

Lessons from Lord Buddha

**A collection of speeches by Hon'ble Prime Minister
Narendra Modi**

Press Information Bureau

Prologue

“We belong to a country that has given the world ‘not Yuddh but ‘Buddh’.’”
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi
(United Nations General Assembly, Sept 2019)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has, time and again elaborated upon how India's spiritual strength is critical in its journey as a nation to achieve not only national goals but this spiritual wealth can provide lasting solutions for the ills that plague the globe. He has always admired the divine and spiritual lights that have freed spiritualism from rituals and made it into a tool of service and self-realization. Naturally, he is a huge admirer and follower of Lord Buddha.

Prime Minister Modi has credited India's spiritual strength with crafting the destiny of the country and also a key force in keeping the society afloat in long years of oppression and slavery. He has clearly laid down that the foundation of freedom struggle is spiritual in nature.

The Prime Minister, a firm believer in proactive, regenerative and trailblazing notion of public welfare finds a natural resonance in Lord Buddha's message where he asks us to take responsibility of self and the humanity in the most natural and serene manner. One of the oft-quoted sutra by Prime Minister Modi

is “अप्प दीपो भव” | That is, be your own light. This obviously has a personal resonance for every spiritual person. However, with a person of Prime Minister Modi's global outlook, it takes on broader connotation and he points out that when a person is self-illuminated, he lightens the world as well.

Similarly, he identifies with the notion taught by the Buddha i.e. ये पमतृता यथा मता | That is, absence of laxity is nectar, and laxity is death. Here, while living this in his ever toiling lifestyle, he sees this with a national and global outlook when he said following such teachings, India is moving ahead with new energy, taking the whole world along.

Another, aspect that emerges from the Prime Minister's speeches about Gautam, the Buddha is that of pride that Prime Minister Modi displays in India's espousal of the creed of peace of which Lord Buddha's gospel is a prime example. He has said India is a country that has given the world 'Not Yuddh (war) but Buddh (Lord Buddha)'. He is deeply moved by Mohan's (Lord Krishan's)

stance of teaching the greatest treatise in the battle ground of Kurukshetra, other Mohan (Mohan das Karamchand Gandhi) leading the notion the non-violence in modern times. Lord Buddha is often evoked by Prime Minister Modi in explaining India's approach to strength, climate, calamity, and peace.

Motivational, passionate and persuasive, this booklet is a compilation of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches about Lord Buddha since he first took charge of the office as Prime Minister of India. The anthology is a recollection of his thoughts and ideas during his speeches on various occasion. Prime Minister Modi's speeches, in general, are on record utterings of the key driver of Indian policy and act as an indicator to guiding principles of the policies of the Indian government. These speeches not only give us an insight into the past but also make way for the positive direction in which the country is heading. They are the primary source that provides the key strands of thinking.

This inspirational compendium contains 12 speeches delivered in Buddhist religious and spiritual occasions and parts of 8 other speeches that are also important in understanding the rich connection between Prime Minister and Lord Buddha. In these speeches, Prime Minister Modi addresses the teachings and philosophies of Lord Buddha that remain relevant in the tumultuous period of today.

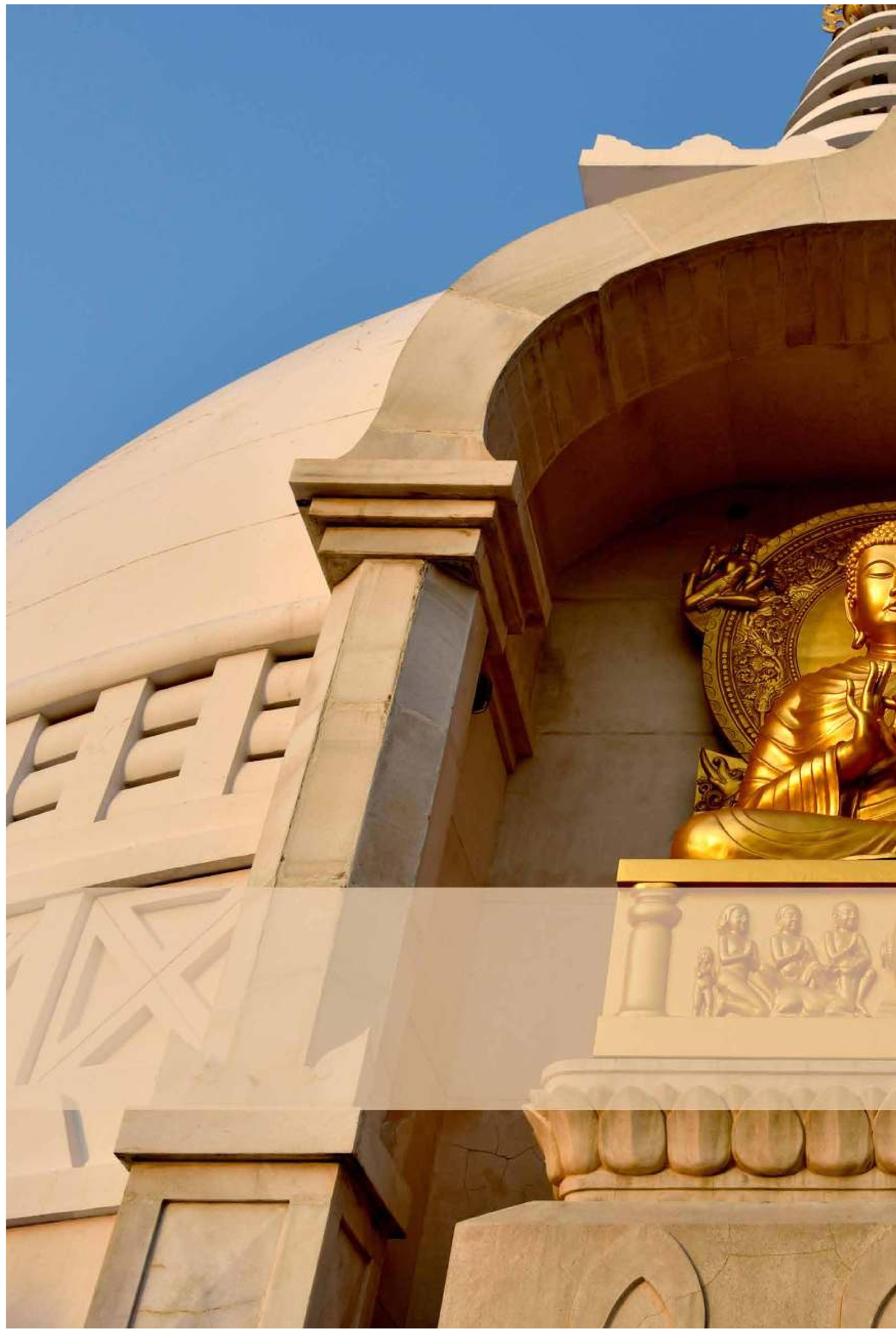
Filled with historical lessons and references that are pertinent in today's day and age, the collection contains valuable lessons by Lord Buddha that can be implemented for the betterment of our daily lives. The current scenario of the hostile world may just be the apt time to revisit the teachings of Lord Buddha that can act as a guiding light towards peace, harmony and sustainability.

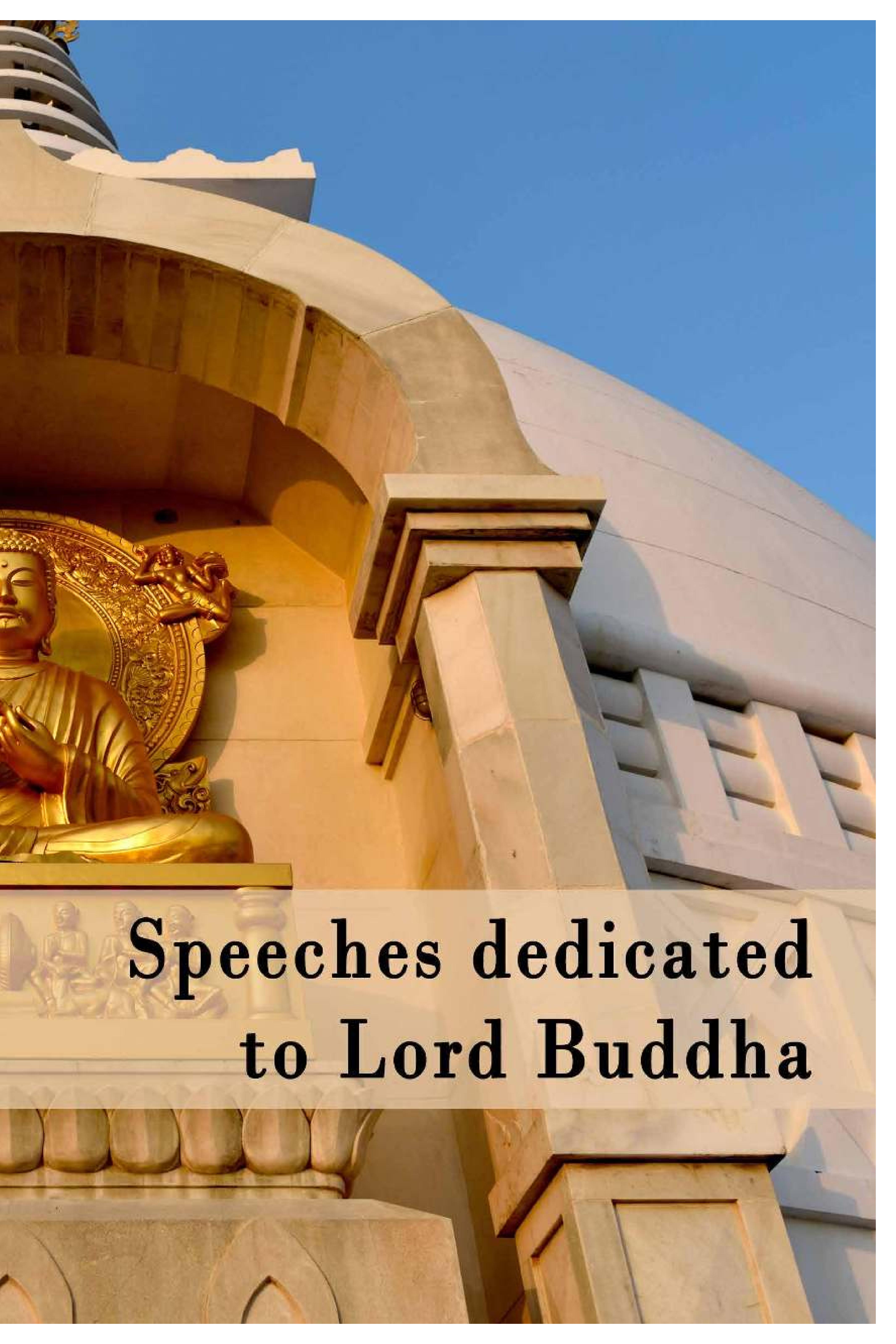
The Buddhist approach of righteous behaviour, wisdom, compassion and camaraderie, and the reduction of Trishna (greed) offers a set of building blocks for a new world order where violence and conflict are minimised and development takes place without degrading the natural resources.

The Compendium also has a section on key mentions of Lord Buddha and Buddhism, that Prime Minister Modi has used to illustrate many of his initiatives, both national and global.









**Speeches dedicated
to Lord Buddha**

2566th Buddha Jayanti and Lumbini Day 2022 Nepal,
May 16, 2022



Key takeaways from the speech:

- India and its people have looked at Nepal with this vision and faith for thousands of years. The common heritage, common culture, common faith and common love, this is our greatest asset. And, the richer this asset is, the more effectively together we can bring the message of Lord Buddha to the world and give direction to the world.
- When we begin to see human life in this fullness, there is no room left for division and discrimination. That is why, rising above geographical boundaries, Buddha belongs to everyone, to everyone.
- According to sermon by Lord Buddha, those who are always engaged in friendship, in goodwill, those followers of Gautama are always awake. They are the real followers of Lord Buddha.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Namo Buddhaya!

On the auspicious occasion of Buddha Jayanti, best wishes for Buddha Purnima from the holy land of Lumbini to all present here, to all the Nepalese, and to all the devotees of the world.

In the past as well, on the day of Vaishakh Purnima, I have been getting the opportunities to visit the divine places associated with Lord Buddha, for events associated with him. And today, I have had the privilege of visiting Lumbini, the holy birthplace of Lord Buddha, in Nepal, a friend of India. The opportunity that I got to visit the Mayadevi temple a while ago is also unforgettable for me. The place where Lord Buddha himself was born, the energy there, the consciousness there, it is a different feeling. I am also happy to see that the sapling of the Mahabodhi tree that I had presented at this place in 2014 is now developing into a tree.

Friends, whether it is Pashupatinathji, Muktinath ji, Janakpurdham or Lumbini, whenever I come to Nepal, Nepal gratifies me with its spiritual blessings.

Friends, in Janakpur, I had said that “Our Ram is also incomplete without Nepal”. I know that today when a grand temple of Lord Shri Ram is being built in India, the people of Nepal are feeling equally happy.

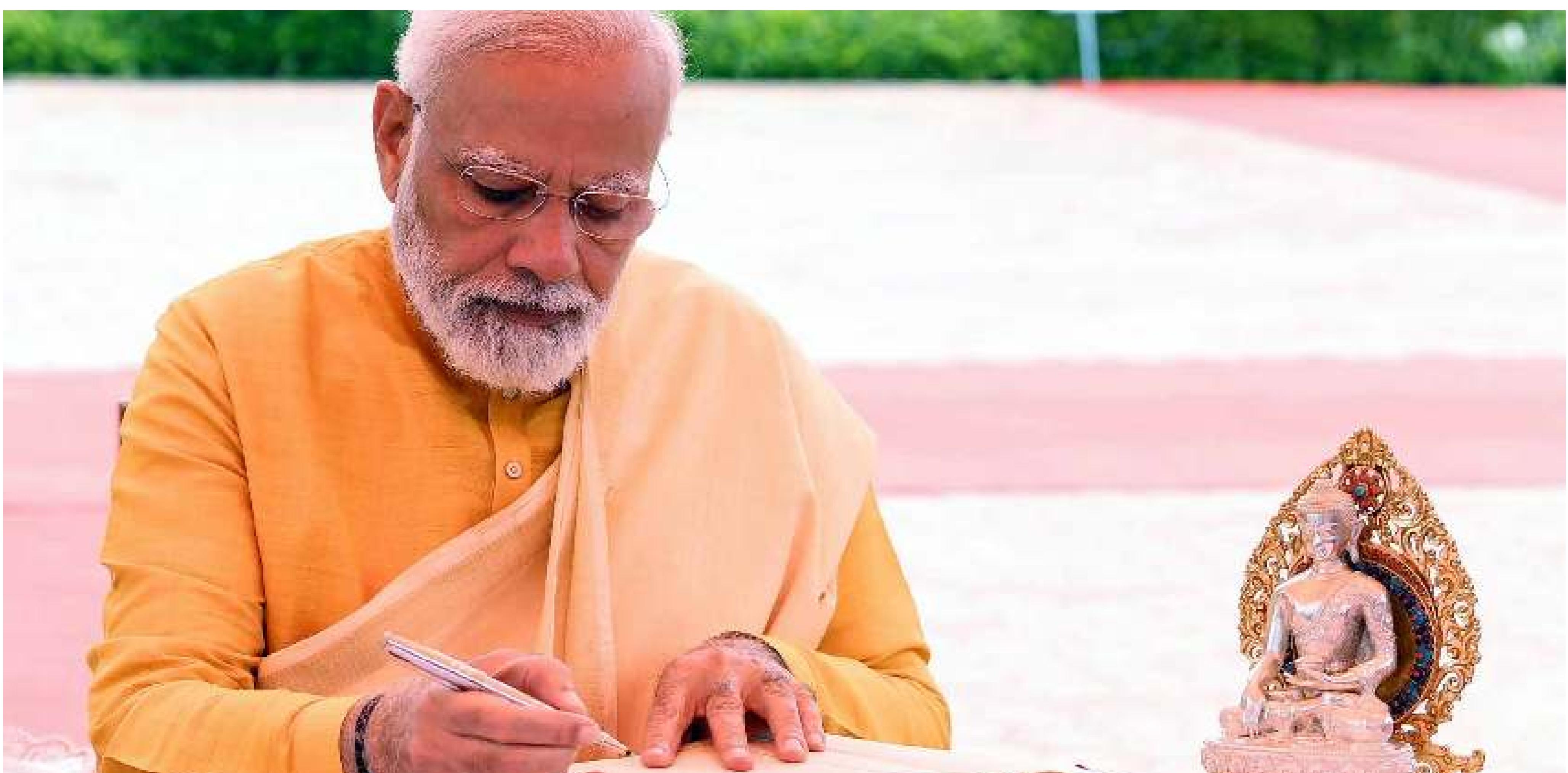
Friends, Nepal means, the country of the world’s highest mountain-Sagarmatha! Nepal means, the country of many holy pilgrimages, temples and monasteries of the world! Nepal means the country that preserves the ancient civilizational culture of the world! When I come to Nepal, I have a different spiritual experience than any other political visit.

India and the people of India have looked at Nepal with this vision and faith for thousands of years. I believe, sometime back when Sher Bahadur Deuba ji and Mrs. Arzoo Deuba ji came to India, and had visited Kashi Vishwanath Dham, Banaras as just described by Deuba ji, it is very natural for him to have a similar feeling for India.

Friends, this common heritage, common culture, common faith and common love, this is our greatest asset. And, the richer this asset is, the more effectively together we can bring the message of Lord Buddha to the world and give direction to the world. In the kind of global conditions that are being created today, the ever-strengthening friendship of India and Nepal and our closeness, will serve the benefit of the entire humanity. And in this, the faith of both our countries towards Lord Buddha, the boundless reverence for him, unites us in one thread and makes us a member of a family.

Brothers and Sisters,

The Buddha is an incarnation of the collective sense of humanity. There are Buddha perceptions, and so are Buddha researches. There are Buddha thoughts, and so are Buddha samskaras. The Buddha is special because he did not only preach, but he made humanity feel knowledge. He dared to abandon the great glorious kingdom and comforts. Certainly, he was not born as an ordinary child. But he made us realize that sacrifice is more important than attainment. Realization is complete only by renunciation. That is why, he wandered in the forests, he did penance, did research. After that introspection, when he reached the pinnacle of knowledge, he never claimed to do any miracle for the welfare of the people. Rather, Lord Buddha showed us the path which he himself had lived. He had given us the mantra - "Aap Deepo Bhava Bhikkhwe" Parikshay Bhikshvo, Grahyam Maddachho, Na Tu Gauravat." That is, be your own lamp. Don't take my words out of respect for me either. Rather test them and assimilate them.





Friends, there is another topic related to Lord Buddha, which I must mention today. Buddha was born as Siddhartha in Lumbini on the day of Vaishakh Purnima. On this day in Bodh Gaya, he attained the realization and became Lord Buddha. And on this day, his Mahaparinirvana took place in Kushinagar. On the same date, the same Vaisakha Purnima, these stages of Lord Buddha's life journey were not merely coincidental. It also has the philosophical message of Buddha hood, in which life, knowledge and nirvana are all together. The three are connected together. This is the perfection of human life, and that is probably why Lord Buddha may have chosen this holy date of the full moon. When we begin to see human life in this fullness, there is no room left for division and discrimination. Then we ourselves begin to live the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' which reflects from 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina' to the Buddha sermon of 'Bhavtu Sabb Mangalam'. That is why, rising above geographical boundaries, Buddha belongs to everyone, to everyone.

Friends, I also have another relationship with Lord Buddha, which is also a wonderful coincidence and which is also very pleasant. The place where I was born, Vadnagar in Gujarat, was a great centre of Buddhist learning centuries ago. Even today, ancient remains are being excavated there, whose conservation work is going on. And we know that there are many such towns in India, many cities, many places, which people proudly know as Kashi of that state. This has been the specialty of India, and therefore you also know my affinity with Sarnath near Kashi. From Sarnath, Bodh Gaya and Kushinagar in India to Lumbini in Nepal, these holy places symbolize our shared heritage and shared values. We have to develop this heritage together and enrich it further. Right now the Prime Ministers of both our countries have also laid the foundation stone of India International Centre for Buddhist Culture and Heritage here. It will be constructed by the International Buddhist Confederation of India. Prime Minister Deuba ji has an important contribution in realizing this decades old dream of our cooperation.

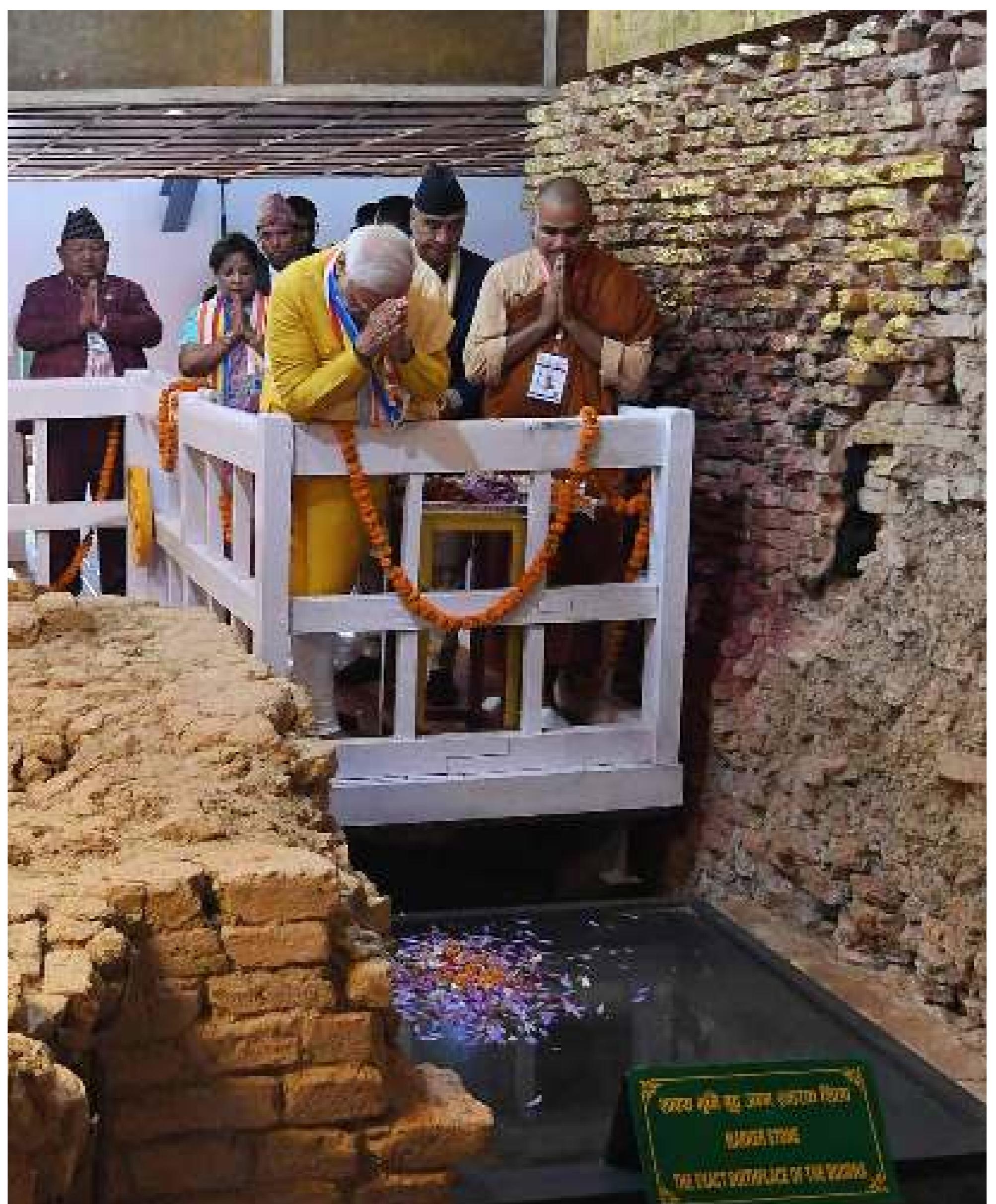
As the chairman of the Lumbini Development Trust, he had decided to give the land to the International Buddhist Confederation. And now full cooperation is being given from his side in completing this project as well. For this we are all deeply grateful to him. I am glad that the Government of Nepal is supporting all efforts for the development of Buddha Circuit and Lumbini, realizing all the possibilities of development. The construction of the Lumbini Museum in Nepal is also an example of joint cooperation between the two countries. And today we also decided to establish Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar chair for Buddhist studies in Lumbini Buddhist University.



Friends, many pilgrimages from India and Nepal have given momentum to the vast tradition of civilization, culture and knowledge over the centuries. Even today, lakhs of devotees from all over the world come to these shrines every year. We have to give more momentum to our efforts in the future. Our governments have also taken decisions like creating integrated check posts in Bhairahawa and Sonauli. Its work has also started. After the completion of these posts, the facility for the movement of people on the border will increase. International tourists coming to India will be able to come to Nepal more easily. Also, this will speed up trade and transportation of essential items. There is such immense potential for India and Nepal to work together between the two countries. The citizens of both countries will benefit from these efforts.

Friends, the relationship between India and Nepal is as stable as a mountain, and as old as a mountain. We have to give a new height to our instinctive and natural relationships as much as the Himalayas. The relationships that we have lived for thousands of years, from food, music, festivals, and customs to family ties, now also have to be linked to new areas like science, technology, and infrastructure. I am satisfied that India is working shoulder to shoulder with Nepal in this direction. India's cooperation and efforts at Lumbini Buddhist University, Kathmandu University and Tribhuvan University are great examples of this. I see many more great possibilities for expanding our mutual cooperation in this area.

Together we will realize these possibilities and the dreams of India and Nepal. Our able youth will grow to the pinnacle of success and become messengers of Buddha's teachings all over the world.



Friends, Lord Buddha says: -

सुप्पबुद्धं पबुज्जन्ति, सदा गोतम-सावका। येसं
दिवा च रतो च, भावनाये रतो मनो॥

That is, those who are always engaged in friendship, in goodwill, those followers of Gautama are always awake. That is, they are the real followers of Buddha. Today, we have to work for the whole of humanity. With this spirit, we have to strengthen the spirit of friendship in the world. I am confident that India-Nepal friendship will continue to work together to fulfill this humanitarian resolve. With this spirit, greetings to all of you once again on the occasion of Vaishakh Purnima.

Namo Buddhaya!
Namo Buddhaya!
Namo Buddhaya!



Vesak Day Celebrations, Buddha Purnima
May 26, 2021.



Key takeaways from the speech:

- Vesak day is celebrated by Buddhists around the world to commemorate the birth, the attainment of enlightenment, and passing away of Gautam Buddha. It is celebrated on the day of the full moon in the month of May.
- In his speech, the PM propagates the message of Lord Buddha about blessings, compassion and welfare for all.
- The PM emphasises on Lord Buddha's way of life where respect for Mother Nature is of paramount importance especially when the world is facing the worst climate crisis of all time.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Namo Buddhaya!
Namaste.

I am honoured to address you all on the special day of Vesak. Vesak is a day to celebrate the life of Lord Buddha. It is also a day to reflect on the noble ideals and sacrifices he made for the betterment of our planet.

While studying the life of Lord Buddha, there is mention of the four sights. These four sights brought Lord Buddha face to face with human suffering. At the same time, it ignited within him the desire to devote his life to removing human suffering.

Lord Buddha taught us 'भवतु सब्ब मंगलम्', which means blessings, compassion and welfare of all. In the last year, we have seen several individuals and organisations rise to the occasion and do everything possible to reduce suffering.

I have also learnt of the generous contributions of equipment and materials made by the Buddhist organisations, followers of Buddha Dharma from world over. The scale, both in terms of population and geographical spread of the task is huge. Humanity has been humbled by the outpouring of generosity and support from fellow humans. These actions are in line with the teachings of Lord Buddha. It manifests the supreme mantra of अप्प दीपो भवः।

One of the biggest challenges is that of climate change. Reckless life-styles of the present threaten the coming generations. Weather patterns are changing. Glaciers are melting. Rivers and forests are in danger. We cannot let our planet remain wounded. Lord Buddha put emphasis on a way of life where respect for Mother Nature is paramount.

Friends,

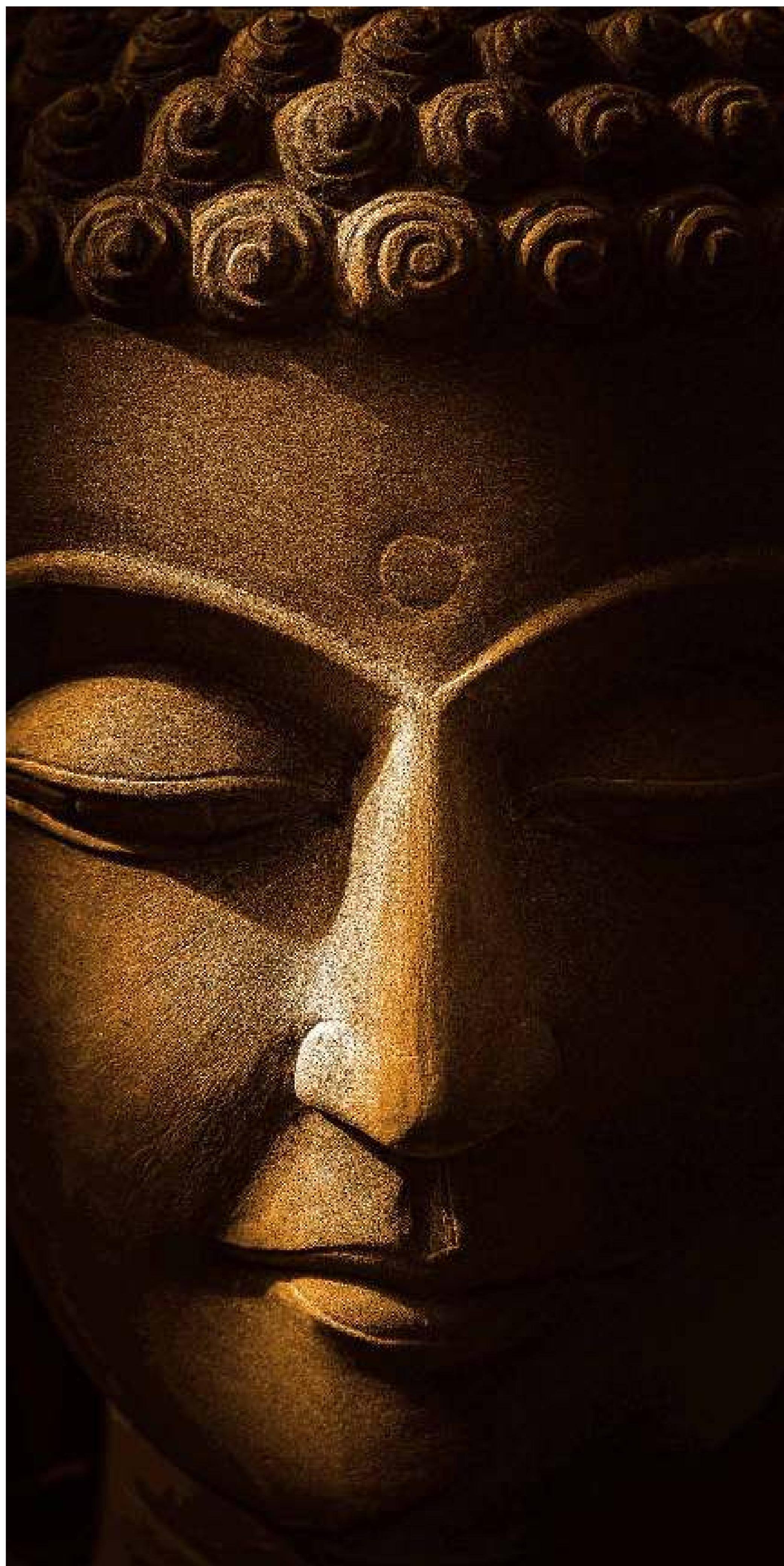
The life of Gautama Buddha was about peace, harmony and co-existence. Today, there are still forces remaining whose existence depends on spreading hate, terror and mindless violence. Such forces do not believe in liberal democratic principles. The need of the hour is for all those who believe in humanity to come together and defeat terror and radicalisation.

For that, the Path shown by Lord Buddha is absolutely relevant. Lord Buddha's teachings and the importance given to social justice can become a global unifying force.

He rightly said - “नत्ती संति परण सुखः:
There is no higher bliss than peace.

Friends,

Lord Buddha was the reservoir of brilliance for the entire universe. From him we all could draw light from time to time and take the path of compassion, universal responsibility and welfare. Mahatma Gandhi rightly said about Gautam Buddha, “Buddha taught us to defy appearances and trust in the final triumph of Truth and Love”. Today, on Buddha Poornima, let us renew our commitment to the ideals of Lord Buddha.



Ashadha Purnima-Dhamma Chakra Day
July 24, 2021.



Key takeaways from the speech:

- Dhamma Chakra Day marks the day when Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment in present day Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh. It is observed on the first full moon day in the Hindu month of Ashadh.
- During his speech, the PM invokes the teachings of Dhamma Chakra Pravartana Sutra also known as the First Turning of the Wheels of Dharma that comprises of the four noble truths and the noble eightfold path.
- The key to overcoming pain and achieving happiness is the harmony between our mind, speech and resolve; between the action and effort.
- The PM goes on to quote the “Dhammpada”. He also mentions the Coronavirus pandemic and how India and the world have followed the path of solidarity laid down by Lord Buddha to deal with this strenuous yet unavoidable situation.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Namo Buddhaya!

On this day, Lord Buddha gave his first sermon to the world after attaining enlightenment. It is said in our country that where there is knowledge, there is perfection. And when the preacher is the Buddha himself, it is natural that this philosophy becomes synonymous with the welfare of the world. When Buddha, who is forged by renunciation and forbearance, speaks, then these are not mere words, but the entire cycle of Dhamma begins. He gave the sermon to only five disciples, but today there are followers of that philosophy all over the world, people who believe in Buddha.

Friends,

Lord Buddha gave us the formula of whole life and complete knowledge in Sarnath. He explained the cause of suffering and how it can be conquered. Lord Buddha gave us the noble eightfold sutras (path) or eight mantras for life. These are ‘Samma Ditthi’ (right understanding), ‘Samma Sankappa’ (right resolve), ‘Samma Vacha’ (right speech), ‘Samma Kammanta’ (right conduct), ‘Samma Ajiva’ (right livelihood), ‘Samma Vayama’ (right effort), ‘Samma Sati’ (right mindfulness), and ‘Samma Samadhi’ (right meditative absorption or union). If there is harmony between our mind, speech and resolve and between our action and effort then we can come out of pain and attain happiness. This inspires us to work for general welfare during good times and gives us strength to face difficult times.

Friends,

Lord Buddha is all the more relevant in today's times of Corona pandemic.

India has shown how we can face even the most difficult challenges by following the path of the Buddha. Today all the countries are moving in solidarity and becoming each other's strength by following the teachings of the Buddha. In this direction, the 'Care with Prayer' initiative of the International Buddhist Confederation is very commendable.

Friends,

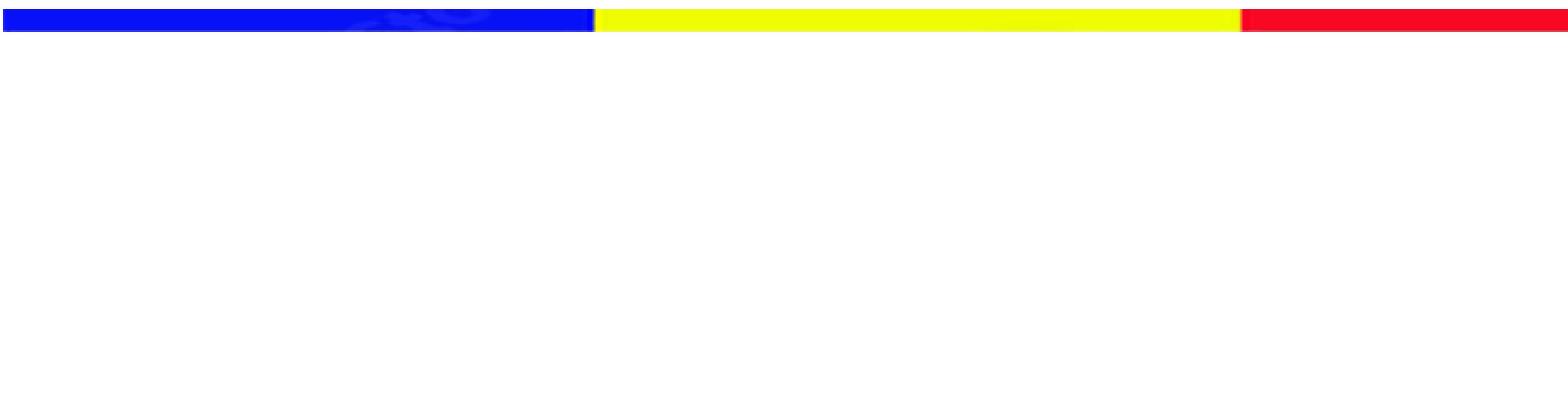
The Dhammapada says:

न ही वेरानि
सम्मनूतीध कुदाचनम्।
अवेरेन च सम्मनृति,
एस धम्मो सनन्ततो॥

That is, enmity does not quell enmity. Rather, enmity is calmed with love and by a big heart. In times of tragedy, the world has experienced this power of love and harmony. As this knowledge of Buddha, this experience of humanity gets enriched, the world will touch new heights of success and prosperity.

With this wish, many congratulations to all of you once again! Stay healthy and keep serving humanity!





Abhidhamma Day at Mahaparinirvana Temple, Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh

October 20, 2021



Key takeaways from the speech:

- Abhidhamma Day is observed to honour the return of Lord Buddha to earth from Tushita (heaven). It is celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Ashwin of the Hindu calendar or the 7th Burmese lunar month.
- Ashwin Purnima also marks the end of the three-month Varshavaas (monsoon retreat) by Buddhist monks and nuns. It aims to spread the message of non-violence towards all living beings including plants.
- The PM while mentioning Lord Buddha's "अप्प दीपो भव", which means "be your own light", enlightens the people about how India is carrying forward this vision and giving it shape with the motto of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayaas.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Namo Buddhaya!

This holy day is the full moon day of the month of Ashwin, the holy land of Kushinagar, and the visible presence of Lord Buddha in the form of his relics! By the grace of Lord Buddha, many transcendental congregations and coincidences are happening together on this day. Just before coming here, I have had the privilege of inaugurating the Kushinagar International Airport. Crores of Buddha followers from all over the world will get the opportunity to come here and their journey will be smooth due to Kushinagar International Airport. The very reverend (Buddhist) Confederation, respected monks and our friends have arrived at Kushinagar from the inaugural flight from Sri Lanka which landed at this international airport. Your presence is a symbol of the thousands of years old spiritual, religious and cultural heritage of India and Sri Lanka.

Friends,

We all know that the message of Buddhism in Sri Lanka was first carried from India by Emperor Ashoka's son Mahendra and daughter Sanghamitra. It is believed that on this day, 'Arahant Mahinda' came back and told his father that Sri Lanka had accepted the Buddha's message with so much positivity. This news had strengthened the belief that Buddha's message is for the entire world and Buddha's Dhamma is for humanity. Therefore, this day is also a day to reinvigorate the age-old cultural ties of all our countries. I congratulate all of you that you are present at the Maha-Parinirvana place of Lord Buddha today. I also extend a warm welcome to our honoured guests from Sri Lanka and all other countries. I also respectfully bow to our revered (Buddhist) Confederation (members), who are present to bless us.



You have given all of us the privilege to have a glimpse of relics of Lord Buddha. After this program in Kushinagar, you are also going to my parliamentary constituency Varanasi. Your visit will bring good fortune there too.

Friends,

I also congratulate all the members of the International Buddhist Confederation today. The way you are spreading the message of Lord Buddha in the modern world is really commendable. On this occasion, I am also remembering my old colleague Shri Shakti Sinha Ji. Shakti Sinha, who was working as the DG of the International Buddhist Confederation, passed away a few days ago. His faith in Lord Buddha and his dedication is an inspiration to all of us.

Friends,

As all of you know, today is another momentous occasion -- the return of Lord Buddha to earth from Tushita (heaven)! That's why our monks also complete their three-month 'Varshavas' (rainy retreat) on Ashwin Purnima. Today I too have had the privilege of donating 'chiver' to the monks of Confederation after the 'Varshavas'. This realization of Lord Buddha is wonderful, which gave birth to such traditions! In the rainy months, nature, the trees and plants around us start new life. The message of Buddha to take a resolution of non-violence towards living beings and the belief of seeing God in plants as well is so eternal that our monks continue to follow it. The monks, who are always active and mobile, take a break in these three months so that no sprouting seed gets crushed and there is no obstruction in the shining nature! This 'Varshavas' not only blooms the nature outside, but also gives an opportunity to refine the nature inside us.

Friends,

The instruction of Dhamma is:

यथापि रुचरि पुप्फं, वण्णवन्तं सुगन्धकं। एवं
सुभासति वाचा, सफलाहोति कुब्बतो

That is, if good speech and good thoughts are practiced with the same devotion, then its result is the same as a flower with fragrance! Because the best words without good conduct are like a flower without fragrance. Wherever the Buddha's ideas have been truly assimilated in the world, there have been ways of progress even in the most difficult of circumstances. Buddha is universal because Buddha teaches to start from within. Buddha's Buddhatva is a sense of ultimate responsibility i.e., whatever is happening around us, in our universe, we relate it to ourselves, we take responsibility for it. If we add our positive effort to what is happening, we will accelerate creation. Today, when the world talks about environmental protection, expresses its concern about climate change, many questions arise. But, if we adopt the message of Buddha, then instead of 'who has to do', the realization 'what is to be done' comes automatically.

Friends,

Thousands of years ago when Lord Buddha lived, there were no such arrangements as they are today, but still Buddha reached crores of people of the world and got connected with their inner soul. I have experienced this in temples and Buddhist monasteries in different countries. From Kandy to Kyoto, from Hanoi to Hambantota, Lord Buddha is omnipresent through his thoughts, monasteries, relics and culture. It is my good fortune that I have been to Kandy to visit Sri Dalada Maligawa,



I have seen his dental remains in Singapore, and I have had the opportunity to visit Kinkaku-ji in Kyoto. Similarly, I have been receiving blessings from the monks of the South East countries. There are different countries, different cultures, but Buddha, who resides in the soul of humanity, is connecting everyone. India has made this aspect of teaching of Lord Buddha part of its development journey. We have never believed in restricting the knowledge, great messages or the thoughts of great souls. Whatever was ours, we have shared with the entire humanity. That is why human values like non-violence and compassion are still ingrained in the heart of India even today. Therefore, Buddha is still the inspiration of the Constitution of India and Buddha's Dhamma-Chakra on the tricolour of India is giving us momentum. Even today, if someone goes to the Parliament of India, this mantra 'Dharma Chakra Pravartana' (first sermon by Buddha) is clearly visible.

Friends,

It is generally believed that the influence of Buddhism in India was mainly in the East. But if we look closely at history, we find that as much as Buddha has influenced the East, he has also influenced the West and South. Vadnagar in Gujarat, which is also my birthplace, has been an important place associated with Buddhism in the past. Till now we knew this history only through the quotes of Hiuen Tsang, but now archaeological monasteries and stupas have also been found in excavations in Vadnagar. Gujarat's past is proof that Buddha was beyond directions and boundaries. Born on the soil of Gujarat, Mahatma Gandhi has been the modern torch-bearer of Buddha's messages of truth and non-violence.

Friends,

Today India is celebrating the Amrit Mahotsav of its independence. In this Amrit Mahotsav, we are taking a pledge for our future, for the future of humanity. At the core of these thoughts is the message of Lord Buddha which says-

अप्पमादो अमतपदं,
पमादो मच्छुनो पदं।
अप्पमत्ता न मीयन्ति,
ये पमत्ता यथा मता।

That is, absence of laxity is nectar, and laxity is death. Therefore, India is moving ahead with new energy, taking the whole world along. Lord Buddha had said

"अप्प दीपो भव" ।

That is, be your own light. When a person is self-illuminated, he lightens the world as well. This is the motivation for India to become self-reliant. This is the inspiration that gives us the strength to participate in the progress of every country in the world. Today, India is carrying forward this idea with the mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, and Sabka Prayas'. I have full faith that together we will pave the way for the welfare of humanity by following these teachings of Lord Buddha.

Namo Buddhaya!!



Vesak Day Celebrations – Buddha Purnima

May 07, 2020.

Key takeaways from the speech:

- Hon'ble PM addresses the nation virtually on the occasion of Vesak Day in May 2020 owing to the lockdown restrictions that are in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus in India.
- The PM emphasises on the four noble truths given by Lord Buddha - Mercy, Compassion, Nonchalance either in happiness and sorrow, and accepting someone with its all virtues and faults; and how these truths continue to aspire India in its journey.
- The PM reminds the listeners that those who are engaged in the service of humanity at all times are the real followers of Lord Buddha, and it is this undying spirit that keeps illuminating our lives.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Namaskar!

A Very Happy Buddha Purnima, many happy Vesak celebrations to all of you and followers of Lord Buddha spread all over the world!

Friends,

Lord Buddha said -

मनो पुब्बं-गमा धम्मा,
मनोसेट्ठा मनोमया,

It means, Dhamma (or the religion exists in the mind), mind is supreme. It leads all actions. It is the mind that connects me with you. That is why, the lack of physical presence is not so felt. It would be a great pleasure to be among you, but now the circumstances are not favorable.

Friends, International Buddhist organization deserve praise for organizing a virtual Vesak Buddha Purnima Day in these difficult circumstances of lockdown. Due to your innovative efforts, millions of followers from all over the world are joining each other in this event.

Besides Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar, the integration of ceremonies taking place at Sri Anuradhapura Stupa and Vaskaduwa Temple in Sri Lanka, are really very beautiful.

Friends, the message and resolve to remove the difficulty of every life have always shown direction to India's civilization, culture. Lord Buddha has further enriched this culture of India.

Lord Buddha in his life's after enlightenment also enriched the lives of many others as well. His message is not limited to any one circumstance, or to any one subject.

For many centuries, before and after Siddhartha's birth, after the turning of Siddhartha into Gautama, the cycle of time continues to rotate taking us through many situations and circumstances.

Time changed, the situation changed, the functioning of society changed, but the message of Lord Buddha has been continuously flowing in our lives. It was possible only because Buddha is not just a name, but also a sacred thought, a thought that beats in every human heart, guides humanity. Buddha is the limit to renunciation and penance.

Buddha is synonymous with service and dedication. Buddha, with a strong will power, is the climax of social change. Buddha is the one who is devoted to perseverance, self-sacrificing, and spreading joy all over the world. And look at the good fortune of all of us, at this time we are seeing many people around us, who serve others, treat a patient, feed a poor person, clean a hospital, to maintain law and order on a road, they all working round the clock. In India, outside India, every such person deserves a salute, a tribute.

Friends, at a time when there is turmoil in the world, many times the feeling of sadness, despair and frustration is seen very much, then the learning of Lord Buddha becomes even more relevant. He used to say that human beings should constantly strive to overcome difficult situations, get out of them. Getting tired and tired is not an option. Today, all of us are also constantly working together to get out of a difficult situation.

Four truths told by Lord Buddha-

Mercy, Compassion, Non-Chalance either in happiness and sorrow, and accepting someone with its all virtues and faults- These truths continue to be the inspiration of the land of India.

You are also seeing today that India is standing firmly in selflessness, without any distinction, with the person in distress, both in the country and throughout the world.

Beyond the profit and loss, able and unable, for us this hour of crisis is to help others, as much as possible to forward the hand of help.

Friends, each and every word, each and every discourse of Lord Buddha reinforce India's commitment to serve humanity. The Buddha symbolizes both the Enlightenment of India and the Self-Realization of India. With this self-realization, India is and will continue to work for the benefit of the entire humanity, the whole world. India's progress will always be helpful in the progress of the world.

Friends, both our scales and goals of success will change over time. However, the thing we always have to keep in mind is that our work should be done with continuous service. When there is compassion for others, compassion and a sense of service, these feelings make us so strong that you can overcome the biggest challenge.

सुप्त बुद्धं पबुज्जन्ति, सदा गोतम सावका

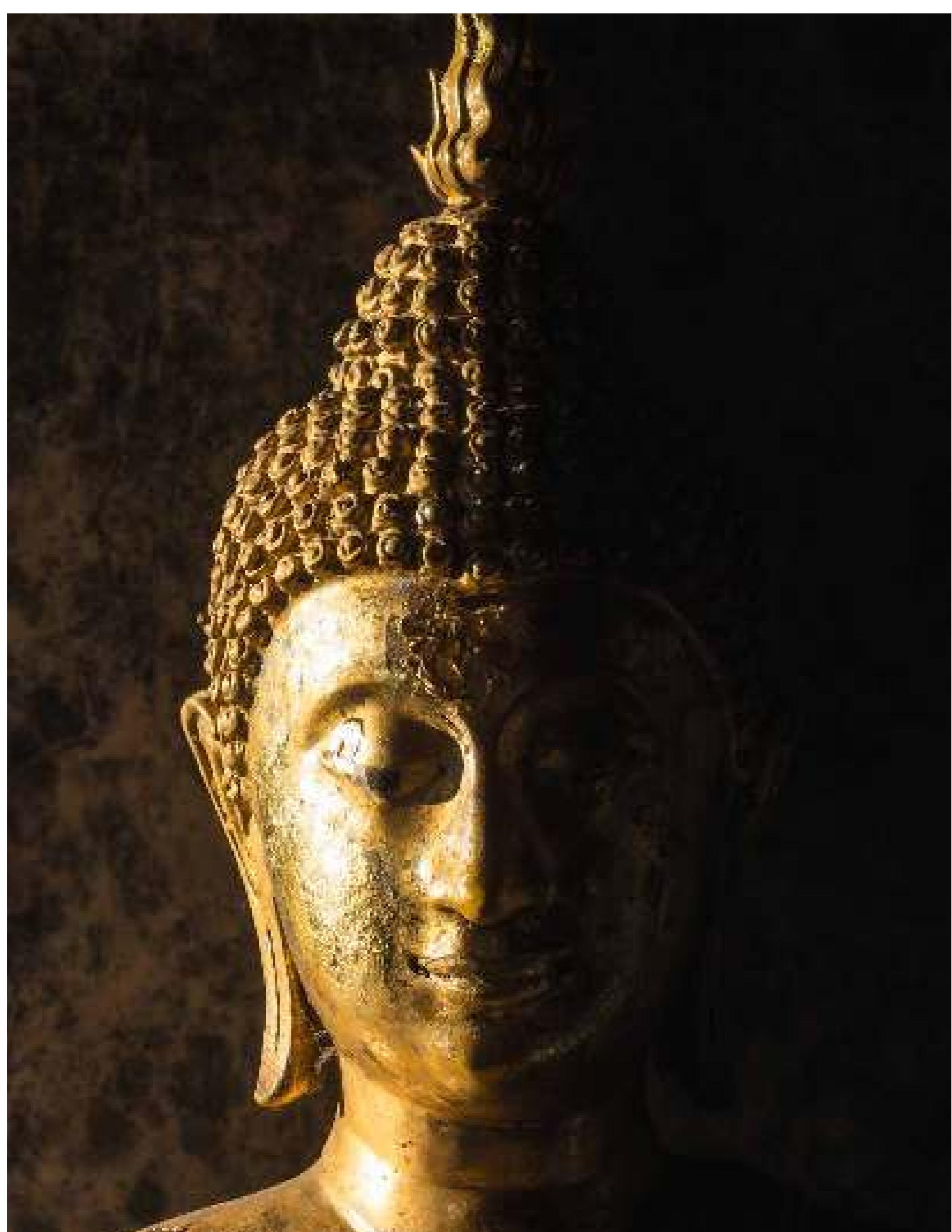
that is, those who are engaged in the service of humanity at all times, day and night, are the true followers of Buddha. This spirit keeps illuminating our lives, keeps it moving.

Dharma Chakra Day

July 04, 2020.

Key takeaways from the speech:

- The Prime Minister explains how the eight-fold path of Lord Buddha driven by compassion and kindness has shown the way towards the well-being of many nations and societies.
- When Buddha delivered his first sermon, he spoke at lengths about how hope creates a spirit of purpose amongst individuals. The Prime Minister recalls the first sermon and invokes the feel of creating hope while drawing parallels with the present day scenario of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- The Prime Minister also informs the people of the cabinet's decision to build an airport at Kushinagar and addressed the need to connect more Buddhist heritage sites in India with the world.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Let me begin by conveying my greetings on Ashadha Poornima. It is also known as Guru Purnima. This is a day to remember our Gurus, who gave us knowledge. In that spirit, we pay homage to Lord Buddha.

Friends, the eight-fold path of Lord Buddha shows the way towards the well-being of many societies and nations. It highlights the importance of compassion and kindness. The teachings of Lord Buddha celebrate simplicity both in thought and action. Buddhism teaches respect. Respect for people. Respect for the poor. Respect for women. Respect for peace and non-violence. Therefore, the teachings of Buddhism are the means to a sustainable planet.

Friends, in his very first sermon in Sarnath, and his teachings after that, Lord Buddha spoke on two things- hope and purpose. He saw a strong link between them. From hope comes a spirit of purpose. For Lord Buddha it was the removal of human suffering. We have to rise to the occasion and do whatever we can to increase hope among people.

I would urge my young friends to also stay connected with the thoughts of Lord Buddha. They will motivate and show the way ahead. At times, they will even calm you down or cheer you up. In fact, Lord Buddha's teaching of - अप्पः दीपो भवः or be your own guiding light is a wonderful management lesson.

Friends, today the world fights extraordinary challenges. To these challenges, lasting solutions can come from the ideals of Lord Buddha. They were relevant in the past. They are relevant in the present. And, they will remain relevant in the future.

Friends, it is the need of the hour to connect more and more people with Buddhist heritage sites.

We in India have many such sites. You know how people also know my parliamentary constituency of Varanasi? As the home to Sarnath. We want to focus on connectivity to Buddhist sites. A few days back the Indian Cabinet announced that Kushinagar airport will be an international one. This would bring so many people, pilgrims and tourists. It would also generate economic opportunities for many.

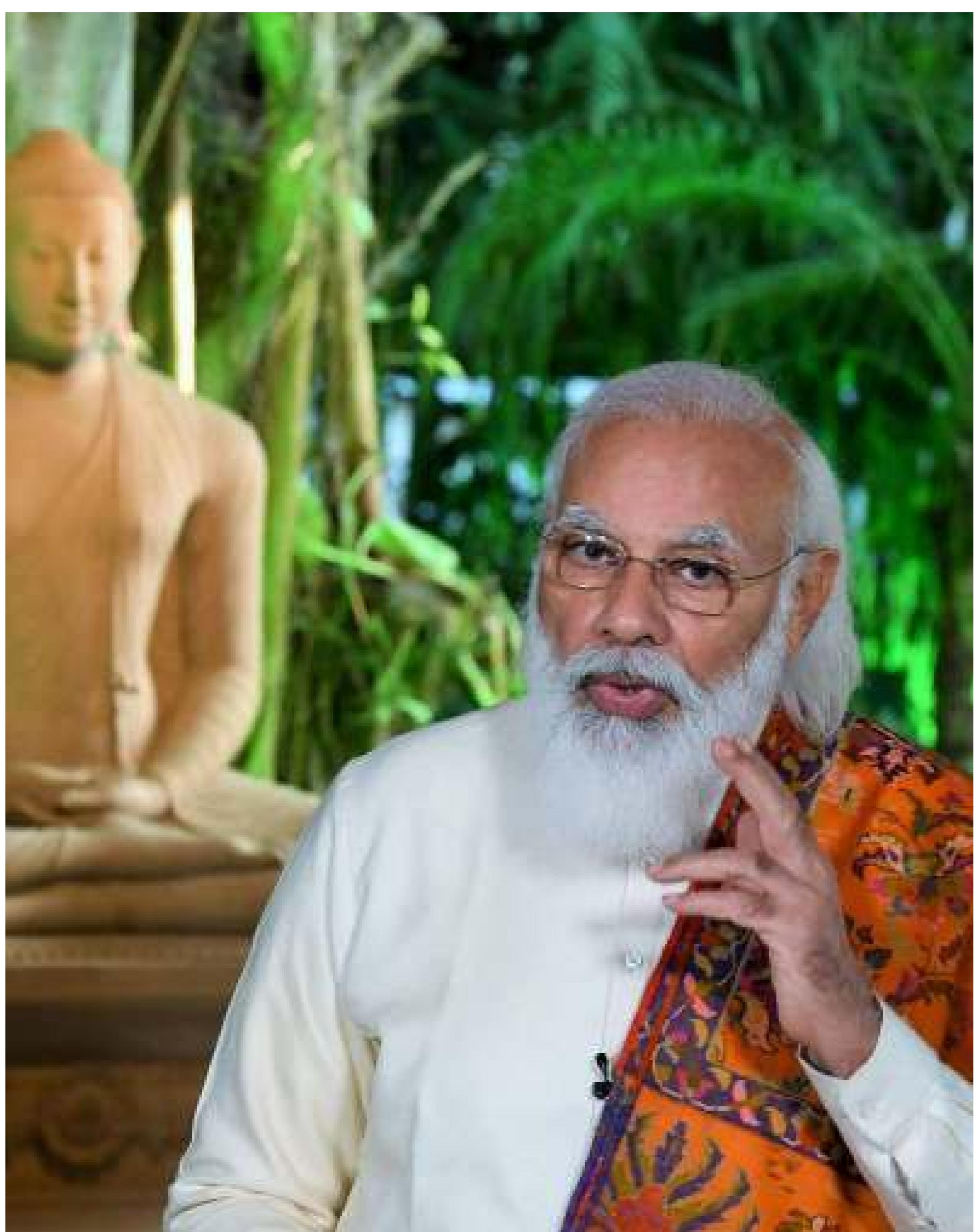
India awaits you!



India-Japan SAMVAD Conference (via VC), Dec 21, 2020

Key takeaways from the speech:

- SAMVAD is a series of dialogues that are held between India and Japan. The first of such conferences was held in New Delhi at Vivekanand International Foundation and at Bodh Gaya in Bihar in 2015.
- The Prime Minister proposes to create a library of traditional Buddhist literature and scriptures in India and vows to support it by providing appropriate resources. It will also act as a platform for dialogue and research between human beings, societies and nature.
- The PM talks about keeping humanism at the core of the India-Japan dialogue by following the path of non-violence laid by Buddha thereby creating a spirit of positivity, unity and compassion across the nation.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Five years ago, we began this series of conferences with former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Since then, SAMVAD has travelled from New Delhi to Tokyo, from Yangon to Ulaanbaatar. In this journey, it has remained true to its fundamental objectives: to encourage dialogue and debate; to highlight our shared values of democracy, humanism, Ahimsa, freedom and tolerance; and, to carry forward our ancient tradition of spiritual and scholarly exchanges. I would like to thank the Government of Japan for their constant support to SAMVAD.

This forum has done great work to ensure promote the ideas and ideals of Lord Buddha, especially among the youth. Historically, the light of Buddha's message spread out from India to many parts of the world. However, this light did not remain static. In each new place it reached, Buddhist thought continued to evolve further over the Centuries. Because of this, great treasures of Buddhist literature and philosophy can be found in many different monasteries today, across many different countries and languages.

This body of writing is a treasure of humankind as a whole. Today, I would like to propose the creation of a library of all such traditional Buddhist literature and scriptures. We will be happy to create such a facility in India and will provide appropriate resources for it. The library will collect digital copies of all such Buddhist literature from different countries. It will aim to translate them, and make them freely available for all monks and scholars of Buddhism. The library will not only be a depository of literature.

It will also be a platform for research and dialogue - a true 'SAMVAD' between human beings, between societies, and between man and nature. Its research mandate will also include examining how Buddha's message can guide our

modern world against contemporary challenges. Challenges like poverty, racism, extremism, gender discrimination, climate change and many others.

About three weeks ago, I was at Sarnath. Sarnath is where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. This Jyoti Punj emerged from Sarnath spread across the world embracing the values of Compassion, Nobility and above all, Manav Kalyan the good of entire humanity. And gently, peacefully, it changed the course of world history. It was in Sarnath that Lord Buddha spoke in detail about his ideal of Dhamma. Dhamma for him was more than prayer and rituals. At the Centre of Dhamma are humans, and their relation with fellow humans. Thus, it is most important to be a positive force in the lives of others. SAMVAD should be one that will spread this spirit of positivity, unity and compassion across our planet. That too at a time when we need it the most.

This is the first SAMVAD of a new decade. It is happening at a critical moment of human history. Our actions today will shape the discourse in the coming times. This decade and beyond will belong to those societies that place a premium on learning and innovating together. It will be about nurturing bright young minds who will add value to the humanity in the times to come. Learning should be such that furthers innovation. After all, innovation is the corner-stone to human empowerment. Societies that are open minded, democratic and transparent are better suited to innovate. Therefore, now is the time, more than ever before, to change the paradigm on what we see as growth. Discussions on global growth cannot happen only between a few. The table must be bigger.

The agenda must be broader. Growth patterns must follow a human-centric approach. And, be in harmony with our surroundings.

It is rightly mentioned in the

यमक वग्गे धम्मपदः

**न हि वेरेन वेरानि, सम्मन्तीध कुदाचं।
अवेरेन च सम्मन्ति, एस धम्मो सनन्तनो॥**

Hostility will never achieve peace. In the past, humanity took the path of confrontation instead of collaboration. From Imperialism to the world wars. From the arms race to the space race. We had dialogues but they were aimed at pulling others down. Now, let us rise together. Lord Budha's teachings command the strength to turn the discourse from enmity to empowerment. His teachings make us large-hearted. They tell us: learn from the past and work towards a better future. This is the best service we can do for our future generations.

The essence of Sanwad remains togetherness. Let SAMVAD bring out the best in us, together. This is the time to draw upon our ancient values and prepare for the times to come. We must keep humanism at the core of our policies. We must make harmonious co-existence with nature as the central pillar of our existence. SAMVAD, a dialogue with ourselves, with fellow human beings, and with nature can light our way on this path. I compliment the organizers for organizing this important event and wish them all success in their deliberations.

Buddha Jayanti Celebrations, New Delhi

April 30, 2018

Key takeaways from the speech:

- Lord Buddha's ideas have not only created a new consciousness, but today his ideas are defining the national character of many countries of Asia. It is a fact that those who have won over the angry mind with Buddhist meditation could succeed and become immortal.
- Lord Buddha has discussed 'Ashtang' in his teachings, and it is. Lord Buddha's eightfold path include right views, right thoughts, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right efforts, right consciousness and right consultation.
- The global vision of Lord Buddha was focused on getting rid of suffering of the world. Buddhism says that it is better to make a person capable of overcoming his sufferings and sorrows than to be sad by looking at that person's misery.
- The Prime Minister went on to thank the previous generations for preserving the Buddhist heritage for 2500 years and also urged the younger generations to play an active role in the following the ways left behind by Lord Buddha.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

There's a belief that when a mantra is enchanted by thousands of people together, energy is created. Today we can feel the same energy. When our eyes are open, we can see each other; but at the same time the name of Lord Buddha is echoing in our minds every moment.

The devotion towards Lord Buddha cannot be expressed in words.

Just like mantras are enchanted by people, they are also enchanted by Lord Buddha. I am fortunate to have got this opportunity to be present among you to seek the blessings of the revered religious heads on this sacred occasion of Buddha Purnima.

Just now Mahesh Sharma ji and Kiren Rijuji ji were saying that it's my second visit. I would have come last year as well but I had to attend a similar event in Sri Lanka for Baisakh. I had got the opportunity to celebrate Buddha Purnima with the Sri Lankan people, Sri Lankan Government and the Buddhist religious leaders who had come from across the world. We all are very busy and have our own responsibilities. But amidst everything we can get salvation just by chanting Lord Buddha's name. But the monks present here have dedicated their entire life to spread the message of love and harmony of Lord Buddha. They are walking on the path shown by Lord Buddha. On this occasion, I bow down to all the great souls who are spreading the message of Lord Buddha across the world. I welcome all the people who have come here from different parts of the country. I have got this opportunity to also congratulate those Institutions and individuals who have made efforts and contributions to this work. My best wishes for their future endeavours. I would specifically like to congratulate Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies at Sarnath and All India Bhikshuk Sangh



at Bodh Gaya for receiving the Baisakh honour.

Friends,

This part of the world i.e. our India, has a bountiful of invaluable heritage which can hardly be found elsewhere. A lot of things has been said and written about Gautam Buddha's birth, education and Mahaparinirvana over the past several centuries. Fortunately for the present generation, part of it has survived despite several difficulties.

We are proud of the fact that the central theme of all the ideas that have emerged from the soil of our country is human welfare. We are also proud of the fact that in this era of new ideas no one has ever encroached upon other's rights or feelings. We do not discriminate against each other's ideologies or religion.

We are proud of the fact that all the ideologies that were born out of India have been taken forward upholding the interests of the entire humanity. We have never said and will never say that only those who follow us will be benefitted. Lord Buddha's ideas have not only created a new consciousness; but today his ideas are defining the national character of many countries of Asia.

Friends,

This is the speciality of this land. Therefore, our country and every Indian can proudly say that our tradition is a witness to the fact that India has never encroached upon the interest of any other country. India has never invaded other countries. Our country has been traversing this path and this ideology for the past thousands of years.

Friends, the journey from Siddhartha to becoming Gautam Buddha is not just the story of achieving Nirvana. This is the story of the truth that anyone who tries to alleviate the pain and suffering of others with his knowledge and wealth walks on the path of becoming Buddha from Siddhartha. He can walk on that path to achieve wisdom.

On the occasion of Buddha Purnima, every moment we remind ourselves of compassion and brotherhood. At a time when terrorism, racism and separatism are covering the message of Buddha under black clouds, the message of compassion and friendship become all the more relevant and indispensable. Life is not about winning battles with destruction, violence and hatred. Life means winning over hatred, violence and injustice with friendship and compassion.

It is a fact that those who have won over the angry mind with Buddhist meditation could succeed and become immortal. The confluence of truth and compassion can only enlighten the Buddha within us.

Buddha means to turn a violent mind into a pure and calm one. The wrong message of discrimination between human beings on the basis of caste, colour and language will never be given out by India or the Buddha. People of any caste, colour, class or religion have always been accepted with their respective individualities. For example, the Jews or the Parsis, have inter-mingled with us for several thousands of years and have become an integral part of the society. We have never imagined about discriminating against them. Following the principle of equality in our lives in itself means living the life of the Buddha. Buddha became the most admired Mahapurush



of the world due to the same harmony and equality. Even Babasaheb Ambedkar had walked on the path shown by Lord Buddha by following his principles.

Today, India is known as the land of Lord Buddha along with its advancement in the mundane fields. It also enhances the greatness of India in the world. ‘Budham sharanam gachhami, Dhammam sharam gachhami, sangham sharanam gachhami’ has become the Mantra of the people who teach the lessons of humanity from the holy land of our country to the entire world. Therefore, the greatest message on the occasion of Buddha Purnima is ‘before you try to change others start transforming yourself; you will also become the Buddha. Before finding faults in others, try to win your inner war; you will also become the Buddha.’ ‘Apo deepah Aap bhava’ which means if you search for the light within yourself then you will also become a Buddha.

Lord Buddha had always been inspiring and spreading the message of compassion and peace. Equality, justice, freedom and human rights are the key values of today’s democratic world. But Gautam Buddha had given a clear message regarding these principles about 2500 years ago. In India, it was not a separate idea and was a part of the whole world’s vision.

According to Lord Buddha’s philosophy, equality means that every person has a dignified presence on this earth. Every person should be given equal opportunities to access resources and avail the rights without any discrimination.

Friends,
In every country, every challenge such as terrorism and casteism and other such inequalities have been

created by none other than the human beings. These inequalities are the root cause of injustice, exploitation, atrocities, violence and social disharmony. On the other hand, the principles of justice, independence and human rights have emerged from the principle of equality. This means that equality is the basic element of these principles.

If the feeling of equality strengthens in our society then the path towards Social Justice, freedom, Human Rights, social change, personal rights, peace, harmony, and prosperity will open up and we will be able to move forward at a faster pace.

Lord Buddha has discussed ‘Ashtang’ in his teachings. I believe that without knowing the path of Ashtang it is very difficult to achieve the ideals of Buddha. Lord Buddha’s eightfold path include right views, right thoughts, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right efforts, right consciousness and right consultation.

It is possible to solve the problems that we are facing in today’s time by following the path shown by Lord Buddha. In order to save the world from the impending danger it is indispensable to follow the message of love and compassion given by Buddha. Lord Buddha had also said that one can gain strength only by walking on this path.

Friends, Lord Buddha was among those philosophers who had understood the need for reasoning. He had emphasized upon the logical test of the principles of his Dharma.

He even used to ask his disciples to test and measure his own ideas based on logic and reasoning without

any ego. In the 2nd century, the advice given by Nagarjuna to king Uday for giving shape to Lord Buddha's messages is still relevant today. He had said - 'provide the blind, the sick, the deprived, the helpless and the poor with compassion and the provision of food and water in an uninterrupted manner. The patients should be taken care of and the distressed farmers should be provided with assistance such as seeds and the other necessary things'.

The global vision of Lord Buddha was focused on the question that how the suffering of the entire world will come to an end forever? He used to say that it is better to make a person capable of overcoming his sufferings and sorrows than to be sad by looking at that person's misery.

I am glad that our government is moving on the path of compassion and service taking inspiration from Lord Buddha. We give top priority to solutions for reducing the hardship and sorrow of the people.

The government has undertaken several tasks to empower the poor such as opening more than 31 crore bank accounts under Jan Dhan Yojana at a premium of just 90 paise per day and Rupee 1 per month. Approximately 19 crore insurance have been provided to the poor and more than 3 Crore 70 lakh poor women have been provided with free gas connection. More than 3 Crore children and more than 80 lakh pregnant women have been immunised under Mission Indradhanush. More than 12 crore loans have been sanctioned without bank guarantee under the Mudra Yojana. Now under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana the government will be providing 5 Lakh rupees annually to 50 crore poor families to facilitate their treatment.



Friends,

The ideas of inclusiveness and togetherness had completely transformed Lord Buddha. He was the son of a king. He had all the luxuries in his life; but when he used to see a person suffering and in pain he used to think that he was not different from them and was the same as them.

This truth gave him a vision - a sense of wisdom, rationality, cognition, ethics and charisma began to emerge as a power within him. The more we absorb this feeling today, the more we will be able to become true human beings first. It is necessary to do this for the sake of humanity and to make the 21st century as the most important century of the world.

Brothers and sisters,

Even after such a long period of enslavement, proper efforts were not made to save the cultural heritage of our country. The country that cannot preserve its history and does not bequeath to its future generations the same grandeur of the heritage can never achieve perfection. Keeping this in view, our government is also working on a great vision for its cultural heritage and for preserving the memories related to Lord Buddha.

There are about 18 such states in our country where there is some or the other pilgrimage centres associated with Lord Buddha. Some of them are more than 2000 years old and attract tourists from across the world. In such a scenario, it is indispensable to develop world class facilities in these places according to the needs of the people. Keeping this in view, Buddhist circuit is being developed under the Swadesh Darshan scheme.



The government has sanctioned more than Rs. 360 crores for the Buddhist circuit. Buddhist sites in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat are being developed.

Besides, the Ministry of Road Transport has been developing the necessary facilities on the roadside of Gaya-Varanasi-Kushinagar route. International conclave on Buddhism is also being organised every 2 years by the Ministry of Tourism. This year, scholars from different parts of the world will be attending this programme. The objective of similar programmes is to inform maximum people about our cultural heritage so that people from the other countries also come and visit the Buddhist sites and obtain knowledge about them. Besides, the central government is also assisting the neighbouring countries for protection of the Buddhist heritage. The Restoration and chemical preservation of Myanmar's Bagan and Ananda temples is going on at a rapid pace by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). This temple was devastated due to the earthquake that had occurred 2 years ago.

The ASI is also involved in conserving the temples of other countries like Bamiyan of Afghanistan, Cambodia's Angkor Vat and Ta Prohm, Vat Phou of Laos and Vietnam's My Son Temple. It is also engaged in conserving the Gandan monastery's manuscripts and their digitisation in Mongolia.

Today I want to request from this platform to some central government Ministries. How to bring all the translation and preservation work of Buddha's teaching compilation – 'Tripitaka' associated with the Buddhist philosophy being done by the various institutions on a single platform?

Can we develop a new portal where we can get the teachings of Lord Buddha in simple words and also the work done by these institutions? I would like to appeal to Mr Mahesh Sharma Ji to take the leadership of this project and make efforts to complete this project within a specific time frame.

Friends,

It is a privilege to all of us that even after 2500 years the teachings of Lord Buddha are still with us. When I say that it is a privilege then also think about the reasons why I am saying this.

Of course our ancestors have had a major role in their preservation. Thanks to the contribution made by our previous generations that we are able to organize such events on the occasion of Buddha Purnima. Our previous generations had made ceaseless efforts in preserving this heritage for 2500 years in order to bequeath it to the future generations. Now the upcoming human history is waiting for your active role and for your resolutions.

After going back, I want you all to think of 5 or 10 resolutions that you want to fulfil by the year 2022 when our country will be celebrating 75 years of Independence. These resolutions can be associated with anything such as protection, preservation of our cultural heritage or spreading the teachings of Gautam Buddha. However, it is my request that every person, institution and organization present here today should make some resolutions to be fulfilled by the year 2022. Your efforts will help in fulfilling the resolution of a New India. We are aware of the challenges. We have the blessings of Lord Buddha. Therefore, I believe that we will definitely fulfil our resolutions of a New India. We are aware of the challenges. We have the blessings of Lord Buddha.

Therefore, I believe that we will definitely fulfil our resolutions.

Today on the sacred occasion of Buddha Purnima I have got this opportunity to sit beside the feet of Lord Buddha, to seek his blessings and to meet you all. I consider myself blessed.

Once again my best wishes to you all for Buddha Purnima. With this I end my speech.

Thanks a lot!

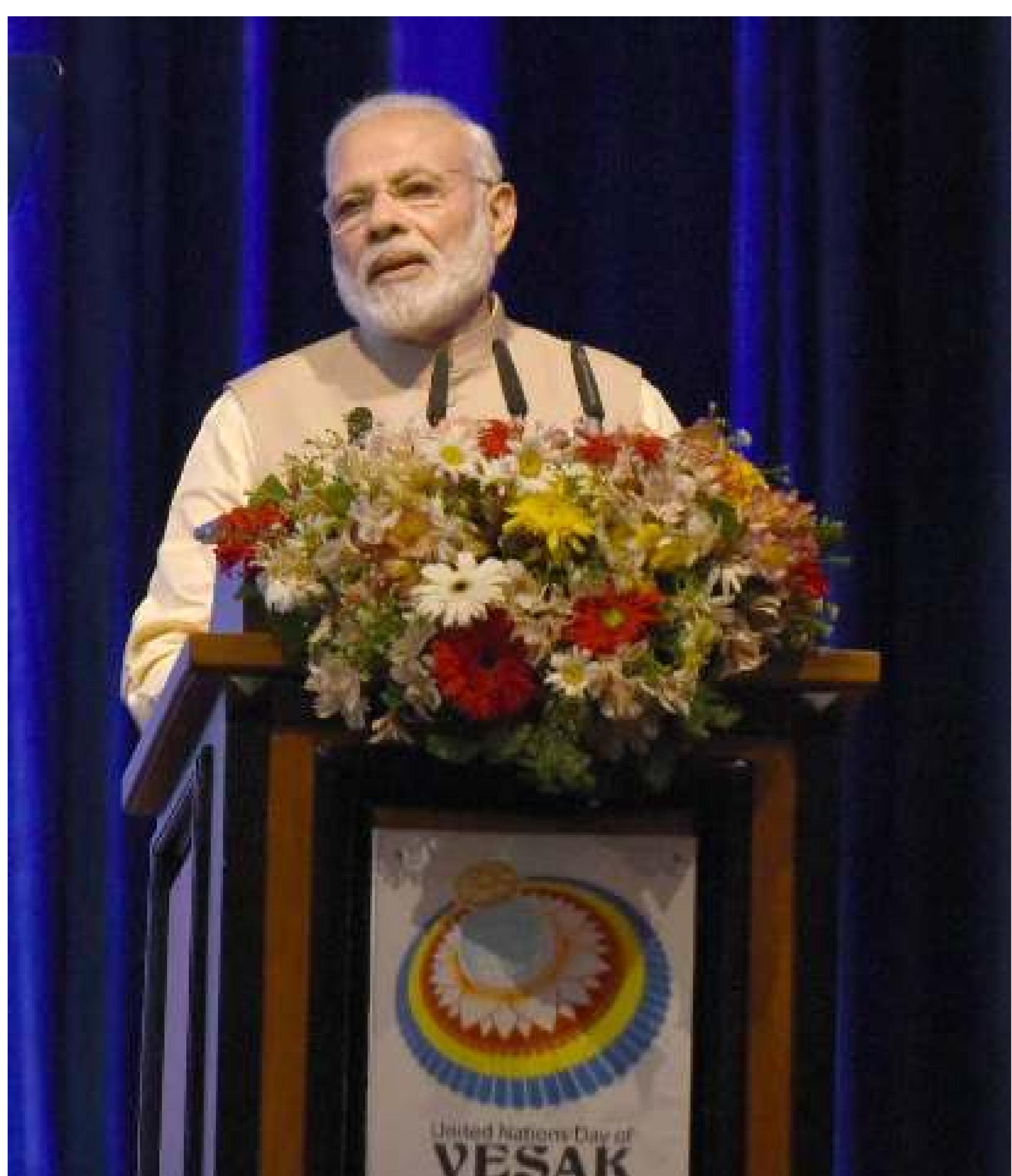


International Vesak Day Celebrations, Colombo, Sri Lanka

May 12, 2017

Key takeaways from the speech:

- Vesak is a day for humanity to revere the birth, the enlightenment and the Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha, the “Tathagatha”. It is a day to reflect on the supreme truth and timeless relevance of Dhamma, and the four noble truths.
- Our region is blessed to have given to the world the invaluable gift of Buddha and his teachings. India’s national symbols have taken inspiration from Buddhism. Its various strands are deep seated in our governance, culture and philosophy.
- The friendship between India and Sri Lanka was etched in time by the “Great Master”. Buddhism imparts an ever present radiance to our relationship. It draws its strength as much through our interconnected values of Buddhism as it does from the limitless possibilities of our shared future.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Namaskaar Ayubuvan.

Vesak is most sacred of days. A day for humanity to revere the birth, the enlightenment and the Parinibbana of Lord Buddha, the “Tathagatha”. A day to rejoice in Buddha. A day to reflect on the supreme truth and timeless relevance of Dhamma, and the four noble truths.

A day to contemplate the ten perfections of दान (generosity); सील (proper conduct); नेख्खम् (renunciation); पनिया (wisdom); वीरि (energy); खनन्ती (tolerance); सच्च (truthfulness); अदतिठान (determination); मेत्ता (loving kindness) and उपेख्खा (equanimity).

It is a day of enormous significance for you here in Sri Lanka, for us in India, and for Buddhists around the world. And, I am most grateful to Excellency President Maithripala Sirisena, Excellency Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and the people of Sri Lanka for extending to me the honour to be the Chief Guest at the International Vesak Day festivities in Colombo. On this auspicious occasion, I also bring with me the greetings of 1.25 billion people from the land of the Samyaksambuddha, the perfectly self-awakened one.

Excellencies, and Friends, our region is blessed to have given to the world the invaluable gift of Buddha and his teachings. Bodh Gaya in India, where Prince Siddhartha became the Buddha, is the sacred nucleus of the Buddhist universe. Lord Buddha's first sermon in Varanasi, which I have the honour to represent in the Parliament, set in motion the wheel of Dhamma. Our key national symbols have taken inspiration from Buddhism. Buddhism and its various strands are deep seated in our governance, culture and philosophy. The divine fragrance of Buddhism spread from



India to all corners of the globe. Mahindra and Sanghamitra, the worthy children of King Ashoka made their journey from India to Sri Lanka as धम्मा दूत to spread the biggest gift of धम्मा.

And, as Buddha had himself said: सज्जानामधम्मादानं जनाती, meaning, the gift of धम्मा is the biggest gift of all. Today, Sri Lanka takes pride in being among the most important nerve centres of Buddhist teachings and learning. Centuries later, Anagarika Dharmapala undertook a similar journey, but this time, from Sri Lanka to India to revive the spirit of Buddha in the land of its origin. In some way, you took us back to our own roots. The world also owes a debt of gratitude to Sri Lanka for preserving some of the most important elements of the Buddhist heritage. Vesak is an occasion for us to celebrate this unbroken shared heritage of Buddhism. A heritage that connects our societies across generations and through centuries.

Friends, The friendship between India and Sri Lanka was etched in time by the “Great Master”. Buddhism imparts an ever present radiance to our relationship. As close neighbours, our relationship spreads across many layers. It draws its strength as much through our interconnected values of Buddhism as it does from the limitless possibilities of our shared future. Ours is a friendship that lives in the hearts of our people and in the fabric of our societies.

To honour and deepen our links of Buddhist heritage, I have the great pleasure to announce that from August this year, Air India will operate direct flights between Colombo and Varanasi. This will ease travel to the land of Buddha for my brothers and sisters from Sri Lanka, and help you directly visit Sravasti,

Kusinagar, Sankasa, Kaushambi and Sarnath. My Tamil brothers and sisters will also be able to visit Varanasi, the land of Kashi Viswanath.

Venerable Monks, Excellencies and Friends,

I believe we are at a moment of great opportunity in our ties with Sri Lanka. An opportunity to achieve a quantum jump in our partnership across different fields. And, for us, the most relevant benchmark for the success of our friendship is your progress and success. We are committed to the economic prosperity of our Sri Lankan brothers and sisters. We will continue to invest in driving positive change and economic growth to deepen our development co-operation. Our strength lies in sharing our knowledge, capacity and prosperity. In trade and investment, we are already significant partners. We believe that free flow of trade, investments, technology, and ideas across our borders will be to our mutual benefit. India's rapid growth can bring dividends for the entire region, especially in Sri Lanka. In infrastructure and connectivity, transport and energy, we are poised to scale up our cooperation. Our development partnership stretches across nearly every sector of human activity such as agriculture, education, health, resettlement, transport, power, culture, water, shelter, sports, and human resources.

Today, India's development cooperation with Sri Lanka amounts to US Dollars 2.6 billion. And, its only aim is to support Sri Lanka in realizing a peaceful, prosperous and secure future for its people. Because, the economic and social wellbeing of the people of Sri Lanka is linked with that of 1.25 billion Indians. Because, whether it is on land or in the waters of the Indian Ocean, the security of our



societies is indivisible. My conversations with President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe have only reinforced our will to join hands in achieving our common goals. As you make important choices for the harmony and progress of your society, you will find in India a friend and partner that will support your nation-building endeavours.

Venerable Monks, Excellencies and Friends,

Lord Buddha's message is as relevant in the twenty first century as it was two and a half millennia ago. The मध्यम प्रतिपादा, the Middle Path shown by Buddha, speaks to all of us. Its universality and evergreen nature is striking. It has been a unifying force among nations. The countries of South, Central, South East and East Asia are proud of their Buddhist links traced to the land of Buddha.

The themes of Social Justice and Sustainable World Peace, chosen for the Vesak day, resonate deeply with Buddha's teachings. The themes may appear independent. But, they are both deeply interdependent and interconnected. The issue of Social justice is linked to conflict within and among communities. This arises principally because of तन्हा or (तृष्णा in Sanskrit), the thirst, which in turn stems from greed. Greed has driven the mankind to dominate and degrade our natural habitat. Our desire to achieve all our wants has created income inequalities in communities and disturbed social harmony.

Similarly, the biggest challenge to Sustainable World Peace today may not be necessarily from conflict between the nation states. It is from the mind-sets, thought streams, entities and instruments rooted in the idea of hate and violence.

The menace of terrorism in our region is a concrete manifestation of this destructive emotion. Sadly, these ideologies of hate and their proponents in our region are not open to dialogue and hence only open to causing death and destruction. I firmly believe that Buddhism's message of peace is the answer to growing arc of violence all over the world.

And, not just a negative notion of peace defined by the absence of conflict. But, a positive peace where we all work to promote dialogue, harmony and justice, based on compassion and wisdom. As Buddha said, "नत्तीसंतिपरणसुखं", "there is no higher bliss than peace". On Vesak, my hope is that India and Sri Lanka will work together to uphold the ideals of Lord Buddha and promote values of peace, accommodation, inclusiveness, and compassion in the policies and conduct of our governments. This is the true path to free individuals, families, societies, nations and the world at large from the three poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance.

Venerable Monks, Excellencies and friends,

On the blessed day of Vesak, let us light the lamps of knowledge to move out of darkness; let us look more within; and let us uphold nothing else but the truth. And, dedicate our efforts to follow the path of Buddha whose light shines all over the world.

As the verse 387 of Dhammapada says:

दिवातपित आदिच्छो, रत्तिंगओभातिचंदिमा
सञ्ज्ञोखतियोतपित, झायीतपति ब्राह्मणों
अथसब्बमअहोरत्तिंग, बुद्धोतपतितेजसा

Meaning:

The sun shines by the day,
The moon lights up the night,
The warrior shines in his armour,
The Brahmin shines in his meditation,
But, the awakened one shines all day and night
by his radiance.

Thank you once again for the honour to be with you.

I look forward to paying homage at the Sri Dalada Maligawa, the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, in Kandy today afternoon. May the Triple Gem of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha bless us all.

Thank you, Thank you very much.

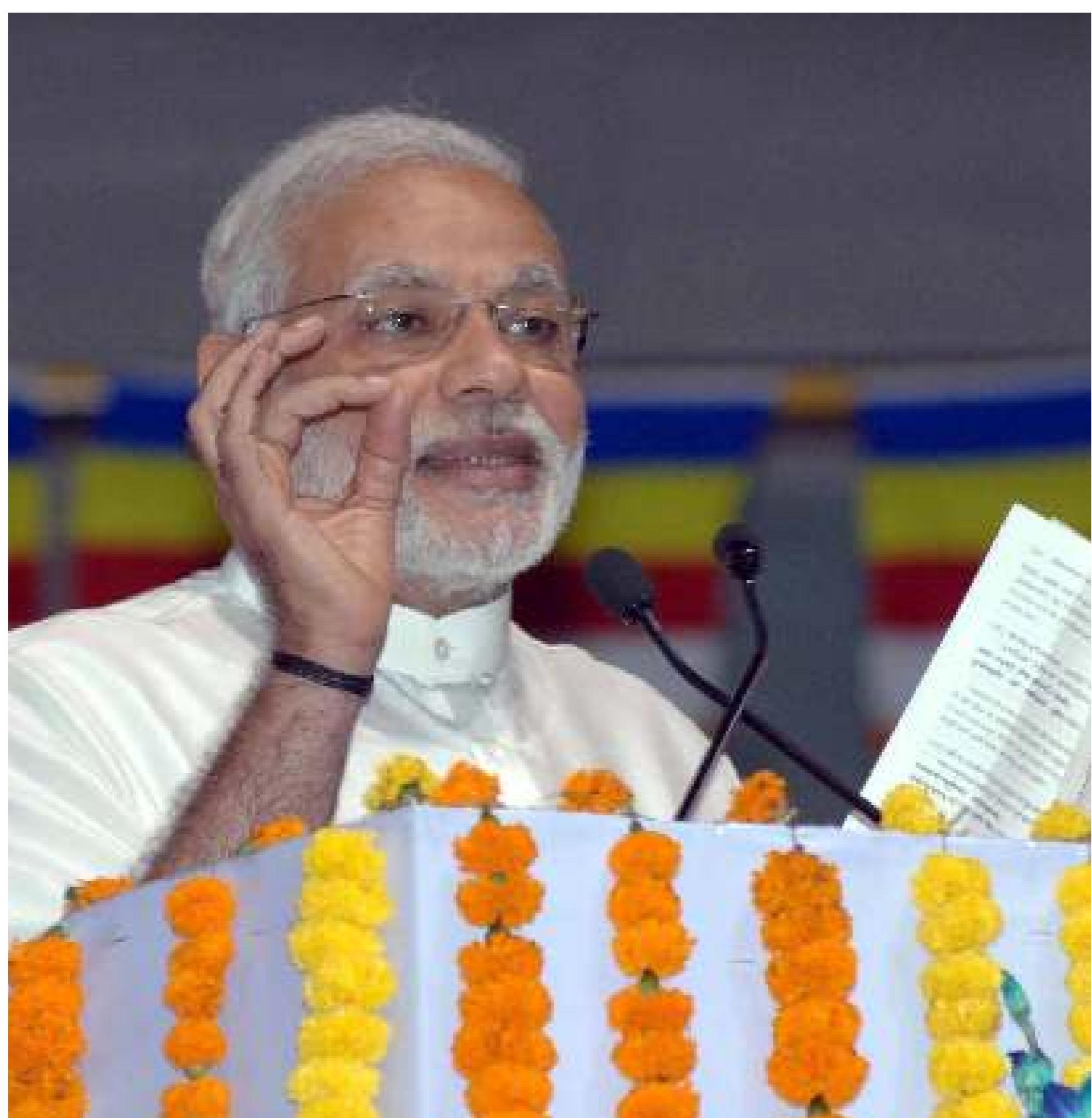


International Buddha Poornima Diwas Celebration

May 04, 2015

Key takeaways from the speech:

- The life of Lord Buddha had a shade of a continuum. His inner compassion resonated in every particle of his being. It was demonstrated even when he was growing up as the Prince Siddhartha amidst royalty and luxury.
- It was the courage and conviction in his belief that led him to leave everything behind in search of a more powerful force for the benefit of mankind.
- Buddha's message was that we cannot achieve results if we walk alone, but if we as people come together. The mantra of "Buddham Sharnam Gachami" emphasises the importance of unity, not just of the people but of souls.
- Recalling his time as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, the PM mentioned about the influence that Lord Buddha had on his life. He got a huge statue of Lord Buddha installed in the secretariat and at the Chief Minister's residence.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Today we all have gathered on an occasion which is like a triple celebration. Today, is the auspicious day of Buddha Poornima when Lord Buddha was born. Today is the day when he attained enlightenment and it is on this very day when Buddha left his body and attained divinity. But on this very joyful occasion we are feeling a little bit sad. Sad because the very land where Lord Buddha was born is passing through a deep crisis. It's hard to imagine the magnitude of this crisis and also it is difficult to gauge the time span for which our brethren from Nepal will have to endure this pain. However, it is also the time when entire humanity can demonstrate the very message of compassion preached by Lord Buddha. Let all of us be inspired with the compassion and empathy and share the pain and sorrow of our brethren in Nepal. Let us wipe their tears and offer our prayers to Lord Buddha to grant strength to these people.

Whenever we discuss Lord Buddha and his preaching it is natural that one may question its relevance in the world today. We ponder if at all it will be beneficial for the humanity or not. But we realize that there is no aspect of life left untouched by the teachings of Buddha. If we want freedom from war, the salvation is by following the path of Buddha. Sometimes people have a misconception that power and wealth hold the solution to various problems, but the life of Buddha negates this notion. We are all aware of the story of Buddha's enlightenment, but if we closely see his conduct we realize that the ground had already been laid. To sow the seed after the rains and obtain a crop is known to everyone, but what we realize later that it was the innate power of that land, its very own potential, that provides fertility for the crops to bloom.

It appears that Buddha was enlightened right since his birth itself. The episode that the world knows as enlightenment was something else.....otherwise

what could be the reason that a person who was born into a royal family, who was trained in warfare, who had immense power, immense wealth realized that this his is not sufficient, something more is required, there is something much more than the material wealth that is required for the welfare of the humanity. One can imagine the courage and conviction in his belief with which he in an instant he left everything in search of a force more powerful to benefit mankind. This is not a small achievement by any means.

When we look at the life of Lord Buddha we find a kind of a continuum. His inner compassion resonated in every particle of his being. It was demonstrated even when he was growing up as the Prince Siddhartha amidst royalty and luxury. We get a glimpse of Buddha much earlier. Once Siddhartha and his brother Devbrata went hunting. Devbrata killed a swan while hunting. Siddhartha saw this and did all he could to save the swan's life. The brother wants to enjoy the kill but Buddha forsaking the love of his elder brother, holds on to his principles even as a child and prevents Devbrata from killing any further. If this compassion wasn't inherent, if the life was not inspired by compassion then this episode would not have taken place. The kind of upbringing he had in his royal family prepared them for warfare at all times and they would be decorated with their arms at all the times. One can imagine that coming from such a background, the compassion was still so intense that he was ready to forsake his brother for a bird. It is this very emotion which gives the power to renounce all, even the power and life of luxury. And even at the end of his life same empathy and compassion can be seen. Even when a person unknowingly nails his ears ...despite of being in insufferable pain, one can imagine what kind of a pain he must have had, yet he displayed the same empathy that

he displayed during the hunting incident and was full of empathy for the person who hit him. How principled his life was, he gave us the message of being unflinching. We can see how he was consistent in his principles throughout his life.

Today the entire world is discussing that the 21st century belongs to Asia. There can be debate that it may belong to this country or the other one but none can deny that it will be an Asian century. Those who imagined the 21st Century to be Asia probably forgot one aspect. There can be no 21st century belonging to Asia without Buddha. There can be no 21st century without Buddha. It is Buddha only who can inspire the world, and what is that inspiration? The world is suffering through crises, people are hell bent on killing each other, violence is at its peak. The physical world is smeared with blood, then where ill the message of compassion rise from? In this atmosphere full of violence who will give the message of love and peace? If we seek who will it be that the world would want to emulate and whose principles the world would be ready to accept, we end up at one person only. There is only one shore for the lost souls and that is Buddha. He is the guiding force for the mankind facing many challenges. If we think that can there be another viewpoint as powerful within our lifespans, we find none. We can see the various ideologies of the world. Those ideologies did not spread far and wide in the life spans of the ideologues. Later their disciples spread it. It must have been propagated by the governments. But someone who gained immense popularity throughout the world, in his lifetime was Lord Buddha. His principles and thoughts have reached around the world. It is the centre of inspiration and unflinching dedication for many. If we associate the various aspects of Buddha's life one realizes that he was a knowledge seeker. Till one has the conviction, till

our principles are not weighed, till we find a better option through a comparative study, the world does not accept our views easily. Buddha's principles were based on sound knowledge, that is why the world accepted them. The world weighed and analysed them and then only it accepted them.

In those days the social life was full of evils. There was an era of doubt. Extending the territorial boundaries seemed like a natural tendency. In those odd times, to talk about sacrifice, to talk about principles and to give a message of love and compassion and to talk of social reforms, those issues which bother us till date, Lord Buddha touched upon those issues around 2500 years back ago.

Just now a book was given to me that I was reading.....I was impressed by a certain passage, which I would like to share with you. It is mentioned at one place. "To think of a future or heaven is a distant dream for those who do not serve others, one cannot be meaningful in this life itself. Leave apart happiness after death, one is not happy in one's own lifetime. It further states that if a labourer does not perform upto his skill or an employee who does not engage his employees according to their skill both fail to realize even their material aims. Those who celebrate May 1st as, labour day can never imagine that Lord Buddha expressed his views on this issue around 2500 years ago.

Be it the caste system, the disparity among the upper and lower classes, the discussions about good or bad, Lord Buddha was very sensitive about those issues. What did he want? At a point he mentions "Let those who are shamed by the others, rise. Those people who toil and sweat, may become beautiful." He wanted that those who toil in the heat and sweat, their lives may become better.

That means that the poor, deprived and exploited held a special place in his heart. At another point he expresses his views on the dignity of women and has discussed women empowerment in a way contemporary to the times he lived in. He says that those born as women in this life will be born as men in the other, those who are considered to be low bred will have a high life in the next. And most importantly he says that despite of all, such people will not be proud. I was just casually going through his views, but imagine what outlook he had for the society. He wanted a change in the society, he wanted an evolution. He wanted both the individual and the society to scale new heights. According to the period he lived in, Buddha's message was that we cannot achieve results if we walk alone, for that we need to come together. He wanted people to come together and the same message was given by Baba Saheb Ambedkar. And that's why whenever one talks of Buddha, the mantra of "Buddham Sharnam Gachami ... comes to our mind. He emphasized the importance of organization. Like he proposed the importance of unity, in a similar way he proposed the unity of souls. He tried to bring together as many peoples he could, he believed in uniting people and made efforts to bring together as many people as he could.

Buddha gave many messages for the development of the individual, but none can be greater. You can read as many management books and attend as many lectures, you can scan as many texts as you wish, but I believe that just one mantra of Buddha is enough. Keep all the knowledge about personality development on one end and Buddha's three-word mantra on the other, the balance will always tilt in Buddha's favour. What is that mantra? The best mantra for personality development is 'Aap Deepo Bhava' meaning let yourself be the light. There can be no better message of upward journey for humans than this.

Many people call Lord Buddha the light of the east. He is mostly referred to in this way. But saying so reflects the limitation of our imagination. What I feel is that he was a source of light for the entire universe. He was the source of light, which illuminated the lives of people as per the need of the times. Let us all draw strength from that light, and attain divinity encompassing empathy, compassion, a tendency to take others along, where we have a tendency to live for others and make sacrifices for them.

The path that Buddha has shown us, when we tread on those paths.... Buddha has discussed the Ashtang marg. I believe without knowing the Ashtang Marg or eight paths one cannot truly understand Buddha. Buddha explains the Ashtang Marg as right view, right thought, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right conciseness, right construction. Lord Buddha has chosen these eight paths for us. Today, United nation has accepted our request for International Yoga Day. 177 nations come together to celebrate the International Yoga day. In the history of the U.N, no such motion has been backed by such a huge majority and neither was any motion passed in such a short span of time. This Yoga will salvage us from materialistic instincts and will deliver us from diseases. Going further it helps us to meditate which is what Buddha aspired us to do. In a way, if we look at it, it is a solution to all the problems currently being faced by the world. These days, whichever country in Asia I visit, the government heads take special care to put one visit to Buddha temple in my itinerary and I also like it.

When I was the Chief Minister I went to China. None can imagine that the program that the Chinese government organised for me had one evening dedicated in a Buddhist temple.

When I went to Japan, the Prime Minister himself came to Kyoto and took me along inside the premises of the Buddha temple there. Recently I visited Sri Lanka, I got a chance to meet all Buddhist Bhikshus. I realized that there is such a lot of spiritual consciousness, but it is lying scattered all around. It is the need of the hour to save the world from the current crises and to spread Buddha's message of love and compassion. Only then all such power will be activated. Then all of us should tread along the path shown by Lord Buddha. Only then we will be able to realize our potential. It's good that many people in our nation have paid attention. Otherwise, it takes hardly any time for things to become controversial in our country.

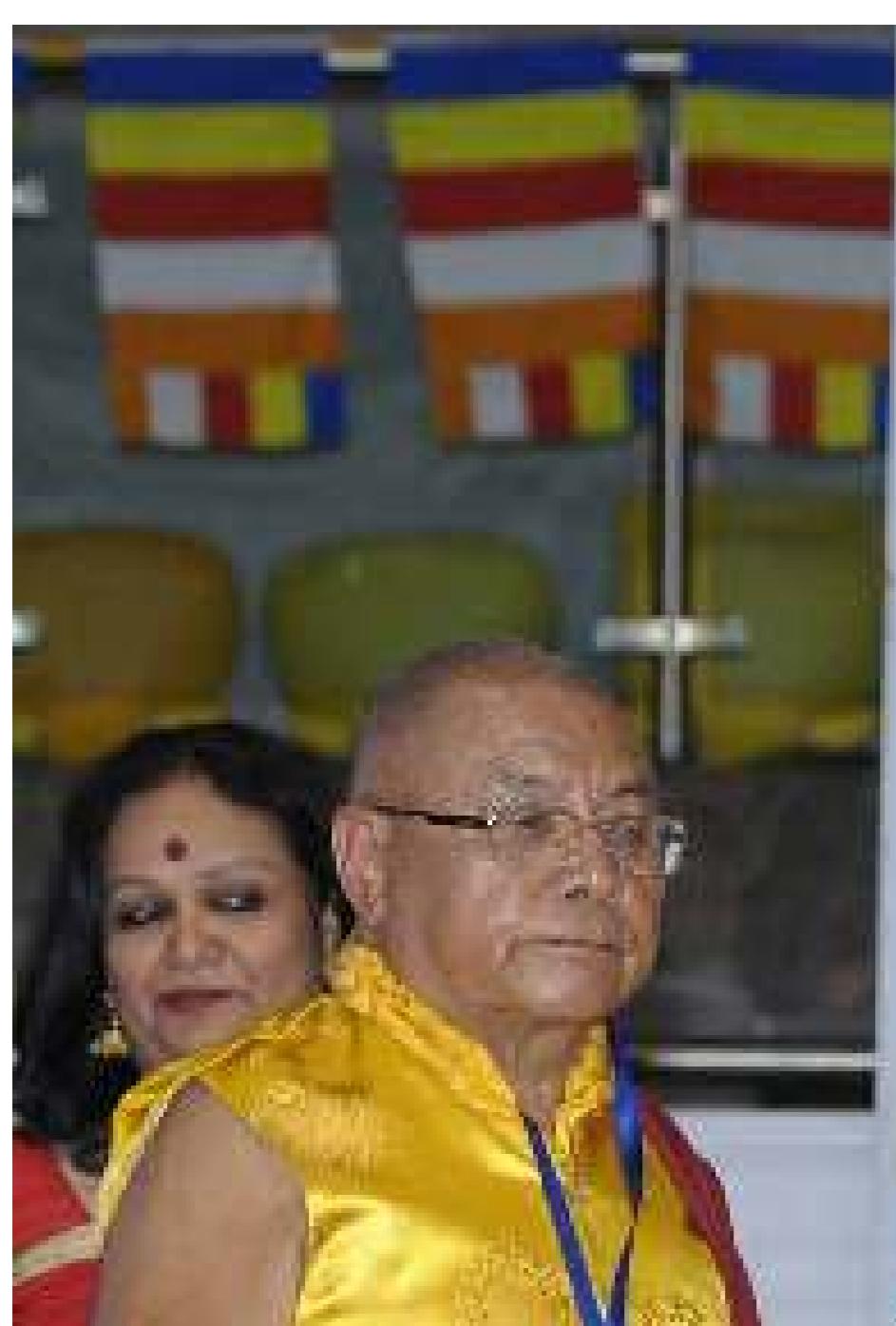
During my tenure as the Chief Minister, when a few Secretariat was built in Gandhi Nagar, I got a huge statue of Lord Buddha installed right in the front. One can see him as soon as one enters. Even at the Chief Minister's residence, I got a statue of Lord Buddha installed. It has still not caught the media attention, otherwise they would have skinned me by now. I believe there is a reason for what I did. It was not due to my knowledge or information that I had, there are a few things that stay with us without being aware of them. The village where I was born, where I lived and studied as a kid and a teenager, I came to know that Huen Tsang lived there for a long time. Why did he stay there? Then I came to know, it's a general assumption that Lord Buddha resides towards the east, but you will be surprised to know that in the far west, in my village there was a hostel for Buddhist Bhikshus. Thousands of Buddhist Bhikshus were educated and trained there. That has been mentioned by Huen Tsang.

So it was natural, that when I became the chief minister I sought to explore if what was written was true. I asked the archaeological

I was very happy that all the things were found in the excavation. Buddhist stupas were found, the hostels were found and Huen Tsang mentioned that thousands received their education and ordination there. Later I organized a Global Buddhist conference and took many Buddhist Bhikshus there. I am happy because during excavation we found the relics of Buddha at one site. We found a gold box which is kept in MS university for now. My plans for the future are to construct a grand temple for Lord Buddha there and people from world over who draw inspiration from Buddha may visit it.

So I have always believed that I have a special connection with Lord Buddha. I experience that I am connected to his thoughts and his path of love and compassion. Today on this auspicious occasion of Buddha Poornima I got a chance to sit at his feet and remember him and meet all of you, I am grateful for that.

I once again pray to Buddha for the people of Nepal, that he grants immense strength to our brethren who are suffering. We pray that this brother of ours becomes strong once again and may become prosperous in the lap of the Himalayas. With this, I conclude my speech. Thank You.





Mahabodhi Society, Sri Lanka

March 13, 2015

Key takeaways from the speech:

- Mahabodhi Society is an international Buddhist organisation founded by Bodhisattva Anagarika Dharmapala on 31st May 1891 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Its objective is to propagate Buddha's message of wisdom, peace, compassion and non-violence towards all beings without discrimination.
- The Prime Minister talks about his birthplace Vadnagar which was home to Chinese scholar and philosopher Huen Tsang who came to India approximately 800 years ago to learn about Buddhism.
- The PM recalls his time as the Chief Minister of Gujarat when he ordered for the excavation of Devki Mori where relics of Buddha were found in a gold box. The excavators also found an establishment which was supposed to be a training centre for Buddhist monks.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

It is indeed a matter of great fortune for me that I got to visit this holy site of the Mahabodhi Society and receive the blessings of all the great saints. I would especially like to thank the head of the Mahabodhi society for this opportunity. I would also like to especially thank you for giving me the opportunity of viewing the Sanchi relics and earn some divine blessings.

I seek blessings of the Buddhist monks. They prayed for me, for India and Sri Lanka, for peace between us and our progress, this touched my heart and I once again thank you all.

Srimad Anagarika Dharmapala has played an important role in the cultural and political renaissance in Sri Lanka. He played an important role in establishing the Mahabodhi Society for the resurrection of Buddhist religion. This society has played an important role in re-establishing the past glory of the ancient Mahabodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya.

It is said that Sri Lanka is the oldest nation still following Buddhism. If we visit any country of the world, we can find the Sri Lankan monks doing this sacred job. Buddha unites us all. It was my great fortune, like Swami ji just mentioned that when I was the Chief Minister of Gujarat I organized an International Buddhist Assembly. Delegates from more than 20 countries attended it, you too had attended it. Generally, it is assumed that Buddhism has maximum influence on the east of India, whereas I hail from Gujarat, which is on the western end of India. This part too is equally influenced by Buddhism.

It is my great fortune that I was born in Varnagarh. Huen Tsang, the Chinese philosopher stayed for a long time there when he came to India some 800 years ago. He has described India of that time.

He wrote that the village I was born in was a huge centre for the training of the Buddhist monks. It had a huge hostel which could house more than 10,000 students. When I became the Chief Minister, based on his writings, I ordered some excavations. We could find all the things he mentioned, those big hostels, the training centre of Buddhist monks etc. Not only that, we have a place in Gujarat called Dev Ki Mori, on excavation there we found the relics of Lord Buddha in a golden box.

I had taken Thero ji to visit all those findings. I have been nurturing a dream. I want to construct a grand temple for Lord Buddha in the place where his relics have been discovered. I have always believed that today the world which lives scared because of terrorism can find salvation only through the path of Buddhism.

I am glad to receive the blessings of all the saints in this holy place. I once again pay my respects to you all. I thank you for the honour and hospitality you bestowed on me. I thank you all once again.



“Samvad” - Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness, Sitagu International Buddhist Academy, Myanmar

September 03, 2015

Key takeaways from the speech:

- The life of Gautama Buddha illustrates the power of service, compassion and, most importantly, renunciation. He was born into privilege but he had a distinct consciousness about human suffering, illness, old age and death.
- Hinduism and Buddhism with their well-defined treatises on Mother Earth can help examine the changes in approach that need to be made.
- The Prime Minister went on to say that the present generations have the responsibility to act as a trustee of the rich natural wealth for future. The issue is not merely about climate change; it is about climate justice.
- Lord Buddha in the 21st Century can be found across national borders, across faith systems, across political ideologies, playing the role of a bridge to promote understanding to counsel patience and to enlighten us with tolerance and empathy.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

I am delighted to be here, at the inauguration of Samvad, the Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness. This is truly an esteemed gathering of spiritual leaders, scholars and leaders from several countries of the world where Buddhism is a prevalent way of life.

It is a matter of immense happiness that this conference is being held in India, including in Bodh Gaya. India is the ideal venue to host a symposium of this nature. We in India are proud of the fact that it was from this land that Gautama Buddha gave the world the tenets of Buddhism.

The life of Gautama Buddha illustrates the power of service, compassion and, most importantly, renunciation. He was born into privilege. The hardships he faced were relatively fewer. Yet, with age grew a distinct consciousness about human suffering, about illness, about old age and about death. He was convinced that material wealth is not the sole goal. Human conflicts repulsed him. And then, he set out, on the path to create a peaceful and compassionate society. In those days, he had the courage and conviction to hold a mirror to the society, and sought to break free from practices and systems seen as regressive.

Gautam Buddha was a revolutionary. He nurtured a faith where a human being is at the core, nothing else. The innermost being of man manifests godliness. In a way, he created a faith without God, and a faith where divinity is not about looking anywhere outside, but about looking within. In three words, Appa Deepo Bhavah (अप्प दीपो भव) or be your own light, Gautam Buddha gave humanity the greatest management lesson. Nothing pained him more than mindless conflict that caused human suffering. Non-violence was integral to his worldview.

The message and teachings of Gautama Buddha resonate loudly and clearly with the major themes chosen for this symposium – the themes of avoiding conflicts, moving towards environmental consciousness and a concept of free and frank dialogue.

The three themes may appear independent but they are not mutually exclusive. Infact, they are mutually dependent and supportive.

The conflict in the first theme is among humans, religions, communities and nation-states, also between non-state actors and states, and even the world. Intolerant non-state actors now control large territories where they are unleashing barbaric violence on innocent people.

The second conflict is between nature and man, between nature and development, and also between nature and science. These types of conflicts call for dialogue to bring about conflict avoidance – not just ‘give and take’ conflict resolution negotiations as what is happening today.

Ethical values of personal restraint in consumption and environmental consciousness are deeply rooted in Asian philosophical traditions, especially in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Buddhism, along with other faiths, such as Confucianism, Taoism and Shintoism, has undertaken greater responsibility to protect the environment. Hinduism and Buddhism with their well-defined treatises on Mother Earth can help examine the changes in approach that need to be made.

Climate change is a pressing global challenge. It calls for a collective human action and a comprehensive response. In India, faith and

nature have had a deep link since ancient times. Buddhism and environment are deeply co-related.

The Buddhist tradition, in all of its historical and cultural manifestations, encourages greater identification with the natural world because from a Buddhist perspective nothing has a separate existence. The impurities in the environment affect the mind, and the impurities of mind also pollute the environment. In order to purify the environment, we have to purify the mind. The eco crisis, in fact, is a reflection of imbalance of mind. Lord Buddha, therefore, accorded importance to the need for preserving natural resources, and created tools related to water conservation and forbid the monks from polluting water resources. The nature, forests, trees and the well-being of all beings play a great role in the teachings of Lord Buddha.

I wrote a book ‘Convenient Action’ which was released by the former President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. In my book I have shared my experiences of dealing with climate change as the Chief Minister. Personally, it is my reading of Vedic literature that educated me about the strong bond between humans and Mother Nature. We are all aware of Mahatma Gandhi’s Doctrine of Trusteeship.

In this context, I want to say that we, the present generation, have the responsibility to act as a trustee of the rich natural wealth for the future generations. The issue is not merely about climate change; it is about climate justice. Again I repeat is not the issue of climate change, it is about climate justice.

In my view, the most adversely affected by climate change are the poor and the downtrodden. When a natural disaster strikes, they are hit the hardest. When there are floods, they are rendered

homeless; during a quake, their homes are destroyed; during droughts, they are affected; and during extreme cold too, the homeless suffer the most.

We can't let climate change keep affecting people in this manner, which is why I believe the discourse must shift focus from climate change to climate justice. The third theme — promotion of dialogue — calls for a shift from ideological approach to a philosophic one. Without proper dialogue, neither of the two themes of conflict avoidance is possible, or workable.

The severe limitations in our conflict resolution mechanisms are becoming more and more obvious. We need significant, collective and strategic efforts to prevent bloodshed and violence. It is, thus, no surprise that the world is taking note of Buddhism. This is also a recognition of the historical Asian traditions and values, which can be used to shift the paradigm to conflict avoidance, to move from the path of ideology to philosophy.

The essence of the entire concept of this conference — including the first two themes conflict avoidance and environmental consciousness — is contained in the dialogue part of it which calls for a shift from the “them vs us” ideological approach to philosophic approach. It is necessary to inform the world about the need to shift from ideology — whether religious or secular — to philosophy. When I spoke at the United Nations last year, I briefly mentioned that the world needs to shift from ideological approach to philosophic approach. A day later when I addressed the Council for Foreign Relations, I expanded on this concept a little more. The essence of philosophy is that it is not a closed thought, while ideology is a closed one. So philosophy not only allows dialogue but it is perpetual search of truth through dialogue.



The entire Upanishad literature is a compilation of dialogue. Ideology only believes in unabated truth. So ideologies which close the gates for dialogue have the propensity for violence while philosophy seeks to avoid it through dialogue.

Thus, Hindu and Buddhist religions are in that sense more philosophies and not just belief systems.

It is my firm belief that the solution to all problems lies in dialogue. Earlier, it was believed that force indicates power. Now, power must come through the strength of ideas and the effective dialogue. We have seen the adverse effects of war. The first half of the 20th century was witness to the horrors of two world wars.

Now, nature of warfare is changing and the dangers are increasing. What took a hundred thousand men or a prolonged battle can now happen through the click of a button, in a span of minutes.

All of us here have a cardinal duty to ensure that our future generations lead a life of peace, dignity and mutual respect. We need to sow the seeds of a conflict-free world and, in this endeavour, faiths of Buddhism and Hinduism have a great contribution.

When we talk about dialogue, what kind of dialogue should it be? It is dialogue which produces no anger or retribution. One of the greatest examples of such dialogue was the one between Adi Sankara and Mandana Mishra.

It is worth recalling and describing this ancient example for our modern times. Adi Sankara, a vedantic who did not give high marks for rituals, was a young man, while Mandana Mishra was an elderly scholar and high ritualist who believed even in animal sacrifice.



Adi Sankara wanted to establish through dialogue and debate with the highest authority on ritualism and that rituals were not necessary for attaining Mukti, while Mandana Mishra wanted to prove that Sankara was wrong in dismissing rituals. This was how, in ancient India, debates on sensitive issues between scholars avoided such issues being settled in streets. Adi Sankara and Mandana Mishra held a debate and Sankara won. But the more important point is not the debate itself but how the debate was conducted. It is a fascinating story that will ever remain one of the highest forms of debate for all times for humanity.

It was agreed that if Mandana Mishra lost, he would cease to be a householder (gruhasta) and accept sanyasa. If Adi Sankara lost, he would give up his sanyasa and marry and settle down as householder or in gruhasta life. Mandana Mishra, a high scholar, offered to Adi Sankara, who was young and therefore Mishra considered unequal, to choose a referee of his choice. Adi Sankara chose Mandana Mishra's wife, a scholar herself, as the referee! If Mandana Mishra lost, she would lose her husband! But see what she did! She asked both Sankar and Mishra to wear fresh garlands and then begin the debate, and said that the one whose garland loses its freshness would be declared as the loser! Why? Because if one gets angry, the body will develop heat, and, as a result, the garland flowers will lose their freshness in that heat. Anger within is a sign of defeat. On this logic, Mandana Mishra was declared as having lost the debate! And he accepted sanyas and became a disciple of Sankara. This demonstrates the vitality of dialogue and that too dialogue without anger or conflict.

Today, in this gathering, we are people of different nationalities, with different lifestyles,

but what binds us is the fact that the roots of our civilisations are in our shared philosophies, history and heritage. Buddhism and Buddhist heritage have been a uniting and binding factor.

They say that this century is going to be an Asian Century. I am very clear that without embracing the path and ideals shown by Gautam Buddha, this century cannot be an Asian century! I see Lord Buddha doing to our collective spiritual well-being what global trade did to our collective economic well-being and the digital internet did to our collective intellectual well-being.

I see Lord Buddha in the 21st Century across national borders, across faith systems, across political ideologies, playing the role of a bridge to promote understanding to counsel patience and to enlighten us with tolerance and empathy. You are visiting a nation that is extremely proud of its Buddhist heritage. My hometown of Vadnagar in Gujarat is one of the many sites where Buddhist relics were found and was one of the places visited by Chinese traveller and chronicler, Xuanzang.

The SAARC region is home to the holy sites of Buddhism; Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar. These sites draw pilgrims from ASEAN nations, as also from China, Korea, Japan, Mongolia and Russia. My Government is doing everything possible to give an impetus to this Buddhist heritage across India, and India is taking the lead in boosting the Buddhist heritage across Asia. This three-day meet is one such effort.

I hope the next three days are full of vibrant and rich discussions, and we are able to sit together and think about the way ahead towards peace, conflict resolution and a clean and green world. Thank You.

Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya, Bihar, India

September 05, 2015

Key takeaways from the speech:

- The Mahabodhi temple is an ancient, Buddhist temple in Bodh Gaya, marking the location where the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment under the Mahabodhi Tree.
- The Prime Minister in his speech draws a parallel between Lord Krishna and Lord Buddha. Shri Krishna gave his message before the start of the war in the Mahabharata and Lord Buddha repeatedly emphasized on rising above warfare. The underlying message by both of them was about establishing Dharma.
- The PM emphasised on developing Bodh Gaya so that it can become the spiritual capital and act as a civilisational bond between India and the Buddhist world. He also assured all possible support to Buddhist nations so that they don't have to face any difficulty in reaching Bodh Gaya.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

I am very happy to be in the midst of all of you. I feel very blessed to be here at Bodh Gaya. After Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, I have the opportunity to visit this sacred place.

I am meeting you all on a very special day. Today, we in India are observing Teachers' Day, to commemorate the birth anniversary of our 2nd President, a great scholar and teacher, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.

In this symposium we have been talking about one of the most impactful teachers in world history, Gautama Buddha. His teachings have inspired millions of people over centuries.

Today, we are also celebrating Janmashtami, the day Lord Krishna was born. The world has so much to learn from Lord Krishna. When we talk about Lord Krishna we say, श्री कृष्णम् वंदे जगतगुरुम् -Shri Krishna, the teacher of all teachers; the Guru of all Gurus. Both, Gautama Buddha and Lord Krishna have taught the world so much. The themes of this conference, in a way are inspired by the values and ideals given by these two greats. Shri Krishna gave his message before the start of the Great War in the Mahabharata and Lord Buddha repeatedly emphasized on rising above warfare. The message by both of them was about establishing Dharma.

Both of them gave great prominence to principles and processes. Gautama Buddha gave the eight-fold path and the Panchsheel. while Shri Krishna gave invaluable lessons of life in the form of Karma Yoga. These two divine souls had the strength to bring people together, rising above differences. Their teachings are most practical, eternal and are more relevant in this day and age than ever before.

The place where we are meeting makes it even more special. We are meeting in Bodh Gaya, a land that has a distinctive place in the history of humankind. This is the land of enlightenment. Years ago, what Bodh Gaya got was Siddhartha but what Bodh Gaya gave to the world was Lord Buddha, the epitome of knowledge, peace and compassion.

This is, therefore the ideal venue for a dialogue and meeting here on the auspicious day of Janmashtami and the special day of Teachers' Day makes this unique.

It was my great privilege to have participated in the Inaugural function of the first International Hindu Buddhist Initiative on "Conflict Avoidance and Environmental Consciousness" hosted by the Vivekananda International Foundation and Tokyo Foundation with the support of the International Buddhist Confederation at Delhi day before yesterday. The Conference was conceptualised on shifting the paradigm from conflict resolution to conflict avoidance and from environmental regulation to environmental consciousness.

I had shared some of my thoughts on the two critical themes which are threatening humanity as no other challenge before. I recalled how in the context of both issues and for changing the global paradigm of thinking the world is looking to the Buddha today as conflict resolution mechanisms and environmental regulations — both of them dependent on the instrumentality of nation states — are increasingly failing to measure up to challenges.

Spiritual and religious leaders and also intellectuals, largely from Buddhist societies participated in the two-day conference and deliberated on the two issues. At the end of the two-day conference, and after

a churning in which spiritual, religious and intellectual leaders participated, the Tokyo Foundation has announced that they have decided to hold a similar conference in January 2016. And other Buddhist nations have also offered to hold similar conferences in their countries.

This is an extraordinary development which coincides with the rise of Asia as an economic and civilisational phenomenon. The themes of the conference, informed and shaped by the Hindu-Buddhist civilisational and cultural perspectives, promise to deepen the notion of conflict avoidance philosophy and environmental consciousness in Asia and beyond.

The two-day conference seems to have arrived at a broad consensus on both issues. On the issue of conflicts — most of which are being driven by religious intolerance — the participants in the conference seem to have agreed that while there is no problem about the freedom to practise one's religion, it is when the radical elements try to force their own ideologies on others, that the potential for conflict arises. On the issue of environment, the conference seems to have agreed that the philosophic underpinning of the Dharma, which stresses the protection of natural heritage, is critical for sustainable development. I may add that the United Nations too has arrived at the view that sustainable development is achievable only through aligning development to the local culture of the people.

This, in my view, is a positive turn in the development modelling of the world of diversity. I may add that the turn in thinking at the global level has created the eco-system for the Hindu-Buddhist societies to carry forward their consensual ideas to the global fora. I personally consider the Hindu Buddhist Conference on Conflict Avoidance and

Environmental Consciousness as an important development in a world that seems to be short of durable ideas on both issues. Hindu philosophy was one of the greatest beneficiaries of the advent and the teachings of the Lord Buddha.

Many scholars have analysed the impact of Buddha on Hinduism. In fact, Adi Sankara was even critiqued for the way he was influenced by the Buddha and Sankara was called as “Prachhanna Boudha” — meaning Sankara was Buddha in disguised form.

That was the extent of influence of the Buddha on Adi Sankara, regarded by many as the tallest Hindu philosopher. At the mass level Buddha was so venerated that Jayadeva in his Geeta Govinda even praised him as Mahavishnu or God himself who descended to preach Ahimsa. So, Hinduism after the Buddha's advent became Buddhist Hinduism or Hindu Buddhism. They are today an inseparable amalgam.

This is how Swami Vivekananda praised Buddha.

I quote: At the time Buddha was born, India was in need of a great spiritual leader, a prophet.

Buddha never bowed down to anything, neither Veda, nor caste, nor priest, nor custom. He fearlessly reasoned so far as reason could take him. Such a fearless search for truth and such love for every living thing the world has never seen. Buddha was more brave and sincere than any teacher. Buddha was the first human being to give to this world a complete system of morality. He was good for good's sake, he loved for love's sake. Buddha was the great preacher of equality. Every man and woman has the same right to attain spirituality— that was his teaching.

I would personally call India Buddhist India

as it has imbibed all the values and virtues of the teachings of Buddha by their religious scholars incorporating them in their literature.

When this highest tribute is paid by one of the great Hindu philosophers would it be wrong to call today's Hinduism in quality and substance as Buddhist Hinduism?

Buddha is the crown jewel of the Indian nation which accepts all ways of worship of all religions. This quality of Hinduism in India was a product of many great spiritual master's, among them was Buddha. And this is what sustains the secular character of India.

The Enlightenment which Buddha attained in Bodh Gaya also lit the light of enlightenment in Hinduism. As the first Servant of this ancient nation I revere Buddha as a reformer of not only Hinduism but also the world, who has given all of us a new world view and vision which is critical for the survival of all of us and the entire world.

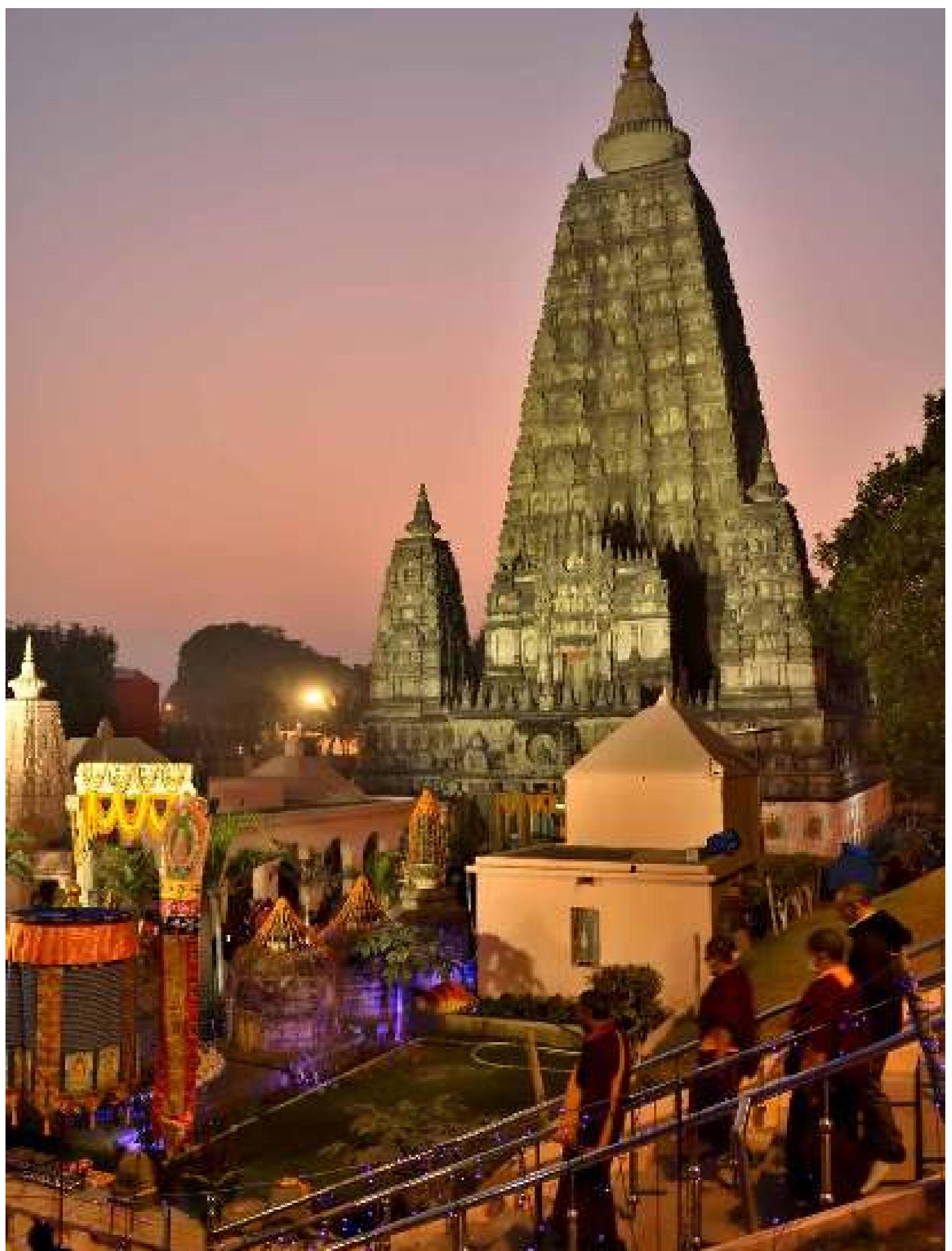
I recognise how Buddhists all over the world revere Bodh Gaya as a place of pilgrimage. We in India would like to develop Bodh Gaya so that it can become the spiritual capital and civilisational bond between India and the Buddhist world. The government of India would like to provide all possible support that its Buddhist cousin nations need for the satisfaction of their spiritual needs from this holiest of holy places for them.

I am happy to read the Declaration of Buddhist Religions and Spiritual Leaders. This declaration is the result of hardwork and extensive dialogue, which is why it is a pioneering document that will show us the way ahead. I also echo Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, who the other day

highlighted the importance of tolerance, appreciation of diversity, and spirit of compassion and fraternity. His message to this august gathering and his continuous support for furthering this initiative is a matter of great strength for us

Once again, my congratulations and best wishes to you all. This conference has raised a hope and urge to go beyond clash and create a dialogue framework for civilizational harmony and world peace. I wish you well in your constant and determined efforts to ensure that our wisdom reaches the future generations and that too in a manner in which they can practically relate to. This is essential not for us or them but for the progress of the entire human race and the beautiful surroundings which we have got from Mother Nature.

Thank you very much. Thanks a lot.





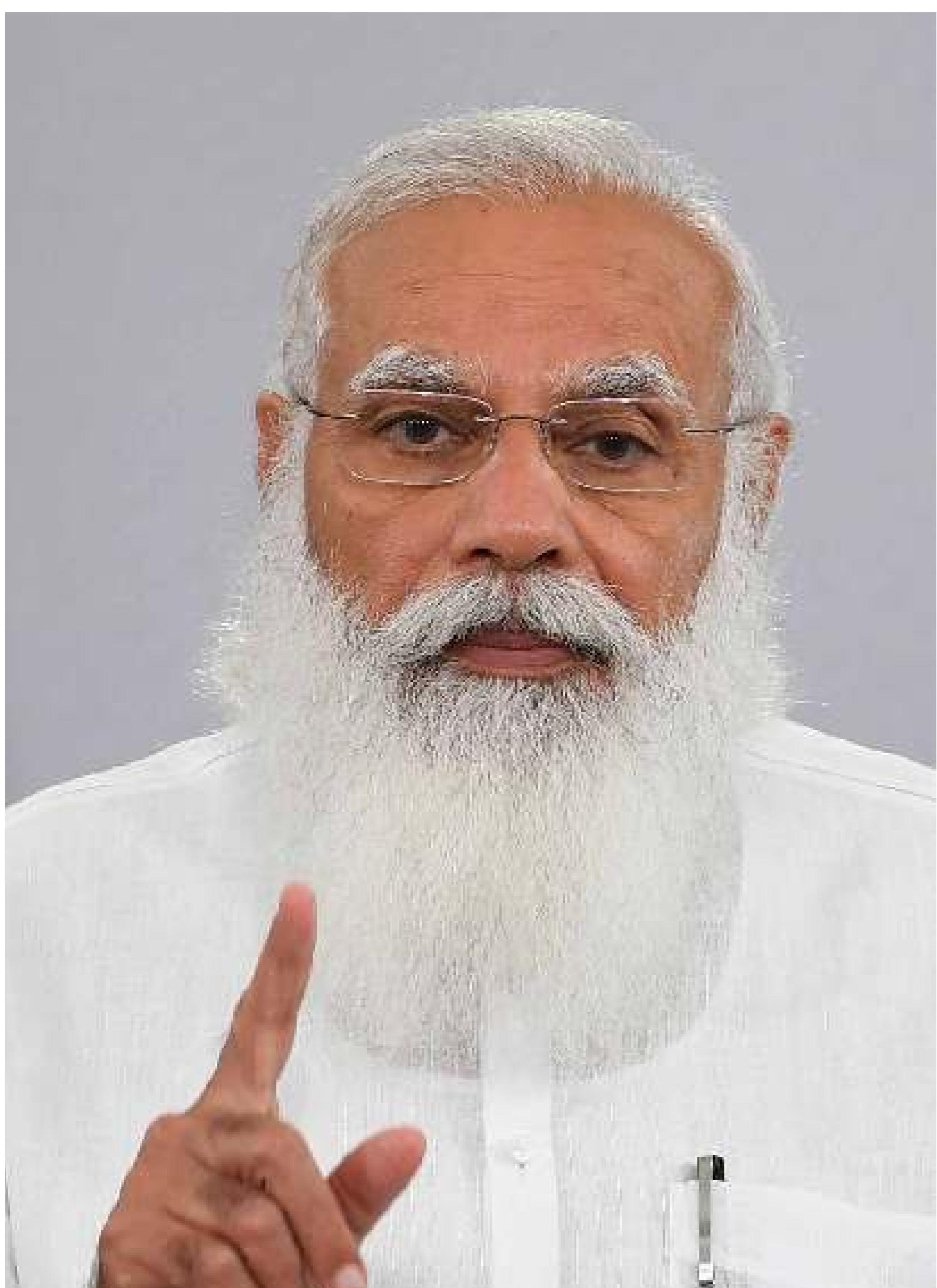


Prominent mentions of
Lord Buddha &
Buddhist themes

Inauguration of Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy at AMA, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, June 27, 2021

Key takeaways from the speech:

- India and Japan are not only committed to outer progress and growth but have given equal importance to inner peace and progress. The Japanese Zen Garden is a beautiful expression of this quest for peace and simplicity.
- The literal meaning of Kaizen as ‘improvement’, but its inner meaning not only emphasizes on improvement but ‘continuous improvement’.
- ‘Zen’ in Japan is ‘Dhyān’ (Meditation) in India and it is given to us by Lord Buddha. The concept of ‘Kaizen’ is proof of the strength of India’s present intentions and our commitment to move forward continuously.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Namaskar!

How are you?

The launch of Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy is a symbol of the spontaneity and modernity of India-Japan relations. I am confident that the establishment of the Japanese Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy will further strengthen the relationship between India and Japan, bringing our citizens closer. I would like to especially thank the leaders of Hyōgo Prefecture and my dear friend Governor Mr. Toshizō Ido. Governor Ido himself came to Ahmedabad in 2017. He and the Hyogo International Association have been instrumental in establishing the Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy in Ahmedabad. I also congratulate the colleagues of the Indo-Japan Friendship Association of Gujarat. They have consistently done remarkable work to give new energy to India-Japan relations. The Japan Information and Study Center also is one such example.

Friends, India and Japan are not only committed to outer progress and growth but have given equal importance to inner peace and progress. The Japanese Zen Garden is a beautiful expression of this quest for peace and simplicity. The people of India will see a glimpse of the peace, poise and simplicity that they have experienced through yoga and spirituality for centuries. And anyway, what is ‘Zen’ in Japan is ‘Dhyān’ (Meditation) in India. Buddha gave this ‘Dhyān’, this Buddhism to the world. And as far as the concept of ‘Kaizen’ is concerned, it is proof of the strength of our present intentions and our commitment to move forward continuously.

Many of you know the literal meaning of Kaizen as ‘improvement’, but its inner meaning is much broader. It not only emphasizes ‘improvement’ but,

'continuous improvement'.

Friends,

Serious efforts were made in Gujarat regarding Kaizen for the first time shortly after I became the Chief Minister. We studied Kaizen thoroughly, implemented it, and it was in 2004 that for the first time so much emphasis was placed on Kaizen during administrative training. In the next year in 2005, we gave Kaizen training to the top civil servants of Gujarat during a brainstorming session. Gradually, we introduced it to the education system and many government offices in Gujarat. The continuous improvement that I was talking about here also continued. We took out truckloads of unnecessary stuff from government offices, revamped processes and made them simpler.

Similarly, huge reforms were carried out in the health department drawing inspiration from Kaizen. Thousands of doctors, nurses and hospital staff were trained in Kaizen. We organized physical workshops in different departments, worked on the processes, engaged people and connected them with it. All this had a huge positive impact on governance.

Friends, we all know that governance is very important in progress, whether it is about the development of the individual, institution, society, or the country. When I came to Delhi from Gujarat, I brought with me the experiences I gained from Kaizen. We introduced this in the PMO and other departments of the Central Government. This led to the simplification of the processes and optimization of office space. Kaizen is being used in many departments, institutions and schemes of the Central Government.

Friends, Our guests from Japan at this event know my personal connection with Japan. The affection

of the people of Japan, their work culture, skills and discipline has always been influencing. And that's why whenever I have said - I wanted to create Mini-Japan in Gujarat, the main idea behind it has been that whenever the people of Japan come to Gujarat, they should find the same warmth and belongingness. I remember that Japan had joined as a partner country with the Vibrant Gujarat Summit from the very beginning. Even today, the largest delegation that comes to the Vibrant Gujarat Summit is from Japan. It is gratifying to see the confidence that Japan has reposed on Gujarat and the potential of its people.

Today the best of Japanese companies are operating in Gujarat. I have been told that their number is more than about 135. Japanese companies have set up their bases in Gujarat in every sector from automobiles to banking, from construction to pharmaceutical. Be it Suzuki Motors, Honda Motorcycle, Mitsubishi, Toyota, Hitachi, many such companies are manufacturing in Gujarat. And one good thing is that these companies are also helping a lot in the skill development of the youth of Gujarat. Three Japan-India Institutes for Manufacturing are providing skill training to hundreds of youth of Gujarat every year. Many companies also have tie-ups with technical universities and ITIs of Gujarat.

Friends, there is so much to talk about the relations between Japan and Gujarat that time will run out. These relationships are strengthened by intimacy, affection and understanding each other's feelings and requirements. Gujarat has always given special importance to Japan. JETRO, which has opened the Ahmedabad Business Support Center, has the facility to provide plug-and-play work-space to five companies simultaneously. Many Japanese compan-

ies have taken advantage of this. When I recall the old days, I find that the people of Gujarat have paid attention to even the smallest details. I remember a topic came up informally once I was discussing something with a delegation of Japan as Chief Minister. This topic was very interesting. People of Japan love to play golf but golf courses were not prevalent in Gujarat then. After that meeting, special efforts were made to expand golf courses in Gujarat. I am happy that there are many golf courses in Gujarat now. There are also many restaurants whose specialty is Japanese food. An effort has been made to make the people of Japan feel at home in Gujarat. We also worked a lot so that there is an increase in the number of Japanese speakers in Gujarat. Today there are many people in the professional world of Gujarat who speak Japanese comfortably. I am told that a university in the state is also going to start a course to teach Japanese. It would be a good beginning. I would also like to have a model of the Japanese school system in Gujarat.

I have been a huge fan of Japan's school system which emphasizes modernity and moral values simultaneously. I had the opportunity to visit Taimei School in Japan and those moments are very memorable. I can say that it was a precious opportunity for me while talking to the children of that school.

Friends,

We also have a strong belief in centuries-old cultural ties and a common vision for the future! Based on this, we have been continuously strengthening our Special Strategic and Global Partnership over the years. For this, we have also made a special arrangement of Japan-plus in the PMO. India-Japan relations gained a new impetus when the former Prime Minister of Japan and my friend Mr. Shinzo Abe

visited Gujarat. He was very excited when the bullet train project started. Even today, when I talk to him, he vividly recalls his Gujarat tour. The current Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Yoshihide Suga, is also a very amiable person. PM Suga and I believe that the friendship between India and Japan has become more relevant to our partnership, global stability and prosperity in this Covid pandemic era. At a time when we are faced with so many global challenges, it is the need of the hour that our friendship and relationship grows in strength. Of course, effort like Kaizen Academy is a beautiful reflection of that.

I would like Kaizen Academy to promote the work culture of Japan in India and step up business interactions between Japan and India. We have to give new energy to the efforts that are already underway in this direction. For example, the Indo-Japan Student Exchange Program between Gujarat University and the Otemon Gakuin University of Osaka! This program has been strengthening our relationship for over five decades. This can be further expanded. Such partnerships can be developed between the two countries and institutions.

I am sure our efforts will continue, and India and Japan will achieve new heights of development together. I also convey my very best wishes to Japan, the people of Japan for organizing the Tokyo Olympics through this program.

Many thanks to all of you!

Inauguration of Kushinagar International Airport, Uttar Pradesh

October 20, 2021

Key takeaways from the speech:

- Lord Buddha delivered his last sermon in Kushinagar and attained Mahaparinirvana in 483 BC. It is also the place where Lord Buddha breathed his last and was cremated at Rambhar Stupa.
- Kushinagar has a special reverence for Buddhists all around the world. The Prime Minister after inaugurating the international airport has put it on the world map making it more approachable for Buddhist followers to visit this pilgrimage.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Brothers and sisters!

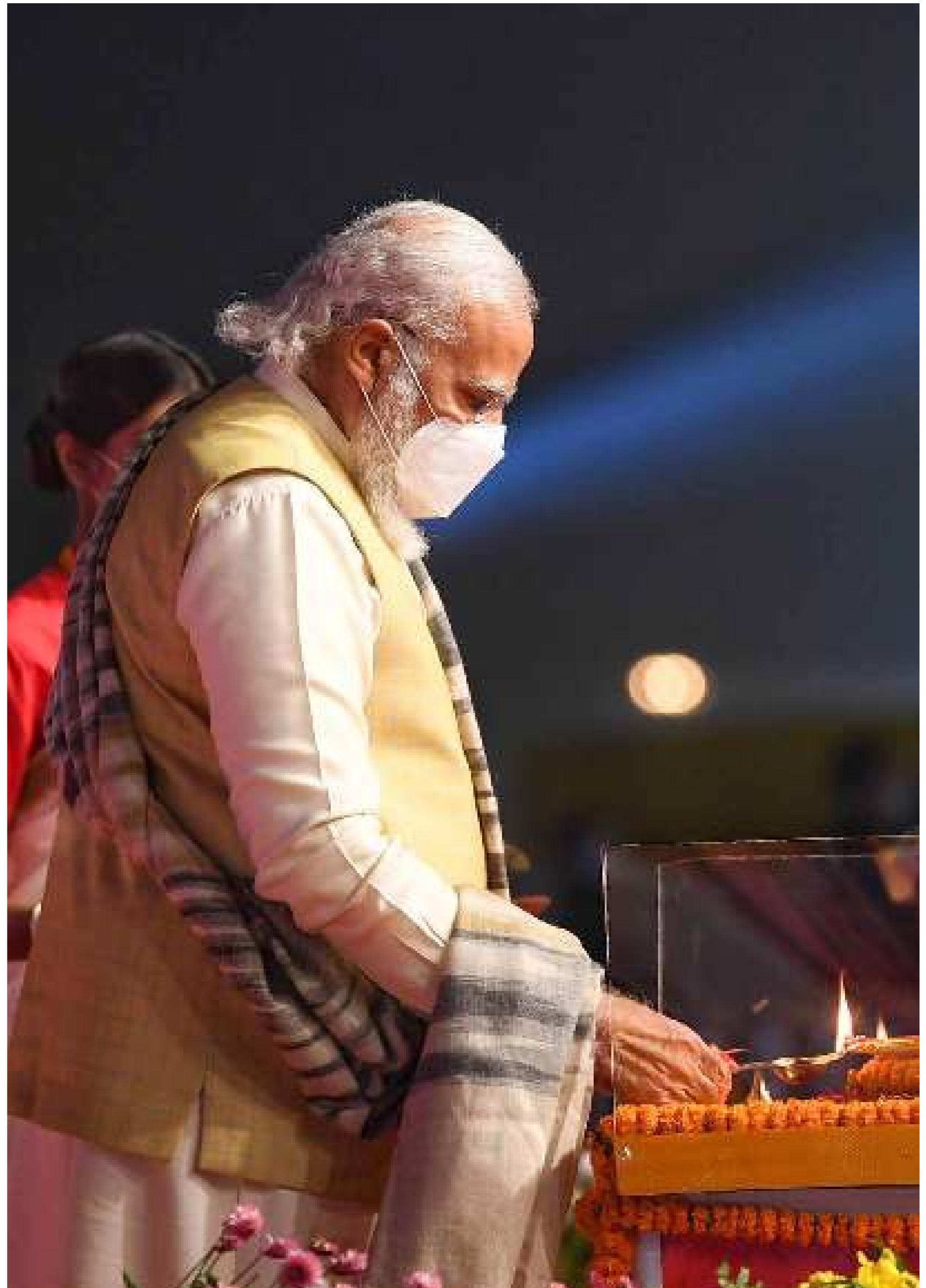
India is the centre of devotion, faith and inspiration to Buddhist society around the world. Today, the inauguration of Kushinagar International Airport is in a way a tribute to their devotion. This region, which is witness to the entire journey from the enlightenment of Lord Buddha to Mahaparinirvana, is getting directly connected to the world today. The landing of a Sri Lankan Airlines flight at Kushinagar is like a tribute to this holy land. Kushinagar welcomes with great pride the revered delegation and other dignitaries who have come from Sri Lanka by this flight today. There is also a happy coincidence that today is the birth anniversary of Maharshi Valmiki. With the inspiration of Lord Maharshi Valmiki ji, the country is marching on the path of Sabka Vikas with the help of SabkaSath and SabkaPrayas.

Friends,

India is paying special attention to develop the places associated with Lord Buddha through better connectivity and the creation of facilities for the devotees. The development of Kushinagar is one of the key priorities of the UP government and the central government. Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha, is not far from here. Jyotiraditya ji has described it in detail now, but still I want to repeat it so that we can easily understand how this region is the centre point of the country. Kapilavastu is also nearby. Sarnath, where Lord Buddha gave the first sermon, is also within a radius of 100-250 kilometers. Bodh Gaya, where Buddha attained enlightenment, is also a few hours away. Therefore, this region is going to become a great centre of faith and attraction not only for the Buddhist followers of India but also for the citizens of many countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, Singapore, Laos, Cambodia, Japan, Korea, etc.

Friends,

India's aviation sector will become a symbol of nation's progress in this virtuous period of independence and the energy of Uttar Pradesh will also be involved in it. With this wish, I congratulate all of you and the followers of Buddhism around the world for this international airport. From here I will go to seek blessings from Buddhist monks from the country and the world and then I will also get the privilege of inaugurating many more infrastructure projects of UP.



Dev Deepawali Mahotsav, Varanasi, November 30, 2020

Key takeaways from the speech:

- At a time when the world is dealing with hostility and terror, the Prime Minister invokes the message of Lord Buddha during his address of the Dev Deepawali celebrations in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- The Prime Minister imagines how Lord Buddha will react in today's scenario. He recalls the Lord's saying, "Hostility does not silence hostility, it is harmony that brings calm to hostility."
- To highlight the path of Lord Buddha towards non-violence, compassion and mercy, the PM mentions the laser show that is now being organised at Sarnath to promote tourism and education.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

I will go to Sarnath, the territory of Lord Buddha. Your long-standing demand to promote tourism in Sarnath during the evening and also for public education has now been fulfilled. The laser show will now realise the messages of compassion, mercy and non-violence of Lord Buddha. These messages become even more relevant today when the world is concerned about the threat of violence, unrest and terror. Lord Buddha would say:

न हि वेरेन वेरानि सम्मनृती ध कुदाचन अवेरेन हि
सम्मनृति एस धम्मो सनन्तनो

i.e., hostility does not silence hostility. Harmony brings calm to hostility. This is the message from Kashi, which introduces divinity from Dev Deepawali, that our minds should be illuminated like these lamps. There is a sense of positivity in all. The path for development is paved. The whole world should absorb compassion and mercy in itself. I am confident that this message from Kashi, this energy of light will realize the resolutions of the entire country. With the help of the 130 crore countrymen, we will achieve the journey of self-reliant India which has been started by the country.





Royal University of Bhutan, Thimpu

August 18, 2019

Key takeaways from the speech:

- The Prime Minister while drawing parallels between the influence of Buddhism in India and Bhutan, he says that the history, culture and spiritual traditions have created a unique bond between India and Bhutan.
- The Prime Minister recalls his days as a student and explains the inspiration that he derives from Lord Buddha's teachings till date. He goes on to extend an open invitation to the students of Buddhism from Bhutan to Nalanda University.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Friends,

It is natural that the people of Bhutan and India experience great attachment to each other. After all, we are close not just due to our geography. Our history, culture and spiritual traditions have created unique and deep bonds between our peoples and nations. India is fortunate to be the land where Prince Siddhartha became Gautam Buddha. And from where the light of his spiritual message, the light of Buddhism, spread all over the world. Generations of monks, spiritual leaders, scholars and seekers have burnt that flame bright in Bhutan. They have also nurtured the special bond between India and Bhutan.

As a result, our shared values have shaped a common world-view. This is visible in Varanasi and Bodh Gaya. And also in Dzong and Chorten. And as people, we are fortunate to be the living vehicle of this great legacy. No other two countries in the world understand each other so well or share so much. And no two countries are such natural partners in bringing prosperity to their peoples.

Everyone faces exams in schools and colleges and also in the larger class-room of life. Can I tell you something? Much of what I wrote in exam was influenced by the teachings of Lord Buddha. Particularly, the importance of positivity, over-coming fear and living in oneness, be it with the present moment or with Mother Nature. You are born in this great land.

Friends,

For centuries, education and learning have been central to the ties between India and Bhutan. In ancient times, Buddhist teachers and scholars formed the bridge of learning between our peoples. This is a price-less heritage, which we wish to preserve and

promote. Therefore, we welcome more students of Buddhism from Bhutan in institutions such as Nalanda University – a historical global seat of learning and Buddhist traditions, which is revived at the very place where it existed fifteen hundred years ago. The bond of learning between us is as modern as it is ancient. In the 20th century, many Indians came to Bhutan as teachers. Most Bhutanese citizens of older generations would have had at least one Indian teacher during their education. Some of them were honoured by His Majesty last year. And we are grateful for this generous and kind gesture.



Inaugural Ceremony of 22nd National Youth Festival, Gautam Buddha Nagar, January 12, 2018

Key takeaways from the speech:

- The Government of India observes January 12 as National Youth Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand who is credited for popularising the Vedantic ideas. It is celebrated to mark his teachings and philosophies.
- The Prime Minister in his speech throws light on the importance of the way of acquiring education. It is by following the path of Lord Buddha's "Be your own light", that one can easily grasp the knowledge that is being given to them.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Friends, the university campus where you are present now has been named after Gautam Buddha. The city where you are present – Greater Noida – it is also Gautam Buddha Nagar and therefore I will share a small story related to Gautam Buddha. It's a small incident, not a big one.

Once a disciple of Lord Buddha asked him, whether every disciple initiated by him, would be able to attain the salvation. Lord Buddha replied – No, only a few will get it.

Some will not get the salvation. The disciple asked why was so? Then the Lord said only those who would properly understand his teachings will be able to attain the salvation and rest of them will keep wandering.

Friends, you will get the same knowledge from the same teacher but how do you receive that, what kind of pledges you yourself make, these things will determine your success or failure.

Look, both Pandavas and Kauravas had the same Guru. Both of them got the same kind of education but how different were their personalities and deeds? It was because of the values of Kauravas and Pandavas were different. You will meet a lot of people who will guide you in your journey of life but you alone will have to decide that after getting knowledge what path you will have to follow; what kind of pledges you will have to make.

This is the essence of Gautam Buddha's philosophy of Appa Deepo Bhav. Become your own lamp, become your own light. Nobody will be there to make you take a pledge. Nobody will be there to remind you. Whatever you have to do, you will have to do that yourself.

Mann Ki Baat on All India Radio

April 29, 2018

Key takeaways from the speech:

- The Prime Minister on the occasion of Buddha Purnima addresses the nation via his Mann Ki Baat monthly program and reminds us to emulate the teachings of Lord Buddha.
- While citing the example of B R Ambedkar who inherited the wisdom of Lord Buddha, the PM mentions that he always worked toward strengthening the oppressed and exploited.
- The Prime Minister explains the need for developing infrastructure for Buddhist tourism in the country. It is a chance to connect India with the South East Asian countries where Buddhist traditions and preaching are a part of their origin.
- While remembering ex PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the PM remembered his contribution towards conducting the nuclear tests in Pokhran on the day of Buddha Purnima, where India demonstrated its might to the entire world in the field of science and technology.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

My dear countrymen! Buddha Purnima is a special day for every Indian. We must be proud of the fact that India is the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the very synonym of power of compassion, service and sacrifice, who guided millions of people around the world. This Buddha Purnima reminds us of all of our obligation to emulate Lord Buddha's teaching as well as, pledge ourselves to follow his footsteps.

Lord Buddha was the fountainhead of egalitarianism, peace, harmony and brotherhood. These are human values, which are most desired in the world today. Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar stressed that Lord Buddha has been a great inspiration in his social philosophy. Baba Saheb had said – “My social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words; liberty, equality and fraternity. My Philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teaching of my master, The Buddha.”

Baba Saheb strengthened the oppressed, exploited, deprived and crores of people standing on the brink of marginalization via the Constitution of India. There cannot be a bigger example of compassion than this. This form of compassion was one of the greatest qualities of Lord Buddha for the alleviation of suffering of the people. The Buddhist monks used to travel to different countries carrying with them the rich ideals of Lord Buddha and this has been occurring throughout the ages. We have inherited the wisdom of Lord Buddha throughout Asia as part of our legacy.

It forges a link between us and many Asian countries like China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar where Buddhist traditions and his preaching are a part of their origins. And this is the very reason that we are developing Infrastructure for Buddhist Tourism, which is going to connect South

east Asia with the important Buddhist sites of India.

I am also very pleased that the Government of India is a partner in the restoration of many Buddhist temples which also includes the centuries old magnificent Anand Temple in Bagan in Myanmar. Today, when there is confrontation and human suffering prevalent everywhere in the world, Lord Buddha's teachings show the way to rid hatred from the world with compassion. I wish people spread all over the world who revere Lord Buddha and believe in the principles of compassion- I wish all of them an auspicious Buddha Purnima.

I seek benediction from Lord Buddha for the entire world, so that we can fulfil our responsibility in building a peaceful and compassionate world based on his teachings. Today, as we remember Lord Buddha, you must have heard about the idols of laughing Buddha, it is said that laughing Buddha brings one good fortune, but very few people know that smiling Buddha is also associated with an important event in India's defence history. Now you will be wondering what is the connection between smiling Buddha and India's military might?

You must remember, 20 years ago today, on 11th May 1998, the Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had said while addressing the nation and his words filled the whole country with pride, courage and elation. The Indian diaspora was infused with new confidence. That day also was the day of Buddha Purnima. On May 11, 1998, at India's western end a nuclear test was conducted in Pokhran, Rajasthan. It has been 20 years since Pokhran and this test was done on Buddha Purnima with the blessings of Lord Buddha. India's test was not only successful but in a way, India had demonstrated its might in the field of science and technology.

We can also say 11 May 1998 is engraved in the history of India as a demonstration of her military power.

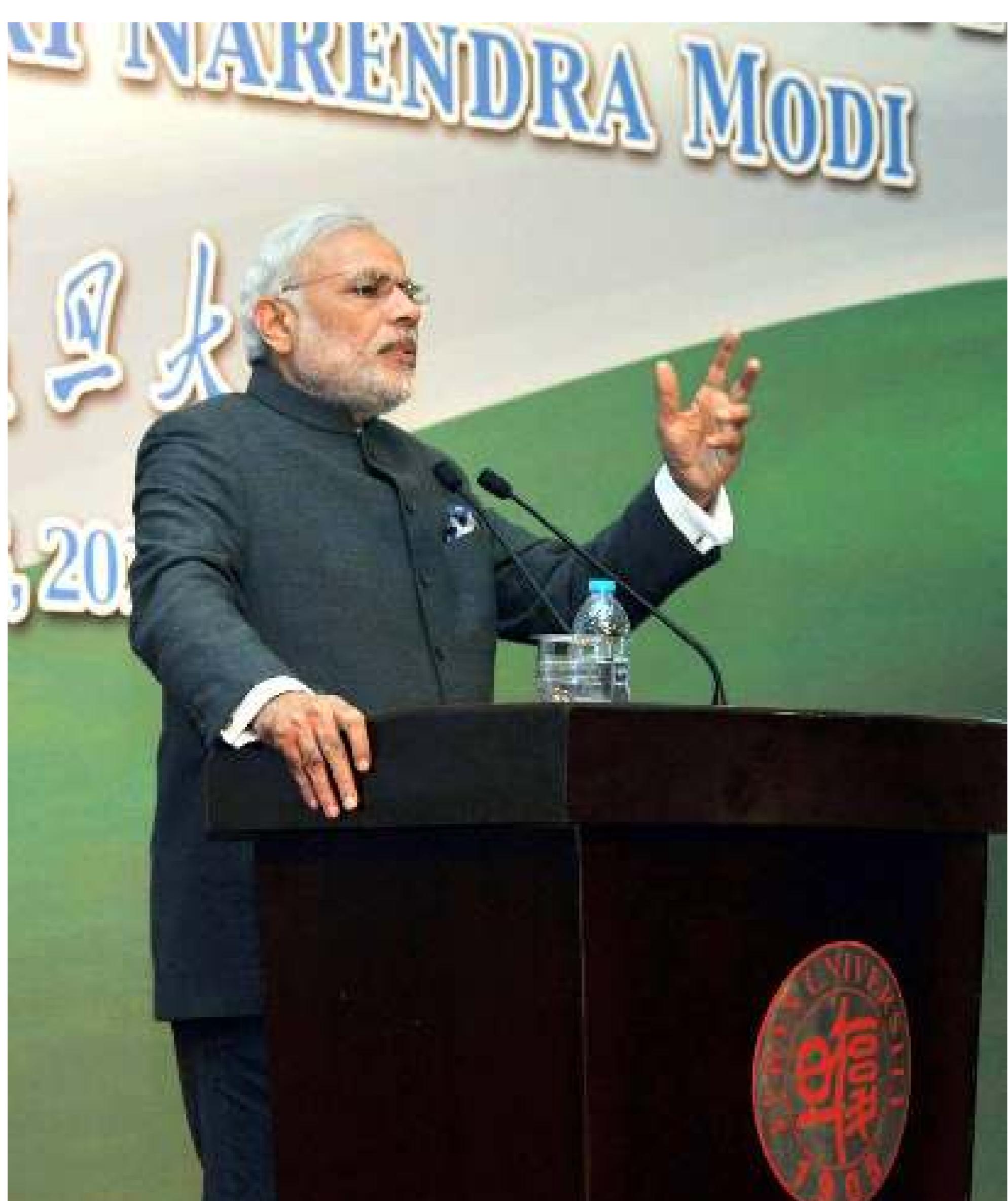
Lord Buddha has shown the world- that the power of inner strength or that of the soul is necessary for peace. Similarly, when you are sturdy as a nation, you can be at peace with others. The month of May, 1998 is not just important for the country from the aspect that nuclear tests were conducted this very month, but the manner in which they were carried out is also important. It has revealed to the entire world that India is the land of great scientists and with a strong leadership, India can reach loftier destinations and earn new laurels. On that day, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji had given the mantra – “Jai-Jawan Jai-Kisan, Jai-Vigyan.”



Launch of Centre for Gandhian and Indian Studies at Fudan University, Shanghai, China, May 16, 2015

Key takeaways from the speech:

- The Prime Minister in his speech remarks on the boldness of ancient scholar Huen Tsang who travelled to India from China 1400 years ago to acquire knowledge and learn about different cultures and traditions.
- The India – China relations have a special place in the history books as Mahatma Gandhi and a Chinese citizen called Zen Centi had so much admiration for each other that the latter once came to see the Mahatma when he was incarcerated in Yerwada Jail in Pune during the freedom struggle.
- The Prime Minister spoke about the age of 21st century that belongs to the likes of India and China and how the two nations should foster development by adopting a humanitarian approach and the ideology of Buddhism.



English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Huen Tsang came to India some 1400 years ago and similarly academic Indians must have travelled to China and all for the sake of knowledge. Such boldness was displayed to acquire knowledge, to learn about different cultures and traditions. It is easy to open the doors for trade and economic reasons. It is easy to invite tourists from all over the world. But opening the doors for knowledge requires immense courage. If one is not strong internally then one is scared of being engulfed by the ideas of others. Will those ideas overpower us? When a person is strong within, he is open to the views and ideas of others. And so China today after the age of Buddha is keen to learn about the great cultural heritage through the life of Gandhi, I think this in itself is a big and important event.

Those relations that are borne out of economic considerations are profit and loss centric. But the relations that are fostered through knowledge, work on the principle of welfare of the future generations. Mahatma Gandhi, though born in a corner of India was a global figure, he was an icon and the various crises that the world is struggling with, can his ideologies show a way out? The world today is facing two major crises – one is global warming and the other is terrorism. Gandhi's ideologies have solution to both these problems, which means the students of this university through Gandhian Study can outline the relevance of Gandhi in today's age through mankind not just for China but for the world. A Chinese person Mr. Zen Centi, admired Gandhi and came to live in Sabarmati Ashram in 1925. He stayed there as Gandhi Ji's disciple. The Ashram inmates could not pronounce his name correctly for it was a Chinese name. So Mahatma Gandhi wrote his name as Shanti Jain.

Similarly, a Chinese scholar Tang Yung – Shan was close to Rabindra Nath Tagore. He has written that when he met Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi Ji was full of praise for China.

Zen Centi after staying with Mahatma Gandhi returned to China and started a newspaper by the name Penang. In 1930 Gandhi Ji was fighting a big battle for India's independence. He was lodged in Yerwada jail in Pune and was on a fast unto death in the jail. When Zen Centi learned about it, he immediately came to India and requested to meet Gandhi Ji. Gandhi Ji had refused to meet anyone inside the jail during his fast. But such was his love for Zen Centi that Gandhi Ji met him in the jail. Such was his love for a Chinese citizen.

21st Century belongs to Asia. China and India together make for a third of the world's population. If this one third population is benefitted and is free of problems, then a third of the world will be freed of crises. So India and China should together scale new heights, with humanitarian approach, with humanity, based on Buddhist ideology and Gandhian experiments, so that we can inspire the world to lead a life which is committed to the welfare of the world.



Ramparts of the Red Fort on the 68th Independence Day, New Delhi

August 15, 2014

Key takeaways from the speech:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the nation on its 68th Independence Day from the ramparts of the historical Red Fort for the first time after taking charge of the office.
- The great emperor Ashok who had chosen the path of war, was so moved by the bloodshed and the aftermath that he decided to renounce his kingdom and follow the steps of Lord Buddha.
- The PM urged the nation to renounce the path of violence and follow the path of peace, brotherhood and prosperity. It is the saviour that has more power than the killer, and it is this quality that makes him Buddha.



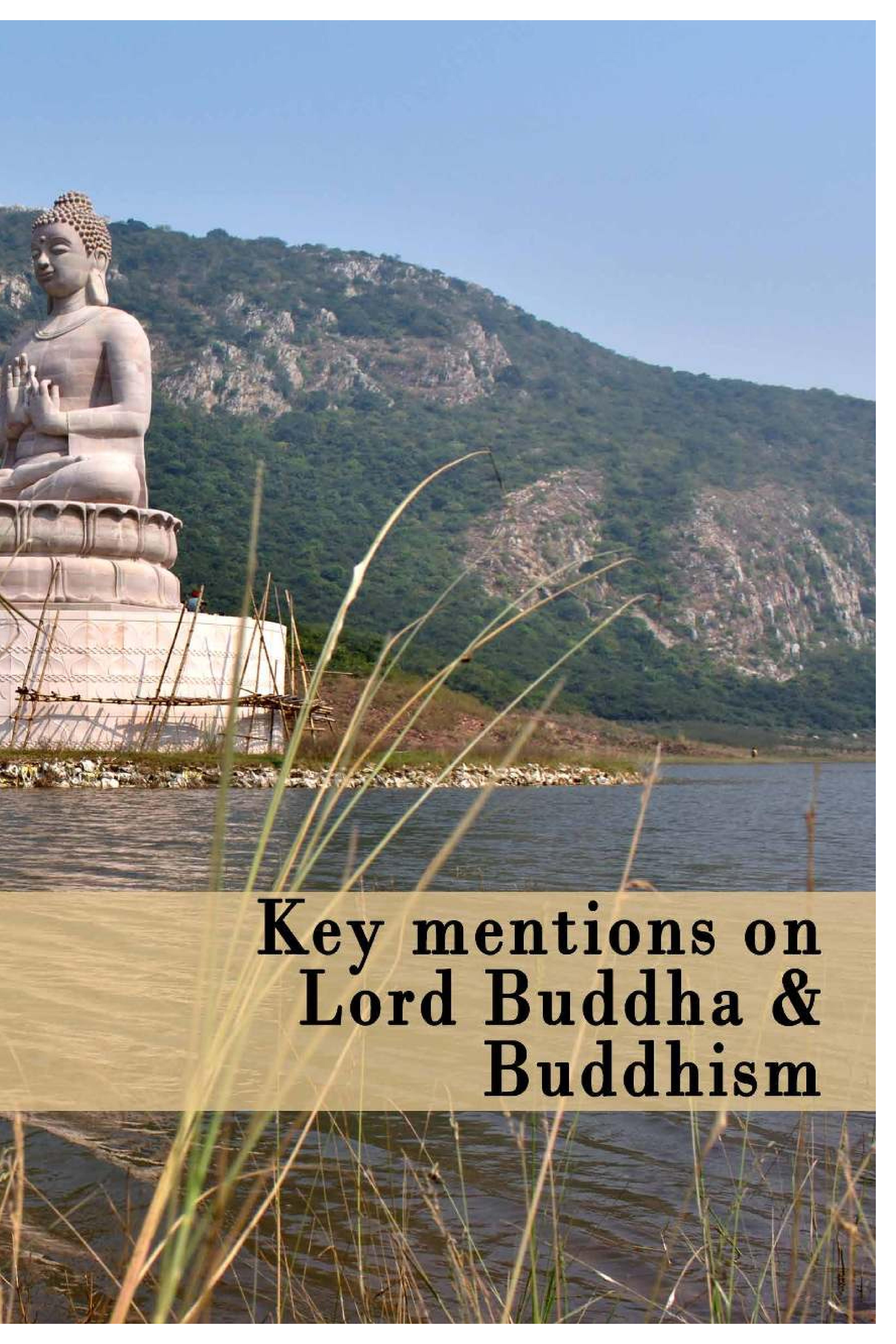
English Rendering of the Prime Minister's Speech:

Brothers and sisters, I had gone to Nepal recently. There I said something publicly to draw the attention of the whole world. There was a time when the Emperor Ashoka who had chosen the path of wars, got converted to the path of Buddha at the sight of violence. There was a time in Nepal when their youngsters had opted for the path of violence but today I witness that the same youngsters are waiting for their constitution. The same people associated with them are framing the constitution. And I further said that if Nepal could present the best example of moving from the weapons to the books then it could provide inspiration to the youngsters in the world to abandon the path of violence.

Brothers and sisters, If Nepal, land of Budha, can give message to the world then why can't India too do the same? So it's the call of the hour that we renounce the path of violence and take the path of brotherhood.

This is the land where incidents from Siddharth's life happened. One bird was shot with an arrow by one brother and the other took out that arrow to save it. They went to mother- whose bird, whose swan? Whether killer's or saviour's, they asked of mother. The mother replied, saviour's. The saviour has more power than the killer and that makes him Buddha. In future countrymen, we will achieve the journey of self-reliant India which has been started by the country.





Key mentions on Lord Buddha & Buddhism

Address to Constituent Assembly of Nepal, 3 August, 2014

This Constituent Assembly will take care of all nuances, I am sure. I believe that the work you have started is in itself a work of great pride. To choose peace over violence can happen only in the land of Buddha. From what I have heard is, you have decided that you will be a Federal Democratic Republic

Lord Buddha born in Nepal removed the darkness of the soul, enlightened us with his views and the human race got a new consciousness.

..
India is willing to offer any help that it can. In the coming times, it is for you to decide the path of development you wish to take. I am not saying anything new. If we talk of tourism then there are 125 crore Indians who wish to visit Pashupatinath at some point of time, want to come to Lord Buddha and spread the message of peace.



Independence Day Speech, 15 August, 2014

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Keynote address at the luncheon hosted by Nippon Kiedanren, 1 September, 2014

The world is divided into two streams. One is that of expansionism and the other of development. We have to decide whether the world gets engulfed in the expansionism or encourage development opportunities to scale new heights. Those who follow the path of the Buddha and believe in development are guaranteed for peace and progress. But today, what we are witnessing is the expansionist mindset of the 18th century. To interfere in the affairs of a country, to occupy territories within a country, such expansionist tendencies will serve no good in the 21st Century.



Remarks at the Joint Press Briefing with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, 1 September, 2014

India and Japan will work for a peaceful and prosperous world drawing upon the message of Lord Buddha and in partnership with all countries of this region and beyond.



Interaction with Chinese media organizations, 16 September, 2014

The state in China from where the Honorable Chinese President comes from, there is a small town in that state and with that town, the people of Gujarat have had old relations. They were one of the first ones to go and set-up business in that town. The monk Xuan Zang, who came to India from China in 600 AD, went to Gujarat and stayed in the village where I come from. Through the medium of Buddhism, India and China, especially China and Gujarat have developed very close relations. From this perspective also, his coming to Gujarat reminds us of a relationship that is of special historic and cultural significance.

Address to the Indian Community in Myanmar, 13 November, 2014

India and Myanmar are historically linked. We fought for our Independence together. And even today the people of this country treat India with reverence due to Buddha. We are constantly striving to be of use to our neighbouring nations as we feel that it is our duty.



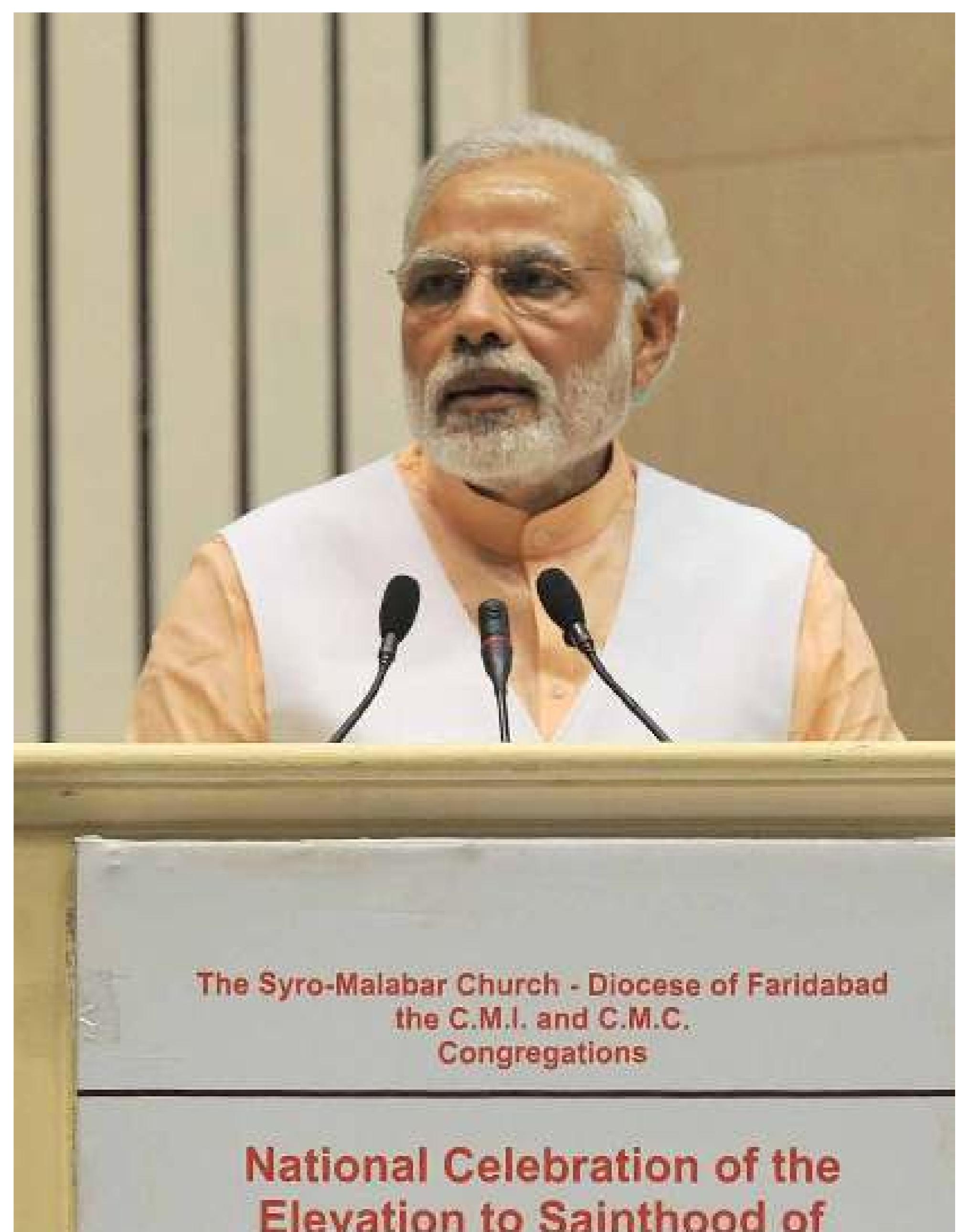
Media Statement during Joint Press Interaction with President of United States of America, 25 January, 2015

Our relationship stands at a new level today. We have outlined a broad vision for our friendship and cooperation that reflects the opportunities and challenges of this century. As Lord Buddha said, noble friends and companions are the whole of the holy life.



National Celebration of the Elevation to Sainthood of Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Mother Euphrasia, 17 February, 2015

India is the land of Buddha and Gandhi. Equal respect for all religions must be in the DNA of every Indian. We cannot accept violence against any religion on any pretext and I strongly condemn such violence. My government will act strongly in this regard.



'Mann ki Baat', 22 February, 2015

Sometimes we far exceed our own expectations. Just try and remember the good works that you have done. You will be surprised at your own achievement. Last year you were sick and yet you got good marks. Last year your uncle got married, one full week got wasted but still you managed to score very well. Earlier you would sleep for six hours and then last year you decided you will sleep for only five hours and you did it. What advice can Modi give you? You become your own advisor and as Lord Buddha said Uppa Deepo Bhavahah.

First International Ramayana Mela, 23 February, 2015

All those nations where Lord Buddha's presence is marked, if those come together and are bound to us collectively, then we can emerge as one big power. All those places connected by Ram and Ramayana, where the people are proud of that heritage, if we hold on to that thread and build relations around them, then these relationships will have better bond and affinity. They become stronger than the diplomatic Relations and attain a next level.



Remarks at Community Reception in Paris, 11 April, 2015

I would request the world that this centenary year of the World War I, is an opportunity to honour the peacemakers. It is an opportunity to grant the right to the land of Gandhi and Buddha. Those days are long gone where India would beg. This nation demands its right. No one can have a better moral authority than the people from the land of Gandhi and Buddha to give the message of world peace. I believe that when U.N celebrated its 70 years, it will reconsider all these facts.



Reply to the questions during the Joint Press Statement with German Chancellor Angela Merkel at Berlin, 14 April, 2015

A nation where the messenger of Nonviolence Mahatma Gandhi was born, where Gautam Buddha was born, whose culture and traditions are dedicated to peace, if that nation fails to secure a permanent membership in the UNSC, that it has to wait for 70 years, then serious questions arise. Shouldn't there be justice for people who believe in peace, who live for peace and who have peace in their DNA. It is long overdue.



Remarks in the Mongolian Parliament, 17 May, 2015

Around two thousand years ago, monks from India crossed difficult terrain and long distance to spread the message of Lord Buddha in this enchanting land. Many went from here to the hot tropics of India in search of spiritual knowledge.

So, as we transform the lives of our people, we also create opportunities for the world. And, we increase our ability to help our friends. This is the urge of the land of Buddha and Gandhi. This is the instinct born from our ancient belief in the world as one family.



Address at the Indian Community Reception in Shanghai, 16 May, 2015

All of us, in our childhood has read that a Chinese traveller by the name Huang Tsang Came to India. He came from China to explore India and was a famous philosopher. He has written many accounts. I am born in Vadnagar Village of Mehsana District. Huang Tsang has mentioned about my village in his travel accounts. He had spent some time there. We generally believe that Buddha was majorly confined to eastern parts, the areas of Bihar and those close to it. But Huang Tsang mentions that Buddha had an equal influence on the western part as well. He mentioned that, in Vadnagar - which is my birth place, there existed a huge educational institute for teaching and training of Bodh Bhikshus. There was a hostel for thousands of students. He wrote that he had seen all those places as he lived there for a long time. When I became the Chief Minister, a thought struck me that if Huang Tsang has mentioned this then why not dig and see. So I asked the government to do excavation. Who gets his own premises dug but that's the way I am. And surprisingly all those things could be found in my village, those hostels and all other things which Huang Tsang had mentioned.

When I won the election and the Chinese President called me up, he gave reference of this thing. He kept all the details about the kind of a person I am. He described me about my birthplace over the phone. I was shocked and amazed at the same time. Later when he came to India he had the wish to go to my village. But that could not materialize as it is some 80-90 kms away from Ahmadabad and there was lack of time. Then he said "Do you know". I said "what". He said, "Huang Tsang when he lived in India, stayed in your village and from there when he returned he came to my village in Shian". A huge Buddha temple is erected at Shian and yesterday he took me there. He showed me the book written by Huang Tsang and he took out that section where the name of my village was mentioned in Chinese language, which was followed by a description of my village.

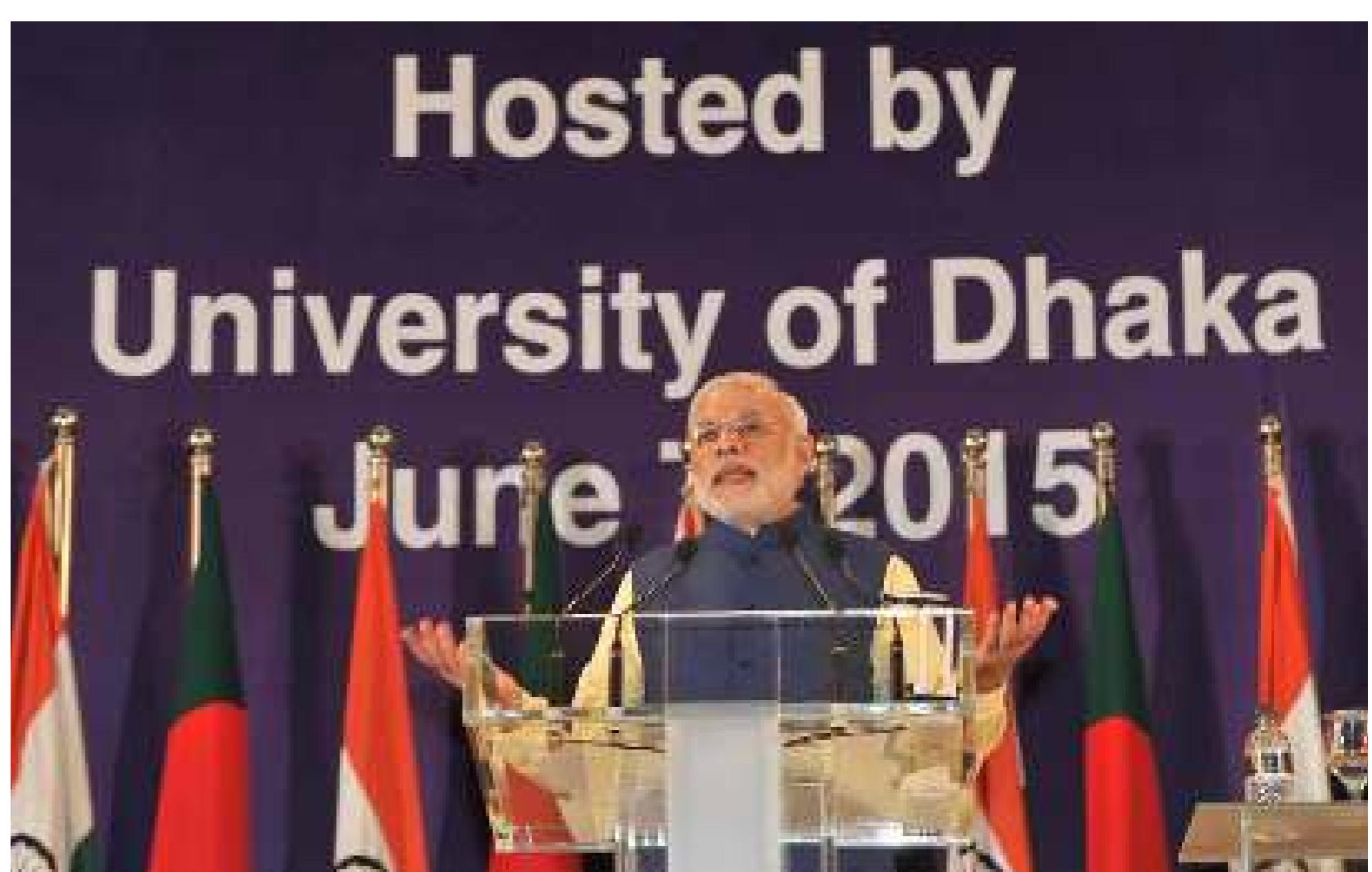
Address at the Launch of Centre for Gandhian and Indian Studies at Fudan University, 16 May, 2015

21st Century belongs to Asia. China and India together make for a third of the world's population. If this one third population is benefitted and is free of problems, then a third of the world will be freed of crises. So India and China should together scale new heights, with humanitarian approach, with humanity, based on Buddhist ideology and Gandhian experiments, so that we can inspire the world to lead a life which is committed to the welfare of the world.



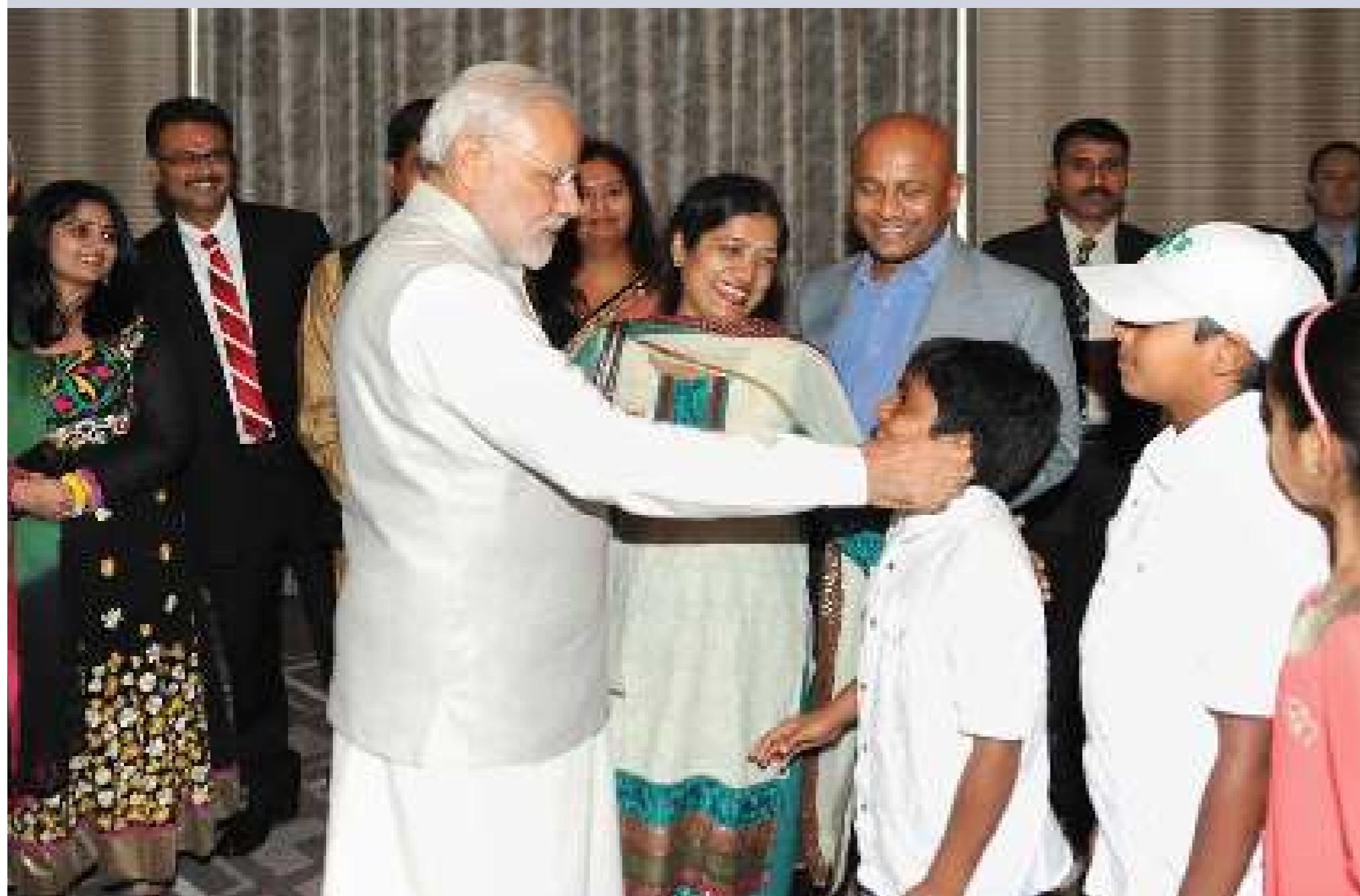
Address at Bangabandhu Convention Centre, 7 June, 2015

Today your Tourism Minister met me. He said that he would like to start the Buddha Circuit for Tourism. India is also incomplete without Buddha and where there is Buddha, there cannot be war. Countries may be fighting for land but we are the two countries who turn the land into a bridge of relationship. Deepo Bhavahah.



Address to the Indian community at SAP Centre, San Jose, 27 September, 2015

We come from the land where Gandhi and Buddha were born. Siddhartha was born in Nepal, but after coming to Bodh Gaya he became Buddha. The land which has given the world the mantra of non-violence can request the world that 21st century should not be tainted with the blood of innocents. We will have to save the 21st century from being tainted by violence. I have very strongly put forth my point in the UN. .



Address to the Indian Community in Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 22 November 2015

Our ties are seen in the footprints of the monks, who spread the message of peace from the land of Buddha to the Southeast Asia. This is the richness of our heritage. This is the ancient foundation of our modern links.



Release of commemorative coins on Dr BR Ambedkar, 6 December, 2015

Baba Sahib did not write this book focusing on "Lord Buddha" rather focussed on his work, "Buddha and Karl Marx" focused on 'Sar-vasamavasi Bahujan Hitay, Bahujan Sukhaya'. If anyone studies Babasaheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's thoughts on economics, he or she will find that those were linked to Indian way of life where there is an indelible imprint of Buddha. That is why; I think that for any nation to progress, it has to preserve such inherited values from its ancestors. Therefore, we should never try to forget our history and the great legends. It will not give us strength.



6th convocation of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, 22 January, 2016

Baba Saheb Ambedkar was inspired from the tradition of Lord Buddha. Lord Buddha's message was Uppa Deepo Bhavahah, i.e. enlighten yourself. The life enlightened by others comes enveloped with darkness; whereas self-enlightened life comes with the guarantee of dispelling darkness. Life should be therefore, be self-enlightened, but that too can only be achieved through education.



Inauguration of the 3rd Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation, 12 April, 2016

Species belonging to the animal kingdom, usually do not act to their disadvantage. However, human beings are an exception. Our compulsions and cravings, our needs and greed, have led to shrinkage of natural habitat and destruction of ecosystems. Here, I recall the famous words of Gautam Buddha who said: "The forest is a peculiar organism of unlimited kindness. It affords protection to all beings, offering shade even to the axe-man who destroys it."



Launch of "Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday" Abhiyan at Mhow, April 14, 2016

Today, on his birth anniversary and on his holy birth land, I have got the honour to felicitate Dr. Dhamma Viriyo-ji, the Sangh Nayak of Akhil Bhartiya Bhikshuk Sangh. Very few people might have the knowledge that how great a personality is today present amidst us. He is said to hold expertise in a hundred Languages. On his birthplace Burma, he came across with Babasaheb and by taking inspiration from him; he resolved to make India his action-place. Through tenets of Lord Buddha, he pursued ceaselessly to associate the whole world with India. I extend my gratitude to Sangh Nayak Dr. Dhamma Viriyo-ji from the depth of my heart and pay my respectful obeisance.

Address to the Nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the 70th Independence Day, 15-August, 2016

While remembering Sri Ramanuja Acharya ji today, I wish to underline his message to the country. He used to say that we should serve all the devotees of the Lord, irrespective of their caste and class. He had said that we should never humiliate anyone and should give respect to all, without any discrimination on the basis of age and caste. The issue that was given importance by Gandhi, Ambedkar, Ramanujacharya, Lord Buddha, our scriptures and by our all spiritual gurus too is the issue of 'our social unity'.



Public meeting with Ex Servicemen in Bhopal, 14 October, 2016

It's not without any reason that Gandhi was born here, Lord Buddh was born here; it's a great tradition under which even brave soldiers sacrifice their lives for humanity and if Gandhi Ji lived then he lived for humanity. This has been the characteristics of this land and due to this we can take pride in our military in this world.

CII-Keidanren Business Luncheon, November 11, 2016

India's core values are rooted in our civilizational heritage. It gets inspiration through the teachings of Truth from Gautam Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi. It gets its wings from our democratic traditions, emphasis on both wealth and value creation, a robust sense of enterprise and quest to modernize and prosper its economy. That is why India and Japan are best suited to work together. .



Launch of Interactive Digital Exhibition, marking 100 years of Champaran Satyagraha, 10 April, 2017

Today we have gathered to commemorate the celebration of one of the greatest events of 20th century. 100 years ago on this very day Gandhiji reached Patna, and started his journey to Champaran. The land of Champaran where the blessings of Lord Buddha's discourse were received, which was a part of the territory that belonged to Mother Sita's father Janak; The farmers of that land were in distress. Gandhiji did not just show the way to the farmers, the exploited people and the victims, but made the whole country realize the power of a peaceful Satyagraha.

'Mann Ki Baat, 30 April 2017

Followers of Lord Buddha across the world celebrate the festival of Buddh Poornima. The world today is undergoing a plethora of problems such as violence, war, annihilation, the arms race et al. Amidst this atmosphere, the philosophy of Buddha comes across as extremely relevant. And in India, Ashok's life perfectly epitomizes the transformation from war to enlightenment. I feel fortunate that the occasion of the great festival of Budha Purnima is celebrated as Vesak day by the United Nations. This year it will take place in Sri Lanka. On this holy event I shall get an opportunity to pay tributes to Lord Budha in Sri Lanka. It will be an opportune moment to re-visit his ideals.



'Mann ki Baat', 28 May, 2017

If we recall Lord Buddha, a fact comes to light that his birth, his enlightenment and his Mahaparinirvana, all three happened under a tree. We have many festivals and religious rituals which are based on worshiping nature and affection towards nature is a part of our everyday life. This is true in case of all sections of society whether lettered or unlettered, rural or urban and even tribal communities. But we need to present this in modern language and integrate with modern arguments.

Indian Community Reception in Philippines, 13 November, 2017

'Mann ki Baat' August 27, 2017

Ours is the country of Buddha and Gandhi, it is the land of Sardar Patel who gave up his all for the unity of the nation. For centuries, our forefathers have imbibed community values, nonviolence, mutual respect – these are inherent to us. We have been hearing and saying Ahimsa Parmo Dharmah from our childhood. In my address from the ramparts of the Red Fort, I had said that violence in the name of faith will not be tolerated, whether it is communal belief systems, whether it is subscribing to political ideologies, whether it is allegiance to a person or customs and traditions. No one has the right to take the law into one's own hands in the name of one's beliefs.

Indian Community event in Yangon, Myanmar, 06 September, 2017

For the past thousands of years India and Myanmar share not only the boundary but also the emotions. In India Myanmar is also known as Brahmadesh or the place that belongs to Lord Brahma. Friends, this is that place that nurtured Buddha and his teachings. The Buddhist monks and the Buddhist texts, for several years, have propagated not only the religion but also Pali language and teachings at every corner of India. The holy land of Myanmar has gifted India and the whole world the art of meditation.

There will be hardly any country which will not have respect for Lord Buddha. This in itself is a great legacy and the Indian community that inhabits in this region can very well shoulder the responsibility of nurturing and glorifying this legacy. An ordinary Indian can contribute several times more than what can be done by the embassy. And I have experienced that today every Indian in the world speaks about himself being an Indian with a pride and confidence.



Inaugural Ceremony of 22nd National Youth Festival on 12 January, 2018

The university campus where you are present now has been named after Gautam Buddha. The city where you are present – Greater Noida – it is also Gautam Buddha Nagar and therefore I will share a small story related to Gautam Buddha. It's a small incident, not a big one. Once a disciple of Lord Buddha asked him, whether every disciple initiated by him, would be able to attain the salvation. Lord Buddha replied – No, only a few will get it. This is the essence of Gautam Buddha's philosophy of AppaDeepoBhav. Become your own lamp, become your own light. Nobody will be there to make you take a pledge. Nobody will be there to remind you. Whatever you have to do, you will have to do that yourself.



'Mann Ki Baat', 29 April, 2018

Speech on "Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World" in the World Economic Forum, Davos, 23 January, 2018

Buddha gave a prominent place to the virtue of 'Aparigraha' which means use according to the needs (non-greediness), in his principles. The principle of trusteeship of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, was also the same- 'consumption as per requirement'.



Conference on 'Islamic Heritage: Promoting Understanding and Moderation'

1 March, 2018

Be it the Lord Buddha two thousand five hundred years ago or be it Mahatma Gandhi in the last century. The fragrance of peace and love has spread across the entire world from the garden of India.

My dear countrymen! Buddha Purnima is a special day for every Indian. We must be proud of the fact that India is the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the very synonym of power of compassion, service and sacrifice, who guided millions of people around the world. This Buddha Purnima reminds us of all of our obligation to emulate Lord Buddha's teaching as well as, pledge ourselves to follow his footsteps. Lord Buddha was the fountainhead of egalitarianism, peace, harmony and brotherhood. These are human values, which are most desired in the world today. Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar stressed that Lord Buddha has been a great inspiration in his social philosophy. Baba Saheb had said – "My Social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words; liberty, equality and fraternity. My Philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teaching of my master, The Buddha." Baba Saheb strengthened the oppressed, exploited, deprived and crores of people standing on the brink of marginalization via the Constitution of India. There cannot be a bigger example of compassion than this. This form of compassion was one of the greatest qualities of Lord Buddha for the alleviation of suffering of the people. The Buddhist monks used to travel to different countries carrying with them the rich ideals of Lord Buddha and this has been occurring throughout the ages. We have inherited the wisdom of Lord Buddha throughout Asia as part of our legacy.

It forges a link between us and many Asian countries like China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar where Buddhist traditions and his preaching are a part of their origins. And this is the very reason that we are developing Infrastructure for Buddhist Tourism, which is going to connect Southeast Asia with the important Buddhist sites of India. I am also very pleased that the Government of India is a partner in the restoration of many Buddhist temples which also includes the centuries old magnificent Anand Temple in Bagan in Myanmar. Today, when there is confrontation and human suffering prevalent everywhere in the world, Lord Buddha's teachings show the way to rid hatred from the world with compassion. I wish people spread all over the world who revere Lord Buddha and believe in the principles of compassion- I wish all of them an auspicious Buddha Purnima.

I seek benediction from Lord Buddha for the entire world, so that we can fulfill our responsibility in building a peaceful and compassionate world based on his teachings. Today, as we remember Lord Buddha, you must have heard about the idols of laughing Buddha, it is said that laughing Buddha brings one good fortune, but very few people know that smiling Buddha is also associated with an important event in India's defense history. Now you will be wondering what is the connection between smiling Buddha and India's military might?

You must remember, 20 years ago today, on 11th May 1998, the Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had said while addressing the nation and his words filled the whole country with pride, courage and elation. The Indian diaspora was infused with new confidence. That day also was the day of Buddha Purnima. On May 11, 1998, at India's western end a nuclear test was conducted in Pokhran, Rajasthan. It has been 20 years since Pokhran and this test was done on Buddha Purnima with the blessings of Lord Buddha. India's test was not only successful but in a way, India had demonstrated its might in the field of science and technology. We can also say 11 May 1998 is engraved in the history of India as a demonstration of her military power.

Lord Buddha has shown the world- that the power of inner strength or that of the soul is necessary for peace.

Address at Shangri La Dialogue, 1 June, 2018

The ancient wisdom of the region is our common heritage. Lord Buddha's message of peace and compassion has connected us all. Together, we have contributed much to human civilisation. And, we have been through the devastation of war and the hope of peace. We have seen the limits of power. And, we have seen the fruits of cooperation. This world is at a crossroad there are temptations of the worst lessons of history. But, there is also a path of wisdom.

Address at Maghar, Uttar Pradesh on the occasion of the 500th death anni- versary of the great saint and poet, Kabir, 28 June, 2018

In order to show the right path to the society, Lord Buddha was born, and a whole lot of saints such as Lord Mahavir was born, Sant Kabir, Sant Soordas and Guru Nanak continued to show us the right way. Whether it is north or south, be it east or west, in every region of the country such great souls preserved the country's spirit and protected it from being tarnished by evil traditions.



Inauguration of Pashupati Nath Dharmashala in Kathmandu, 31, August, 2018

In a way, this holy land of Kathmandu is a place of confluence of both Hinduism and Buddhism. In what way, these two faiths are inclusive of each other, and there is amity between the followers of both the faiths which can be experienced by anybody who passes through the lanes and pathways of Kathmandu. This temple of Lord Pashupatinath Ji too is surrounded by the centers of several faiths, like it is intertwined with the flock of Buddhist monks. As Pradeep Ji said just a while ago that one does not even know when the chanting Om Mani Padme Hum unites with the chanting of Om Namah Shivay by the devotees of Lord Shiva. This tradition is also an important link between the relationship of Nepal and India. If Lumbini in Nepal gave Gautam to the world, then Bodh Gaya in India turned him into Lord Buddha for the world. The path shown by Gautam Buddha is an inspiration to solve many problems of the modern world like the problems of extremism and terrorism.

Address at Indian Community Event in Japan, 29 October, 2018

This is my third visit to Japan as the Prime Minister of India. Whenever I come to Japan, I have a very affectionate experience here. That is because relations between India and Japan are rooted from cultures to trends. Be it Hinduism or Buddhism, our heritage is shared.

There are many such strong threads of the past woven in the relations of India and Japan. While Buddha and Bose connect the history of India and Japan, the present of new India is being strengthened by emissaries like you. The ambassador of the government is one but thousands of envoys of our nation are present here.



Foundation stone laying ceremony for Guru Ravidas' birth place development project, 19 February, 2019

Last year only, I had gone to Maghar to lay the foundation stone of Sant Kabir Academy. Similarly, all the holy places related to Lord Buddha were preserved and beautified in Sarnath.

'Address at the Royal University of Bhutan, Thimpu, 18 August, 2019'

India is fortunate to be the land where Prince Siddhartha became Gautam Buddha. And from where the light of his spiritual message, the light of Buddhism, spread all over the world. Generations of monks, spiritual leaders, scholars and seekers have burnt that flame bright in Bhutan. They have also nurtured the special bond between India and Bhutan.

As a result, our shared values have shaped a common world-view. This is visible in Varanasi and Bodh Gaya. And also in Dzong and Chorten. And as people, we are fortunate to be the living vehicle of this great legacy. No other two countries in the world understand each other so well or share so much. And no two countries are such natural partners in bringing prosperity to their peoples.

A few days back, my good friend, Prime Minister Doctor Tshering wrote a Facebook post that touched my heart. In that post he mentioned about Exam Warriors, and just now also a student mentioned about that book. Exam Warriors, a book I wrote about how to face exams without stress. Everyone faces exams in schools and colleges and also in the larger class-room of life. Can I tell you something? Much of what I wrote in Exam Warriors is influenced by the teachings of Lord Buddha. Particularly, the importance of positivity, over-coming fear and living in oneness, be it with the present moment or with Mother Nature. You are born in this great land.

For centuries, education and learning have been central to the ties between India and Bhutan. In ancient times, Buddhist teachers and scholars formed the bridge of learning between our peoples. This is a price-less heritage, which we wish to preserve and promote. Therefore, we welcome more students of Buddhism from Bhutan in institutions such as Nalanda University – a historical global seat of learning and Buddhist traditions, which is revived at the very place where it existed fifteen hundred years ago.



Inauguration of the International Co-operation and Convention Centre – Rudraksh in Varanasi, 15 July, 2021

From Shiva to Lord Buddha in Sarnath, Kashi has treasured spirituality as well as art and culture for centuries.



Address to Indian Armed Forces in Leh, 3 July, 2020

Lord Gautam Buddha has said – Courage is about commitment and conviction. Courage is compassion. Courage is what teaches us to stand boldly and steadfast for the truth. Courage is what gives us the strength to say and do what is right.

Launch of Atma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Abhiyan, 26 June 2020

The Kushinagar airport, an important airport in terms of the Buddhist circuit, has been declared an international airport. This will strengthen air connectivity in Purvanchal and crores of devotees within the country and abroad who believe in Lord Buddha will now be able to come to Uttar Pradesh easily. This will also create many employment and self-employment opportunities for the local youth.

Dev Deepawali Mahotsav in Varanasi, 30 November, 2020

From here, I will go to Sarnath, the birthplace of Lord Buddha. Your long-standing demand to promote tourism in Sarnath during the evening and also for public education has now been fulfilled. The laser show will now realise the messages of compassion, mercy and non-violence of Lord Buddha. These messages become even more relevant today when the world is concerned about the threat of violence, unrest and terror. Lord Buddha would say:

न हि वेरेन वेरानि सम्मनृती ध कुदाचन अवेरेन हि
सम्मनृति एस धम्मो सनन्तनो

i.e., hostility does not silence hostility. Harmony brings calm to hostility. This is the message from Kashi, which introduces divinity from Dev Deepawali, that our minds should be illuminated like these lamps.

UNSC High-Level Open Debate on “Enhancing Maritime Security: A Case For International Cooperation” 9 August, 2021

Thousands of years ago, Lothal port of Indus valley civilization was linked to maritime trade. It was in the independent maritime environment of ancient times that the message of peace of Lord Buddha spread to the world. In today's context, India has defined the vision of SAGAR – (Security and Growth for All in the Region) – based on this open and inclusive ethos.

Inauguration and laying of foundation stone of multiple projects in Somnath, Gujarat, 20 August, 2021

The Buddha Circuit is facilitating the visit of Buddhist followers from all over the world to India. Today, the work is progressing rapidly in this direction. Similarly, the Ministry of Tourism is developing tourist circuits on 15 different themes under the 'Swadesh Darshan Scheme'. These circuits will also create opportunities for tourism and development in many neglected areas of the country.

Address to the Indian Community in Tokyo, Japan, 23 May 2022

Inauguration of Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, 13 Dec 2021

The realization of Lord Buddha was revealed to the world in Sarnath. Sage Kabir Das was born here for reforming society. If there was a need to unite the society, then Kashi became the center of the power of devotion of Sant Raidas ji. Kashi is the land of four Jain Tirthankaras, the epitome of non-violence and austerity.

Inauguration of New Circuit House at Somnath in Gujarat, 21 January, 2022

Buddha Circuit is making it convenient for tourists from India and abroad to visit all the places of Lord Buddha. Visa rules have also been relaxed for foreign tourists, which will also benefit the country.



Inauguration of Biplobi Bharat Gallery at Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata, 23 March 2022

I see the blue circle inside the Tricolour as a symbol of India's cultural consciousness. From Vedas to Vivekananda, from Buddha to Gandhi, this cycle continued. This cycle has never stopped be it Mathura's Vrindavan, Kurukshetra's Mohan, his Sudarshan Chakra and Porbandar's spinning wheel.

Friends, this time when I have come to Japan, we are celebrating seventy years of our diplomatic relations, seven decades. You also must be experiencing yourself while you are here. In India also, everyone feels that India and Japan are natural partners. Japan has played an important role in India's development journey. Our relationship with Japan is of intimacy, spirituality, our relationship with Japan is of cooperation, of belongingness. And so, in a way, this relationship is of our strength, this relationship is of respect. And this relationship is also of a common resolve for the world. Our relationship with Japan is that of Buddha, of wisdom, of knowledge. We have Mahakal, so there is Daikokuten in Japan. We have Brahma, we have Bonten in Japan, our mother is Saraswati and so we have Benzaiten in Japan. Our Mahadevi is Lakshmi, so there are Kichijoten in Japan. So we have Ganesha and Japan has Kangiten. If there is a tradition of Zen in Japan, then we consider meditation as a medium of action with the soul. Even in the 21st century, we are taking forward these cultural relations of India and Japan with full commitment, and I am the Member of Parliament of Kashi and would like to say with great pride that the former Prime Minister of Japan Abe visited Kashi and he gave a wonderful gift to Kashi, Rudraksh made in collaboration with Japan in Kashi and what was once my workplace, in Ahmedabad, Zen Garden, and kaizen academy are those things that bring us so close. All of you here while in Japan are making this historical bond stronger and stronger. Friends, today's world needs perhaps more than ever to follow the path shown by Lord Buddha. This is the path which is the way to save humanity from every challenge of the world, whether it is violence, anarchy, terrorism or climate change. India is fortunate to have the direct blessings of Lord Buddha. Imbibing his thoughts, India continues to serve humanity. No matter what the challenges are, no matter how big it may be, India is looking for solutions to them.





**Ministry of Information
and Broadcasting**
Government of India

