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## Buddha’s teachings biggest strength of this earth: PM Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the inauguration of the Global Buddhist Summit (GBS) in New Delhi on 20 April (Thursday) 2023

“The teachings of the Shakyamuni Buddha are the basis for solutions to the greatest challenges confronting the world today, including war, economic instability, terrorism and climate change,” Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the Global Buddhist Summit (GBS) on 20 April 2023 at New Delhi.

Addressing the inaugural session of the two-day Summit that was

attended by Buddhist spiritual leaders, members of the Sangha, distinguished Buddhist scholars, practitioners from across the world, diplomats, lay devotees and representatives of influential institutions, PM Modi said “the Buddha had provided a solution centuries ago to deal with war and conflict, social and multiple crisis the world is grappling

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### Meeting of SCO Member States



At the inauguration the Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and DoNER, Shri G.K Reddy with the Minister of State for Culture and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal and the Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs, Smt Meenakshi Lekhi

### Shared Buddhist Heritage

Inaugurating the two-day international conference of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on “Shared Buddhist Heritage” the Union Minister for Culture & Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region, Mr G. Kishan Reddy said, “Buddha taught us the way to be happy, peaceful and harmonious with full compassion.”

In the footsteps of the Buddha, the enlightened one, he added that “we should not only celebrate heritage but also adhere to the Buddha’s message of non-violence, peace and respect for all sentient beings and live in harmony, and ensure sustainability.”

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Buddha's teachings... from page 1



Union Minister for Culture, Mr G Kishan Reddy presenting a memento of the Nalanda seal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

with today.”

“Threats like terrorism and religious fanaticism are attacking the soul of humanity. Climate change is looming large over the existence of the entire humanity. Glaciers are melting, ecology is being destroyed and species are becoming extinct,” added the Prime Minister, though, also reminding the gathering that “in the midst of all this, there are millions of people like us who have faith in the Buddha, who believe in the welfare of all living beings. This hope, this faith is the biggest strength of this earth.” He further said that, “when this hope gets united, the Buddha’s Dhamma will become the world’s belief and Buddha’s realization will become the belief of humanity.”

The Summit, organised by In-

ternational Buddhist Confederation and the Ministry of Culture, saw the participation of more than 500 delegates, around 175 of who were from overseas representing 31 countries. The theme, “Responses to Contemporary Challenges: Philosophy to Praxis” generated informed and intense discussions. Participants suggested that the Global Buddhist Summit should be an annual event to take the dialogue on several of the challenging issues forward.

Drawing upon Buddha’s thoughts on issues relating to the environment, the Prime Minister said “the path of Buddha is the path of the future, the path of sustainability. Had the world followed the teachings of Buddha, we would not even have faced a crisis like climate change.”

Explaining how each one of us was impacting the earth, he said “be it our lifestyle, eating or travelling habits, everything has an impact, it makes a difference. Everyone can fight the challenges of climate change. If people become aware and change their lifestyle, even this big problem can be dealt with and this is the way of the Buddha.”

With this spirit, the Prime Minister added that “India has started Mission LiFE. Mission LiFE means Lifestyle for the Environment! This mission is also influenced by the inspirations of Buddha, furthering the thoughts of the Buddha.”

Prime Minister Modi went on to mention that there is no problem in the modern world whose solution we could not find in the teaching of the



At the inauguration with the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi are the Union Minister for Culture, Mr G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister for Law and Justice, Mr Kiren Rijiju, Union Ministers of State for Culture, Mr Arjun Ram Meghwal, and Smt Meenakshi Lekhi and Secretary General of International Buddhist Confederation, Ven Dr Dhammapiya.



Prime Minister offering Chivara Dana to the superme members of Holy Sangha at the Global Buddhist Summit

Buddha. For the war and unrest that the world is suffering today, the Buddha had given solutions centuries ago.

In an address interspersed with quotations from various ancient Pali texts, Prime Minister Modi recalled the path of Buddha - 'Pariyatti', 'Pati-patti' and 'Pativedha' which translates to Theory, Practice and Realization. "India is moving fast on all these three points. We have continuously propagated the values of Lord Buddha and have worked with a sense of dedication

to take the teachings of the Buddha to the masses and also the development of Buddha Circuit in India and Nepal." The Prime Minister further mentioned that "we have rejuvenated pilgrimage centres like Sarnath and Kushinagar, and constructed the Kushinagar International Airport and the India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage in Lumbini."

The Prime Minister emphasized that "it is the legacy of Lord Buddha's teachings that India considers the

suffering of every human being as its own. Be it peace missions in different countries of the world, or calamity like the earthquake in Turkey, India stands with humanity in times of crisis by exerting its full potential."

He went on to say that "today the world is watching, understanding, and accepting this sentiment of India's 140 crore people. And I believe that this forum of the International Buddhist Confederation where practitioners from across the world have gathered is a testimony to it."

In conclusion the Prime Minister said "Buddha is beyond the individual; it is a perception. The Buddha is a thought that transcends the individual. The Buddha is a thought that transcends forms and the Buddha is a consciousness beyond manifestation. This Buddha consciousness is eternal and ceaseless. This realization is distinctive."



GBS logo - represents Dharmachakra Mudra or the hand gesture of the 'Wheel of Dhamma'.

## The Panch Pradarshan: a celebration of Five Exhibitions

An exhibition the "Panch Pradarshan," the celebration of Five Exhibitions, was organised as part of the Summit.

The exhibition displayed a pictorial 10- year journey of the IBC; 'the Life and Legacy of Master Atisa Dipankara Srijnana', a Buddhist revered monk; the travel accounts of Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang - 'Sublime Wandering, pilgrimage path of the Buddha'; an audio-visual presentation on the digital restoration of the Ajanta Cave paintings of Padmapani and the rich cultural legacy of the Buddha manifested in the heritage of Vadnagar city (Gujarat), through photographs of excavated sites and a display of some of the objects re-

covered.

The Prime Minister was visibly impressed by the exhibition and spent time understanding the essence of each

segment. He gave special attention to the display of artifacts from Vadnagar. Mentioning the Vadnagar display, the Prime Minister in his address later said,



Director General IBC, Mr. Abhijit Halder explaining the exhibition to the Hon'ble Prime Minister

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The two-day deliberations explored how the Buddha Dhamma's fundamental values can provide inspiration and guidance in the present times, which drives technological advancements and consumerism yet grapples with a devastated planet and rapid disenchantment of societies.

The discussions were under the following four sub themes:

## 1. Buddha Dhamma/Dharma and Peace

## 2. Buddha Dhamma/Dharma: Environmental Crisis, Health and Sustainability

## 3. Preservation of Nalanda Buddhist Tradition

## 4. Buddha Dhamma/Dharma Pilgrimage, Living heritage and Buddha Relics

The Summit was divided into two parts: an academic session and a Sangha session. During the academic session, speakers emphasized the implementation of Dhamma into the field of science and technology to cope with present-day challenges.

In contrast, the Sangha session focused

on the teaching of Dhamma to benefit the contemporary world with compassion and harmony. Given the current global challenges, including pandemics and global warming, the Sangha sessions focused on an individual's duty towards the planet.

The keynote speakers, Padma Shri Prof. Robert Thurman, and His Holiness Thich Tri Quang, along with many other session speakers, addressed significant global issues and generated policy recommendations for further implementation.

## Government developing Buddhist Holy sites and monuments: Reddy

In the welcome address, the Union Minister for Culture, Mr G Kishan Reddy said the "first Buddhist Summit is being held on the 75<sup>th</sup> year of India's Independence, it is the auspicious occasion when we celebrate 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' throughout the year." He further stated that "the Summit will be engaging the supreme Buddhist hierarchy and eminent scholars who will discuss matters of universal concerns and will come up with the Buddhist response for dealing with the current global challenges collectively."

The Minister said that the government of India is promoting Buddhist pilgrimage by developing various ancient holy places and monuments. A special train now connects all the important pilgrimage sites for encouraging religious tourism.

He also mentioned the three Deemed Universities for Buddhist higher education and many other Buddhist institutions that have the patronage of the government, thus signifying the eminence Buddhism held in the nation's ethos and history.



Union Minister for Culture G Kishan Reddy



Union Minister for Law and Justice Kiren Rijju

## Learn to live sustainably, respect the earth, its resources: Rijju

The Union Minister for Law and Justice, Mr Kiren Rijju highlighting the philosophy of the Buddha mentioned that the teachings of impermanence and interdependence remind us that everything in this world is changing and is interconnected, and that our actions have consequences not only on us but the world outside. We must learn to live in a way that is sustainable and respectful of the earth and its resources.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Minister Rijju said "several steps for the promotion and preservation of Buddhist culture in the country had been initiated. From 2014, the Government of India has taken a lead role in all the events related to Buddhism and associated with Lord Buddha. All the important events are celebrated across the country, where we see a very active role played by the states for the first time." He further said the Prime Minister, himself takes the lead role in all the major events, particularly the Vaisakh Buddha Purnima, where he actively participates not only in India but in the neighbouring countries, as well.

## Help to save environment: Meghwal



Union Minister of State for Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal

In his valedictory address at the end of the two days deliberations, Mr Meghwal referred to the several ways and means of attaining happiness as taught by the Buddha. He asked the gathering to focus on one's bare necessities rather than aspire for more. This, he emphasized was the root of all problems.

On the subject of climate change, he said everyone should introspect on how consciously they can help in preventing damage to the environment. In this connection, Mr Meghwal mentioned that he "often rides a bicycle for errands to send a message to people" by setting an example. The Minister also highlighted India's rich philosophical and spiritual heritage where one can find solution to all problems and Buddhism is part of this overall ecosystem.

Speaking at the culmination of the Global Buddhist Summit (GBS), Mr. Abhijit Halder, Director General, IBC mentioned that the conference was unique in many ways especially considering the very advanced and modern topics discussed by some of the speakers in relation to Dhamma. This has relevance to the modern world, the youth and future generations, he said.

Mr. Halder mentioned that of

## 'Pure and universal Dhamma to last forever' Ven Dhammapiya



Secretary General of International Buddhist Confederation, Ven Dr Dhammapiya

In the opening invocation at the inauguration the Secretary General IBC, Ven Dr Dhammapiya recited verses from the Buddha's teachings for blessings to the event and prayers for the "pure and universal Dhamma to last forever, spread everywhere in the world for the welfare, benefit and happiness of all sentient beings."

He called upon the congregation to "join hands and pledge to act collectively to contribute our bit in making the world a peaceful place to live in with abundance of all good and positive things."

On the second day of the summit, Ven Dhammapiya in his opening remarks noted, the previous day, a

speaker had mentioned about different Buddhist traditions that have evolved in different parts of the world. "Each of these is like a different coloured flower growing from the same stalk, which is the teaching of the Shakyamuni. The Buddha gave different teachings to different people of different capacity in different places. So, it is good to remind ourselves of what is said in verse 194 of the Dhammapada," the Venerable said and then quoted:

"Happy is the arising of the Buddha;  
Happy is the exposition of the Ariya Dhamma;

Happy is the harmony amongst the Sangha;  
Happy is the practice of those in harmony."

He suggested that all communities of the Buddhist Sangha need to step forward to address the challenges before us in the world today.

"We are not that different from one another. We share the same air and the same water. Therefore, we must adopt a global point of view to promote world peace, protect Mother Earth and practise compassion. We need to implement the universal values implicit in all religious traditions to help us all," he concluded.

## GBS - relevant to modern world: DG IBC

all the papers presented there was one which questioned the long term sustenance of Buddhism or Dhamma and whether we will indeed be able to sustain Buddhism for the next 2500 years. This, he said was futuristic thinking and all of us practicing Dhamma should think on these lines. Referring to another paper, Mr. Halder noted that it focused on mindfulness in negotiations, especially while signing agreements having significant relevance to issues of peace and

conflict. He mentioned that while dealing with conflicts and war like situations the relevance and importance of mindfulness taking into consideration the overall well being of all sentient beings was of prime importance.

Mr. Halder also appreciated the fact that some speakers spoke on

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DG IBC Abhijit Halder



## “Cultivate Compassion and Wisdom”

**H**is Holiness the Dalai Lama in his long awaited address that kept the audience mesmerised said, “one thing that defines the Buddha’s teaching is his explanation of dependent arising. Of the two Tibetan syllables, ‘ten-jung’, the first means dependent and the second, arising. This gives us an insight into reality. Everything is dependent. Nothing is independent. Things arise in dependence on other factors. Since nothing is independent, everything comes about through dependent relationships.” His Holiness spoke in Tibetan, which was translated into English. The audience heard him in rapt attention.

### Importance of Dependent Origination...

“Why is understanding dependent arising (or dependent origination) important? Because when we don’t have this insight, we grasp at self as something substantial and real. This in turn can lead to our drawing distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ that develops conflict. We develop attachment to those like us and aversion to others who we see as different,” His Holiness mentioned.

“Compassion too is at the heart of the Buddha’s teaching. Acharya Chandrakirti indicates this when he pays homage to compassion at the

### Excerpts from the address by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

opening of his text ‘Entering into the Middle Way’. He compares compassion to a seed, to the moisture that allows the seed to grow and to the eventual fruit.”

His Holiness went on to say, “the heart of the Buddha’s teaching is a combination of compassion and wisdom, and as Buddhists, our task is to cultivate these two qualities.”

He further added, “many of the problems we face are to do with how we view reality. We tend to accept that things exist in the way they appear. We project a sense of reality onto what appears before us. The Buddha’s teaching of emptiness helps us see that what we perceive does not reflect reality. Then we can overcome our feelings of attachment and craving. And when we do that, the mind becomes pure.”

His Holiness explains that, “as Buddhists we need to pay attention to the process by which we grasp at the reality of things. If there was no solution to our problems, to focus only on suffering would be demoralizing. When we achieve insight into reality, we can

also see that it is possible for us to attain enlightenment. So, because of deep reflection we gain a sense of freedom.”

“I struggle with this, but I feel, I am making progress. Acharya Chandrakirti says when you can gain deep insight into reality, compassion for suffering beings arises naturally. He states that on the two wings of insight, reality and compassion we will soar to the further shore of enlightened liberation. I’m now in my late 80’s, but I continue to practise and aspire to reach the path of preparation.”

### Cultivation of Wisdom.....

His Holiness mentioned that the Tibetan tradition also includes tantra and meditation on deities, but he feels that what really has an impact on the mind is the cultivation of wisdom, insight into reality, and compassion for all beings. These are the practices that have enabled him to transform his mind.

He revealed that because this was a gathering of followers of the Buddha, he had shared his own experience to show that if we take our Buddhist practice seriously, pursuing deep inquiry into reality and nurturing compassion, while also refining the practices of resting and analytical meditation, it will make a difference to



Members of the audience listening to His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s address at the Global Buddhist Summit in New Delhi, India on 21 April, 2023



The Chief Guest, His Holiness the Dalai Lama presenting the special address on 'Contribution of Buddha Dhamma and Sangha towards World Peace'. Seated on the dais are (from left to right) Ven Dr Dhammapiya, Secretary General IBC (India), His Eminence Kyabjé Yongzin Ling Rinpoché Tenzin Lungtok Thinley Chöphak (India), His Eminence Padma Acharya Karma Rangdol (Bhutan), His Holiness 43rd Sakya Trizin, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoché (India), Most Ven Waskaduwe Mahindawansa Mahanayake Thero (Sri Lanka), His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Eminence Rev Khamba Lama Gabju Chojamts Demberel (Mongolia), His Eminence Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa (India), Most Ven Jung Bum (South Korea), Ven Bhikshu Dhamma Shobhan Mahathero (Nepal), and Most Ven Thich Thien Tan (Vietnam)

our daily life. He advised that we can all aspire to achieve higher levels of realization. Therefore, he urged his listeners to make the appropriate effort.

"Rituals are not important," he continued. "What we need is the cultivation of resting and analytical meditation, an understanding of reality and the practice of compassion. These are the sort of teachings that come alive within you, therefore they're worth the effort."

His Holiness added that, "I can also assure you that paying attention to the courage of compassion enables you to transform adversity into opportunity."

Referring to his early days of learning Buddha Dhamma His Holiness said that "I was born in north-east Tibet and came to Lhasa, here I studied the works of Buddhist masters who presented ways to develop wisdom and compassion. Their advice had a deep impact on me. Another factor that distinguishes Buddhism is the wide collection of means to effect inner transformation. It's very rich in meditation practices that have an impact on our day-to-day conduct. Incorporating the Buddha Dharma into our lives is a way of expressing gratitude to our teachers."

## Philosophy of Life - Buddhism



His Eminence the 7th Kyabjé Yongzin Ling Rinpoche

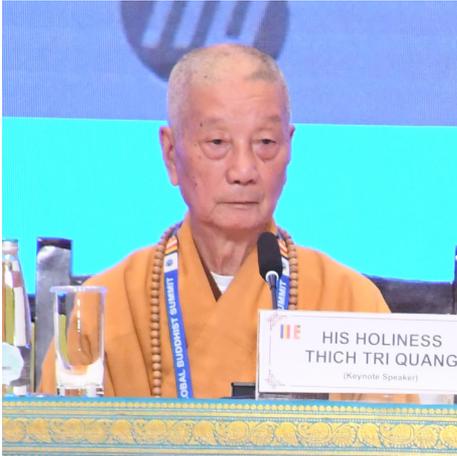
One should begin by seeking the inner essence of our common faith to promote the universal teachings of Buddha Dhamma. It's our responsibility to make people aware of the universal and practical teaching of the Buddha known to everyone specially the youth of today. Education should be imparted to our youth following the universal principles of Dhamma that was taught and preserved in our ancient Mahavihara like Nalanda. Prospects of the future

are indeed very bright.

Buddhism today is not only part and parcel of the rich Indian culture but also becoming the part of the world culture because of its universal and secular teachings. It is much needed in today's chaotic world to sustain the society. Buddhism is basically a philosophy of life; how we can live a life of peace, happiness and harmony within and share with the world around us.



## Buddhism & Peace are inseparable



His Holiness Thich Tri Quang, Supreme Patriarch, Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, Vietnam, Patron, IBC

I am grateful for the Global Buddhist Summit, where we seek the path to peace and happiness. Buddhism and peace are inseparable. Wars arise from ignorance, greed, and hatred, but inner purity and compassion can bring true peace. Environmental crises demand attention. We must understand the interconnectedness of all life forms and protect nature to safeguard our own existence. Preserving the Nalanda tradition is vital, as it upholds the timeless relevance of the Dharma. Buddhist pilgrimage and reverence for relics strengthen faith and foster unity. I wish you all well in this Summit.



Ven Geshe Dorji Damdul is the Director of Tibet House, Cultural Centre of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, New Delhi

## “Understand the nature of reality, how to transform the mind” Prof Thurman

Prof Robert Thurman recalled that in his inaugural address to the summit, Prime Minister Modi announced that India has historically been dedicated to ‘ahimsa’, non-violence or doing no harm. This is important when it comes to people willing to die rather than take life. Thurman noted that the Buddha was born into a warrior family but abandoned that kind of life to overcome the obscurity in his mind.

Great Indian universities such as Nalanda developed an approach to education that enabled participants to understand the nature of reality and, in terms of psychology, how to transform the mind. The core curriculum of Nalanda has been preserved in the great monasteries of Ganden, Drepung and Sera, which are currently re-established in South India.

Thurman mentioned the importance of Buddhists engaging in discus-



sion with scientists. He suggested that a common scientific and materialistic view of life such that we become nothing when we die is an error with ethical implications. If, at death, we become nothing, it's easy to believe that we will not need to face the consequences of our actions. Instead, he concluded, we must find ways to take care of everyone.

## Convergence and Divergence between Nalanda Philosophy of Emptiness and Quantum Physics

Excerpts from Ven. Geshe Dhamdul's presentation:

Modern physics more precisely Quantum Physics and Relativity Theory are great gifts for the humanity from the scientific giants such as Albert Einstein (Noble Laureate 1921) and Neils Bohr (Noble Laureate 1922). These are the two undeniably great gifts to the world from the West.

In the East, many great philosophical traditions evolved since thousands of years ago. More often, there were debates happening amongst these traditions resulting in the proliferation of the human thoughts and philosophies to great heights on both sides. Buddhist philosophy is no exception. What mathematics is, for maintaining the rigour of modern physics, logic is for maintaining the rigour of philosophy in the East.

In the contemporary time, due to the ease of technology, the two traditions – modern science and Buddhist philosophy - can meet with ease for mutual learning and benefits. The rigor of

empiricism of modern physics and the rational deep analysis of Buddhist philosophy can enrich the human insight into the ontological reality.

Precisely, emptiness of objectivity as presented as the core Buddhist philosophy resonates the Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle and likewise the lack of observed object - momentum and position - independent of an observer in Quantum Physics. The concept of Quantum vacuum makes a great sense when seen from the light of Buddhist concept of emptiness to be the fabric of all existences.

Theory of dependent origination and the Principle of Relativity of Arya Nagarjuna reflect a great parallel with the General and Special Theory of Relativity of Albert Einstein. Whether or not the counterpart views reconcile is to be researched by scholars who have command over both the disciplines.

# 2023-NEW DELHI DECLARATION

*On the occasion of the first Global Buddhist Summit  
20-21 April, 2023*

The focus of the Global Buddhist Summit was on modes of disseminating and internalizing universal values and to find ways to work together, to address the burning challenges both within and globally and offer a sustainable model for future of the world. There has been general agreement that the basic fundament which can provide inspiration and guidance in the light of Buddha's message of Peace, Well-being, Harmony and Compassion for Universal Peace need to be highlighted and worked upon as follows:

**1.Aim:** In the present world scenario, the human race has been in great need to be free from conflict, ill-feeling, greed, selfishness and uncertainty of life. We are in dire need of peace and harmony both, in our personal life and at the global level. The texts, doctrines and philosophy of Buddha Dhamma are best guide for inter-faith dialogue, harmony and universal peace.

**2.Peace:** We recognize that peace is the foundation for human happiness and well-being, and that conflicts and violence are a significant threat to peace. We call upon all nations, organizations and individuals to work towards creating a world free from conflict, violence and war.

**3.Environment Sustainability:** We recognize that environmental degradation is one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity today. We affirm our commitment to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. We urge governments and individuals to take action to reduce carbon emissions, protect biodiversity, and preserve natural resources for future generations.

**4.Wellbeing:** We acknowledge that true happiness arises from inner peace and contentment. We encourage individuals to cultivate mindfulness, compassion, and wisdom, which are essential for promoting happiness and well-being.

**5.Buddhist Pilgrimage as Living Heritage:** We recognize the significance of Buddhist pilgrimage as a living heritage that promotes spiritual growth, cultural understanding and social harmony. We call upon governments to preserve and protect the sacred sites of Buddhism and promote their accessibility to people of all backgrounds.

**6.Recommendations:** There is a crucial need for a paradigm shift in human attitude towards nature. Drawing upon the Teachings of the Buddha for the welfare of all sentient beings, Members of the Sangha, Buddhist leaders, Scholars, followers and institutions can play a significant and effective role in addressing this multi-faceted crisis. Continuation of annual Global Buddhist Summit is one such important step in this direction.

7.Nalanda, one of the greatest seats of Dhamma education for nearly 700 years between the 5th and 12th centuries AD, precedes the modern system of university education. It was famous for value education and character building. These values need to be inculcated among youths to rejuvenate the society towards "Vasudeva Kutumbakam".



**If there is no peace in an individual's heart, there will be no peace in the world: Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara**

The Most Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nyanissara (Myanmar) emphasized the importance of cultivating a good heart and its implicit qualities of love, compassion, and forgiveness.

He observed that if there is no peace in an individual's heart, there will be no peace in the world. And the only way to achieve that peace is to practise insight meditation. Such meditation can help us achieve a balanced mind; just as cultivating compassion enables us to change a negative mind into one that is positive. The Most Venerable's message concluded with the wish that may peace and harmony prevail throughout the world.

## His Holiness the Noble Indomitable Spirit Of Buddhism



His Holiness the Dalai Lama in conversation with Most Ven Dr Waskaduwe Mahindawansa Mahanayaka Thero at the Global Buddhist Summit '23

Consider the last few decades and the several decades ahead as very significant in the annals of the two-and-half millennia history of Buddhism. As Buddhist revival and deeper recognition of its lofty teachings among world nations, political and spiritual leaders and people of different beliefs have gained an unprecedented momentum in this particular era.

Even though renowned Buddhist monks, Buddhist scholars, devotees and even princes and emperors had constantly played their significant role on Buddhist revival and its global expansion, the era I am referring to has to be considered more significant because the government of India, headed by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, a Hindu leader, together with leaders of several Buddhist countries of the South Asian region, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and many international Buddhist organizations have resolutely committed themselves towards the noble cause and continue to internationalizing the Buddhist con-

cepts of peace – peace in the mind of people and peace in the world – brotherhood, compassion and loving kindness to fellow humans and all living beings, 'ahimsa' or non-violence, democracy and a war-free world.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who in spite of having been deprived of his official status as the spiritual and temporal

### Excerpts from the address by Most Ven Dr Waskaduwe Mahindawansa Mahanayaka Thero at Global Buddhist Summit 2023

leader of Tibet under the non-religious communist China's military invasion and forced to live in exile in India for over

six decades continues to devote his life primarily for taking the teachings of the Buddha to every part of the world while also focusing on the independence and democracy of his motherland. Today he is recognized as the most prominent Buddhist spiritual leader by world nations, national leaders and spiritual leaders. In spite of his most heartening concerns for the distressed people of his motherland and his continuing struggle for their liberation, one could say without any restrains that he focuses more

on taking the message of the Buddha to every corner of the world in his indomitable effort towards realization of the Buddha's goals of world peace, a war-free world, brotherhood among fellow human beings, believing in compassion and non-violence. In spite of all that he has been deprived of as a spiritual and

temporal leader of Tibet, and also his advance age, he is always serene, blissful travelling constantly from country to country, meeting national leaders, spiritual leaders, speaking at international forums and meeting peoples representatives demonstrating the true spirit of the Buddha and an incarnation of a

divine soul for the noble cause. Dr Thero focused on several such incidents and instances where His Holiness when delivering his teachings to thousands of people globally for long hours and consecutively for a number of days devoted his commitment towards global peace.

## Breaking Barriers: The Rise of Educated Buddhist Nuns



Most Ven Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo

Firstly, it is not generally known or appreciated that probably in the 8th & 9th centuries there was actually a section of Nalanda University itself that was specifically for nuns.

It is reported that there were Bhikshunis with high scholastic attainments such as Dharmacandra, who was a renowned teacher and philosopher. She is said to have studied at Nalanda University, where she later taught and wrote commentaries on Buddhist texts. Also, Bhikshuni Suvarnadharmani who was known for her scholarship and deep understanding of the Prajnaparamita literature.

Obviously at one time in India such education was available for the female monastics although later this has seldom been mentioned. We also do not know where else in India such educational facilities for bhikshunis may have existed.

As we do know, the Nalanda system of study and debate was imported into Tibet from the 8th century when it was introduced by Shantarakshita, an Acharya from Nalanda University.

At that time five- Tibetan young men received ordination as monks and

**Most Ven Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo, President, International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), is an author, teacher and Founder of the Dongyu Gatsal Ling Nunnery in Himachal Pradesh, India. Excerpts from her presentation...**

the first monastery of Samye was established. An academy was set up to translate the texts from Sanskrit into Tibetan.

Later over the next few centuries there are a lot of exchanges between Tibet and Nalanda up to the 12th century, this Nalanda system of academic study was introduced into all the Tibetan traditions along with practice of the tantric texts.

The education of Himalayan Buddhist nuns has been very limited, with women receiving little more than a basic education in religious texts and practices.

Books were written by the male scholars for other male scholars and the female voice was rarely heard. The educational opportunities available even for the most devoted female practitioners were very restricted.

However, in recent years, there has been a growing movement to provide the nuns with a more comprehensive education that includes the study

of philosophy, in accordance with the established Nalanda tradition.

Firstly, starting in the 1960s while the Tibetans were in exile in India

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### HIS HOLINESS AN INSPIRATION



Deputy Secretary General of IBC, Ven Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden

In his concluding remarks at the end of the session referring to His Holiness, Ven Jangchup Choeden said

**“You are an inspiration to many people on this planet, something that will continue into future generations. We need your advice and guidance—please live long.”**



Shared Buddhist Heritage from page 1



The conference was inaugurated by the Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and DoNER Shri G.K Reddy with the Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs Smt Meenakashi Lekhi and the Minister of State for Culture and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal

The focus of the Conference held on 14-15 March, 2023 at New Delhi was on India's civilizational connection with the SCO nations. The event, a first of its kind, under India's leadership of SCO (for a period of one-year, from 17 September, 2022 until September 2023) was organized by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of External Affairs and the International Buddhist Confederation.

It brought together participants from Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia and Arab countries on a common platform to discuss "Shared Buddhist Heritage". The SCO countries comprise of Member States, Observer Status States and Dialogue Partners. More than 15 scholars, delegates presented research papers. These experts were from Dunhuang Research Academy, China; Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnology, Kyrgyzstan; State Museum of the History of Religion, Russia; National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan; Teaching for Morality and Ethics, Bahrain; Partnership & Exhibition department, United Arab Emirates; Belarusian State University, Belarus; and International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Myanmar.

A number of Indian scholars of Buddhism also presented papers and participated in the event.

Minister Reddy explained that the very objective of the SCO was to encourage conversation, cooperation and coordination, thereby, maintaining peace among the SCO member coun-

tries.

Recalling the Prime Minister's statement, he quoted him saying, "I see Lord Buddha in the 21st century, across political ideologies, playing the role of a bridge to promote understanding and strengthening ties among the nations of the world by sharing the Buddha's heritage."

## Buddhism binds us together in a Global culture: Meghwal

Union Minister of State for Culture & Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal mentioning the teachings of the Buddha of self-realization and self-examination that were very important in the 21st century, said "Buddhism is not only a part and parcel of Indian Culture but it also binds us together at the global cultural level because of its universal and value-based teachings."

The Minister said, "the teachings of the Buddha being Universal, made a deep impact on the SCO region which is evident from the fact that his teachings took the visual form as Buddhist art." He mentioned that for people who say 'I want peace', the Buddha's message is 'first we have to remove "I

(which signifies ego) then do away with "want" (which signifies desire), and all that is left afterwards is "Peace". He was glad to mention that the first conference on Shared Buddhist Heritage will bind the linkages between the SCO countries through focusing on art styles, archaeological sites and antiquities in various museums of different countries.

## SCO can be a force for ethics and values: Lekhi

Union Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs Meenakashi Lekhi mentioned that heritage and history connected us all through the SCO platform. The SCO member States, Observers and dialogue partners are connected by Buddhist philosophy which can make SCO a formidable force in terms of ethics and value system.

Minister Lekhi said "Buddhism in ancient times, had spread across the region through Eurasian trade-routes and the very first university which the world had known was the University of Taxila, which had a hospital for both humans and animals and it was funded by the traders."

Establishment of this University was a great means to absorb students to teach Buddhist art and archaeology. She expressed confidence in SCO as a platform for sharing ideas which will promote peace and harmony and "it is through dialogue only that a common goal can be achieved which is of utmost importance for world peace". She also spoke about the influence of Buddha's teachings on Emperor Ashoka.

So far, as Indian history was concerned, the contribution of Buddhism had been immense. In this context, the Minister mentioned that having visited the countries where the Buddha's teachings are relevant and where Buddhist art and architecture are pop-



ular, she found that there was visible “Indianness” in the locations. She mentioned King Ashoka as being credited for transforming the Mauryan dynasty from a war machine into society of tolerance, non-violence and social justice mainly due to Buddhist philosophy. She expressed a desire to invite everyone to work on the philosophy and thought process of Dharmapala who had spread Lord Buddha’s message also in material terms, which was through trade of spices and other material items.

## SCO best platform for shared Buddhist Heritage: Halder

The Director General of International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) Mr Abhijit Halder emphasised that there cannot be a better platform to discuss the issues of Shared Buddhist Heritage, relating to art and architecture than the SCO. Buddhist culture, tradition, value system, practices, which were found

outside of India, were in Central Asia in the 3rd century BC. Buddhism covered North Afghanistan to Uzbekistan, to Tajikistan and parts of South West China. Over a period, several monks travelled from India to the Central Asian towns to carry the message of the Buddha. The traders supported the activities of these monks thus creating a healthy ecosystem in the region with positive messaging in the field of social welfare, pure governance, non-violence, peace and stability. Central Asia became a hub for the spread of Buddhism to other regions over the next several years. There is a sleeping Buddha in Tajikistan, rock featured paintings in Kazakhstan and ancient Buddhist site at Krasnaya Rechka in Kyrgyzstan, which was recently inaugurated in September 2022.

He mentioned that according to Al Beruni, Buddhism spread to Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Gandhara in Pakistan. He further said that there is need for SCO countries to work proactively towards creating a robust mechanism for excavation of Buddhist sites.



International and national participants at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference

## The Conference re-established trans-cultural links

The aim of the Conference was to re-establish trans-cultural links, seek out commonalities, between Buddhist art of Central Asia, art styles, archaeological sites and antiquity in various museums’ collections of the SCO countries.

The conference was a rich treasure trove of historical evidence on Buddhism. This came out clearly in all presentations of the participating countries. Excavations of ancient sites, collections in museums, monasteries, stupas and artifacts retrieved over the years, were a testimony to the incredible expanse that Buddhism had spread to in ancient times. So far, just a fraction of its richness the world had seen, most of it still remained underground, waiting to be excavated.

The delegates present were from Russia, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Bahrain, Myanmar, United Arab

Emirates and Kazakhstan. Leading Indian experts also participated.

Ms. Sunita Dwivedi, author and explorer (India) presented a paper on ‘Buddhist Heritage of Xinjiang – A Traveler’s Account’ and Dr. Yanpeng Song, Deputy Director, Information Center of Dunhuang Studies (China) on ‘Respect and Responsibility: Inspiring Children through Buddhist Stories’. The session was moderated by Prof. Baidyanath Labh, Vice Chancellor, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda.

While Ms. Dwivedi drew attention to the inaccessibility of many important Buddhist sites in Xinjiang - sites that are either lost or are barred from public viewing, Song by studying the specific case of the ‘Mindfulness of Dunhuang: Deer Jataka story’, argued that involving children in the Buddhist stories depicted in the wall paintings of Mogao Caves has great potential to engage them emotion-

ally, enabling them to express, exchange, explore, and examine their moral understandings of the values embedded in the story.

The paper presented by Mr. A. Imran Shauket (Pakistan) was on “The Buddhist Civilization of Gandhara.” Dr. N. G. Alfonso, Curator of the Central Asian Art collection at the State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow (Russia) presented a paper on “Buddhism in Buryatia – Traditions and Modernity.” This session was moderated by Prof. Anupa Pande, who showed a rare collection of photographs and spoke on art history. Dr A. Shauket, Advisor to Pakistan Tourism Coordination Board and a promoter of Buddhist heritage of Pakistan, highlighted Gandhara art presence in Taxila,



Mr. A. Imran Shauket



Khyber Pass and Swat valley. “Pakistan’s Swat Valley was a treasure house for Buddhist archeologists, it is believed there were 1,000 monasteries in this region,” said Dr Shauket. He also referred to various legends mentioning Guru Padmasambhava’s footprints in this area.

He said that the Peshawar Museum houses several scripts in both the Sharda and Pali languages. Inviting Indian scholars, he said “the doors were open to Indian scholars to study these and decode them, as well as visit Buddhist sites in Pakistan”. He also offered to organize exhibitions on Gandhara and Swat excavated findings around the SCO countries.

“Many of the Buddhist sites had been destroyed over the past several decades. The army too had blown up stupas in the NWFP’s Khyber region but now defacing or destroying artifacts has become a major offence in Pakistan. However, the land developers were moving faster than the excavators or archeologists,” he added.

Dr Alfonso explained antiques of Buddhist art from the museum collection. In the Buryatia region of Russia, the museum had a significant collection of Buddhist objects: thangka icons, miniature paintings, sculptural and relief images, altar decorations, ritual attributes and ritual weapons, amulets and caskets. The same objects were still found in modern Buddhist temples in Buryatia. There was a distinct connection to India, such as, “The terracotta clay items of the 16th century are very similar to the icons found in Madhya Pradesh.” She informed.



Dr. Ms. Nonna Alfonso & Mr. Tugarinov Pavel

Mr. Bobomullo Saidmurodovich Bobomulloev, Representative of the National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan presented virtually on Buddhist Monuments in Tajikistan. He highlighted how Buddhist sites were ruined in Tajikistan and need expert handling for excavation.

Mr. Deepankar Aron, Commissioner, GST in the State of Uttarakhand, Govt. of India, an expert on Buddhist art and architecture, in his presentation on Shared Buddhist Heritage of Central and East Asia examined the spiritual, cultural and art-architectural linkages that bind the civilisation of India, Central and East Asia.



Dr. Yanpeng Song & Dr. Shengliang Zhao

Dr Shengliang Zhao, formerly, Director of the Dunhuang Research Academy spoke on “Dunhuang in the World: The Cosmopolitan Dunhuang Culture.” While speaking on the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, (the thousand Buddha caves), he showed many slides that highlighted the influence of Indian Caitya on the caves and their art work in the region. Providing examples, he said the central pillar in the cave 482 of Mogao was influenced by Ajanta’s cave number 10.

Similarly, with the influence of Mathura sculptures of the standing Buddha, his clothes were seen in the Binglingsi caves. There were references to cross border influences. A cross-ankle Bodhisattva from the Museum of Art Tokyo had influenced the Bodhisattva’s statues of Northern Liang cave and in Northern Wei caves but in fact, the statue in Japan was actually a replica of an Indian one. So was the case of Gandhara

statues of Bodhisattva in Tokyo that had influenced the ones in the caves of China. Ajanta cave- painting techniques also influenced the paintings of murals in the Dunhuang complex. Some influences were traced to Mesopotamia and ancient Greece too.

Dr Zhao said the Dunhuang culture was originally a Buddhist culture and Buddhism came from India, though developed in China for a long time. “Due to the prosperity and development of the Silk Road, the continuous exchange of Eastern and Western cultures has left an extremely rich heritage in Dunhuang. We can see not only the culture of India and China but also Central Asia, West Asia, and even ancient Greece and Rome,” he said.

Bhaddanta Dr. Candamukha, Associate professor and head of the department of Suttanta studies International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Myanmar while speaking on The “Symbol of Wheel” and its Progress as a Way of Meditation Technique in Myanmar, explained the significance of how among many symbols that were inherited from Buddhism, it is the symbol of wheel that is used to illustrate as physical and spiritual Buddhist heritage. In this regard, he appreciated the Indian Flag for incorporating the Dharma Chakra in the middle.



Bhaddanta Dr. Candamukha

Steering the discussion to contemporary times, he pointed out that it was through Buddhism that civilisational development reached all over the world. What remains of that rich cultural legacy now are only archeological sites in those lands.



“The Buddha prescribed Dharma to be enshrined and experienced within the heart. This was then inscribed and portrayed in Buddhist Art. This is all that remains as physical evidence showing that there was a Buddha, and that your ancestors had practiced Buddhism on these lands. The only historical evidence to remind us of Buddha’s humanism,” said Dr. Candamukha

Mr. P. A. Tugarinov, Researcher at the State Museum of the History of Religion, Russia, made a presentation on “Buddhist Heritage in the Collection of the State Museum of the History of Religion” and Dr. Aleh Perzashkevich, Associate Professor of Belarusian State University, Belarus, spoke on the “Legacy of Buddhism in Belarus.” The session was moderated by Prof. C. Upendra Rao.

Mr Tugarinov took everyone on a virtual tour of the state museum at St. Petersburg and brought out the essence of its history. On being asked, he also explained the significance of Buddhism in St. Petersburg. Mr. Perzashkevich in his presentation highlighted how despite Belarus not having a direct footstep of Buddha, the people practice Buddhism on a regular basis. There are no religious limitations in Belarus, there is nothing against Buddhism and its traditions in the country.

## SCO- Strengthening Civilisational Bonds

The Conference was a unique meeting of the minds, where countries from different geographical regions but with a common thread connecting them based on a shared civilizational legacy, strengthened by Buddhist missionaries who played a major role in integrating various cultures, communities and regions in the entire Indian subcontinent and Asia, at the end of the two-day discussions, listed ways to continue the age-old bonds into the future.

Prof. Anupa Pande, Pro Vice Chancellor of the National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation

## A call for a series of SCO Heritage Conference

During the Open Session of the conference, most participants expressed the need to continue this conference as a series and each member country could take turns to host it. An exhibition of various artifacts can be organised, led by IBC for the participants and relevant scholars.

Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Belarus made an open invitation to visit the Buddhist heritage sites in their respective countries. Tajikistan requested India to take lead in visiting their sites with an excavation team to revive the historical significance of the region.

The keynote speaker Prof. K Warikoo, founder of the Central Asian Studies Programme at the Jawaharlal Nehru University summed up the Conference, recapping the important points suggested by speakers in their presentations. This platform, he said enabled the participants of the SCO countries to learn from each other about the Buddhist sites, practices and history and to get a virtual access to many of these places.

He noted that the participants were unanimous in their observation that Buddha’s teachings were universal and non-sectarian. The Buddha had shown the middle path that was very relevant in these stressful times. This needed to be preserved in the right spirit.

There was an urgent need to preserve and restore the remnants of the rich Buddhist heritage currently in ruins in parts of Central Asia.

The experience of the Dunhuang Cultural

Complex in China shows that the murals and the artifacts have been restored well, and this should be taken as a model to develop Buddhist sites in India, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Prof. Warikoo said, “There was an urgent need to preserve and popularize the Buddhist legacy among the younger generation. The steps in this direction were to introduce audio visual documentaries, books and chapters in school and college curriculum.”



The delegates at the two-day international conference of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on “Shared Buddhist Heritage” with Minister of State for Culture, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, senior officers of the Culture Ministry and Director General, IBC

and Museology (NMI), at the end of the meeting aptly describing the sentiments expressed by all participants said “Buddhism is like a banyan tree; it

roots firmly in India while the branches spread to Central Asia, China, Far East and in the Indian Sub-continent.”



Breaking Barriers....from page 11

**Most Ven Jetsunma is best known for having spent 12-years living in a remote cave in the Himalayas, three of those years in strict meditation retreat. The talk gave a historical perspective and traced the history of educating the Himalayan Buddhist nuns within the Nalanda tradition. Excerpts from the paper:**



Most Ven Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo in a remote cave in the Himalayas

and Nepal, girls were being educated along with boys and many went on to attend university. Then in the 1970s highly educated women came to India and Nepal from the West and studied the Dharma in such places as the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics in Dharamsala. They engaged in studies and debating which previously had been considered off-limits and unsuitable for women.

### **‘Wisdom’ is considered female**

In Buddhist tantras ‘Wisdom’ is considered female and Prajnaparamita is the mother of all the Buddhas – since the Buddhas are born of wisdom! In 1985 the American nun Ven Bhikshuni Karma Lekshe Tsomo started Jamyang Choeling nunnery for Himalayan nuns where they could receive full education in philosophy in accordance with the Nalanda system taught by learned Geshes – as well as other subjects. In

1987 in Bodhgaya Bhikshuni Lekshe Tsomo co-founded the Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women.

In 1987 the Tibetan Nuns Project was founded by Rinchen Khandro who at that time was the president of the Tibetan Women’s Association, and this provides a long course in philosophy for nuns following the monks’ traditional agenda and taught by eminent Geshes or monk Professors.

In 1995 the first inter-nunnery debate session was held at Dolma Ling Nunnery in the presence of HH the Dalai Lama.

In 2016 for the first time in Tibetan history the Geshema degree was bestowed by HH Dalai Lama on the nuns who qualified after 17 years of study and 4 years of annual exams. Now there are at least 54 Geshemas.

It is also good news the Nyingmapa nunnery Tsogyal Shedrupling in Karnataka has recently bestowed the Khenmo title on its qualified graduate nuns.

Khenmo is the highest scholastic title in the non-Gelukpa schools. My own nunnery of Dongyu Gatsal Ling in Himachal will also soon be enthroning some of our nun teachers as Khenmos.

Perhaps in time, as the nuns grow in confidence, they may incorporate a more feminine insight and intuitive approach along with the rational and logical aspects of Dharma philosophy.

Also, the introduction of some modern methods of instruction and more knowledge of neuroscience and quantum physics, may bring about further insightful exploration and blending of both the ancient and modern understanding of mind and matter, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama wishes. After all, impermanence and change are fundamental doctrines in the Dharma.

Now the Himalayan nuns are educated and have risen to become respected scholars, and teachers, keeping pure ethics and living in well-run disciplined nunneries. They are exemplary monastics.



GBS - relevant.... from page 5

Dhamma and its linkages with the cyber space and the information paradigm highlighting pros and cons of the internet. He reiterated that once again this is an issue where society could be impacted adversely and in a negative manner if the principles of 'Dhamma' and 'mindfulness' were not adhered to while communicating on the social media net. He mentioned that given the scope of misinformation and disinfor-

mation, the possibility of the internet and social media causing fissures in the society was far high as brought out by one of the speakers.

Mr. Halder thanked all the guests from abroad and from India attending the GBS and expressed hope that with the success of the GBS, especially with active participation of all those present in the hall, the IBC

was confident that it was in a position to undertake more such events in future. Referring to GBS as a "ship" which has been under construction for some years, he mentioned that all the participants from far and wide at the GBS were the first passengers of this ship called "GBS" which has been launched with the culmination of the two day event and would traverse a long journey.

The Panch...from page 3

"there is another reason for my intimate attachment to this summit. Vadnagar in Gujarat, where I was born, has a deep association with Buddhism. Many archaeological evidence related to Buddhism have been found in Vadnagar. Once, Buddhist traveller Hiuen Tsang also visited Vadnagar. And all these (excavated artifacts and objects) have been put up in the exhibition in detail. And see the coincidence! I was born in Vadnagar and I am the MP from Kashi, and Sarnath is also situated there."

## Excavations at the archaeological site of Dev Nī Morī



The inscribed Relic Casket, Dev Nī Morī Buddha Relics. @M S University

and Vihāras belonging to early centuries of the Common Era.

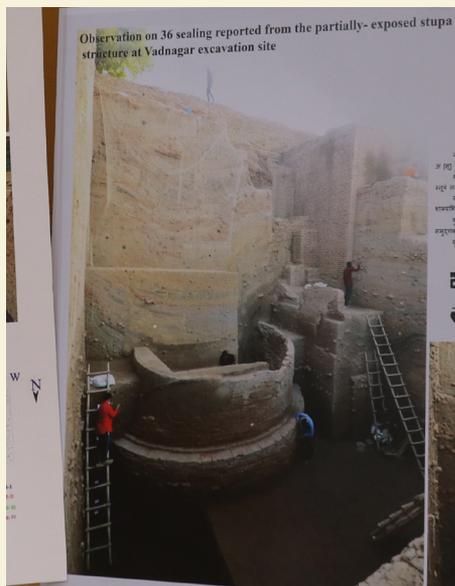
The highlight of the excavations was the discovery of a circular reliquary casket which bore an inscription reading 'dashabala sharira nilay,' in other words 'the abode of the Body Relic of the Buddha'.

The main body of the casket bears an inscription which records an account of the construction of the stūpa and the installation of the Buddha Relic casket there.

It indicates that the Mahāstūpa (great stūpa) was erected during the reign of King Sri Rudrasena on the 5th day of bhādrapada in the year 127 of the Kathika Kings (i.e. 206 century CE).

The excavations at the archaeological site of Dev Nī Morī were conducted by the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda from 1959 to 1963.

The excavations revealed the remains of a big Mahāyāna Buddhist Stūpa



Observation on 36 sealing reported from the partially exposed stupa structure at Vadnagar excavation site.

## The excavated monastic site in Vaḍnagar



Vaḍnagar in ancient times was situated at the junction of two important trade routes connecting east to west and north to south India. Excavations at Vaḍnagar from 2006-12 and 2014-19 have revealed the existence of a Buddhist monastery dating 1st CE to 7th CE. Scholars believe Vaḍnagar most likely represents Ānandapura mentioned by the Buddhist monk-scholar Xuanzang (7th CE) in his travelogues.



## A pilgrimage to celebrate spiritual bonding



Ven. Dr. Dhammapiya, Secretary General, IBC addressing the Korean pilgrims under the most sacred Bodhi tree at the Mahabodhi temple, Bodhgaya

A unique and innovative initiative was undertaken by the Republic of Korea to mark the 50-years of diplomatic relations with India. A Korean delegation of 108-monks came on a pilgrimage of all the Buddhist holy sites in India. The visit was facilitated by IBC.

Ven. Dr. Dhammapiya, Secretary General, IBC joined the Korean delegation at Bodh Gaya to greet the visiting monks on their spiritual journey, on this momentous occasion.

The pilgrimage that included not just the well-known holy sites, but also far-flung historical places associated with the Shakyamuni, many of which required crossing difficult terrains.

The convergence of the esteemed monks symbolizes the profound cultural and religious ties that have flourished over the past half-century, reinforcing the enduring bond between India and the Republic of Korea.



The Korean delegation of 108-monks on a pilgrimage of all the Buddhist holy sites in India, praying at the Mahabodhi complex

## A gift of Holy Mongolian Kanjur for Tibet House



Minister of State for Culture, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, Presents the Mongolian Holy Kanjur to the 43rd Sakya Trizin Ven. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, spiritual head of the Sakya sect in the presence of the 7th Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche

Rare Mongolian religious texts- a Set of 108-Volumes of the Holy Kanjur that were originally translated from the Tibetan (Kanjur) were presented to 43rd Sakya Trizin Ven. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, spiritual head of the Sakya sect who received the holy text for Tibet House by Minister of State for Culture, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, at the IGNC on 20 February, 2023.

H.E. Ling Rinpoche, presided as the Chief Guest. The Director General IBC, Mr Abhijit Halder and Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, the Member Secretary of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), also participated.

## Celebrating Mahakaruna Day at Gautam Buddha University



Venerable Bhikkhu Sanghasena Founder/President, Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC), Leh, Ladakh (4<sup>th</sup> from right) with spiritual leaders from all the faiths, Prof. Ravindra Kumar Sinha, Vice-Chancellor, Gautam Buddha University (4<sup>th</sup> from left) and Mr Abhijit Halder, Director General, IBC (6<sup>th</sup> from left)

**K**aruna is the heart-essence of the Buddha's teachings. It is through his unbounded compassion and loving kindness the Buddha reached out and touched the hearts and minds of countless human beings, transforming their lives through a noble path of virtue, meditation and profound understanding.

On February 15, spiritual leaders from all the faiths joined together to reiterate the virtue of 'Karuna'. The Director General of the International Buddhist Confederation participated in the celebration that was organised by the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC) of Ladakh at the Gautam Buddha University in Greater Noida. On the occasion, the MIMC acknowledged and honoured the IBC for its remarkable contributions towards preserving and promoting Buddha Dharma.



At IGNC with the statue of Bharata Muni, the ancient sage to whom the musical treatise Natya Shastra is traditionally attributed to (from L to R): Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, the Member Secretary IGNC, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for Culture, the 7th Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche, the 43rd Sakya Trizin Ven. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, and Mr Abhijit Halder, Director General, IBC

The Ministry of Culture had taken up the project under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) for reprinting the 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur which had been gifted to Mongolia last year. The collection holds immense spiritual and cultural signifi-

cance, representing centuries of wisdom, philosophy, and religious teachings. By presenting this sacred treasure to the Tibet House, the event aimed to uphold and promote the rich cultural heritage shared between India and Tibet.

### Lokneeti and Sanchi Buddhist, Indic University celebrate Khajuraho Literature Festival

**A** unique initiative was launched by Sanchi Buddhist and Indic University to discuss the Buddhist literature at the Khajuraho Literature Festival. Many people participated and also shared their insights of Buddhist writings.

The IBC, as a knowledge partner of the Khajuraho Literature Festival, collaborated with the event's organizers to promote Buddha's teachings and values. The IBC was represented at the event by the Director, Mr Vijayant Thapa and Dr Chandan Kumar, the former as a keynote speaker, and the latter presented a paper.



## INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST CULTURE AND HERITAGE (IICBCH) LUMBINI, NEPAL

To promote the core values of the Dhamma as preached by Gautama Buddha, and in order to unravel the mind's true nature through rigorous practice of learning, reflection, meditation, and to experience the feeling of oneness with Lord Buddha and peace within, the construction of a state-of-the-art project, the **'India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and**

**Heritage (IICBCH)'**, being implemented by International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) New Delhi, will begin shortly at the Monastic Zone of Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha.

The chosen site at Lumbini is not only a pilgrimage site but falls within the UNESCO World Heritage complex. Thus, this special status provides an opportunity to create

a sustainable environment through architecture. The centre has been conceived as a modern architectural marvel with a unique design that symbolises the essence and meaning of the lotus flower – one of Buddhism's most revered symbols of enlightenment and is considered important in the Buddhist traditions.



IICBCH  
LUMBINI, NEPAL

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

Headquartered in New Delhi, the IBC is the outcome of the historic Global Buddhist Congregation held in November 2011 in New Delhi, wherein 900 delegates from all over the world, representing the entire Buddhist world, resolved to form an umbrella Buddhist world body based

in India, the land of Buddha's enlightened awakening and origins of Buddha dharma.

The leadership of the IBC comprises the supreme religious Buddhist hierarchy of all traditions and countries as Patrons and members of our Supreme Dhamma Council.

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

### Mission

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



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION  
Collective Wisdom United Voice

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