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Global Buddhist Summit

The International Buddhist Confederation is holding a 2-day Global Buddhist Summit: Response to Conflict and Violence, Climate Change, Nature and Sciences at Rajgir International Convention Centre, Rajgir, Bihar, India on 26-27 March 2020. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, the supreme heads of the Holy Sangha of various countries, most eminent spiritual masters, scholars and eminent delegates from world over will be attending the Summit.

JETHIAN TO RAJGIR

Dhamma Walk - a spiritual pilgrimage



Monks and nuns from different countries and traditions alongwith many lay persons come together to retrace the footsteps of the Buddha from Jethian to Rajgir

Around 5,000 people including monks, nuns and laity participated in the International Dhamma Walk retracing the ancient route along the sacred 'Buddha-Path' from Jethian to Rajgir, in Nalanda district. The walk saw representatives of 15 countries take this spiritual pilgrimage, a distance of 15.5 km to reconnect with the Buddha. It was

sponsored by the Nav Nalanda Mahavihara (Deemed University) and co-sponsored by Light of Buddha Dharma Foundation International (LBDFI) and the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee on 13 December 2019.

One of the important events of the Buddhist calendar in India is the annual *Contd. on page 2...*

IBC delegation meets President of Sri Lanka



Secretary General, Ven Dr Dhammapiya and Deputy Secretary General, Dr Damenda Porage, called on the President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Gotabhaya Rajapakse

An IBC delegation, led by the Secretary General, Ven Dr Dhammapiya called on the President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Gotabhaya Rajapakse at his residence in Colombo on 14 December 2019. The other member of the delegation was the Deputy Secretary General, Dr Damenda Porage, Chairman, Foundation for Buddhist Brotherhood which is a Sri Lankan member organization of IBC.

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Dhamma Walk- a spiritual pilgrimage

Dhamma Walks along the Buddha trails to revive the ancient tradition of Cetiya Carika (a walking pilgrimage). As mentioned in the Buddhist literature, the Buddha on his maiden visit to Rajagrha after his Enlightenment was received by Bimbisara the king of Magadha at Supatitha Cetiya. Both of them along with hundreds of people of Magadha then walked this path through the beautiful valley of Rajagrha where king Bimbisara offered the Venuvana (Bamboo Grove) to the Buddha and the Sangha, around 2,500 years ago.

The path through the beautiful valley connecting Rajgir with Jetia (Latthivana, Yasthivana) was once an important pilgrimage path connecting sacred Buddhist places like Indrasailaguha (Parwati), Rajagriha, Jethian, Tapovana and Sambodhi (Bodhgaya). The 'Buddha-Path' has been conceptualised on the basis of travelogues of Chinese Monk – Scholar Xuanzang in the seventh century AD. The description of Jethia- Rajgir valley and its association with Buddha has also been supported by British archaeologist Alexander Cunningham who identified the site in the year 1871.

Jethian in ancient times was called Latthivana (Yasthivana), meaning Bamboo forest. Jethian village is surrounded by



Most Ven. Master Shih Lien Hai, member of the Supreme Dhamma Council of IBC seated on the dias (fourth from left) followed by Ven. Lama Lobzang, President, IBC, Dr Ravindra Panth, Asoka Mission and Mr Govind S. Khampa, Executive Director, IBC

hills from three sides and this serene valley has a very deep connection with the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. In the 6th century BCE, Siddhartha the prince of Kapilavastu, set out to find the truth related to the phenomenon of life.

In search of the truth, Siddhartha passed through Vaisali to Rajgriha (Rajgir). By word of mouth the news of his presence in the area reached King Bimbisara.

The King was very impressed with Siddhartha's stately presence and his calm and composed manner. Bimbisara did everything in his power to keep Siddhartha in his state, even offered half his kingdom, but Siddhartha eloquently declined each offer explaining that these were the very things that he wanted

to break free from in his search for a cure from the miseries of life. Before leaving Rajgriha in search of the truth, Bodhisattava Siddhartha promised King Bimbisara to share his experience once he attained enlightenment. After his enlightenment, keeping his promise the Buddha, along with the Sangha, left Gayasisa (Brahmayoni) for Rajgriha.

Walking 25 miles north-east along the hills they reached a beautiful bamboo forest, Latthivana (Latthivanuyyana, Yasthivana, Jethian), surrounded by hills on three sides.

Chinese monk-scholar Xuanzang (Hieun Tsang) mentioned an interesting legend where a man made a failed attempt to measure the height of the Buddha with a bamboo stick (latthi) and



A view of the participants



Lighting the lamp Mr Govind S. Khampa, Executive Director, IBC and Ms Wangmo Dixey, Executive Director, Light of Buddhadharma Foundation International (LBDFI)



Monks and nuns being served food from Buddhist devotees at the Sanghadana

Grand & Colourful Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony

The 15th International Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony of Theravada Tradition organized by the Light of Buddha Dharma Foundation International (LBDFI) was held in Bodhgaya from December 2-12, 2019. Around 10,000 monks, nuns and other devotees participated in the all-India programme this year. The event was coordinated and supported by the Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC) and Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO). The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) also monetarily supported the event.

Eleven countries participated this year in the annual event held regularly in Bodh Gaya under the sacred Bodhi Tree. These were Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, South Korea and India. The Indonesian and Vietnamese delegations were represented by monks from both the Theravada and the Mahayana traditions. This year, Vietnam was the main organizer.

“Hundreds of participants recited the precious teachings of the Buddha in all the eight sacred sites of the ancient heartland of the Aryadesha,” said Ms Wangmo Dixey, Executive Director, Light of Buddhadharma Foundation International (LBDFI), Executive Director, Dharma College (Institution based in the USA) and President, International Buddhist

Association of America. The programme was held with the cooperation of the Management Committee of LBDFI in India led by Mr Ranjan Kumar, Director, LBDFI-India.

They travelled by bus and covered over 2,600 km meeting hundreds of monks and laypeople in each site and participated in 2-3 day chanting programmes, culminating in the 15th International Tipitaka Chanting Ceremony in Bodhgaya.

Some of the eminent participants were the District Magistrate, Gaya and Ex-officio Chairman of the Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC), as the Chief Guest, Mr Nangzey Dorjee (IAS), Member Secretary, BTMC, Counsel

General of Myanmar in Kolkata, Ven Lama Lobzang, President IBC and President Asoka Mission, Most Ven. Dharma Master Hsin Tao, Abbot, Linju Mountain Monastery, Taiwan, Mr Ravindra Panth, Asoka Mission and many Mahatheros and Theras representing all the participating 11 countries

On behalf of IBC, Mr Govind S. Khampa, Executive Director, attended the concluding ceremony at Bodh Gaya on December 12, 2019.

Dedicated to reviving the Buddha Dharma in India, the LBDFI works to promote Buddhist pilgrimage, to develop the Buddhist Circuit, to educate monks and to support Buddhist publications.



Monks from 11 countries took part in the chanting ceremony this year

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IBC delegation meets President of Sri Lanka

The President of Sri Lanka highlighted the historic ties between Sri Lanka and India. We have shared the Buddha Dhamma from the times of Ashoka-the great, his son Mahinda and daughter Sanghamitta. But more recently, Sri Lankan reformer and revivalist, Anagarika Dharmapala played a key role in reintroducing Buddhism in different parts of India.

The Secretary General's visit to Sri Lanka was from 4-26 December 2019. He called on many Supreme Sanghas to explain the role of IBC, its upcoming events and invited them to the proposed IBC's international conference to be held in Rajgir. The response to Secretary General's personal invitation was positive with most of the Venerables accepting the invitation. They also expressed their happiness over the support Buddhism was receiving from the Honorable Prime Minister of India. The Supreme Sanghas that the Secretary General met were: Most Ven Warakagoda Sri Gnanarathana Mahanayake Thero (Asgiriya); Most Ven Thibbotuwawe Sri Sumangala Mahanayake Thero (Malwatte); Most Ven Dimbulkumbure Wimaladhamma



With Most Ven Kotugoda Dhammawasa Mahanayake Thero, the Supreme Patriarch of Sri Amrapura Maha Nikaya

Anunayake Thero (Malwatte); Most Ven Kotugoda Dhammawasa Mahanayake Thero (Supreme Patriarch, Amrapura); Most Ven Ittapana Dhammalankara Mahanayake Thero; Most Ven Waskaduwe Mahindawansa Mahanayake Thero; Most Ven Kolonnawe Sumangala Mahanayake Thero; Most Ven Yalagamuwe Dhammissara Anunayake Thero; Ven

Prof Kollupitiye Mahindasangarakkhitha Thero, Chief Abbot of Kelaniya Royal Temple; and Most Ven Prof Pallekande Rathanasara Anunayake Thero.

The Secretary General also informed the Supreme Sanghas about the proposed International Buddhist University to be opened in Tripura state. This was the outcome of the 'Agartala Declaration',



With Most Ven Thibbotuwawe Sri Sumangala Mahanayake Thero of Malwatte Chapter of Siyam Maha Nikaya



Ven Dr Dhammapiya, Mr T S Sandhu, Indian High Commissioner (3rd & 4th from left). Other in the photo are Mr Vinod Jacob, Dy High Commissioner (extreme left), Dr Damenda Porage (fifth) and members of the IBC delegation



(December 2015) at IBC's international seminar on 'India's North Eastern Region and Buddhist Heritage: Bridge between South and South East Asia' held in Agartala, Tripura. The seminar declaration called for a Buddhist University be set up in North East India, preferably in Tripura.

The Secretary General sought their suggestions, guidance and support to make the International University a reality and a unique place for academics, and protection of Buddhist Culture and practises. He was assured of full support to rejuvenate the Buddhist Dharma for the good, happiness and peace in India and the world over.

The Secretary General also attended the 100-year, centenary celebrations



With Most Ven Warakagoda Sri Gnanarathana Mahanayake Thero, Asgiriya Chapter of Siyama Maha Nikaya

of the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress in Colombo, December 21-23. To strengthen ties between IBC and the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress, he also met several members. The IBC delegation received a grand welcome in Kandy by the Nelligala International Buddhist Centre led by Ven Wathurakumbure Dhammarathana Thero. Ven Dr Dammapiya leading the IBC delegation called on the Indian High Commissioner, Mr Taranjit Singh Sandhu in Colombo. Describing the meeting as "very good", the Venerable said the High Commissioner extended support for IBC activities in Sri Lanka.



The inaugural lamp lighting as Ven Dr Dhammapiya, IBC Secretary-General (right) and Ven Khenpo Chimed, IBC Secretary, look on

The Inner Path film festival goes to Nepal

The IBC's two-day Inner Path – a festival of Buddhist films held for the first time in Kathmandu, Nepal was a resounding success with participation cutting across all segments of society. Eminent citizens, members of parliament, senior government officers, monks and nuns attended the film shows.

Held at The Malla Hotel, in Kathmandu, the festival showing different practices of Buddhism from around the world was inaugurated by Dr Gyan Punniyak, Chief of Buddha Shanti Vihara Shankarnayke.

Speaking at the programme Dr Punniyak said the Buddhist teachings were a marvellous way to solve the problems of this world.

Among the films screened were Seven Wonders of the Buddhist World, Searching for Miracle, Sound of Silence and A Thousand Mothers.

Ven Khenpo Chimed, Secretary, IBC said, "not only are there challenges present all around the world, but also the challenges we are facing are similar. Therefore it is our collective responsibility to come together to find solution to these.

He further said that violence, the misuse of faith or religion, rising natural calamities are all outcomes of human greed. We need to see how we can respond as Buddhists to these present day challenges.

Among the other dignitaries who attended the festival were Mr Sher Bahadur Tamang, former Law Minister of Nepal, H E Ms Ashu Lucky Sherpa, former Nepalese Ambassador to Australia and New Zealand, Ms Ani Choying Drolma, the Nepalese Nun famous for her melodious chanting and prayers the world over, to name a few.

Along with screenings, the event also saw a folk dance performance by the Sherpa Cultural Group.

IBC's Empowered Committee meets in Kathmandu

On the sidelines of IBC's The Inner Path- a festival of Buddhist films, art and philosophy held in Kathmandu, Nepal, a meeting of the Empowered Committee too was organised. The second meeting of the Empowered Committee of IBC was held on 17 October, 2019 in Park Village Resort, Kathmandu. The meeting was chaired by Ven Dr Dhammapiya, Secretary General, IBC. It reviewed IBC's various activities and gave directions for future programmes.

Mr Malay K Sinha, Director General (DG), IBC briefed the EC members on the progress of the Scholarship programme for studying Buddhism in India and noted that educational institutions and universities had joined the programme offering to host the students and now the financial details were being finalised. The Committee expressed its satisfaction on the progress. Further, he also informed about other events that have been undertaken till date and programmes that were in the pipeline.



IBC members and others lighting butter lamps.

Photos Courtesy: AajkoNews



View of audience at the opening ceremony





‘Cultivate oneness of humankind’



His Holiness the Dalai Lama greeting the audience accompanied by Dr. Renuka Singh, Director of Tushita Meditation Center at St. Columba's School in New Delhi. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA.

Conflict and violence are the results of untamed anger, selfishness and narrow mindedness which can be curbed if we cultivate the sense of oneness of 7 billion human beings,” the Tibetan spiritual leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama said, speaking at Tushita’s 40th anniversary and 12th Dharma celebration in New Delhi.

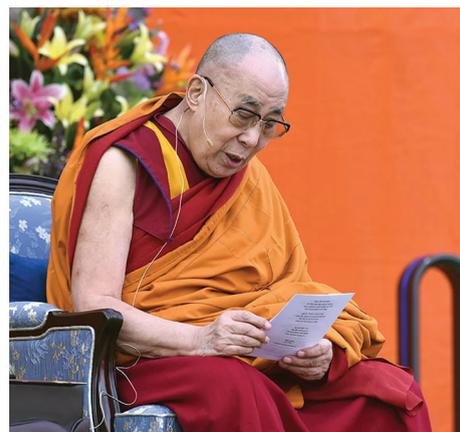
St. Columba’s School was the venue where the highly revered and loved His Holiness delivered a lecture on ‘overcoming anger and anxiety’ to over thousands of people including students from over 20 schools in and around Delhi.

Speaking on cultivating the oneness of humankind, His Holiness asserted that humans irrespective of different religious beliefs are mentally, physically and emotionally the same. Whats more pivotal is that everyone wants a happy life at the end.

“Moreover, these days scientists claim that basic human nature is

compassionate,” His Holiness said.

Left to one’s own devices, humans, as His Holiness explained, are very capable to do more good than harm but unfortunately, humans sometimes lack in using their intelligence. This failure to effectively use the intelligence in a constructive way paves way for



His Holiness the Dalai Lama reciting and explaining the Eight Verses on Training the Mind. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA.

destructive emotions to take over which is why the world is immersed in the man-made problems.

“Since these problems are man-made so logically we are morally responsible for reducing these problems if not eliminating them entirely,” His Holiness asserted.

Pointing out the flaws in modern education, His Holiness mentioned that it heavily lacks the crucial understanding of the workings of mind and emotion, and instead lays much emphasis on leading a materialistic life.

Furthermore, he added that humans are now increasingly asserting the concept of ‘us’ and ‘them’ which is only escalating the gap between people.

“The reality of today’s world is such that the eastern world depends on the western world and vice versa.

Similarly, this entire world is one community so we have to live side by side with a spirit of brotherhood,” His Holiness added. His Holiness urged everyone to imbibe the practice of ahimsa and Karuna in daily life alongwith studying and reviving the ancient Indian knowledge. In fact, he urged the education institutes to include ancient Indian knowledge in their academic curriculum.

“Education should be the medium to promote secularisms, compassion and

The 22nd Dharma Celebration by Tushita Mahayana Meditation Center was held at St. Columba’s School lawns, Delhi on Wednesday 20th November 2019 where His Holiness spoke on ‘Overcoming Anger and Anxiety.’ This topic was selected keeping in mind the needs of the young people and relating it to the notion of mental hygiene propounded by His Holiness.

The year also marks the 40th anniversary of the centre that was established in 1979 by late Lama Yeshe



peace,” added His Holiness.

Speaking especially to the students, His Holiness called them the ‘key people’ vested with a responsibility to build a happy future.

His Holiness highlighted his four commitments to the gathering that are the promotion of oneness of humanity, religious harmony, preserving Tibetan religion, culture and language and lastly to revive the interest in the ancient Indian knowledge.

His Holiness then explained the eight verses on training the mind written by Geshe Langri Thangpa.

*By thinking of all sentient beings
As more precious than a wish-fulfilling
jewel*

*For accomplishing the highest aim,
I will always hold them, dear.*

*Whenever I’m in the company of others,
I will regard myself as the lowest
among all,*

*And from the depths of my heart
Cherish others as supreme.*

*In my every action, I will watch my mind,
And the moment destructive emotions
arise,*

*I will confront them strongly and avert
them,*

Since they will hurt both me and others.

*Whenever I see ill-natured beings,
Or those overwhelmed by heavy misdeeds
or suffering,*

*I will cherish them as something rare,
As though I’d found a priceless treasure.*

Whenever someone out of envy



Students singing a self-composed fusion song. Photo/Tenzin Phende/CTA

*Does me wrong by attacking or
belittling me,
I will take defeat upon myself,
And give the victory to others.
Even when someone I have helped,
Or in whom I have placed great hopes
Mistreats me very unjustly,
I will view that person as a true spiritual
teacher.
In brief, directly or indirectly,
I will offer help and happiness to all my
mothers,
And secretly take upon myself
All their hurt and suffering.
I will learn to keep all these practices*

*Untainted by thoughts of the eight
worldly concerns.
May I recognize all things as like
illusions,
And, without attachment, gain freedom
from bondage.*

”The first seven verses deal with the practices associated with cultivating the method aspect of the path such as compassion, altruism, aspiration to attain Buddhahood, and so on. The eighth verse deals with the practices that are directed toward cultivating the wisdom aspect of the path” explained His Holiness.

Responding to questions from the audience, His Holiness advised practising altruism and compassion above everything else as he noted the purpose of education is serving others. The event was hosted by Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre to commemorate the celebration of its 40th anniversary and its 22nd dharma celebration.

Tushita Centre was established in Delhi by Ven. Lama Yeshe and its current Spiritual Director, Ven Lama Zopa Rinpoche in 1979 for the preservation and promotion of Tibetan Buddhism and Indian Wisdom Culture.

and Lama Zopa Rinpoche.

In 1981, the first Dharma Celebration was held in order to connect His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the people to receive ancient Indian wisdom and to the significance of Buddha Dharma in the lives of people and spread happiness.

The twelfth Celebration saw hundreds of people sitting in orderly rows listening to His Holiness completely captivated with the teachings, a well-organised event, many came up to the organisers to share their thoughts and impressions

on the function. A person in conversation with the Director of the Centre, Ms Renuka Singh was heard saying, “this function is a true reflection of the Indian pluralism as it is a Buddhist function being held in a Catholic school, organised by Sikhs and attended by people of all denominations!”

Tushita has been holding regular meditation classes, discussions, teachings, outreach programme and Dharma Celebrations.



Remembering Anagarika, great reformer and revivalist

Excerpts from the Keynote speech at the Inauguration of Inner Path Festival of Buddhist Films, Art and Philosophy on "Srimath Anagarika Dharmapala", at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi by H.E. Mr. Austin Fernando, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka

Celebrating the 155th birth anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala has been undertaken this year in several places in India, as well in Sri Lanka. For instance, in Bodh Gaya it was coincidental with the inauguration of the International Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, which added value and colour to this year's celebrations. Remembering him was also done in Mahabodhi Society Temple in Delhi and at various other temples in India. Though Anagarika Dharmapala's revolutionary actions for Buddhism were due to an overall neglect that was observed in India, it may be interesting to view the need for extra Buddhist actions even today, in the light of erosion of discipline, values, increase of criminalities as reported from around the world.

Srimath Anagarika Dharmapala was noted for being a crucial personality who spoke at the World Parliament of Religions and who founded the Maha Bodhi Society of India, and restored sacred Buddhist shrines. The former made him an international revivalist and the latter the creator of an institution that was intrinsic to India, that served the local and international needs of revivalism and continuing to be instrumental for the same, even today.

The commitment to such Buddhist revival activities was in Anagarika Dharmapala's blood and behaviour, molded when he was a young boy by the association of Buddhist priests, including Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thero and later with personalities like Colonel Olcott and others. Such mental adjustments to serve religion have to be created in Buddhists, if we need Anagarika Dharmapalas to be created in an ailing society. It is here new technology related to orchestration of ideas and philosophies



At the inauguration of The Inner Path festival of Buddhist films, Art and Philosophy at NGMA, New Delhi, October 10-13, 2019, (L-R) H E Mr Austin Fernando, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Ven Dr Dhammapiya, Secretary General, IBC, Mr Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, Honb'le MP from Ladakh, Mr Adwaita Charan Gadanayak, Director General, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mrs Aruna Vasudev, President, NETPAC India and Mr Malay K Sinha, Director General, IBC

become very important too.

After leaving school at a young age Dharmapala started studying ethics, philosophy, psychology, art and especially biographies and history. These prepared him to take religious challenges and equipped him with capacity to debate his case for Buddhist revivalism. Debating became a necessity for revival then.

His father encouraged young Dharmapala to take a clerical job in a government office, but at the age of twenty he joined the Theosophical Society, where he could learn Buddhist theology. This was a good foundation for his future revivalist activities because it broadened his knowledge and developed attitudes. With the arrival of Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, the revival activities in Buddhism were expanded. It is said that towards this end he expounded revivalism to the Sinhala Buddhists by translating the

letters from Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky into Sinhala language and widely distributing them. For a society falling in to western attitudes influenced by Christian practices that were prevalent then and considered socially more acceptable due to benefits accrued by being thus, this would have been an important means to save an ailing society.

The International Institute in Bodh Gaya which was inaugurated on Anagarika's 155th Birthday could be considered an appropriate action hub, since it resonates with what Anagarika Dharmapala did in Sinhala language then. In his Last Will, Anagarika had stated that he wished to become a Bhikku in India and "preach the Dhamma to Indians". This could be a timely need even today when evils become so rampant. How we can address these issues through media, cinema and other legal and non-legal tools becomes pertinent and this meeting of minds today on the given subject could be a pathfinder.



At the World Parliament of Religions, Anagarika lectured on the topics "The World's Debt to Buddha" and "Buddhism and Christianity," which captivated intellectual attention. He attempted to make Buddhism appealing to his Western audience and delivered talks with references to science, the European Enlightenment, and Christianity. He became internationally recognized after these talks. This could be a relevant path even today in Christian and non-Christian society.

Though Colonel Olcott and Anagarika were engaged in Buddhist activities together, differences arose between the two of them due to apparent conceptual priorities. Colonel Olcott's priority was to spread Buddhism. Anagarika focused on regaining control of Bodh Gaya Temple. When we remember him in Bodh Gaya or in Delhi today and commit for wider Buddhist activities by building infrastructure like the Mahabodhi International Institute, we have to consider our actions as an extension of enhanced continuation of what Anagarika Dharmapala aspired at the end of the nineteenth century.

It was not only Bodh Gaya that was in ruins. For example, the sacred area of Sarnath was so bad he saw the sacred area being used as a pigsty location and bricks of the stupas were being taken away in carts to construct houses and bridges. Emotionally moved, he wrote to the Collector explaining the absolute neglect, stating "To the 475 millions of Buddhists, the Deer Park at Sarnath is holy as Jerusalem is to Christians and Mecca to the Mohammedans". Fortunately we do not face such situations now.

While appreciating the service done by the Government to restore many of India's Buddhist places of worship, it is noted that even today we have to safeguard or upgrade some places of worship. I believe that the Narendra Modi

Government is the best bet to get those achieved. Nevertheless, one may cynically say that we do not have an Anagarika to pursue those efforts. Especially in India and Sri Lanka when we sometimes find fundamentalists, to bring solace through inter faith reconciliation becomes quite important and hence emergence of leaders of Dharmapala's stature becomes exceedingly relevant.

Along with these institutional contributions, Dharmapala's efforts for social reformation went hand in glove. Towards this end, Anagarika visited Myanmar and brought to Bodh Gaya Venerable Shin Chandra and Shin Thuriya, two novice monks, on the recommendation of Saradaw Sandimar, again internationalizing the Buddhist exercise. Internationalizing Buddhist activities started by him has come to stay.

According to literature, Bhikku Devamitta's last words were: "Let me die soon. Let me be reborn. I can no longer prolong my agony; I would like to be born again twenty-five times to spread the Buddha Dhamma." Therefore, when reminiscing Anagarika Dharmapala, we reminisce and project our interest in propagating and sustaining Buddha Dhammas as he wished, and this is why as High Commissioner, my involvement with the monks, institutions and persons involved with what he established give me great pleasure. I considered it a gift that was given to me in Sansara to have been with any such exercise. It is yet another reason for me to be happy today.

Everything is impermanent in life. It was preached by Gautama Buddha, expressing "Anichchaavathasankaaraa". But I think the name of Anagarika Dharmapala seems to be eternal. Today, not only the Mahabodhi Society of India, but also others too think it fitting to venerate and remember the Anagarika.

Anagarika Dharmapala

A Sri Lankan reformer and revivalist, Anagarika Dharmapala, founded the Maha Bodhi Society of India in 1891, and is credited with having revived the practice of Buddhism and Bodh Gaya's heritage in the country.

Anagarika Dharmapala (17 September 1864 - 29 April 1933) is also known to be the first Buddhist in modern times who preached Buddhism in three continents, namely Asia, Europe and North America. As reformer and revivalist, Anagarika Dharmapala's work is symbolic of the symbiotic relationship that has existed between India and Sri Lanka for centuries.

About 2,600 years ago while sitting beneath the Bodhi Tree, after six years of strenuous practice to discover the path that leads to the end of suffering caused by greed, anger and hatred, and ignorance, Prince Siddhartha became the Buddha, attaining Full Enlightenment. In 1891 Dharmapala visited the Bodh Gaya Temple and the Sri Maha Bodhi tree and seeing the neglected condition of the temple vowed to restore the holy place. He founded the Maha Bodhi Society of India, of which academicians Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee were later Presidents. Dr. Mookerjee was later one of the founders of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The society aimed at the revival of Buddhism in India and restoration of the ancient Buddhist shrines in Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar. Anagarika spent the rest of his life to preserve the historical sites in India where the Buddha taught and lived; to protect the Buddhasana in Sri Lanka; and to disseminate the Dhamma throughout the world.

In 1893 Anagarika attended the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago representing the Maha Bodhi Society and the Buddhist world giving a speech, 'The World's Debt to Buddha' thoroughly impressing the participants. His well-received lectures opened the eyes of Western intelligentsia to the greatness of Buddha Dhamma. It is here that he met another philosopher saint Swami Vivekananda from India. The bonding between the two laid the foundation for a lasting relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism, between Dharma and Dhamma and above all between India and Sri Lanka.





BODHIDHARMA

Venerated as Dhyana Master

Bodhidharma, a prince of Kanchipuram, is still venerated in East Asia. In China he is known as Tamo and in Japan as Daruma. His contribution to Buddhism is acknowledged because of the transmission of the philosophy of Dhyana and martial arts to China in about 527 AC. Dhyana is pronounced Ch’an in Chinese, Song in Korea and Zen in Japan. Different means and ways of attaining enlightenment have been preached by the Buddhist masters. Bodhidharma preached immediate insight into the nature of reality.

“A continuation of Memoirs of Eminent Priests” states that Bodhidharma first reached the territory of the Sung dynasty and then proceeded towards the south. According to another record Bodhidharma belonged to the kshatriya caste and was the third son of King Sugandha of South India. His teacher was Prajnatara, at whose advise he undertook a journey for China that took him about three years.

On reaching China Bodhidharma met Emperor Wu-ti of the Liang dynasty in Nanking and had an interview with him. The Emperor enquired if there is any merit in building temples, copying the Sanskrit sutras and permitting people to become monks? Bodhidharma said-no, nothing whatsoever. This is just insignificant and impermanent. It is like the shadow following a body. Whatever is there it is unreal. Wu-ti asked about the real merit. Bodhidharma replied that



This is the fourth in a series on the Great Masters



the characteristic of pure wisdom is so subtle, perfect and void which cannot be sought in the world. Wu-ti was inquisitive about the importance of the holy doctrines. But when Bodhidharma said that all is emptiness nothing can be called holy, the Emperor got upset and angry. Thus Bodhidharma could not come to any understanding with him. No state patronage was available to him. He left Nanking and went to Lo-yang. Then he travelled extensively in many countries. Finally, he established Ch'an Buddhism with its headquarters at Shaolin.

Bodhidharma did not write any texts and preached that true knowledge is gained in meditation by intuition and communicated by transference of thought. His chief thesis is twofold: faith and practice. He defined faith as firm belief in all living beings possessing the same truth. They should give up falsehood and return to reality. They should concentrate their thoughts by facing the wall and thinking that there is no existence of self and others, and the enlightened and profane all are equal. He divided practice into four sections: (a) A practitioner should endure all hardships and think that owing to his previous karma, he is suffering the consequence. (b) He should be contented with his lot, be it sorrow or happiness, loss or gain. (c) He should not hanker after anything. (d) He should act in accordance with the Dharma which is *svabhava* (truth) and is pure.

Lankavatara-sutra is the only text in which the school of thought preached by Bodhidharma has faith because it deals with the principles of meditation. Bodhidharma had handed over his copy of Lankavatara-sutra in four fascicles to his first disciple Huike. The sutra could lead all sentient beings to spiritual opening and enlightenment. The Lankavatara-sutra, later on it was taken to Japan becoming one of the basic texts of Zen Buddhism. This contemplative

tradition of Ch'an was brought to Japan by the Japanese monk Dosho, founder of the Hosso sect, who had gone to China in AD 653. On coming back he established the first meditation hall in Japan to teach the way of meditation. The tradition was further followed by a great monk of the ninth century, Saicho, posthumously entitled as Dengyo-daishi. When Zen came to Japan, its followers were aristocratic. It served poets, painters, sculptors and architects. It also got rooted among the masses. Kenninji in Kamakura was the first large scale monastery constructed in AD 1202. Promotion of Zen was meant for protection of the nation. It has a following of around ten million with twenty-one thousand temples. Soto and Rinzai are the popular sub-sects. They vary in teaching and methods, but meditation remains their foundation. Soto was founded by monk Dogen.

Wife of a Japanese emperor Soga invited a Chinese monk I-kung in the second quarter of the ninth century to establish the doctrine. Zen philosophy is different from all other Buddhist sects being vibrantly alive as a part of the daily



Bodhidharma in China



Bodhidharma in Japan

life at almost all the levels of society. People go to Zen monasteries to practice Zen to learn self-reliance, physical and spiritual discipline, refinement and advancement through concentration, purity of mind and essentiality, inner quest, patience and obedience. It is steeped in its fundamental concepts of *shunyata* and simplicity, beauty and purity, harmony and grace; it advocates futility of non-essentials, worldly trappings and human passions. The conceptual basis of its philosophy is *satori* or sudden enlightenment that is possible through concentration and meditation. Through *satori* the inner-most wisdom becomes free from misconceptions and is awakened. Importance of meditation remains paramount in Zen because action after meditation with an unwavering mind and soul is the Zen spirit.

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Reviving Buddhist Culture in Bengal



Rup Aruper Mayay is a presentation of the Mystic songs of Bengal Baul, Fakir, Kirtan in the Light of Charyapada.

Attodeep, a social and research based NGO, recently showcased a cultural programme on the theme- 'Buddhism in Bengal', at the Nalanda Arts Festival (November 2019) organised by the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (Deemed University) and the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre to mark their foundation day.

The performing arts and folk music of Bengal have a very strong influence of Buddhism, says Madhushree Chowdhury, a film maker, a performing artist and Director of the NGO. The group works mostly around Buddhist texts and is a regular participant at the Global Buddhist Conferences organized by Mahabodhi Society at Bodh Gaya, for the past few years.

Attodeep also performed at the Vesak day celebrations organised by the Ministry of Culture in New Delhi last year. Representing the Bengal Buddhist Association, its performance was Praner Pradip- The Light Of Inner Self, a dance-theatre based on Tagore's thoughts on Buddhism.

Today Attodeep sees a huge potential for building a Buddhist culture in Bengal via the arts. Cultural activities would include demonstrative performances, street theatres, audio drama, musical presentations based on Buddhist

heritage and culture. The NGO has a good collection of spiritual songs and theatrical presentations based on Buddhist poems, songs, dramas from classical to contemporary writers and those of Tagore's thoughts on Buddhism. The vision is to rediscover a Buddhist era through the language of literature, art and culture.

The name Attodeep has been taken from the last words of Tathagata Buddha in Pali-'*Attodeepa Bhava*' meaning '*Let your Inner Light be ignited!*'

Attodeep is a platform of Buddhist culture, literature and philosophy. It works in areas where religion and spirituality connect with culture. Its activities include research, training and performance of many Buddhist art forms, evolution of ancient Indian music, theatre and dance.

Attodeep and Buddhism in Bengal

Ancient Bengal was a centre of Buddhist learning, art and imperialism; in fact, Buddhism is the basis of Bengal's cultural and linguistic heritage as the earliest poem-song in Bengali is *Charyapada* composed by the Buddhist monks. When Buddhism began to decline in different parts of India, it took its last shelter in Bengal.

Interestingly, today researchers are

tracing out a *heritage path* in the soil of Bengal throwing new light into the history of Bengal. All significant excavation sites of West Bengal and Bangladesh lie within the radius of 400 km with Kolkata at its centre. This connecting link is growing stronger with archaeological developments in the Southern parts of Bengal like Tamrolipto, Mogalmari, Chandraketugarh, Dhosa, Dumdum paving a path for the history of Bengal to be revisited.

With these possibilities of developing Bengal from a place of *Latent Buddhism* to *Living Buddhism*, Attodeep is spreading awareness through seminars, lectures, demonstrative performances, and cultural programmes with special focus on the newly developed archaeological sites of West Bengal.

Highlighting Buddhism via the Arts

The Mystic Singers, the wandering minstrels of Bengal (Baul, Fakir, Darbesh and Sai) have preserved the ancient and fascinating Indian tradition of the Charyapada, within their repertoire. The essence of Charyapada or the write-ups on self-explorations that continue to be written today form part of the Attodeep's performances.

The mystic singers of Bengal the Baul, Fakir, Darbesh are ignorant of the fact



Rup - Aruper -Mayay- a presentation of the Mystic songs of Bengal with an insight of Vajrayana Buddhism



Attodeep presents a dance-theatre titled Aro Alo Asuk Prane or Let Your Inner Light Be Ignited based on the poems of Charyapada, Rabindranath, Vivekananda, Jibanananda and many others.

that the root of their songs belong to the most sophisticated and alluring form of Buddhism that is Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism. So the *Sufi* or *Darbeshi* or *Fakiri* and the *kawali* songs of Bengal and most importantly the *Kirtans*, the *Bauls* songs with simple language and soulful music appeal to today's youth a lot. Also the dances based on these songs with deep insights and allegorical meanings can bring out the essence of Buddhism through the abstraction of the movements.

Domni is a traditional dance form which is said to have prevailed in Bengal since the time of Charyageeti as many of their themes still resembles with that of Charya.

Attodeep's repertoire includes compositions on the life and philosophy of Buddha. To mention a few: Girish Ghosh's **Buddhadeb Charit**, Nabin Sen's **Amitabha**, Mohit Chattopadhyay's **Tathagata** and Bani Basu's **Maitreya Jatak** have strong philosophical insights with simple dialogues. They are very contemporary in approach and are both entertaining and enlightening thus appealing to the youth as well.

Other texts that offer great possibilities for performances are Haraprasad Shastri's **Bauddha Dharma**, Satish Chandra Vidyabhusan's **Buddhadeb**, Satyendranath Tagore's **Bauddha Dharma**, Moni Bagchi's **Gautam Buddha**, Rathindranath Tagore's **Buddha Charit**, Abul Fazal's **Manab Putra Buddha** and Rajendralal Mitra's **Living Buddhism in Bengal**. These are treasure troves of intricate Buddhist philosophies which can also be great subjects for future researchers. Based on these authentic texts, seminars and demonstrative performances can be arranged, says Madhushree.

Almost every well-known and eminent poet of Bengal, from both Bangladesh and West Bengal, like Swami

Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Nazrul, Jibanananda, Sankha Ghosh, Samsur Rahman, Sufiya Kamal, Sunil Ganguly, Shakti Chattopadhyay and many others have written remarkable poems on Buddha and Buddhism. Demonstrative, theatrical and dance performances based on these poems can be very effective in enlightening people about Buddhist philosophical thoughts. Attodeep has done several performances based on these poems titled **Buddha Pranam**.

Though **Gaudiya Nritya** is a classical dance form of West Bengal, it has also some Buddhist reference just as the Oddisi dance.

Rabindranath Tagore, the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize for poetry was an ardent lover of Buddha. He has written innumerable poems, songs, drama, and poetic drama in verse that is quintessence Buddhism, in fact many of them are sourced from Buddhist texts.

Gautama Buddha and **Swami Vivekananda** – though they appeared at a gap of two thousand five hundred years – it is easy to identify them as similar and like-minded. The main purpose of their lives is the love for mankind. Vivekananda dedicated to Buddha a long poem titled *Namo Sambuddhao* (Salutation to Buddha).



Buddha Pranam- A collage of Music, dance and theatre



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.

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.



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION

Collective Wisdom United Voice

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Maha Bodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya*

Editor: Vichitra Sharma • **Editing & Design:** Bushchat Media

Published and printed by IBC Secretary General, Ven. Dr Dhammapiya, on behalf of International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

Address: Room No: 330, 330A, 331, 331A, 2nd Floor, Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, New Delhi – 110011 (India)

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