

## FIRST CIRCULAR, June 2026

Dear Colleagues,

The XX1st Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (IABS) will take place at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada from July 31st to August 4th, 2028. It is with great pleasure and warmth that I cordially invite scholars from around the world to Vancouver, a vibrant city on the West Coast of North America. We are honoured to host this esteemed congress in such a dynamic international hub, for us to connect and collaborate.

### General Information

The First Circular is being sent to all current IABS members. A friendly reminder that a valid IABS membership for the year 2028 is required in order to attend the congress. To apply for or renew your membership, please visit the [IABS website](#) and follow the provided instructions. If you have any questions about eligibility, kindly contact the association's [General Secretary](#).

Participants will also need to pay a registration fee to help cover the costs of organizing the event. The specific amount will be announced in the upcoming Second Circular. We are also considering options for virtual attendance and will provide further details on the hybrid format in future communications.

Future updates and announcements will be shared via email and posted on the upcoming congress website. Please subscribe to the [IABS 2028 Newsletter](#) to receive updates.

We encourage you to share this information with your colleagues and graduate students who are not currently IABS members but may be interested in participating in the congress.

### Academic Program

The aim of this congress is to create an open environment for scholarly exchange in the form of publicizing new findings, promoting collaborations, and incubating future directions in the field of Buddhist Studies. To fulfil the aim and optimize academic communication, the Planning Committee declares the following format of proceedings:

- (i) In order to accommodate as many participants as possible and maximize the variety of research topics, only one paper per participant is permitted.
  - (ii) Each conference day will consist of one morning session and one afternoon session, each with several panels and sections convening concurrently. In each panel or section, a maximum of five or six papers will be presented. Each presentation will have a 20-minute time limit, followed by a 10-minute Q&A session for questions and discussions.
- (A) Panel: A panel is devoted to papers focusing on a specific topic, organized by a convenor. All panels will be limited to half a day, except for special cases. Convenors will contact the selected contributors directly.

- (B) Section: A section groups individual papers submitted under one theme. A list of general topics will be proposed by the Planning Committee in the Second Circular (April 2027).

### **Call for Panel Proposals**

The Planning Committee would like to invite initial panel proposals from scholars and colleagues from all areas of Buddhist Studies. If you are interested in convening a panel, please provide us with a 200-word description of the proposed topic as well as a tentative list of potential contributors (not counted within the 200-word limit). Once the selected panel topics are presented in the Second Circular, interested individuals should contact the panel convener directly to inquire about joining.

The initial panel proposals should be sent to Jinhua Chen, Chair, Planning Committee of the XX1st IABS Congress, the University of British Columbia, Department of Asian Studies, at [info.iabs2028@ubc.ca](mailto:info.iabs2028@ubc.ca). The deadline for the initial panel proposals is **February 28, 2027**.

### **Individual Paper Proposals**

Individual paper proposals are not being accepted at the moment. We will announce a call for individual papers in the Second Circular, along with a list of themes suggested by the Planning Committee.

### **Posters and Exhibits**

We welcome both posters and exhibits for this congress. Exhibition space will be provided, and poster and exhibit presentations will take place during special sessions where participants can interact with each other in a less formal setting. More details will come in the Second Circular.

### **Visa Requirements**

Visa requirements vary according to the nationality of the visitor. Please consult your travel agent or the Canadian consulate/embassy in your home city for up-to-date information. Except for issuing an acceptance letter for the IABS congress, the planning committee cannot offer any assistance in procuring a visa.

### **Accommodations**

We are pleased to inform you that a block of studios and suites in the [Gage Suites](#), the [West Coast Suites](#), and one other residential building has been reserved at the UBC Point Grey campus. These options offer convenient access to both the campus and lodging amenities throughout the entire congress. The suites accommodate from single occupancy up to a maximum of four guests, allowing flexible options for family or shared groups. Further details will be provided on the upcoming congress website. Please note that suites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Additional accommodation options will be announced in the Second Circular. Booking reservations will open in early 2027.

### **Conference/Travel Grants**

The Planning Committee, regretfully, cannot provide direct financial support for travel or conference, but we strive to ensure the affordability of the registration fee.

Nevertheless, the Planning Committee is pleased to offer the IABS Student Travel Bursaries to students who require financial support for their travel to and stay in Canada. Despite the limited spaces, students are encouraged to apply for it. More details will be announced in the Second Circular.

I look forward to meeting everyone in Vancouver, 2028.

With kind regards,  
Jinhua Chen

**The Planning Committee of the XXIst IABS Congress**

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Chair: Jinhua Chen (University of British Columbia)

Academic Coordination: Carol Lee (University of British Columbia)

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**Correspondent**

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