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President, Bangladesh Bouddha Kristi Prachar Sangha, Bangladesh

Holy Jewel Relics of Buddha return to India After 127-years

The historic return of the Holy Jewel Relics on 30th July, 2025 marked a significant event which will be etched in the annals of Indian history. The Sacred Piprahwa Relics of Lord Buddha returned to their rightful home in India. This momentous repatriation was made possible through an exemplary public-private partnership between the Government of India and the Godrej Industries Group. The Ministry of Culture also successfully halted the process of auction of these Relics earlier by Sotheby's of Hong Kong. The Holy Jewel Relics were brought to the National Museum, New Delhi.

Shri. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister of Culture & Tourism, Govt. of India expressed that PM Modi's vision which aligns

moving forward by preserving our heritage, is getting fulfilled with the homecoming of the 2,500-year-old Jewel Relics kept in a stone casket.

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Union Minister of Culture & Tourism, Govt. of India, Shri. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat paying homage to the Holy Piprahwa Jewel Relics



H. H. The Dalai Lama's legacy to Continue for Future Generations

The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) commemorating the 90th birth anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, at a daylong conference on the 13th July, 2025 at New Delhi called "Celebrating Glorious 90 Years of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama- Spiritual Wisdom and Global Relevance"



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The Union Minister expressed gratitude to **Shri Pirojsha Godrej** for his efforts in repatriation of the Sacred Relics from Hong Kong. In May 2025, auctioning of the Sacred Relics was decided by the Sotheby's Maison, an auction house based in Hong Kong, which was condemned by the Buddhist community around the world. The Minister further emphasized that the importance of the repatriation extends beyond the Buddhist community, holding profound relevance for non-Buddhists across India as well.

Pointing to the prompt return of the Jewel Relics since the time it was scheduled to be auctioned, the Honourable Minister referred to a mention by **Shri Abhijit Halder, Director General IBC** at an event some time ago when praising the efforts to stall the auction of the Relics, **Shri Abhijit Halder** had mentioned that returning of the Relics do often take long time, but would be brought back soon under

Sangha members venerate the Holy Jewel Relics

the guidance of the Minister of Culture and Tourism. The Minister mentioned that the Relics had indeed returned to the country much earlier than anticipated.

A historic event unfolded when the Sacred Piprahwa Jewel-Relics of Shakyamuni Buddha returned home to India after 127-years, making it an emotional and immensely spiritual moment for the world-wide Buddhist community, as well as for the people of India.

Their return, a challenge for the Indian government, is also a tribute to the country's role as a guardian of the Buddha Dhamma, and its ancient spiritual and cultural heritage.

The Relics that had been lost to India, suddenly came up for auction at a lead-

ing auction house- the Sotheby's of Hong Kong and were listed as "The Piprahwa Gems of the historic Buddha."

These Jewel Relics were excavated in 1898 by the British civil engineer, William Claxton Peppé at the ancient Buddhist stupa at Piprahwa, Uttar Pradesh (North India), and were part of a larger find, including bone fragments, soapstone and crystal caskets, and a sandstone coffer.

An inscription in Brahmi script on one of the caskets confirms these as Relics of the Buddha, deposited by the Sakya clan, which when translated reads: 'This is a deposit of the Relics of the Buddha, the august one, by the Sakyas, the brethren of the distinguished one, with their sisters, children, and wives'.

In 1899, most of these Relics were transferred to the Indian Museum in Kolkata and classified as 'AA' antiques under the law then. A small



portion of the Relics were gifted to the King of Siam (now Thailand). W.C. Peppé was allowed to retain a small selection of these items. It is this selection of gems, now in the possession of Chris Peppé, the great grandson of W.C. Peppé (now residing in the UK), that had been offered for sale and was being auctioned.

With the timely intervention by the Government of India, through its Ministry of Culture, seeking diplomatic and legal options the labourious journey was embarked upon to halt the auction and repatriate the Piprahwa Gems.

The Relics include a collection of 334 gemstones- amethysts, coral, garnets, pearls, rock crystals, shells, and gold to mention some; many of these had been worked into pendants and beads and had been placed alongside the cremated remains of the Buddha inside the stupa between 240- 200 BCE.

The relics are protected under the Indian laws such as the Indian Treasure Trove Act 1878, the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958 and, the Antiques and Art Treasures Act 1972. The Ministry of Culture in its notice to the Sotheby's mentioned that the sale of the Sacred Piprahwa Relics violates the Indian and international laws, as well as the UN conventions. It also mentioned that the Relics constitute an inalienable religious

and cultural heritage of India and the global Buddhist community. The Ministry pointed out that the Piprahwa gems are inseparable from the Sacred Relics and cannot be commodified.

The Sacred Piprahwa Jewel Relics will be subsequently placed on public display, allowing citizens and global visitors to pay homage and witness these rare artefacts.

After, overcoming a herculean challenge, the significance of the return of Sakyamuni Buddha's Relics to his homeland highlights India's enduring

legacy of wisdom, peace, compassion, and spiritual strength.

It is an occasion for the Buddhists around the world to rejoice and personally connect with these Relics by visiting the exposition; for it is nothing short of a miracle that after 127-years, the lost Jewel-Relics return with the Buddha's blessing to the land of his birth. ▣

Visual of the Sacred
Piprahwa Jewel Relics



Returns Home after 127 years



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The 90 years commemoration celebrations were a tribute from IBC to honour His Holiness's lifelong dedication to compassion, peace, and universal ethics; his teachings that go beyond borders and beliefs.

Over 500 Buddhist scholars, researchers, practitioners, and eminent spiritual leaders many of them who had been closely interacting with His Holiness for the past several years, deliberated on some of his profound teachings and looked for answers in the knowledge, wisdom, and experience of His Holiness.

As the conference decoded the mysteries of the universe through science, speakers continued to seek meaning through spiritual reflection. Can these two seemingly different paths- the empirical and the contemplative- walk together? His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama believes they not only can but must. For further discussion on these subjects' scholarly papers were presented on the following topics: *'Relevance of Buddha Dhamma in the 21st Century'*, and the *'Future of Tibetan Buddhism and the Preservation of its Culture'*, and *'Quantum Physics, Neurosciences and Buddhism.'*



Most Ven. Khamvanh Voladeth (Laos) presenting a Painting for His Holiness

Eminent Buddhist Monks from over 20 nations greeted His Holiness through video messages on this landmark year and prayed for his good health, and long life during the conference. To name a few, these were from Thailand, Laos, Sri Lanka, Japan, Cambodia.

There were many others who personally presented gifts and greeting scrolls for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to *Most Venerable Prof Sam-*

Venerable Sangha Members at the commemoration of the 90th birth anniversary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

dhong Rinpoche who was representing His Holiness at the event. They were Geshe Yonten Lama, Russia; Dr Damenda Porage, Sri Lanka; Most Ven. Phrarat Vajarasuttiwong Arayawangso, Thailand; Ven Dr Yon Seng Yeath, Cambodia; Ven Buddhapala Bhikshu, Korea; Most Venerable Khamvanh Voladeth, Laos; Rev. Tomoyuki Ichihashi, Japan; Ven. Dr. Ashin Pinyasami Sayagyi, Myanmar; and Ven. Bhikkhu Kaboggoza Buddharakkhita, Uganda.

A special tribute from the famous **Hollywood actor Richard Gere**, a practicing Tibetan Buddhist was played via a video message at the conference that conveyed gratitude and admiration for his teacher, His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The IBC produced a special film for the occasion on the life and experiences of His Holiness the Dalai Lama called *"A Light that Shines: Celebrating His Holiness, the 14th Dala Lama."*

Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche, Secy. General of IBC began the glorious celebration by welcoming *His Holiness 43rd Sakya Rinpoche, His Holiness 105th Gaden*



Tripa, Most Ven. Arayawangso, Most Ven. Waskaduwe Mahindawansa Mahanayake Thero, Most Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche and Ven. Bhikkhu Kaboggoza Buddhakkhita.

The Secretary General emphasized that this occasion aimed to reflect on the joy that His Holiness brings into our lives, wisdom he shares and the unique spirit that makes him so undeniably Holy, kind, inspiring and dependable. He stated how dedicated His Holiness is towards common causes like world peace, universal responsibility, environmental protection, and oneness of entire humanity. His Holiness is looked upon for embracing change while remaining dedicated to ancient wisdom and values. He said, His Holiness often says, *“I am son of India as far as my body is concerned as it has survived on Indian dal and roti for more than 60 years and as for my mind, it is fully influenced by thoughts of thinkers like Nagarjuna and other Nalanda masters”*. In His Holiness’ words, the relationship between Indians and Tibetans is like Guru and Chela (teacher-disciple relation).

The Secretary General expressed his indebtedness towards His Holiness for his generosity towards the IBC since its inception and how His Holiness was a mentor throughout.

The occasion was blessed when the special message from His Holiness 14th Dalai Lama was read out by our ***Guest of Honour Most Venerable Samdhong Rinpoche***. Notable lines from his letter expressed how Tibet-

ans refer to India as “Arya Bhumi”. He mentioned how he feels a “special closeness to India”. He believes that if aspects of India’s ancient wisdom, of which the Buddha’s teachings are a part, are combined with modern education, they can make a beneficial contribution to greater peace and happiness in the world. He further said that the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS) at Sarnath, Varanasi that was founded in 1967 with Government of India’s assistance, facilitated scholars from the Himalayan



***Venerable Sangha Members
at the commemoration of the
90th birth anniversary of
His Holiness the Dalai Lama***

Region and Tibetans to be part of major projects to restore several texts that have been preserved in their Tibetan translation. He said, at the present time, there is growing interest in Buddhism among Chinese people, including those from mainland China, which is part of their cultural inheritance.

His Holiness also expressed his gratitude to the Government and people of India for the warm hospitality shown towards them since 1959 and for the

generous support to protect and preserve the Buddhist culture that is founded on India’s age-old values of karuna and ahimsa. Moreover, scientists around the world are interested to know more about Buddhist philosophy and the Buddhist explanation on the interlinkages between the mind and emotions.

Senior member of Thailand’s Supreme Sangha council Most Ven. Arayawangso talked about the “Triple Gem” that includes the virtues of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha is to be seen as a power to protect the Tibetan people. He also highlighted how the foundation of a great civilization is rooted in recognizing the good and the evil with wisdom.

The Head of Sakya order of Tibetan Buddhism and the keynote speaker ***Most Venerable Sakya Trizin*** delved into the realms which we are most cognizant, that is the outer activities of His Holiness which has shaped our contemporary understanding of compassion.

In his Guest of Honour address, Most Venerable Prof Samdhong Rinpoche explained how His Holiness compiled teachings of Buddha in a suitable medium which is understandable in the post-modern civilization of the 21st century. His Holiness is known as the fearless teacher of the 21st century.

***Prof Samdhong Rinpoche
spoke about the
four commitments of
His Holiness.***



The conference on His Holiness the Dalai Lama's enduring legacies served as a testament to his contributions across spiritual, scientific, and cultural domains. His life and teachings have consistently offered pathways for both individual well-being and global harmony.

This conference highlighted the crucial task of celebrating and perpetuating his enduring vision of peace, compassion, wisdom, and interdisciplinary dialogue for a global audience. It underscored the ongoing and increasing relevance of his legacies in navigating the complexities of the 21st century.

This included the practical applications of his spiritual teachings for mental well-being, which offer a sophisticated "map of the mind" for contemporary psychological challenges. It also highlighted the pioneering model of interdisciplinary dialogue with science, which has fostered mutual learning and opened new frontiers of research, demonstrating a dynamic approach to knowledge.



Furthermore, robust discussions took place on the strategic preservation of Tibetan culture through rigorous intellectual engagement and global academic outreach to ensure the accessibility of a profound wisdom tradition for generations to come. It emphasised a collaborative effort for preserving Tibetan Buddhism and culture in modern academia and for the young generation living in the free world.



In the Valedictory address, respected **Claude Arpi** talked about how following the Tibetan uprising in 1959, His Holiness Dalai Lama worked hard to rehabilitate the people. His Holiness introduced the concept of democracy for the people of Tibet, he made the charter, and constituted assembly of Tibetan deputies. Mr Arpi further highlighted how Buddha's influence remains even after 2600 years. He mentioned how "Neobuddhists" of the West are trying to follow the footsteps of Buddha. He put forth another point of view, as he mentioned how he thinks representatives from China should be invited for future events and conferences.

Declaration for the 90th Birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama titled "Karuna and its relevance in conflict avoidance" was presented by **Most Venerable Ananda Bhante**, Vice President of IBC and General Secretary of Mahabodhi Society, Bengaluru. The declaration stands by celebrating the impact His Holiness has made as an advocate of global peace and universal responsibility. The way he continues to show up for preserving the rich culture and heritage of Tibet is reflected in the recent statement made by him regarding continuation of his reincarnation only by the people of Tibet. Ultimately, this conference became a catalyst for continued dialogue, deeper learning, and the active application of His Holiness' universal message.

It emphasized the continuation of his profound legacy to inspire and guide future generations towards a more compassionate, wise, and peaceful world, transcending boundaries and fostering global understanding.

The conference succeeded in honouring the Dalai Lama's extraordinary contributions and providing an opportunity to create a platform for scholars, monks, and thought leaders to work together for continuing his legacy for future generations. ▣



An exhibition on the Life and Times of His Holiness



A Cultural Programme at the celebrations



School children from Dehradun in their traditional dress singing a devotional song, specifically written for the His Holiness celebrating his birth anniversary

His Holiness' voice is unifying in a world of differences



Guest of Honour, Most Venerable Prof Samdhong Rinpoche, representing His Holiness at the event

Most Venerable Prof Samdhong Rinpoche speaking about His Holiness recounted the four commitments of His Holiness. The first being to promote basic human values which touched countless lives transcending boundaries of religion, cultures, and nationality. Buddhist values of compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, and contentment are universal which is essential for happiness and peace. His Holiness' voice is unifying in a world of differences, as he always says, *"My religion is kindness"*.

His second commitment is to foster harmony among the world's religious traditions and recognizing wisdom in all spiritual paths. He emphasized on how different religions can learn from one another while maintaining their unique identity. His Holiness' non-sectarian approach demonstrates true spirit of Buddha's teachings.

The Third commitment involves preserving Tibetan Buddhism culture & identity. Through His Holiness' visionary efforts, Tibetan Buddhism found new soil to grow, primarily in India and preserving it has gone beyond mere survival. It has contributed in its own ways to the world's civilization. Profound philosophical insights, meditation practice and compassionate world view of Tibet enriched the spiritual landscape of humanity.

***"My religion
is kindness"***

His fourth commitment is promoting ancient wisdom of India; the Nalanda tradition is seen as a gift to the eastern and western intellectual traditions. His Holiness constantly emphasizes how Buddhism was born in India and the comprehensive system of Buddhist philosophy about logic, meditation

that developed thereafter is humanity's greatest intellectual achievements.

"The world has come to recognize ancient Indian wisdom incorporates not only Buddhist philosophy. It also involves advanced traditions incorporating logic, epistemology, psychology, and contemplative science. It offers invaluable insight for facing challenges of the contemporary world. Scholars have demonstrated how these ancient traditions can enrich contemporary understanding of our consciousness," he said.

In conclusion he added that *"His Holiness had showed us that ancient wisdom is not merely a historical interest but contains practical methods for cultivating inner peace and understanding the nature of reality. The four prominent commitments of His Holiness realize the bodhisattva ideals."* ▢



Young Buddhist Scholars Reimagine Wisdom Transmission in the 21st Century

The 3rd International Conference of Young Buddhist Scholars (ICYBS), held on 22nd August 2025 at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC) in New Delhi, brought together a vibrant community of young scholars, monks, professors, and dignitaries from across the globe. Organized by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) in collaboration with (DAIC), the conference explored the theme “Wisdom Transmission in Buddha Dhamma in the 21st Century,” emphasizing how ancient teachings can be meaningfully shared in today’s fast-evolving world.

In his welcome address the Secretary General of IBC **Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche**, spoke of the organization’s commitment to

nurturing young minds and sustaining the sacred stream of *Citta Santa-ti*—the uninterrupted consciousness of the Buddha’s wisdom. Scholars from many countries, such as Russia, Viet-

nam, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Taiwan, and India participated in the day-long dialogue.

The keynote speaker, **Prof. K T Sarao** praised IBC’s use of the term “Buddha Dhamma” over “Buddhism,” framing it as a decolonial linguistic shift. He also stressed the importance of ethical values in addressing global inequalities, reminding attendees that education without empathy can be dangerous.



Col Akash Patil, Director DAIC, Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche, Secretary General IBC, Chief Guest Shri Rana Pratap Singh, Vice Chancellor of Gautam Buddha University, Prof. K T Sarao and Shri Abhijit Halder, Director General, IBC (from Left to Right).

Chief Guest Sh. Rana Pratap Singh, Vice Chancellor of Gautam Buddha University, spoke about sustainable living and the need to integrate Buddha Dhamma into science curricula. He emphasized that the teachings of the Buddha offer timeless guidance for happiness, leadership, and ecological balance.

A section of the audience



A powerful address was given by **Yeshi Dawa**, Senior Researcher at the 108 Peace Institute, drawing from personal experience and the teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he emphasized the importance of mental training and compassion in an age of rising mental health challenges, urging youth to cultivate inner resilience through awareness and kindness.

A documentary screening on the “Holy Relic Exposition in Vietnam” showcased the spiritual impact of the event, which drew over 17 million devotees across four cities and nine provinces. The film highlighted the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and IBC in organizing the sacred exposition.

The conference featured four thematic panels. The first focused on Emperor Ashoka’s governance and philosophical contributions, highlighting his role in spreading Dhamma across Asia and strengthening India-Sri Lanka ties. Panellists discussed how Ashoka’s moral teachings laid the foundation for ethical governance beyond religious boundaries.

Panel II explored traditional models of wisdom transmission, particularly the Guru-Shishya relationship. Speakers emphasized the transformative nature of this dialogue, where the guru embodies the Dhamma and the shishya actively engages in ethical and meditative practice.

Panel III delved into the intersection of Buddha Dhamma, technology, and AI. Experts discussed how ancient wisdom can guide ethical innovation, proposing the Middle Path as a framework for responsible technological development. Speakers also addressed the limitations of AI, advocating for



Secretary General, IBC, Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche presenting a memento to Chief Guest Sh. Rana Pratap Singh, Vice Chancellor of Gautam Buddha University

emotionally intelligent systems that honour compassion and inclusivity.

The final panel focused on youth, education, and the evolving role of Buddhist institutions. Speakers highlighted the importance of holistic training, scholarships, and authentic spiritual leadership to engage younger generations. Gautam Buddha University’s integrated model of study and spiritual cultivation was presented as a promising example of modern Buddhist education.

The conference concluded with a Vote of Thanks by **Prof. Ravindra Panth**, who reaffirmed the living tradition of Buddha Dhamma and the role of individuals as vessels of wisdom. He expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Culture and all contributors, emphasizing that the path of Dhamma continues through collective commitment, awareness, and compassionate action. □

Participants at the International Conference of Young Buddhist Scholars





ĀŚĀḌHA PŪRṆIMĀ- marks Buddha's first teachings



Venerable Sangha community at the Dhamek Stupa, Sarnath on 10 July, 2025

Sarnath, where the Buddha's wheel of Dhamma was set in motion, holds deep spiritual significance for Buddhists. It is the Sacred site where Buddha gave his first sermon, the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*, leading to the foundation of the Four Noble Truths (*Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*) and the Eight-Fold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga*) also known as the Middle Path leading to the establishment of the Buddhist Sangha.

Recognizing its importance, the **International Buddhist Confederation** (IBC), along with the Ministry of Culture and the Mahabodhi Society of India, celebrated Āśāḍha Pūrṇimā at Mulagandha Kuti Vihara, Sarnath on

July 10, 2025.

Āśāḍha Pūrṇimā, the second most auspicious day after Buddha Pūrṇimā, marks Buddha's first teaching to the pañcavargiya disciples (Aññā Koṇḍañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji) at Deer Park, Rīṣipatana Mrigadaya. It also signals the start of Varsha Vāsa, a three-month monastic retreat for reflection and ecological mindfulness, where monks and nuns reside in Viharas to avoid harming plant life and small creatures during the rainy season.

The celebrations began with "Parikramā", a clockwise circumam-

bulation of the Dhamek stupa. This practice symbolizes life's journey, fostering spiritual growth and self-realization, while aligning with the body's natural energy flow and encouraging detachment from material desires.

On the occasion, **Ven. Summitananda Thero, in-charge of Mulagandha Kuti Vihara** presented insights on the spiritual significance of the location and its role in nurturing unity within the global Buddhist community.

This was followed by a screening of the documentary film on the exposition of the Holy relics of the Buddha in Vietnam. Appreciating the success

of the exposition of the Holy relics, **Ven. Dieu Tri**, a senior nun from Vietnam, expressed the emotions of fellow Vietnamese who participated in ‘once in a lifetime’ opportunity to venerate the Sacred Relics, underscoring the participation of around 17.8 million devotees across 9 provinces in Vietnam.

Reiterating the true aspects of Dhamma, **Ven. Wangchuk Dorjee Negi, Vice Chancellor of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies**, Sarnath, mentioned about the relevance of integrating academic vigour and spiritual understanding. He further delved into the symbolic meaning of Mahamaya Devi’s dream of the six-tusked white elephant, which marked the beginning of Dhamma. It’s also a

symbol of purity and spiritual awakening.

Most Ven. Sumedha Thero, President of the Indo-Sri Lanka International Buddhist Association, Sarnath, expressed gratitude to the Govt of India for commemorating this year’s Āśāḍha Pūrṇimā at Sarnath. He emphasized the deep-rooted historical ties between India and Sri Lanka and the enduring legacy of Emperor Ashoka in enhancing the ties between both the nations. The ties, linked by Buddha’s teachings and Ashoka’s vision, reflect a collective longing for peace across the borders.

The celebrations concluded on a note by **Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche, Secretary General, IBC**. He reaffirmed IBC’s commit-

ment in fostering international solidarity through mindful action, empathy, inclusivity, and shared humanity. They form the vital pillars in creating a peaceful world, as in contemporary times, it has become a necessity to bridge differences in the global community.

Expressing collective gratitude, the vote of thanks was delivered by **Ven. Seelawanso Thero, Principal of Pali and Buddhist Dhamadoot College, Mahabodhi Society of India**, reaffirming commitment to shared spiritual values.

The event not only marked an important moment in Buddhist history, but also highlighted global unity, intellectual dialogue, and the enduring values of compassion and enlightenment. ▢



Ven. Sumitananda Thero, Ven. Wangchuk Dorji Negi, Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche, and Ven. Sumedha Thero at Mulagandha Kuti Vihara at Sarnath (from left to right)



Re-examining Rebirth and Reincarnation: A Scholastic Conference on Saṃsara: Sri Lanka

A unique conference- ‘FUTURE LIFE: Re-examining Rebirth and Reincarnation- A Scholastic Conference on Saṃsara in Buddhist Philosophy’, was held at the Post Graduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka on July 26, 2025.

The event was organized to celebrate the 90th birthday of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. It was a collaboration between the Foundation for Buddhist Brotherhood, the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, and the *International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)*, New Delhi, India.

The Chief Guest of the event was *Honorable Minister of Budhasasana, Hinda Sunil Senevi* and the *keynote Address was delivered by Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche*, Secretary General of IBC on “Rebirth in Buddhism”.

The conference brought together esteemed Buddhist monks, scholars, and researchers from around the world, representing both the Pali and Sanskrit traditions of Buddhism. The primary goal was to provide a platform for dialogue and comparative analysis of the concept of rebirth across Theravāda,

Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna traditions, while also including perspectives from modern science and philosophy.

The Conference was organised under the Chairmanship of Prof. Most. Ven. Homagama Dhammananda Thero, Vice Chancellor, Buddhist and Pali University, Homagama; Ven. Prof. Dr. Lenagala Siriniwasa Thero, Dean, Faculty of Language Studies, and Dr. Damenda Porage, Chairman, Foundation for Buddhist Brotherhood Society, Sri Lanka and DSG, IBC



Secretary General IBC, Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche, presenting the Keynote address

Key themes and discussions included:

- **The centrality of rebirth:** The concept of past and future lives is considered a foundational tenet in Buddhism, supported by principles such

as life continuing in patterns, arising from causes, and carrying traces of past actions.

- **Terminology debates:** The conference addressed contemporary scholarly debates over terms like Reincarnation, Rebirth, and Rebecoming; (from the Pāli term Punabbava), particularly concerning their potential implication of a permanent soul & ātman.

- **Two modes of rebirth:** Discussions differentiated between the involuntary rebirth of ordinary beings, driven by karma and delusions, and the chosen rebirth of advanced Bodhisattvas, who return out of compassion to help others.

- **The Tulku system:** The Tibetan Buddhist tradition of recognizing reincarnated spiritual teachers, known as the Tulku system, was highlighted as a unique interpretation of rebirth. The Dalai Lamas are the best-known example, believed to be reincarnations of Avalokiteśvara who choose to return out of compassion.

- **Philosophical challenges:** The conference also touched on the complex philosophy of Śūnyatā (emptiness), which can challenge the conventional understanding of rebirth and even the

reality of the present life.

The event aimed to foster unity and mutual understanding between the Pali and Sanskrit traditions. It was intended to be a landmark event for advancing scholarly understanding and bridging traditional wisdom with modern inquiry.

Excerpts of the Keynote Address: “Rebirth in Buddhism”

by Shartse Khensur Jangchup Choeden Rinpoche

In his address Rinpoche explains the concept of rebirth through the 12 Links of Dependent Origination, a core Buddhist doctrine that describes the cycle of existence and the nature of suffering. He emphasized that understanding dependent origination is equivalent to seeing the Dharma and the Buddha. He elaborated more on the Importance of Dependent Origination. The Buddha’s enlightenment came from fully realizing how the 12 links trap beings in a cycle of misery. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has often stated that “*Buddhism’s distinctive view is dependent origination, and its distinctive practice is non-violence.*”

Ultimately, Rinpoche defines saṃsāra not as a place, but as the uncontrolled cycle of our own body and mind moving through these twelve links in this and future lives. The teaching on dependent origination was explained by the Buddha to help beings understand this process and find a way to become free.



Venerable Sangha Members at the Conference

The conference featured a distinguished panel of speakers, including-

Prof. Gehse Ngawang Samten- Future Life: Studies Across Buddhist Traditions in the Context of Indian Schools and Modern Science;

Ven. Prof. Gonadeniye Pangnarathana Thero-An Analysis of Birth and



Most Ven Elikewala Seelananda Nayake Thero is presenting a certificate to Geshe Ngawang Samten, in the presence of former Minister of Buddhasasana, Dr Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe

Death in the Theravāda Abhidhamma;

Ven. Prof. M. Wijithadhamma Thero-Bhava and Jāti in the Theravāda Tradition: A Doctrinal Analysis of Saṃsāric Continuity;

Khenpo Ugen Namgyel- Reincarnation and the Bodhisattva Ideal – A Journey Beyond Self;

Geshe Nicholas Vreeland- Reincarnation;

Tulku Jurme Dorjee-Consciousness and the Methods of Recognizing Reincarnations; amongst others.

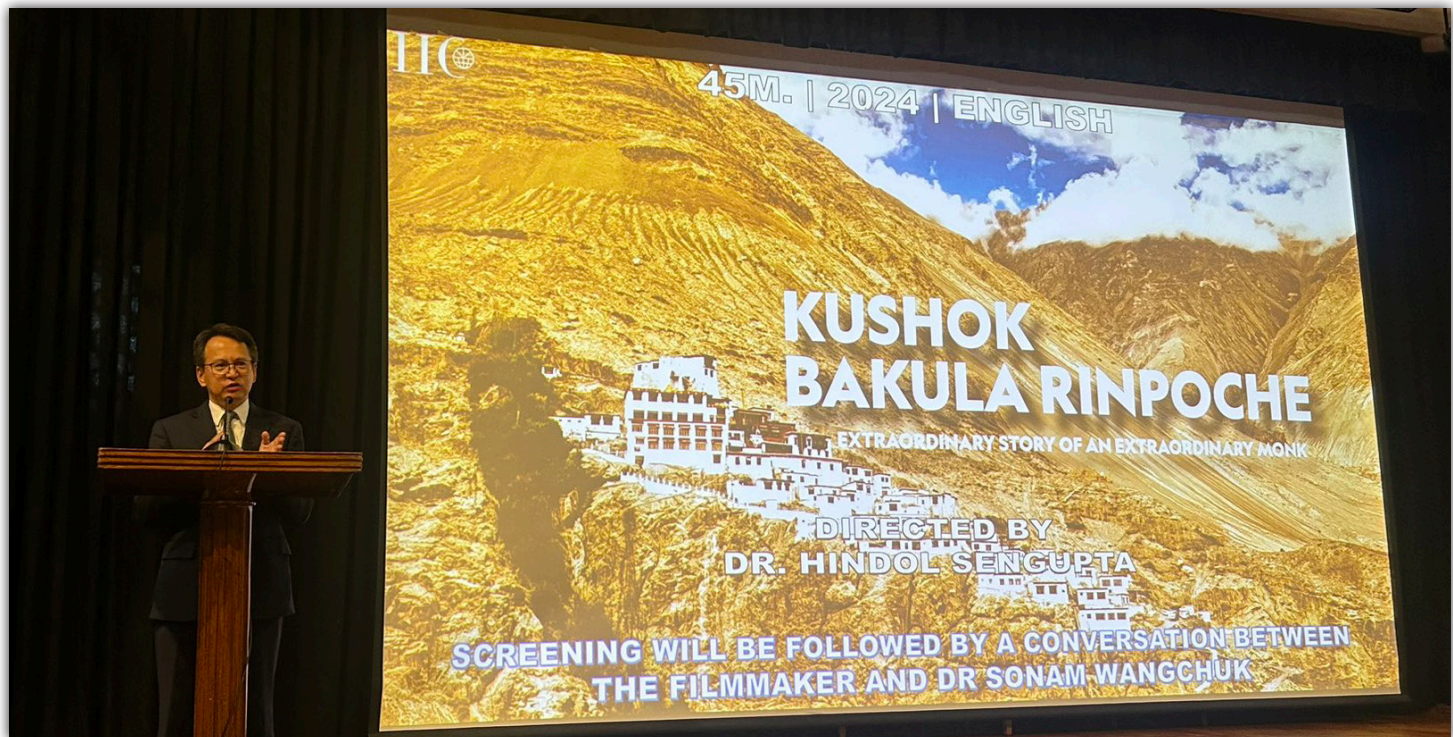
The scholarly depth of the sessions underscored the relevance of Buddhist philosophy in both traditional and modern contexts.

The Valedictory Session was Chaired by **Most Venerable Elikewala Seelananda Nayake Thero** and the Chief Guest was **President Counsel Dr Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe**, Former Minister of Buddhasasana, Justice and Constitutional Reforms. Speaking at the occasion, Dr. Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe commended the organizers and participants for contributing to a global conversation on one of the core features of Buddhism.

At the end of the conference, “The Kelaniya Declaration on Reincarnation” was read and passed unanimously by the monastic and lay scholars who were present. ▣



19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche The Monk who revived Buddhism in Mongolia



The Chief Guest H.E. Mr. Ganbold Dambajav, Ambassador of Mongolia to India speaking at the event

Rinpoche is an extraordinary Monk. A combination of a scholar, a philosopher, a social reformer, a consummate Statesman, an effective diplomat, and a popular mass leader; he served the Indian state and the people of his native Ladakh, and the nation for many decades on the strength of his moral integrity, simplicity, and humility.

This is how Rinpoche was described by **Sonam Wangchuk Shakspo** who served as a diplomat at the Embassy of India in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (1990-2000), working with Ven. Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, the Monk Ambassador, as his Private Secretary.

More recently, **Dr. Hindol Sengupta** of O.P. Jindal Global University di-

rected a documentary film honouring Kushok Bakula Rinpoche that was premiered at the India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi on 27 August, 2027. The film required Dr. Sengupta to travel to Mongolia and Ladakh to meet individuals closely associated with Kushok Bakula.

The film produced by **Shri Rishi Suri** of Grin Media, highlights the life and legacy of the revered Buddhist monk and diplomat who shaped modern Ladakh and played a pivotal role in reviving Buddhism in Mongolia.

The Chief Guest was **H.E. Mr. Ganbold Dambajav**, Ambassador of Mongolia to India, while the Guest of Honour was **Shri Abhijit Halder**,

Director General of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC). He joined the event virtually from the Spituk Gompa or (Pethup Gompa), located in Leh, which was the seat of the renowned **19th Kushok Bakula Rinpoche**. He was the Supreme Head of the Spituk Monastery.

Ambassador Dambajav recalled accompanying Rinpoche across Mongolia and receiving his blessings. He emphasized Rinpoche's role in Mongolia's peaceful transition and spiritual revival, noting that even the Mongolian President awaited his arrival with reverence. After decades of suppression under the USSR, Bakula's presence reignited Buddhist traditions, including the celebration



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The Director General IBC participating virtually from Leh with the Spituk Monastery in the background

of Buddha Day, now officially recognized by Mongolia's Parliament.

Shri Abhijit Halder praised the filmmakers and shared his long-standing association with Rinpoche since 1990. He highlighted IBC's efforts to honour Bakula's legacy, including sending his statues to Kalmykia, Buryatia, Tuva—the Russian cities and to Mongolia. He also credited Rinpoche for supporting the construction of Leh's Shanti Stupa in collaboration with Japanese monks. Kushok Bakula Rinpoche, spiritual head of Pethup Gompa in Spituk, Ladakh, is believed to be an incarnation of Buddha Amitabha and one of the original Sixteen Arhats. His 19 previous incarnations are recorded in Tibetan scripture Nayan Chaghot.

The documentary traced his journey from mobilizing Ladakhi youth post-independence to serving as India's ambassador to Mongolia for over a decade. His tenure saw the revival of Buddhism in post-Communist Mongolia, including the construction of a monastery in Ulaanbaatar modelled after one in Ladakh.

The film also explored Rinpoche's close ties with Indian leaders like Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Vajpayee, por-

traying him as a spiritual figure whose influence transcended borders. Cinematographer Koteswar Rao captured this narrative with depth and clarity.

Former Mongolian President Nam-baryn Enkhbayar, who appeared in the film, likened Bakula to Mahatma Gandhi, calling him a visionary who won the hearts of Mongolians. Lama Purevbat and Shirendev Dorlig, featured in the film, crediting Rinpoche for enabling their spiritual education in India, which helped establish Mongolia's Vipassana tradition.

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Kushok Bakula Rinpoche served the Indian state and the people of his native Ladakh, and the nation for many decades on the strength of his moral integrity, simplicity, and humility

Rinpoche's Biographer **Sonam Wang-chuk** explained in the film that Bakula's arrival fulfilled a prophecy about the return of Arhat Bakula during Buddhism's decline. His extended diplomatic tenure—unusual in foreign service—underscored his spiritual mission, including bringing Buddha's relics to Mongolia in 1993.

Former IBC Secretary General Dhammapiya, featured in the film, described Bakula as a bridge of friendship between Russia, Mongolia, and India. **Shri MP Singh**, ex-Ambassador to Mongolia, preserved Rinpoche's prayer hall at the Indian embassy, honouring his contributions to bilateral ties.

The screening concluded with a dialogue between Dr. Sengupta and **Prof. Ravindra Panth, Director, IBC**. The dialogue emphasized the universal relevance of Buddha Dhamma and Rinpoche's message of integrating tradition with practice. ▣





World Peace Conference reflects on World War II at its 80th Anniversary

The World Peace Conference 2025 was held from August 23rd to 25th in the serene Himalayan town of Leh, Ladakh, commencing with a symbolic tribute to global harmony by dedicating the Six Guardians of Peace, Roku Jizō statues, at Buddha Park, Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC) led by Rev. Koya Matsuoka and Ms. Sachiko from Japan. The conference was attended by **Adv. Tashi Gyalson, Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, LAHDC, Leh, Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Founder-President of MIMC and Shri Abhijit Halder, Director General of the International Buddhist Confederation** as a gesture of international unity.

The Conference was facilitated by Jin Young Lim and Stanzin Gurmet from

the Spawo Foundation. It was jointly organized by Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC), alongside the Ladakh Shanti Stupa Committee, Thiksey Monastery, LAHDC Leh, the Union Territory Administration of Ladakh, the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace (ABCP), the International Association of Educators for World Peace (IAEWP), the Global Peace Foundation (GPF), and various inter-faith and civil society groups.

Ven. Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Founder-President of MIMC, delivered the welcome address reflecting on the 80th anniversary of World War II, urging the world to turn the legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki into a catalyst for global compassion and solidarity.

Honourable Chairman and CEC, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, graced the occa-

sion as the Chief Guest. In his keynote speech, he congratulated the recipients of the World Peace Award. He emphasized that true peace demands more than rhetoric—it calls for purposeful and impactful action. He further highlighted that the pressing battle of our time is not among ourselves, but against the escalating threats of climate change and environmental degradation.

Shri Abhijit Halder, Director General, International Buddhist Confederation, underscored the importance of dialogue as a vital tool for overcoming divisions. Additionally, he highlighted the significance of mindfulness and the deep interconnection among all beings, positioning these values at the heart of broader strategic frameworks aimed at securing lasting global peace.



The symbolic offering was facilitated by Jin Young Lim and Stanzin Gurmet of the Spawo Foundation, representing a bond between Japan and Ladakh.

Representatives of different religious faiths also presented their perspectives on global peace. The occasion was also blessed by **Khenzur Rinpoche Lobzang Tsetan** and attended by eminent guests including Ghulam Mehdi, Executive Councillor of LAHDC Leh, Ambassador Dr. Deepak Vohra, Dr. P.R. Trivedi, Dr. Vijay Dhasmana, Dr. Markandey Rai, C. Phuntsog, and an international delegation of peace advocates.

The conference concluded with a grand ceremony at the Shanti Stupa, attended by monks from Japan and India. **Shri Abhijit Halder, Director General IBC, the Chief Guest**, drew parallels between Ladakh's experience of regional conflict and Japan's history with Hiroshima and Nagasaki, highlighting the Shanti Stupa as a powerful symbol of peace built jointly by Japanese and Indian Buddhists.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama honoured

On August 24, His Holiness the Dalai Lama was honoured at a luncheon held at Abi-Spang Spituk in Leh, Ladakh, organized by the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) and the Ladakh Gonpa Association (LGA). Despite heavy rain, His Holiness attended the event, which featured speeches, cultural performances by local villagers, and heartfelt interactions with attendees. He was received by the President of the LGA. **Shri Abhijit Halder, Director General IBC** was a special invitee at the event along with Adv. Tashi Gyalson Hon'ble Chairman CEC and other distinguished guests.

NEWS IN BRIEF

1st Asian Association for Buddhist Studies

Sat, Aug 30, 2025 - Sun, Aug 31, 2025

The first Asian Association for Buddhist Studies Conference was held at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, on 30-31 August, 2025. The Conference was organised in honour of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's 70th Birth Anniversary and was supported by Chulalongkorn University, the Thai Foundation, and scholars from across Asia and beyond to explore Buddhist philosophy, history, art, literature, and architecture.

Dr. Chandan Kumar, representing IBC as Academic Consultant presented a paper that emphasized the enduring relevance of Buddhist heritage in fostering inter-civilisational dialogue and academic collaboration.



Participating in the conference were leading universities and institutions from across Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, India, the UK, and Southeast Asia. It also included a cultural tour to a prominent Buddha Vihara and an exhibition showcasing Buddhist art and manuscripts, enriching the academic exchange with lived heritage.

Asian Association for Buddhist Studies Conference marked a significant step towards advancing scholarly collaboration, deepening cultural appreciation, and strengthening regional bonds among Buddhist academics across Asia. ▢



Meetings with prominent Gurus

The IBC consistently remains in touch with senior monks belonging to different traditions. DG IBC took the opportunity of getting the blessings of H.E **Kundling Rinpoche** and H.E **Kyabje Yongzin Ling Rinpoche** on September 23.



During discussions with **Ling Rinpoche**, the latter shared details of activities carried out at his monasteries and his travel plans. He mentioned that because of the prevailing complex situation in the world there is an increasing consciousness across nations towards Buddha Dhamma.

H.E Kundling Rinpoche praised the activities of IBC and mentioned that he has always been forthcoming in contributing towards IBC's efforts and to propagate the message of the Buddha across the world. Discussing his busy schedule, he added that in spite of several other commitments, he was available for participating in IBC led activities.

The DG IBC also met the **43rd Shakya Trizin** on September 24 and discussed a range of issues. These included education and health that were of special interest to Rinpoche. He mentioned to DG IBC about his travel to remote locations in India and Nepal to emphasize the relevance of health and education. ▢

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tri-Services Motorcycle Expedition to celebrate Buddha's legacy



To promote peace and cultural unity a Buddha-Trination, Tri-Services Motorcycle Expedition arrived in Chittoor on 31st August 2025, en route to Karnataka. It was earlier flagged off from Vizak, Vishakhapatnam.

The rally a part of a broader initiative under the 'Heartfulness Tri-Nation, Tri-Services Lord Buddha Circuit' symbolizes a journey from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean.

The riders were Mr. Srinivasulu, Revenue Divisional Officer Chittoor, other representatives of the Department of Tourism Department, faculty members and students of Savithramma Government Degree College.

Earlier, a landmark MOU between the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) and the Circuit was signed in November 2024 to advance Buddhist teachings across South Asia. The expedition celebrates Lord Buddha's legacy. ▣



IBC & UP government promote global Buddhist heritage in Korea

As a commitment to promoting global Buddhist heritage, the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) participated in the four-day Busan International Buddhism Expo 2025 in South Korea.

The IBC's and the Tourism Department of Uttar Pradesh set up an exhibition showcasing the Holy Buddhist sites – Sarnath and Kushinagar -where Buddha's first sermon was delivered and where Buddha attained Mahāparinibbāna, respectively.

The exhibition was inaugurated by senior officials from the Indian embassy in South Korea. Both countries bond over shared Buddhist values. It is believed that the ties date back to 1st century AD as Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya married a Korean King during that period.

The theme for the Expo was "Find Your Enlightenment (with the Eightfold Path)". Celebrating contemporary Buddhist philosophy and practice, the Expo gathered attendees from around the world and engaged them in a variety of programs, exhibitions, and activities related to Buddhist culture, art, heritage, and lifestyle.

Around 400 booths were set up with approximately 200 organizations participated in the exhibition. The expo was organized by Korea's Buddhist Newspaper and BBS Buddhist Broadcasting, with support from the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, Busan Metropolitan City, and the Busan Metropolitan City Buddhist Association. ▣



The IBC at the Busan International Expo (BEXPO 2025), Republic of Korea to promote global Buddhist heritage from 7th - 10th August, 2025



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, and meditation, as well as to experience the feeling of oneness with Lord Buddha and peace within, a state-of-the-art project titled the 'India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage (IICBCH)' is being undertaken.

The project, implemented by the *International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)*, New Delhi, is in its final phase of construction at the Monastic Zone of Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha.

This chosen site at Lumbini is not only a pilgrimage site but is categorised within the UNESCO World Heritage complex. Thus, this special status provides an opportunity to create 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 popular symbols of enlightenment and is considered important in the Buddhist traditions.



Following an agreement between the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) and the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), on 25 March 2022, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi along with the then Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba performed the 'shilanyas' ceremony and laid the foundation stone of IICBCH at the site on 16 May 2022.

Current Status of the Project

The project has entered its final phase of construction. Approximately 95% of the structural work is completed, with ongoing construction of the lotus structure to be placed atop the roof and interior art and other technical works. Besides the lotus structure which involves special engineering feat, the interior art work is also very important and critical aspect of the project, which will determine the overall look, attractiveness and exquisiteness of the structure. The IICBCH will be inaugurated shortly.



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION
Collective Wisdom United Voice

The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) is a global umbrella Buddhist organisation headquartered in New Delhi, India.

Established under the patronage of the supreme Buddhist religious hierarchy, it currently has a membership worldwide, both monastic and lay, that include world bodies, national and regional federations, orders, temple bodies and monasteries, etc.

The IBC was conceptualised during an international workshop in Delhi in 2011, where delegates from 11 countries unanimously agreed on the need to form a new International Buddhist organisation in India, the place of the origin, development and dissemination of Buddha Dhamma that would serve as a common platform for Buddhists worldwide.

As per its motto, **"Collective Wisdom, United Voice"**, the IBC provides a common platform to all followers of the Buddha Dhamma 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.

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