bhutan. It is the largest in a series of conferences on Gross National Happiness organised by the Centre for Bhutan Studies in cooperation with international partners since 2002.

The conference celebrated the 60th birthday of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan who enunciated this inspiring aim when he said “Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross Domestic Product” in the 1970s. The Fifth Druk Gyalpo, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, has creatively sustained this vision, and has further stimulated the integration of GNH values in government policies and programmes.

The conference opened with addresses from Tsuglag Lopen Rinpoche, one of the highest ranking lamas of Bhutan’s Central Monastic Body, and by Thailand’s Most Ven. Professor Phra Brahmamandit, Chief Abbot, as well as the Chief Abbot of India’s Ngagyur Nyingma University in Namdroling, and the Ven. Lama Lobzang, who is the Secretary General of the International Buddhist Confederation. Other eminent speakers included His Excellency Javier Zarate Rivas, who is both the CEO of Bolivia’s Ministry of Foreign Relations and an expert on their indigenous cosmology of Buen Vivir. The CEO of the Global Environmental Facility, His Excellency Naoko Ishii, and a Member of Parliament from France’s Green Party Mme Eva Sas, were also present. The first day celebrated the release of Bhutan’s 2015 Gross National Happiness Index, which shows a moderate increase in GNH since 2010. The momentum carried through to the end. The Conference’s closing session included a presentation on wellbeing at work, on the impact of sound on wellbeing, on the Buddhist nuns of Bhutan, on laws for happiness, and a closing presentation by Robert F Kennedy Jr, entitled ‘A contract with our future’.

Speaking at the conference, IBC

Secretary-General Lama Lobzang said: “When the 4th Druk Gyalpo, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuk first sowed the seeds of this idea, the world outside Bhutan barely took notice. Today however, 40 years later, we are all talking about it. A majority of us are convinced that this is the only way out of the grave crisis that we have brought upon ourselves through our narrow vision that could not distinguish between prosperity and peace, that refuses to see that the rampant model of “economic development” that rules the world does not necessarily lead to happiness.”

“By giving to the world the concept of Gross National Happiness, the Kingdom of Bhutan has shown us a way out of our

ventions to advance GNH in their own contexts. There were ten or more participants from eleven countries including Australia, Brazil, UK, Canada, Chile, Germany, and France – while Japan and the US had more than 20, Thailand more than 40, and 98 participants from India. Participants came from every region – from Israel and Oman, Puerto Rico and Romania, South Africa and China, plus 12 European countries.

Alongside intellectual interchange, the Conference itself aimed to be an experience of GNH. Held in specially designed tents on the lawn of Ugyen Pelri Palace, participants’ eyes were refreshed by the natural beauty of Paro valley and of the striking Bhutanese architecture of the palace. They



Secretary General of IBC, Ven. Lama Lobzang, offering the traditional khadag to His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Fifth Druk Gyalpo (Bhutan)

suffering, caused in no small measure by human greed. In these times of conflict, injustice and eroding values, this could well be the panacea for the various ills afflicting humankind today.”

During the conference, 116 experts from academia, politics, business and civil society, coming from 48 different countries across the world shared their insights and experiences with a total of around 500 international and hundreds of Bhutanese participants, and engaged in discussions with the audience. The speakers are each innovative leaders in their own right of creative, determined, and thoughtful inter-

savoured Bhutan’s native red rice with organic vegetables, prepared by local hands. Their spirits were lifted by traditional dances, including a very sacred masked dance. They also enjoyed Khyentse Norbu’s film *Travellers and Magicians*. They interacted with each other, of course, but also exercised and strengthened commonality of purpose. Thus, through the formal sessions and the setting and cultural activities, this 2015 GNH conference provided an opportunity for policy representatives, policy makers, practitioners and academicians to share experiences on translating wellbeing and happiness frameworks into practice.

This interchange enriched their own endeavours, which have sympathetic resonance with His Majesty's original vision of GNH, and extended GNH across many contexts within and outside Bhutan

"The exchange between scholars and practitioners with diverse backgrounds promises to bring very fruitful discussions that will benefit Bhutan and international participants alike," said Dasho Karma Ura, President of the Centre for Bhutan Studies.

At a dinner reception hosted the evening previous to the conference, Prime Minister Lyonchoen Tshering Tobgay pointed out that GNH is gaining momentum in other countries and that a global paradigm shift is underway. He said that the combined global effort of official and grassroots actions can pressure decision makers to create policies that better serve communities.

"This conference is one of the many ways of cultivating GNH activities," he said. "And the fact that so many of you are here today

not yet known whether this is a good or bad rate. "We are still learning what is a 'good' growth rate of GNH Index!," he said.

The findings have revealed that 20 percent of Bhutanese saw increases in access to public services: electricity, clean water, and health care, among others. Per capita income has also increased and instances of human-wild life conflict have reduced.

However, the Prime Minister noted that there have been some negative developments such as declining spirituality and a rise in negative emotions like anger, jealousy, and frustration. Lyonchoen said that he is committed to implementing strategies to address this. "We have the wisdom in our Monastic Body to work with the Ministry of Education to renew our values education, so children learn spiritual skills and emotional intelligence early on," he said.

The survey also shows that 17 percent of Bhutanese feel that driglam namzha has weakened. Lyonchoen said that he will re-

faction with the government's performance was much less than in 2010. Lyonchoen attributed this to "divisive electoral politics", explaining that voters of the opposing party may have poorly rated the present government's performance. He pointed out that there has been a sharp increase in the government's actual delivery in services.

Lyonchoen said that such obstructive behaviours have to be removed before they become embedded. "I will open a discussion of what it would mean to carry out our debates and democratic exchanges, and even our electoral campaigns, with compassion, and wisdom," he said. "From the GNH Indicators I can see clearly that Bhutanese care about how government performs, that they are troubled, and they are keeping track."

The Conference Programme

The conference covered a variety of aspects of GNH. Day 1 started with an opening ceremony and addresses by eminent religious leaders and international political representatives. The remainder of the first day was filled with talks on general aspects of GNH, Buddhism, sustainable development and measurement issues, as well as case studies on GNH initiatives in Bhutan and in a business environment.

The morning of the second day was marked by contributions on psychological wellbeing, ecology and community vitality. In the afternoon, participants could choose to attend two out of four parallel sessions. Parallel session 1 focused on country-reports and comparisons between Bhutan and other countries. The parallel session 2 discussed good governance questions and gender issues. Parallel session 3 featured contributions on Buddhism, while parallel session 4 was about ecology.

Day 3 started with two parallel sessions. The first focused on Buddhism, culture and time use, while the second was primarily about ecology, sustainable development, education, indicators and development goals. The afternoon of day 3 was a plenary session and the conclusion of the conference. It started with brief summaries of all previous sessions, followed by five contributions touching on diverse aspects of Gross National Happiness. The event closed with an address by the eminent Robert F Kennedy Jr. ■



His Majesty Fifth Druk Gyalpo interacting with Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General, IBC, Most Ven. Sanghasena Mahathera, Hon. Treasurer of IBC and other participants

also reflects a mutual recognition that this is the moment to create change," he added.

"Together, we must work to build societies that are sustainable in every way and offer a better quality of life for everyone. We must lead by example. And we must cheer one another when we are tired or discouraged."

Lyonchoen also spoke about the latest GNH survey and how the government will address some of its findings.

Referring to the latest GNH survey findings, in which the GNH Index has increased to 0.756 from 0.743 in 2010, Lyonchoen said as this was only the second survey, it is

visit the education curriculum and require graduates and trainees to take an intensive module on Dzongkha, philosophy and culture. "Yet in the end our values have to be renewed with authenticity and from within, in our homes and communities," he said.

On decreasing community vitality, such as declining volunteerism and weaker social links, Lyonchoen said that this is a "plaintive cry for attention to fight social isolation both among our elders left behind in rural areas and new urban migrants facing loneliness, and I am committed to raising this point strongly with our local leaders."

The survey found that the people's satis-

Interfaith dialogue: INEB's conference calls for searching common solutions to problems

An Interfaith Dialogue for Peace and Sustainability under the theme “Converging Streams: Engaging for Holistic Development” was held in Colombo and Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka by the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) of Thailand.

INEB's 2016 biennial conference from January 22-28, 2016 was jointly organised with Sadahan Sevana, the Sevalanka Foundation and the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

The opening public symposium at the Sri Lankan Foundation began with chanting accompanied by traditional instruments which brought a feeling of calm and unity to the gathering. This symposium was particularly auspicious as the President of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena, shared the stage with eminent Buddhists in the fields of engaged Buddhism, climate change, and holistic and sustainable development. Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General of IBC was also present.

Around 200 persons from 22 countries interacted in various processes of interfaith



At the inauguration (L to R) **Dr Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari**, Conservancy for Trans-Himalayan Arts & Culture, USA and Global Envoy, IBC; **Dr Joanna Macy**, an environmental activist and Buddhist scholar, USA; **Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa** (Founder Chair) Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, Thailand, Member Global Advisory Committee IBC; **H.E. Maithripala Sirisena**, President Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka; **Ven. Athuraliye Rathana Thero**, MP and Founder Chair of Sadahan Sevana Monastery, Sri Lanka; **Dr A T Ariyaratne**, Founder Chair, Sarvodaya Movement Sri Lanka and **Ven. Lama Lobzang**, Secretary General IBC, India

Photos Courtesy: INEB

dialogue focusing on peace and sustainability. The majority of persons came from Asian countries including Laos, Myanmar, China, S. Korea, Siam/Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, India, and Sri Lanka,

with others coming from Canada, the USA, Hungary, Austria, and Australia.

Key messages given by the respondents including Ven. Lama Lobzang noting the need to move out of the monastery and temple to look for common solutions to our problems. Dr A T Ariyaratne recommended solving these with an approach that combines spirituality with communication technology. Mr Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksa spoke about structural violence saying that it was systematically preventing people from meeting their basic needs. This was followed by reminding the audience that each person is on a personal quest that leads each of us to finding common ground because we are actually interrelated. Dr Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari commented that sustainability is needed within ourselves and that sustainability of our beliefs begins with ourselves which requires putting beliefs into action. Ven. Rathana closed by appealing to everyone to support the agreement that was read, then went on to say that spiritual leadership and collective effort is necessary for it to be put into practice.

The participants ventured on two separate study tours designed to help

Look for new paths with spiritual friends

The social and environmental issues we face today affect people of all religions. Modern trends towards materialism, consumerism, urbanisation, corporate globalisation, and nationalism are contributing to a wide range of inter-connected challenges: depression, loneliness and suicide, poverty and inequality, communal conflict, environmental degradation, and climate change. As we search for new paths, our religious traditions have a critical role to play. Religious teachings and practices help us move beyond the material. They shape our understanding of the world, our values, and our behavior. Religious teachers and practitioners recognize that personal transformation is the root of social transformation and is key to making the entire planet a better place to live.

In recognition of these shared challenges and opportunities, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) has been expanding its programmes to increase dialogue, understanding, and collaboration across traditional religious divides. This includes divides between institutions and sects within the Buddhist tradition and divides between religious traditions. In recent years, INEB has participated in and organized inter-faith programs on greed and consumerism, women's leadership and gender issues, peace and human rights, and climate change and biodiversity.

Every two years, INEB organises an international gathering of *kalyanamitra*, which means spiritual friends. In these conferences, opportunities to discuss and formulate ways to address these social issues are openly created. The location rotates each year.

About INEB

In 1989, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) was established in Siam (Thailand) by Sulak Sivaraksa and a group of Buddhist and non-Buddhist thinkers and social activists. INEB operates as an autonomous organisation under the Bangkok-based Sathirakoses-Nagapradeepa Foundation. Over the years the network has expanded to include members, both individuals and organisations, from more than 25 countries across Asia, Europe, North America and Australia. From this diversity, an understanding of socially engaged Buddhism has emerged which integrates the practice of Buddhism with social action for a healthy, just, and peaceful world.

them to understand the country context that prepared them for the conference that followed. The two groups traveled in different directions, one to examine the topic of ecosystems, climate change and sustainable development in the Sinharaja Forest Reserve in southern Sri Lanka while the second group learned about pluralistic and inclusive societies living in the post-war conditions of Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka.

One unique highlight of the symposium took place when an agreement to sustain life – *Our Ecological Conversation* – was read and officially presented to the President of Sri Lanka. The statement ends with the following imperative:

We call on all world leaders, faith leaders and all peoples of this planet:

• *To unite for our common good, to*



INEB Conference participants went on two separate study tours where they interacted with each other to learn about the issues

Reaching out to all faiths

INEB's network has also been strengthened and broadened as it continues to reach out to other faith traditions as partners and collaborators on issues of common concern. A case in point is the participation of Mr Shahid Siddiqui, an eminent journalist, Chief Editor of the Urdu weekly *Nai Duniya*, from India and also a former Member of Parliament of Rajya Sabha (the Upper House).

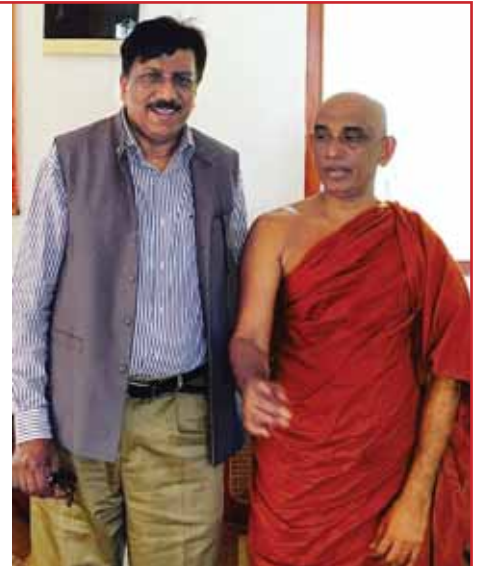
"It was a wonderful experience for me. We engaged with not just different strands of Buddhism but with different faiths and cultures," he said. Today religion has become a problem the world over. It is aggressive, non-accommodative and the impulse is to fight back to secure oneself.

"People are indulging in the negative interpretation of religion and not looking at the positive side. Participating in this conference I found people from different faiths coming together, discussing, understanding each other's path and finding out that the problem was somewhere else. Maybe in the socio-economic condition of the people but was addressed through religion.

There have been a lot of conflict between the Buddhists and Muslim people in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. Though the interactive sessions we gained more understanding of each other's religion and also found out that the root cause was elsewhere. But vested interests groups, either to justify themselves or to attack and condemn other groups use the pretext of religion.

collectively embrace a new paradigm where economics and politics serve life and sustainability; where our differences enrich us to live as one human family, to be mindful of what is needed now and those generations yet to be born.

• *To abandon growth-based economics; to commit to the Great Turning towards sustainability, total elimination of fossil*



Eminent journalist, Mr Shahid Siddiqui, with Ven. Athuraliye Rathana Thero

Through my interactions here, I learnt that the real problem was economics. Right now the global atmosphere is that of anti-Islam so everyone latches onto it to settle all scores.

I had wonderful interactions with Ven. Athuraliye Rathana Thero. Monks like him have an extremely holistic approach. Violence or non-violence differs from situation to situation and issue to issue. We cannot dub a religion being peaceful or a violent one for all times to come. Religions don't exist in vacuum. We should all also look within ourselves to see where we've gone wrong and try to understand ourselves first.

I found the Sri Lankan youth extremely positive and development and growth oriented. I strongly recommend engagement of the moderates of every religion. They should come together on a common platform to counter the extreme forces globally, he expressed. ■

Text: Vichitra Sharma

fuels, healthy and toxin-free agriculture, moral and physical wellness, and a life-centered approach to sustainability.

May we be rigorous in our efforts, respecting all life-forms and embrace the opportunity of this Ecological Conversation. Let us be guardians and champions of these changes; let us have faith in our common destiny. ■

‘Insecurity makes you aggressive’

*She shot to fame as the ‘English woman who lived in seclusion for 12 years in a remote Himalayan cave.’ That was more than two decades ago. **Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo** now teaches a community of young nuns of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage at the Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery in Himachal Pradesh. She talks to **Ranjeni A Singh** at the IBC’s Samvad conference in New Delhi about the growing popularity of Buddhism, women in spirituality and rising fundamentalism*

More and more people seem to be taking to Buddhist practices. Is Buddhism the answer to urban angst?

Religion has different meaning for different people, at different times. It can’t be the universal answer for everybody’s problems. The deep philosophy and clear meditational methods in Buddhism help people — whether they are Buddhists or not — understand their mind and deal with emotional problems by seeing them clearly. Buddhist techniques can be very helpful for people, whether they take on board the rest of the dharma or not. Many people are joining Vipassana courses but they are not necessarily becoming Buddhists. Buddhist techniques help them become better Christians, or better Hindus — to put it simply, to become better humans. I know many Catholics who practise Buddhist meditation and have become better Catholics. Buddhism is eclectic as it helps you connect with your true nature and anything that helps you do that is a good thing. As the Buddha said, ‘Anything that helps bring good qualities in us is dharma’.

What drew you to Buddhism?

I tried reading the Bible and Quran. I took up yoga. I read a bit about Hinduism and Taoism also. Then I realised that I was not theistically inclined, so I got attracted to Buddhism. For me it was the most clear and uncomplicated path at that time. Most religions start on the premise that there is a creator god outside of ourselves to whom we have to be endlessly grateful no matter what, and who, at the end of our course through life, is going to sit there and judge us. Buddhism does not start from that premise; it tells us how to deal with the mind and says that most of our problems stem from ourselves and not from others.



“

The reason why monasticism is important in Buddhism is because it gives much less distraction. It leads to less grasping and attachment. If you are in a lay situation, you have jobs, families, social life — things that take up so much time and our mental and emotional energies, whereas in a monastic situation, most of that is dropped away.

As soon as I read about it — I was 18 at that time — I knew this is what I have always known. I am so grateful to the Buddha for laying it out for me so clearly. I was brought up in a Christian country, grew up among Jewish friends, but found my call in Buddhism.

Does one have to be a practitioner to benefit others? Is renunciation essential for spiritual growth?

In Tibetan Buddhism, some of the highest teachers or lamas are married and have families. Here we are dealing with the mind, with conditions of the mind. Whether they are monks, nuns, or lay people, they all have pollutions. How successfully we deal with these pollutions is up to us. In fact, many of the qualities needed to be cultivated on the path like compassion, patience, loving kindness and generosity exist in lay situations. For example, mothers have to have endless patience, compassion and kindness. Robes are not essential for spiritual growth. The reason why monasticism is important in Buddhism is because it gives much less distraction. It leads to less grasping and attachment. If you are in a lay situation, you have jobs, families, social life — things that take up so much time and our mental and emotional energies, whereas in a monastic situation, most of that is dropped away. So you have much more time for study and practice.

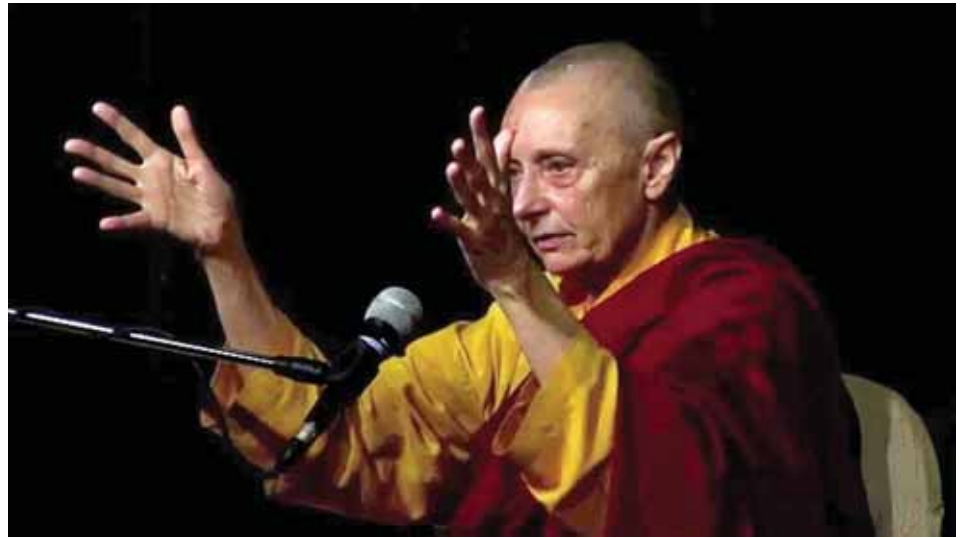
You once said that women have been spiritually undernourished and overlooked for far too long. Are things changing?

Things are changing, though not as fast as we would like them to. The female voice is still pretty muted. But the idea now with education, that women now have a role to

play, is slowly being understood. And certainly from the point of view of nuns, the situation is improving. No doubt about that. At least people are talking about it now, which previously was unimaginable. So, it is a step forward.

How do nunneries help to empower women?

In the secular world, girls are being educated equally with boys and they are doing just as well. The question arose in monasteries: Why aren't nuns getting educated along with monks? Once the idea took root, the movement started — of educating nuns philosophically, and in debates and so forth. It became unstoppable. In the Tibetan tradition now, next year, a whole group of nuns are going to take what could get them a degree, which is like a doctorate in divinity, which previously they could never have gotten. We will soon have female geshes. Now the aspiration is towards regaining higher ordination for nuns in some Buddhist countries, notably China, Taiwan, Korea and Vietnam. However, other Buddhist countries like Tibet, Thailand and Sri Lanka are still male-dominated. So it has been quite an uphill climb but eventually they will have to include nuns. The lamas have to take up the issue. The Gyalwang Drukpa



and Gyalwang Karmapa have been very supportive. Without their help we couldn't have done much. Being westerners, we are seen as interfering feminists and so nobody takes us seriously. Therefore, it is important for change to happen grassroots up.

Women are believed to be naturally compassionate; is the spiritual path easier for them?

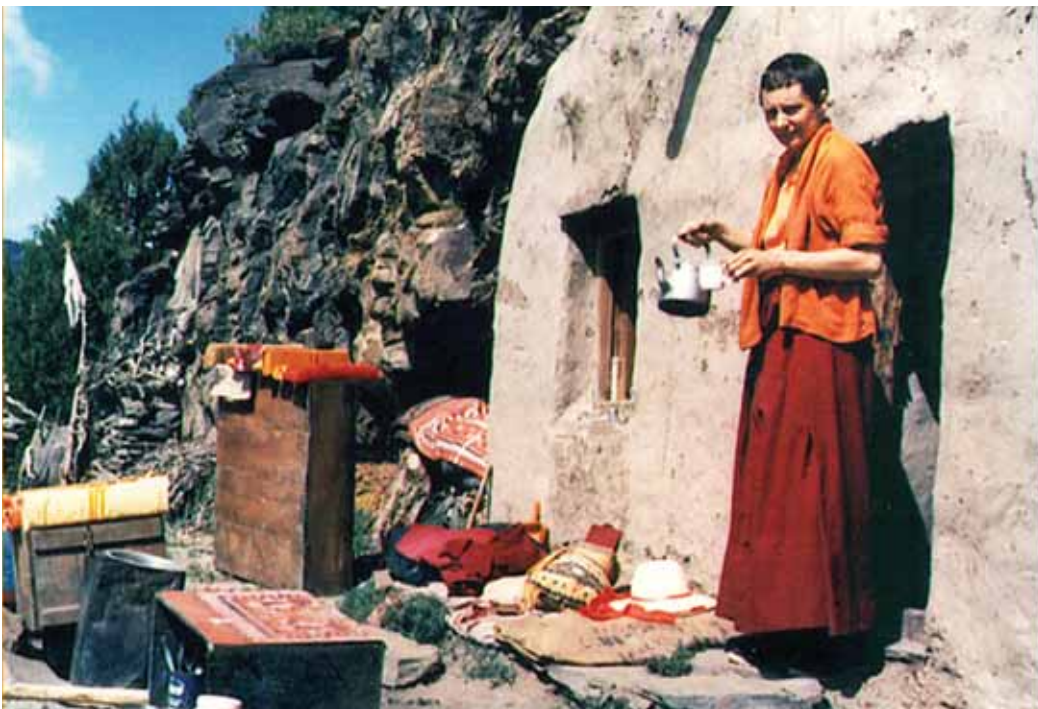
My dear, we have all the potential. It is considered that women are innately more suited for meditation. Many teachers are

beginning to realise that their best students are women, because of this ability to attune to higher levels more easily. Also, women are more attuned to their emotions and as mothers — as nature intended them — they naturally feel at ease within a compassionate framework. The Buddha said that just as a mother loves her child beyond herself, a seeker should develop loving kindness with that intensity of feeling.

Why do you think fundamentalism is on the rise?

That is because people are feeling insecure and challenged experientially. Fundamentalism is rising not just in the Islamic world, but in Christianity and Buddhism also. When paradigms shift, you want to feel secure. You begin to see life as black and white — that you are right and others are wrong. You get angry with those who disagree with you. You also feel deprived. Insecurity gives birth to aggression. You reject things to feel superior and hate those who have those things. You see them as lesser beings who are condemned to go to hell, and so you kill them and torture them; if you are promised heaven as a reward for killing the 'infidels,' you feel superior. It is so medieval. (Tenzin Palmo, president of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women and Abbess, Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery, was in New Delhi to attend a conference on 'Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness' organised by Vivekananda International Foundation). ■

Courtesy: The Speaking Tree



Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo lived in seclusion for 12 years in a remote Himalayan cave



From Ganga to Mekong

Buddhism as a binding force

More than 100 Vietnamese and 40 international scientists, scholars and Buddhism researchers from the US, China, India, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia and other countries took part in the two-day 'Buddhism in Mekong Region: History and Development' conference held in Ho Chi Minh City on November 13-14, 2016.

The conference, the first and largest of its kind, was organised by the HCM City University of Social Sciences and Humanities and the Vietnam Buddhism Institute, and supported by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), India, among others.

Speaking at the event, His Holiness Thich Tri Quang said that environmental protection and treatment in the Mekong region in the context of climate change was one of the focuses of conference's main themes.

Buddhist researchers suggested the application of Buddha's teachings in raising social consciousness about environmental protection in the Mekong region, particularly



the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

H.H. Thich Tri Quang pointed out the need to reduce abusive exploitation of natural resources, to ensure environmental sustainability, and to meet the demand of future generations, as per UN guidelines.

The Most Ven. Dr Thich Nhat Tu said the conference would collect opinions about creating a foundation for regional and international cooperation, thus enhancing sus-

tainable and comprehensive development in the region.

In his address, IBC Secretary General Ven. Lama Lobzang said that the fact that "a conference of this nature is being hosted by the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha shows the importance that both the Mekong and Buddhism hold in the lives of more than 60 million of our brothers and sisters for whom this great river is the life blood. The 12th longest river in the world, the Mekong flows through a region that is rich in cultural diversity and ethnic heterogeneity, and has spawned some of the most glorious civilizations in the history of humankind. Right from the Tibetan plateau, where it originates, through the Yunnan province of China, across Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam, the great river binds the people through the livelihoods it supports and the bio-habitats that it has engendered. Little wonder then that the river is called the Mae Khong, or the Mother Khong.



Inauguration of the Conference at HCM University of Humanities and Social Science. The Chief Guest, His Holiness Thich Thien Nhon, President of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha's Executive Council (4th from left), Most Ven. Thich Thien Tam, Vice President of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and member of IBC's Supreme Dhamma Council (3rd from left), Most Ven. Prof. Thich Tri Quang, Vice President, National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (5th from left), Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General IBC (6th from left) and other eminent Buddhist leaders and scholars



Secretary General IBC, Ven. Lama Lobzang (centre), at the Minh Dang Quang School alongwith Dr Barbara Mass, Secretary IBC Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation (standing with folded hands). Ven. Thich Nhat Tu, Vice Director – Secretary General of Vietnam Buddhist Research Institute and Executive Member of IBC’s Governing Council, addresses the gathering

“Besides the Mekong, which is a factor that binds the region geographically, there is another strand that binds all these countries together. This strand is Buddhism, which is historical and civilisational in nature. Most importantly it is an emotional thread that unites the ethnically diverse peoples that inhabit the course of the Mekong.

“This emotional thread called Buddha Dhamma, that run through this entire region, also connects it to India, the land where, more than two-and-a-half millennia ago, Buddha attained *sambodhiprapti*, delivered the *dhammachakkpavattanasutta* and finally attained *mahaparinibbana*. It was in the same land that Ashoka the Great, inspired by Buddha’s eternal message of love, compassion and peace, decided to renounce warfare and adopt the Dhamma. He thereafter became the greatest ambassador of Buddha’s teachings, sending his messengers to different lands, not with conquering armies to rule them, but with a simple message of love that would thereafter rule the hearts and lives of their people. Perhaps this one single decision by a truly great ruler changed the course of human history, otherwise, who knows, we human beings would have fought and finished ourselves many centuries ago.

“In these times of violence, injustice, inequality, unbridled consumerism and en-



Most Ven. Thich Thien Tam, Vice President of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and member of IBC’s Supreme Dhamma Council, presents an idol of Sakyamuni Buddha to Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General IBC, at the Pho Minh Temple. Ven. Thich Nhat Tu, Vice Director – Secretary General of Vietnam Buddhist Research Institute and Executive Member of IBC’s Governing Council, is on the microphone

vironmental degradation, the world needs Buddha Dhamma more than ever before. That is why the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), of which I have the honour of being Secretary General, endeavours to provide a common platform to all Buddhist

traditions in the world so that Buddhist values and principles can become a part of the ongoing global social, political and economic discourse.”

Dr Ashoke Barua in his paper mentioned that Buddhism begins with the Buddha’s



Enlightenment and ends with man's. Buddhism was from the first a missionary religion. Nothing was written down for at least four hundred years after the death of Buddha. But the principles discussed were memorised eventually in course of centuries gradually codified, changed and divided into two major divisions – the Hinayana known as Theravada and Mahayana, namely the Chinese and Tibetan traditions. The Theravada tradition spread from India to Sri Lanka and Burma in the third century BCE, and from there to Yunnan in south-west China, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia,

interaction between the two countries on the resurgence of the order of monks and the reinforcement of the Theravada Buddhism. As is evident from the analysis, four major issues such as the political instability, lack of political patronage, changing discipline and knowledge of Buddhist monks and lack of properly ordained monks had been addressed by the bilateral relations. Theravada Buddhism had flourished in the periods of righteous kings such as Maha Wijayabahu and Maha Parakramabahu in Sri Lanka and Anuruddha and some others in Myanmar who were supportive for the

have widened their horizon of cultural, religious and economic relationship.

Ven. Dr Thich Nhat Tu's emphasis was on the importance of promoting understanding, tolerance and dialogue among religion and belief for purpose of respect for religious and cultural diversity throughout the world. His standpoint in this regard is that apart from universal practice of tolerance, respect, dialogue among religions, we should encourage cooperation among different civilisations, cultures and religions, in order to promote international peace for humanity.

Prof. K T S Sarao discussed Brahmanical-Hindu and animistic practices in modern Cambodian Buddhism. He said that over the centuries, a phenomenon of syncretism, acculturation and assimilation has been taking place within the popular milieu. Brahmanical-Hindu and Buddhist movements in a variety of forms became implanted in Cambodia through many waves of Indianisation.

In the session on environmental crisis and response, Dr Khanh Tran and Huyen Tran presented an overview of hydroelectric dams and other economic development projects on the Mekong that cause severe both human and environmental impacts. These development projects range from the large hydroelectric dams in Yunnan Province to the smaller Xayaburi and Don Sahong dams in Laos. Moreover, the Chinese have cleared and enlarged the river as a navigation channel for large commercial boats, even oil transport vessels. These development projects cause serious economic, ecological and environmental consequences in downstream countries, especially Cambodia and Vietnam. These significant impacts are largely ignored by upstream countries.

Similar to the dangerous situation in the East Sea, they may be the causes for conflict, political crisis and even war in the near future. Even the survival of the Mekong river may be in serious doubt in the next few decades.

Over 140 presentations were delivered at the conference. They discussed Buddhism's development and integration in Vietnam, its heritages and culture, and environmental protection in the context of globalisation and sustainable development. ■



Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General IBC, presents IBC brochure to H.H. Thich Tri Quang, the Deputy Sanghaja of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha. H.H. Thich Tri Quang is a member of the Supreme Dhamma Council of IBC

South Vietnam and Indonesia. The Chinese form of Mahayana later spread to Korea, Japan and North Vietnam. The Tibetan Mahayana tradition spread throughout the Himalayan regions and to Mongolia, Central Asia and northern Inner China, and also to southern China including Vietnam.

In his sociological study on the reciprocal religious relationship between Myanmar and Sri Lanka in the 11th and 12th centuries, W M Dhanapala said that his objective was to explore and explain the main issues that the Buddhism in both countries confronted with and the positive impacts of the

perpetuation of Buddhism and provided political patronage. It is contended that Sri Lanka and Myanmar had been able to protect the Theravada Buddhism and perpetuate it due to the reciprocal support they gained through bilateral relations.

Dr Rana Purushottam Kumar Singh, in his presentation, said that India through its Look East policy has tried to revitalise the cultural and religious linkages between India and the five nations like Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Because of the Look East policy and Ganga Mekong Co-operation, all six countries



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Secretary General IBC Ven. Lama Lobzang, Rajya Sabha MP RCP Singh, National Spokesperson, Samrat Ashok Club, Dr Sachidanand at the release of a book on Sakyamuni Buddha

Latiya Mahotsav celebrated

The 20th Latiya Mahotsava (Festival) was celebrated near Emperor Ashoka's Pillar, Latiya, Zamania, Gazipur (Uttar Pradesh) on February 2, 2016. The festival was organised by the Samrat Ashok Club with the support of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC). Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was the Chief Guest at this year's celebrations.

The Samrat Ashok Club comprises members of the Sakya and Maurya communities in India. The former trace their

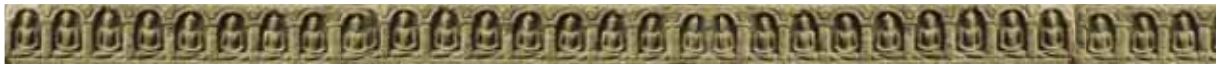
lineage from the clan of Buddha Sakyamuni himself, while the latter trace their ancestry back to the Maurya clan to which Emperor Ashoka belonged.

The history of the Latiya festival dates back to the 6th Century BCE, when Lord Buddha stayed here on his way to Shrawasti from Rajgir. In commemoration of this, Emperor Ashoka the Great built a pillar with eight lions facing in eight directions. Thousands of devotees assemble in Latiya to celebrate the festival on February 2 every year. ■



Photos: Kshipra Simon

Members of the Samrat Ashok Club gather at the Latiya Mahotsava



Maha Bodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya.

Photo: Vichitra Sharma

The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) is a Buddhist umbrella body that serves as a common platform for Buddhists worldwide. It currently has a membership comprising more than 300 organisations, both monastic and lay, in 39 countries.

Headquartered in New Delhi, the IBC is the outcome of the historic Global Buddhist Congregation held in November 2011 in New Delhi, wherein 900 delegates from all over the world, representing the entire Buddhist world, resolved to form an umbrella Buddhist world body based in India, the land of Buddha's enlightened awakening and origins of Buddha dharma. The leadership of the IBC comprises the supreme religious Buddhist hierarchy of all traditions and countries as Patrons and members of our Supreme Dhamma Council.

As per its motto, "Collective Wisdom, United Voice", the IBC provides a common platform to all followers of the Buddha Dharma worldwide to address issues that are of both Buddhist and global concerns.

"Promoting inter-faith understanding is among the main areas of focus of the IBC, and it therefore endeavours to promote the universal nature of the basic goodness of all religions, interdependence and universal responsibilities," says Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General, IBC.



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION

Collective Wisdom United Voice

Mission

To gather the collective wisdom of Buddhists around the world to speak with a united Buddhist voice; to make Buddhist values part of global engagement while working to preserve and promote Buddhist heritage, traditions and practices.

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