



International Buddhist Conference

March 16-18, 2017

New Delhi, India

Buddhism in Indo-Japanese Relations

日印関係における仏教

Organizer: **SAMUTTHAN FOUNDATION**

Supported by: **JAPAN FOUNDATION**

CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline: December 18th, 2016

Abstract Submission: samutthan.conference@gmail.com

In September 2014, Mr. Narendra Modi, on his first visit to Japan as the Prime Minister of India, choose to start his official tour by visiting Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan and well known for its various famous Buddhist temples. The purpose of Prime Minister Modi's visit to Kyoto was to emphasize on the Buddhist linkages between Japan and India. The Buddhist linkages between India and East Asian countries have always been an important aspect of India's Look East policy. However, in recent years, there is a renewed emphasis on "Buddhist diplomacy" i.e. the use of the religious and cultural heritage of Buddhism as a soft power for India's engagement with South Asian, South-east Asia, East Asia, especially Japan and China and even Russia, which has a history of Buddhist linkages with India.

India, as the birthplace of Buddhism, has always held a reverential place in the worldview of Japanese Buddhists, and is referred to as *tenjiku* (heavenly land) or *saiten* (western paradise) in the Buddhist scriptures of Japan. However, there are very few and sparing instances of interactions between Indian and Japanese Buddhists in pre-modern Japan, and the descriptions about India were mostly drawn from the Buddhist legends that were transmitted to Japan from India via China. It was only with the advent of modern era in Japan i.e. after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and opening of Japan with the end of isolation (*sakoku*) policy that Japanese Buddhists were able to travel to India to visit the Buddhist sites and give real life accounts of their experiences in India.

The purpose of this conference is to understand the role of Buddhism, in people to people contacts as well as in formal diplomatic initiatives, in the relationship between India and Japan in different phases of the history of both the countries.

The approach of the conference is threefold: First, to study the history of interactions between India and Japan, especially through Buddhist pilgrimages from Japan to India and how it has influenced both Japanese and Indian Buddhism, especially the Buddhist revival movements in India and the development of Buddhist sacred sites such as Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Sarnath etc. Second objective is to understand the ideological implications of these Buddhist interactions

between Japan and India on the Buddhist movements in Japan and India, impact on Buddhist scholarship in Japan, and the development of ideologies such as Buddhist nationalism or Pan-Asianism in India, Japan as well as in other Asian countries. Third, how these historic Buddhist linkages between India and Japan has been used as a soft power in the diplomatic relations between India and Japan and the renewed emphasis on Buddhist diplomacy in India's foreign policy towards Japan.

Samutthan Foundation, in association with Japan Foundation, will organize a two-day International Buddhist conference in New Delhi, India, which will focus on the historical, religious, cultural and international relation aspects of the Buddhist interaction between India and Japan. The conference proposes to invite scholars of Buddhism, religious studies, history, international relations and other fields from Japan, India and other countries.

The conference will focus on, but not limited to, the following themes:

- Role of Buddhist pilgrims, tourists, monks and scholars in the history of relations between India and Japan.
- Buddhist heritage as soft power and cultural diplomacy between India and Japan.
- Buddha's relics in diplomatic and non-diplomatic exchanges between India, Japan and other East Asian countries.
- Analysis of archival (travelogues, diaries, memoirs of Buddhist travelers), archeological and others resources on Indo-Japanese Buddhist interactions.
- Impact of Buddhist pilgrimages from Japan on Buddhist revival movements in 19th and 20th century India.
- Contribution of Japanese Buddhists towards restoration of Buddhist sites in India.
- Impact of Buddhist pilgrimages to India on Buddhist scholarship in Japan and India.

- Interactions between Japanese Buddhists and Indian Buddhists and intellectuals (Dharmapala, Shaku Kozen, Okakura Tenshin, Fuji Nichidatsu and others).
- India's independence movement, anti-westernism, Buddhist nationalism and Pan-Asianism of Japanese Buddhism.
- Indian Buddhism and Buddhist 'modernism' / Modern Buddhism (*Kindai Bukkyo*) in Japan.
- Post-second world war peace movements of Japanese Buddhists and Gandhian ideology.
- Transnational networking of Engaged Buddhists and Buddhist activists of India and Japan.
- Buddhist tourism and internationalization of Buddhist sites in India.
- Interactions between Japanese and Indian Buddhists in global perspective, and making of transnational or Global Buddhism.
- India's Buddhist diplomacy towards other East Asian, South and South-east Asian countries.

Those interested in presenting a paper in this conference should send their abstract (about 1000 words in English) relevant to the theme of the conference along with a short CV/profile (300 words in English), mentioning their name, affiliation and areas of research interest by **December 18th, 2016** to samutthan.conference@gmail.com (cc:ranjanayaya@gmail.com).

We intend to publish a book based on the papers presented in this conference. Those with ongoing, unpublished research and able to contribute a chapter to this book will be given preference.

Selected presenters are expected to submit full presentation paper (approx. 3000 words in English), that will be part of the conference publication, at least two weeks prior to the date of the conference. Conference proceedings and discussions will be mainly in English. Some interpretation/ translation assistance could be provided to Japanese speakers.

For any conference related queries contact-

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CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS:



Samutthan Foundation is a non-governmental organization registered as a Public Charitable Trust in India. Its main activities are in the areas of community development, promotion of art and culture and enhancement of international understanding.



Japan Foundation is an organization of the Government of Japan established to promote international understanding and harmonious relationship between Japan and other nations through cultural and intellectual exchanges.