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Dialogue on Vinaya between monks of the Theravada and Nalanda traditions

March 18-19, 2015, New Delhi

A high ranking delegation of Sangha Theravada from Sri Lanka, including four Mahanayakas, two Anunayakas and eminent scholars will participate in the historic “Dialogue on Vinaya” with high ranking monks of the Nalanda tradition, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi. The dialogue assumes added significance in the light of the historical, cultural and spiritual linkages between India and Sri Lanka and IBC’s core agenda of inter-tradition dialogue and understanding as well as its motto of Collective Wisdom, United Voice. ■

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Richard Gere



Mr Richard Gere, Global Envoy of IBC and Chairman of the Gere Foundation called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

Mr Richard Gere, Global Envoy of IBC and Chairman of the Gere Foundation was in New Delhi in December 2014. He was part of a delegation of prominent Indian and global personalities hosted by the IBC to attend a conference in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. While in Delhi, Mr

Richard Gere called on the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Prime Minister Modi has taken a keen interest in the revival of Buddhist heritage and restoration of ancient Buddhist sites in Gujarat. He has often been quoted as saying that this interest stems from the fact that in his village Vadnagar, where he grew up, he was witness to some major excavation work on a Buddhist monastery. The Archaeological Department discovered a Buddhist Monastery in Gujarat’s Vadnagar.

According to news reports, the monastery had two votive stupas and an open central count yard. The walls of the monastery were built using bricks. It had around 12 cells for residential purposes with its entrance in the northern direction. This Buddhist monastery probably belongs to the 2nd to 4th century era and it seems it was in use for 300 years, says Gujarat State Archaeology superintendent Yadubir Singh Rawat. ■



Excavated ruins of ancient Buddhist Vihara in Vadnagar, Gujarat. Hsuen Tsang, the Chinese monk, traveller and translator, had described the site in his travelogue.

Arunachal Pradesh: Tawang hosts international conference on 'Challenges facing Himalayan Region'

The International Buddhist Confederation in association with the Department of Karmic and Adhyatmik Affairs (Chosrig), Government of Arunachal Pradesh, organised a day-long conference on 'Challenges facing the Himalayan region: Education, Health and Culture', which was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju and well-known Hollywood personality Richard Gere, who is also IBC Global Envoy and Chairman of the Gere Foundation, with the lighting of a butter lamp amidst the chanting of Mangalacharan by monks of the Tawang monastery.

While stating that the Himalayan Region has always been the vanguard of cultures and civilisations Mr. Rijiju emphasised on the need to preserve the age-old culture and traditions, especially in these changing times.

"Without knowledge, religion is incomplete. We need to have faith in our religion and it should be a medium to propagate development in our society. We need monasteries and Gompas, but along with these we need quality education and better medical facilities," he added.

Expressing his views on the issues concerning the youth, Mr Richard Gere emphasised on the importance of education and stressed on valuing and preserving the culture in the modern age. Mentioning his long-standing desire to visit Tawang, Mr



Delegates at the one-day international conference-cum-workshop: The Hon. Members of State Assembly (MLAs) from Tawang, Mechuka & Lumla, Ven. Lama Lobzang, Chombay Kee, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju, Richard Gere, State Cabinet Minister Pema Khandu, Shantanu Moitra, Greg Kruglak, Jamie Cresswell and Jagath Sumathipala.

Gere said, "Tawang is truly a hidden paradise and you live in a very special place." He added that it doesn't matter whether a country is rich or poor, everyone's concern is the same— health, education and culture.

Addressing the conference, Minister for Urban Development, Tourism, Art & Culture, Arunachal Pradesh, Pema Khandu invited global attention to the Himalayan Region saying that it contributes substantially towards maintaining the global ecological balance. He appealed to all the participants to introspect on the depleting moral values, loss of culture, traditional art and profes-

sions to counter the challenges faced by the Himalayan belt. He said that more such conferences would help in coming up with solutions for these challenges.

Mr Kiren Rijiju, Mr Richard Gere and the IBC delegates later visited the famous Tawang monastery, Urgelling Gompa (Birth place of the Vith Dalai Lama) and the Khinmey monastery. The delegates also visited Mahabodhi Old Age Home & Orphanage and later the Manjushree Vidhyapeeth, an orphanage run by Padmashree awardee Lama Thupten Phuntsok and interacted with the children. ■



Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of State for Home, receiving a memento from State Minister for Urban Development, Tourism, Art & Culture Pema Khandu.



Richard Gere interacting with children at Mahabodhi Old Age Home & Orphanage.

IBC signs MoU with Ministry of Tourism, Gujarat

At the Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Gandhinagar, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Tourism, Gujarat and IBC for the preservation, development and promotion of Buddhist heritage sites in the state.



Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel receiving a memento of the Buddha from Ven. Lama Lobzang during the MoU signing ceremony on January 11, 2015 at Gandhinagar. Also seen is State Tourism Secretary Sonal Mishra.

Buddhist heritage of Gujarat: Devni Mori Project

As per the MoU, IBC will be collaborating on the proposed construction of a Grand Relic Stupa and Vihara at the historic site of Devni Mori, near Ahmedabad, to house the Buddha relic discovered there in the early 1960s. In this connection, earlier in November 2014 an IBC delegation comprising of Ven. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche (President), Ven. Lama Lobzang (Secretary General), Dr Harsha Kumara Navaratne (Deputy Secretary General), Mr Ashok Wangdi and Mr Kishore Thukral visited Gandhinagar, Gujarat and met the Tourism Secretary and the Secretary of the Pavitra Yatradham Vikas Board. The delegation also visited the proposed site at Devni Mori. ■



The site of the Grand Vihara at Devni Mori, Gujarat.

Historic announcement on restoring nuns' ordination by 17th Gyalwang Karmapa

During the Second Arya Kshema Winter Dharma Gathering, the Gyalwang Karmapa made the historic announcement that, starting from next year, he would take concrete steps towards restoring nuns' vows in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Beginning with the restoration of the novice 'getsulma' and training 'shikshamana' nuns' vows next year, which will be conferred with the assistance of a special contingent of nuns from the Dharmagupta tradition, this will then lay the necessary framework leading to 'gelongma' or 'bhikshuni' full nuns' vows in the future.

"The biggest event during next year's Third Arya Kshema Winter Dharma Gathering will be reinstituting the novice and training vows for nuns within the Tibetan tradition," he said. "This will be a historic event."

"Many people might think I'm doing this because others want me to," the Karmapa explained. "But I'm not doing it to placate anyone or in response to anyone. No matter how others see it, I feel this is something necessary. In order to uphold the Buddhist teachings it is necessary to have the fourfold community (fully ordained monks (gelongs), fully ordained nuns (gelongmas), and both male and female lay precept holders. As the Buddha said, the fourfold community are the four pillars of the Buddhist teachings. This is the reason why I'm taking interest in this."

Inviting the Dharmagupta nuns, who hold bhikshuni ordination, to confer the first two levels of vows to a limited number of nuns in the Tibetan tradition will ensure that their novice and training ordinations are conducted in a proper and complete ceremony from an unbroken lineage. These novice and training vows may then form the basis for future full ordination.

At present within the Tibetan system, which follows the Mulasarvastivadinaya tradition, there is no lineage for conferring bhikshuni or full nun's ordination. The invited group of nuns will consist of 10 or 20 fully ordained nuns from a nunnery in the Dharmagupta tradition renowned for their careful upholding of the vinaya.

During the daily teachings of the Arya Kshema Winter Dharma Gathering, the Gyalwang Karmapa had earlier discussed the issue of nuns' ordination in some detail. The full contents of his talk are available at www.ibcworld.org ■





IBC Governing Council Meeting

RAJGIR, BIHAR | December 10-11, 2014

The Governing Council Meeting of the IBC was held at Rajgir, Bihar in mid-December. Out of a total 54 members, 38 were present. These included two Presidents (His Eminence Dr. Ashin Nyanissara, Mahasayadaw of Myanmar, and Her Royal Highness Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuk, Princess of Bhutan), and three Vice Presidents (Ven. Banagala Upatissa of Sri Lanka, Ven. Thich Quang Ba of Australia and Mr Jamie Cresswell, President of the European Buddhist Union). During the two days deliberations, members discussed proposed amendments to the IBC Constitution. A Working Group consisting of 11 members, including the Secretary General in ex-officio capacity, was formed to guide and assist the Secretariat in its functioning.



HRH Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuk, Princess of Bhutan, giving the welcome address.

During the event, discussions were also held on guidelines, role, functions and activities, etc.

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

1. Ven. Lama Lobzang
2. H.E.T.K. Lochen Tulku Rinpoche
3. Mr. Jamie Cresswell
4. Ven. Thich Nhat Tu
5. Ven. Bhikku Sanghasena Mahathera
6. Ven. Khenpo Chimed
7. Dr. Harsha Kumara Navaratne
8. Dr. Bhalchandra Mungekar
9. Dr. Gregory Krukglak
10. Dr. Damenda Porage
11. Mrs. Ang Dawa Sherpa

SUB-COMMITTEES

Management and Finance

- Dr. Gregory Krukglak
- Dr. Damenda Porage
- Ven. Khenpo Chimed
- Dr. Harsha Kumara Navaratne

Projects, Programmes and Membership

- Dr. Harsha Kumara Navaratne
- Mr. Jamie Cresswell
- Mrs. AngDawa Sherpa

Symposiums, Publications and Communication

- Ven. Thich Nhat Tu
- Ven. Bhikku Sanghasena Mahathera ■



Members deliberate at the Governing Council Meeting.

The 'Buddha-Path': A spiritual journey

The landscape of Bihar abounds in pilgrimage routes connecting important places associated with the life and events of Buddha and his disciples. Mid-December 2014 saw hundreds of Venerable monks and nuns from different countries and traditions under the banner of International Tipitaka Chanting Council (ITCC), along with many lay persons come together to once again re-trace the footsteps of the Buddha. They walked for a distance of two to 14 km on the historic stretch between Rajgir and Jethian, to undertake a sacred journey; earning immense spiritual merit.

The path through the valley connecting Rajgir with Jethian, was an important pilgrimage route connecting Indrasailaguha (present day Parwati), Rajagriha (present day Rajgir), Yasthivana (present day Jethian), Tapovana and Sambodhi (Bodhgaya).

The participants of "The Walk", organized by Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, (Deemed University), Nalanda, gathered at Jethian, Common Grounds, Gaya District where Buddhist Patriarchs and eminent scholars spoke on the historic and spiritual importance of the region as well as the route taken by the Buddha.

Historically, it is said that before leaving Rajagriha in search of the truth, Siddhartha promised King Bimbisara to share his experience once he attained enlightenment. After attaining sambodhiprapti, he kept his promise and, along with the Sangha, left Gayasisa (Brhmayoni) for Rajagriha. Walking 25 miles north-east along the hills they reached a beautiful bamboo



IBC Governing council members at the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara. They also visited the Hsuen Tsang Memorial, the Nalanda ruins, the World Peace Pagoda and the Vulture Peak (Griddhraj Parvat).

forest, Latthivana (Jethian).

In his account, however, Hsuen Tsang mentions an interesting legend where a man made a failed attempt to measure the height of Buddha with a latthi (bamboo stick), and then threw the bamboo to the ground in frustration. The bamboo stick took roots, and the place became Latthivana (Yasthivana or bamboo forest). In the heart of this bamboo forest was Supatittha Cetiya. This is where the Buddha stayed during his maiden journey to Rajagriha after his enlightenment.

King Bimbisara gathered news of the Buddha's presence. King Bimbisara along with his retinue of ministers and a myriad of followers from the town of Rajagriha came to greet this enlightened one.

The Buddha and the Saṅgha, escorted by King Bimbisara and myriads of people from Rajagriha then took this route through Jethian-Rajgir Valley to reach Rajagriha, where the King Bimbisara offered the Buddha and the Saṅgha his favourite pleasure garden, the Veluvana (Bamboo Grove). The walk culminated here with the planting of bamboo saplings by the devout who managed to walk the entire 14-km stretch.

The IBC partnered the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Light of Buddha Dhamma Foundation International (LBDFI), Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC), Mahabodhi Society of India, Department of Youth, Art and Culture, Government of Bihar and the Sarvodaya Group, Patna. ■



Monks and nuns from different countries and traditions along with many lay persons come together to re-trace the footsteps of the Buddha, from Rajgir to Jethian, earning immense spiritual merit.



The participants gathered at Jethian, Common Grounds, Gaya District where eminent scholars spoke on the historic and spiritual importance of the region as well as the route taken by the Buddha.



Lighting of the lamp by Minister of State for Home and religious leaders.

MahaKaruna Day

Karuna is the heart-essence of the Buddha's teachings. It is through his unbounded compassion and loving kindness that the Buddha reached out and touched the hearts and minds of countless human beings, transforming their lives through a noble path of virtue (sila), meditation (samadhi) and profound understanding (panna).

In today's world afflicted with revenge, intolerance and brutal killings of the innocent the voice and teachings of the Buddha are needed more than ever. Man has become destructive; ignorantly propagating hatred and cruelty all in the name of race, nationality, religion and so forth.

We turn to the call of 'Karuna' as

practised by Buddha and later 'Ahimsa' by Mahatma Gandhi. On January 7 spiritual leaders from all the faiths joined together to reiterate the virtue of 'Karuna.' The event was organised by the students, staff and members of the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC) of Ladakh, India, and IBC member organisation to promote brotherhood/sisterhood, peace and harmony through their annual programme that was held in Delhi for the first time.

'Mahakaruna Day' celebrations were held at India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Mr. Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State, Home Affairs, Govt. of India. The Guests of Honour present were H.E. Mr. Chalit

Maniyakul, Ambassador of Thailand, H.E. Prof. Sudharshan Seneviratne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, H.E. Sanjaasuren Bayaraa, Ambassador of Mongolia, Thupstan Chhewang, Member of Parliament, Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, IBC President & Chancellor of Sanchi University of Buddhist & Indic Studies, Rev. T.K. Lochen Tulku Rinpoche, IBC Vice President & Spiritual Head, Key Monastery Spiti, H.E. Skabje Khamtrak Rinpoche, Spiritual master of Drukpa Lineage, HH Swami Chidananda Saraswati, Spiritual head of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, Maulana Umer Ahmed Illyasi, President, All India Imam Association, Ezekiel Issac Malekar, Hon, Secretary, Jadah Hyam Synagogue, New Delhi, Dr. Ponchai Pinyapong, President World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth, Thailand, Dr. Mohinder Singh, scholar and member of National Commission for Minorities, Govt. of India, Ambassador P. Stobdan, Former Indian Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Ms. Moe Chiba, UNESCO, New Delhi, Dr. Ravindra Panth, Director Nava Nalanda and Ven. Lama Lobzang, IBC Secretary General. ■

Inauguration of BGF Centre, Ara Damansara Selangor, Malaysia

The new Centre of Buddhist Gem Fellowship (BGF), Malaysia was inaugurated on March 7-8, 2015 with all night Paritta Chanting in the Sri Lankan Theravada tradition. The event also marked the opening of K Sri Dhammananda Assembly Hall, Gratitude Day and the Closing of BGFs 25th Anniversary Celebration Year.

BGF is rooted in the Pali Tradition and is non-sectarian. It was formed in the 1980s to gather young graduates and working



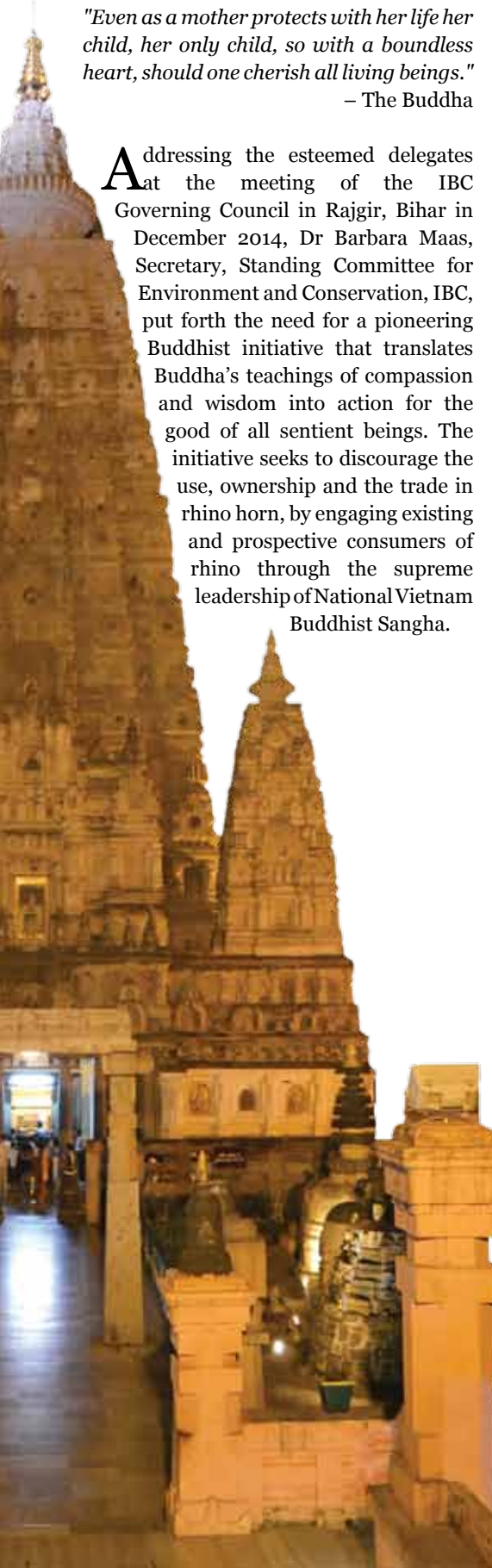
professionals for spiritual friendship and enhance their knowledge and skills for Dhamma works. Under its motto "Growing People, Inspiring the Future" it has been nurturing Buddhist leaders.

Its innovative programmes and approaches are adopted by other groups within Malaysia as well as outside the country. BGF plays a pivotal role to bring about the "Transformation of the Malaysian Buddhist community". ■





For a Buddhist Conservation Awareness Initiative



"Even as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child, so with a boundless heart, should one cherish all living beings."

— The Buddha

Addressing the esteemed delegates at the meeting of the IBC Governing Council in Rajgir, Bihar in December 2014, Dr Barbara Maas, Secretary, Standing Committee for Environment and Conservation, IBC, put forth the need for a pioneering Buddhist initiative that translates Buddha's teachings of compassion and wisdom into action for the good of all sentient beings. The initiative seeks to discourage the use, ownership and the trade in rhino horn, by engaging existing and prospective consumers of rhino through the supreme leadership of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha.



Panel in Sanchi

This campaign adapts the successful strategies employed by Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign (TCAC). Started in 2006 in collaboration with Wildlife Trust of India and blessings of HH the Dalai Lama, the campaign from 2006-08 quickly and lastingly persuaded Tibetans in Tibet and outside as well as other Himalayan communities to abandon the use and trade of tiger skins and other animal furs.

On the similar lines the Buddhist Rhino Conservation Initiative would actively promote agreed guidance and awareness about the illegal and immoral rhino

HH the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, Supreme Head, Karma Kagyu tradition and Chairman, IBC Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation:

We should not just always dig and build, but also do something to protect the environment. The sutras and tantras say that keeping the monasteries and sacred places clean has immeasurable benefits. It is the same with the earth: the earth is in great danger and it needs our care, so we should try to help protect the environment for all the beings in the world. Even if we can't do anything else, it is not too difficult to explain the basic things we need to do to protect the world. You should educate people about this and say, "This is how it is." So whether we are members of the sangha or lay people, if we take some interest in protecting the environment every single day, it will be very good.

IBC and Environment

According to The Diamond Sutra, it is impossible to distinguish between sentient and non-sentient beings. Every Buddhist should protect the environment.

We should move from Compassion to Action as we are the eyes, heads and arms of the Avalokiteshvara, "the Hearer of the Cries of the World". It manifests in a form that is appropriate to the prevailing circumstances. It is an opportunity for great healing for all sentient beings; an opportunity to show that wisdom and compassion are more than just two words.

There is a role for Buddhists everywhere and we can be a catalyst for change.

The agenda of IBC Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation encompasses global, national and policy issues including climate change, wildlife trade, environmental degradation and nature conservation, plastic pollution and litter to begin with.

horn usage and trade through Buddhist monasteries and institutions, teachings, and prayer meetings as part of religious and community gatherings as well as in schools and community centres.

Cracking down on poaching and policing the illegal wildlife trade, have long been the main strategies for saving rhinos and other endangered species. But conventional approaches to rhino protection through enforcement and anti-poaching have to be increasingly regarded as ineffective. Recent developments in terms of closer collaboration between South Africa and Vietnam are a positive step, but must be backed by effective initiatives to be successful in curbing demand. New innovative and complimentary initiatives are needed to stop the killing of rhinos. By addressing members of the public through their respected spiritual leaders, this initiative will bypass slow-moving conventional channels and approaches which have so far failed.

Buddhist, monastic, community and contemporary publications, social media channels, podcasts and films are other avenues to spread the message effectively. ■



Telhara excavations point to the largest Mahavihara

By Dr. Atul Kumar Verma

Ancient India was the largest centre of education in the world for centuries. The land of Magadh, the tapsthal of Lord Buddha, has particular importance in Indian history.

When Magadh was a flourishing empire, especially during the Gupta period, it was the world's biggest hub of education. Even during and after the Pala-dynasty, there were several Mahaviharas around Nalanda where students would go to study. Until now, we had proof of the existence of Nalanda and Vikramshila universities alone. ***But in the past five years, evidence has surfaced through new excavations which show how Tiladhaka Mahavihara University (Sri Prathama Shivapura Mahavihara Bhikshu Sangha) might have been one of the largest Buddhist learning centres.***

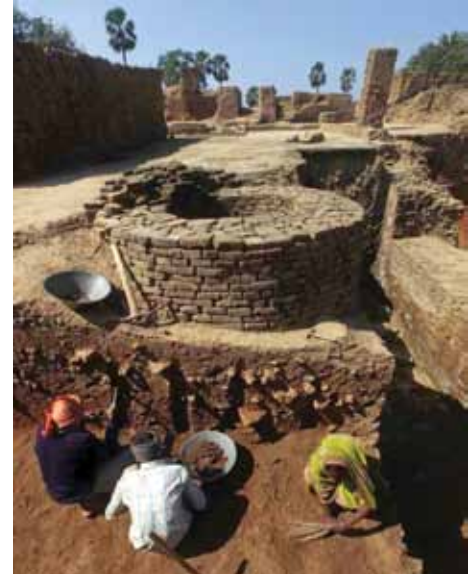
The Mahavihara has been described by the Chinese travellers Hsuen Tsang and I-Tsing in their accounts. According to the information in their accounts, besides this university there were several other universities, such as Udantapuri Mahavihara (present day, the town of Biharsharif), Dharawat Mahavihara (now Jahanabad) and Ghosiyawan Mahavihara, somewhere around Nalanda.

According to details mentioned by Hsuen Tsang, the vast courtyard of this Monastery had a three-storey building with tall

It was just a mound; where village children played. Who would have thought that deep beneath its golden brown earth would be stories of dynasties and empires that now suggest that this — Telhara, a village 33 km from the ruins of the more famous Nalanda University — could be 'Tilas-akiya' or 'Tiladhak', the place Chinese traveler Hsuen Tsang visited and wrote about during his travels through India in 7th century AD? So far, there were only vague references but recent excavations at the mound suggest that Telhara was indeed an ancient university or seat of learning with seven monasteries

minarets that chimed melodiously when the wind blew. It is impossible to imagine the atmosphere of learning, meditation and thought that permeated the campus in those days, from reading the accounts.

The excavations have found ample evidence about the *Mahavihara* at Telhara, located in Ekangarsarai block of Nalanda District. The locals have always known it as Baladitya Dune. Although historians have some differences on this, it is generally believed that Narasimha Gupta, one of the Gupta rulers, was also known as Baladitya. Narasimha defeated Mihirakula with the help of Yashodharmana, the ruler of Malwa and reconstructed Nalanda, so



there is enough reason to believe that this was the same Baladitya who contributed to the building of Tiladhaka Mahavihara at Telhara.

The Mahavihara was an important centre of Buddhist learning. It is believed that the students came here for higher education after studying at Nalanda. Hsuen Tsang, who came to India in the seventh century, mentioned it as Tiloshikiya Mahavihara. I-Tsing described it as a beautiful Mahavihara of his times.

In, 1872, the Magistrate of Nalanda, M Broadley, provided information about this site for the first time. In 1875 Alexandra Cunning Humal also mentioned this site. He wanted to excavate it but this didn't happen then.

It was over 130 years later, in Independent India that this excavation officially began on December 26, 2009. by the Directorate of Archaeology of Bihar Government's Art, Culture and Youth Department, under the direction of Dr. Atul Kumar Verma, Director, Archaeology, assisted by Sri Nandgopal, Sri Sanjeev Ranjan, Sri Arun Kumar and Sri Satyadeo Rai.

After excavation for four sessions, it became clear that the Tiladhak (now Sri Pratham Shivapura Mahavira Bhikshu Sangha) described in history existed and this is where it was located. In the 12th century, Bakhtiyar Khilji looted this Mahavihara and burnt it down completely removing



all evidence. The excavators found 10" thick ash deposits layered throughout the excavated trenches. The spread of this site is almost a kilometre in radius.

As revealed by the excavations this monastery was huge in dimension with a spacious hall dotted with many cells. Evidence of the three temples has been found, each with a single room along with circular path.

During excavations several statues of the Buddha made of blue basalt stone in the *abhaya mudra* and *dharama chakra provarlaha mudras*, and one stone image of yumantka, apart from many other seals of clay of the Buddha. One seal of fasting Buddha is particularly noteworthy as prior to this only one statue of the fasting Buddha had been found anywhere; it is in the Gandhara styles and is now housed in a museum in Pakistan.

In the ongoing excavation, remains of a wall have been found which can be divided into three sections. The lowest section of the wall is believed to be belonging to the *Kushana* period, the middle section is of the *Gupta* period and the upper section is from the *Pala* period. The bricks used in construction during *Kushana* period were of 42x32x6 cm. The brick size of Gupta period is of 36x28x5 cm while those of the Pal period were of 35x25x4 cm. A considerable quantity of pottery was found, this includes sprinklers from around the Kushan period, vase, miniature pot, bowl, spotted bowl, a lid-cum-bowl and so on. Remains of charred rice, more than a kilo was unearthed during excavation, from the Gupta layers. Moreover, what established the sites antiquity of around the middle of 1st millennium B.C. were some pieces of N.B.P.W that were also found.

A *dhawaja* (flag) made of unbaked clay is remarkable in the sense that it details Buddha being followed by his two disciples-Sariputra & Moggalana.

A few sculptures in red sand stone were also found from the excavations. The best among them is the image of an *Avalokiteshvara* of 3 feet height in *Ajay Mudra*.

It is said nearly a thousand Buddhist monks lived here from the 6th to 10th century A.D.

This is an expanded version of Dr. Atul Kumar Verma's brief address at the IBC's Governing Council Meeting in Rajgir, December 11-12, 2014. ■



Mindfulness and Awareness—Bringing Wisdom into Society: Achan Sulak Sivaraksha

One of Asia's leading social thinkers and activists from Thailand, and founder of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, Arjan Sulak Sivaraksha spoke recently on Wisdom, more specifically on what it means in Theravada Buddhism. He talked about the cultivation of mindfulness and awareness and the importance of emancipatory change, both personal and social. Excerpts:

"I am contending that people may be clever but not wise and that perhaps many people are too clever to the point of being cynical and un-wise. The price of pre-occupation with intelligence is the twilight of wisdom.

In Buddhism, wisdom has a special denotation that is different from the worldly sense or the general meaning of the word. Wisdom in Buddhism does not mean being clever or possessing intelligence and understanding of the kind associated with thinking. Wisdom is deeper than thinking. While thinking is restless, fleeting and jumpy, wisdom is a concentrated, calm and prolonged state of mind, which also carries with it a sense of peace and happiness. This may be difficult to appreciate in an era in which multi-tasking is a favoured practice. In the world of multi-tasking, there's little time for thinking and

even less for achieving wisdom. On the contrary, wisdom must be cultivated through spiritual training.

Mindfulness is the precondition for and companion of wisdom. Wisdom is always guided and supported by mindfulness. The path of wisdom practice is exemplified in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness or the Four Satipatthana: body, feeling, citta and dhamma. The path leads progressively from the external—i.e., the body or what you see, smell, sense, etc.—to the internal; that is, feelings, states of mind or citta, and dhamma. Dhamma is the content of the mind. Each of these four is a domain of personal experience.

The highest levels of meditation practice will enable us to cut the Gordian knot of the inner and outer division.

Why is mindfulness also fundamental for society or social change? Should social change come first, then followed by personal or spiritual change? Or is it the other way around? Neither way is correct because systemic and social change and spiritual change are the two sides of the same coin. We are a part of the world. And hence the kind of world that we create and change also change and constitute us. Gandhi is right to assert: "Be the change you wish to see in the world." ■

Magha Puja celebrated in Cambodia



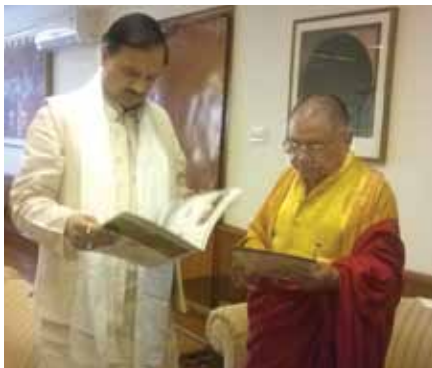
The Magha Puja was celebrated on the full moon of February 3, 2015 throughout the Kingdom of Cambodia, commemorating the meeting of some 1,200 Buddhist monks who without any consultation arrived at the same time to visit Lord Buddha.

The day was marked by illuminations, chanting, food offering at the pagodas where many lay persons flocked in to celebrate

and participate in the festivities. The Queen Mother presided over the ceremony in the absence of His Majesty the King, at the Royal Chapel.

On the Chinese New Year Period, the Buddhist Centre and Buddhist Mission (Buddha Mandala and Dhamma Duta) organized the ordination of several hundreds of Samanera and young nuns for 6 days with Buddhist teachings and stories. The donations from Cambodian expatriates in Australia, France and other countries helped to meet the needs in monastic robes for the Samanera and white robes for the young nuns. Food and drinks and other necessities were provided also by the lay persons from the local communities. Senior monks, such as Venerable TOUCH Sarit and Venerable Khemacaro Yos Hut also attended the ceremony. On February 25, 2015, the High Representative of His Majesty the King, HRH. Princess SISOWATH Pongneary Monipong presided over the closing ceremony in the afternoon. ■

Picturespeak



IBC Secretary General Ven. Lama Lobzang called upon Dr Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (Independent charge) for Civil Aviation, Tourism and Culture, on February 27, 2015, and presented him with a copy of the IBC Newsletter Sambodh. He was also presented with a memento.

Poetry and Literary Conclave: Songs of Milarepa was organized in collaboration with the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. It was attended by approximately 100 prominent poets and scholars from all over India. His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, Supreme Head of the Karma Kagyu tradition gave a discourse on the life of Milarepa and explained his songs of awakening. Milarepa is one of the most widely known Saint and Poet of Tibet.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Medical Camp in Tawang from April 2-6, 2015: IBC in association with Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, India, is organising a week-long Medical Camp in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. A team of eight Super Specialist Doctors of AIIMS, New Delhi will conduct complex and critical treatment and diagnosis in this remote border region.

Zero Waste Himalaya Initiative: IBC in association with Tawang Monastery, YUVA Arunachal and Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh plans to organise Zero Waste workshop in May 2015. It will be conducted by Zero Waste Himalaya Sangha from Bhutan and Sikkim, India and Deer Park Institute, Bir, India and various NGOs, monastic, village and community bodies, forest and social department of local administration, educational institutions, etc. are likely to participate.

Symposium on Buddhist Sanskrit Texts in Indian and Japanese collections: Kyoto/Tokyo Japan in June 2015.

Conference on 'Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative for Democracy Promotion and Conflict Avoidance': in collaboration with the Vivekananda International Foundation, The Brookings Institute and the Tokyo Foundation.

International Conference on Sustainable Goals: in Colombo, to be jointly organised by IBC, Sri Lanka chapter.

Conclave on SAARC Buddhist Circuit Pilgrimage and Tourism: Proposed to be hosted by IBC in December 2015 or January 2016 with participation of all stakeholders and various Buddhist organisations.

IBC General Assembly meeting: The bi-annual meeting of the General Assembly of IBC will be held tentatively in November 2015. Election of the Governing Council and amendments to the Constitution are the main items on the agenda.

International Festival of Sacred Arts and Music at Bodhgaya, Shilong, UK and Vietnam is proposed.

Boudha Mahotsav: This grand festival of the Buddhist heritage is proposed to be organized by IBC in association with the Nav Nalanda Mahavihara, Ministry of Culture, Govt of India, Govt of Nepal, Bihar Tourism, Uttar Pradesh Tourism, Andhra Pradesh Tourism and Telangana Tourism in Bodhgaya, Kushinagar, Amravati, Nagarjunakonda and Lumbini.

The 2nd ICE Conference

(Asian Civil Society Conference on Climate Change & Ecology)

Climate Change, Sustainability and Resilience

The 2nd ICE conference will focus on exploring ways to implement actions in response to climate change and increasing awareness of cooperation and creating a common ground for joint response to climate change among civil society groups including faith-based, international development, and environmental groups in Asia while building their capacity to respond to climate change. Topics will include: poverty, food crisis, energy, disasters, biodiversity, good governance, reduction & adaptation cases, human capacity development, etc.

■ Registration

Date	Activities	Registration Fees	
		Low Income (South Country)	High Income (North Country)
22-25 April	Japan Energy Tour(in Japan)	USD 80	USD 150
24-25 April	A to Z Climate Change Workshop (in South Korea)	USD 50	USD 80
27-28 April	Korea Energy and Environmental Tour	USD 50	USD 100
29-30 April	The 2nd ICE Conference (in South Korea)	USD 30	USD 60

※ The registration deadline is open till March 31th, 2015.
The registration form can be downloaded in INEB website www.inebnetwork.org or <http://ineb.jp/english/international/icebase/ice-2southkorea>

■ Organizers

- Korean Organizing Committee for Asian Civil Society Conference on Climate Change and Ecology (Buddhist Ecological Contents Institute, Christian Environmental Movement Solidarity, Citizen's Movement for Environmental Justice, Green Asia Network, Korea Brahma Kumaris Association, Korean Buddhists' Foundation for Social-Welfare & Volunteering, Korean Catholic Solidarity for Creation Integrity, Korean Federation for Environmental Movement, Lotus World, Social Enterprise Nonamegi, Peace Village Network, Won-Buddhist Environment Solidarity)
- INEB (International Network of Engaged Buddhists)
- ICE Network (Inter-Religious Climate & Ecology Network)

Contact Information

For the main conference & events in Korea,
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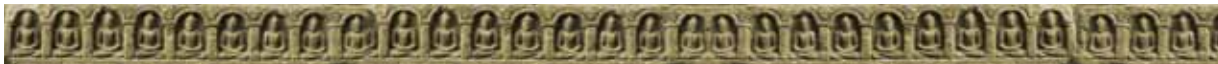
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Nalanda ruins. Photo by Dr Victor Wee



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION
Collective Wisdom United Voice

What is IBC

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 organizations, 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 Venerable Lama Lobzang, Secretary General, IBC.