SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY, DEORALI, SIKKIM

PRESS RELEASE

A National Seminar was held at the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetoology under the auspices of the Institute from the 29th to the 30th of March 1995. For the first time in the history of the state a Seminar of this nature was organized for the broader dissemination of Dharma. The participants were given the option to choose between two subjects namely (i) Guru Padmasambhava's contribution to Sikkim and (ii) Cultural aspects of Sikkim. These are hitherto unexplored subjects into which no person or organisation has deeply delved into for serious analytical research. The Seminar which was attended by more than forty delegates and observers hailing from various parts of the country as well as Bhutan, Nepal and Korea represented many universities and academic bodies of national and international fame. Prominent among them were the celebrated historian and philologist Dr. R. K. Springle, the noted Tibetologist Prof. Santri Kaur Pathik, Prof. Saigal Lai Singh, Head of Department of Buddhist Studies, Prof. G. Gryanto, Department of Buddhist Studies, Prof. Norboo Penor, Prof. of Tibetan Studies, Durbar Ling Govt. College, Khopje Dorchen Dorgi, Principal of SHEDA, Dr. Kapileshwar Labh, Lecturer, Jawharlal Nehru University and a host of other scholars and dignitaries known for their tradition and exceptional eminence.

The inaugural function commenced on the 29th March '95 at the Institute premises amidst a festive atmosphere punctuated with delightful music which was very loud on the faces of the people who had thronged the Institute forenoon. His Excellency The Governor of Sikkim inaugurated the newly constructed replica of the Bhutia-Kosa Lake (Tsho Pamo) by unveiling the immaculate statue of Guru Padmasambhava in a scintillating and thought provoking discourse. His Excellency, in his capacity as the President of the Institute highlighted on the importance of Guru Padmasambhava and gave a succinct resume of the venerated aspects of Sikkimese culture. He declared that "Perhaps this is for the first time in the history of the Institute that a scholarly deliberation and the exchange of thought on the historical perspective of the Guru's contribution and cultural aspects of Sikkim is being organized by the SRTI. I do sincerely wish that you all will leave the site with more enlightened views of Tibetoology."

The Director in his address opined that "in the days of four great Universities like Nalanda, Takshashila and Vikrama shila and Undinpurit could flourish due to the auspicious patronage given to this Institution by the people as well as the sovereign. No one, irrespective of their caste, colour, race and language need to turn away from this Institute since Tibetoology is not the sole prerogative of the Tibetans alone. On the contrary, it encompasses the whole of mankind and all sentient beings." A tastefully decorated flower pavilion was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Ex-CM who later on addressed the gathering as the representative of the Hon'ble C M who could not be present during the occasion owing to other important preoccupations. The second volume of the Bulletin of Tibetoology for the year 1994 was released by the Hon'ble Cultural Ministe who by virtue of his high position is also the Vice-President of the Institute. He exhorted the people to become true Buddhists through their
precept and practice and expressed his hope that the Institute should in the course of time, organize smaller types of Seminars, symposia and spiritual conferences. Prof. Ahmad Sayeed was called upon to present the first paper of the seminar after which the morning session was adjourned with a vote of thanks conferred upon all those who were present by the Director, SRTI.

The second and third sessions was presided over by Prof. S.S. Singh and Prof. S.K. Pattnaik respectively on the 25th afternoon and the following morning during which scholars delivered papers on various aspects and dimensions of the subject. The valedictory session was chaired by the Hon'ble Chancellor of Sikkim Smt. S.N. Bhagawati, which was concluded with a vote of thanks by Smt. B. Ghosh, Asstt. Director of the Institute. The chairperson Justice Smt. Bhagawati in her valedictory address congratulated the bold attempt which had been made by the Director and the staff of the Institute. He expressed his felicitation to associate himself with the affairs of the Institute as the day is to come and in the arbitration of the session highlighted upon some of the cardinal points which had been discussed during the session.

This seminar did epitomize one of the cardinal objectives of the Institute which has been laid down in its charter of incorporation in Art. 10 and of its objectives and functions which suggests that the Institute was established 'To organize conferences and meetings on different areas of Tibetology and to record recognition to scholars in the field by means of scholarships and prizes. The preamble of the charter clearly mentions that the Institute should work actively for the development of the knowledge of Tibet, its culture and all arts and sciences associated with origin and developments of the Chud and to set high standard of research both orthodox and modern, as the subjects mentioned.'

In this respect the seminar has been fruit bearing and significant since scholars belonging to both orthodox monastic systems as well as from various Universities put their heads heads and hands together.

As a result the syncretic conclusions drawn out of the deliberations were based on Tibetan primary sources as well as other relevant sources of study. The members of the Academic council who met on the 21st of March '88 has now decided to revise these learned papers and bring them out in two volumes very shortly. This Seminar is definitely the beginning of many such events and health in the history of Tibetology and Buddhism.