

2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DHARMA-DHAMMA

The Centre for Study of Religion and Society (CSRS) of India Foundation has organised the First International Conference on Dharma-Dhamma in September, 2012 at Bhopal. We had Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka and the Department of Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh as our collaborators in organising this Conference. Over 400 delegates from 20 countries participated in this Conference. The CSRS is organizing the 2nd International Conference on Dharma-Dhamma in collaboration with the Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies, Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh on 28 February - 02 March, 2014 at Bhopal, India.

The central theme of this Conference will be “Nature, Source and Relevance of Dharma-Dhamma Traditions.” The aim of the Conference is to undertake intra and inter cultural study of the varied Buddhist traditions and their textual sources vis-à-vis the Vedic traditions by way of revisiting them, focusing on their basic framework and the superstructures erected on them.

CENTRAL THEME - NATURE, SOURCE AND RELEVANCE OF DHARMA-DHAMMA TRADITIONS

The aim of the Conference is to undertake intra and inter cultural study of the different Buddhist traditions and their textual sources vis-à-vis the Vedic traditions by way of revisiting them, focusing on their basic framework and the superstructures erected on them. Both the Vedic and the Buddhist traditions are *dharma/dhamma*-centric, aiming at cultivation of *dharmic* individual, state and society.

Dharma is not only a pivotal concept but it has also been the most basic and pervasive concept within Indian cultural ethos. According to Indian thought, the cosmic process and human existence have a built-in teleology and purposiveness. There is an inherent order in the cosmos. It is called ‘*Rta*’. The Vedic seers highlighted this concept and exhorted us to adhere to the order inherent in the cosmos.

The advent of the Buddha has had a significant effect in the history of world cultures and civilizations. He transformed an inherited tradition and evolved a new outlook. In his own words, "Even so have I, O' Monk, seen an ancient way, an ancient road, traversed by the supremely enlightened ones of the olden times" (*Samyutta Nikaya* II, p. 106-7).

The great repertoire of *Dharma-Dhamma* is embedded in the classical as well as contemporary traditions and texts of the Orient. The human ideal is inexorably intertwined with the ‘Story of

Civilization' everywhere in the globe, especially in the east. There is a common factor in both the Vedic and Bauddha traditions which delineate that 1) there is a universal law, rhythm or dhamma that orders all things in the universe; 2) individual conduct is to be in conformity with this principle; and 3) essential nature of an entity is the 'ultimate reality of the way the things really are.'

Thus, *Dharma-Dhamma* traditions prescribe a universal ethic which is evolved over time as an 'eternal truth, which will result in the ultimate good of all entities (*bhutihitam*).' The Buddha's very first sermon set in motion, the wheel of universal law. The Vedic tradition also mentions that the universal goal is the attainment of *abhyudaya* (general welfare) and *nihisreyas* (bliss) for all.

The Conference seeks to explore the shared values of *Dharma-Dhamma* philosophical traditions, which will be of guidance to the troubled world of today.

SUGGESTED THEMES

1. Apotheosis of the Buddha in theological trends through the ages
2. Historical growth of Bauddha canons
3. The world-view of *Samsara* in Hindu-Bauddha texts
4. The emergence of *Rishi, Sramana and Bhikku* traditions in Sanskrit and Pali texts (Rise of asceticism)
5. *Pravrtti* and *Nivrtti* traditions – Evolution through the ages
6. Hindu eschatology and Bauddha precepts of *Nirvana*
7. Development of Yogic traditions
8. Ascetico-intellectual movements in the Orient
9. Concepts of time and reality in *Dharma-Dhamma* traditions
10. Mysticism of the Middle Way
11. Interpretation of *Dhamma*
12. Consciousness studies in the Orient
13. The Middle Doctrine beyond '*Anatta* and *Atta*'

14. Faith and Mindfulness
15. *Bodhi Sakkhiya dhamma* traditions – morality, compassion and *Brahma Vihara*
16. Importance of *jnana* in Buddhism
17. Buddha traditions in *Tripitaka*, *Mulasarvastivada*, *Yogacara*, *Madhyamika*, and texts such as *Avtamsakasutra*, *Sadhammasutra*, *Sukhavatisutra*
18. Hindu traditions in the *Veda*, *Upanishad* and *Epics*
19. *Dharma-Dhamma* traditions in South India