

'Vitasta: Kashmir Festival

Seminar on Buddha Dhamma and Kashmir

June 23-26, 2023

SKIIC (Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre)

Srinagar, Kashmir

The Vitasta Festival, a three-day event, was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah on June 23, 2023, at the SKIIC (Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre) in Srinagar, Kashmir. The festival aimed to celebrate the cultural heritage of Kashmir and promote dialogue on the historical significance of Buddha Dhamma in the region. One of the highlights of the event was a seminar on Buddha Dhamma and Kashmir, which attracted prominent scholars, experts, and academicians.

The seminar on Buddha Dhamma and Kashmir commenced with an inaugural session presided over by K. Sreenivasarao, Secretary of Sahitya Akademi. The session featured an inaugural address by Professor K.N. Warikoo from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), who is a renowned expert on Kashmir studies. The esteemed Chief Guest for the session was Madhav Kaushik, the President of Sahitya Akademi.

A total of 30 scholars and experts presented their research papers during the seminar on Buddha Dhamma and Kashmir. These papers covered various aspects of Buddha Dhamma's historical and cultural significance in the Kashmir region. The presenters included both national and international scholars, contributing to a diverse range of perspectives and insights.

Dr. Chandan Kumar, Research Associate, International Buddhist Confederation, delivered a paper titled "Kashmir: A Gateway of Buddha Dhamma to the World" during the Seminar on Buddha Dhamma and Kashmir held as part of the Vitasta Festival. The paper presentation aimed to explore the historical significance of Kashmir as a gateway for the spread of Buddha Dhamma (teachings of the Buddha) to the world.

Dr. Chandan Kumar's paper highlighted the profound influence of Buddha Dhamma in the Kashmir region and its role as a pivotal gateway for the transmission of Buddhist teachings and practices.

The paper provided an overview of the historical context of Buddha Dhamma in Kashmir, emphasizing the region's strategic location along the ancient Silk Route. It discussed how Kashmir served as a prominent centre for Buddhist learning, attracting renowned scholars, monks, and pilgrims from neighbouring regions and distant lands.

Dr. Chandan Kumar highlighted significant Buddhist sites in Kashmir, such as the ancient monastic complexes of Harwan and Parihasapura, as well as the renowned ruins of the Buddhist stupa at Ushkur. The presenter discussed the architectural and artistic aspects of these sites, underscoring their importance in understanding the spread of Buddha Dhamma in the region.

The paper explored the contributions of Kashmiri scholars to Buddhist philosophy and literature. Dr. Chandan Kumar discussed the remarkable work of figures such as Vasubandhu, Asanga, and Shantarakshita, who played crucial roles in shaping Buddhist thought and establishing Kashmir as a centre for philosophical debates and intellectual discourse.

The presenter emphasized the cultural exchange facilitated by Kashmir's Buddhist connections. The region served as a hub for the exchange of ideas, artistic expression, and religious practices between India, Central Asia, and Tibet. This cultural exchange enriched not only Kashmir but also influenced the development of Buddha Dhamma in various other regions.

Dr. Chandan Kumar's paper shed light on the historical significance of Kashmir as a gateway for the dissemination of Buddhist teachings. The presentation highlighted the rich Buddhist heritage of Kashmir, the contributions of Kashmiri scholars to Buddhist philosophy, and the cultural exchanges that occurred in the region. By exploring these aspects, the paper reinforced the importance of Kashmir in the larger narrative of Buddha Dhamma's global spread.





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North Zone Cultural Centre

cordially invite you to
a two day long Seminar on

Buddhism and Kashmir

on the occasion of

Ambit of Vitasta : Kashmir Festival

on **24-25 June 2023**

at SKICC Seminar Hall, near Centaur Hotel, Cheshmashahi,
Srinagar, UT, Jammu and Kashmir 190001