

WORKSHOP:

“AFFIRMING BUDDHIST VALUES REGARDING RELIGIOUS PLURALISM: TOWARDS A BUDDHIST UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS MINORITY RIGHTS”

24. – 25. April 2015

Venue: Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka.

Organised by: Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka and the Buddhist Federation
of Norway,

PROGRAM:

Friday 24 April	
09:00-09:10	Opening ceremony
09:10-09:20	Welcome speech by Ven. Prof.Gallele Sumanasiri Thero, Vice Chancellor BPU
09:20-09:40	Welcome speech by Mr. Egil Lothe, President of BFN
09:40-09:50	Welcome speech by Ven. Marathugoda Manirathana Thero, Advisor BFN project
09:45-10:15	Participants present themselves & share their expectations about the workshop
10:15-11:15	Introduction to the workshop by Mr. Egil Lothe & others
11:15-12:30	Lunch
12:30-13:30	Looking at the UDHR and ICCPR and the concept of Human Rights. Emperor Asoka and his Edicts on religious pluralism. An introductory presentation by Mr. Egil Lothe with comments by the participants.
13:30-14:30	Justice between religions – presentation of some issues: a) Buddhist perspectives on the UDHR. Can the concept of Human Rights be rooted in the Dhamma? b) Freedom and self-determination of the individual. Implications in relation to the “freedom to change his religion or belief” and “the right to marry and to found a family without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion”. c) Equality of human beings. Equal treatment / non-discrimination of all irrespective of religion. d) “Freedom of expression and opinion”. Right speech, wrong speech, hate speech and freedom of speech, e) Disseminating religion ethically. Is there a way to do that? f) Human Rights versus Animal Welfare. What to do when they conflict with each other? g) Religion occupying public space. Rules for coexistence. h) The issue of diversity. The right of “ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, ... to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language”
14:30-14:50	<i>Tea/Coffee</i>
14:50-17:00	Beginning the discussion – discussing issues a), b),c) and d). Reflections on the proceedings
Saturday 25 April	
09:00-10:00	Comments by Ven. Prof.Gallele Sumanasiri Thero
	Comments by Mr. Egil Lothe
	Comments by Ven. Marathugoda Manirathana Thero
10:00-11:00	Continuing the discussion - discussing issues e), f), g) and h).

11:15-12:30	Lunch
12:15-14:00	Exploring constructive ways of dealing with religious minority issues – a Buddhist approach of dealing with conflict between religions.
14:00-14:20	<i>Tea / coffee</i>
14:20-16:00	Rights & Duties of Religions – points for a Buddhist declaration of Freedom of Religion. What can we agree upon?
16:00-16:30	Reflections from all participants and concluding session