

IABU Newsletter, Second Edition – March 2008

From the Bangkok Secretariat of the International Association of Buddhist Universities



International Association of Buddhist Universities Executive Council Meeting – 13 January 2008

IABU Secretariat: On 13-14 January 2008, the IABU held the 1st Executive Council Meeting, since the foundation of the association during last year's 2007 United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations – held in Bangkok, Thailand. Some of the details discussed were the setting up of the 1st International Association of Buddhist Universities Conference and Symposium – to be held on 13-15 September 2551/2008 at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme of the symposium is: **Buddhism and Ethics**, the sub-themes are:

- Buddhist Ethics and Economy – headed by Ven. Xue Cheng
- Buddhist Ethics and Education – headed by Dr. Tamas Agocs
- Buddhist Ethics and Literature – headed by Dr. R. Panth
- Buddhist Ethics and Mind Culture – headed by Dr. Sumanapala
- Buddhist Ethics and Politics – headed by Ven. Dr. Yifa
- Buddhist Ethics and Science – headed by Prof. Geshe Samten
- Buddhist Ethics and Social Development – headed by Prof. Le Mahn That

The Keynote Speaker and Guest Speakers have not been announced – and are still under consideration.

HAABU

The 1st IABU Executive Council Meeting - 13th January 2008 Decisions

The First IABU Executive Council Meeting held on 13 & 14 January 2008/2551 at MCU resolved:

1. To hold a summit of the heads of the Member Universities/ Colleges, on the last day of the next coming Bi-annual General Meeting of the IABU [May 2008 at UNDV Celebrations in Hanoi, Vietnam];
2. To form a committee/college of patrons and invite leaders of national Sangha/Buddhist organizations to become patrons;
3. To compose a list of Buddhist classical languages courses on offer at Member Universities with a view to encourage Member-Institutions sign a Memorandum of Understanding between them as part of an effort to promote the study of Buddhist classical languages; the program should to be divided into advanced program and elementary;
4. To develop a database of curricula and related information of Member Institutions, including their website and contact person;
5. To provide relevant information to Member-Institutions to help them in their accreditation process;
6. To publish a journal once a year; for that, to first form a good editorial committee; and to give priority to papers presented at the IABU Symposium while open also to other quality papers;
7. Mindful of "The Regulations" on "Admission to Membership" as laid down in the Constitution, to approve, for the time being, an application of a candidate-institution to become an IABU member, if an Executive Council member supports the application (Re: Constitution, p. 28);
8. To hold the Second General Meeting with a Symposium, a meeting of Patrons and a Summit of the chief Executive Officers of Member-Institutions for three days from 13 to 15 September 2008/2551 in Bangkok, Thailand, to be sponsored by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University;

9. At least, the first two days of the General Meeting are to be devoted to the Symposium; perhaps, while the Symposium may continue on the third day morning in parallel with the Summit; the Bi-annual General Meeting is to take place in the afternoon of the third day, after which the IABU Bangkok Declaration will be issued;
10. The theme of the First IABU Symposium is: Buddhism and Ethics, and the seven sub-themes or the titles of the panels for which papers are to be called for, are:
 - 10.1 Buddhist ethics and Literature (Dr. R. Panth)
 - 10.2 Buddhist ethics and social development (Prof. Le Mahn That)
 - 10.3 Buddhist ethics and Mind Culture (Prof. Sumanapala)
 - 10.4 Buddhist ethics and education (Dr. Tamas Agocs)
 - 10.5 Buddhist ethics and Science (Prof. Geshe Samten)
 - 10.6 Buddhist ethics and economy (Ven. Xue Cheng/ Dr. Yuan Ci)
 - 10.7 Buddhist ethics and politics (Dr. Yifa);

And there will be one keynote speaker and one guest speaker – but the details have yet to be confirmed.

The Council also resolved to defer the following matters to the Bi-annual General Symposium:

1. If the Constitution should be amended to include community development as one of our objectives;
2. whether to organize seminars between the Bi-annual General Meetings; and,
3. If individual people can become a member.

14th January 2008 - IABU Executive Council Meeting Agenda (revised)

1. Appointment of an Hon. Treasurer
2. Appointment of Assistant Hon. Treasurer
3. New members' list
4. organizer for each sub-theme of the Second Symposium
5. Editorial Committee for the whole Second Symposium
6. Editorial Committee for the IABU Annual Journal
7. Editorial Committee for the Newsletter
8. A committee for electronic resources
9. How to improve the functions of the Secretariat

Decisions

1. Honorary Treasurer: from MCU; Assistant Honorary Treasurer: Prof. Takahashi
2. New colleges accepted.
3. IABU Committee for Scrutiny of New Members
 - 3.1 Ven. Prof. Dr. Chisho Namai (Chair)
 - 3.2 Ven. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Somjin Sammapannayo
 - 3.3 Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami
 - 3.4 Dr. Tamas Agocs
4. Membership Fees should be put to the coming General Meeting. This year, all fees are excepted, because Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University is paying for all expenses.
5. Organizers are confirmed.
6. One and half a day for papers.
7. Panel discussion will enable members:
 - 7.1 (a) to help our members to get to know imminent scholars
 - 7.2 (b) to hear their learned views
 - 7.3 (c) to introduce IABU to them
 - 7.3.1 Information about Prof. D. Kalupahana
 - 7.3.2 Information about another name by Prof. Stanley
8. Secretariat to consult with the organizers and the EC Chair and finalize the list.
9. If the papers should be translated into other languages: [Chinese/Thai/English]
10. IABU Editorial Board
 - 10.1 Prof. Philips Stanley (Chair)
 - 10.2 Dr. Tamas Agocs
 - 10.3 Ven. Dr. K. Dhammasami
 - 10.4 Dion Peoples (Manager)
 - 10.5 Ven. Dr. Ching Hsin
 - 10.6 Ven. Dr. Phramaha Somjin
 - 10.7 Ven. Dr. Chisho Namai
 - 10.8 Ven. Prof. Jinwol Lee
 - 10.9 All the organizers are on the Editorial Committee for their panels.
11. Organizers of the Summit
 - 11.1 The Most Ven. Prof. Phra Dharmakosajarn (Chair)
 - 11.2 Three Vice-Chairmen (Vice-Chairmen)
 - 11.3 Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami (Secretary)

- 11.4 Ven. Bhikkhuni Dr. Yifa
- 11.5 Prof. Chisho Namai
- 11.6 Prof. Sumanapala Galmangoda
- 11.7 Dr. R. Panth
- 11.8 Ven. Phramaha Dr. Hansa Dhammhaso
- 11.9 Ven. Dr. Yuanci
- 11.10 Dr. Eko Legowo
- 12. Newsletter: networking and disseminating information; The IABU Journal will be more academic.
- 13. The IABU Electronic Resources Committee
 - 13.1 Prof. P Stanley (Chair)
 - 13.2 Ven. Bhikkhuni Dr. Yifa
 - 13.3 Ven. Prof. C. Namai
 - 13.4 Ven. Prof. Jinwol Lee
 - 13.5 Ven. Dr. Yuan Ci
 - 13.6 Ven. Dr. Thich Naht Tu
 - 13.7 Dr. Ravindra Panth

Next IABU E.C meeting: Hanoi, Vietnam. During the UN Vesak 13-17 May 2008. (The meeting will probably be on 15th.)

Highlighted Member University:

Dharma Gate: A Buddhist University in Budapest

1. Hungary: Introduction

A Short History

Hungary is a small country in the middle of Europe. It covers ninety-three thousands square kilometres and has just over ten million inhabitants. For eleven hundred years, since the Hungarian people occupied the land, it has been constantly changing shape and population due to never ending wars and migration. Though there are different theories concerning the ancient homeland of the Hungarians, it is generally accepted that they originally come from the East. The legend of an Asian origin is attested by the oldest chronicles and a unique Hungarian folk culture. Hungarian is one of the few languages in Europe which does not belong to the Indo-European group.



The Hungarian tribes are said to have entered the Carpathian Basin and settled there at the end of the 9th century CE. One hundred years later, King István (Stephen) converted to Christianity and established the Hungarian State.

Hungary: a Country in the Heart of Europe

The Kingdom of Hungary became a major economic and political power in Central Europe under the dynasty of Árpád. Lying at the door of Eastern-Europe, the country was repeatedly overrun and devastated by foreign invaders, and was even dominated by the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire for 150 years. After repeated wars of independence, the nation achieved a measure of sovereignty within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1867. In the 20th century it suffered extreme losses, when it lost more than two thirds of its territory and approximately one third of its population in the two World Wars. It was in 1989, after the withdrawal of the Soviet Red Army, that a new period began with the change to democracy, culminating in Hungary's accession to the European Union in 2004.

Religions

Evidence gathered from linguistics, ethnography, archaeological excavations and a few scriptural sources suggest that the ancient religion of the Hungarians was a kind of Central Asian Shamanism. Hungary's first king, Saint Stephen, took up Western Christianity, but the conversion of the people was a long and painful process. Hungary remained predominantly Catholic until the 16th century, when the Reformation took place and, as a result, first Lutheranism, then soon afterwards Calvinism became the religion of almost the entire population. In the second half of the 16th century, Jesuits led a successful campaign of counterreformation and by the 17th century, once again, Hungary became predominantly Catholic. Atheism became widespread in the 20th century, especially in the Communist Era, when people with religious convictions were disadvantaged. After

the collapse of the Soviet system Hungary saw a revival of religions, although a large percentage of the people still claim themselves unreligious.

According to a recent poll, 44% of Hungarian citizens responded that "they believe there is a God". 31% answered that "they believe there is some sort of spirit or life force" and 19% answered that "they do not believe there is any sort of spirit, God, or life force". (Eurobarometer Poll, 2005)

2. Buddhism in Hungary

The Appearance of the Buddha-Dharma

The growth of interest in Buddhism in Europe dates back to the mid-19th century. The first translations of Buddhist texts into Western languages were soon followed by books on the Buddha, his Teaching, and his Community. The first accounts of Buddhism were published by Christian authors from 1890 onwards. The first book that dealt exclusively with Buddhism was the Buddhist Catechism written by Subhadra Bhiksu (alias Friedrich Zimmermann), a German follower of the Buddha, published in the Transylvanian town of Máramarossziget (now Romania) in 1893. The first monograph on Buddhism: Dhammo, an Introduction to the Teaching of the Buddha, a thorough and well-documented two-volume book with sutta sections and excerpts translated into Hungarian, was written by Jenő Lénárd. First published in 1911-13, it became a basic source of information on Buddhism for several subsequent decades.

Though reliable information on Buddhism came to Hungary relatively late, Hungary also boasts one of the first Buddhist scholars in Europe. Alexander Csoma de Kőrös was born in the Eastern part of Transylvania (now Romania) and dedicated his life to finding the ancient homeland of the Hungarian people. In 1819 he set out to Asia on foot. Between 1822 and 1830 he spent several years in Tibet (Ladakh) studying the Tibetan scriptures under the guidance of lama-scholars. He compiled a Tibetan-English Dictionary and a Tibetan Grammar, which – along with his studies of the life of the Buddha and an analysis of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon – were published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1834-36. Renewing his search for the ancient homeland he set out to Lhasa in 1842, but died on the way. His example inspired many subsequent generations of Oriental scholars and Buddhist seekers.



Alexander Csoma de Kőrös

20th Century Developments

From 1893 onwards there were some short-lived attempts to establish a lay Buddhist community. The first long-lasting result was achieved by Dr. Ernő Hetényi (Dharmakīrti Padmavajra). In 1951, at the height of Communist terror and oppression, he founded the Hungarian Buddhist Mission. One year later he joined the Ārya Maitreya Mandala Order founded by the

German Lama Anagārika Govinda, whose lineage represents a unique blend of Theravāda and Tibetan Buddhism. In order to spread the Buddha Dharma in Eastern Europe, the two orders established the "Alexander Csoma de Kőrös Institute of Buddhology" in 1956. Through their public courses and publications, teachers and students of the Institute made significant contributions to the dissemination of the Dharma in Hungary. The Institute ended in 1991 when its teachers founded The Gate of Dharma Buddhist College. The Buddhist Mission built the first stūpa in Hungary in 1982. Dr. Hetényi passed away in 1999, but the Buddhist Mission continues to function as the Hungarian Ārya Maitreya Mandala.



Dharmakīrti Padmavajra

In 1990, just one year after the change to democracy, the Houses of Parliament passed an Act on Religion which granted recognition of all religious communities regardless of their size or membership. This gave a unique opportunity to smaller communities of different religions to become officially recognized denominations. (Some of these new establishments decided to call themselves "churches", a term claiming universality.) In the liberal atmosphere of the 90-es, among a plethora of new "churches", several new Buddhist communities were founded. These new formations mostly belong to one or another school of Tibetan Buddhism, though Chinese, Korean and Japanese Chan or Zen lineages, as well as Theravāda Buddhism, are also represented.

Largest or most significant communities include the Karma Ratna Dargye Ling Hungarian Karma Kagyūpa Community, the Gate of Dharma Buddhist Church (see below), the Buddhist Vajrayāna (Diamond Way) Community, the Sakya Tashi Chöling Buddhist Community, the Mokusho Zen House, the Onedrop Zendo Hungary and the Hungarian Community of Kvanum School of Zen. Recent developments include the establishment of two more Tibetan communities and the Jay Bhīm Community, an Ambedkarite group comprising mostly Romany (Gypsy) youth. It is difficult to guess the number of followers of the Buddha-Dhamma in Hungary, but 20-30,000 seems to be a reliable estimation. Most Hungarian Buddhists, however, are lay people, and no Buddhist monastery has yet been planted on Hungarian soil.

The Gate of Dharma Buddhist Church

The Gate of Dharma Buddhist Church was officially founded on the full moon of May 1991 (2535 AN) as an umbrella organization for different Hungarian Buddhist communities. Founding members numbered 108 professed Buddhists. Founding communities include the Ārya Tantra Mandala (or Ātama Noble Tantric Circle of the Western Disciple), the Hungarian Nyingmapa Community, The Gate of Dharma Zen Community and the Order of the Heavenly Throne Five Elements (a Chinese Buddhist School of Medicine and Martial Arts). These were later joined by the TeKiKaGyū (or Golden Siddhartha Order), the Mokusho Zen House and the Hungarian Vipassanā Society. In technical terms, The Gate of Dharma Buddhist Church is a Buddhist Ecumenical Foundation.

The Foundation was established with a double purpose: one, to join efforts in the founding of an institute of higher education in order to integrate the Buddha's teaching into the Hungarian educational system; and two, to create a multi-traditional Buddhist community to represent Dharma values and teachings more prominently among the religious traditions of Europe. Founding members started The Gate of Dharma Buddhist College in September 1991. The College brought together under its roof not only teachers of the founding communities, but also philosophers, cultural anthropologists and scholars of oriental linguistics – tibetologists, indologists and sinologists – coming from different academic institutions. Thus the curriculum, from the very outset, has not only embraced a wide range of Buddhist subjects, but also included courses in Western philosophy, comparative religion and the sacred languages of Buddhism (see below). In 2003 the Church founded the "Tiger Cub" Grammar School in the south-western area of Hungary with a high gipsy population living under extremely poor conditions, in order to offer them the opportunity of secondary education. It has also started a project to found a Buddhist primary school.

Presently the Foundation has over 2000 members. Situated in the middle of a leafy ex-communist bloc in the 9th district of Budapest, the College building also functions as a centre for communal life, where member organisations hold communal gatherings, celebrations, meditations, rituals, public lectures or seminars, and exhibitions. Visiting teachers from all traditions also lecture regularly in the main shrine-room. In 2004 the "Gate of Dharma" Buddhist Ecumenical Foundation joined the European Buddhist Union, a network of Buddhist Communities and Organizations in Europe.

3. The Dharma Gate Budapest Buddhist University

Founding History and Main Principles

The Dharma Gate Budapest Buddhist University is a unique Buddhist institution of tertiary education that is recognised, accredited and financed by a Western government. It was founded in 1991 as a Buddhist College by The Gate of Dharma, a multi-traditional umbrella organization for Theravāda and Mahāyāna groups representing a wide spectrum of Dharma lineages and inspirations. Its general principles were laid down in a foundation letter, which stated

The Gate of Dharma Buddhist College shall propagate the teachings of the universal Buddhist tradition. It shall not represent any particular school but shall provide opportunity for the study of the Buddhist teachings of all schools. It will realize that goal as applicable to the present age with its conditions and specifically in order to clarify a common spiritual background for all Buddhist traditions and help them to work together.

The Buddhist College started in a rented apartment in the downtown of Budapest with nine volunteer lecturers and sixty students. Three years later it moved into an ex-office building in the 9th district, where it is still situated now. The size of the institution grew gradually over the years. Now there are twenty-five full-time and eight part-time teachers instructing about three hundred and forty students within its walls. Teaching staff consists of Dharma teachers, Buddhist scholars, philosophers and language teachers. Their common vision of education was articulated in a Mission

Statement, an extended version of the founding letter, in 1994. It specifies the "opening up of a gateway to the Dharma", i.e. the facilitation of spiritual education in Buddhism, as the main mission of the College. It insists that no hierarchical distinction should be made between the Buddhist schools on religious or spiritual grounds, and it also ensures a harmonious co-operation between academic scholars and dharma-teachers. (See entire text appended)



The College building

Accreditation

The initial curriculum of the Buddhist College was based on the teaching program of the three original founders: Antal Dobosy, Laszlo Mireisz and Laszlo Takacs, former teachers of the Buddhist Mission at the "Alexander Csoma de Kőrös Institute of Buddhology". Their courses on the histories and doctrines of Buddhism came to be augmented by language and philosophy classes offered by young scholars: linguists, orientalists, cultural anthropologists and philosophers graduating from the Budapest ELTE University of Arts and Sciences. The three strands of study – Buddhist doctrines, languages, and comparative religion and philosophy – were gradually woven together into a unique blend of Oriental wisdom and Western scholarship offering a wide range of knowledge and perspective.

When the Buddhist College started its work, no established system of accreditation in Hungary yet existed. Soon, however, in order to protect higher education standards, accreditation laws were passed and every institution had to go through an authentication procedure. Due to its standing as a religious school of higher education, the Buddhist College was entitled to run its program under the rubric of "Theology", but an accreditation committee comprised of Christian Theologians was clearly incompetent. Finally a committee of Oriental scholars was set up headed by Dr. Erich Steinkellner, Director of Buddhist and Tibetan Studies at the University of Vienna, as a guest. Accreditation was preceded by a long process of curriculum development and re-structuring and was finally granted in 1999. On fulfilling a number of additional criteria set by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, accreditation was finally reconfirmed in 2001.

Following upon the introduction of the new law of tertiary education in 2005, the Buddhist College joined the Bologna process¹ and was one of the first Hungarian institutions of higher education to be re-accredited in the new tertiary educational system. This was achieved by a thorough reworking and expansion of the curriculum. A new 3-year BA program was started in September 2006 and a 2-year MA program launched in September 2007. The length of the training was thus extended from four to five years and in effect the "Buddhist College" developed into a University meeting European standards. It was renamed as Dharma Gate Budapest Buddhist University in 2007.

Programs

The Dharma Gate Budapest Buddhist University offers BA and MA programs in Buddhist Theory and Practice (or Buddhist Theology).² The language of education is Hungarian.

BA degree in Buddhist Theory and Practice is offered to (1) Buddhists who would like to gain an overall view of Buddhism, study the evolvement of the Dharma in its original Indian context with the history of the main schools and practice lineages, and learn some comparative ideas with Western disciplines, (2) non-Buddhists who want to gain good theoretical and experiential knowledge of Buddhism, and (3) Academic scholars of Buddhism who wish to enhance their professional skills or gain experience in meditation.

The BA program consists of a mandatory core curriculum and a chosen study track (called a specialization). These include Dharma teaching, Comparative Religion and Philosophy, Indic language and Indian culture, Tibetan language and culture, Chinese language and culture, Japanese language and culture and professional training in Martial Arts.

The Core curriculum consists of six modules. (A module is a set of interlinking courses distributed over several semesters). The backbone of the curriculum is comprised of a double set of courses on Buddhist philosophy – covering the historical development of Buddhist ideas in India – and Buddhist meditation, offering insight into the truth or experiential value of those ideas. These are supplemented by modules on Indian Philosophy (as background to the development of Buddhist thought and practice), Buddhist culture and history (focussing on the historical aspects of that development in India and other main Buddhist cultural areas), Buddhist scriptures (studies in Buddhist canonical literature) and a module called "Foundations of Religion and Philosophy" consisting of seven courses to set the Buddhist teaching in context for the Western student.

Specialization in Dharma teaching is meant to deepen and supplement the Buddhist core curriculum both in practice and theory. It consists of a general program and a more specialized training in one of the major Buddhist traditions: Theravāda, Zen, or Tibetan Buddhism. The general part offers courses on Buddhist ethics and sciences (such as Cosmology and Symbology), as well as additional training in the practice and theory of Buddhist meditation. Theravāda, Zen and Tibetan

¹ The purpose of the Bologna process is to create the European higher education area by making academic standards and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible within Europe.

² The term "theology" is not felt appropriate for Buddhism, a non-theistic religion.

Buddhist tracks offer in-depth study of a particular Buddhist tradition augmented by a basic knowledge of the original language of that tradition (e.g. Pali, Chinese/Japanese or Tibetan).

Specialization in Comparative Religion and Philosophy offers comprehensive knowledge of the history of the different world religions, their basic teachings and scriptures, the fundamental issues of cultural anthropology, the main traditions of Eastern and Western philosophy and their most prominent thinkers with their main works and ideas. Training in the specialization thus concentrates on the different religions and philosophical systems. Its primary aim is to put Buddhist religious and philosophical ideas into a wider context, thus encouraging comparative and interdisciplinary scholarship between Buddhism and the different Western disciplines.

Specializations in Buddhist Languages and Culture (Indian, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese) offer in-depth study of a particular Buddhist tradition along with its language, history, literature and other cultural aspects. Students taking up these specializations may become Buddhist translators from the language of their choice, or they may want to utilize their language skills in other areas.

Specialization in Martial Arts Professional Training is an option is for those who wish to develop their spiritual skills through practicing and teaching a martial art related to a traditional Buddhist culture. Aikido and karate are taught presently.

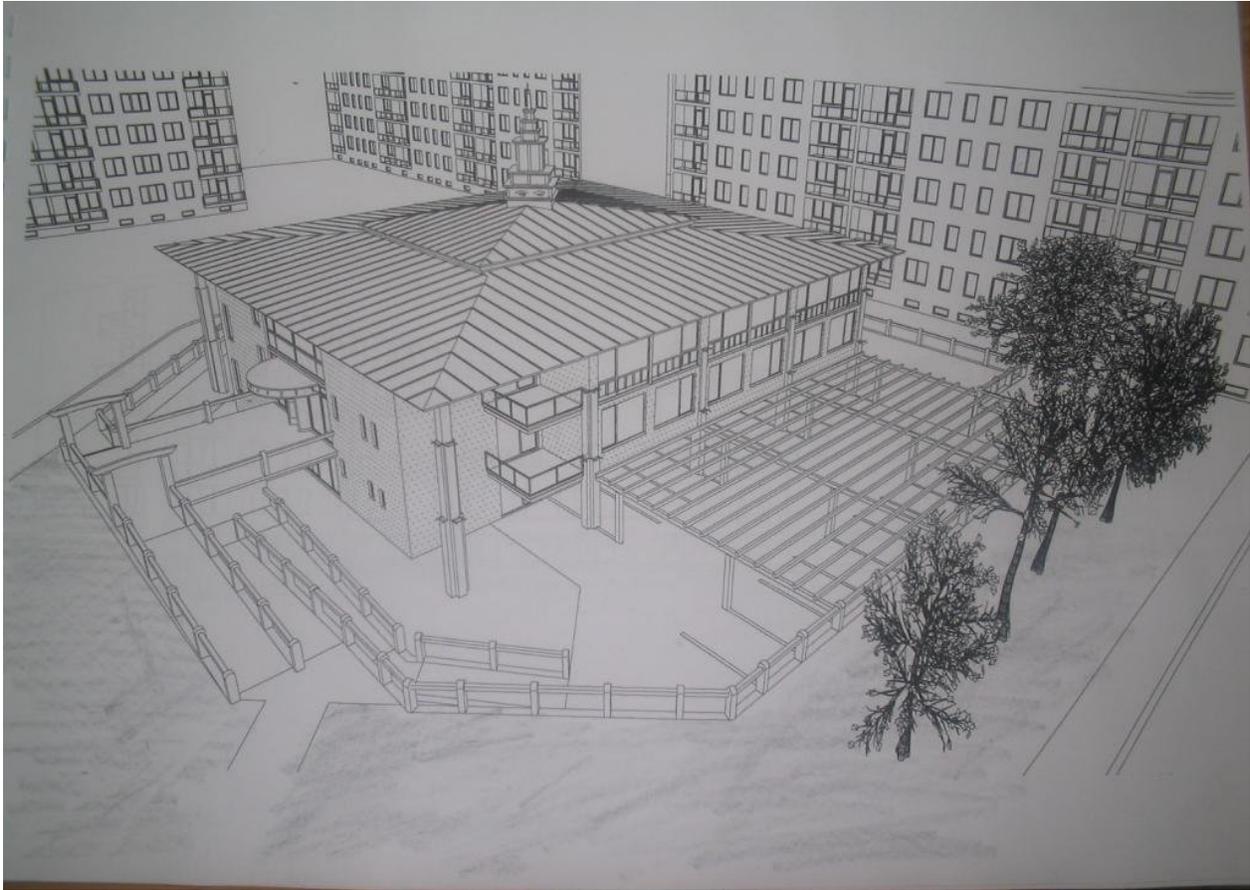
MA in Buddhist Theory and Practice is offered to (1) Students holding BA in Buddhist studies who wish to deepen their knowledge and skills, (2) Buddhist students or teachers who are trained in a contemporary practice lineage and would like to learn more about the over-all Buddhist tradition, particularly the development of Buddhist thought in India. They may want to pursue this in order to put their own tradition into perspective and see its interconnections with other philosophical schools and lineages. (3) Buddhist or non-Buddhists who have some prior knowledge of the Dharma and are interested in the practical application of the Buddha Dharma in modern life. These categories are not meant to be exclusive as there may be many more reasons why one would want to pursue a degree in Buddhist theory and practice.

The MA program seeks to deepen and widen the scope of theoretical and practical skills acquired in the BA study program. The core curriculum is composed of modules in Buddhist philosophy, meditation practice, scriptural studies and engaged Buddhist studies, which offers a selection of courses on the practical applications of Buddhist theory and practice in the West. These include a range of interdisciplinary subjects and courses in comparative religion. Students specializing in Dharma Teaching will be offered further modules in Buddhist ethics and psychology, Buddhist education, comparative philosophy and the sacred languages of Buddhism. Training in Buddhist languages and cultures and Comparative Religion and Philosophy also continues on the MA level. (For a full course list you may refer to the Dharma Gate Budapest Buddhist University website at www.tkbh.hu)

Plans for the Future

The Buddhist University has developed steadily throughout the sixteen years of its existence. The library is a good example to the point. Founded with just a few books donated by Church members, now with over 40,000 entries it is probably the best collection on Buddhism in the country (though it is still located in a rented apartment adjacent to the College building). The first ten years of the College was mainly a period of internal capacity development and little energy or attention was dedicated to research or international communication. In 2005, however, The Gate of Dharma Church and College founded the East-West Research Institute to promote scientific research into Buddhism, its interdisciplinary areas and applications, as well as to develop external relations with academic institutions and Buddhist study centres worldwide. As members of the European Buddhist Union, we initiated a project for the co-operation of Buddhist institutions of higher education all over the continent. A great step in developing international relations was achieved in 2007, when we joined the ranks of the newly established International Association of Buddhist Universities.

In our interaction with fellow Buddhists abroad we have met with a lot of sympathetic interest in our programs and appreciation of our achievements. They made us realise the true uniqueness of the "Dharma Gate" as an accredited and multi-traditional Buddhist University with an eye towards the practical application of the ancient Buddhist wisdom in our present age. In the years to come we would like to preserve this unique quality and extend its benefits even further. First, we would like to start a PhD. program within a few years, and second, we are planning to offer degrees in English. In order to achieve both goals, we are seeking to further develop our international connections, since our English language programs can only be realised in international cooperation. In the long run we would like to develop into an international centre of Buddhist higher education. Expanding and developing further programs on such a large scale also necessitates increasing our infrastructural facilities. The College building purchased 10 years ago is too small for our ever-growing activities. In 2006 the Gate of Dharma Church managed to buy a piece of land (0.5 acre) with a building, which was previously rented for dormitory purposes. The dormitories were converted into classrooms but even this does not provide enough space. There are no communal areas, for instance, and there are only two small-size teachers' rooms. For this reason, we would like to build a new university building and now we are at the stage of planning. Funds for the new building are still nonexistent, but we pray that with the help of the Buddhas we will be able to realise our aspirations to the benefit of all sentient beings.



Plan of the new university building

Appendix: Mission Statement

The Dharma Gate Buddhist University is a religious school of higher education. The designation "Dharma Gate" metaphorically refers to its main mission: to open a gateway to the Buddhist Teaching, or Dharma. This symbolic gesture manifests in the realisation and transmission of the Teaching.

The Dharma (or Buddhist teaching) may take manifold forms, but is chiefly found within ourselves. It is discovered by the individual on the spiritual path of awakening.

Teachers shall do their utmost to help students study and practice the Dharma. The Community shall consider all teachers and students equally as the Buddha's disciples.

Keeping true to the 2.500 years history of Buddhism, we shall realise the living Dharma under the present circumstances, in our own day and language and in a way that fits our own mentality.

We shall not consider any Buddhist school superior to any other. Rather, we shall recognise their equal validity and effectiveness for people with different aptitudes. We shall endeavour to study all Buddhist traditions and facilitate growth of a characteristically Hungarian (or European) tradition.

The University shall provide venue to Buddhist teachers of all traditions as well as academic scholars without any hierarchical distinction.

The University shall implement the above principles in its curriculum, teaching methods and examination system.

On top of regular classes, in order to deepen their understanding, students shall be given opportunity to engage in individual studies based on personal teacher-disciple relationships.

Training methods shall combine the transmission of factual information with developing practical skills needed for the inner realisation of the Teaching and emphasize spiritual autonomy.

We shall be open to dialogue with all religions and spiritual traditions that share the same open attitude with us.

It is our conviction that all religious traditions contribute significantly to the alleviation of suffering. With this consideration we shall do our best to serve and benefit humankind and each individual.

Institutional News:

Xuan Zang Memorial Day Celebration at Nalanda (Deemed) University, India



Most Venerable Dr. Ashin Nyanissara honored by Dr. Rabindra Panth of Nalanda University, India

The first anniversary of the inauguration of the Xuan Zang Memorial was organized at the Xuan Zang Memorial Hall on 12th February 2008, at Nalanda. For the occasion, a Special Lecture from the Most Venerable Dr. Nyanissara, Chancellor, Sitagu International Academy, Sagaing, Myanmar, entitled, “Importance of Nalanda and Relevance of Buddha Dhamma in Present-Day Society” was organized under the exchange program of Nalanda Deemed University and Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities.

Five days Special Lectures on - The Importance of Efficient Reading and Effective Writing in Research Work

Ven. Dr. Khammai Dhammasami from Oxford Buddha Vihara, U.K. delivered a series of five special lectures on the above topic from 19th to 23rd, Feb. 2008 under the exchange program of Nalanda Deemed University and IABU and ATBU at Nava Nalanda Mahavihara (Nalanda Deemed University) at Nalanda, India. These lectures were mainly for the Research Scholars who were highly benefited. Highlights of the lectures:

“When we write research paper or thesis, there are two drivers, the writer as well as the reader - to be carried by. Therefore, clarity of expression or presentation is very necessary. There should be well-ordered writing, wherein one paragraph should carry one issue only. In one paragraph old information should come first and the new ones later. The article should be an organic whole. All the paragraphs should be well-connected with one-another. Introduction may run into several paragraphs. Ideally it should constitute twenty percent of the whole text. The main body of the text should illustrate the issues raised in the introductory paragraphs and should ideally constitute seventy percent of the text. The last part of the article, i.e., the conclusion may also run into several paragraphs but ideally it should constitute ten percent of the main text. While writing such articles we should keep in mind that there should be end-weight. The end-weight means that the most important information must come in the last.”

Naropa began a social action research project – undertaking a community-wide dialogue pertaining to reproductive justice [abortion issue].

“Fertile Grounds” is about recognizing that the personal is political, that behind each statistic there is a story,” says Fioré Grey, a Naropa student who helped conceive the event. “We feel that by telling these stories people will connect and realize that they share common ground. We want to plant the seeds for social action, and that action needs to be rooted in the personal experiences that make up the larger political picture.” After researching birthing rights, abortion rights, and the rights of pregnant women in prison, Naropa students were astonished to find a great deal of interconnectivity between seemingly isolated issues. “Incarcerated women,” says student Emily Keef, “face incredibly inhumane conditions—receiving an extra bag of potato chips to meet their increased nutrition needs, being shackled and restrained during labor, having unnecessary C-sections forced upon them—but these issues are really part of a bigger problem; it's socio-economic, it's the attitudes of our society. It's all interrelated.”

IABU Members Provided Websites:

Recently, a call was sent out to the IABU Members – calling on information. Nation by nation, the manager reports the following status:

Bangladesh: University of Chittagong – nothing from Dr. Jinabodhi, and links to UC Website are broken.

Other: University of Dhaka has a Department of Sanskrit and Pali – are they in the IABU?

Status: How can Buddhist institutions in Bangladesh receive information?

Cambodia: Preah Sihamoni Raja Buddhist University's link to the outside world is through a posting on the Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities website: www.atbu.org. The website offered to the IABU: www.buddhistuniversity.net is filled with junk websites and broken links – and nothing of the university's professional offerings. Advice: someone inside Cambodia should take upon the effort to ensure their websites are working properly, and e-mail addresses are working addresses due to the high volume of returned messages. Ven. Tepmoly Heik Sopheap's e-mail address does not work: heiksopheap@yahoo.com

China: Only contact information on the Buddhist Academy of China, but nothing further of the five newly invited members. No websites in English.

Hungary: Budapest Buddhist University – good website, but only offers courses in Hungarian language. <http://www.tkbh.hu/ENGLISH/index.html>

India: www.navnalanda.org is a false website – the real website is www.nalanda.org - but nothing happens when visiting the page. Another website: www.navnalanda.com seems to be operative. Another website: <http://www.ibdindia.org/> is very organized. Question: is the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, the same institution as the College for Higher Tibetan Studies? If not – both should be included as IABU Members. The website: www.somaiya.edu is working. If there are other universities, colleges, or institutes not included in this section – they have not reported themselves to the Manager of the IABU.

Indonesia: No working websites, based on the contact information provided.

Japan: Few websites in English about three Buddhist Universities in Japan [there must be more!] – perhaps they can be provided to the Manager of the IABU Bangkok Secretariat. Google can translate some of the webpages. Rissho University does have a decent English language page.

Korea: Many universities or departments offering Buddhist Studies are not listed, and only a few have English language websites, such as: Dongguk University. Information coming out from Korea should be greater.

Laos: Sangha College of Vientiane has a minor website linked to the government's website. Not enough information available about Buddhist universities or programs from Laos, and no e-mail contacts.

Malaysia/Thailand: The website for the International Buddhist College is very functional: www.abc.ac.th However, e-mails leading to the college seem to never be received, or faculty

members are non-responsive. Question: Is there any other Buddhist institutions available for Malaysians inside their nation – or only outside, such as: in Thailand or Singapore?

Mongolia: two institutions, but there might be more – no e-mail contact.

Myanmar: No e-mail contact. www.sitagu.org seems to be an informative website, although dated. The Department of Religious Affairs has a lot of Buddhist information, but has not been updated in nearly four years.

Singapore: The Mangala Vihara's webpage is operational. There should be other Mahayana Buddhist institutions in Singapore – information likely in Chinese.

Taiwan: Numerous schools, few with workable e-mails and English language websites.

Thailand: Three fully functioning universities with great websites and contact personnel, and many extension campuses.

USA: Two – University of the West and Naropa – but Wikipedia list more.

Vietnam: Little information available in English. Universities could consider to offer an English-language webpage.

Result of the inquiry: institutions should provide the IABU Bangkok Secretariat with good contact information. This fundamental step can ensure information is disseminated freely amongst member institutions. Perhaps a 'national' contact can acquire all of the information and send upward to the IABU Bangkok Secretariat as a hub for IABU information.

Interesting On-line Journals:

The Bangkok IABU Secretariat received the following submissions, worthy of investigating for our diverse interests:

Chulalongkorn University's Journal of Buddhist Studies: www.stc.arts.chula.ac.th/cjbs/cjbs.htm

Oxford Center for Buddhist Studies: <http://www.ocbs.org>

Journal of Buddhist Ethics: www.buddhistethics.org

Southeast Asia Texts, Rituals, and Performance: www.seatrip.ucr.edu.

Thailand, Laos and Cambodia Studies Group: www.tlc.ucr.edu

Tung Lin Kok Yuen's Buddhist Door Journal: www.buddhistdoor.com/journal/index.html

The TLKY website has working links to many Buddhist Institutions!

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship: <http://www.bpf.org/tsangha/papers.html>

...and the Secretariat acknowledges that there are other useful sites: www.accesstoinsight.com; www.buddhanet.net; www.buddhistchannel.tv; and other such websites