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Supreme Head of Mongolian Buddhists, Mongolia
- ♦ **His Eminence 24th Pandito Khamba Lama Damba Ayusheev**
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- ♦ **His Holiness Late Aggamaha Pandita Davuldena Gnanissara Maha Nikaya Thero**
Mahanayaka, Amarapura Nikaya, Sri Lanka

International Symposium on Scholarship for Studying Buddhism in India

As a part of IBC outreach to connect the Buddhist world with India's vast treasure-trove of Buddhist knowledge, legacy, and heritage, as well as to promote scholarship and research, IBC is on the path of launching an academic initiative in phases.

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'Let's restore and move on': ABCP held in Mongolia

Prayers at the inauguration of the 11th General Assembly of Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP) at the Gandan Tegchenling Monastery

The 11th General Assembly of Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP) was held in Ulaanbaatar, from 21-23 June, 2019 at Mongolia's leading monastery Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, under the benevolent gaze of a huge Statue of Lord Buddha with his two disciples.

It was during the visit of the Indian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Mongolia in May 2015, that he announced the gifting of a Buddha statue with his two disciples to the Gandan Tegchenling Monastery.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations-ICCR was assigned the responsibility of commissioning the statues. It awarded the contract for commissioning and installation of the

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IBC celebrates Buddha Jayanti

The auspicious Vaisakh day of full moon was commemorated by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) in prayers- recitation of the sutras, meditation and discourse on Dhamma.

In his message of greetings to all, including brothers and sisters in the

Dhamma, the Secretary General, Ven Dr Dhammapiya called upon the global community to shun violence in all forms for that is the only way to live a happy and peaceful life. "As nobody wants to be harmed and no living creature wants to die, let us shun violence and also stop the

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PM gifts Buddha statue to Mongolian monastery

Statues to Ram Sutar Fine Arts Private Limited headed by world-famous Sculptor Padmabhushan Shri Ram Vanaji Sutar and Shri Anil Ram Sutar.

The statue was installed in the gigantic Assembly Hall of the Gandan Tegchenling Monastery in April this year with the consecration carried out under Buddhist tradition and ritual. Though, the Statue will be officially inaugurated on 6th September, later this year, the 50th ABCP's General Assembly was held in this huge illustrious hall.

The historic Gandan Tegchenling Monastery was founded in 1809 by the Gelug school of Vajrayana Buddhism, and the institutional and cultural center of Mongolian Buddhism. The monastery's abbot, His Eminence the Khamba Lama Gabju Chojamts Demberel, is the highest-ranking Buddhist leader in the country. He is also president of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace and head of the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations also sponsored a 15-member Laddakh Cultural Group for a performance at the opening ceremony of the Conference that was attended by over 150 guests from 14 countries including India, South Korea, Russia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, North Korea, Vietnam, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand, Japan and Mongolia, with a Tibetan delegation led by Venerable Thupten Ngodup, the Nechung Kuten, and representatives from all of the major Buddhist traditions.

Since ABCP is a registered observer organization of UN, Ms. Ingha Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC, Ambassador and Permanent Representative from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also attended the inaugural ceremony.

From the Mongolian Government, the President Kh. Battulga, the Minister of

Education, Cultural, Science & Sports Mr. Yo. Baatarbileg and several other Members of Parliament were present and delivered remarks during the inaugural ceremony. The messages of the President of Sri Lanka and Prime Minister of Bangladesh were also read out by representatives of the respective countries and handed over to the President of ABCP Khamba Lama Chojamts. The special message of His Holiness Dalai Lama was also screened during inaugural ceremony.

The Conference was held under the theme "Let's restore and move on" in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Assembly. As part of the events, an International Academic Conference was also held on June 22 and 23 under the topic of "Buddhist heritage and values of 21st Century". It was first convened under the aspiration of Asian countries to preserve their cultural heritage through spreading the teachings of the Buddha and valuing wisdom and compassion in ensuring peace.

The leaders who participated in the conference were the most senior Buddhists in the Russian Federation

and in the Republic of Buryatia, the 24th Pandito Khamba Lama Damba Badmayevich Ayusheev; the head lama of the Kalmyk people, Telo Tulku Rinpoche, who is also the honorary representative of the Dalai Lama for Russia, Mongolia, and the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States; and the head lama of the Tuvan people, Lopsan Chamzy.

Among the distinguished guests was the president of Mongolia, Khaltmaagiin Battulga. During the opening ceremony he remarked: "Mongolia has always supported the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace, and it has been seen as a valuable contribution of Mongolians not only to ensuring peace throughout the world but to maintaining its values, which are still valid to this day. Guided by the teachings of the compassionate Buddha, during the difficult times of Cold War, the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace made its voice heard not only in Asia but throughout the whole world. Moreover, it has presented new opportunities in cultural, educational, and economic long-term cooperation where human rights, freedom and unity are upheld.



A session of the 11th General Assembly of the ABCP

Therefore, the conference was registered as an observer to the UN's Economic and Social Council in 1988 in recognition of its contribution to the well-being of humanity through its actions for peace." (from the Office of the President of Mongolia)

The Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace is a voluntary mass movement of Asian Buddhists reflecting their sincere aspirations to realize the ideals of peace, justice and human dignity. Its aim is to bring together efforts of Buddhists in support of consolidating universal peace, harmony and cooperation among people of Asia.

The history of the organization dates to 1968, when three eminent Buddhist monks—Ven. Khamba Lama Samagiin Gombojav (Mongolia), Ven. Khamba Lama Jambaldorj Gomboev (USSR) and Ven. Kushok Bakula Rinpoche (India)—met in Buryatia to discuss the state of Buddhism in the region and to explore the possibility of setting up a Buddhist organization. In July 1969, Ven. Sumanatissa and Ven. Wipulasara (Sri Lanka), Ven. Jinaratana (India) and Ven. Amritananda (Nepal) visited Ulaanbaatar at the invitation of Khamba Lama Gombojav. Over the course of their meeting they agreed to establish an international Buddhist organization in the Mongolian capital.

On 13 June 1970, another meeting was held in Ulaanbaatar, approving a resolution to establish an international organization called the Asian Buddhist Committee for Promoting Peace. The first general assembly was held in the city and Ven. Gombojav was elected president. During the third general assembly in New Delhi in 1974, the organization's current name was adopted, and in the same year His Holiness the Dalai Lama participated in the forum and became an ABCP member.

The ABCP, one of the few religious organizations registered in the United Nations, has since convened 11 general assemblies in Mongolia, Sri Lanka, India, Japan and Laos.

Excerpts from the Report by Gabju D. Choijamts, President of ABCP, Khamba Lama of Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists at the 11th General Assembly of ABCP

Ulaanbaatar, 23 June 2019

Dear Most Venerable monks and lamas of the National Centres,
Brothers and sisters in the Dharma,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to, on behalf of the Mongolian Buddhists and the people of Mongolia, extend my sincere gratitude to you all for accepting our invitation to the 11th General Assembly of ABCP and coming to our beautiful country - the land of blue skies, and extend to you all, with folded hands, a very warm welcome on this auspicious day.

We have all gathered here after quite a long period of time since the last 10th General Conference of ABCP and the present regular Ulaanbaatar General Assembly is important for we are tasked to review and assess our organisation's past history and outline the future goals and objectives.

We Asian Buddhists have together come a long way over the past half a century to unite our efforts for the noble striving of all the sentient beings for peace and tranquillity of all the peoples of our world.

If we look back into the pages of history we find that way back 50 years ago, right here in this land where we have today converged, the foundation stones of our movement for peace were laid.

Let me clarify. In December 1969, Gabju the Learned Samaagiin Gombojav, Khamba Lama of the Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, the Centre of Mongolian Buddhist invited the Most Venerable Sumanatissa Thero of then Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Venerable Amritananda Thero

of Nepal, Venerable Gunaratna Thero of India, and a representative of the Buddhists of the former USSR or present Russia to Ulaanbaatar. While discussing the existing international situation, and the noble goals and objectives of Buddhism, they supported the initiative of the Khamba Lama to unite for carrying out joint actions by Asian Buddhists for the promotion and development of peace in Asia. Guided by this mission, they unanimously decided to call a Meeting of Asian Buddhists in June 1970, thus setting in motion the noble cause of peace promotion.

I would like to bow and pay my deep respect to our gurus - the Most venerable Samaagiin Gombojav of Mongolia, Most Venerable Sumanatissa Thero of Sri Lanka, Venerable Gunaratna Thero of India, Venerable Amritananda Thero of Nepal and Most Venerable Gomboyev of Russia for their enormous contribution to laying the foundation of this noble cause, setting in motion the solidarity movement of the Asian Buddhists, and founding and extending our organisation.

On behalf of the participants in our General Assembly and on my personal behalf I would like to express our sincere appreciation and respect to His Holiness Samdech Tep Vong, the Great Buddhist Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia for your continuous support to the activities of ABCP and for the many years you have been with us.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Dharma,

Our Great Teacher Shakyamuni, the pinnacle of compassion, peace and tolerance, was born on this Earth more



than 2,500 years ago. Lord Buddha showed us the path leading to a peace without suffering, an immortal yearning of humankind. Teaching us that all kinds of suffering are born of our ignorance of the cause of all the sufferings, and showed us how to rid of all this suffering by way of purifying out minds and hearts, and through enlightenment.

The teachings of peace and the manifestation of the ideas of peace spread far and wide in most of the countries of Asia, bringing in its fold thousands and millions of followers, establishing one common universal cultural heritage to become a global religion. Today, peoples living in other continents are also broadly accepting Buddhism. The world Buddhists, true to the teachings of the Great Shakyamuni, have always prayed for lasting peace and have walked in unity under one movement for peace.

In the 1970s, when the dangers of Cold War was growing throughout the world, and when some countries and peoples of Asia were exposed to the devastations of war, Asian Buddhists came together in solidarity and unity to become one of the movements consistently and invariably standing up for peace for humanity, and that organisation, with five scores years of history and which has become an expression of the unity of our heart and soul, and a reliable support of our cooperation is the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace.

ABCP, the peace movement of the Asian Buddhists, guided by the teachings of Lord Buddha, was thus founded with a mission to strengthen peace and security on the Asian continent, unite the peace-loving Asian Buddhists, establish equitable and friendly relations among nations, and spreading the teachings of our Lord Buddha.

Proceeding from this very premise, the first meeting of Asian Buddhists, which was held in Ulaanbaatar in 1970, set up this peace organisation and which began its history under the motto "May fighters with weapons in hand, meet each other with flowers in their hands."

This Meeting issued a resolution on establishing a centre for coordinating the



efforts of the Asian Buddhists for peace, and Mongolia's Khamba Lama S. Gombojav, one of the initiators of the movement, was elected the President of the Centre, and Indian venerable Gunaratana and Venerable Sumanatissa of Ceylon were elected the centre's Vice President, while a Mongolian profession Ch. Jugder was elected the organisation's Secretary general. This marked the beginning of the history of ABCP - an organisation for unity of the Asian Buddhists.

The first member centres of this newly established organisation were the National Centres of India, Mongolia, Russia, Japan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. I would like to emphasise that these National Centres have always actively supported the activities of ABCP and have been true to the founding goals and missions of the organisation even up to today. Taking this opportunity, I would like to sincerely thank the venerable monks and members

of delegations of the founding national centres of ABCP.

Over the past half a century, the activities of our organisation had grown in strength, scale and scope, making strong and broad social impact and cooperation among the Asian Buddhists for peace. A striking illustration of this was the foundation of the ABCP National Centres of Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the fact that delegation of 15 national centers have come here today for our 11th General Assembly. This goes to prove the invariable commitment of the Asian Buddhists to the teachings of Lord Shakyamuni, the values of Buddhism and the supreme mission of ensuring peace throughout the world. Furthermore, this is a striking illustration of the fact that we have all come and gathered here to fight for peace, sustainable development



The inauguration of 11th General Assembly of Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP)

I feel proud to note that the Buddhists of India, the holy land where Shakyamuni gave his first sermons, have always remained the spiritual strength and cornerstone of peace

and well-being of peoples of the world with renewed joint effort, vigour and new commitments.

Allow me to thank you all once again sincerely.

Distinguished Venerable and friends in the Dharma.

The past 50 years of history of the Asian Buddhist movement for peace in the face of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace, overcoming the huge global political and social changes spanning two millennia, is rich in historical lessons. This is our common pride and a joint history. This history can be divided into two basic periods, one pertaining to the 20th century and the other to the 21st century.

The first 30 years of ABCP was closely connected with the events in the last three decades of the twentieth century. We can say that these 30 years were a period of energetic activity of our organisation.

Nine General Conferences of ABCP were held during these 30 years. The First General Conference was held in 1970 in Ulaanbaatar, the then Mongolian People's Republic. The Second one was held in Kandy, Sri Lanka in 1972, the third in 1974 in New Delhi, India, the fourth in Tokyo, Japan in 1976, the fifth and sixth General Conferences in Ulaanbaatar in 1979 and 1982, the seventh in 1986 in Vientiane, Laos, the eighth and the ninth General Conferences were held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. These General Conferences outlined the goals and objectives of the organisation in light of the pressing global and regional issues, and took important decisions that emboldened the spirit, hopes and cooperation of the Asian Buddhists.

The 10 year activities of ABCP, spanning the period from 1970 to 1980, depending on the then existing circumstances, were special years prompting our organisation

to strongly raise our voice for peace and redouble our efforts for tranquillity for the peoples of Asia and putting an end to foreign wars and aggressions in the continent by stepping up the involvement of the Asian Buddhists in these endeavours. These efforts were also spearheaded at banning weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons, and promoting universal disarmament.

The first five General Conferences, held in Kandy, New Delhi, Tokyo and Ulaanbaatar, guided by these goals and objectives, galvanised the efforts of the Asian Buddhists, thus making a practical contribution to the cause of global and regional peace, and it became a recognised part of the international body of peace-loving organisations, which can be qualified as the key achievements of ABCP.

The first General Conference in Ulaanbaatar issued an Appeal for Peace in Asia and putting an end to the Vietnam War, and supported the initiative of uniting the Buddhists of the Asian countries for peace.

The Second General Conference in Kandy, Ceylon adopted a special resolution on Indo-China and an Appeal to all Buddhists of Asia and the World to defuse regional and international tensions, guarantee the right to peace, progress and development, and reminded the aggressors and instigators of wars and violence, that

"He who, by causing pain to others,
Wishes to obtain peace for himself,
He, entangled in the bonds of hatred,
Will never be free from hatred"

(Dhammapada)

Recalling the teaching of the Lord Buddha and accordingly, the ABCP President had appealed to remain invariably committed to peace. I would like to, from this podium, specifically note that the Buddhists of Sri Lanka even today continue to be true to the teachings of Lord Shakyamuni, and have become the vanguards in the struggle for peace.

The New Delhi Declaration, adopted at the Third General Conference held in India in 1976, was particularly significant



for it added fresh impetus to the growth and development of our organisation, expanded the framework of its activities, and outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Buddhists, especially Buddhists of Asia.

I feel proud to note that the Buddhists of India, the holy land where Shakyamuni gave his first sermons, have always remained the spiritual strength and cornerstone of peace. India was the first country to support our movement and the interest of our organisation, rendering comprehensive support.

Today, we must celebrate the name, the efforts and contributions of our Great Teacher Bakula Rinpoche, the former President of ABCP.

And so, taking this opportunity, on behalf of the Mongols and the national centre delegates present here, I would like to sincerely thank the delegation head and members of delegation of the India ABCP National Centre for preserving with honour this tradition in the new Millennium, and who, in support of our today's General Assembly, have come here in Ulaanbaatar.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Dharma,

Conflicts and contradictions have become frequent in recent years in the region and in the world; major influential countries are resorting to mutual sanctions, imposing their own will against each other, mounting trade and information technology war, and are refusing to address all issues through either talks or dialogue. What's more some major powers have even relinquished the disarmament agreements, and are increasing their military budgets, and have mounted an arms race. All this are fraught with the danger of putting under threat the peaceful and tranquil life of the global humanity.

Alongside this, ecological crisis, global climate change, hunger, poverty and pandemics owing to the dire shortage of potable water and food, the growing social gap owing to the unbalanced distribution of wealth, international human trafficking and other global crimes demand collective solution through collective effort from

every one of us here today.

Under such circumstances, there arises the imperative need to revive and intensify the activities of ABCP. On the other hand, the political and economic situation of the member countries are becoming stable, the National Centres have a better capacity to carry out activities on their own, they are being replenished with a new generation of monks and lamas, and better realise the roles and responsibilities of the Buddhists in the ever-changing and evolving world,



Mongolian President Kh. Battulga

and proceeding from all this, there have been new ideas and suggestions for strengthening and intensifying out joint efforts.

Striking examples of this were the Executive Council meetings, first held in May 2017 in New Delhi at the initiative of the India ABCP National Centre, and the second Executive Council meeting held in May 2018 in Dhaka, Bangladesh where it was decided that the 11th general Assembly of ABCP would be held in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia.

The state and government of Mongolia, with due account of the developing circumstances in the world, have been expressing their interest and initiative to revive the activities of the international

peace organisation, with its headquarters in Mongolia.

The Honourable Prime Minister of Mongolia, U. Khurelsukh, addressing the 73rd Session of the UN General assembly in 2018 had said, "More recently, in the 20th century, in the epoch of the Cold War, we were conducting salient activities for combining voices of international Buddhists for the world peace through the Asian Buddhists Conference for Peace (ABCP), established in 1969 and we are achieving tangible results in the fight against the ideological divide. Nowadays, we deem there is a pressing demand for effective dialogue mechanisms, such as the ABCP, which has consultative status at the UN ECOSOC. Thus, we are determined to revitalize its activities at regional and international arenas." This statement of our Prime Minister are consonant with my striving and aspirations to revive and project the ABCP and its activities to a new level, the afore-mentioned calls and appeals, and accordingly set up a National Organising Committee for the organisation of the 11th General Assembly under the motto "Rejuvenation and Way Forward." The organising committee worked very hard and made very good preparations for the General Assembly. I would like to thank you all for your hard work.

I would also like to thank all the ABCP National Centres, who too are full of determination to project their own activities to new levels and heights, for coming to this General Assembly with new thoughts and ideas.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Dharma,

The present 11th General Assembly is extremely important for all of us. I am confident that the General Assembly would be successful by mapping out the future goals and objectives, the long-term mission of our organisation with constructive ideas and suggestions, within the precinct of the new revised Charter of ABCP, which would carefully lay out the organisational and structural set up of the organisation.

The General Secretary, members of the National Organising Committee and I personally, actively worked for the draft-

ing of the new revised version of the ABCP Charter; and the draft revised Charter had been shared with all the National Centers for their feedback, comments and suggestions. I would like to thank those National Centres that had sent in their comments and suggestions earlier.

Our organisation, while consistently implementing its noble mission must expand the direction of its activities by promoting international collaboration to implement the 17 goals of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, covering a host of issues such as economy, environment, peace and security and in this respect we consider it very timely the participation of the President of ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council) Honourable Ambassador Rhonda King in our 11th general Assembly. ABCP is determined to intensify its activities for peace and shall work to gain the 'C' Consultative status of ECOSOC.

In view of this, one another important task would be to increase the number of ABCP members. In this respect, the Dhaka Executive Council meeting had already agreed to improve outreach and establish contacts and relations with the Buddhists in the ASEAN and SAARC regions. Accordingly, Ven. Dr. Khy Sovanaratana of the Cambodia ABCP National Centre and Mr. Sonam Wangchuk of the ABCP India National Centre were appointed as the two Regional Coordinators. Availing of this opportunity, from the podium of this General Assembly, I would like to call on the heads of the National Centres to make the above initiative a practical reality.

An international scholarly conference is being organised on the sidelines of the 11th General Assembly involving eminent scholars from the regional countries, research institutes, colleges and universities. I am confident that this scholarly conference would come up with valuable proposals and recommendations for the future development policy and actions of ABCP.

I would like to sincerely thank you all again and wish success to the deliberations.

May the Triple Gem bless our noble deeds.

With inputs from ICCR and Buddhistdoor

2019 ULAANBAATAR DECLARATION

**Adopted on the Auspicious Occasion of
50th Anniversary and Eleventh General Assembly of
Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace**

June 21-24, 2019

We, Buddhist monks and laymen, representatives of peace-loving Buddhists from Asia, gathered for the Eleventh ABCP General Assembly, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of ABCP, at Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, being conscious of new changes and developments taking place in the international arena, more particularly in the recent past, take commitment to uphold global peace, morality, unity, and equality based on the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni and UN sustainable development.

Whereas, as Buddhists what can we do to bring about a qualitative change in the life of the people through sustained spiritual development and moral values in conformity with the noble teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni, who taught us to overcome greed, hatred, jealousy, violence, cruelty and revengefulness by building an attitude of unconditional love, universal brotherhood and contentment.

Now, therefore, at the conclusion of our successful celebrations and meetings we, the assembled delegates, unanimously resolve and adopt this Declaration.

Article 1: Buddhist Response to Peace, Disarmament and Conflict Avoidance

1.1. All nuclear tests should be banned and anti-proliferation treaties, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons should be fully implemented. We pray for surviving Hibakushas and the successful outcome of the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference.

1.2 Extremism, radicalization and terrorism in the name of religion,

ideology or any other premise should be opposed at all levels.

1.3 Create cultures of peace and justice across civilisations, cultures and religions by co-ordinating dialogue among civilisations and cultures in order to prevent conflicts and support efforts for inter-cultural and inter-religious peace-building.

1.4 Stand for respect of human rights and against discrimination in all forms.

1.5 Build bridges of inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding, dialogue and cooperation to overcome the social, economic, cultural and religious dynamics that increase the risk of wars.

1.6 Develop commitments in all areas of life to building peace and to dissolving potential for conflict.

1.7 Join forces, share new insights and traditional wisdom, coming from a diversity of civilisations and religions can prevent injustices and dangers that threaten our life community on this planet.

Article 2: Buddhist Response to Sustainable Development

2.1 Climate change is causing havoc and poses existential crisis before the only planet we all live in. We call on all nations to work towards sincere implementation of all international agreements, protocols and treaties on climate change.

2.2 Nature Conservation can neither be sidelined nor overlooked as other species who co-habit this planet are being wiped out too due to effects caused by us humans bearing in mind the interdependence of nature and the welfare of all sentient beings.



2.3 ABCP member countries all signatories of global development goals; given that only 11 years are left before the implementation of these goals, ABCP National Centres commit themselves to work closely with their respective governments in collaboration with the UN and other multilateral bodies to speed up the implementation of these goals for the benefit of all.

Article 3: On Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation

3.1 Promote the unity and harmony among religious groups, further exchanges and cooperation with the religious organisations in all countries

3.2. Insist on the principles of friendship, peace, development and cooperation, cherishing peace in the religious organisations.

3.3. Form attitudes of individuals and societies towards the 'other' so that there would be no brutal acts of individuals can be made in the name of religion and violent groups within religious traditions.

3.4. Foster the inspiring and peace-building elements of religions, more effective ways of dialogue and cooperation among religions and between the world of politics and religions are needed.

Article 4: On the Status of Gender Equality

4.1 Promote equal rights of women in religious practices.

4.2 Promote women's rights, gender equality and empowerment of women.

4.3 Accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic, social, educational and religious fields.

4.4 Advocate access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and work.

4.5 Eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women.

Signatories to the declaration: Heads of the ABCP National Centres.

ABCP Bangladesh National Centre 1	Most Ven. Sanghanayaka Suddhananda Mahathero
ABCP Bangladesh National Centre 2	Jibanananda Barua
Cambodia National Centre	His Holiness Samdach Preah Tep Vong
Department of Religion and Culture, CTA, Dharamsala	Most Ven. Thupten Ngodup
ABCP India National Centre	His Eminence Lochen Tulku Rinpoche
Japan Religious Persons Council for Peace	Most Ven. Shohaku Kishida
ABCP Korean National Centre, DPRK	Most Ven. Kang Su Rin
ABCP Korean National Centre, Taego Order, Republic of Korea	Ven. Dr. Woneung Lee Chi Ran
Buddhist Fellowship Organisation of Lao People's Democratic Republic	Most Ven. Khamvan Voradeth
ABCP National Centre Gandan Tegchenling Monastery	Most Ven. Da Lama Kh. Byambajav
ABCP National Centre Dashichoiling Monastery	His Eminence Dr. Ch. Dambajav Khamba Lama
ABCP Nepal National Centre Anandkuti Vihar	Ven. Bhikkhu Maitri Mahthera
Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia, Ivolginsky Datsan Ulan-Ude, Buryatia	Most Ven. Khamba Lama Damba Ayusheev
Russian Federation, Aginsky Datsan	Ded Khamba Lama Ven. Tsyren
ABCP National Centre	Dondukbaev
ABCP Sri Lanka Centre (Ven. Dr. Sumatissa Chapter)	Ven. Prof. Pallekande Rathanasara Mahathero
ABCP Sri Lanka National Centre (Ven. Dr. Wipulasara Chapter)	Ven. Dr. Maitipe Wimalasara Mahathero
National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Vietnam	Most Ven. Dr. Thich Duc Thien
Combined Buddhist Universities of Vietnam	Prof. Dr. Le Manh That

Article 5: On Children and Youth

5.1 Ensure that the rights, safety, the right to education and well-being of all children and young people are recognised, respected and protected.

5.2 Stand firmly against all forms of child labor, use of children in armed conflicts, sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and support all efforts towards their eradication.

5.3 Bring the views and experiences of children and young people to the attention of government and the community.

5.4 Create child-safety and child-friendly environment, where children and young people with whom we have contact are safe and feel protected.

5.5 Advocate for service responses to meet the needs of marginalised children and young people.

Article 6: On Buddhist Traditions, Culture and Heritage

6.1 Assist and complement the actions of the member states of ABCP in preserving and promoting Buddhist traditions and cultural heritage.

6.2 Mobilise knowledge, research and reinforce international cooperation on Buddhist cultural heritage for stronger global Buddhist partnerships.

6.3 Safeguard tangible Buddhist cultural heritage such as holy Buddhist monuments, historical buildings and archaeological sites in India, Nepal and around the world, including non-Buddhist countries and maintain their sanctity.

6.4 Work to make the most of digital technology to record, document and preserve Buddhist cultural heritage and make it available online.

Encourage the expansion of Buddhist NGOs which actively and substantively engage in disaster relief, social welfare and the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Declared on this day the 23rd of June 2019, at ABCP Headquarters at the Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia by the heads of delegations of the ABCP National Centres.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM on Scholarship for Studying Buddhism in India

As a part of IBC's efforts to connect the Buddhist world with India's vast treasure-trove of Buddhist knowledge, legacy, and heritage, as well as to promote scholarship and research, IBC is on the path of launching an academic initiative in phases.

Such an initiative is rooted in the well-chronicled ancient tradition of India's Nalanda University and other similar centers of higher learning which drew students and scholars from all over the world. Since Buddhism was founded in India and the most important Buddhist places associated with Shakyamuni Buddha's life are found here, India is the natural destination for in-depth Buddhist learning.

Prof. Geshe Ngawang Samten, Vice-Chancellor of the Central University for Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, and leading IBC's academic programme says India is the natural destination for higher education in Buddhist studies. As everyone knows, Buddhism is rooted in India, being the land of the origins of Buddha dharma.

Scientists around the world are now discussing quantum physics- the nature of matter that eventually everything dissolves and so on, this is not new for us. Buddha had spoken about it and we had a huge body of literature on the subject.

The Indian Buddhist traditions covering logic, epistemology and philosophy are unique and it's this depth in our Buddhist studies that draws lay scholars as well as those following a monastic way of life to India.

The various seats of Buddhist learning in India including the revived modern Nalanda University and many other universities in India with separate faculties of Buddhist studies provide existing resource base to build upon. Therefore, this initiative aims to contribute to reviving India's place as an international seat for the study of Buddhism and its multifaceted evolution.

IBC will offer Scholarships for studying Pali/Sanskrit and Buddhist Studies at various universities/institutions in India and later abroad. In the first phase, it will provide scholarships for higher studies to interested students from abroad to study in India. In the second phase, the programme will be expanded to Indian students wanting to study abroad.

Under a mentoring system wherein the international students coming to India on scholarship will also remain in close touch with IBC for any assistance or internship even after returning to their respective countries.

IBC will also establish academic chairs in Buddhist Universities of South, South East and East Asia and will also mentor a Buddhist Leadership and Volunteers (Dhammadoot) programme for the youth.

To initiate the process, IBC is organizing a two-day International Symposium on Scholarship for Studying Buddhism in India on 20-21 July, 2019. This two-day symposium is designed with the intention of deliberating upon and arriving at detailed modalities with regard to eligibility criteria, selection procedures, courses to be offered in Indian universities and monasteries, and related subjects.

The Symposium will be a two-way interaction between Buddhist academics from Indian Institutes and representatives from overseas Buddhist institutions. The potential Indian host-institutions, representing major universities and monastic institutions would give an overview of the educational prospects in their respective university/monastery, including the details of possible courses that may be offered and duration of the courses and other related facilities. As part of the dialogue there will be suggestions and feedback from the invited overseas participants managing and conversant in the area of academic exchanges.



Life and Legacy of **Atisha Shri Dipankarajnana** (982 - 1054 CE) and Cultural Renaissance in Tibet

This feature on Atisha aims at showcasing his life and legacy from birth to nirvana, through photographs of the related places and monasteries in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal and Tibet. Valuable relics preserved in Tibetan monasteries like the statue of Devi Tara that he worshiped and carried with him to his work place, caves where he taught, (class rooms) his walking stick, his seats, the manuscripts that he brought from Indonesia from his guru, biography painted on the walls of a Tibetan monastery, manuscripts, his disciples and people associated with him in laying a strong foundation of Buddhism in Tibet giving it a unique identity.

Atisha Sri Dipankarajnana the Indian teacher was born in the village Vajrayogini in Bikrampur region of Bengal, currently in Bangladesh, in 982 CE. He was a great saint-philosopher of 10th-11th century, the last among the great Indian teachers who went to Tibet for re-establishing and cleansing Buddhism.

The people and the kings of Tibet made sacrifices to invite him to reform and reinvigorate the lax, corrupt and decaying systems. He revolutionized the social, religious and cultural lives of the people in Tibet. Atisha has been venerated for nearly 1000 years as a revered personality, as a shining symbol of peace, compassion, humanism, self-sacrifice, harmony and amity in the Buddhist countries.

During his life in India, Atisha had devoted his energies for protection



Statue of Atisha at Shalu monastery, Tibet

His preaching electrified the monks as well as the common people with a new concept of moral purity, self-sacrifice, nobility of character and idealism.

Atisha had received, practiced, and mastered the instructions on Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana schools of Buddhism, and non-Buddhist schools of his times- including Vaisnavism, Shaivism and Tantrism, studied sixty-four kinds of arts including music and logic, and accomplished them by the age of twenty-two; was ordained into the Mahasanghika lineage at the age of twenty-eight. He was regarded highly by all the traditions of Buddhism in India at the time.

At the age of thirty-one, Atisha set off for a perilous journey to Sumatra in order to study under the reputed Suvarnavapi Dharmakirti. Goddess Tara was his guiding spirit and continued to be so until the end of his life, Atisha remained there for twelve years.

After over a decade of intensive training, he returned to Magadha. Soon he was appointed to the position of steward, or abbot, at the venerable Buddhist university Vikramashila, established by the King Dharmapala of Bengal and soon rose to prominence.

In the 11th century, the Tibetan King Byang-chub 'Od invited Atisha when monastic Buddhist tradition of Tibet had been nearly wiped out after King Langdar-ma's intolerant reign. He has been an important figure for last ten centuries in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition because

**This is the second
in a series on the
Great Masters**

and dissemination of Dharma at the monastic universities like Odantapuri, Vikramashila, Somapuri and Nalanda. He played a singular role in infusing wisdom and resurgence of Buddhism, laying a foundation of Buddhism in all its purity.



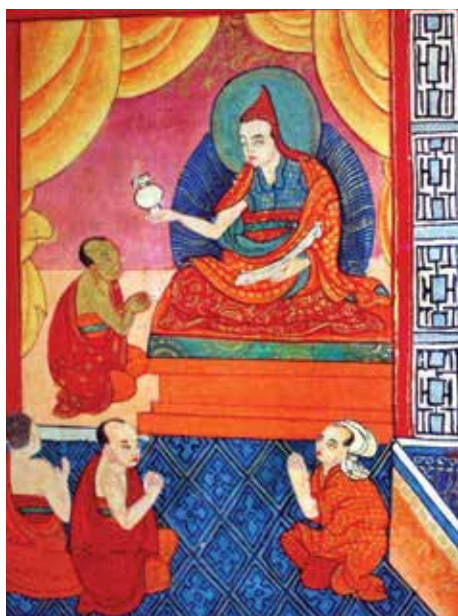
Birth place of Atisha in Bangladesh



The stick carried by Atisha wherever he traveled, still preserved with utmost devotion



Birth of Atisha from Drepung monastery, Tibet



Atisha receiving initiation from his teacher in Indonesia

he revived, refined, systematized, and compiled an innovative and thorough approach to *bodhichitta* known as “mind training” (Tib. *lojong*), in such texts as A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment, and established its primacy to the Mahayana tradition in Tibet.

Atisha wrote, translated and edited more than two hundred books from

Sanskrit into Tibetan to spread Buddhism. He also wrote several books on Buddhist scriptures, medical science and technical science in Tibetan. Several books written by him in Sanskrit are extant only in Tibetan translations now.

Atisha spent nine years in Nyetang, a town near Lhasa, where he discovered Tibetan libraries with impressive

collections written in both Sanskrit and Tibetan. He passed away in AD 1052 at the prophesied age of seventy-two in a village near Lhasa. He was enshrined near his last permanent home in the town of Nyetang. Drom-ton-pa, the principal disciple of Atisha kept his legacy, and this became later known as the Kadampa tradition of Buddhism. This was later revived by the Tibetan teacher Tsong-kha-pa, the founder of the Gelug tradition.

The essence of the teachings of Atisha play a valuable role both for the monastic and lay societies a millennium later. Researching, reminding and reviving the unexplored avenues of the life and legacy of Atisha, is essential for enhancing systems of our times and understanding his great contribution to world history. The world today is suffering from over advancement of technology, fuelling greed, hunger and violence. Values and social conventions are losing ground. Traditional spiritual beliefs and practices, along with socio-political systems are a need of the day for harmony in life and enhancing cultural relations amongst all Asian countries.

By **Prof. Dr. Shashibala**, Dean, Centre for Indology, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Delhi Kendra, specializes in Buddhist arts and cross cultural connections among Asian countries



Demystifying the Buddhist *Tantra*

In order to elaborate on *tantra* and its alignment in Buddhist thought and practice there are two moot points that need to be examined. The first is to explore the alignment of *tantric* practices in Buddhist philosophy carefully, considering the exotic-notoriety that *tantra* conjures in the minds of most of us, and in terms of secret-occultism it is associated with. The second is the answer to the question, did the Buddha teach *tantra*? Is *tantra* an authentic and genuine part of the repertoire of Buddhist practice? An answer to these questions are necessary since there are many Buddhists from the Southern schools or Theravadins, and many from the Northern or Mahayana schools who disbelieve that the Buddha taught *tantra*. This article explores with both a logical as well as an inspirational viewpoint this fundamentally important issue.

We can begin with an understanding that the Buddha taught a way of life and



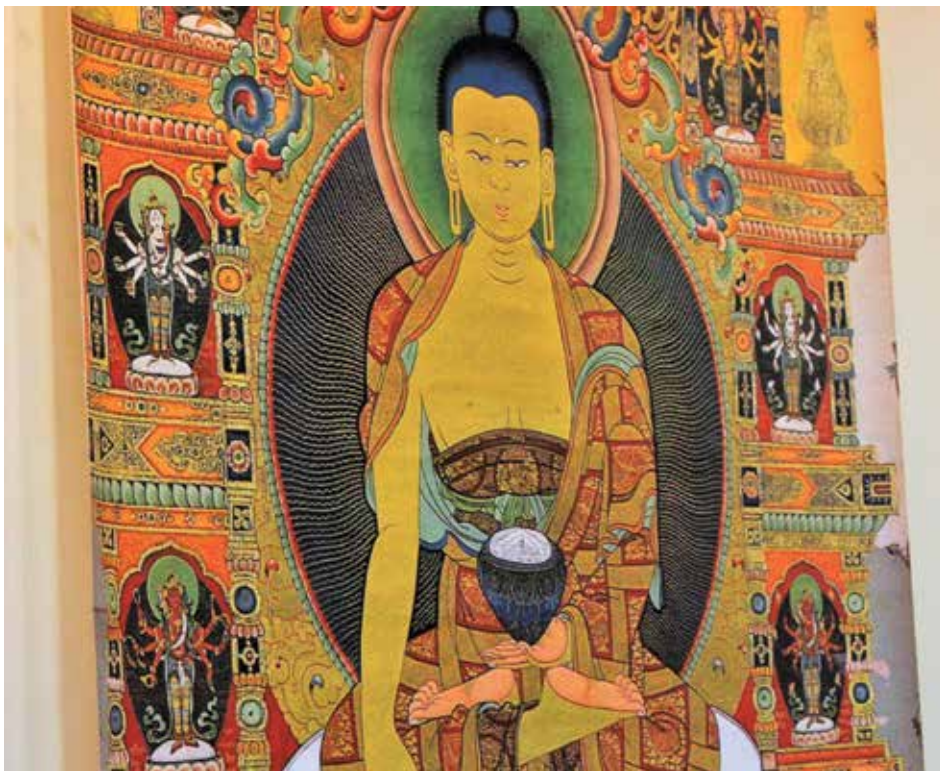
Dharma Cakra

learning and that from the vast doctrine expounded by the Buddha spanning nearly 45 years there arose the sophisticated philosophies, insightful treatises and other metaphysical profundities. Further along the path of the Foe Destroyed (*Arhat*) and the Solitary Hearer (*Pratekyabuddha*) of the individual Vehicle (*Theravada*) practitioners, the potential Buddha-to-be transcends his motivation from just personal emancipation to help others along the path.

This altruist intent begins with the first thought (*adhicinta*) of the *Mahayanist's* advent on to the Perfection Vehicle (*Paramitayana*) where the aspirant begins to exhibit a special qualities of charity (*dana*), ethics (*shila*), heroic effort (*virya*), patience (*ksanthi*), higher knowledge (*jnana*) and ensuing wisdom (*prajna*). The next stage raising from the altruist intent on the *Mahayana* path is the Adamantine Vehicle or *Vajrayana*.

Vajrayana is also known as the *Mantrayana* or *Tantrayana* and constitutes the four progressive states of the Action (*Kriya*), Performance (*Carya*), Yoga (*Anuttara*) and Highest Yoga (*Mahaanuttara*) *tantras*. These *tantra* in themselves contain the mother (*Yamantaka*, *Guhasamaja*), father (*Cakrasamvara*, *heruka*) and neutral (*Kalacakra*) *tantras*. One undertakes the *Theravada* when one wishes to free oneself from the ills of *samsara*. Such a person realizes the short comings of cyclic existence and then generates an intense desire to escape from it. It gradually dawns on the person that he is but one person whereas sentient beings are innumerable and therefore it seems only more logical to sustain one's spiritual quest, not only for one's individual sake but for all sentient beings.

If we attempt to describe the three paths based on their scope and outcomes we can see a structure that helping the spiritual aspirant's travel on the path of self-realization. These can be categorized as disciplined-*vinaya* efforts directed towards personal liberation and correspond to the *Theravada*; the generation of altruistic-*sutric* intentions with an enlightening attitude to free all sentient beings from the cycle existence due to the shortcomings of *samsara* and is the *Mahayana* path, and; the application of *abhidharmic*-metaphysics and the *tantric*-esoteric communion through deity yoga through arising in the illusory body under the practices and processes of



Buddha Sakyamuni surrounded by the pantheon of his tantric manifestations



Dakhinis bearing auspicious symbols of Buddha's Enlightening Activity

the *Vajrayana* or esoteric-tantric path.

What needs special mention here is that for practicing *Vajrayana*, the altruistic intents of a *Mahayanist* become imperatively more important or else the practice of *Vajrayana* becomes a greater cause for samsara and its enmeshments rather than leading the aspirant towards the goal of Buddha-hood.

For the sceptics who claim that the Buddha never taught *Vajrayana* or *Tantra*, it is important to understand that there exists no contradiction whatsoever between the *Theravada*, *Mahayana* and the *Vajrayana* systems of Buddhist thought and practice. They essentially all dovetail into one another and snugly fit into the other like nested loops, and therefore complement each other, rather than contradict each other as so some people unfortunately think.

While the Buddha never taught the *Tantra* in the first or the second or

the third. turning of the wheel, yet he is supposed to have emanated in his *sambhogakaya* at Vultures Peak and first taught the *Kalachakra Tantra* to a chosen few, which lays to rest the controversy that the Buddha never taught the *tantras*.

When the eight worldly considerations play havoc with the body, emotions and minds of some of us there arises a need to apply spiritual balm to heal the bruises to our mind, emotions and body. Our constant need to win, gain fame and profit and receive praise can play havoc with our equanimity and positivity causes anxiety and pain. This becomes the reason for someone to run for refuge to the *Buddha*, *Dharma*, *Sangha* and a *Guru*.

It is a strangely comfortable introverted state which comes from keeping emotions at bay, primarily arising out of withdrawing from our attachments. It is only but natural that as a direct consequence of such a noble and valiant motivation.

The energy-intent-energy-intent loop arising from this motivation (*virya*), the aspirant's focus gets transmuted from the esoteric to the exoteric plane, 'an outward movement of one's gaze, in which one realizes that while he has been able to come out of a life of strong afflictive emotions, there are others who are still affected by it. It is out of a calm-benevolence from where arises the wish to benefit others of a similar calm peacefulness. This altruistic wish to help all sentient beings cross the four rivers of suffering and attain the stable, calm and insightful state similar to his becomes the first thought' or *adiscinta* of the aspiring *Bodhisattava*.

While there is a heady mix of benevolence, compassion, and empathy, these positive feelings are initially more at an intellectual level. This is also strengthened through the practice of exchanging self for others (Tib. *lo-jong*) and the preliminaries contemplations



of the graded path (*Tib. lam-rim*) and which entails contemplating on death and impermanence, shortcomings of samsaric existence and karmic law of cause and effect. Pro-social priming is harnessed through meditating on the four immeasurables which constitute generating loving kindness (*maitri*), compassion (*mudita*), empathetic joy (*karuna*) and equanimity (*upeksha*).

These powerful contemplative practices give rise to a different manifesting frequencies of energy which being to operationalize our thinking, feeling and knowing. Different neural coordinates are triggered out of altered settings in our bio rhythm, endocrine network and the practitioner can begin to explore and detect finer ways of think, feeling, knowing and doing i.e. skilful means or *upaya*. Exploring new pedagogies within one's own continuum hereto unknown, undiscovered and ignorant about. There is a heroism that arises out of unfamiliar-self-awareness, shifting of ego states from self to others



The Universal Mantra for generating Bodhicitta – Om Mani Padme Hum!

and manifesting ingenuity to surpass oneself in available resources, magi-like to help and benefit others on the path of dharma. Fully realising that active peace is not necessarily an absence of war, and it is this intent to instigate arousal of heroic endeavours to benefit others; and that gives rise to the warrior-ship of the *Bodhisattvas*.

The act of helping, benefitting others through the path of the sacred warrior gives rise to an intoxication, and that

beckons the advent for the *sadhaka* into the sacred *Tantra*. It's important to understand that the advent into tantra is intent-less – as natural as a fruit appearing on a tree – naturally and uncontrived!

Therefore, *Theravada* is like sowing a seed, which is deliberate, disciplined, effort to hone the body-mind combine with and nourishing skills and attitudes. *Mahayana* is like nurturing the plant – watering, protecting and pruning it for sustenance. Expressing fundamental love, affection and gentle care. *Theravada* entails strict discipline. Practice of *Mahayana* entails elegance and benevolence. *Vajrayana* path appears as a result of the practice of *Theravada* and *Mahayana* and in this sense it is uncontrived. It is like fruits appearing on the tree as a natural consequence. The actual practice of *Vajrayana* is essentially the consummation of the fruit. The path of *Vajrayana* reveals the clear light of bliss, the light of wisdom cognizing the nature of emptiness of self and all phenomenon. It annihilates ignorance – without ignorance both attachment and aversion left no support to cling to.

Buddhist tantras presuppose and require that the union between the skilful means or *upaya*, represented by the *vajra*-moving principle pouring its wholesome enlightening activity into the ghaṇṭa-receptacle which is also the wisdom encapsulating *Prajnaparamitahradya* or the heart-wisdom of the universal mother!

**!!OM GATE GATE PARAGATE
PARSAMGATE BODHI SVAHA!!**

By **Dipankar Khanna**

(The author is a Scholar-in-residence at Srishti Institute of Art Design and Technology, Bangalore)



Buddhasakya muni surrounded by the pantheon of this tantric manifestations

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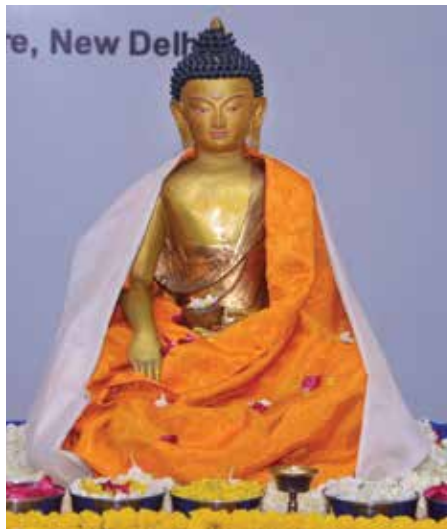
IBC celebrates Buddha Jayanti

killing of animals,” the Venerable stressed.

The Secretary General urged all to “lead a life without fear or vindication, avoid reckless consumption and thoughtless exploitation of nature. Let’s be mindful in our thought and action so that we can protect the environment and our mother earth.” On this thrice-blessed day (Sakyamuni’s Birth, Enlightenment and Mahaparinirvana), Venerable Dr. Dhammapiya recalling the teachings of Lord Buddha, said “let us open our heart and radiate boundless love and compassion in all directions, treat everyone as our own with much love and care so that no living creature is harmed.”

The Secretary General’s discourse was extremely meaningful and inspirational, reflecting on the issues confronting today’s world. The celebrations were held in a colourful atmosphere, yet marked by devotion. Ven Lama Lobzang, working President of IBC and President of Asoka Mission was the Chief Guest who started the function with an invocation, followed by the Mangalacharan blessings by the Monks of the Theravada Tradition, the Refuge and Bodhicitta prayers by the Mahayana Monks.

In his welcome address, the Director General of IBC Mr Malay K. Sinha presented a brief overview of IBC and its outreach. Inspirational teachings and quotations of Shakyamuni Buddha were recited by



IBC Secretary General, Ven Dr Dhammapiya

Ven Kabir, a meditation instructor and spiritual programme coordinator of Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre in New Delhi. A short meditation session was conducted by Dharmacharya Shantum Seth, Buddhist Scholar and Practitioner in the Zen Tradition, and representing the Ahimsa Trust. A very powerful film on the relevance of Buddha Purnima was also shown at the function.

A unique part of the programme was the inclusion of the voice of youth and what Buddhism meant to the young. Ms Angmo Dechen shared how Buddhism gave her strength and resilience to endure the loss of her father at a young age.

The Executive Director of IBC, Mr. Gobind Khampa delivered a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the participants. The function was attended by monks, government officers, lay persons, students, and members of the diplomatic community: they were H.E. Mr. Austin Fernando, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, H.E. Mr. Nilamber Acharya, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Nepal, H.E. Mr. Bounneme Chouanghom, Ambassador, Embassy of the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, H.E. Mr. Moe Kyaw Aung, Ambassador, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ms. Moe Takeda, Second Secretary, political section Embassy of Japan and Mr. Kim Kum Pyoung, Director, Korean Culture Centre.



Members of the diplomatic corps and other guests



Maha Bodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya

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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