

CONFERENCE ON SHARED BUDDHIST HERITAGE OF SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO)

SCO Council of Heads of State - 2023

S | E | C | U | R | E | S C O

SECURITY | ECONOMY | CONNECTIVITY | UNITY | RESPECT | ENVIRONMENT

Date: 14-15 March, 2023

**Venue: VIGYAN BHAVAN
NEW DELHI, INDIA**

Organizers:



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION
Collective Wisdom United Voice



सत्यमेव जयते

संस्कृति मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
CULTURE

OVERVIEW

SCO Nations with a 'Shared Buddhist Heritage' meet in New Delhi-2023

A Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference on “Shared Buddhist heritage in SCO countries” was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) focusing on India’s civilisation connect with the SCO nations at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on March 14 and 15, 2023. SCO Member States, Observer States and Dialogue Partners of different countries viz. China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, India, Belarus, Bahrain, Myanmar, UAE participated in the event. The SCO events brought together Central Asia, East Asia and South Asian and Arab countries on a common platform to discuss “Shared Buddhist Heritage”. A number of Indian scholars of Buddhism also participated in the event.

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) brought together Central Asian, East Asian, South Asian and Arab countries on a common platform to discuss “Shared Buddhist Heritage”. More than 10 scholars, delegates presented research papers on the topic. These experts are 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; Belarusian State University and International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, Myanmar, to mention a few.

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. One of the natural marvels in this world is the evolution and spread of ideas, since times immemorial. Crossing effortlessly, formidable mountains, vast oceans and national boundaries; ideas that find a home in distant lands; getting enriched with the existing cultures. So is the uniqueness of Buddha’s appeal and its universality crossed both time and space. The humanistic approach of this appeal permeated art, architecture, sculpture and subtle attributes of human personality; finding expression in compassion, mutual co-existence, sustainable living and personal growth.

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 civilization legacy, strengthened by Buddhist missionaries who played a major role in integrating various cultures, communities and regions in the entire Indian subcontinent and Asia discussed for two days various themes, chalk-ing out ways to continue the age-old bonds into the future.

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.



INAUGURAL ADDRESS



Shri G. Kishan Reddy

Hon'ble Union Minister for Culture & Tourism and
Development of North Eastern Region, Govt. of India

While addressing the gathering on March 14, Shri Reddy stated that he was glad to be at the event with all the SCO member states who had gathered to discuss and share their values arriving from different parts of the world regarding our common Buddhist Heritage. He spoke about the Buddha, the Enlightened One, who is the messenger of peace and non-violence for the world. Hon'ble Minister mentioned that “Buddha taught us the way to be happy, peaceful and harmonious with full compassion”.

This conference, according to the Hon'ble Minister, plays a vital role in strengthening the brotherhood and friendship between various cultures, communities and regions in the entire Indian sub-continent, Asia and the world. He said that Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, the former Vice-President of India had chaired the SCO Council of Heads of States Summit in November 2020 and inaugurated the online International Exhibition on the Shared Buddhist Heritage held on virtual mode due to the pandemic. The exhibition involved institutions like Museums of Kolkata, Kazakhstan, Dun Huang Academy (China), Museum of Kyrgyz Republic, Museums of Pakistan, Russia, antiquities of Tajikistan and archaeological sites of Uzbekistan, among others. While China's rich digital collection of Buddhist murals was exhibited from the north western city of Dunhuang, Russia showcased Buddhist art from the province of Buryat through icons and ritual objects. Pakistan, on the other hand, exhibited Buddhist heritage of Swat valley and Taxila.

Hon'ble Minister also said that “all of us should follow in the footsteps of the great Buddha. We should not only celebrate heritage but also follow the Buddha's message of non-violence, peace and respect for all sentient beings and live in harmony and ensure sustainability.” He added that “we are gathered here in first of its kind conference as the very objective of the SCO is to encourage conversation, cooperation and coordination, thereby, maintaining peace among the member countries”. “Creating an environment of world peace” he highlighted is an important agenda of the SCO. He reiterated that our Hon'ble Prime Minister's statement - “I see Lord Buddha in the 21st century across the political ideologies playing the role of the bridge to promote understanding and strengthening ties with the world by sharing Lord Buddha's heritage”. Shri Reddy further stated that “our government is developing Buddhist world class infrastructure, and in November 2021, Our Hon'ble Prime Minister inaugurated the Kushinagar International Airport in Uttar Pradesh in order to facilitate easy access to the Buddhist trail.”

The Hon'ble Minister emphasized that it was indeed a moment of immense pleasure that Ministry of Culture along with the Government of India was organising the first International SCO Conference. He said that “we want to build stronger and deeper bonding amongst the member countries

through Buddhism”. He also brought out that the SCO gathering led us to realize that the Buddha is an underlying link that binds us. The purpose of the SCO Conference is to renew trans-cultural links and shared histories between the SCO member countries. He extended his good wishes to the Conference and expressed hope to take the dialogue further towards creating a peaceful, harmonious and a compassionate world as professed in art forms and architecture during the times of the Buddha.



Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi

Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs
Govt. of India

MoS Smt. Lekhi mentioned that heritage and history connects us all through the SCO platform. She said that 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. Smt. Lekhi said “Buddhism has spread across the region through Eurasian trade-routes and in ancient time, the very first university which the world has 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 archeology. She expressed her confidence in SCO as a platform for sharing of 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 the Ashoka, wherein he talks about Pragya (wisdom) where one not only follows the right path but also has the motivation to do so.

So far as Indian history is concerned, the contribution to Buddhism has been immense. In this context, the MoS mentioned that having visited the countries where the Buddha’s teachings are relevant and where Buddhist art and architecture are popular, she found that there was visible “Indian-ness” in the locations. She mentioned King Ashoka is 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 everybody to work on the philosophy and thought process like that of Dharmapala who had spread Lord Buddha’s message also in material terms, which was through trade of spices and other material items.



Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal

Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Culture & Parliamentary Affairs
Govt. of India

The Hon'ble MOS Shri Meghwal first welcomed all delegates of different countries and the scholars who attended the event. He mentioned that teachings of the Buddha about self-realization and self-examination were important in the 21st century. He 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 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 museum collections of different countries.



Shri Abhijit Halder

Director General
International Buddhist Confederation

Shri Abhijit Halder emphasised that there cannot be a better platform to discuss the issues of Shared Buddhist Heritage regarding art and architecture than the SCO. Buddhist culture, tradition, value system, practices, which were found outside India was 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 spread of Buddhism to other regions over several years. We have 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 said that according to Al Beruni, Buddhism spread to Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria and Gandhara in Pakistan. He further said that some work has to be done on the Buddhist art and archeology in Iran, Iraq and other parts in the Central Asia.



Shri. Niraj Kumar

Director BTI, Ministry of Culture
Govt. of India

Presented Vote of Thanks for the Inaugural Session.



PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Day-I

Plenary Session



Keynote Address

Prof. K. Warikoo

Prof. (Retd.)

Center for Central Asian Studies

JNU

Prof. K. Warikoo, in his Keynote address, affirmed that India has a firm socio-economic and cultural tie with Central Asian, East Asian countries and far beyond, and that Silk route system provided stable trans-continental bridge facilitating multilateral exchanges between India, Central Asia, East Asia and China (covering all the SCO countries).

He went on to say that with spread of Buddhism in Central Asia since 3rd century BC, a constant cultural exchange between India and the Central Asian countries took place with a large movement of monks and pilgrims from these countries. According to Prof. Warikoo, Buddhist monks/scholars/travelers from India contributed in spreading of Buddhism in Central Asia and East Asia, particularly Buddhist sages in Kashmir who played an important role in spreading Buddhism in Xinjiang and China.

Prof. Warikoo further alerted that it is high time that all antiquities, frescoes, manuscripts, inscriptions and artefacts which are living testimony to the shared Buddhist Heritage in SCO countries and are lying scattered in various places across the region are documented. In this regard, he further suggested that India along with countries from SCO members develop a comprehensive and concrete programme for identification, location, documentation and dissemination of such rich and common historical and cultural legacy.



PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

DAY - I

Session - I



Moderator

Prof. Baidyanath Labh

Vice Chancellor, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara, Nalanda

India

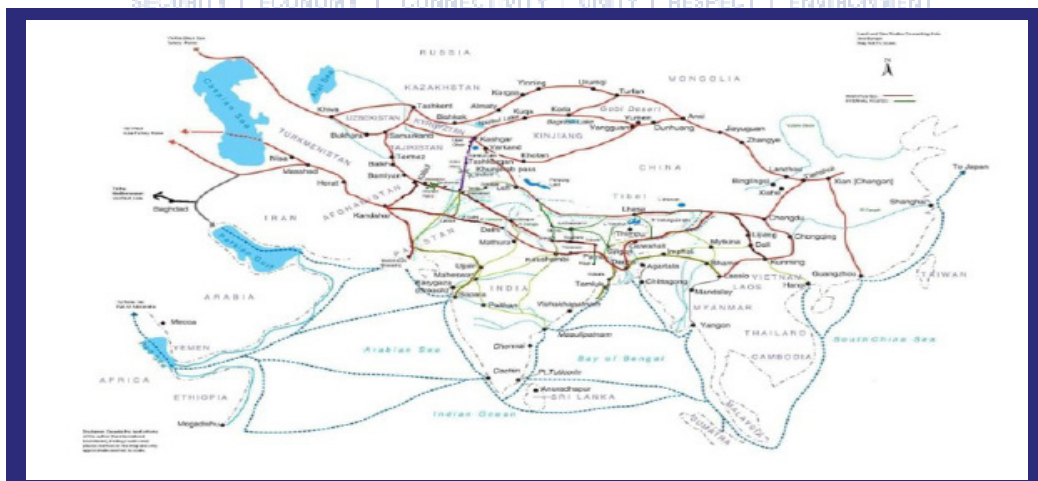


Speaker - Ms. Sunita Dwivedi

Author and Explorer

Dr Dwivedi pointed out that the web of routes between India, Central Asia and China were also termed as the Dhamma Routes as Buddhist missionaries travelled along these routes to spread the Dhamma [the Buddha's Law] in the oasis cities of Xinjiang and other provinces of China. It was along these routes that Asoka's messengers perhaps carried Buddha's relics to Xian where they were enshrined at the Famen temple. This temple, as visited by this author, in its notice boards clearly inform that the relics of the Buddha were brought to Xian during the reign of Mauryan emperor Asoka.

The presentation by the author of about 25 photographic slides highlighted cave arts, statues and mural paintings found by her in Xinjiang from Turgfan to Koral, Kucha, Kashgar, Tashkurgan, Khotan as well as those found in the various museums of India, China and Russia.



XINJIANG ON INDIA- CENTRAL ASIA- CHINA ROUTES

China

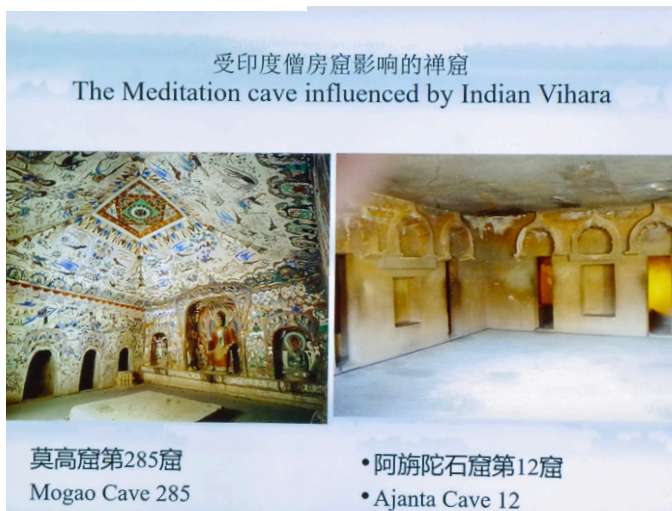


Speaker - Dr. Yanpeng Song

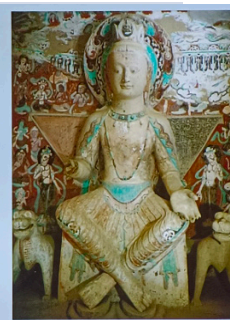
Deputy Director, Information Center of Dunhuang Studies

Dr. Song presented on the Mogao Caves, also known as Thousand Buddha Caves, which are a group of ancient caves known for their resplendent murals and painted sculptures. The caves were built over the period of several different dynasties. To date, the site includes 735 caves, housing approximately 45,000 square metres of wall paintings. The contents of these wall paintings are very rich, including Jataka tales (stories of Sākyamuni's meritorious deeds in his previous lives), Karma stories (stories based on the law of cause and effect), and sutra tales (which illustrate specific sutras, or condensed manuals/texts) (ibid.). These paintings do not only record Buddhist stories, but also convey the basic values of Buddhism, such as compassion, honesty, generosity, love, and filiality, which largely conform to common values in a modern society and can be interpreted from a modern perspective to develop new moral lessons.

With specific emphasis on the topic of Mindfulness of Dunhuang: Deer Jataka story, Dr. Song argued that involving children in the Buddhist stories depicted in the wall paintings of Mogao Caves has great potential to engage them emotionally, enabling them to express, exchange, explore and examine their moral understandings of the values embedded in the story.



交脚菩萨像 3-4世纪
东京 松冈美术馆 藏
Cross-ankled Bodhisattva,
3rd-4th century, Matsuo
Museum of Art, Tokyo



莫高窟第275窟
交脚菩萨 北凉
Cross-ankled Bodhisattva,
Mogao cave 275, Northern
Liang (421-439)



云冈石窟第9窟 交脚菩萨
北魏
Cross-ankled Bodhisattva,
Yungang cave 9, Northern
Wei (460-534)

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS DAY - I

Session - II



Moderator

Prof. (Dr.) Anupa Pande

Director/Pro-VC and HoD
National Museum Institute

Pakistan



Speaker - Mr. A. Imran Shauket

Entrepreneur, promoting Buddhist Heritage sites in Pakistan

The representative from Pakistan, Mr. Shauket, said that there is not much related to Buddhism in Pakistan except the Gandhara and Taxila findings. He said that Gandhara has very old history of Greeks, Persian, Mauryan and Italian archaeology from the past. The oldest evidence of Buddhism in Gandhara can be found through 'Asokan edicts' established by 'King Asoka'. He said that Buddha is a binding form of Western influence, Hindu influence and Chinese influence. He also said that Pakistan has been historically ignored as far as Buddhism is concerned. He said only 25 percent of sites have been excavated and 75 percent are undiscovered. He thereafter gave a presentation on how Buddhism was being promoted in Pakistan showcasing Gandharas' relevance to Padmasambhava in Odiyana in Pakistan. His main effort was to gather global attention towards Buddhism in Pakistan.

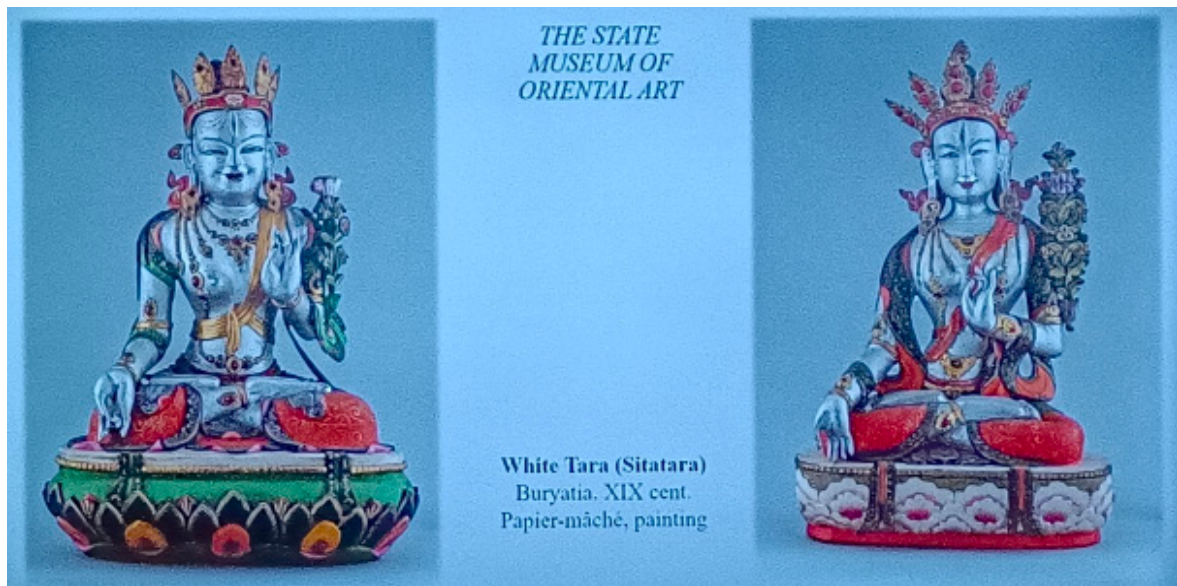


Russia

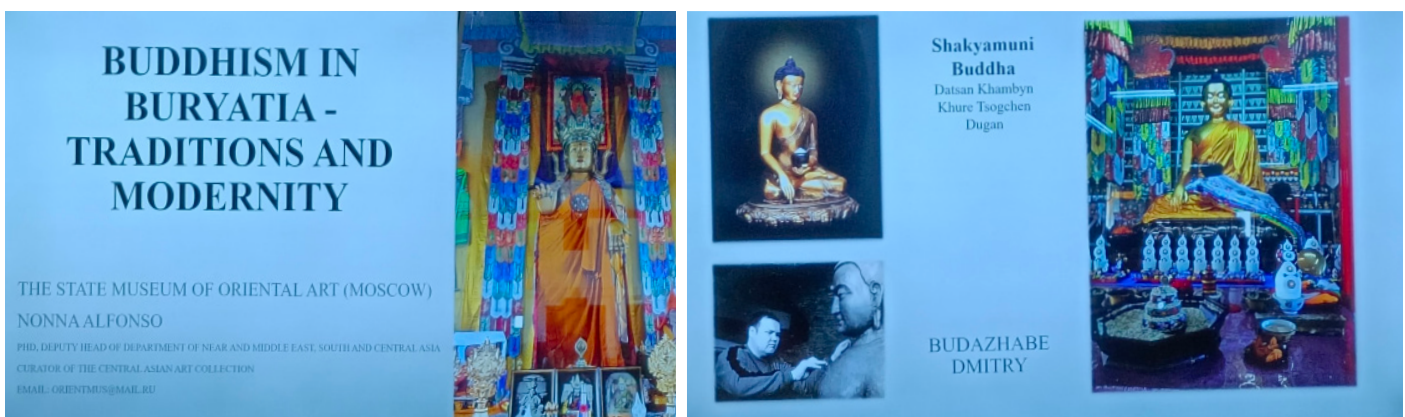


Speaker - Dr. Nonna Alfonso

Deputy Head of the Department of Art of the Peoples of the Near and Middle East,
South and Central Asia



Dr. Alfonso mentioned that widespread Tibetan Buddhism (the Gelug school) among the Buryats began in the 18th century. Buddhist Buryat art reached its peak in the 19th century. She claimed that the State Museum of Oriental Art (Moscow) has a significant collection of Buddhist art of the 19th and early 20th centuries. She displayed pictures of thangka icons, miniature paintings sculptural and relief images, altar decorations, ritual attributes and ritual weapons, amulets and reliquaries. The aim of her paper was to show antique objects of Buddhist art from the museum collection and the use of similar objects in modern Buddhist temples in Buryatia. There was a distinct connection to India, Dr. Alfonso presented, such as, “the terracotta clay items of the 16th century are very similar to the icons found in Madhya Pradesh.”



Delhi Tour & Cultural Programme

After the technical sessions, all the delegates from India and foreign countries were taken for 'Delhi Darshan' to Humayun's Tomb and Gandhi Smriti. In the evening, a cultural programme was organised at the Regal Banquet of The Lalit, New Delhi for all the participants of the conference. The North-Central Zonal Cultural Centre (NCZCC) prepared a performance 'Sanskriti-Virasat', choreographed by Ms. Rani Khanam, representing classical and folk-dance styles across various states of India. The cultural programme was attended by Hon'ble Minister of Culture, Tourism and DoNER Shri G. Kishan Reddy and Hon'ble Minister of State for Culture and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, following which the former hosted a Gala Dinner for the delegates.



PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS DAY - II

Session - I



Moderator

Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan

Executive Director of the International Research Division
India International Centre Delhi

Tajikistan



Speaker - Mr. Bobomullo Bobomulloev

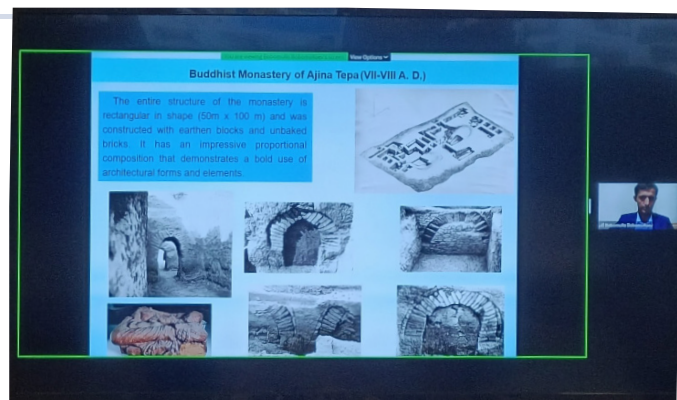
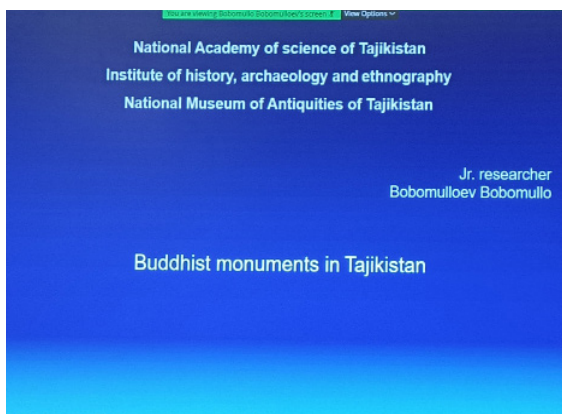
Representative of the National Museum of Antiquities of Tajikistan

The participant from Tajikistan, Mr. Bobomullo Saidmurodovich Bobomulloev showcased several sites that existed around 8th century A.D. but had there after gone under the surface. He sought assistance from member countries to form a group to study these lost sites and revive them.

Prof. Bobouullo Bobomulloev (Tajikistan) presented a paper on 'Buddhist monuments in Tajikistan' highlighting as to how Buddhist sites were in ruins in Tajikistan and urgently needed foreign assistance for excavation and restoration.

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India



Speaker - Mr. Deepankar Aron

Commissioner, GST in the State of Uttarakhand, Govt. of India

Mr. Aron's presentation examined the spiritual, cultural and art-architectural linkages that bound the civilisations of India, Central and East Asia. It studied the movement of Buddhist art and architecture as also that of the Buddhist Colossi depicted in caves, grottoes and frescoes along the Silk Road and beyond from the lost cities of Karakhoja and Yarkhoto in Xinjiang province of China to the re-discovered caves of Dunhuang to the grottoes of Yungang and Longmen. The role of political patronage as also that played by monks, traders, civil-servants and diplomats in transmission of Buddhism and in translation of manuscripts was discussed.

The recurring theme of Buddhist temples and monasteries located atop holy mountains as a part of religious and cultural transmission from India to East Asia was explored including replication of the concept of Char-dhams in China centred around the Bodhisattvas such as Manjushree in Wutai-shan and Samantabhadra in Emishan. Emergence of cultural and literary symbols in this shared heritage such as that of three holy monkeys or the Chinese Monkey King or the Chinese epic – A Journey to the West was also touched upon.

Shared Buddhist Heritage of Central and East Asia- A presentation by Deepankar Aron, India



Art and Architecture – Caves, grottoes and Colossi

Tuyog caves, Turpan, Xinjiang, China





Speaker - Dr. Shengliang Zhao

Research fellow of Dunhuang Research Academy

Speaking on the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes, (the thousand Buddha caves), Dr Shengliang Zhao, 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 borders influences. A cross-ankled 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 statutes of Bodhisattva from Tokyo influencing the ones in the caves in 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 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. At the location, one can not only see cultures of India and China but also Central Asia, West Asia, and even ancient Greece and Rome.

S | E | C | U | R | E | S | C | O

敦煌文化本来是佛教文化，佛教从印度传来并在中国长期发展，佛教就与中国传统文化完美地结合在一起，成为了中国传统的一个重要方面。由于丝绸之路的繁荣发展，东西方文化不断地交流，在敦煌留下了极其丰富的文化遗产，从中我们不仅看到中国和印度文化，还可以找到中亚、西亚乃至古希腊罗马文化的痕迹。因此，作为人类文化遗产，敦煌文化具有世界性。

Dunhuang culture was originally Buddhist culture. Buddhism came from India and developed in China for a long time. Buddhism has been perfectly integrated with traditional Chinese culture and has become an important aspect of Chinese tradition. Due to the prosperity and development of the Silk Road, the continuous exchange of Eastern and Western cultures has left an extremely rich cultural heritage in Dunhuang, from which we can not only see the culture of China and India, but also find the traces of the culture of Central Asia, West Asia and even ancient Greece and Rome. Therefore, as a cultural heritage of mankind, Dunhuang culture has a worldwide character.

马图拉雕刻的影响
The influence of Mathura sculptures



立佛像 2世纪 马图拉博物馆 藏
Standing Buddha, 2nd century, the Mathura Museum



立佛像 马图拉博物馆 藏
Standing Buddha, the Mathura Museum

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS DAY - II

Session - II

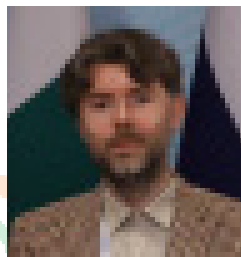


Moderator

Prof. Shashi Bala

Dean, Bhavan's KM Munshi Centre of Indology
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

Russia



Speaker - Mr. Tugarinov Pavel

Researcher at the State Museum of the History of Religion

The Russian delegate, Mr. Tugarinov Pavel shared the rich collection of Buddhist art and artefacts in St. Petersburg and also showcased the strong connect between Indian art and Buddhist art as found in different parts of the former Soviet Union.

Mr. Tugarinov said that the State Museum of the History of Religion in St. Petersburg is one of the world's few museums and the only one of its kind in Russia with its permanent exhibition featuring the origin and development of Religion. It houses a wide range of historical and cultural monuments from various countries, ages and peoples. He brought out that the St. Petersburg Museum was founded as a part of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and opened to the public on 15 November 1932 in the former Kazan Cathedral.

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Myanmar



Speaker - Bhaddanta Dr. Candamukha

Associate professor and head of the department of Suttanta studies
International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University

Bhaddanta Dr. Candamukha of Myanmar, steering the discussion to contemporary times pointed out that it was through Buddhism people developed all over the world. What remains of that rich development now are only archeological sites on those lands.

The Buddha prescribed Dhamma 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 very lands. The only historical evidence to remind us of Buddha's humanism. Dr. Candamukha lauded India for including the Dhamma wheel in its national flag and said it was a great symbol in projecting how deep Buddhism is embedded in India.



Belarus



Speaker - Dr. Aleh Perzashkevich

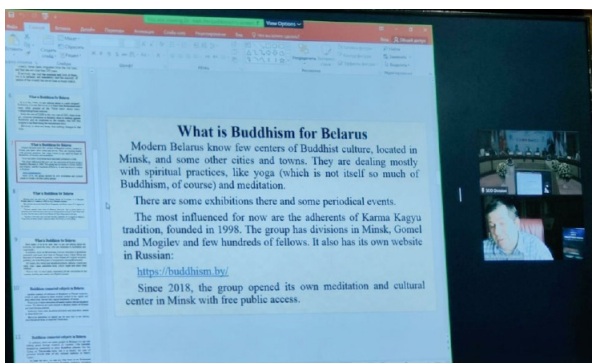
Associated Professor of Belarusian State University

Dr. Perzashkevich said that Buddhism, its origin, initials of doctrine, history and culture are part of World History and are part of mandatory school subject in Belarus. In addition, he said that there are few Buddhist cultural groups, museum expositions and meditation practices besides yoga, medical and martial art centers, connected to Buddhist culture in Belarus.

He suggested to the conference participants that one should start, of course, from the school, where every Belarusian gets basic knowledge about the world and culture. Since its independence, he said that Belarus has its own school programme. Buddhism, its origin, initials of doctrine, history of development and its culture form part of World History subject for students from 10 up to 18 years old. The religion and its traditions has its own sections in the textbooks and school atlases.



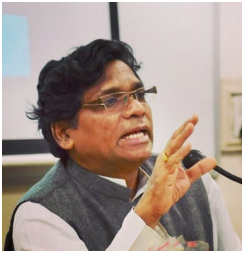
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THE MUSEUM COLLECTION NUMBERS ABOUT 200 000 EXHIBITS
IT HOUSES A WIDE RANGE
OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ARTIFACTS
FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES, AGES, AND PEOPLES.
THE MUSEUM KEEPS COLLECTIONS THAT COVER A VAST EXPANSE OF TIME
FROM THE ARCHAIC (C. 6000 BC)
AND ANCIENT EGYPT TO THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES IN EUROPE,
FROM THE ANCIENT GREECE TO THE PRESENT DAY.
THE HISTORY OF BUDDHISM AND ISLAM IS ALSO PRESENTED ON THE DISPLAY.

PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS DAY - II

Open Session



Moderator

Prof. Upendra K. Rao

Professor, School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies
JNU

During the Open Session of the conference, most participants expressed the need to continue this conference as a series, possibly annually, and each member country could take turns to host it. In this regard, Tajikistan requested India to take lead in visiting their sites with an excavation team to revive the history of the location.

Bahrain



Mr. Phra Supakit Chumwaegwapee (Thiraviriyo)

Meditation Instructor, Moral teaching, Traditional Buddhist Ceremonies

During the open session, Mr. Phra Supakit Chumwaegwapee, Dialogue partner Bahrain, highlights the essence of peaceful coexistence.

UAE



Mr. Khalifa Ali Abu Amaim

Expert and Head of the Partnership & Exhibition department

The conference came to a close with Chairperson, Prof. K. N Warikoo's address where he highlighted how this platform enabled the participants of the SCO countries to learn from each other on Buddhist sites, practices and history and at least get a virtual access to many of the places. The Vote of Thanks was proposed by Prof. Ravindra Panth, Director (Academic), IBC.

The event also led to cross interaction between Indian and foreign scholars and IBC got the opportunity of establishing links with individuals/ institutions dealing with Buddhism in the SCO States. The conference was extensively covered by the media.



FAREWELL DINNER

For the farewell dinner at the Lalit Hotel, Hon'ble Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs, Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi interacted with all the participants attending the conference.







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