

A Declaration of the Hindu-Buddhist Summit Phnom Penh, Cambodia - Feb. 12-14, 2009



Thanks to the efforts of GPIW there was a very successful meet of Hindu and Buddhist religious leaders for three days from Feb 12-14 at Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Coming from different countries representing various sects, they had an exposure to the Hindu religious leaders for the first time. The discussions were on topics of common interest like prevention of conversion, ways and means of increasing the effective representation of these two traditions in the meets of world religions and so on. The following resolutions were the outcome of this significant meeting of dialogue.

We, the Hindu and Buddhist religious leaders assembled here, have come together in recognition of our shared spiritual foundation and of the need to work in closer partnership.

Hinduism and Buddhism are two of the oldest religious traditions in the world and provide a profound and highly sophisticated worldview, which is of great significance and value to the world community at this crucial



time. Together we comprise nearly one-fifth of the world population, approximately 1.5 billion people. Because of their universal nature, our traditions have the power to unify, integrate and synthesize on many levels, and to foster unity among the human family. Our traditions are based on an understanding of the interconnection of all life forces, on compassion for all sentient beings, on the search for realization of our true nature and the ultimate reality. Our traditions teach that there are many paths to the realization of truth and that all religions are valid pursuits of the one truth and have an equal right to be. This wisdom, which emerges from the East, can be an enormous resource in helping the evolution of our global society and thus now must play its role on the world stage.

Over the years, and even today, the global community has excluded or marginalized our voices in creating and shaping the nature of global interreligious exchange. Interreligious dialogue has essentially been a dialogue among the Abrahamic community, and this



has led to a great imbalance. The Eastern religious traditions must now come forward to assume a proportionately appropriate voice on the global stage for the sake of creating a more balanced world community. This balance will bring great benefit to all.

We call upon the international community to recognize that the Hindu and Buddhist communities in Asia are being targeted and subjected to unethical conversion practices – aggressive practices that denigrate our traditions and cultures and claim superiority of external, foreign influences. It is tearing the social fabric of our communities, causing division and friction and creating the pre-conditions for conflict. Billions of dollars each year are targeted by international organizations for this conversion work, and our most vulnerable communities are the victims. This is a form of cultural violence and should be recognized as such by the international community.

Therefore, to address these issues and to give greater global voice to Eastern wisdom, we resolve that:

- The Hindu and Buddhist communities must stand equally with the Abrahamic family, be represented in proportionate numbers and participate equally in shaping the agenda and nature of interreligious exchange so that we can bring greater East-West balance to the world community;
- We will create a new global forum to give greater voice to the wisdom of the Eastern traditions so that we can help the world community understand more fully the values, principles and essential knowledge of the Eastern traditions;
- We will work to raise international awareness of the dangers of unethical conversion practices, practices that undermine our communities and threaten the peaceful coexistence that religions in Asia have enjoyed for centuries.
- We want to express that those religions whose theologies tolerate, advocate and encourage the practice of violence (either

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physical, emotional or cultural) against the followers of other religions, and through institutionalized deliberate programs which destroy native cultures, identities, and sense of cultural continuity and respect for ancestral heritage to be adharmic.

- We are committed to using all the technologies available to help educate our people about Dharma, to uphold and strengthen Dharma in all aspects of our society and to educating the world community about who we are.
- In keeping with the findings of the United Nations Commission on Climate Change, we appeal to the global community to reduce its consumption of meat in order to help save the planet from the dangers of climate change.
- We declare that mutual respect among religions is a must to promote harmony among them.

- We declare cultures should be protected in the same manner as biodiversity and endangered species of animals and plants with special global laws and initiatives.
- Both traditions should expand their efforts to promote ethics of caring for all those people who need help. We also agree to address all other social issues obtaining in our societies.
- Both traditions should work together to develop programs to teach our youth our spiritual traditions, utilizing the various means of communication available today.

Therefore, to bring about greater world balance, to help foster greater understanding of Dharma in the world community, and to protect and strengthen our societies, we declare a new Hindu-Buddhist partnership that will work to give greater global voice to Eastern wisdom and bring benefit to the human family and the world's community of life.

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