



PRESS CONFERENCE

Tuesday June 13, 2006 at 11h30
20 bis, Chemin du Terroux, 1218 Grand Saconnex

GENEVA – CONFERENCE CENTRE FOR BUDDHISM

Inauguration: on June 23, 2006

History of the Project

The City of Geneva is known worldwide for its international vocation towards culture both spiritual and humanitarian – The City of Peace – where the decision makers meet.

With the growing worldwide interest in Buddhism, a group of Buddhist communities joined together to develop the project of a Centre in Geneva.

The State Council of the Republic and Canton of Geneva realised the importance of having such a centre within its territory and made available, to the Buddhist communities, the site in the Community of Grand-Saconnex, with an emphyteutic lease of 50 years.

Realisation

The International Buddhist Progress Society (I.B.P.S.), a Swiss Foundation from Gelfingen, Canton of Lucerne, the representative in Switzerland of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order undertakes the responsibility and management of the Centre.

On 10th January, 2005 the ceremony to bless the site at Chemin du Terroux was held and the construction started. The architectural office of Anderegg and Rinaldi, designed this unique project for Geneva and have worked, since the beginning, with the representatives of the various Buddhist organisations involved. The building shows a deep understanding of the teachings of the Buddha.

The Centre, directed by the I.B.P.S., will host spiritual practices, meditation, cultural and educational activities, conferences and receptions. It is now called the **Geneva - Conference Centre for Buddhism**, bringing together the different Buddhist traditions in Geneva.

The Centre fulfils the aims of Buddhists to have a place to practice together and to meet, as well as the traditional spirit of welcoming, whereby all interested in the Buddhist teachings can be received. The Centre will be open to all.

The International Buddhist Progress Society of Switzerland - I.B.P.S.

The monastic community I.B.P.S., founded at Gelfingen, Canton of Lucerne in 1996 is a non-profit, apolitical Buddhist foundation for common public interest. I.B.P.S. is a branch of the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Order, whose founder is the Venerable Master Hsing Yun, 48th Patriarch of the Lin Chi School of Mahayana Ch'an Buddhism. Fo Guang Shan has more than 194 centres worldwide, large monasteries located in Europe, South Africa, the Americas, Australia and Asia.

The religious spirit of I.B.P.S. was inspired by the Bodhisattvas, which is to say by the respect for the altruistic tradition bringing faith, happiness, wisdom and comfort to others. I.B.P.S. works to develop a humanitarian and dynamic Buddhism adapted to today's society.

The lay organisation of I.B.P.S., the Buddha's Light International Association (B.L.I.A.), is very active in more than a hundred countries. Recognised as a Non-Governmental Organisation by the United Nations, B.L.I.A. has, as of today, more than a million members.

Conscious of the importance of Geneva, the international city with a humanitarian tradition, I.B.P.S. has opened the **Geneva - Conference Centre for Buddhism** in June 2006, located at 20 bis, chemin du Terroux, Grand-Saconnex, Canton of Geneva. Besides Buddhist activities, multicultural meetings and international conferences will be organised to contribute towards the radiance of the City of Geneva, City of Peace.

Venerable Master Hsing Yun – Founder of the Monastic Order of Fo Guang Shan

The Venerable Master Hsing Yun was born in 1927 in the Jiangsu Province of China. At the age of 12, he entered a monastery near Nanjing. He was ordained in 1941 and became the 48th Patriarch of the Lin Chi Ch'an School.

In 1949, he left China for Taiwan where he began to accomplish his long-term wish to promote Humanistic Buddhism, which means spiritual practice in daily life. During nearly half a century the Venerable Master Hsing Yun has dedicated his efforts to promote world peace through the practice of the Buddha's teachings.

Devoting himself to the revitalisation of traditional Chinese Buddhism, in 1967, the Venerable Master Hsing Yun founded the Monastic Order of Fo Guang Shan in Taiwan and has now more than 1,200 monastic disciples. Numerous religious, social, educational and cultural projects have been achieved under his guidance both on national territory and abroad, demonstrating the success of this undertaking.

He has founded Buddhist institutes, universities, schools worldwide, a broadcasting network, a daily newspaper as well as publishing houses for books and music. A prolific writer and an inspiring speaker, Master Hsing Yun has written many books on Buddhist sutras and a wide spectrum of topics over the past five decades.

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