

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS
NEW DELHI
(MEDIA CELL)

Press Release

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on behalf of Government of India gifted a Buddha Statue to a very prestigious and historic Buddhist Temple “Tongdosa temple” in South Korea. On the auspicious occasion of “Buddha Jayanti ,“on May 19,2021 as per Korean calendar the Buddha statue was unveiling at the temple.

Embassy of India, Seoul, in collaboration with the Tongdosa authorities, organized a series of events in connection with the gift of a statue of Lord Buddha by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) to the people of the Republic of Korea. This included a handing-over ceremony at the Embassy on April 30, 2021, enshrining ceremony of the statue in Tongdosa on May 16, 2021 and a ceremony to dedicate the statue to the Korean people, coinciding with the Vesak celebrations on May 19, 2021.

The statue was handed over in a ceremony at ICCR's Cultural Centre Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Embassy of India, Seoul, by Ambassador of India to ROK H.E. Ms. Sripriya Ranganathan to Head Monk of Tongdosa Ven. Hyeonmun on April 30, 2021. The enshrining ceremony of the Lord Buddha Statue was held at Tongdosa, Yangsan on May 16, 2021.

During the ceremony, Ambassador highlighted the central importance of Buddhism in promoting India-Korea cultural relations and people-to-people linkages over the centuries.

ICCR Director General Mr. Dinesh K. Patnaik, in his message, emphasized that temples like Tongdosa bring the teachings of Lord Buddha to the world and celebrate the power and goodness of Buddhism all over the world.

On the occasion of the Korean Vesak celebrations on May 19, Secretary Ministry of External Affairs, Mrs. Riva Ganguly Das, dedicated the statue to the people of ROK emphasising the abiding relevance of the teachings of the Buddha which provide all mankind the inner strength to cooperate for the common good of all and in overcoming the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. She also announced the launch of a virtual exhibition on "Bodhicitta: Interweaving Buddhist Art Traditions from India across Asia", curated by National Museum of India and presented in association with SVCC, Embassy of India, Seoul and the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism in ROK.

Tongdosa itself enjoys a special connection with India, having been built by monks who had travelled to India and become part of the Buddha's close circle of disciples. The ceremonies on this occasion were graced by prominent Korean dignitaries including Ven. Hyeonmun, Head Monk of Tongdosa Temple; Mr. Yeo Han-gu, Secretary to the President for New Southern and Northern Policy; Members of National Assembly of ROK Mr. Park Seong-jun,

Mr. Jeong Pil-mo, Mr. Choi Jong-youn, Mr. Choi In-ho, Mr. Yoon Geon-young, Mr. Yoon Young-seok, Mr. Kim Doo-Kwan & Mr. Kim Jeong-ho; Mr Cho Hyun-rae, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs Office, ROK Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; Mr. Kim Il Kwon, Mayor of Yangsan; Mr. Park Jong-Won, Vice Governor of Gyeongsangnam Province; and Dr Lee Jae-young, Chairman, Democratic Party of Korea Yangsan District Chapter.

The gift of the statue is testimony to the long-standing friendship and civilization linkages between the people of India and ROK and the historic ties between Tongdosa and India.

May 19, 2021

ABOUT THE TONGDOSA TEMPLE

The Tongdosa temple is the main temple of the 15 diocese of the Jogye order, which is the most powerful Buddhist order in the country, with over 6 million followers. The Tongdosa temple is considered to be amongst the holiest as the original relics of the Sakyamuni Buddha are enshrined in its central hall. The Tongdosa temple also runs 15 other smaller temples in the area. Ven. Hyun Moon, Head Monk of the Tongdosa temple, explained the temple's history, emphasizing that the temple enjoys a very special connection with India, having been built by monks who had travelled to India and become part of the Buddha's close circle of disciples. He added that the very location of the Tongdosa temple was influenced by the connection with India: it was built in

the vicinity of the Yeongchuksan mountain range because the shape of this range resembles that of the mountain range near Rajagriha where the Buddha imparted the Buddha Dhamma to his disciples. Head Monk of Tongdosa Temple specifically thanked India Government stating that the Buddhist faithful are especially happy to have a Buddha statue that had come to them all the way from India, the home of Buddha.

VEDIO ATTACHMENTS

Director General of ICCR Shri Dinesh Patnaik sent his video recorded goodwill message was played during the ceremony at Tangdosa Temple. Video message is attached. The video message of Smt. Riva Ganguly Das Secretary Ministry of External Affairs conveying good wishes to the Republic of South Korea is also attached.

Clipping of ceremony at Tangdosa Temple is attached.

Details of Buddhist Statue:-

Size of the statue : 3.3 feet (1 Meter)

Posture : Seated

Material : Bronze

Sculptor : Sh. Naresh Kumar Kumawat, Matu Ram Art Centres Pvt. Ltd
Gurgaon