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Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION
Collective Wisdom United Voice

Nineteen of the world's most senior Buddhists have issued a landmark call to political leaders to adopt an effective climate change agreement at the UN negotiations in Paris starting November 30. This is an initiative of the Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective (GBCCC), a coalition of Buddhists and interfaith organisations, and the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), the global Buddhist umbrella body based in New Delhi, India. The IBC played a major role in securing endorsements and framing the statement that addresses the issue of climate change and brings the concept of environmental consciousness in the global narrative.

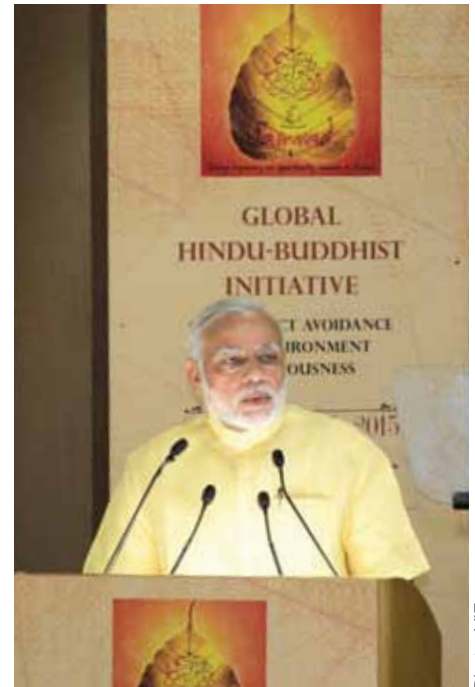
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SAMVAD – GLOBAL HINDU-BUDDHIST INITIATIVE ON CONFLICT AVOIDANCE AND ENVIRONMENT CONSCIOUSNESS

PM Modi hails the teachings of the Buddha

Over 21 countries represented by leading scholars, teachers of spirituality and religion, venerable *bhikkus*, political leaders and former heads of state, converged for the 'Samvad – Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environmental Consciousness' in New Delhi in early September. Inaugurating the conference, Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, emphasised that teachings in Buddhism and Hinduism can provide answers to many of the world's problems, especially those related with conflict and environment. "The message and teachings of Gautama Buddha," he said, "resonate loudly and clearly with the major themes chosen for this symposium – the themes of avoiding conflicts, moving towards environmental consciousness and a concept of free and frank dialogue."

The two-day conference, jointly organised by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and the Tokyo Foundation, was held in New Delhi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the inauguration of the two-day conclave - 'Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness'

Photo: VIF

STOP PRESS

IBC mourns passing away of His Holiness the Sangharaja of Laos

The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) deeply mourns the passing away of His Holiness Phra Achan Maha Phong Samaleuk, Sangharaja and Acting President of the Lao Buddhist Fellowship Organization. His Holiness was an esteemed Patron of IBC, whose



blessings and wisdom have guided IBC in its endeavours to give shape to the dreams and aspirations of millions of our brothers and sisters of the Buddha Dhamma all over the world.

May His Holiness continue to inspire the Sangha for all times to come.



Photo: VIF

on September 3-4, 2015.

In a pre-recorded message played at the inaugural session, Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, highlighted the importance of tolerance, appreciation of diversity, and spirit of compassion and fraternity. He acknowledged the contribution that Buddhism had made to humanity and said that Japan owed its “rule of law” to Buddhism.

Delegates from over 20 countries including Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan, Mongolia, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Russia and the United Kingdom attended the conference. The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, and Union Minister of State for Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation, Mahesh Sharma, were among the distinguished invitees to the conference, which was also attended by the former President of Sri Lanka, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, senior ministers from Japan, Mongolia, Bhutan and Nepal, His Eminence Khamba Lama Rev. Chojamts Gabju Demberel, Supreme Head of Mongolian Buddhists, Most Ven. Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara, Founder Chancellor of the Sitagu International Buddhist Academy in Myanmar,

Most Ven. Prof Bellanwila Wimalaratna Thero, Anu Nayaka of the Kotte Chapter and Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayawardenapura, Sri Lanka, Ven. Thich Thien Tam, Vice President of the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, and Most Ven. Ming Kwang Shi, Vice President of the Buddhist

Association of ROC, Taiwan, besides other high-ranking Buddhist monks and Hindu religious leaders from around the world.

At the conference, renowned Buddhist and Hindu scholars, religious leaders and opinion makers deliberated upon, and attempted to come up with, a new framework



Photo: Kshirpa Simon

(from right to left) Secretary of State, Ministry of Culture & Fine Arts of Cambodia, H.E. Mr Chuch Phoeurn; Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal, Kripasur Sherpa and the Nepalese Ambassador to India, Deep Kumar Upadhyay along with other distinguished attendees



Eminent guests, speakers and delegates at the conclave: 1. The State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Minoru Kiuchi; 2. Dashicholing Monastery Mongolia, Vice President, IBC, H.E. Dr Ch. Dambajav Khamba Lama; 3. Secretary General and Coordinator of Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, India Param Pujya Swami Paramatmananda; 4. SriKsetra Adichuchanagiri Ashram, 72nd Pontiff of the Sri Math Mandya, Karnataka, India, Sri Sri Sri Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji.; 5. Spiritual & Humanitarian Leader, Founder of the Art of Living, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar; 6. Ven. Lama Lobzang; 7. H.E. Telo Tulku Rinpoche Shadjin Lama, Kalmyk Republic, Russian Federation; 8. Former President of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga; 9. Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi; 10. Vice President, National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Member Supreme Dhamma Council of IBC Most Ven. Dr Thich Thien Tam; 11. Mahasayadaw, Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Myanmar, H.E. Maha Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara; 12. Finance Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Lyonpo Namgay Dorji; 13. Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal, Mr Kripasur Sherpa; 14. Abbot, WatPa Buddhapoj Hariphunchai, Thailand, Most Ven. Arayawongso; 15. President, The Tokyo Foundation, Mr Masahiro Akiyama, 16. Chairman of VIF, Admiral K K Nayyar; 17. Supreme Head of Mongolian Buddhist, Member of Council of Patrons, IBC, H.E. Rev. Khamba Lama Gabju Choijamts Demberel; 18. Minister of Mongolia and Head of Cabinet Secretariat, Mr B. Sangajav; 19. Lecturer, Goethe – University Frankfurt am Main and Board Member, Council of Religions, Germany, Dr Karsten Schmidt; 20. Ambassador of Japan to India, Mr Takeshi Yagi; 21. Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr Kiren Rijiju; 22. Prof. of Int'l Political Economy, IMD, Switzerland, Mr Jean Pierre–Lehmann; 23. Founder Director, Dhamma Dipa Foundation, Tripura, Ven. Dr Dhammapiya; 24. Distinguished Research Professor, Legal Anthropology, SASTRA University, India, Mr Swaminathan Gurumurthy; 25. Chairperson, Infosys Foundation, India and Social Worker, Dr Sudha Murty; 26. Eminent Scholar, Historian and Author and Chairman of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Dr Lokesh Chandra; 27. Former Foreign Secretary of India, Mr Kanwal Sibal; 28. Ambassador of Bhutan in India, Mr Vetsop Namgyel; 29. Prof. of Buddhist Studies, Dr Shashibala; 30. Vice President of Vivekananda Kendra, Kum. Nivedita R Bhide; 31. Prof. Lumini Buddhist University, Ven. Dr Naresh Man Bajracharya; 32. Abbot of Gaden Shartse Monastery, Karnataka, Ven. Khen Rinpoche Jangchup Choeden; 33. President, Buddhist Association of Taipei, and Member of the Presidium of IBC, Most Ven. Ming Kwang Shi; 34. Anunayaka of The Kotte Chapter, Sri Lanka, Most Ven. Prof. Bellanwila Wimalaratana Thero; 35. President, Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka, and Member of the Presidium of IBC, Most Ven. Banagala Upathissa Thero; 36. President, Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre, Leh, Ladakh, and Honorary Treasurer, IBC, Most Ven. Bhikku Sanghasena Mahathera; 37. National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Most Ven. Dr Thich Nhat Tu; 38 Member of the Executive Council, World Buddhist Organisation, and Eminent Scholar, Taiwan, Prof. Hsiang-Chou Yo; 39. Minister of State for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Dr Mahesh Sharma; 40. Director, VIF, General NC Vij; 41. Secretary, IBC Standing Committee on Environment & Conservation, Dr Barbara Mass; 42. Adviser on Religious Affairs to the President of Mongolia, Dr M Bataa; 43. Director, Policy Research, The Tokyo Foundation, Japan, Mr Tsuneo Watanabe; 44. Director, Vraja Prakalpa, Acharya Dr Shrivatsa Goswami

that will move away from the usual solutions to two key issues confronting humankind today, i.e. rising conflict and rampant environment degradation.

The first day was devoted to the issue of conflict. The participants sought to evolve a new paradigm that speaks about 'conflict avoidance' rather than 'conflict resolution'. For decades the world has attempted to find peace by negotiating only after a

conflict has broken out. It is, however, being increasingly believed that the current approach, based largely on the western and simplified perspective of conflict between faiths and civilisations, is failing to deliver results.

Thus, the world is progressively taking notice of the benign nature of Buddhism as compared to western thought and ethics, and recognising the importance

of historical Asian traditions and values as being greatly relevant for the future of world peace and harmony, and for fostering a culture of understanding and acceptance of the alternative view, that goes beyond that of just mercy and tolerance. In consonance with the ancient Buddhist and Hindu philosophies, it is now felt that a method must be evolved to avoid conflict altogether, rather than attempt to resolve it after



Photo: VIF

Speakers on the dais (from left to right): State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Minoru Kiuchi, His Eminence Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara, Director of VIF, Gen. NC Vij, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Sri Lankan President, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, Founder of the Art of Living, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Union Minister of State for Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation, Dr Mahesh Sharma, listening to the pre-recorded message by Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe.

it has occurred.

Political and religious leaders, as well as scholars attending the session, discussed ways and means of avoiding conflict in a world torn apart by religious fanaticism and ideological bigotry. They acknowledged that there is a need to break away from ideological shackles and start a philosophical debate to develop global understanding as a means

to avoid conflict. The teachings of Buddha, Swami Vivekananda and other spiritual Buddhist and Hindu leaders, therefore, especially on religious understanding and peaceful co-existence, are more relevant today than ever before.

Speakers on the first day included Most Ven. Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, the State Min-

ister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Minoru Kiuchi, Founder of the Art of Living, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Ven. Thich Nhat Tu of the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Mr S Gurumurthy, leading political thinker and co-convener of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch, Dr Lokesh Chandra, President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Dr M Bataa, Advisor on Religious Affairs to the President of Mongolia, Dr Karsten Schmidt, Board Member of the Council of Religions in Germany, Prof SN Balagangadhara of the Ghent University, Belgium, and Mr Jean Pierre-Lehmann, Emeritus Professor, International Political Economy, IMD, Switzerland.

The second day of the conference witnessed a spirited and composite dialogue on environment consciousness as the prime paradigm of socio-cultural cooperation and

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Photo: Kshipra Simon

(From left to right) Most Ven. Prof. Bellanwila Wimalaratana Thero, Sri Lanka; His Eminence Telo Tulku Rinpoche, Shadjin Lama, Kalmyk Republic, Russian Federation; Most Ven. Dr Thich Thien Tam, Vice President of National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha; and His Eminence Rev. Khama Lama Gabju Choijamts Demberel, Supreme Head of Mongolian Buddhists.

PM Modi calls for collective action on climate change

"The place where we are meeting makes it even more special. We are meeting in Bodh Gaya, a land that has a distinctive place in the history of humankind. This is the land of enlightenment. Years ago, what Bodh Gaya got was Siddhartha, but what Bodh Gaya gave to the world was Lord Buddha, the epitome of knowledge, peace and compassion..."

"The Enlightenment which Buddha attained in Bodh Gaya also lit the light of enlightenment in Hinduism. As the first Servant of this ancient nation, I revere Buddha as a reformer of not only Hinduism but also the world, who has given all of us a new world view and vision which is critical for the survival of all of us and the entire world.

"Climate change is a pressing global challenge. It calls for a collective human action and a comprehensive response. In India, faith and nature have had a deep link since ancient times. Buddhism and environment are deeply co-related."

"I recognise how Buddhists all over the world revere Bodh Gaya as a place of pilgrimage. We in India would like to develop Bodh Gaya so that it can become the spiritual capital and civilisational bond between India



Photos: Vichitra Sharma

PM Narendra Modi joins the Sangha in offering prayers under the Holy Bo Tree in Bodh Gaya.

and the Buddhist world. The government of India would like to provide all possible support that its Buddhist cousin nations need for the satisfaction of their spiritual needs from this holiest of holy places for them..."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

The delegates to the conference also adopted the Bodh Gaya Declaration the next day in Bodh Gaya that endorsed the same.

(see next page)



Photo: Kshipra Simon

(Left) Prime Minister offering Dana (an inlay-work gift box containing two sacred Bodhi leaves from the Bodhi Tree and pouches with sacred soil from Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar wrapped in sacred cheevaa cloth) to the Holy Sangha; (Right) PM Narendra Modi addressing the gathering at Bodh Gaya.



Photo: VIF

Former Sri Lankan President, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, addressing the conclave.

creative global action. This session was chaired by Param Pujya Swami Paramatmananda, Secretary General and Coordinator of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, and co-chaired by Most Ven. Telo Tulku Rinpoche, Shadjin Lama of the Kalmyk Republic, Russian Federation.

Speakers at the session unanimously admitted that humankind is on a collision course with nature, and that the biological limits of the earth are being severely tested. Over-exploitation of natural resources, deforestation, unrestrained killing of species,



Photo: Kshipra Simon

Union Minister for External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj, addressing the valedictory function.

Bodh Gaya Declaration of Buddhist Leaders

This Bodh Gaya Declaration of Buddhist spiritual and temporal leaders, scholars, philosophers and thinkers is made in Bodh Gaya at the conclusion of day-long devotional and spiritual accomplishments. It is hereby declared that:

- 1 Bodh Gaya, where Siddhartha became Buddha, is the seat of enlightenment for the world of Buddhism and Buddhist civilisation that have inspired all religions of the world.
- 2 In this age of increasing conflicts, where in the last 15 years religious conflicts have trebled and killings in the name of religion have gone up by two-thirds, the spiritual gift of Buddha is the only hope for the world to overcome the intra-religious and inter-religious strife and massacre.
- 3 **The Hindu-Buddhist civilisations have a special responsibility to work for conflict avoidance and environment consciousness by expounding the philosophical principles common to Hinduism and Buddhism to save the world from fratricidal conflicts.**
- 4 The Hindu-Buddhist civilisations, that celebrate diversity and are non-conflicting with other religions, will have to work together for a paradigm shift from the present conflict resolution model powered by geopolitics to conflict avoidance model inspired by civilisation.
- 5 This will call for in-depth spiritual orientation to present an alternative world-view as a new paradigm for understanding, appreciating and celebrating diversity based on the ancient idea of Dhamma as in Pali and Dharma as in Sanskrit.
- 6 There is no place more appropriate and elevating than Bodh Gaya for inspiring and institutionalising such noble work.
- 7 Bodh Gaya has the credentials to emerge, and must emerge, as the global symbol and vehicle for enlightenment, peace and hope for civilisational, spiritual and cultural harmony.
- 8 A Buddhist spiritual and civilisational institution, that will bring together and make the entire Buddhist world participate in this momentous task, will be built in Bodh Gaya in the coming three years.
- 9 Hindu civilisational and spiritual institutions will be invited to work with this new Buddhist institution to share the responsibility for global peace and harmony.
- 10 Buddhist spiritual leaders will approach governments of all Buddhist nations to support this monumental and noble task of developing Bodh Gaya as an International Centre of Buddhism for the enlightenment of all humankind.
- 11 We call for support from the Government of India for the development of infrastructure and other public utilities in the area.
- 12 A team of experts will be constituted to begin the noble work and the responsibility for this purpose shall be given to a committee.

Bodh Gaya

September 5, 2015

melting of glaciers, ever increasing exploration for hydrocarbons and pollution are leading the world towards catastrophe. There is, thus, an urgent need for strategic action to mitigate the emerging environmental woes that, in turn, lead to conflict at various levels.

They spoke about the philosophical foundations of Buddha dharma, especially its ethical values of personal restraint in

consumption and respect for the environment. Buddha's 2,600-year old message about compassion, personal responsibility, and the path to happiness holds the key to a new way of relating to each other and to our environment. The participants agreed that both Buddhism and Hinduism, with their well-defined treatises on respect for Mother Nature, can create a huge positive impact that will lead towards a sustainable world.

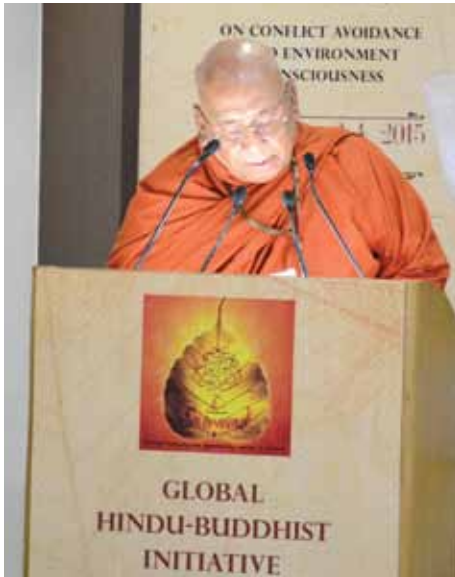


Photo: VIF

His Eminence Maha Sayadaw Ashin Nyanissara –Mahasayadaw, Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Myanmar, addressing the conclave.

The speakers on the occasion included Mr Lyonpo Namgay Dorji, Honourable Minister of Finance, Kingdom of Bhutan, Shri Kripasur Sherpa, Honourable Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal, Dr Sudha Murthy, Chairperson of the Infosys Foundation, Ven. Thich Thien Tam, Vice President of the National Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Ven. Geshe Jangchup Choeden, Abbot of the Gaden Shartse Monastery in Karnataka, India, Sri Sri Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji, Sri Ksetra Adichuchanagiri Ashram, Mandya, Karnataka, India, Dr Barbara Maas, Head, International Species Conservation, NABU International and Secretary IBC Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation, Prof Naresh Man Bajracharya, Vice Chancellor of the Lumbini Buddhist University in Nepal, Prof Hsiang-C Hou Yo, eminent scholar from Taiwan and Dr M D Srinivas, Chairman of the Centre for Policy Studies, India.

In her keynote address at the valedictory session, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Minister for External Affairs, Government of India, underlined the linkages between environment and conflict. She pointed out that while on the one hand a totalitarian approach, where man is at the centre, was propagated by a large number of western philosophers, on the other hand Buddhist and Hindu philosophers remained deeply conscious of the need to preserve nature.

Exhibition on Xuanzang's pilgrimage

An exhibition, 'Chetiya Carika-the Dhamma Pilgrimage', was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi on the occasion of 'Global Hindu-Buddhism Initiative', held at Bodh Gaya on September 5. The focus of the exhibition was to showcase the pilgrimage legacy of Xuanzang and to highlight this part of the Buddhist circuit that remains untapped.

Buddhism was lost in the land of its origin, Bihar, in the 13th century. Orientalists, till the publication of the travelogues of 7th CE Chinese monk-scholar Xuanzang, believed that the images of the Buddha, with large earlobes and lips and twisted curly hair, were of African origin. It was only in mid 19th CE when travelogues of 5th CE Chinese monk-scholar Faxian and Xuanzang were translated from Chinese to European languages. These revealed the origin of Buddhism in India and existence of an elaborate Buddhist pilgrimage "in the Footsteps of the Buddha". Many British explorers, including Cunningham, worked hard to decipher the works of Xuanzang. All the prominent Buddhist pilgrimage sites, including the now popular Nalanda, Sarnath, Vaishali, Sravati, Lumbini, etc., were identified on the basis of Xuanzang's accounts.

The highlight of the exhibition was a detailed map showing the entire pilgrimage route of Xuanzang. The map was prepared on the basis of the '*Biography*' and the '*Journey to the West*', the two works of Xuanzang. Exhibits included photographs, books, art and handicrafts.



Photo: Nava Nalanda Mahavihara

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being shown the map at the exhibition depicting Xuanzang's pilgrimage by Deepak Anand. Also seen are Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju and Director-cum- Vice Chancellor of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Dr Ravindra Panth.

She cautioned the audience that environmental degradation has reached an alarming stage today and that if corrective steps are not taken urgently, future generations will not forgive us.

Recalling the deliberations during the two-day conclave in his concluding remarks at the valedictory session, General N C Vij, Director of VIF, stated that the conference had met all the objectives it had set

out to achieve. Religious leaders, scholars and all other delegates were aligned to the same thought process. Mr Masahiro Akiyama, President of the Tokyo Foundation, declared that Japan would host the next Hindu-Buddhist Samvad in January 2016.

The conference ended with a formal vote of thanks by Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General of the International Buddhist Confederation. ■

India-Japan: Echoes of cultural friendship



Photos: Kshipra Simon

Union Minister of State for Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation, Dr Mahesh Sharma, inaugurating the exhibition. Also seen are Director of VIF, Gen. NC Vij, and exhibition curator, Prof Shashibala (left); Former Sri Lankan President, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga looking at the display. Also seen is Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Mr Kiren Rijju, and Director of VIF, Gen. NC Vij (centre). The State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Minoru Kiuchi, addressing the gathering.

A photo exhibition on 'India-Japan: Echoes of Cultural Friendship', at Vivekananda International Foundation, displayed the history of cultural friendship between India and Japan on September 3-5, 2015. It reflected the sharing of ideals of wisdom and compassion, faith and sacrifice, purity and enlightenment. The history goes back to 552 AD when Japan ushered in a new era. Since then Buddhism has remained the core and culmination of the friendship and will continue for generations to come.

The exhibition curated by Prof. Shashibala opened with Horyuji monastery – Dharmavardhana Mahavihara – and Shotoku Taishi, the Ashoka of Japan, who drew its first constitution, built temples and gave a strong foundation to Buddhism in Japan. Sound of bells from these temple still reverberate and smoke of the incense offered by devotees spreads the fragrance of *dharma*, creating a conflict-free world.

As per statistics compiled by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, there are 75,000 Buddhist temples in Japan. Daianji has a temple dedicated to Sarasvati, where Sanskrit is still studied. Shinran, a 12th century Japanese monk, believed in togetherness of the Buddha Dharma and *rajadharma*. He urged they work together as the responsibility of peace and benevolent rule lies with a ruler and Buddhist temples ensure divine protection to a state.

The Great Buddha at Todaiji is a symbol

of national unity and integrity. Its consecration ceremony was performed by Indian monk-scholar Bodhisena, invited as officiating priest in 736 AD. Nearly 10,000 delegates from the Buddhist world joined him for the 'eye-opening ceremony'. The brush with which he painted the eyes is still kept at Shosoin monastery.

The second section of the exhibition focused on the Vedic tradition, presenting mandalas as projections for *dhyaana*. They assimilated philosophical ideals of transcendence in life, devotion to the cosmos and adoration to Vedic deities. *Homa*, the fire ritual, known as *Goma* in Shingon Buddhist tradition, considered to be the highest expression of ritual practice, was transmitted from Vedic India.

The third section focused on the philosophy of *dhyaana-yoga*, which became Zen in Japan. Zen has penetrated deep into the Japanese life, laying emphasis on stern spiritual discipline. Its influence on arts, attitudes and perceptions has been pervasive. It teaches self-reliance, physical and spiritual discipline, refinement and advancement through concentration, purity of mind and essentiality, inner quest, patience and obedience.

Japan became the land of devotion to action, grandeur of thought and depths of philosophy. Samurais liked its principle of '*ken zen ichi*' meaning '*shastreshastrea kaushalam*' – life requires wisdom and gallantry both. Zen, with its transcendental

value system, inspired the poets and artists like Saigyō. The philosophy is expressed in the beauty of gardens, Haiku poetry, painters' brush and vibrations of Zen.

The next section was dedicated to Sanskrit, which became a medium of transcendental values and secular advancement in Japan. Till date, a rich literary treasure of Sanskrit texts consisting of *dharanis*, *tantras*, *sutras* and other texts, has been kept in Japan. Sutras can be heard in daily recitation of the Japanese. Emperor Shomu used Sanskrit *sutras* as a core to create a unified country and became a supreme monarch. During mid-8th century, he dispatched Sanskrit *sutras* to all provinces and ordered for their recitation on fixed days and time.

The system of education saw a phase of democratisation in the 9th century with creation of Sanskrit-based alphabet invented by the monk-scholar Kobo Daishi. He created Japanese Kana syllabary of 50 sounds: *ai u e o*, *kakikukeko*, etc. Daishi gave training for writing Sanskrit *mantras*, *dharanis* and seed syllables.

The great monk Jiun Sonja, a saint of great learning and noble virtues, was given the honorific title 'Sonja', meaning '*arya*' or '*arhat*'. This honour has not been given to any other in Japan. Sanskrit calligraphy became a divine art in Japan. The last section had photos of rituals performed in the daily lives of the Japanese, which are similar to Indian ways of sanctification and divine empowerment. ■



His Holiness the Dalai Lama speaking to Indian business and political leaders at the talk organised by the Hinduja Foundation on September 20, 2015.

Photos: Ian Cumming

Talk on ethics in leadership

His Holiness the Dalai Lama in London

His Holiness was welcomed by the businessmen, the Hinduja brothers - Srichand, Gopichand, Prakash and Ashok - to their house at Carlton Terrace, at a lunch hosted by IBC's Global Envoy, Lady Mohini Kent Noon, and the Hinduja Foundation. This grand mansion was once occupied by Queen Victoria's Prime Minister, William Gladstone. His Holiness affirmed to a small family gathering that wherever he goes he carries India's message of 'ahimsa', or non-violence, and inter-religious harmony. He was introduced to a gathering of about 100 Indian political and business leaders by Lady Mohini Kent Noon, who said how privileged they were to have him there. She mentioned His Holiness's consistent dedication to non-violence, noting that while there may be hotheads, there have been no Tibetan terrorists.

His Holiness responded, remarking that Hindu, Jain and Buddhist traditions have the practice of ethics, concentration and wisdom in common, the only difference being that the Buddha taught 'anatman', the lack of an independently existent self. He said he considered himself to be a 'son of India', because his brain is filled with Nalanda thought and his body had been nourished so long by Indian rice and dal.

Asked if he thought there were evil people in the world or just that some were

misguided, he replied:

"Just misguided. We can't find evil children. It's when people become adults that they behave badly. Human beings are social animals. It is love that brings us together. As to whether the world is getting better or not, we can say that more people are becoming aware of the importance of peace of mind."

To a question about astrology, His Holiness replied that he didn't know, but that the 5th Dalai Lama, who had been a qualified astrologer, had made the remark that on the auspicious day of his birth, thousands of dogs had also been born.



Lady Mohini Kent Noon, IBC Global Envoy, introducing His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Lady Mohini Kent Noon, a well-known philanthropist and IBC's Global Envoy, said it was an extraordinary privilege to have His Holiness the Dalai Lama with them. She said that His Holiness has been an inspiration to people all over the world. He has faced many harsh difficulties throughout his life, lost his country, and Tibet is going through a critical period. But he has consistently kept to the path of non-violence, peace and compassion. The Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959, and has lived in India ever since. He says: "For the past 56 years I am having Indian rice, chapatti, tea. Now I consider myself as the son of India, son of the soil".

"I attend His Holiness' annual Teachings sessions in Delhi and he has talked about the need for a Map of Emotions, for the Self is the root of mental poisons.

And that joyfulness is the answer to all disease.

And the journey is the destination.

She said: "His Holiness has also given the Foreword to my book *Nagarjuna*, the great Buddhist master, written for lay readers. Rishi Nagarjuna emphasised interdependence of existence, impermanence, and the silent mind." Lady Mohini Noon Kent informed that last year when the Tibet Office had offered her the opportunity to host this event for His Holiness – because she is the Global Ambassador in the UK for the IBC – she had turned to Gopi Hinduja for help, who readily agreed. ■

IBC–Working Group Meeting

The two-day Working Group Meeting was held on September 1-2, 2015, to discuss the proposed amendments to the IBC Constitution. The document containing proposed amendments had been circulated in advance among all members of the Working Group. It was agreed that after incorporation of the suggestions made by members of the Working Group, the revised document would be circulated again among the members. The amendments would then be put before the Governing Council in its next meeting. A substantive part of the discussions pertained to the following subjects: categories of memberships for the IBC, registration and membership fee, creation of a new position in IBC, chairman of the Governing Council, operation of Bank Accounts of IBC, next meeting of the Governing Council and proposed activities up to March 2016.

The following was discussed and agreed upon regarding the proposed amendments to IBC Constitution:

1. Memberships

Amendments to various clauses of the IBC Constitution were discussed in detail. There was a detailed discussion on the categories of membership, especially Associate Membership. A majority of the members were of the opinion that the category should be retained for now, and that the specific clause could be reconsidered later. Prof B Mungekar and Mrs Ang Dawa Sherpa, however, were of the opinion that Associate Membership should be discontinued. They therefore disagreed with the majority view, and wanted their dissent to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

It was decided that the issue of membership and the voting rights assigned to different categories of members will need to be addressed. A sub-committee consisting of Dr Gregory Kruglak, Ven. Dr Thich Nhat Tu and Mr Jamie Cresswell was constituted to look into this issue, and make recommendations to be circulated to the full Working Group at the earliest opportunity and Mr

Jamie Cresswell was deputed to look into this issue, and make recommendations to be circulated to the full Working Group at the earliest opportunity.

2. Registration and Membership fee

Ven. Dr Thich Nhat Tu suggested that a registration fee of USD 300 could be charged from members at the time of acceptance of application for membership. He further suggested that the annual membership could be fixed at USD 100.

It was also suggested that if a member organization is unable to pay the annual fee, the matter may be brought before the Governing Council for its consideration.

Further suggestion was that there should be a special fee structure for SAARC countries, namely Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

It was decided that the issue of registration and membership fee needed further discussion, and could be taken up in the next meeting of the Governing Council.

3. Introduction of a new position in IBC

Dr Harsha Navaratne suggested that a new position of Chairperson of the Governing Council be introduced. The Chairperson would chair all meetings of the Governing Council, thus ensuring continuity in its conduct and proceedings.

However a majority of the members were of the opinion that the present provisions regarding chairing of the Governing Council meetings should be retained. According to these one of the eight-Presidents will chair a meeting of the Governing Council. In the absence of the Presidents, any of the Vice Presidents shall chair the meeting.

4. Operation of bank accounts of IBC

According to the current provisions in the IBC Constitution, one of the 8 Presidents, the Secretary General and the Treasurer shall be signatories to the bank account, which may be operated jointly by the Treasurer and any one of the other two signatories.

Members were of the unanimous opinion that since IBC is registered in India under



Members discussing at the Working Group meeting at New Delhi

Photo: Govind Bist

the Societies Registration Act and is subject to the Indian laws, its bank accounts should be operated only by Indian nationals. Thus it was suggested that the Secretary General, Treasurer and one other Indian national who is a member of the Governing Council should be signatories to the bank account, which may be operated jointly by the Treasurer and one of the other two signatories.

It was agreed that an amendment be proposed accordingly to the requisite provision of the Constitution.

5. Meeting of the Governing Council

Members were informed that the next Governing Council meeting might be held in Gujarat, subject to the approval of the government of Gujarat. IBC has signed an MoU with the Gujarat government to help it preserve, develop and promote Buddhist heritage in the state, and construct a Grand Relic Vihara in Devni Mori. At a meeting of the Working Group formed by the government of Gujarat for this purpose, Ven. Lama Lobzang had suggested that, to begin with, IBC could facilitate a visit to Gujarat by high ranking Buddhist religious leaders and opinion makers from around the world. The Governing Council meeting will be an opportunity to fulfill that commitment. Further, if the government of Gujarat is willing to host members of the Governing Council, it will mean a substantial reduction in costs incurred by IBC.

An alternative venue for the meeting could be Agartala in Tripura, where IBC is organising an “International Seminar on India’s North Eastern Region and Buddhist Heritage – Bridge between South and South East Asia” from 12 to 14 December 2015. Since some of the members of the Governing Council would also be invited to the seminar, and the staff of IBC would already be present in Agartala, it was suggested that the Governing Council meeting could be held on 16 and 17 December 2015, after a one-day gap following the conclusion of the seminar. A majority of the members preferred Agartala as the venue for the next Governing Council meeting. However a final decision regarding the venue would depend on the response received from the Government of Gujarat. The IBC secretariat was requested to follow up on the matter with the state government.

The meeting was attended by:

1. **Ven. Lama Lobzang**
(Secretary General)
Chairman
2. **Mr Jamie Cresswell**
(Vice President)
Member
3. **Prof B Mungekar**
(Deputy Secretary General)
Member
4. **Dr Harsha Kumara Navaratne**
(Deputy Secretary General)
Member
5. **Mrs Ang Dawa Sherpa**
(Honorary Secretary)
Member
6. **Dr Gregory Kruglak**
(Honorary Secretary)
Member
7. **Ven. Bhikku Sanghasena Mahathera** (Treasurer)
Member
8. **Ven. Thich Nhat Tu**
(Executive Member of the Governing Council)
Member
9. **Ven. Khenpo Chimed**
(Executive Member of the Governing Council) Member
10. **Mr Seshadri Chari**
(Advisor)
11. **Most Ven. Prof Thich Thien Tam**
(Member of the Supreme Dhamma Council) Special invitee
12. **Ven. Banagala Upatissa**
(Vice President)
Special invitee
13. **Mr Lai Seow Khee**
Special invitee
14. **Mr Maling Gombu**
Special invitee
15. **Mr Kishore Thukral**
(Executive Director, Communications)
Ex-officio
16. **Ms Vichitra Sharma**
(Coordinator, PR and Media)
Ex-officio

6. Proposed activities up to March 2016

i. Samvad – Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness:

Members were informed that IBC, in collaboration with the Vivekananda International Foundation and the Tokyo Foundation, is organizing this 2-day conference in New Delhi on September 3-4, 2015. Prime Minister Narendra Modi would inaugurate the conference. The Chief Guest at the Valedictory would be Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Minister for External Affairs, Government of India. The delegates will thereafter be taken to Bodh Gaya, where Prime Minister Modi would address them again, and the Bodh Gaya Declaration of Buddhist Leaders will be adopted.

ii. International Seminar on India’s North Eastern Region and Buddhist Heritage – Bridge between South and South East Asia (Forging synergies for growth and sustainable development): Members were informed that the seminar is proposed to be held in Agartala, Tripura on December 12-13, 2015. On December 14, delegates will be taken to visit Buddhist heritage sites in the state. The seminar is being organised in collaboration with the Asian Confluence, Shillong. The Dhamma Dipa Foundation, Sabroom, Tripura, will be the local partner. Participants will be invited from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, besides various states of North-East India.

iii. Symposium: Buddhist Sanskrit Texts in Indian and Japanese collections: As part of the Festival of India in Japan, this symposium was earlier scheduled for November 2015, but may now be held in March-April 2016, depending on the dates given by the Indian embassy in Tokyo.

iv. Visit by HH the Dalai Lama to UK: HH the Dalai Lama is scheduled to visit UK later in September 2015. While in London he will be hosted at lunch by the Hinduja brothers. Leading members of the

Indian community in the UK will be invited for the event. Lady Mohini Kent Noon, Global Envoy of IBC will be coordinating the meeting.

v. Conference in Lumbini on “Preservation, Restoration and Development of Buddhist Pilgrimage and Holy Sites in Nepal – Buddha’s Birthplace”: Members were informed that this conference will be organized by IBC in Lumbini in January-February 2016, subject however to the political situation in Nepal stabilising. ■

Strong leadership needed to save Planet Earth

Dr Barbara Maas, Head, International Species Conservation, NABU International Foundation for Nature, and Secretary, IBC Standing Committee on Environment & Conservation, speaking at the ‘Samvad – Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environmental Consciousness’ in New Delhi, said “There is still time to slow the pace of climate change and limit its impacts, but to do so, the Paris summit will need to put us on a path to phase out fossil fuels. We must ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, through visionary and comprehensive mitigation and adaptation measures.

“Our concern is founded on the Buddha’s realisation of dependent co-arising, which interconnects all things in the universe. Understanding this interconnected causality and the consequences of our actions are critical steps in reducing our environmental impact. Cultivating the insight of inter-being and compassion, we will be able to act out of love, not fear, to protect our planet.

“Buddhist leaders have been speaking about this for decades. However, everyday life can easily lead us to forget that our lives are inextricably interwoven with the natural world through every breath we take, the water we drink, and the food we eat. Through our lack of insight, we are destroying the very life support systems that we and all other living beings depend on for survival.

“We believe it imperative that the global Buddhist community recognise both our dependence on one another as well as on the natural world. Together, humanity must act on the root causes of this environmental crisis, which is driven by our use of fossil fuels, unsustainable consumption patterns, lack of awareness, and lack of concern about the consequences of our actions.

“Will we be able to maintain yields in a world that is facing potentially significant environmental change? Soil is running out. Or, rather, it is running away. Intensive agriculture which plants crops on fields without respite leads to soil erosion. This



Photo: Kshipra Simon

Dr Barbara Maas, Head International Species Conservation, NABU International Foundation for Nature, and Secretary, IBC Standing Committee on Environment & Conservation

can be offset by using more fertiliser, but there comes a point where the soil is so eroded that farming there becomes very limited, and it will take many years for such soils to recover.

“The estimated level of resources and ecosystem services required to support human activities today is just over 1.6 Earths. Since 1961, the first year consistent United Nations statistics were available, humanity’s demand on resources has gone from being within the means of what nature could support to significantly over budget. Our planet went into global overshoot in the early 1970s.

“Buddhism offers a truly unique way of approaching life and by focussing not just on ‘Me, Me, Me’, but by being inclusive and spending love on everybody. The challenge is to rise above our primitive biological programming.

“We have constructed a system we can’t control. It imposes itself on us, and we become its slaves and victims. We have created a society in which the rich become richer and the poor become poorer, and in which we are so caught up in our own immediate problems that we cannot afford to be aware of what is going on with the rest of the human family or our planet Earth. In my mind I see a group of chickens in a cage disputing over a few seeds of grain, unaware that in a

few hours they will all be killed.

“If humans don’t change there will be chaos, famine and misery on a scale never witnessed before. Social upheaval and violence will lead to collapsing civilisations. There’ll be wars over resources such as oil, water, arable land, access to food, etc., and conflicts over migration, diseases outbreaks and famine, droughts, superstorms. We have even altered our planet’s climate and the chemistry of the oceans.

“Politicians, spiritual leaders, educators, consumers, businesses and corporates, and media will need to show some brave leadership instead of following business as usual.

“Strong leadership is the need of the hour. Organisations and governments need to walk the talk!” she said. ■

MAIN SIGNATORIES TO THE STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

1. **His Holiness Thich Pho Tue**, Supreme Patriarch of All Vietnam Buddhist Sangha
2. **His Holiness Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa**, Sangharaja, and Chairman State Sangha MahaNāyaka Committee, Myanmar
3. **His Eminence Agga Maha Panditha Dawuldena Gnanissara MahaNayaka Thera**, Mahanayaka Thero, The Supreme Prelate of the Amarapura MahaNikaya, Sri Lanka
4. **His Holiness the Dalai Lama Tenzing Gyatso**, 14th Dalai Lama
5. **His Eminence Rev. Khamba Lama GajjuDemberel**, The Supreme Head of Mongolian Buddhists
6. **His Holiness Dr Dharmasen Mahathero**, The Supreme Patriarch (Sangharaja) of the Bangladesh Sangha
7. **His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa**, Head of the Karma Kagyu
8. **His Eminence Jaseung Sunim**, President, Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism

Leading Buddhists sign landmark statement on climate change to global leaders

Nineteen of the world's most senior Buddhists have issued a landmark statement to political leaders to adopt an effective climate change agreement at the UN negotiations in Paris starting November 30.

Buddhist Climate Change Statement to World Leaders

We, the undersigned Buddhist leaders come together prior to the 21st Session of the Conference of Parties (COP21) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, to add our voices to the growing calls for world leaders to cooperate with compassion and wisdom to reach an ambitious and effective climate agreement.

9. **Zen Master ThichNhat Hanh**, Patriarch of the Plum Village International Community of Engaged Buddhists
10. **Bhante B Sri Saranankara Nayaka Maha Thera**, Chief Adhikarana Sangha Nayaka of Malaysia
11. **Venerable Bhikku Bodhi**, President, Buddhist Association of the USA
12. **Venerable Lama Lobzang**, Secretary General of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)
13. **Rev. Hakuga Murayama**, President, All Japan Young Buddhist Association (JYBA)
14. **Venerable Olivier Reigen Wang-gen**, President, Buddhist Union of France (UBF)
15. **Most Venerable Aryawangso**, Vice President of the world Fellowship of Buddhists, Thailand
16. **Venerable Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo**, Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery, India
17. **Sensei Amala Wrightson**, Auckland Zen Centre, New Zealand
18. **Royal Highness Ashi Kesang Wangmo Wangchuk**, Bhutan
19. **James Bruce Cresswell** - President, European Buddhist Union



Photo: Amos Simon

The Secretary General of the International Buddhist Confederation, the Ven. Lama Lobzang, signs the #Buddhist4Climate Statement in Delhi

We are at a crucial crossroads where our survival and that of other species is at stake as a result of our actions. There is still time to slow the pace of climate change and limit its impacts, but to do so, the Paris summit will need to put us on a path to phase out fossil fuels, and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, through visionary and comprehensive mitigation and adaptation measures.

The basis of our concern is founded on the Buddha's central concept of the dependent co-arising of all things; which condition each other in universal interconnectedness for the benefit or harm of all life. Understanding this interconnected causality and the consequences of our actions is a critical step in reducing our environmental impact, as is cultivating insight of inter-being and compassion. Buddhist leaders have been speaking about this for decades. However, everyday life can easily lead us to forget that our lives are inextricably interwoven with the natural world – through every breath we take, the water we drink and the food we eat. Through our mindlessness, we are destroying the very life support systems that we, and all other living beings depend on for survival.

We believe it is imperative that the global Buddhist community in particular,

recognises both our dependence on one another and the natural world. Together, all people of faith and none, must act on the root causes of this environment crisis that is driven by our use of fossil fuels, unsustainable consumption patterns, lack of awareness and our undue concern about the consequences of our actions.

We strongly support the “The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change,” endorsed by a diverse and global representation of Buddhist leaders and Buddhist sangha's. We welcome and support the climate change statements of other religious traditions. These include more recently this year, Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home, the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change, as well as the upcoming Hindu Declaration on Climate Change. We are united by our concern to phase out fossil fuels, to reduce our consumption patterns and the ethical imperative to act against both the causes and the impacts of climate change, especially on the world's poorest.

To this end, we urge world leaders to generate the political will needed to close the emissions gap left by country climate pledges to ensure that the global temperature increase remains below 1.5 degree Celsius, relative to pre-industrial



levels. We also ask for a common commitment to scale up climate finance, so as to help developing countries prepare for climate impacts, and to help us all to transition to a safe, low carbon future.

The good news is that there is a unique opportunity at the Paris climate negotiations to create a turning point. Scientists assure us that limiting the rise in the global average temperature to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius, is technologically and economically feasible. Phasing out fossil fuels and moving toward 100 percent renewable and clean energy, will not only spur a global, low-carbon transformation, it will also help us to embark on a much needed path of spiritual renewal. In addition to our spiritual progression, in line with UN recommendations, some of the most effective actions individuals can take is to protect our forests, move toward a plant-based diet, lower consumption, recycle, switch to renewables, fly less and take public transport. All of us can make a difference.

We call on world leaders to recognise and address our universal responsibility to protect the web of life for the benefit of all, now and for the future.

For These Reasons, We Call On All Parties in Paris:

1. To be guided by the moral dimensions of climate change as indicated in Article 3 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
2. To agree to phase out fossil fuels and move towards 100 percent renewables and clean energy
3. To create the political will to close the emissions gap left by country climate pledges to ensure that the global temperature increase remains below 1.5 degree Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels.
4. To make a common commitment to scale up finance above the \$100 billion pledged in Copenhagen in 2009, including through the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to help vulnerable developing countries prepare for climate impacts and transition towards a low-carbon economy.

The time to act is now.

Yours sincerely

The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change

Today we live in a time of great crisis, confronted by the gravest challenge that humanity has ever faced: the ecological consequences of our own collective karma. The scientific consensus is overwhelming: human activity is triggering environmental breakdown on a planetary scale. Global warming, in particular, is happening much faster than previously predicted, most obviously at the North Pole. For hundreds of thousands of years, the Arctic Ocean has been covered by an area of sea-ice as large as Australia—but now this is melting rapidly. In 2007 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) forecast that the Arctic might be free of summer sea ice by 2100. It is now apparent that this could occur within a decade or two. Greenland's vast ice-sheet is also melting more quickly than expected. The rise in sea-level this century will be at least one meter—enough to flood many coastal cities and vital rice growing areas such as

the Mekong Delta in Vietnam.

Glaciers all over the world are receding quickly. If current economic policies continue, the glaciers of the Tibetan Plateau, source of the great rivers that provide water for billions of people in Asia, are likely to disappear by mid-century. Severe drought and crop failures are already affecting Australia and Northern China. Major reports—from the IPCC, United Nations, European Union, and International Union for Conservation of Nature—agree that, without a collective change of direction, dwindling supplies of water, food and other resources could create famine conditions, resource battles, and mass migration by mid century—perhaps by 2030, according to the U.K.'s chief scientific advisor.

Global warming plays a major role in other ecological crises, including the loss of many plant and animal species that share this Earth with us. Oceanographers report that half the carbon released by burning fossil fuels has been absorbed by the oceans, increasing their



Environmental disasters like landslides are leading to soil erosion

Photo: Himanshu Joshi

acidity by about 30 per cent. Acidification is disrupting calcification of shells and coral reefs, as well as threatening plankton growth, the source of the food chain for most life in the sea.

Eminent biologists and U.N. reports concur that “business-as-usual” will drive half of all species on Earth to extinction within this century. Collectively, we are violating the first precept—“do not harm living beings”—on the largest possible scale. And we cannot foresee the biological consequences for human life when so many species that invisibly contribute to our own well-being vanish from the planet.

Many scientists have concluded that the survival of human civilization is at stake. We have reached a critical juncture in our biological and social evolution. There has never been a more important time in history to bring the resources of Buddhism to bear on behalf of all living beings. The four noble truths provide a framework for diagnosing our current situation and formulating appropriate guidelines—because the threats and disasters we face ultimately stem from the human mind, and therefore require profound changes within our minds. If personal suffering stems from craving and ignorance—from the three poisons of greed, ill will, and delusion—the same applies to the suffering that afflicts us on a collective scale. Our ecological emergency is a larger version of the perennial human predicament. Both as individuals and as a species, we suffer from a sense of self that feels disconnected not only from other people but from the Earth itself. As Thich Nhat Hanh has said, “We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness.” We need to wake up and realize that the Earth is our mother as well as our home—and in this case the umbilical cord binding us to her cannot be severed. When the Earth becomes sick, we become sick, because we are part of her.

Our present economic and technological relationships with the rest of the biosphere are unsustainable. To survive the rough transitions ahead, our lifestyles and expectations must change. This involves new habits as well as new values. The Buddhist teaching that the overall health of the individual and society depends upon inner well-being, and not merely upon economic indicators, helps us determine the personal

and social changes we must make.

Individually, we must adopt behaviors that increase everyday ecological awareness and reduce our “carbon footprint”. Those of us in the advanced economies need to retrofit and insulate our homes and workplaces for energy efficiency; lower thermostats in winter and raise them in summer; use high efficiency light bulbs and appliances; turn off unused electrical appliances; drive the most fuel-efficient cars possible, and reduce meat consumption in favor of a healthy, environmentally-friendly plant-based diet.

These personal activities will not by themselves be sufficient to avert future calamity. We must also make institutional changes, both technological and economic. We must “de-carbonize” our energy systems as quickly as feasible by replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources that are limitless, benign and harmonious with nature. We especially need to halt the construction of new coal plants, since coal is by far the most polluting and most dangerous source of atmospheric carbon. Wisely utilized, wind power, solar power, tidal power, and geothermal power can provide all the electricity that we require without damaging the biosphere. Since up to a quarter of world carbon emissions result from deforestation, we must reverse the destruction of forests, especially the vital rainforest belt where most species of plants and animals live.

It has recently become quite obvious that significant changes are also needed in the way our economic system is structured. Global warming is intimately related to the gargantuan quantities of energy that our industries devour to provide the levels of consumption that many of us have learned to expect. From a Buddhist perspective, a sane and sustainable economy would be governed by the principle of sufficiency: the key to happiness is contentment rather than an ever-increasing abundance of goods. The compulsion to consume more and more is an expression of craving, the very thing the Buddha pinpointed as the root cause of suffering.

Instead of an economy that emphasizes profit and requires perpetual growth to avoid collapse, we need to move together towards an economy that provides a satisfactory

standard of living for everyone while allowing us to develop our full (including spiritual) potential in harmony with the biosphere that sustains and nurtures all beings, including future generations. If political leaders are unable to recognize the urgency of our global crisis, or unwilling to put the long-term good of humankind above the short-term benefit of fossil-fuel corporations, we may need to challenge them with sustained campaigns of citizen action.

Dr James Hansen of NASA and other climatologists have recently defined the precise targets needed to prevent global warming from reaching catastrophic “tipping points.” For human civilization to be sustainable, the safe level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is no more than 350 parts per million (ppm). This target has been endorsed by the Dalai Lama, along with other Nobel laureates and distinguished scientists. Our current situation is particularly worrisome in that the present level is already 387 ppm, and has been rising at 2 ppm per year. We are challenged not only to reduce carbon emissions, but also to remove large quantities of carbon gas already present in the atmosphere.

As signatories to this statement of Buddhist principles, we acknowledge the urgent challenge of climate change. We join with the Dalai Lama in endorsing the 350 ppm target. In accordance with Buddhist teachings, we accept our individual and collective responsibility to do whatever we can to meet this target, including (but not limited to) the personal and social responses outlined above.

We have a brief window of opportunity to take action, to preserve humanity from imminent disaster and to assist the survival of the many diverse and beautiful forms of life on Earth. Future generations, and the other species that share the biosphere with us, have no voice to ask for our compassion, wisdom, and leadership. We must listen to their silence. We must be their voice, too, and act on their behalf. ■

Over 320 endorsements of the Declaration have been obtained from eminent Buddhists from 37 countries



Devni Mori: Recreating a Grand Vihara



Photos: Ojas Hirani

Proposal 1: Aerial view of site.

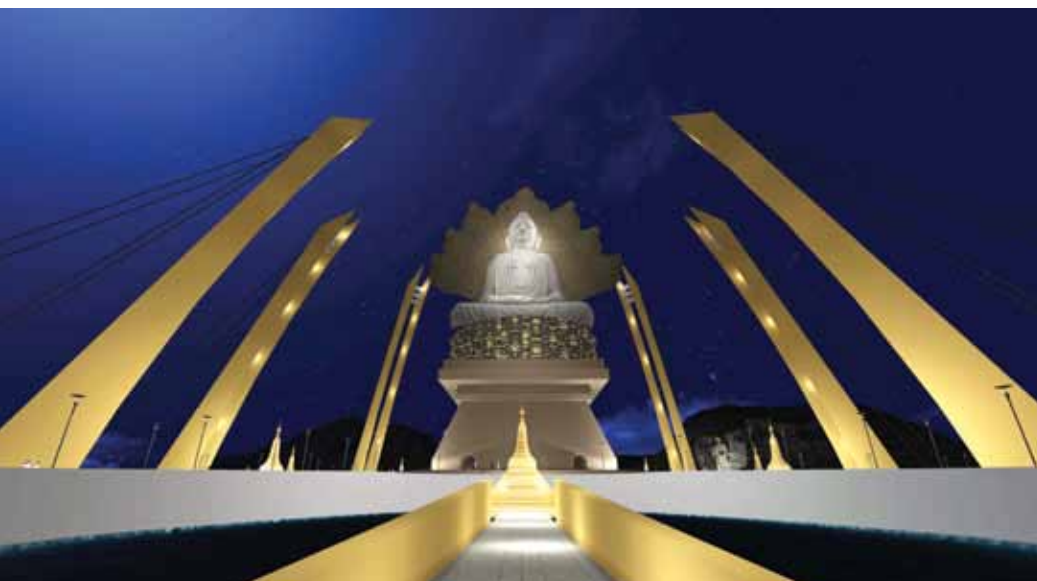
Devni Mori was in ancient times an important Buddhist destination in Gujarat, dating back to the 3rd-4th century AD. In more recent times, the findings of remains of a stupa, a chaitya and a vihara of a Buddhist Monastery have corroborated this with the excavations conducted by archaeologist S N Chaudhary in 1959. The relics found here are now kept in M S

University, Vadodara.

To retrieve the lost importance of this great Buddhist site and holy place, then Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi conceived the idea of building a grand vihara, which would be a significant destination for followers of Buddhism, tourists and scholars of theosophy, religious art and architecture. An MoU was

signed to this effect between the Gujarat Tourism Department and the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

Architects started shaping this project from 2011. Presentations of the designs were made in front of His Holiness Dalai Lama, Mahanayakas of Sri Lanka and, recently, in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and 417 Buddhist delegates



Proposal 2: The Main Axial Path



Photo: Kshipra Simon

PM Modi (on the left) watching the audio-video presentation by the Gujarat government



Photo: Ojas Hirani

Proposal 2: Exhibition Area

from all over the world.

Architect Ojas Hirani has developed two options for the same. The first emphasises Buddhist symbols like Lotus, Dharmachakra, Eight Cardinal directions and envisages one of the biggest stupas of the world (108 metres), which will contain the relics of the Buddha. The second option emphasises the life of the Buddha. A 108-metre high sitting Buddha statue will have ramps going upwards, on which the life of the Buddha will be depicted.

To be created in the lap of the nature, the iconic statue of the world's tallest sitting Buddha is being proposed with unique idea of a Shesh Naga behind the statue. The Mukh Darshan Path, in the form of connecting bridges, emphasises the central statue and enhances the grandeur of the structure. The four spires create an axis, giving a sense of centralisation to the Statue. The relics of Buddha will be kept on top of the structure which will be the apex point of the structure.

The Tourism Department of Gujarat has now taken this project on a fast track mode as the Prime Minister has indicated that the project should be completed in the coming six to seven years. The Tourism Department and the International Buddhist Confederation has accordingly planned all the future activities for easy implementation and fast completion. ■

Preserving Buddhist Heritage of Ladakh

AUGUST 23-30, 2015



The 4th International Festival of Buddhist Heritage of Ladakh (IFBHL) was held from August 23-30, 2015, focused on showcasing, conserving and preserving the rich cultural heritage of Ladakh.

It was hosted by the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre, the International Festival of Buddhist Heritage of Ladakh (IFBHL), and in association with the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC). The primary objective of the festival was to create awareness, showcase and preserve the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of the Himalayas.

This year, the main theme of the festival was 'Historical Heritage of Ladakh' with the sub-theme of the seminar being 'responsible and sustainable tourism'. Over the last few decades, tourism has become an important component of the Ladakhi economy. It has also been an important driver of social and cultural change. The festival facilitated discussions to explore how tourism can be harmonised with

Ladakhi heritage preservation.

As with the previous editions of the IFBHL, the 4th edition included cultural performances, the International Buddhist Film Festival, seminars, meditation sessions and cultural tours to different regions of Ladakh, witnessing the holy mask-dance by the monks of the Hemis Monastery, special session on Buddhist Heritage of Ladakh by UNESCO experts, etc.

Eminent scholars, politicians, social and religious heads from different countries participated in the events. In addition, a cultural troupe from Thailand also participated in the festival. ■

Picturespeak

IBC Secretary General Ven. Lama Lobzang presented with the 'World Buddhist Outstanding Leader Award' by Acting Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, Most Ven. Somdech Phramaha Rachmanglajarn, organised by the World Fellowship of Buddhist Youth and the National Office of Buddhism, Thailand.



Photo: Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre, Ladakh

Nepal: Reconstruction and Heritage Conservation Initiatives

The Nepal chapter of IBC organised a conference in association with Buddhist Organisations of Nepal in August to discuss the post-earthquake scenario regarding resources, reconstruction, rehabilitation initiatives and the conservation of Buddhist heritage.

At the conference, a reconstruction committee was constituted in the presence of IBC Secretary General Ven. Lama Lobzang. This was named Resource, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Committee. "The concept is to draw the attention of the global Buddhist community to the problems confronting Nepal after the devastating earthquake. We need to move forward and work together on this front," said Ven. Khenpo Chimed, Executive Member of the IBC Governing Council.

The meeting was addressed by Mr Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, then President of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninists) and now Prime Minister of Nepal, and Mr Kripasur



(From left to right) Ven. Khenpo Chimed, Executive Member of the IBC Governing Council, Ven. Thubten Jikdol, Ven. Lama Lobzang, Secretary General IBC, Mr Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, then President of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninists) now Prime Minister of Nepal and Mr Kripasur Sherpa, Minister for Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, Nepal.

Sherpa, Minister for Culture, Tourism, and Civil Aviation, Nepal.

The conference worked out a six-point MoU during the two-day conference. The following are the resolutions:

1. By incorporating the conference declaration of the Triyanas about the damages

caused to the Buddhist heritage thereafter, followed by detailed discussions, it was resolved to prepare a comprehensive report including the suggestions and advice.

2. Based on the comprehensive report, a plan to renovate, and if necessary to reallocate some of the Buddhist heritage will be taken up.

3. For the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Buddhist heritage sites, it was resolved that IBC headquarters will appeal to various countries and donors to assist.

4. It was resolved to extend the membership list of the founding members of IBC, Nepal Chapter.

5. It was resolved that IBC Nepal will coordinate all the Buddhist organisations and organise an international level conference at Lumbini, the birth place of Buddha.

6. It was resolved that in order to organise an international level Buddhist Conference at Lumbini, IBC Nepal chapter will constitute an Organising Committee of the International Buddhist Conference. ■



Participants at the conference organised by IBC Nepal Chapter and Buddhist organisations of Nepal on Post-Earthquake Reconstruction, Rehabilitation Initiatives and Buddhist Heritage Conservation.

Tree plantation and environmental pledge

To celebrate the 80th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on July 5, 2015, the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) organised a 'Tree Plantation' drive along the banks of the river Yamuna that runs along the city of Delhi. The effort saw the cleaning of the river banks and greening of the neighbourhood by planting traditional and fruit-bearing trees to attract birds and other species for a sustainable ecology and habitat.

The Chief Guest, the Chief Secretary of the Government of NCT, Delhi, Mr K K Sharma launched the 'Tree Plantation' drive. The main function was held at the Tibetan school at Majnu Ka Tila, in North Delhi. More than 2,000 Buddhist monks from different states of the country as well as from other countries participated in the programme and planted trees along the river banks and by the side of the nearby settlements.

Also, around 1,000 members of the Maurya and Shakyas communities planted saplings to mark the occasion. The programme included planting of 2,000 saplings of local varieties of fruit-bearing, flowering and medicinal trees. Around 1,500



Chief Secretary Sharma planting a tree as Ven. Lama Lobzang looks on.



Chief Secretary, Government of NCT, Delhi, Mr K K Sharma addressing the gathering at the Tree Plantation Programme organised by the IBC on the occasion of 80th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. (from left) Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi, Mr Tempa Tsering, Engineer-in-Chief (MCD North), Mr R K Singh, IBC Secretary General, Ven. Lama Lobzang, and IBC Advisor, Mr Sheshadri Chari.

Photos: Samrat Ashok Club

members of the Himalayan communities from border areas, stretching from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh, also participated in the Clean and Green programme.

Mr Sharma administered a pledge to all the participants at the event, committing them to plant more trees in their surroundings and to sustain them for a better and greener tomorrow. He also appealed to the community to keep their neighbourhood clean.

He recalled the great teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, who preached that you were not just responsible for yourself but for the others' actions too. It would be a great service if you cleaned not just your homes but also the road next to it, he

said. "Look after the riverbed next to your settlement. The river Yamuna is the lifeline of the city and the sister of the Holy river Ganga. As water is holy for us, please do not throw garbage into it," he appealed.

He also urged the participants to act as harbinger of peace and brotherhood in society and be messengers of green and clean programme in their neighbourhood. He also appealed to the gathering to become "friends of tree" to sustain them. This programme was in tune with the "Swachh Bharat, Harit Bharat" campaign by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The programme was also a way of celebrating the 80th birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, one of the Patrons of IBC. ■



Members of the Samrat Asoke Club who participated in the tree plantation drive.



Maha Bodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya.

Photo: Vichitra Sharma

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

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

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

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



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION

Collective Wisdom United Voice

Mission

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

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