



“The monk from MIT” to speak on values and ethics at ICG Lecture

On Sunday, the 7th of May, the Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi, the Founder and CEO of The Dalai Lama Centre for Ethics and Transformative Values at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), will deliver a lecture on “Re-imagining Ethics in a World of Rapid Developments” at The International Centre Goa (ICG), at 6 pm. The Venerable is widely known as an innovative thinker, a philosopher educator, a philanthropist, a polymath and a monk. He lectures internationally on subjects ranging from philosophy, science, ethics and religion to socio-political thought.

Born in Vaishali, Bihar, the young Priyadarshi experienced visions of monks and Buddhist temples. This led him to enter a Buddhist monastery in Rajgir, near the ancient Nalanda University, at the age of 10. Talking about his decision at that young age to an Indian newspaper a few years ago, he explained: “Callings are never rational. I never went back on this decision because it wasn’t an attraction that would fade over time. This is what I am meant to be.”

The Venerable went on to study traditional Indo-Tibetan and Japanese Buddhism and was ordained by His Holiness The Dalai Lama, who is his spiritual mentor. However, he also received a secular education, apparently at the insistence of his parents, and obtained his bachelor’s degree as an Integral Honors Scholar in Philosophy, Physics, and Religious Studies at Le Moyne College, a private Jesuit institution in Syracuse, NY. He went on to complete his graduate studies in Comparative Philosophy of Religion at Harvard University.

Given his multi-lingual and multi-cultural education and training, it is not surprising that the Venerable has actively participated in and promoted inter-cultural dialogue. He represented the Buddhist tradition in a meeting with Pope John Paul II in 1997 when Christians were being attacked in some parts of India. He has also engaged with Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Pope Benedict, HH Gyalwang Karmapa, and other religious leaders on a number of occasions.

The Dalai Lama Centre for Ethics and Transformative Values is dedicated to inquiry, dialogue, and education on the ethical and humane dimensions of life. Its founding members include several Nobel Laureates including Iranian lawyer Shirin Ebadi and American Jody Williams.

A keen and accomplished photographer, The Venerable is also the Founding Director and President of the Prajnopaya Institute and Foundation, a worldwide humanitarian organization which provides care for all regardless of ethnicity, religion or gender, and a Founding Member of the Vishwa Shanti Stupa in New Delhi and Sarnath.

The lecture will be chaired by Professor A. Raghuramaraju, University of Hyderabad, one of India’s most eminent philosophers. He taught at Goa University in the early 1990s before joining the University of Hyderabad. A prolific writer in both English and Telgu, other than several published articles in national and international journals, he has edited or authored over 10 books with Oxford University Press and other prestigious publishers. These include *Debates in Indian Philosophy* (2007); *Debating Gandhi* (2010); *Modernity in Indian Social Theory* (2010); *Enduring Colonialism* (2011); *Philosophy and India* (2013); *Debating Vivekananda* (2014) and *Modern Frames and Premodern Themes in Indian Philosophy* (2017). The book *Debates in Indian Philosophy* was listed as a Choice Outstanding Academic Title in 2007.