



BUDDHA JAYANTI 2015

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY: A JOYFUL CELEBRATION

**HOSTED BY CLAREMONT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
IN JOINT COLLABORATION WITH INDIC FOUNDATION
AND BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA**

Held at:

Mudd Theater

Claremont School of Theology

1325 North College Avenue

Claremont, California 91711

**3rd
May**

SUNDAY

2015

6:00 P.M.

- ◆ Free Admission
- ◆ Event open to public
- ◆ Free Parking

Message from



President Dr. Jeffrey Kuan

Dear Participants:

On behalf of Claremont School of Theology (CST), let me say how delighted and honored we are to co-host the Buddha Jayanti 2015 event with the Indic Foundation and the Buddhist Society of Southern California here on our campus. I want to extend my very warm welcome to all of you who are gathered here today! I would like also to express my deep appreciation to Dr. Deepak Shimkhada, President of the Indic Foundation, for extending the invitation to CST to co-host this auspicious event.

Founded as a United Methodist school of theology here in Claremont in 1956, CST has since its beginning collaborated with and served other Christian denominations in an ecumenical spirit. Over the years that spirit has led us to expand our collaboration with other religious traditions as we begin to focus our curricula in our various degree programs on interreligious studies in order to respond to the reality of our religiously pluralistic world. Currently, we have close partnerships with Bayan Claremont, an Islamic graduate school, the Academy for Jewish Religion California, and the University of the West, a Buddhist university. Our students cross-register in one another's institutions, study with one another, and learn together what it means to live and serve in a religious pluralistic world.

Today, as we commemorate the Buddha Jayanti, we are also taking this opportunity to broaden our multi-religious collaboration to include the Dharmic traditions, specifically Hinduism, Sikhism, and Jainism. I am looking forward to committing CST to a shared vision toward a long-term partnership with the Indic Foundation, the Center for Sikh Studies, and the Center for Jain Studies. These collaborative efforts will benefit our students and prepare them better to "create a difference for the world we live in." With my very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey Kuan".

Kah-Jin Jeffrey Kuan, Ph.D.
President

Message from



Dr. Deepak Shimkhada, Chair of Buddha Jayanti Organizing Committee

On behalf of the Indic Foundation and 2015 Buddha Jayanti Organizing Committee, I am pleased to welcome you to the 2015 Buddha Jayanti celebrations at Claremont School of Theology. For collaborating with the Indic Foundation to jointly celebrate Buddha's birthday on his campus, I thank Dr. Jeffrey Kuan, President of Claremont School of Theology (CST). CST, as a Christian seminary, is well known for preparing future pastors and religious leaders. Realizing the complexity of the world, CST has broken out of its comfort zone by welcoming the world's other religious traditions and including them in its curriculum. It now has under its umbrella, college of Islamic studies. A process is underway to include the four Dharmic traditions, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. Center for South Asian Religious Traditions has been created, and I am pleased to announce that Indic Foundation is part of the Center.

I acknowledge the help of Mr. Ram Lama, Coordinator of the 2015 Buddha Jayanti, and board members of the Buddhist Society of California, for celebrating Buddha's birthday with us. Many individuals and businesses, whose names appear on various pages of this program booklet, have contributed their valuable time, money, ideas and artistic or technical talents. To them I am indebted. Without their help this program would not have been possible.

Finally, I thank the magnificent staff of Mudd Theater under the directorship of Dr. Jack Coogan, Professor of Claremont School of Theology, for providing the auditorium and its services for today's celebration.

Message from



Ram Lama, Coordinator, 2015 Buddha Jayanti

Lord Buddha's birthday is a joyous occasion. I was coordinator of Buddha's birthday celebration in 2012 at the same venue. I am again pleased to be coordinator for this year's event.

As coordinator, I have come in contact with many individuals during the process. It's not an easy task to pull off without the help and support of many individuals. One really doesn't have to be a Buddhist to participate at a Buddhist event. There are many on the organizing committee and other committees who are not Buddhists, and still they came forward to offer support with the goodness of their hearts. I thank them all for their pure spirit of cooperation.

If the Buddha were alive today, he would have appreciated it. The Buddha Jayanti is all about peace, cooperation, help, support, balance, harmony and compassion. The Buddha's teachings touch on these aspects, and they teach us who we are and what we should do as human beings. I for one believe that we should live a life of non-violence and social responsibility if we want to follow Buddha's teachings.

Finally, I thank you for your support for and your interest in Buddha Jayanti 2015. With the success we have today we may return next year to celebrate Buddha's birthday with you. Before leaving, I thank President Kuan of CST and the board of directors of Indic Foundation headed by Dr. Shimkhada for permitting me to be the coordinator of this magnificent event. -Thank you.

About Indic Foundation

Indic Foundation is affiliated with Claremont School of Theology. Its purpose is to advance the knowledge of Hindu studies in the United States through academic courses and cultural events. Claremont School of Theology and Indic Foundation share a number of core values. Both institutions work to foster academic excellence in the study of religious traditions of the world, including South Asia. Recognizing these core values, Claremont School of Theology and Indic Foundation have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to join in partnership to provide education leading to various certificate and degree programs in South Asian studies, Hinduism in particular. These degrees will be awarded under the banner of Center for South Asian Religious Traditions (CSART) of Claremont School of Theology. This is an exciting time, and we invite you to help us build the first Center for Hindu Studies in the nation.

The Board of Directors of the Foundation consists of

President: Dr. Deepak Shimkhada

Vice-Presidents: Shaila Rao Mistry

Treasurer: Sushma Lal

Secretary: Rahul Parikh

Member: Jamie Mills

Founders:

Dr. Deepak Shimkhada

Sushma Lal

Dr. Cynthia Humes

Dr. Rita Sherma

Center for South Asian Religious Traditions (CSART)

Claremont School of Theology (CST) and the Center for South Asian Religious Traditions (CSART) share a number of core values. Both institutions work to foster academic excellence in the study of the religious traditions of South Asia. As an interreligious university, Claremont School of Theology works with scholars and practitioners from most of the world's major religious traditions, as well as with secular experts. CST seeks to build constructive partnerships across multiple traditions for the common good. The Center for South Asian Religious Traditions brings expertise in the cultures, traditions, and practices of Hindu, Jain and Sikh religions. Its primary goals are to provide high-quality accredited academic courses on the Indic traditions at the undergraduate and graduate levels and to arrange events that feature the historical, cultural, spiritual, religious, musical and artistic richness of the traditions of South Asia.

To reflect these core values, CST and CSART jointly will offer courses in each respective religious tradition and will jointly organize programs on the CST campus with a view toward enriching the lives of community members of various persuasions in the Southland. The CST administration values the tradition of academic excellence that each of the CSART centers is likely to contribute to the richness of lives in the U.S. It therefore will develop in the next decade its deep connections with South Asian religious communities around the world, and the series of cultural and educational events that the CSART and each of the centers will organize. We wish to open the doors for the CSART and each center to be active in arranging and sponsoring courses and cultural events within and in partnership with CST. With that spirit in mind CSART is born. Let the cooperative work begin with CSART and each respective center (Hindu, Jain and Sikh) providing an average of two courses per year as part of the regular curricular offerings of Claremont School of Theology. This number may increase or decrease as the student enrollment and course demands reflect. These courses will be governed by the same Memos of Understanding that govern the relationship between CST and its other cooperative institutions, including the same revenue-sharing arrangements and the same access to services. Eventually, Claremont School of Theology hopes to establish independent and standalone centers for each of the Indic traditions, namely Center for Jain Studies, Center for Hindu Studies, and Center for Sikh Studies, which will offer accredited degrees. We intend that the curricular offerings of each of the Indic religious traditions will contribute to CST's programs in Indic Studies and will be offered as important components of whatever programs are established.

PART ONE

Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony

Introduction—Dr. Deepak Shimkhada

Lamp lighting

Welcome—Dr. Jeffrey Kuan,

President—Claremont School of Theology

Address:

Dr. Nitin Shah—Center for Jain Studies

Mr. Gurdishpal Singh—Center for Sikh Studies

Dr. Deepak Shimkhada—Center for Hindu Studies

MOU signing

PART TWO

Buddha Jayanti Program

- Emcee: Michael Reading
Welcome: Dr. Deepak Shimkhada, President, Indic Foundation and Chair of 2015 Buddha Jayanti Celebration Committee
Message: Corey Calaycay, Mayor of City of Claremont
Address: Mr. George Pappas, Honorary Consulate General of Nepal in Los Angeles
Address: Mr. Ram Lama, Coordinator of Buddha Jayanti 2015
Recognition: Sponsors, donors, and VIPs in the audience
Chanting: Buddhist monks and nun of various traditions—Thai, Tibetan, Chinese and others
Talk: Universal Teaching of the Buddha by Dr. Sthaneshwar Timalsina, Associate professor of Religion at San Diego State University

Cultural Program

1. Manjushree Dance (Newari classical dance)
Performed by Bindu Tamang
2. Skit: Siddhartha Becomes Buddha
Written and directed by Deepak Shimkhada
Actors: Ram Tamang, Bhimsen Tamang
Sound effects: Rahul Parikh
3. Nepali Folk Dance adult
Performed by Bindu Tamang, Ramesh Shrestha and Bhimsen Tamang
4. Nepali Folk Dance junior
Performed by Rubi lama and Sabina Lama
5. Tamang Selo Dance
Performed by Bhimsen Tamang, Surya Moktan, Laxmi Shrestha, and Deepa Poudel

Mara's daughters: Ashika Shrestha, Bevo Siwakoti, Lakshmi Shrestha, Deepa Paudel, Sabina Lama

All dances choreographed by Bindu Tamang

Backstage Manager: Dolma Lama

Announcement of the formation of Buddhist Society of California and installation of its Board of Directors

Vote of thanks: Ram Lama

Program adjourns

Followed by a vegetarian food catered by Catherine Dickerson of Catherine Dickerson Catering Service of Lemon Tree Café

Sponsors

We thank the advertisers and sponsors for their support in making the 2015 Buddha Jayanti celebrations in Claremont a big success.

Buddha Jayanti 2015 Organizing Committee

Chairman—Dr. Deepak Shimkhada

Vice-Chair & Coordinator—Ram Lama

Assistant Coordinator—Dil Shrestha

In charge of Cultural Program—Bindu Tamang

In charge of Puja Management—Bindu Lama

In charge of Food Management—Balram Tamang

In charge of Monks—Jamie Mills

Director of Finance—Sharada Shrestha

Press Photography—Ramesh Shrestha

Videography and Skit—Dil Shrestha

In charge of Volunteers –Ram Tamang

Volunteers

We thank the following volunteers for their time and help

Tek Lama

Bhimsen Tamang

Surya Mokhtan

Tika Tamang

Sagun Tamang

Deepa Poudel

Kamal Thin

Peter Mokhtan

Rohan Lama

Gyan Dhoj Lama

Dolma Lama

Ram Maya Lama

Ashika Shrestha

Laxmi Shrestha

Bhikshuni Lozang Trinlae

Jamie Mills

Michael Reading—Photography

Organizers

Claremont School of Theology

Indic Foundation

Buddhist Society of California

Facts about Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha

The precise date of birth of Siddhartha Gautama is not known. Depending on which text one believes in, his birth is either 563 BCE or 480 BCE. In either case, Buddha left his corporeal body at the age of 80. The generally accepted date is 563 BCE. Based on that, today is the 2578th birthday of the Buddha, popularly known as Buddha Jayanti or Buddha Purnima (swanya punhi in Newari or Nepal Bhasa), because he was born on the full moon day.

Birth place—Lumbini, now in Nepal

Clan—Shakya

Father—Suddhodana

Mother—Mayadevi

Foster mother—Mahaprajapati

Wife—Yasodhara

Son—Rahul

Place of enlightenment—Bodhgaya

First sermon—Sarnath

Place of death—Kushinagar



King Ashoka raised a stambha (pillar) in Lumbini to commemorate the Buddha's birthplace. The pillar was inscribed with his edict and it's still standing as a testimony to Buddha's birthplace. Buddha gave all his sermons in Pali, a language widely spoken by the masses of north India. There are legends that speak of his visit to his birthplace and the Kathmandu Valley. However, historically and archeologically it has not been substantiated. Other legends speak of King Ashoka's strong connection with Nepal. One of his daughters, Charumati, for example was believed to have been married to a prince of Nepal in the 3rd century BCE. There is a bahal (monastery) named after her (Cha Bahil or Chabel). The same king is believed to have built four stupas in the Kathmandu Valley. Although all are in a dilapidated condition, they still are standing in four corners of the Valley.

After Buddhism left India around 13th century, Nepal—i.e. the Kathmandu Valley—became the center where many Tibetan monks, wanting to learn Buddhism, came. Therefore, Nepal has been not only the birthplace of the Buddha, but also the repository of Buddhism to this day. It's natural for the Nepalis to feel proud that Buddha, although he was born in Lumbini, belongs to the world. That's one of the reasons we are celebrating his birthday even in a small city like Claremont. Happy Buddha Jayanti to all.

SKIT: Siddhartha Becomes Buddha

Cast

Siddhartha Gautama (young male)
Mara (older male, rough and tough)
Mara's five daughters (young and beautiful females)



Narration

Some 2500 years ago, Siddhartha Gautama was born in Lumbini, Kapilavastu, now in Nepal. Kapilavastu, at that time, was a republic ruled by King Suddodhana. As the only son of his father, Siddhartha was poised to inherit his father's riches, his power, and the kingdom. As the years passed, Siddhartha married a beautiful woman named Yasodhara and together they had a son. Yet Siddhartha was very unhappy. So at the age of 29, he decided to leave everything behind in search of happiness. After Siddhartha left his palace under cover of darkness, he went straight to the forest where he spent six years, practicing austerity. As he could not find the answer to his quest, he went to Bodhgaya and found a big tree where he sat down to meditate. This is the story of that seeker who left the comfort, riches and a kingdom in favor of a secret—the secret of happiness in life.

Act I

The place is quiet and tranquil. Birds chirp, and soothing music is heard in the background. Siddhartha is seated in a lotus position under a tree. His eyes are shut, and he is in deep meditation with his hands on his lap. After about two minutes, Mara enters.

Act II

Mara introduces himself looking to the audience:

"My name is Mara. I am the Lord of Darkness." He laughs loudly, "Ha, ha, ha."
"Look at this young man; he thinks he is going to overcome the darkness that is me. Ha, ha, ha."
"But I will not let him do so. No one can escape me. I am everywhere, and I am in everyone's heart."
"First, I am going to scare him."

Mara makes scary faces, shouts, blows air, and stamps. But Siddhartha is not perturbed. Then Mara says, "Okay, that is fair enough. Obviously, he really is in deep meditation. It seems he is beyond the physical realm. He can't hear me, nor can he see me. So I will have to use my arsenal to break his concentration."

Mara bangs on the floor with a big and tall staff he holds. Siddhartha does not flinch. So Mara takes out his red light saber (Darth Vader's light saber) and brandishes it in different directions, tapping it on Siddhartha's shoulders in the manner of striking him. But that doesn't move Siddhartha either. Then, Mara says, "OK, it didn't work. It seems he is intent on gaining enlightenment at any cost. But we will see. How can he resist temptation? Everyone has desire and clinging. So let me call my beautiful daughters of fear, ignorance, deceit, greed and desire. Let me see if he can resist them."

Act III

Mara's daughters enter. Their anklets jingle, and they walk in a graceful manner, swaying their hips in different directions. Two enter from the left and three from the right, and each of them starts to dance seductively. Music plays in the background. The girls finish their dance by touching Siddhartha on his chest and on his face. But they have no effect on Siddhartha.

Act IV

Enraged, Mara enters again.

"Shame on you my beautiful daughters. Five of you couldn't seduce one single man. Now go away—leave right now."

"Now let me show him my strength."

A sound of thunder is heard in the background and lights flicker. Mara gets really mad, he stamps and growls. But still Siddhartha is unaffected by all this. So Mara throws his hands in the air and sits down in front of Siddhartha.

"OK, Siddhartha, you made your point. Now let us talk like two civilized people."

"It's good meeting you, finally," Siddhartha spoke.

"Why are you being so stubborn? Why don't you want to join me? I have money, I have power, I have women, and I have everything that people desire."

"Remember that I was a prince before, and I had everything that you are promising me. But I left all of that in favor of truth—that is freedom, freedom from all desires. So why would I join you to get something that I don't want? Thank you, but no thanks. Please leave me alone."

"But I am a part of you; you live in me. I am your house," Mara says.

"No, Mara, you are a pure illusion. You do not exist. Earth is my witness," so saying Siddhartha touches the ground with his right hand. Mara falls on the ground. Bright lights appear; again the sounds of birds are heard. Siddhartha becomes Buddha.

Written by Deepak Shimkhada based on Buddha's life as found in Lalitavistara Sutra and other Pali canons.

Thank You

We sincerely thank our donors, whose generosity has supported many aspects of today's event.

Ram Lama
Deepak Shimkhada
Center for Jain Studies
Center for Sikh Studies
Indic Foundation
Sharada Shrestha
Dil Bahadur Shrestha
Yam Thapa
Tek Lama
Gopal Adhikari
Gyanendra Gurung
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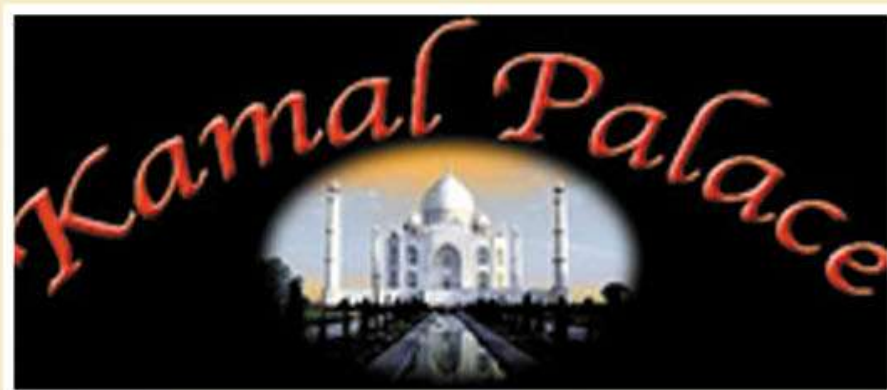
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