



Deshkal Society
presents

8th Edition of

Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues 2026

Buddhist Heritage, Culture, and Sustainability

14th-15th March 2026
Bihar Museum, Patna

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14th-15th March 2026
Bihar Museum, Patna

ORGANISED BY



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



Indian Council
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DR. AMBEDKAR
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment,
Government of India



इन्दिरा गान्धी राष्ट्रीय कला केन्द्र
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS



Nava Nalanda
Mahavihara



A.N. College
Patna

The Dialogues
create a platform
for the expression of
experiences, reflections
and insights from
plural perspectives
connecting Buddhist
heritage, culture and
sustainability for
building a future on
the foundations of
Buddha's legacy on
enlightenment and
compassion.

Plenary Sessions,
Conversation,
Panel Discussions,
Talks, Book Launch,
Film Screening,
Cultural Performance,
and Exhibitions

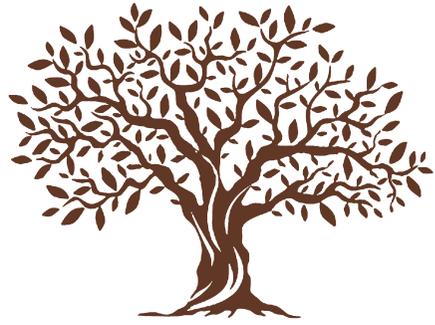


GUEST COUNTRY
Bhutan

Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues **The Journey Continues**

The Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues are a dynamic and living process that culminates every year as an annual event. The 1st edition of the Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues was held in Bodh Gaya from March 9-12, 2018. The 2nd and 3rd editions were held respectively in March 2019; December 2020 at the IGNCA New Delhi. 4th and 5th returning to Bodh Gaya in March 2022 and 2023. The 6th Edition focusing on “Landscape of Enlightenment: Bodh Gaya, Rajgir and Nalanda” was held in 2024. The 7th edition of the Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues, held in Delhi, offered a space for dialogue on fostering critical appreciation of Buddhist philosophy, heritage, and monuments and engaging in a dynamic process of negotiating local and global geographies and re-envisioning connections between different modes of heritage making and sustainable development.

These Dialogues have been forums for multidisciplinary engagements of academicians, researchers, artists, Buddhist seekers, travellers to share their insights, experiences and perspectives regarding Buddhist philosophy, heritage, Bodhgaya, Buddhist tourist/pilgrim circuit and contemporary relevance of Buddhism in engaging with issues of sustainability. A number of reputed institutions of the government and non-government, including public and private sectors in India have encouraged and participated in these dialogues.



Deshkal Society has immensely benefitted from the plural perspectives that have emerged in these Dialogues. This pursuit for exploring interconnections for building a sustainable future, inspired by Buddha's legacy on enlightenment and compassion, continues. Over the years Deshkal has attempted to calibrate its own focus. In the context of Bodhgaya there is an opportunity to mediate this relation between heritage and sustainable development with key precepts and perspectives enshrined in Buddhist economics and indeed Buddhism. The other important focus relates to the enriching relationship between the Magadh region and South East Asian nations to strengthen historical and cross-cultural exchanges.

In the 8th edition the focus is on understanding and exploring different dimensions associated with Buddhist heritage, culture, and sustainability. It seeks to understand the conceptual and operative domain of heritage, tangible and intangible, and a proliferation of spaces and spheres associated with it. Heritage making has multiple meanings as represented in pathways of viewing, researching/writing, conserving, doing and consuming. These manifold representations in cultural production related to heritage, that have their local embeddings as well as global geographies, can enrich substantive experience for ways, means and ends of sustainable development.





8th Edition *of*
Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues

Programme Schedule

14 | 15
March 2026

Day 1

Saturday, 14 March 2026

VENUE | AUDITORIUM, BIHAR MUSEUM, PATNA

REGISTRATION | 9:00 AM TO 10:00 AM

Plenary Session

TIME | 10:00 AM TO 12:00 NOON

SHORT VIDEO PRESENTATION

Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues 2018



CHAIR

Shri Shyam Saran, Hon'ble President, IIC, Author, Diplomat, and Former Foreign Secretary, Government of India

MODERATOR

Dr. Shruti, Assistant Professor, School of Media Studies and Humanities, Manav Rachna University, Faridabad, Haryana

WELCOME AND CONTEXT

Shri Sanjay Kumar, Founder, Deshkal Society, and Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues

GUESTS OF HONOUR

Shri Anjani Kumar Singh, Hon'ble Director General, Bihar Museum, Patna, Policy Maker, and Former Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar

Dr. D. M. Mulay, President, Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues, Author, Former Ambassador, and Member of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

Shri Arvind Mohan, Journalist, Author, and Chairperson, Deshkal Society

Shri Neeraj Kumar, Public Intellectual, Hon'ble Member of Bihar Legislative Council, and Former Minister, Public Relations Department, Government of Bihar

Dr. Harish Khare, Scholar, Journalist, Author, Columnist, and Public Commentator

REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

VOTE OF THANKS

BOOK LAUNCH*

Buddhism and Buddhist Heritage: Philosophy, Culture and Conservation

Edited by Rahul Ghai, and Sanjay Kumar

Buddhism and Bodh Gaya: Percept, Heritage and Sustainability

Edited by Rahul Ghai, and Sanjay Kumar

As part of the Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues, two significant volumes, “*Buddhism and Buddhist Heritage: Philosophy, Culture and Conservation*” and “*Buddhism and Bodh Gaya: Percept, Heritage and Sustainability*”, will be formally launched. Together, these works offer a rigorous engagement with Buddhist philosophy, its cultural manifestations, and the contemporary imperatives of heritage conservation. While the first volume situates Buddhism within broader philosophical and civilisational frameworks, the second turns to Bodh Gaya as a living sacred landscape, examining questions of perception, preservation, and sustainable stewardship. The launch marks an important scholarly contribution to ongoing conversations on safeguarding Buddhist heritage while deepening its relevance in the present.

*By the dignitaries of the Plenary Session

TEA BREAK | 12:00 NOON TO 12:30 PM



INAUGURATION: PHOTO EXHIBITION

TIME | 12:00 NOON

by **Shri Anjani Kumar Singh**, Hon'ble Director General, Bihar Museum, Patna,
Policy Maker, and Former Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar

in the gracious presence of

Head Lama, Bhutan Royal Monastery, Bodh Gaya

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Mr. Rupak Sinha, Photo Journalist, Gaya, Bihar
and

Ms. Khanjan Purohit, Managing Editor, Ephemere Photo Journal, Tokyo

Sacred Imprints in Time: Bhutanese Monastic Aesthetics in the Landscapes of Bodh Gaya and Rajgir

The photo exhibition presents a compelling visual exploration of the art, architecture, and landscapes of Bhutanese monasteries and temples in Bodh Gaya and Rajgir. Through carefully curated photographs, the exhibition highlights the intricate woodwork, vibrant murals, symbolic motifs, and serene spatial design that define Bhutanese Buddhist aesthetics in these sacred sites. It also features evocative images of the iconic Mahabodhi Temple, illuminating its architectural grandeur and spiritual centrality. Together, the exhibition invites viewers to engage with the shared cultural and spiritual heritage that connects Bhutan, Bihar, and India through the living traditions of Bhutanese architecture, art, and culture of Buddhism.



Session 1

TIME | 12:30 PM TO 1:30 PM

THEME

Buddhist Philosophy, Ambedkar and Human Liberation

CHAIR

Prof. Siddharth Singh, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Nava Nalanda Mahavihara,
Bihar

SPEAKERS

Dr. Manindra Nath Thakur, Associate Professor, Centre for Political Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar: Questions of Human Liberation

Dr. Ajay K. Verma, Professor, Centre for Philosophy, Jawaharlal Nehru
University, New Delhi
Can the Sunyavadins have a robust notion of Dharma?

LUNCH BREAK | 1:30 PM TO 2:30 PM



Session 2

TIME | 2:30 PM TO 3:30 PM

CONVERSATION

Dr. T. C. A. Raghavan (IFS), Distinguished Diplomat, Author, and Former Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi
with

Dr. Himanshu Prabha Ray, Tagore National Fellow, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
and

Dr. Shashank S. Sinha, Historian, Publisher, and Author of the recently-published book *Casting the Buddha: A Monumental History of Buddhism in India*

The session on the history of Buddhism and India's relations with other Asian nations will foreground a substantive and intellectually engaging dialogue. It will illuminate key historical trajectories associated with the spread of Buddhism within India and across Asia, while critically examining how the Buddha's ethical and philosophical legacy continues to shape contemporary developments in the country's cultural and diplomatic engagements.



Session 3

TIME | 3:30 PM TO 4:30 PM

MODERATOR

Dr. Bijoy Kumar Choudhary, Historian, Archaeologist, and Former Director, Bihar Heritage Development Society, Patna

TALK ON

Reclaiming India's Intellectual Heritage: Collation, Conservation, Digitization and Propagation of Traditional Knowledge Systems of the Indian Sub-continent

Shri Shyam Saran, Hon'ble President, IIC, Author, Diplomat, and Former Foreign Secretary, Government of India

TEA BREAK | 4:30 PM TO 4:45 PM



Session 4

TIME | 4:45 PM TO 5:30 PM

हमर चम्पारण - जमीन, इतिहास, संस्कृति और स्वभाव

BOOK DISCUSSION

Shri Arvind Mohan, Author and Journalist

with

Dr. Gyandeo Mani Tripathi, Educationist and Public Intellectual, Patna,
Bihar

The discussion will engage with the archaeological evidence linking Champaran to early Buddhist traditions, highlighting material remains, historical routes, and cultural continuities that situate the region within the broader Buddhist landscape of ancient India.



Session 5

FILM SCREENING

TIME | 5:30 PM TO 6:30 PM

MODERATOR

Shri Uday Sahay, Author, and Chairman, SAUV Comminctions, New Delhi

Nalanda: A Journey through Time

The documentary by filmmaker **Surinder M. Talwar** brings to life the extraordinary legacy of Nalanda Mahavihara, one of the world's earliest and most influential centres of Buddhist learning. The film chronicles Nalanda's unparalleled contributions to Buddhist philosophy, literature, art, and architecture from the 5th to the 13th century, spotlighting its role as a hub of intellectual exchange that drew scholars from across Asia and shaped Buddhist thought and cultural traditions far beyond India. Featuring insightful interviews with eminent experts, the documentary situates Nalanda at the heart of Asia's civilisational history and invites reflection on its enduring impact on global knowledge systems.

Day 2

Sunday, 15 March 2026

VENUE | AUDITORIUM, BIHAR MUSEUM, PATNA



Session 1

TIME | 9:30 AM TO 11:00 AM

THEME

Buddhist Heritage, Culture, Conservation, and Sustainability

CHAIR

Dr. Abhishek Amar, Professor, Hamilton College, New York

SPEAKERS

Dr. Avanindra Nath Thakur, Professor, Jindal School of Government and Public Policy, O. P. Jindal Global University, Sonapat, Haryana
Pilgrimage, Precarity, and Work: Context and Prospects of Occupational Diversity in Bodh Gaya

Dr. Shikha Jain, Founder Director, DRONAH
Buddhist Heritage in South Asia: Gaps in the World Heritage List and need for a serial national/transnational narrative

Dr. Manish Sinha, Professor, Department of History, Magadh University, Bodh Gaya, Bihar
The Tibetans at Bodh Gaya: Heritage Making and Existential Identity

Dr. Sushmita Dutt, Educationist, and Senior Consultant, UNICEF, New Delhi
The Paintings of Ajanta



Session 2

TIME | 11:00 AM TO 12:00 PM

CONVERSATION

Shri Sanjay Kumar Verma (IFS), Former Chairman, Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries, New Delhi, and Former Indian High Commissioner to Canada, and Indian Ambassador to Japan, Marshall Islands and Sudan

with

Shri Uday Sahay, Author, and Chairman, SAUV Communications, New Delhi

The session on inter-relationship between Buddhist heritage conservation and culture will involve an engaging discussion with a focus on the creative interplay of conservation technology and documentation of major and minor sites, redevelopment of Greater Magadha Heritage Zone and tourism circuit, Nalanda educational initiatives, international collaboration, policy tweaking, and wider community participation.

TEA BREAK | 12:00 NOON TO 12:15 PM



Session 3

TIME | 12:15 PM TO 1:30 PM

MODERATOR

Dr. Vinita Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of English, A.N. College, Patna, Bihar

THEME

Tracing Text and Thought in Buddhist Traditions

The panel invites a dialogue among textual, literary, and philosophical approaches to tracing Buddhist texts and thought across traditions.

Dr. Snigdha Singh, Professor, Department of History, Miranda House, University of Delhi

Stories that Think: Narrating Gender, Emotion, and Ethics in the Divyavadana

Ms. Priyadarshini Chatterjee, PhD scholar, Department of Literature and Languages, SRM University AP, Andhra Pradesh

Writing Alterity Without Appropriation: Buddhist Ethics in Victor Segalen

Dr. Shruti, Assistant Professor, School of Media Studies and Humanities, Manav Rachna University, Faridabad, Haryana

Redemption and Renunciation: Buddhist Ethics and Literary Representation in Vaishali ki Nagarvadhu

LUNCH BREAK | 1:30 PM TO 2:30 PM



Session 4

TIME | 2:30 PM TO 3:30 PM

SPECIAL SESSION

India-Bhutan Relations: Exploring and Building on the Buddhist Connect and Emerging Areas of Cooperation

MODERATOR

Dr. Pravin Sinha, Consultant (Social & Economic Justice),
and Member, World Economic Association

SPEAKERS

Prof. Mathew Joseph C., MMAJ Academy of International Studies,
Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi
*'Gross National Happiness' (GNH) and the World View of Bhutan:
Some Observations*

Dr. Subodh Chandra Bharti, Research Associate, Indian Council
of World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi
*Bhutan: Quest for Stability and Balanced Approach to Economic Growth
and Sustainable Development*

Aditya Gowdara Shivamurthy, Associate Fellow, Strategic Studies
Programme, Observer Research Foundation
India-Bhutan Relations: Outlining Emerging Areas of Cooperation



Valedictory Session

TIME | 3:30 PM TO 4:30 PM

CHAIR

Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, Hon'ble President, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi

GUESTS OF HONOUR

Ms. Renana Jhabvala, SEWA, and Co-founder and former Board Chair, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)

Ms. Tashi Peldon, Deputy Chief of Mission, Royal Bhutanese Embassy, New Delhi

Dr. Alakh Narayan Sharma, Professor, Founder-Director Institute of Human Development, New Delhi

VOTE OF THANKS

Saurabh Kumar, Program Coordinator, Bodh Gaya Global Dialogues 2026

TEA BREAK | 4:30 PM TO 5:00 PM



Deshkal Society aims to provide dignity, equity, and justice through improving access to quality elementary education, entitlements for habitats and heritage, secure livelihoods and dignified existence. Since 1995 it has been working towards this aim by bringing together knowledge and practice in Bodh Gaya region in particular and at national level in general.



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