

**SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY,
DEORALI, SIKKIM**

PRESS RELEASE

A National Seminar was held at the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology under the aegis 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 chose between two subjects mainly (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 linguist and philologist Dr. R. K. Sprigg, the noted historian of Tibetology Prof. Suniti Kumar Pathak, Prof. Sangha Sen Singh, Head of Department of Buddhist studies, Prof. G. Gyatso, Department of Buddhist Studies, Prof. Norboo former Asstt. Prof. of Tibetan studies, Darjeeling Govt. College, Khenpo Dechen Dorji, Principal of SHEDA, Dr. Kapileshwar Labh, Lecturer, Jawaharlal Nehru University and a host of other scholars and dignitaries known for their erudition and exceptional eminence.

The inaugural function commenced on the 29th March '95 at the Institute premises amidst a festive atmosphere punctuated with delight and mirth which was writ large on the faces of the people who had thronged the Institute foreground. His Excellency The Governor of Sikkim inaugurated the newly constructed replica of the Dhana-Kosa Lake (Tsho Pema) 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 historicity of Guru Padmasambhava and gave a succinct resume of the variegated aspects of Sikkimese culture. He declared thus "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 organised by the SRIT. I do sincerely wish that you all will leave the state with more enlightened views of Tibetology.

The Director in his address opined that "In the days of four great Universities like Nalanda, Takshasila and Vikraama sila and Undantapuri could flourished due to the sumptuous 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 Tibetology 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 Eccl. Minister 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 Tibetology for the year 1994 was released by the Hon'ble Cultural Minister who by virtue of his high position is also the Vice-President of the Institute. He exhorted the people to become true Buddhist through their

precept and practice and expressed his hope that the Institute should in the course of time, organise similar types of Seminars, symposia and spiritual conventions. 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, SRIT.

The second and third session was presided over by Prof. S.S. Singh and Prof. S.K. Pathak respectively on the 29th afternoon and the following morning during which scholars deliberated upon various aspects and dimensions of the subjects. The valedictory session was chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Sikkim Sri. S. N. Bhargava, which was concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri B. Ghosh, Asstt. Director of the Institute. The chairperson Justice Shri. Bhargava in his valedictory address eulogised the bold attempt which had been made by the Director and the staff of the Institute. He expressed his fondness to associate himself with the affairs of the Institute in the days to come and as the arbitrator 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 organise conferences and meetings on different items of Tibetology and to accord 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 Chos, the culture and all arts and sciences associated with origins and developments of the Chos and to set high standard of research both orthodox and modern, in the subjects mentioned"

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

As a result the synthetic conclusions drawn out of the deliberations were based on Tibetan primary sources as well as other relevant sources of study. The member of the Academic council who met on the 31st of March '95, has now decided to revise these learned papers and bring them out in two vols very shortly. This Seminar is definitely the beginning of many such events and heralds a new epoch in the history of Tibetology and Buddhology.