



as an annual event by the nation.

Shri Upendra Kushwaha, Minister of State for Human Resources Development, said that the messages of Bhagwan Buddha are purely scientific and these contain the solutions of all problems of mankind. "We have to spread his messages worldwide."

The Vesak Samman Prashasti Patra 2016 awards were presented to Mr Ramesh Chandra Tiwari, Professor Geshe Ngawang Samten, Dharmachari Lokamitra and Bhadanta Galgedar Prajnanada Mahasthavir in recognition of outstanding contribution to the preservation, development and promotion of Indian arts and culture, and promotion and dissemination of Buddhist studies.

Mr. Tempa Tsering, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and a member of the Organizing Committee shared the dais with Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of State for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijju, Minister of State for Human Resource Development Upendra Kushwaha, and IBC Secretary General Ven. Lama Lobzang.



The programme started with a group song by the Chakma Buddhist Society. Prof. Geshe Ngawang Samten, Vice Chancellor of Central University for Tibet Studies, Sarnath gave an introductory Dharma talk, which was followed by Buddhist Monks of different traditions recited Mangalacharan-chanting of Sutras in Pali, Sanskrit and

Tibetan. The Ladakhi Children's Choir from Mahabodhi School, Chandigarh sang a group song.

After the inauguration, hundreds of Buddhists (school children and families included) converged at the Asoka Mission for a feast and a cultural programme. Later, in the evening they were addressed by the community leaders and Mr Kushwaha.

More than a hundred Tibetans residing in Delhi also attended the celebration. On Buddha Purnima Day, Tibetans in Samyeling Tibetan Settlement, Ladakh Buddh Vihar and South Delhi have been actively engaged in arranging and distributing free food and cold drinks service to the general Indian public.

Buddha Purnima or Vesak is regarded as the thrice-sacred day that celebrates three momentous events in the history of human kind, regardless of the country or Buddhist tradition to which we belong, namely Buddha's birth, sambodhiprapti and mahaparinirvana.

This thrice blessed day is one of the most significant factors in the development of human thought and civilisation. In

New Vihara inaugurated in Deokhali

The foundation stone of Samrat Ashok Buddha Vihar was laid by Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General IBC, in the small village of Deokhali in Uttar Pradesh to propagate Dhamma in the countryside, on June 20, 2016. This day is important because Emperor Ashoka took up the Mission of Dhamma by spreading it to foreign lands by sending his own son Mahindra and daughter Sanghmitra to Sri Lanka. The villagers had a Vishwa Shanti March (World Peace March) with slogans written on the hoardings of message of Dhamma the previous day.

The State Minister of Tourism, Mr Om Prakash Singh, undertook a food offering ceremony (Bhojan Dan) to the Bhikkhu Sangh in the morning. During the formal programme, Ven. Lama Lobzang who was chief guest of the programme insisted on the need to follow the law of Dhamma i.e. Panchsheel which was a great message for the Upasaka. He said that it was not at all necessary to convert from one's religion to Buddha Dhamma. The person is Buddhist, he said, if he or she follows Panchsheel even though he may be Hindu, Muslim or had any other faith.

Further, he explained about the importance of being the citizen of Bharat and above that it is important to have the blood relation with Lord Buddha, the Shakya communities.

Bhante P Shiwali Mahathero, Secretary General, Mahabodhi Society of India, focused on the importance of the day. He



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said that if anyone wants to see that how much respect Sri Lankan people and the government had towards India, you may go to Sri Lanka on today's date and see the respect for Mahindra and Sanghmitra. Because on this day, so many centuries ago, they had reached Anuradha Puram in Sri Lanka with saplings of the Bodhi Tree.

Bhante PC Chandra Mahathero, Vat Thai

Buddha Vihar Vaishali, a citizen of Thailand expressed happiness at the laying of the foundation stone for the Buddha Vihar.

Mr. Mannu, the representative of the State Tourism Minister declared a support of Rs 5 lakh for the boundary of the Vihar. He also said that the Minister had adopted the village for its total development.

Bhante Datya Saran, Viharadhipati, Samrat Ashok Buddha Vihar, the Chief Speaker of the program said that between Bodhgaya and Sarnath there is approximately 400 km but there is no cultural centre to propagate dhamma. He said with great enthusiasm that it is his dream that this Buddha Vihar shall prove as a Great Centre of Cultural revolution because the people of this village are dedicated towards dhamma.

Thousands of people gathered from the local area and 50 per cent of them were women. ■



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Towards a global understanding

IBC Governing council meets in Thailand

The Governing Council of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) met from 01-04 March 2016 at the Temple Town of Ayutthaya, Thailand. The meeting was organised in partnership with the International Network of Engaged Buddhists and the Thammasat University, Thailand

High ranking Buddhist monks from around the world, scholars, opinion-makers, special invitees (from 24 countries) and members of various Buddhist organisations converged at the Temple Town to take stock of the working of their Confederation, discuss constitutional issues, individual country matters and to share innovative experiences related to the Sanghas, Monasteries and Temples.

The business sessions pertained to presentation of the Minutes of the Governing Council meeting in Rajgir, Annual Report, the Audited Accounts, a report on the major programmes in the year 2015-16. Some of these were the Samvad: A Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness held both in New Delhi and Bodh Gaya, the Secretary General's business visits to South East Asia and East Asia for sharing and keeping up on latest

developments, the International Seminar on India's North Eastern Region and Buddhist Heritage: Bridge between South Asia and South East Asia held at Agartala, Tripura and the Buddhist Climate Change Declaration and Statement to World Leaders presented at COP-21, in Paris; to name a few.

Some of the other issues discussed at the meeting included:

1. IBC's Stand for Conflict avoidance instead of conflict resolution.
2. Heritage preservation and development
3. Environment and conservation
4. Gender issues and women's ordination
5. Inter-faith dialogue and understanding: a key challenge to religious intolerance

6. Young leadership
7. Art, Culture and Media

With the growing influence of the Buddhist way of life around the world delegates from Africa, Mexico, Brazil, Jamaica, Germany, France, Argentina, Japan, Mongolia, Australia to name a few, with very diverse and interesting perspectives offered varied experiences as related to Buddhist philosophy.

The lead on IBC's environment and conservation **...(her title)....** Dr. Barbara Maas, a wildlife biologist and conservationist reported that she and her team were busy making a video to be distributed across Buddhist monasteries of Vietnam with the message to stop killing

Commitment to gender balance

Deputy Secretary General Bhikkhuni Dhammananda appreciated IBC's commitment to gender balance as expressed in the IBC brochure and included in the Charter in November 2011. Supported by Ven. Bhikshuni Jampa Tsedroen (Dr. Carola Roloff), Ven. Dhammananda suggested for Bhikkhuni participation in the next Dialogue on Vinaya. Ven. Jampa Tsedroen expressed that all the traditions and its members, i.e. bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, upasakas and upasikas can also participate in it. Ven. Jampa Tsedroen added that Ven. Prof. em. Dr. Heng-ching shih (Taipei National University), Prof. Dr. Dhammananda and herself had been among the invited speakers at the International Conference on Vinaya organised by the Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi (India, from 17 to 19 January 2011.)

Rhinos for commercial gains. “Rhinos are being poached in India, and Vietnam is the hub of the illegal trade in rhino horn. The population of rhinos is depleting fast, they are killed in the most brutal manner just to extract the horn which is sold in China for a hefty price.”

The video seeks to establish a connection with Sangha edicts pertaining to protection of nature. With several conservation efforts failing in the past, this is an innovative attempt led by Maas, from **Germany**, who has worked at the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania and with the New Zealand government.

IBC Nepal chapter's President, Ven. Jikdol, that represents all the three Buddhist traditions, namely Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. The Chapter had been active in Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Coordination (RRRC) work after the devastating earthquakes in Nepal a year ago. Through the IBC Nepal RRRC Committee, the chapter also worked with the delegation of the Australian Buddhist Federation led by Ven. Thich Quang Ba that distributed relief material among the earth quake victims.

The President of **IBC Sri Lanka**, Mr. Jagath Sumathipala, informed the members that the IBC Sri Lanka now has its own Constitution and it has been sent for registration. The main events for Sri Lanka during the year was a very successful Dialogue on Vinaya between senior monks of the Nalanda Tradition based in India and senior monks from the Theravada tradition of Sri Lanka, from 17-20 March, 2015. The Mahanayakas and other senior Sri Lankan monks who participated in the Dialogue also met His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This dialogue was held after centuries. He informed that the next Dialogue on Vinaya is slated to be held in Sri Lanka later this year.

Mr. Sumathipala desired some guidelines regarding membership to country chapters, as also on how to expand the membership. The membership drive will start after there is more clarity on this. He also informed that a documentary film was planned on the ancient route taken by Buddhism to the ancient city of Anuradhapura, and how the Holi relics of Buddha came to Sri Lanka from Kalinga in



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India. The Sri Lanka chapter is working to preserve and promote Buddhist heritage, in keeping with the IBC mission.

South America: Ven. Bhikkhu Nandisena has been involved for more than 20 years in the promotion of Buddhism in the Spanish speaking countries from Mexico to Argentina as well as in Spain. He observed that so far there had been an absence of a truly international Buddhist organisation in the world. He himself had been involved in different international Buddhist organisations and had reached the conclusion that normally they have a parochial, country-oriented mentality. They try to bring in Buddhism from their own country to the rest of the world. However Ven. Bhikkhu Nandisena stated that he has high hopes and expectations that IBC will succeed where other organisations had failed. Ven. Bhikkhu Nandisena proposed the setting up of a Latin American chapter. He also proposed that the website of IBC be translated to Spanish and Portuguese, and offered to help in this regard.



Africa: Ven. Buddharakhita informed that Buddhism was brought by the English in 1925 from Sri Lanka to Tanzania in Africa. They first formed the Singhalese Buddhist Association. It took forty years to change that name. But the Temple has



existed for eighty years, though there was no monk in it. Ven. Buddharakhita had sent a monk from Luanda to this temple. He has himself been a monk for 14 years. He established the Africa Buddhist Union, which currently has 10 members. They include one monk each from two Muslim countries, namely Egypt and Senegal. The latter has translated Ven. Buddharakhita's book into French.

Ven. Buddharakhita proposed the formation of an Africa chapter of IBC at his Uganda Buddhist Centre. He stated that there are 54 countries in Africa, but only 7 of them have a Buddhist presence. He invited members to come and see his monastery and to assist in introducing Buddhism in Africa through music.

The Caribbean: Dr. Aye Hnin Thwin, originally from Myanmar, but has been living in Jamaica for the last 25 years. She presented the history of Buddhism in Jamaica. Stating that over 90 per cent of the 2.7 million people of Jamaica are Christians. Buddhism first came to Jamaica in the early 1990s with a small group that came from Myanmar to work in the health sector. Though visiting monks have been coming on a regular basis for teachings and retreats, the first Theravada Buddhist Association was founded in 1998. In 2001 Ven. Lokanatha came from UK to reside in Jamaica. Speaking about the challenges for Buddhism in the Caribbean, Dr. Aye Hnin Thwin mentioned that language is a major barrier because not everyone speaks English. Many Jamaicans speak Dutch and Spanish. She also said that



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because of violence and crime, people are hesitant about coming out in the evenings. To increase the numbers in Buddhist congregations, especially among the youth and the migrant population, adequate manpower, funding and regular interaction with the community is important. She advocated partnerships and networking to expand their work, and requested IBC to guide them as well as other member countries.

The United Kingdom: Dr Sunil

Karyakarwana said that both he and Capt. Kaji Sherpa were Asians living in the UK, playing a major role in representing ethnic Buddhists in the western world, and that they are trying to bring the various Buddhist communities together. He informed that there are 650 organizations registered in the UK, though only about 400 of them are active. However despite so many Buddhist organisations, the fact remains that ethnic Buddhists are losing their second generation because of their specific issues not being addressed adequately. He, therefore, suggested that rather than be represented through a European chapter, the different communities of ethnic Buddhists in the UK should be brought together under one body that would then represent them in IBC.

Capt. Kaji Sherpa, Founder President of the Buddhist Community Centre, UK, made a brief presentation about the centre, highlighting its significance and uniqueness. The centre was consecrated by His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Yangsi Rinpoche (Teacher of His Holiness the Dalai Lama) and inaugurated by His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself. Capt. Kaji Sherpa also emphasised the importance



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of Buddhist community cohesion and education for the younger generation. He also strongly recommended that IBC should take part in the International Buddha Jayanti celebrations to be held in May in Kathmandu and Lumbini in Nepal

Buddhism in the West: Mr. James Cresswell suggested that IBC should raise awareness about Buddhism in the west, namely Europe, Canada and the United States, and build friendships, trust and understanding among Buddhists from all different traditions. Buddhism in West Europe is very diverse, more than the three yantras. There are new Buddhist groups as well who don't fit into any of the traditional groups. There are many lay people who have become teachers. Mr. Cresswell was not in favour of establishing a separate chapter in Europe. In his opinion it is important to make people aware of IBC as a great umbrella organization, and to assuage their fear of their organisations being taken over by IBC. Further, Eastern Europe has a long history of Buddhism but even they might not join the European Chapter. Therefore we have to find ways of working together. He suggested that one good way of presenting IBC in the west was to hold some event that could be related to a particular issue, such as the refugee crisis, nuclear disarmament, environment and climate change, etc.

Brazil: Introducing his organisation, Associacao Tahthagata Garbha (ATG) of Sao Paulo, Brazil, as a Special Invitee, Ven. Acharya Lobsang Chogni said that ATG registered in Brazil is run by four ordained Sangha that comprises, beside himself, 3 nuns. In the 11 years of its existence, ATG has grown as an education centre of excellence, both nationally and internationally, building a quality framework for philosophical education, charity and social work, in spite of great adversity. Last year ATG also started offering an introductory course to the public on the Four Noble Truths which, like the other courses run by ATG, can be attended in person or pursued online. Over 170 students are enrolled for this course. ATG also runs a Bachelor's Degree program to train teachers to teach the Dhamma. Members of ATG make a monthly donation which goes into a social project to help



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the Tibetan Children's Village. Several texts and books have been translated into Portuguese by the ATG translation team. ATG also offers an extensive Buddhist library that includes the Kangyur and Tengyur and many books including a large collection of books by HH the Dalai Lama.

Ven. Acharya Lobsang Chogni expressed the hope that ATG would be able to collaborate with IBC in order to improve the knowledge of its students by participating in the activities, events and discussions, and be part of the international Sangha. He stated that at ATG, they consider IBC to be the most suitable organization in the world that would be able to provide such important and essential help for them. He felt that in a peaceful country like Brazil there was great scope for Buddhism to grow.

China: Ven. Miao Haiyn was invited as an observer to the meeting and he shared his experience in putting Climate Change messages into action. He informed the members that their temple in China is the first Buddhist temple that can be called an eco- temple or green temple. They have installed a solar plant that generates 600 kilo watts of power. The temple is taking other eco- friendly measures too. Many other temples in China are following this example and adopting eco-friendly measures.

The temple has initiated the Chang and Chi, the ancient Tea Ceremony. The Chang and Chi also have medicinal qualities. Ven.



Miao Haiyn proposed promoting solar energy as well as the Chinese Tea Ceremony in India. He suggested that this could be achieved by taking a pilgrimage tour from China to India via Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan.

Indonesia: Prof. Philip K. Widjaja, also a special invitee said that out of a total population of 235 million in Indonesia, less than 5 million are Buddhists. Among them there are followers of different traditions such as Mahayana, Theravada, Tantrayana, Nichiren and Tao, as well as a mix of local cultures. One of the rising stars today is the Maitreya sect from the Mahayana tradition. Prof. Widjaja's organization, Walubi (Perwakilan Umat Buddha Indonesia or Indonesian Buddhists Association) is an umbrella organization that covers many sects of Buddhism in Indonesia. It does not involve itself in Dhamma teachings but, like IBC, serves as a platform for all sects to come together and know each other. This helps in communication as well as information exchange, and also helps them to share experiences and network with each other. The entire congregation comes together for Vesak, Dhammasanti, and for social services in public health and basic education, although every sect has its own



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individual creative programmes and related activities.

Walubi also tries to implement and introduce new teaching methods that are of interest to the youth, using gadgets,

internet, etc. and a new way of explaining the Dhamma through songs, cartoons, books and other modern media tools. It has also set up higher education facilities such as Universities and is creating a big organization for promoting vegetarianism among followers of all faiths. Walubi is also working on eco friendly ways for using renewable energy, minimizing waste, minimizing food wastage, saving water and encouraging green spaces.

Walubi interacts with the government and with other faiths, and participates in international exchanges and interfaith dialogue, besides cooperating on issues of common concern. The organization is also, at times, called upon to resolve internal intra-sect conflicts, conflicts between sects, conflicts between regions or even conflicts with other organizations or faiths. Indonesia is one of the biggest Muslim countries in the world, and is susceptible to extremist and terrorist threats. In such a scenario, Walubi tries to build better relationships through dialogue, and has almost never had to resort to legal recourse.

In the discussions that followed the presentations, Mr. Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari pointed out that **IBC is a platform for all the traditions of Buddhism.** It



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can facilitate a dialogue between various Buddhist traditions, such as the Dialogue on Vinaya between the Nalanda and Theravada tradition. IBC can also facilitate dialogue between followers of Buddhism and other religions, such as “Samvad: Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness”. In future, it may be the Christians or the Muslims seeking a dialogue with Buddhist leaders, which too can be facilitated by IBC. Further, **we must remember that when people are adopting Buddhism as their religion, they must be encouraged to stay within their own culture and then build Buddhism into it.** He agreed with Ven. Bhikkhu Nandisena that **we have to let Buddhism grow in whatever environment or culture people are living in, and not import Tibetan or Thai or other traditions.**

Ven. Bhikkhuni JampaTsedroenwas of the opinion that **Buddhists need to be an identity-**

establishing community so that they can raise awareness of Buddhism in the rest of the world.

Ambassador Lalit Mansingh agreed that IBC should raise awareness of Buddhism on issues that affect the world. If there is a Buddhist voice, IBC should be the one projecting and promoting it. He said that as far as the three traditions are concerned, IBC does not recognise a hierarchy or qualitative difference. We take a total and comprehensive view of Buddhism. Thus we refer to all of us as Buddhists.

At the conclusion of the session, Ambassador Lalit Mansingh complimented members from different parts of the world for having thrown up some excellent ideas. He said that it was evident from the presentations that we are in a new world. It is a digitised world. It’s a world of technology, where the methods of communications are changing, and therefore if we are to pass on the language of Buddha, it must be passed on in this new language.

Financial Discussions

Datuk Seri Dr. Victor Wee made a detailed presentation on how to raise funds for NGOs, especially keeping IBC in mind. A funding strategy was called for at the outset. This would begin with short-term and long-



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term funding strategies and inflows. Short-term funding is for typically a few months to a maximum of 2 to 3 years. Funding for more than that period is termed as long-term funding. An organization must depend on multiple sources, such as donor funding, one-off fund/donation, and income generating activities that keep up the fund flow.

Donor funding: This includes donations, project funding, online crowd-funding and fund-raising events that are project specific.

Income-generating activities: These activities include raising funds through collection of membership or subscription fees, sale of publications, sale of products, in-kind contribution, including volunteer staff time, training and consultancy. Such funding could be short-term in nature, or come from a one-off activity like a public event, or even come from long-term sustained sources, e.g. membership fees, book sales, etc.

Investments: Investments such as fixed deposits, financial investments, trust funds, endowment funds, investment in land, etc. are long term, sustained sources of income that are internally controlled by the organization.

Datuk Seri Dr. Victor Wee emphasised the need for NGOs like IBC to understand donor priorities and link their needs with the donor themes. Generic fund requests do not work. The project or activity for



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which funds are sought must help to build the prospective donor's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy/policy. The NGO must also build its credibility by keeping/building proof of outputs/activities to show how the funds received were spent. Evidence of work completed can be monitored by a third party. To give further proof of good intentions the NGO can ask the donor what kind of evidence is required so that the donor too can justify that the CSR money has been well spent. He also stated that it is important to understand how donors (corporate donors, government funding, international

agencies, private or individual endowments etc.) themselves raise funds. IBC members were then taken through a detailed presentation with examples of a full-fledged fundraising campaign.

Mr James Cresswell agreed with Datuk Seri Dr. Victor Wee that we need to think of alternative sources of funding for IBC. One of the ways to raise funds could be to encourage members to organize fundraising through dinners and concerts in their respective countries. He welcomed the proposal of merging the committees for Management and Finance into one, and said that the new committee could come up

with proposals for raising funds.

Membership fee: It was agreed that fixing of membership fee requires greater time and thought, and therefore a final decision on membership fee should be taken by the Membership Committee.

Media and Publicity

All speakers in this session, namely Datuk Seri Dr. Victor Wee, Mr. Raymond Lam and Ven. But Buntenh stressed the need for reaching out to the world and publicizing IBC's work through the internet and social media.

Mr. Raymond Lam, **from Taiwan,**

Buddhism in Action

Ven. But Buntenh stressed on the need for, and advantages of, using modern communication and media tools. He pointed out that most of the Buddhist practices appear to attract the old, and as a result young people are not taking interest in the religion. He therefore uses modern tools and contemporary issues, and in this way gets the youth interested and more involved in issues. Ven. But Buntenh is currently working on climate change as the major issue. His organization, "Buddhism for Peace" is promoting online dialogue through radio, focusing on forests. Ven. Buntenh has also created a mobile application, through which people send in information whenever and wherever deforestation activity starts. Activists of the organization then reach the area to stop its deforestation. Every week the organization sends a batch of 10 monks to spend a week in the forest. This batch is replaced by another similar batch the following week. In this way the

forest is under constant vigil. The New York Times has made a video on his work, titled "Threat to Cambodia's Sacred Forests".

Ven. But Buntenh emphasised the use of two important tools in this kind of work, namely music and media. He gave the example of his own organization that composes music and puts it up online. This music is stacked on a music website. Sustainability messages are placed between musical tracks on the website. The organisation also uses websites, blogs, mobile apps, Facebook and Twitter. Ven. But Buntenh's car has been refurbished in a way to look like a studio with images of trees calling out: "Your survival depends upon me. Stop killing the tree". Thus instead of pushing the youth to follow Buddhism or giving them books on religion, Ven. But Buntenh literally moves around with his message, and helps in disseminating Buddhist philosophy through his campaign for a sustainable environment.



Editor, Buddhistdoor.net spoke on how media can assist in spreading Buddhism, better understanding of Buddhist thought, engaging Buddhists and remaining connected with Buddhist activities. The media, as a form of mass communication, plays a major role in shaping societal consciousness, and since Buddhism has a stake in expressing its teachings to as large an audience as possible, the debate over how to create media is one in which Buddhism can actively participate. "The press affects Buddhists, so how can Buddhists make their own contributions to the media and shape it in turn?" he said. He asked all to use his organisation Buddhistdoor.net for communication. It covers contemporary Buddhist issues, and reaches religious institutions, universities, academic departments and cultural institutions. It is not a secular publication. The platform is completely Buddhist; the staff members, in particular the journalists, are all Buddhists. They are openly and unapologetically there to promote Buddhism. He said that IBC should use his organisation to enhance its global media reach while at the same time connecting with other Buddhist masters and communities.

Formation of committees

Names of members were proposed and finalized for the following committees:

Membership Committee:

Chairperson – Prof. B. Mungekar

Management and Finance Committee:

Chairperson – Ms. James Cresswell

Global Outreach Committee:

Chairperson – Mr. Lalit Mansingh

Election Committee:

Chairperson – Mr. Lalit Mansingh

Needs of small Buddhist communities in remote regions –

Mr. Chhombay Kee: As a resident of the state of Arunachal Pradesh in North East India, pointed out that most Buddhists in the remote regions come from a poor background. They are therefore lured to convert to other faiths with free food, free education and free health care. He suggested that Buddhist monasteries should work at the grassroots level to connect with the people, and should also involve themselves in social welfare activities rather than just in conducting pujas. That would be the best way to connect with the youth and discourage them from converting to other

religions. He welcomed the suggestions to build a social media platform such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, etc. to connect better with the younger generation

In the discussion that followed, Mr. Henry Baey suggested that individual monasteries and temples should actively spread the message of the Dhamma. This will not amount to proselytising, because we seriously believe that the solution to many of the ills facing society today can be found in the Dhamma. Mr. Lai Seow Khee was of the opinion that IBC is ideally placed to undertake such work. Mr. Jamyang Dorjee felt that this was a good opportunity for IBC to work in the Himalayan regions, especially in Nepal and Sikkim, with the youth, as they are seeking their cultural identity. Mr. Prashant Verma suggested that young people should be trained to become Buddhist youth leaders who will actively engage with socio-political issues. On behalf of the Deer Park Institute in Himachal Pradesh, India, he offered to conduct a joint youth training programme with IBC and INEB. ■

Inauguration showcases Buddhist culture

The Governing Council meeting was inaugurated on the grounds of the historic Wat Maha That, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Ayutthaya, Thailand on March 1, 2016.

The function began with a rendering of the auspicious Mangalacharan. This was followed by a minute's silence observed in the memory of HH Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara Sangharaja, Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, HH Maha Phong Samaleuk, Sangharaja of Laos, Most Ven. Uddugama Sri Buddhakhita Maha Nayaka Thero, Maha Nayaka of the Asgiriya Nikaya, Sri Lanka, HH Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche, Head of the Nyingma Order and H.E. Chatral Rinpoche, Dzogchen master.

The formal welcome address was delivered by the President of the International Buddhist Confederation



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(IBC), Her Royal Highness AshiKasang Wangmo Wangchuk of Bhutan. Ven. Arayawangso, Abbot of the Buddhapojharipunchai Forest Monastery and Advisor to the India Studies Centre of the Thammasat University welcomed

the participants and invitees on behalf of the Thammasat University. This was followed by words of welcome by Ajarn Sulak Sivaraksha, Co-founder and Chair of the Advisory Committee, International Network of Engaged Buddhists.

Samyak Sambodh



The Chief Guest, H.E. Mr Pongchak Semson, Advisor to the Minister of Culture, Thailand, spoke about the importance of culture and heritage in the modern world, and the role it can play in bringing people together. He specifically mentioned the shared history and culture of India and Thailand, and hoped that these would bring the two nations even closer.

The Guest of Honour, H.E. Mr Prayoon Rattanasenee, Governor of Ayutthaya, recalled the history of Ayutthaya, and mentioned that it had drawn its name from Ayodhya, the kingdom of Lord Rama in the ancient Indian epic, the Ramayana.

This was followed by the keynote address, delivered by H.E. Mr Rae Kwon Chung, former Principal Advisor on Climate Change at the Executive Office of the UN Secretary General, and Climate Change Ambassador of the Republic of Korea. Mr Rae Kwon Chung iterated that international faith based organisations such as IBC can play a crucial role in the ongoing global discourse on climate change and environment, and in attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

In his response to the keynote address, Mr Lodi Gyaltzen Gyari, Global Envoy of IBC and Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee, International Network of Engaged Buddhists, agreed that IBC and other similar organizations could prove to be an excellent vehicle for attaining SDGs,

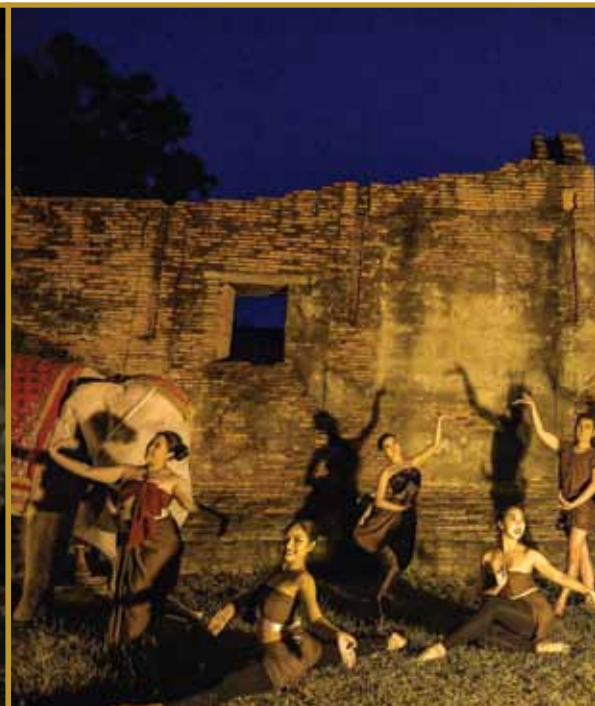
especially given their vast membership across the globe, the varying fields of expertise of their members, their religious and moral appeal for the masses, and the resultant influence they could exercise on governments and policy makers.

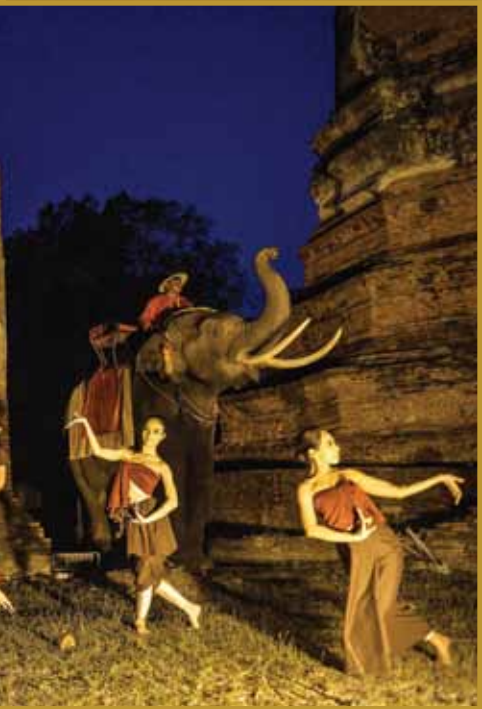
Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General of IBC, delivered the formal vote of thanks, and on behalf of all members of the organization, prayed for the good health and long life of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand.

The cultural programme began with

the rendition of dhamma songs by the renowned singing nun from Nepal, Ani Choying Drolma, who is also a Global Envoy of IBC and the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador to Nepal.

As the sun started to set, the audience was treated to traditional dance and music by Thai artistes, as well as a musical performance by a Mongolian ensemble. Dinner was served on the banks of the canal that runs along the western side of the temple's premises. ■





symbols of India's governance contain icons related to Ashoka. The Emblem of India, adopted on 26 January 1950, the day that India became a republic, is an adaptation of the Ashoka Lion Capital that is now preserved in Sarnath Museum. The four Asiatic lions, standing back to back, symbolize power, courage, pride, and confidence. The emblem is inscribed on all official documents of the Government of India, and appears on all Indian currency and passports. The Ashoka Chakra (Ashoka Wheel), a 24-spoke wheel on its base, features in the center of the national flag of India.

At the end of the day-long celebration, in order to honor Ashoka's immense contribution to humankind and Indian culture, and his influence, which has extended far beyond the borders of India, a unanimous resolution was adopted



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to request the Government of India to facilitate the observance of this historic day as an annual national public holiday.

The 14 April celebration was attended by more than 2,000 members of the Shakya and Maurya communities, which trace their origins to the Shakya clan of Shakyamuni Buddha and the Maurya clan of Ashoka, respectively. Indian Minister of State for Human Resource Development Upendra Kushwaha was the chief guest and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju was guest of honour. Members of Parliament and senior diplomats from Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Mongolia also attended. ■

Buddhism as a Science

A Talk by Robert Thurman

Robert Thurman, an internationally acclaimed American Buddhist scholar specializing in Asiatic religions, especially Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, also recognized as one of the twenty-five most influential Americans of 1997 by Time, visited the Vivekananda International Foundation on 5 April 2016 to deliver a talk on 'Buddha as a Scientist'. He was accompanied by Lama Lobzang, Secretary General of the International Buddhist Conference, who incidentally happened to be among the moving forces behind the 'Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment' held by the VIF in early September 2015.

In his almost an hour-long illuminating talk filled with humour, Robert Thurman described how Buddha was way different from the founders of other world religions. Buddha was not a prophet to the extent that he made no tryst with God, nor was he authorized by Him to found a new world religion. On the contrary, Buddha was someone who truly understood the nature of reality of himself and the world at large.

Buddhism, according to Thurman, is



more knowledge-based than faith-oriented. Unlike many others who would tend to believe 'Nirvana' as the convergence between the soul and the greater soul, it is the state of knowing the ultimate reality which brings about real change i.e. ultimate happiness to mankind. The essence of

Buddha's teachings lies in the fact that the more you know the less you suffer and vice versa. Buddha stressed on knowledge at its cutting edge - education of ethics, mind and wisdom. Needless to say, Thurman kept the audience spell-bound with his mesmerizing talk, a refreshing change for the VIF faculty who otherwise remain bogged down mostly in strategic affairs. As with such talks, questions were fielded to the Speaker by an inquisitive audience. A consensus view emerged during the interactive session that while the pan-Asian effort to revive the world's oldest university at its original site at Nalanda in Bihar is indeed praiseworthy, there is crying need to incorporate religious studies in its curriculum, failing which the entire effort to revive the university to its pristine glory would turn meaningless. ■



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IBC hosts Vietnamese delegation

IBC hosted a ten-member delegation from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, headed by Mr. Pham Manh Lam, Chief of the Ministerial Office of the Ministry of Information and Communication, on 24 May 2016. The delegation was accompanied by Ms Nguyen Thi Sen, Attache in the Embassy of Vietnam in New Delhi.

IBC invited Prof. Geshe Ngawang Samten, Vice Chancellor of the Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Ven. Sonam Lama, Member of the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim, Mr. Maling Gombu, General Secretary, Minority Cell, BJP, Mr T Prasad, IAS (Retd.), Minister, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Mr RD Maurya, National President, Akhil Bhartiya Maurya Mahasangh and Mr Hetpal Singh Sakya, Ex-National President, Akhil Bhartiya

Supreme Dhamma Council as well as of the Presidium and the Governing Council. Through them, in the years to come, IBC looks forward to further engagement with Vietnam, by setting up an IBC chapter, and undertaking and organizing joint projects and programmes.

Mr. Pham Manh Lam thanked IBC for organizing the meeting at such short notice, and introduced each member of the delegation.

Ambassador Lalit Mansingh recalled the historical ties between Vietnam and India, and said that even in recent times the two countries have shared a close relationship. He recalled the role of Ho Chi Minh in the Non-Aligned Movement, and said that the late Vietnamese leader is regarded as a great hero even in India.

based on compassion. He appreciated the struggle of the Vietnamese people for freedom and peace from 1962 to 1974, and also the fact that the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha had been a strong pillar of IBC since its early days.

Prof. Geshe Ngawang Samten told the delegation that although Buddhism declined in India in the 13th century, Buddhist culture is deeply ingrained in Indian culture. India never invaded another country, nor imposed its philosophy or culture on anyone. Yet other countries embraced Buddhism of their own volition. Buddhism is received as a religious, philosophical and educational system as well as a science. It has many dimensions. Today western scientists and educational philosophers are working with Buddhist philosophy and systems. As a result the principles of scientific study and approach have changed. In the United States, 27 states have accepted Buddhist mind training as a part of their education curriculum, thus leading to a change in the education policy. The very core element of the Buddhist doctrine is to transform ourselves by destroying the negative elements within ourselves, and by building on the positive elements.

Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Hai, a member of the delegation, wanted to know about how IBC communicated its aims and objectives to the public at large, and whether the organization received any support from the government.

Ambassador Lalit Mansingh replied that IBC is an independent and autonomous body that receives some support from the government. The aim of IBC is not to convert people to Buddhism or to promote Buddhism, but to provide a common platform to the Buddhists of the world to come together and look for solutions to issues of global concern.

Mr. T. Prasad, Minister, Government of Uttar Pradesh, added that in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, people are more interested in the social and cultural meaning that Buddhism provides to the lives of the poor and the downtrodden. ■



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Shakya Mahasabha. The IBC leadership was represented by Secretary General, Ven. Lama Lobzang, along with Deputy Secretary General, Prof. BL Mungekar and Chairperson of the Global Outreach Committee, Mr. Lalit Mansingh.

Welcoming the delegation, Ven. Lama Lobzang appreciated the contribution of the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha (NVBS) in the formation of IBC, right from the stage of its conceptualization. He informed the visiting delegation that besides His Holiness Thich Pho Tue, the Supreme Patriarch of NVBS who is a Patron of IBC, other senior leaders of NVBS are members of IBC's

Prof. BL Mungekar recalled the visit of the IBC delegation to the UN Day of Vesak celebrations in Ninh Binh, Vietnam in May 2014. He said that given the extent of IBC's membership, the organization is the biggest forum for spreading Buddha's message and Buddhist values across the world. He said that Dr. BR Ambedkar, being the father of the Indian Constitution, ensured that Buddhist values, such as liberty, equality, justice, fraternity and compassion, were enshrined in the Constitution. He said that the world today is suffering from many ills and is looking towards Buddhism as a panacea, because it is the only philosophy

Rinpoche on meditation in daily life

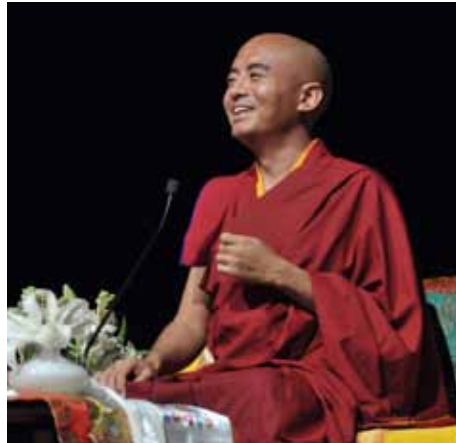
In March, IBC organised a lecture by Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche in association with Asoka Mission, Deer Park Institute and The Attic in New Delhi. The theme of the lecture was 'Meditation in Daily Life'.

The Rinpoche started with speaking about the three things important for meditation—View, Meditation and Conduct.

"First, for meditation I will teach you about the view. So view is how, why, what something like that. So why you have to meditate, what is the meditation. The ascent of meditation is awareness. To apply awareness. Awareness is not something we don't have or we have. Everybody has it. But the problem is we are not recognized our own awareness. In the meditation tradition we called basic goodness. Means we all have good nature. In Buddhist we call Buddha nature. You all are good. We all the nature of us is good. We all have awareness. We have wisdom, capability, compassion, skill. Everyone is unique. But important is we have to recognize first. If you don't recognize your goodness even though you have but you might not see it. And if you don't see it almost like you become don't have.

"So now what is awareness. Knowing. Thinking and knowing little bit different. So knowing I know everything by birth. Knowingness. Yes, ofcourse you have knowingness. But you have to recognize now your own knowingness. And to nurture your own knowingness, and exercise your own knowingness. Then that's the meditation. Ascent of meditation is awareness. Ascent of meditation is clarity, openness, peaceful, blissful. This is the experience of meditation. Not the ascent of meditation.

Second is the meditation. Actual practice. So the actual practice is. You have to know how to give job to the monkey mind. Normally there are many different techniques of meditation. First I will



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teach you meditation with sound. You can use any sound around you. So ask your monkey mind. Hello there's sound and monkey mind says yes. Just listen. You don't have to do anything. Normally we can hear sound but our mind is not with sound. So, let any sound come to your ear. You can let them come in. You just simply listen. While listening to the sound you may have image, verbal, voice, anything. As long as you are not forget to listen to sound, you are fine you are in meditation. Your awareness with sound now. So now you can listen to any sound. Sound meditation works with some people and some people not.

Another meditation technique is mental recitation. Recite in your mind. You can choose any mantra. If you have spiritual practice you can choose name of any God or if you are not related with any religious, you can use simple word. You come out with one word, phrase. And then repeat that word in your mind again and again. So normally what we do in Tibet we use mantra like Ommanimemehu. And recite this in our mind. So, this is my first meditation technique.

Third part is how to apply in everyday life in action. In action, might be good to have two things: Formal Meditation Session and Informal Meditation Session.

The formal meditation session is when you sit on a cushion, cross your leg, in what we call the Buddha media posture. This can be done everyday for a certain time, say 5 minutes or 10 minutes.

After 30 days it will become habit. It will become part of your daily life. Then it is easy. Like everyday we get up in the morning and brush our teeth. So, the idea is to make a habit about meditation.

The other way is informal meditation. So, this is done while walking, talking, having lunch, dinner, in the, meeting, driving car. If you drive a car relax, listen around, or be aware of your road, be present with your body and what you do. Awareness here means you know what you are doing. Maybe you can have some technique which can easily remind you of your meditation awareness. Or you can write something on a piece of paper. Put in your office or at your home. Near your bedroom, in the kitchen. Whenever you see that, your mind is in meditation. And, particularly if you have some kind of like difficulty, stress, anger, sadness, panic, depression, whatever; at that time focus your mind through the Ommanimemehu. At the beginning it may be quite difficult. But then if you slowly do it again and again, you let go. So you can apply yourself like this in everyday life. And slowly, slowly everything becomes support for your awareness. What you see, whatever you see, hear, smell, taste, sensation, thought and emotion. So everything becomes support for your meditation. And everything become your friends. And you can be happy everywhere anytime. Even under difficult situation. Under difficult circumstances."

The lecture was followed by a Q&A session. ■



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Maha Bodhi Temple, Bodhi 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.

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

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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