

BUDDHIST FEDERATION OF NORWAY

THE BUDDHIST FEDERATION OF NORWAY WAS FOUNDED IN 1979

PRESENTLY 14 BUDDHIST ORGANISATIONS WITH A TOTAL NUMBER OF 13.828 MEMBERS HAVE JOINED THE BUDDHIST FEDERATION OF NORWAY.

THE MAJOR TRADITIONS OF BUDDHISM ARE ALL REPRESENTED IN THE BUDDHIST FEDERATION OF NORWAY.

THE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE BUDDHIST FEDERATION OF NORWAY

THE ORGANISATIONS OF THE BUDDHIST FEDERATION OF NORWAY REPRESENT BOTH BUDDHISTS OF ASIAN BACKGROUNDS AS WELL AS “NEW BUDDHISTS» OF WESTERN BACKGROUND. THERE ARE ALSO “NONDENOMINATIONAL” BUDDHISTS WHO ARE DIRECTLY AFFILIATED WITH THE BUDDHIST FEDERATION OF NORWAY.

Activies of BFN

- Receive and allocate financial support from the government (pro anno 11 mill. NKR = 187 mill SL rupies)
- Register Buddhists as members of BFN
- Promote Buddhism through internet, books etc.
- 1996 Co founder of Interreligious Council of Norway
- Engage in interreligious dialogue
- Promote peace and human rights

HOW MANY BUDDHISTS IN NORWAY?

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF BUDDHISTS CAN BE ESTIMATED TO BE AT LEAST 33.000 WHICH CONSTITUTE 0,66 % OF THE POPULATION OF NORWAY WHICH PRESENTLY STANDS AT 5 MILLION.























24 4:30AM





A project of the Buddhist Federation of Norway:

“Religious Minorities in Buddhist Majority States”

This project addresses the issue of Buddhists' relation to religious minorities in Myanmar, Thailand and Sri Lanka also looking at the situation of the Buddhist minority in Bangladesh. Our approach is Dhamma-based and seeks to relate the principles of the Universal Declarations of Human Rights to the values of freedom of religion embedded in the Buddhist tradition while contextualising them in the countries in South Asia.

A large crowd of people, many wearing traditional maroon robes, are gathered outdoors under a clear blue sky. In the center, a monk holds up a white protest sign with handwritten text. The text reads "The World is not only for Muslims" in brown ink. In the background, several white stupas are visible against the sky.

The World is not
only for Muslims

TRENDS IN SOUTH ASIA:

- **tensions between religious groups**
 - **aggressive Christian proselytism,**
 - **violent Islamic fundamentalism,**
 - **Buddhist radicalism**
 - **allegations of violations of human rights by Buddhists**

The Buddhist Federation of Norway
seeks to approach these challenges
through
intra-Buddhist dialogue
organising *workshops*
as well as
facilitating expression of Buddhist
viewpoints
through a *book* and a *website* devoted
to this issue.

The aim:

- to facilitate discussions among Buddhists about these challenges,
- increase awareness about the principles of Dhamma and Human Rights relating to freedom of religion,
- promoting good practices among Buddhists regarding relations to other religions.

Buddhist affirmation of
universal
values:

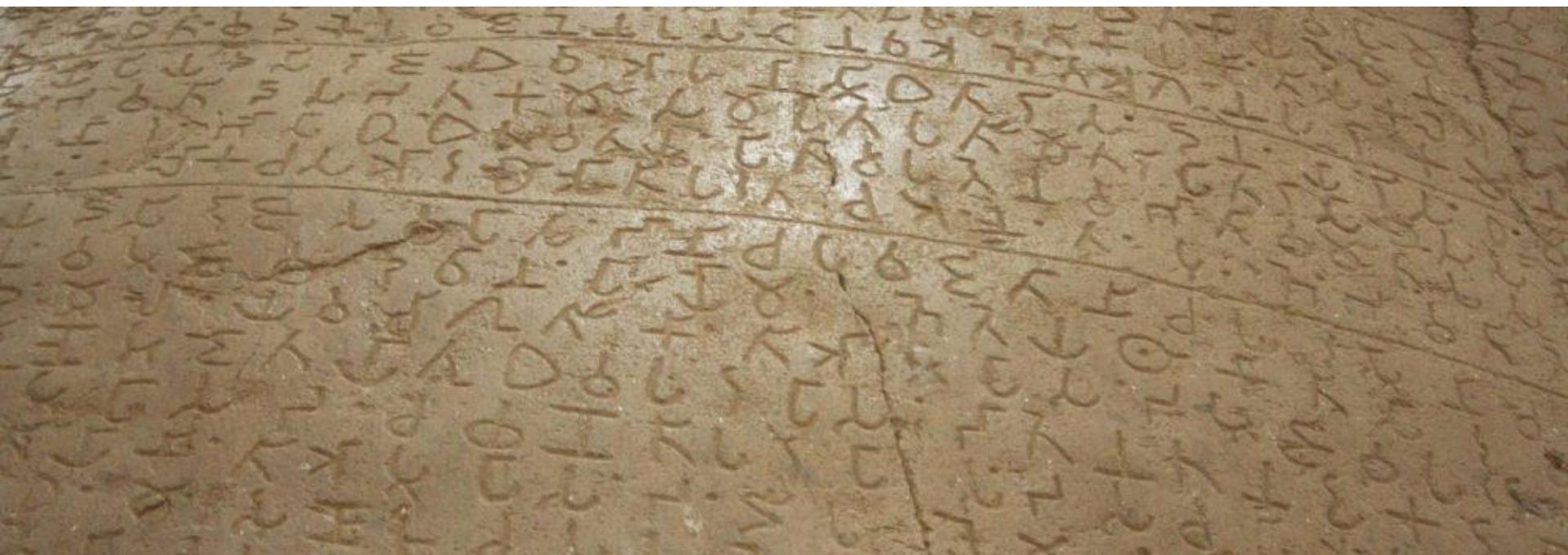
Asoka (304–232 BCE)



Ruled almost all of the Indian subcontinent from ca. 269 BCE to 232 BCE

Had edicts inscribed on rocks and pillars mostly in Magadhi language and in Brahmi script. Inscriptions found in more than 30 localities in India and beyond.

Asoka – Rock Edict XII



*devānampiye piyadasi rājā
sava-pāsamdāni cha pavajitāni
cha gharahastāni cha pūjayati
dānena cha vivādhāya cha pūjāya
pūjayati nena tu tathā dānam va
pūjā va devanāmpiyo mamñate
yathā kiti sāra-vadhi asa
savapasāmdānam ...*

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, honors both ascetics and the householders of all religions, and he honors them with gifts and honors of various kinds. But Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not value gifts and honors as much as he values this -- that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions.

Growth in essentials can be done in different ways, but all of them have as their root restraint in speech, that is, not praising one's own religion, or condemning the religion of others without good cause. And if there is cause for criticism, it should be done in a mild way. But it is better to honor other religions for this reason.

By so doing, one's own religion benefits, and so do other religions, while doing otherwise harms one's own religion and the religions of others. Whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought "Let me glorify my own religion," only harms his own religion. Therefore contact (between religions) is good.

One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others.

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desires that all should be well-learned in the good doctrines of other religions.

Asoka: Rock Edict XII (Girnar)

United Nations affirmation of
universal
values:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

**is a declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly
on 10 December 1948**

UDHR:

**... recognition of the inherent
dignity and of the equal and
inalienable rights of all members
of the human family**

Background of UDHR:

**... disregard and contempt for
human rights have resulted in
barbarous acts which have
outraged the conscience of
mankind.**

Holocaust of European Jews

Industrialized mass murder of Jews by the German state during WW2

An estimated 5 million Jews – children as well as adults – from Germany and occupied countries in Europe were sent to gas chambers to be killed during the years 1942 - 1945.



Хилс хэргээр шүүгдэж буй лам нар
нь шүүх хурлын дараа буудан
хороогджээ. 1937 он.

Lamas at mock trials listen as they
are given the death sentence for
fabricated crimes. Archival photo
1937.



Genocide on Buddhist monks

1937 – 1938: **execution of more than 18 000 Buddhist monks in The People's Republic of Mongolia**

1937: More than 700 monasteries

1939: No monasteries left

UDHR

- **Article 1**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

UDHR

- **Article 16**

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

UDHR

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

UDHR

- Article 29, 1.

Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

**Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by
General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966
entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49
Accepted by 165 countries**

ICCPR

- ***Article 18***

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to **have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice**, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, **to manifest his religion or belief** in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.

3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the **liberty of parents** and, when applicable, legal guardians **to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions**

ICCPR Article 19

1. Everyone shall have the right to **hold opinions** without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to **freedom of expression**; this right shall include freedom to **seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds**, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain **restrictions**, but these shall only be such as are **provided by law** and are **necessary**:

- (a) For **respect of the rights or reputations of others**;
- (b) For the protection of **national security** or of **public order** (ordre public), or of **public health** or **morals**.

ICCPR Article 20

1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.
2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.

ICCPR

- ***Article 27***

In those States in which ethnic, **religious** or linguistic **minorities** exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, **in community with the other members of their group**, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise **their own religion**, or to use their own language.

Regional instruments

- European Charter of Human Rights (1950)
- American Convention on Human Rights (1969)
- African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981)

Declarations by religions

- Roman Catholic Church - Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965) *Dignitatis Humanae*
- *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights (1981)* – *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights (1990)*
- *LPN Perera: Buddhism and Human Rights - A Buddhist Commentary on ... (1991)*

**THANK
YOU**

INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION
Delegation visit to Bihar 13 - 14th September 2013
SPECIAL PRAYER DEDICATED TO WORLD PEACE
under the sacred Bodhi Tree, Bodhgaya

IBC, 2013

HON

PROF. KWAN