



**RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF
LAW, PUNJAB**

**CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN
INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW**
in collaboration with
**TEMPLE OF UNDERSTANDING, INDIA
FOUNDATION**
presents

**THE PANCHA BHOOTA & INTERNATIONAL
HUMANITARIAN LAW: AN INTRINSIC
RELATIONSHIP**

ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 02 2020 | 6 PM (IST)

Register here:

<https://forms.gle/TudM2LPSfsXjtfCX8>

Certificates to be provided on participation in the event

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Centre for Advanced Study in International Humanitarian Law (CASH) is an esteemed research centre of Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, which is dedicated to research in the field of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). It aims to ensure that future leaders and opinion-makers understand the practical relevance of the subject of IHL and have a thorough knowledge of its basic principles. Whenever there are serious and large-scale violations of IHL, the law itself tends to get the blame. Such violations should, of course, rouse the international community to action however, it is important to find out exactly where the problem lies rather than rushing headlong into changing the rules, especially as this is nowadays an extremely arduous, costly and unpredictable process. Therefore, the first and foremost function is to sensitize teachers, researchers, and students about the provisions of the IHL so that they may choose IHL as a field in their future research endeavours.

TEMPLE OF UNDERSTANDING

In 1960, Juliet Hollister (1916-2000) created the Temple of Understanding (TOU) after a realization that the world was in grave danger unless the gifts, wisdom, and insights of religious traditions could be recognized and cultivated to promote positive social change. She is the first woman to have founded an interfaith organization. Eleanor Roosevelt was among the first to endorse the concept. In the late 1950's, Juliet travelled the globe, bearing letters of introduction from the former First Lady, in order to gather support from the world's religious and political leaders.

“May this greatly needed Temple of Understanding come into realization soon, for our world

surely needs the inspiration and leadership of such a ‘Spiritual United Nations’.” That year, Juliet met with luminaries such as Egyptian President Nasser, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Pope John XXIII, and Albert Schweitzer -who responded to her request for a meeting with, “Come at once and I will send a canoe.”

ABOUT THE EVENT

*“Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away”.*

-Percy Bysshe Shelley

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is a set of rules which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. These principles of IHL or the Law of War are rooted in the rules of ancient civilizations and religions- warfare has always been subject to certain principles and customs. It is pertinent to explore in detail these ancient ideas that have shaped IHL and analyze how they affect the field of law in the modern times.

One of these ideas is the theory of the Pancha Bhoota or Pancha Maha-Bhoota which states that all cosmic creation can be traced back to five basic elements: Earth (Prithvi), Water (Apas), Fire (Agni), Air (Vayu) and Space (Akasha). The theory takes prime significance in Hinduism and Buddhism and provides that it is the knowledge of the five elements that allows mankind to understand the laws of nature to attain greater health, power, knowledge, wisdom and happiness. This arises out of deep intuition of how the universe operates. In the contemporary age, most of these elements can be seen as Global Commons or ‘The Common Heritage of Mankind’, such as the High Seas, the Atmosphere, Antarctic and the Outer Space.

In today’s fast-paced and competitive world, as geopolitics is fraught with disputes that are connected to the 5 elements of life, we tend to forget that we do not bring or take away any of mother earth’s jewels. From Yemen to Kashmir to the claims on Outer Space, everything boils down to conflicts over these 5 elements. With polar caps melting and global temperatures at an all-time high, it is necessary to understand why eco-sensitive practices during war are so important. Therefore, IHL must go beyond traditional roles and concern itself with matters of biodiversity conservation and climate change in conflict areas.

ABOUT THE EVENT

In the present scenario, it will be interesting to recognize how equal access to the 5 elements of nature particularly during the times of warfare may form a crucial part of the International Humanitarian Law regime in the times to come. With polar caps melting and global temperatures at an all-time high, it may be interesting to see why eco-sensitive and ethically correct practices during war might be important. We have seen the vast damage that the lack of eco-sensitive practices can bring, such as in the aftermaths of Vietnam and Rwanda. In the present scenario, it is interesting to recognize how equal access to the 5 elements of nature particularly during the times of warfare may form a crucial part of the International Humanitarian Law regime in the times to come.

Although war may be inevitable, it is crucial to ensure the sustenance of a basic code of ethics, the first step of which is ensuring equal access to the basic elements for all parties concerned.

OBJECTIVE

- To enhance our understanding of the interrelationship between Sustainable Development and the connect of these 5 basic elements to life.
- To delve into the ancient relationship of the elements of life and the laws of war
- To elucidate the interplay between IHL and IHRL in the context of post-conflict reconstruction.
- To develop best practices to avoid these 5 basic elements from being contentious or denied during conflicts.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



Hon'ble Dr. Karan Singh

Hon'ble Dr. Singh is an Indian politician, philanthropist and poet. He belongs to Jamwal Dogra Dynasty. He worked closely as a teenager with Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel during the founding of the Republic of India, He ia also the youngest ever union cabinet minister. He was the Prince regent of J&K till 1952. Following which at age 21, he served as the first President of J&K from 1952 to 1965.

Dr. A. K. Merchant, Baha'i

Dr. Merchant is the General Secretary, Temple of Understanding India Foundation. National Trustee, Lotus Temple & Baha'i Community of India, and Chairman, the Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Delhi. Active participant at the Parliament of World's Religions held in Melbourne (2009), Salt Lake City (2015), Toronto (2018).



Dr. Suman Khanna Aggarwal

Dr. Suman was An Associate Professor of Philosophy, Delhi University. She obtained her doctoral degree on Gandhian thought in 1978 and has since translated her theoretical knowledge into practical action by founding the Gandhian NGO - Shanti Sahyog. She is also the receipient of several prestigious awards.

Dr. Stellina Jolly

Dr. Stellina is a Senior Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Legal Studies, South Asian University. A Fulbright Scholar with the University of San Francisco and a recipient of the IVLP, she researches in international environmental law and conflict of laws. She is a member of IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law and was awarded an educational grant on Civil Society Law from ICNL and USAID.



Dr. Katherine Heather

Dr. Heather is a British-Australian writer and professor at Bifröst University in Iceland. She studied Modern History and Politics at Oxford University. She completed a doctorate in comparative constitutional law and human rights law. Her debut novel Psalm 119 published when the author was just 23, was awarded the Helene du Coudray Prize. She researches and lectures on constitutional law, human rights law, and the philosophy of law.

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