

A vibrant photograph of cherry blossoms in full bloom against a clear blue sky. The flowers are white with delicate pink centers and yellow stamens. Some buds are still closed, showing their reddish-brown tips. The background is filled with more blossoms, some in focus and some blurred, creating a sense of depth and a bright, cheerful atmosphere.

No. 7

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy
NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER No.7 covers the news of research projects which the Institute of Oriental Philosophy carried out from January 2020 to March 2021. (Affiliation and title etc. at that time)

Introduction

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy

Founder: Daisaku Ikeda (President of Soka Gakkai International)

Director: Akira Kirigaya

History

On January 27, 1962, the Institute of Oriental Studies was founded in Shinjuku ward, Tokyo, for the sake of clarifying the relevance of Buddhism and other world religions in the modern world. The institute was recognized as a nonprofit foundation under Japanese law in December 1965, at which time the name was changed to the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP). On November 18, 2010, the IOP was recognized as a Public Interest Incorporated Foundation under Japanese law.

Objective

The IOP is dedicated to advancing scholarly inquiry into Buddhism and other world religions to clarify their universal value, to integrate them into humanity's rich spiritual heritage in the modern age and to solve myriad problems facing humanity today.

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Director's Greeting



Mr. Akira Kirigaya
(Director of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy)

On February 4, 1961, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda, the founder of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP), was standing in Bodh Gaya, India, the birthplace of Buddhism.

Here, President Ikeda sketched his plan to establish the IOP as an academic institution where a new culture that can guide humanity would be built based on the profound oriental spiritual civilization revolving around Buddhism. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the birth of the concept to establish the IOP. On this significant occasion, we received the guiding principles of the IOP from President Ikeda. In gratefully receiving these, I would like to think about the IOP's mission and the shape that it should take in the future.

1. Establish the dignity of life as the prevailing philosophy of the age

In recent years, human rights issues have been raised from various perspectives and have gained attention amid various situations, from nuclear issues and environmental issues including climate change to national and ethnic conflicts, diversity issues, bullying and cyberbullying. Nowadays, the effects of COVID-19 have also been significant, and the clue to solving these problems depends on how we address the 'dignity of life'. At the dawn of the 21st century, President Ikeda looked ahead to the future and presented a plan for every 50 years from 2001. In this vision, President Ikeda expected to "make a philosophy involving the 'dignity of life' the spirit of the era and to establish this as a worldwide spirit" between 2051 and 2100. He then envisioned our planet beyond that period with permanent peace and flourishing human culture. The IOP would like to do its part in creating such an era.

2. Contribute a rich reservoir of wisdom to support a network of global citizens

Looking around the world, the problems mentioned above have also created division, conflict and distrust in various aspects. To overcome these problems, it is essential for people around the world to work together, live in harmony and trust each other. President Ikeda entrusted the IOP to contribute to this goal by a rich reservoir of wisdom. "A rich reservoir of wisdom" can be interpreted in two ways. The first is to gather wisdom at the IOP. President Ikeda emphasizes "close cooperation among the research fellows", saying that "perfection can be achieved only through discussions with others based on the studies of individuals, with individuals' work supplementing that of each other", rather than each of them sticking to their own opinions without taking a broader perspective. The second is to gather the wisdom of the world through dialogues across different civilizations and religions among the best academics and research institutions in Japan and overseas. Through these activities, we would like to contribute to a network of the citizens of the world.

3. Build a global civilization for peace as an institute with a global mission

One of the founding spirits of the IOP is to "serve for peace". In recent years, the IOP has held the exhibition, 'The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence', both in Japan and abroad. To date, about 900,000 people have visited the exhibition in 17 countries and territories. This exhibition conveys the concept of the dignity of life and the equality of all people, the philosophy inherent in the Lotus Sutra and the vision of peace and harmonious coexistence based on such a philosophy. The exhibition has been obtaining understanding and empathy from an increasingly wider circle of people in various religious and cultural areas. Going forward, we would like to expand this circle in a network with various institutions and people around the world, to aim to create a peaceful global civilization and to make utmost efforts to realize a happy society where no one is left behind.

On the 60th Anniversary of

Soka Gakkai International President Daisaku Ikeda envisaged the establishment of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) as an academic institute of research into oriental wisdom when he visited Bodh Gaya in India on February 4, 1961. IOP holds a meeting every year to commemorate the day as 'IOP Day'. Here are articles of Japanese and overseas intellectuals who have contributed on the 60th anniversary of the conception of the IOP.



The Institute of Oriental Philosophy as a Testament to the Founder's Ideological Struggle **Dr. Bambang Wibawarta** (Professor of University of Indonesia)

This year celebrates the 60th anniversary of the birth of Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda's concept to establish the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) in 1961. First of all, I would like to express congratulations regarding this 60th anniversary of the birth of the concept to establish the institute. I also would like to say that I think highly of the history of the institute and the efforts it has made so far.

As you know, President Ikeda held a futuristic thought that transcends the times. Of course, when he prepared for the establishment of the IOP, he gave it various considerations after a long thinking process. When I think about the IOP's existence, which is an outcome of President Ikeda's ideological struggle, the fruits of its existence have provided remarkable benefit to young people, whom President Ikeda had big expectations for, and all other concerned parties, including myself. The message regularly included in the various talks of President Ikeda heralded a universal law regarding the possibility and uniqueness of all life with dignity. By bringing up this law, President Ikeda not only constantly delivers a message of peace but also leads humanity in the direction of balance and harmonious coexistence.



'The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence' exhibition at the library of the University of Indonesia (September, 2019). The viewers counted 8700.

President Ikeda is trying to position all human beings as noble and irreplaceable, and the IOP's existence not only makes the soul and core of his thought for world peace sustainable but also enables the IOP to disseminate them to all parts of the planet.

When a friend of mine that belongs to Soka Gakkai Indonesia contacted the University of Indonesia to co-host the exhibition, 'The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence', we sincerely welcomed the opportunity to hold such a unique and significant event. This exhibition had been held in various countries, including Hong Kong, India, Spain and South Korea. Indonesia was going to be the 17th country/territory in the world to host it. The exhibition introduced the Lotus Sutra, one of the heritages of human wisdom, and was held at the University of Indonesia from September 10 to September 24, 2019.

the Conception of the IOP

Many people attended the opening ceremony of this Lotus Sutra exhibition, including Muhammad Anis (the rector of the University of Indonesia) and Sinta Nuriyah Wahid (the first lady of the fourth President of Indonesia, Abdurrahman Wahid). The visitors filled our university's vast library, which was the host venue for the event. The exhibition presented research results on the dissemination of the philosophy inherent in the Lotus Sutra to various parts of the world, along many manuscripts (reproductions) of valuable Buddhist scriptures and paintings going back 2000 years. The venue was crowded with many visitors every day, and not only students from the



University of Indonesia but also children and students from other universities, elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools, and the general public visited the exhibition. Many students also visited the Lotus Sutra exhibition at the University of Indonesia. Mr. Jaya Suprana (Indonesian World Records Museum), Dr. Nurhadi Magetsari (University of Indonesia) and Mr. Eiichi Tsutaki (IOP) made presentations during the symposium.

I received first-hand feedback from visitors such that they were very enthusiastic and curious about the content of the extremely academic and precisely organized exhibition on the Lotus Sutra. The clear purpose of the exhibition and the structure of the content in line with President Ikeda's intentions have resulted in a strong impression on and inspiration for young people from various backgrounds, as it is our younger generation that will shoulder the future era and create peace and balance. The reasons for the success of this exhibition are not only attributable to its important and exciting content. Above all, it is thanks to the IOP's contribution, as it planned and supervised the exhibition so that the content could be very easy to understand and could be viewed academically.

There have been rapid changes in our current world, and many problems that can become a source of conflict between nations and groups are casting a shadow over us. Under such circumstances, I believe that the existence and role of the IOP, which disseminated the message of peace and harmonious coexistence through the Lotus Sutra exhibition, is significant. The message that the Lotus Sutra exhibition conveys is inherent in every individual, no matter where the person is on Earth, and it is a sense of value that inspires everyone.

The results of the research activities promoted by the IOP have demonstrated a synergistic effect such that many people can move in a positive direction. And I can feel that the IOP has been creating a better, more-fulfilling and happier life and social order.

On the 60th Anniversary of



High Hopes and Aspirations for the Forum to Rediscover the Power of Thoughts

Prof. Emer. Hiroshi Ichikawa

(Professor Emeritus of The University of Tokyo)

On the occasion of celebrating the 60th year of drawing up the vision for the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP), I would like to revisit the significance of the institute by reflecting on how the idea of founding it was conceived. In his written contribution (to the first issue of IOP's periodical, *Toyo Gakujutsu Kenkyu* [The Journal of Oriental Studies]) titled 'Message of Congratulations', Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda, the institution's founder, articulated his expectations for it in the following words:

Firstly, I have a great faith that, as all fellows at this institute uphold the loftiest philosophical ideals that they work to put into practice, they will conduct the thorough research and study of various thought systems and cultures in the Orient, explore untrodden fields of study and bring about new academic outcomes from their perspectives... I also expect that the activities of this institute will always be directly connected to the interests of the common people. That is the second feature of the IOP that makes it unique and distinct from others... Thirdly, I am certain to find close cooperation among the research fellows based on their spirit of shared purpose. Needless to say, it is teamwork and mutual dedication that bring about great accomplishments.

President Ikeda stresses that the IOP fellows that share the leading philosophical principles are sure to stay connected to people and strive for new heights through mutual encouragement and cooperation. While identifying such distinctive features and values of the institute, he expresses his high hopes that the institute will disseminate their values to the world and that its fellows will enhance the power of thought.

It is our thoughts that drive us to action. The power of our thoughts becomes palpable when we look into the depths of our being. If we were to lose sight of this, both our existence and society would become rootless. The power of a thought will gain strength through the process of the construction of powerful arguments as well as a consistent return to the original point. That has nothing to do with being oratory. I find the original point of President Ikeda's thoughts and philosophy in his constant engagement in dialogue with people and the respect he holds for others. He clearly expects every member of the IOP to share that ethos. Because everyone has different circumstances and problems, we need to adjust our narratives according to the situation when we share our thoughts with them. In order for those that do the sharing to come up with an optimal narrative, they need to solidify the foundation of their thoughts. Such efforts are needed to meet the expectations set out in the words of "always be directly connected to the interests of the common people". That leads me to believe that creating an arena to cultivate and strengthen the thinking power of the research fellows is the fundamental purpose of founding the IOP for President Ikeda.

One of the primary activities of the IOP, which distinguishes itself from other institutions, is its comprehensive study of the Lotus Sutra scriptures. It is quite noteworthy that the IOP has been conducting academic exchanges with other institutions from around the world that preserve Lotus Sutra manuscripts. I was especially impressed by the IOP-hosted exhibition held in Tokyo in 1998, featuring the Petrovsky Sanskrit Manuscripts of the Lotus Sutra housed by the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Considering that this precious manuscript had been kept deep inside the depository under strict security and had never been lent out, the manuscript brought all the way to Japan and exhibited in public was indeed a miraculous feat, especially for experts in the fields of Buddhist manuscript studies. This exhibition had become possible thanks to the friendship that President Ikeda had developed with Russian important persons dating back to the time of the USSR. The IOP, holding academic exchanges with the Russian Academy of Sciences, testifies that the friendship has been maintained ever since and will be developed to yield further important achievements.

the Conception of the IOP

With respect to the development of thinking power, I have high hopes that the IOP will provide further testament to the uniqueness of Buddhist philosophy through its comparative studies of the philosophy of other thought systems including different religions. To date, President Ikeda has engaged in dialogue with numerous academics around the world, many of whom have different religious and cultural backgrounds. It is easily imaginable that, as he discussed the various themes in these dialogues based on a deep understanding of the counterparts' philosophical background, he has consciously revealed the characteristics of Buddhist philosophy through his own words in contrast to the remarks of his counterparts. It is my earnest wish that comprehensive studies on the remarks of President Ikeda in his discussions with academics will be carried out so as to closely examine the prominent characteristics of his thinking from every dimension and to present the findings systemically. I do hope that these studies be conducted not in a way to simply go through his work and list the findings but rather with the attitude to explore his ideas and principles in order to find solutions to the problems that we are facing. This kind of approach will be instrumental in reviving the visions and ideas contained in decades-old dialogues of President Ikeda in today's world and make them relevant for present and future readers. I am confident that academics at the IOP that can pool their wisdom toward carrying out an extensive project like this are the fittest candidates for this undertaking.

With that in mind, what is required for IOP researchers today is to strengthen their understanding of Buddhist philosophy based on an awareness of the global challenges facing us. Our history, from East and West, ancient to modern, has many examples to show that the power of thought was developed at a time of crisis. Let's take a look at the development of Christian philosophy. Augustine's *City of God* is an epitome of how important theological works were born out of controversies in church history. He authored it not because collected systematic theological studies were in demand back then. This book was composed in response to the harsh accusations that Christianity had been responsible for the fall of the mighty Roman Empire, which had happened so quickly when pagans came for invasion. In his work, Augustine the Hippo tries to make his case that Christianity, which aims for a City of God and the salvation of souls, is not responsible for earthly events. It was this sense of urgency that drove him to write this thesis such that if he had not made a counterargument, Christianity would be doomed. The imminent, inevitable threat of existence gives rise to the urge to verbalize a thought.

I would like the IOP fellows to conduct thorough research into the recorded remarks and statements of President Ikeda so as to compile a chronological study of his ideas and opinions on particular themes or issues to see if there is consistency in his views. If any changes are found, there begins the study of identifying possible factors that caused alterations in his thinking and detailed research into the context of his remarks in question. The accumulation of research and repeated discussions based on this analysis will be the key to revealing the depths of his thoughts. I think that a dialectic approach, like the one employed for the Talmud in Judaism, will provide study with an optimal platform in which, when discussing a certain theme, researchers present the foundation of the argument by quoting the predecessors' teachings instead of offering one's own opinions. Then, they can examine the logical integrity and consistency of the cited teachings through a peer review process and finally present their opinions or views regarding the topic. Such discussions will be of great help for them to exchange views and deepen their understanding of the theme. It is commonly believed that Catholic monasteries are closed-off to different ideas, however, the truth is just the opposite. Monks and nuns in monasteries are said to have exchanged their thoughts freely than in any other religious order. It was their vibrant discussion and exchange of different ideas that lead them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their faith, which facilitated their understanding of the Christian philosophy. The IOP offers a perfect training ground for developing the power of thinking through dialectic argument.

I have high hopes that the IOP will continue to play pivotal roles in exploring the thoughts and philosophy of President Ikeda and making new developments based on them. I am looking forward to seeing the further dissemination of new philosophical research from the IOP that would contribute to the advancement of the vision of its founder.

On the 60th Anniversary of



The Philosophy Supporting Soka Gakkai to Become a World Religion

Mr. Masaru Sato

**(Visiting Professor of Doshisha University, Writer, Former
Chief Analyst of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)**

Soka Gakkai is now developing into a world religion under the guidance of Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda. A critical element for a religion to develop into a world faith is a philosophy supporting it. In my opinion, the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) plays a major role in forming the philosophy that promotes the worldwide kosen-rufu of Soka Gakkai.

In Christian theology, systematic theology is used to convey philosophical principles based on the tradition and faith of Christianity. On the other side, there are philosophies based on Christianity. For such philosophies, it is important to note that a universal language not restricted by Christianity is used. It seems to me that the relation between Soka Gakkai's teaching and principles and the IOP's philosophical activities has a structure similar to the relation between Christian theology and philosophies. Philosophies are indispensable intellectual work for a world religion.

An editorial by *Seikyo Shimbun* (February 4, 2020) described the history of the establishment of the IOP as follows:

Sixty years ago, in October 1960, President Ikeda visited the Americas, marking his first step toward the worldwide kosen-rufu. In late January of the following year of 1961, he set off on a trip to Asia.

Along the way, President Ikeda pondered: "Within Asia, some are countries of Theravada Buddhism, and others are Islamic countries. Besides religions, cultures and social structures are diverse. Unless we accurately recognize this reality, we will not be able to engage in fruitful dialogues for peace."

On February 4 of the same year, President Ikeda was in Bodh Gaya, India, the birthplace of Buddhism, and made up his mind:

"It is absolutely necessary to have an institution that studies the thoughts, philosophies and cultures of the Orient and the rest of the world from a multifaceted perspective... I want to realize 'dialogues across civilizations and religions' that everyone can understand."

These ideas led to the establishment of the IOP and are the origin of 'February 4 IOP Day'.

On January 27, 1962, one year after its birth, the Institute of Oriental Studies (Toyo Gakujutsu Kenkyujo) (now the IOP) was established. At the inauguration ceremony, President Ikeda expressed his expectation that the IOP would become an academic center of wisdom amid the creation of a new culture.

Since then, the IOP has been conducting research on Buddhist philosophies centered on the Lotus Sutra and on other religions and ideologies around the world, and has been promoting intercultural interaction and dialogue. The IOP has also introduced the philosophical principles of the Lotus Sutra to the world through the movement including exhibitions open to the public.

the Conception of the IOP

If the aforementioned words of President Ikeda as per "It is absolutely necessary to have an institution that studies the thoughts, philosophies and cultures of the Orient and the rest of the world from a multifaceted perspective... I want to realize 'dialogues across civilizations and religions' that everyone can understand" were to be described in the words of the Christian theology, 'ecumenism' would be the perfect translation. 'Ecumenical' means the whole inhabited world. In this world, some people believe in religion such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam or Shinto, while others do not believe in any religion. An important challenge of ecumenism is to talk with these people from the viewpoint of 'What is human?' and to deepen mutual understanding.



The IOP invited Mr. Sato to its public lecture series 'Human Rights and Human Future' for his lecture 'Divine Right and Human Rights in Christianity' on October 11, 2019 (Tokyo).

The IOP is addressing this challenge splendidly. Importantly, Soka Gakkai considers the projects of the IOP to be the embodiment of humanism based on the spirit of the Lotus Sutra.

The following exchange between President of Soka Gakkai Minoru Harada and Student Division Leader Koichi Kabasawa is interesting (*Seikyo Shimbum*, July 30, 2020).

Kabasawa: Humanism is the spirit of the Lotus Sutra. As many as about 900,000 people from 17 countries and territories around the world have visited the Lotus Sutra exhibition, which the IOP first started in 2006. This has included people from countries of Islamic regions such as Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as Thailand, where most people are adherents of Theravada Buddhism, along with Europe and South America, and the exhibition has obtained empathy from an increasingly wider circle of people.

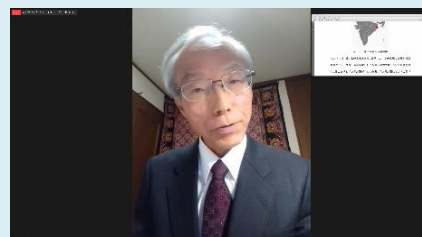
Harada: President Ikeda established Toyo Gakujutsu Kenkyujo (the predecessor of the IOP) in January 1962 as an institution that studies the thoughts, philosophies and cultures of the Orient and the rest of the world from a multifaceted perspective, based on his belief that it is important to properly understand the religions, cultures and ethnic groups of each country. The IOP was also the forerunner of subsequent various cultural and educational institutions founded by President Ikeda. President Ikeda's efforts have produced fruits one by one and have realized Soka Gakkai's solidarity with today's world.

Based on the guidance of President Ikeda that it is important to properly understand the religions, cultures, and ethnic groups of each country, the IOP has sincerely conducted advanced research on all the universal life beyond human beings for people not only of the Orient but also all over the world. I respect the history and presence of this institute and look forward to its further development in the future.

Online Public Lecture Series: 'Faith and Reason in the Midst of Corona Pandemic'

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) organized 'Faith and Reason', a public lecture series to show how humankind can respond to the pandemic challenge based on points which Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda discussed in his lecture 'Scholasticism and Modern Civilization' in 1973. The lecture series discussed how we can establish new guidelines for humankind based on a philosophy that can combine reason (medical treatment and policymaking, etc.) and faith (religious perspective of life and death) without any contradictions.

Lecturer: Dr. Keiji Takeuchi
(Professor Emeritus of Reitaku University)
Date: October 10, 2020
Mode: Online Lecture (YouTube)
Title: 'Thoughts of Indian Poet Rabindranath Tagore on Faith and Reason'



According to Dr. Takeuchi, faith can be understood as religion and reason as being related to rationality, logic and science. From the Buddhist perspective, Dr. Takeuchi added, "Tagore envisioned Visva-Bharati University as a base for the study of Buddhism to bring the teachings to people's lives. The Buddha's message of compassion towards every living being is connected to the thought of love, which Tagore embraced. He called people of the world to gather and live the ideal life of the Buddha." In conclusion, Dr. Takeuchi commented, "Holding up the great ideal, Tagore's thought focused on the evolution of human beings through literature, music, art and education, turned careful attention to social reality, and warned against the crisis of modern civilization. I believe it is possible for us in the current time of the Corona pandemic to learn a lot from the heritage that Tagore left."

Lecturer: Dr. Hiroo Sato
(Professor of Tohoku University,
Research Fellow Commissioned to IOP)
Date: October 17, 2020
Mode: Online Lecture (YouTube)
Title: 'Pure Land Where the Buddha Disappeared: Geology of Multicultural Coexistence in the Japan Islands'



Referring to the Corona pandemic, Prof. Sato explained that, in Japan, pandemics had earlier been attributed to transcendental causes like 'yakubyo gami' (the god of plagues). In pre-modern times of widespread death and uncertainty of life, people were seeking philosophies that viewed life and death as being inseparable. They believed that the death was not the termination of everything, but a departure towards a next birth.

Prof. Sato said that the life of a human being does not end in this world and beliefs that connect life to death are always necessary as the long history of humanity shows. He concluded, "Buddhism has provided the greatest philosophy on life and death. We should pay more careful attention to Buddhist thought once again going forward. It is necessary for us to understand that religion is always required for negotiating life instead of believing that it is just a relic of past thinking."

In response to the Corona pandemic, the first online public lecture series streamed live on YouTube and the viewers could count more than 1400 from all over the world. The series were viewed in countries of Asia (Thailand, Philippines and India), Europe (United Kingdom and France) and United States as well. The lecture was followed by a live Q&A session with the viewers.

Lecturer: Prof. Emer. Hiroshi Ichikawa
(Professor Emeritus of The University of Tokyo)
Date: November 28, 2020
Mode: Online Lecture (YouTube)
Title: 'Faith and Reason in the 21st Century:
Jews and Their Religious Mission'



In his lecture, Prof. (Emer.) Ichikawa said, "In the first half of the 20th century, European Jews were faced with the threat of ethnic extinction due to the Holocaust unleashed by the Nazi regime and the anti-Semitism of the Soviet Union. It was a time when, in Europe, the balance between 'faith and reason' overturned into a divide between 'enlightenment and barbarism'." Prof. Ichikawa introduced Isaiah Berlin, Emmanuel Lévinas and Yeshayahu Leibowitz as three Lithuanian doctors who confronted the Holocaust. Touching on the fact that Lévinas despaired at philosopher Martin Heidegger who had Nazi affiliations, Prof. Ichikawa commented that we can see a division between faith and reason even in the personality of the philosopher. On the other hand, Lévinas encountered Monsieur Chouchani, a wise Rabbi, and could further his faith and study of the Talmud owing to Chouchani's mastery. Prof. Ichikawa said, "Just as the Talmud comes across as being deeply concerned with confronting totalitarianism, religion is all about spiritual struggle."

Lecturer: Dr. Yushi Okajima
(Professor of Chuo University)
Date: December 12, 2020
Mode: Online Lecture (YouTube)
Title: Postmodern and Faith –
AI and Externalization of Decision Making'



According to Dr. Okajima, a sub-cultural trend has occurred in the transition from the 'Great Story' (that gave a universal sense of values) to the 'postmodernism' (that cherishes the individual way of life). In addition, he stressed that the advance of scientific technology has had a great impact on engendering such a postmodern view that everyone can be different and free to do whatever they like. As we look back at the history of modern times, we find that people have placed their trust more in scientific technology than religion and philosophy. They needed rational explanations for natural phenomena that only science could provide. However, I think it arrogant to assume that everything can be fully explained by science." In conclusion, Dr. Okajima shared his hope, "Human beings have externalized their own functions to devices and tools, leaving only decision making as an exclusive human domain. The process of making decisions on how we live our life should be based on religious faith and philosophy. I am determined to research further on how they can play an important role in the field of technology."

Academic Exchange Agreement with RAS Institute of Philosophy

An online MOU-signing ceremony was held on February 5, 2021 for academic exchange between the Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP). Dr. Andrey Smirnov, director of the Institute of Philosophy, and Mr. Akira Kirigaya, director of the IOP, attended the ceremony with the other members concerned.



The Institute of Philosophy was founded in 1921 by the Russian Academy of Sciences to study all the thematic areas and problems of philosophy. The members of the institute produce many books and articles every year. The RAS Institute of Philosophy and the IOP have had a long interaction, in 2008 holding the joint symposium 'Buddhist Philosophy in Multicultural Context', as well as publishing an *Encyclopedia of Buddhist Philosophy* (of which the IOP was in charge of 16 sections). In 2018, moreover, IOP delegates made a courtesy visit to the Institute of Philosophy. The current agreement is informed by the vision that both institutes will cooperate regarding academic activities and advance further interaction by exchanging journals and contributing articles to each other's journals. The Institute of Philosophy is the 12th institution which the IOP has concluded academic exchange agreements with.

Online Projects amidst the Corona Pandemic

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IOP has taken the lead in going online with its public lecture series, research department meetings and section and project research meetings.

On July 28, 2020, the IOP invited Prof. (Emer.) Hiroshi Ichikawa of The University of Tokyo, to its 'Society and Religion' lecture, its first online research meeting with an external lecturer. Prof. Ichikawa's lecture, 'Challenge of Jewish Orthodoxy in a Modern Secular Society', discussed five main points: (1) Dr. Arnold Toynbee's 'Jewish Model' and the future, (2) Jewish orthodoxy in the present (visit to Bnei Brak in Israel), (3) the Jewish orthodoxy response to modernity (with particular reference to the case of Lithuania), (4) the transition of orthodoxy in the context of the challenge posed by secularism, and (5) the religious situation in Japan from the Jewish perspective. The lecture was followed by a Q&A session with IOP research fellows.

The IOP also organized a three-way online discussion entitled, 'Reflection on Humanity against Suffering – Resilience and Hopes in the Time of the Corona Pandemic', between Prof. Ichikawa, Dr. Yutaka Ishigami (senior research fellow of the IOP) and Dr. Nobuo Yamagishi (research fellow commissioned to the IOP). Highlighting the fact that human beings have tended to ignore the underlying reasons for the spread of diseases and infections, the three researchers discussed whether the corona pandemic has brought humanity an awareness of this omission. The discussion appears in *Toyo Gakujutsu Kenkyu* (Japanese edition of *The Journal of Oriental Studies*) vol.59 no.2.

'The Lotus Sutra—A Message and Harmonious Coexistence' Exhibition

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) plans and puts together 'The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence' exhibition, which has been touring the world since 2006. The exhibition displays IOP's research on the Lotus Sutra, and introduces its teachings and the history of its dissemination in simple, easily assimilable language.



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2014)

'The Lotus Sutra and Its World: Buddhist Manuscripts of the Great Silk Road', the very first Lotus Sutra exhibition of the IOP, was launched 1998 with 47 treasured items including original Buddhist manuscripts and woodblock prints in 14 languages. Selected out of the approximately 100,000 artefacts in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOM RAS), these items were displayed for the first time in Japan. The exhibition finally grew into the far larger and more comprehensive 'The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence' exhibition with many

more precious items on display.

Full support by the IOM RAS, the Dunhuang Academy China and the International Academy of Indian Culture has made it possible to display facsimiles and replicas of the Lotus Sutra manuscripts and replicate the Dunhuang Mogao Caves along with other various Buddhist items and materials. The exhibits include the Petrovsky Sanskrit manuscript of the Lotus Sutra which seems to have been copied in the eighth century and the Gandhari replicated manuscript of Dharmapada which seems to have been copied from the first to second centuries. Moreover, the exhibition shows imitative paintings of flying beings in Mogao Caves, duplicated Dunhuang materials of the Lotus Sutra, iron pens and birch bark used for copying and other objects. On display, are approximately 160 items. The IOP also edited the guidebook to the exhibition that have been published in four languages: Japanese, English, Korean and Chinese (simplified and traditional characters).



Sao Paulo, Brazil (2011)



Nonthaburi, Thailand (2017)

Based on the idea of "visualizing the Lotus Sutra", the exhibition attracted more than 900,000 visitors in 17 countries and territories of the world as of 2019: Japan, India the land of Buddhism's birth, Nepal the birthplace of the Buddha, Thailand where Theravada Buddhism took root, the Islamic cultural area of Malaysia, and others in Asia, Europe and Latin America. To date, Lee Soo-sung (former prime minister of South Korea), Vira Rojpojchanarat (Minister of Culture, Thailand), Jao Tsung-I (professor emeritus of the Chinese University of Hong Kong) and Burton Watson (English translator of the Lotus

Sutra), many guests and representatives from every section of society have visited to the exhibition.

IOP Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series



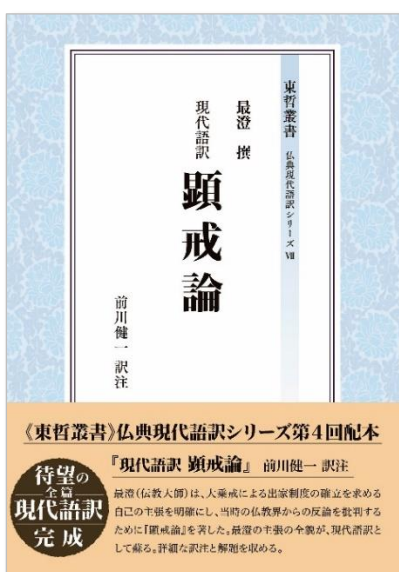
In cooperation with various institutes from around the world that preserve precious Lotus Sutra manuscripts as well as prominent experts and scholars, the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) and the Soka Gakkai have been involved in publishing the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series, including facsimile editions and Romanized texts, which help promote Buddhist studies, in particular further studies of early Mahayana Buddhism centering on the Lotus Sutra.

The project was launched in 1994 and 19 items have been published as the manuscript series from 1997 to 2019 (not for sale). Part of the background leading up to this series was the fact that the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda, founder of the IOP, was

presented with several precious reproductions and microfilms of Lotus Sutra manuscripts by various institutes and individuals.

Regarding the critical editions of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra, among the pioneering works that have been published to date are the Kern-Nanjo edition (1908-1912), the Wogihara-Tsuchida edition (1934-1935), and the Dutt edition (1953). From the contemporary standard of the discipline, critical editions that are more precise and reliable are required to enable future research efforts. One of the purposes of the series publications is to provide basic data for editing such new critical editions.

Totetsu Modern Translation Series



It was Zhiyi, Zanran and Saicho that wrote commentaries and teachings and had a great impact on the future generation in the school of the Lotus Sutra. Later, Nichiren took over the teachings of school and established the fundamental doctrines based on the literatures of the school.

These literatures originally written in Chinese are contained in complete Buddhist canons such as *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo*. The IOP has been conducting its project to translate literatures into modern Japanese language as Totetsu series (Totetsu stands for IOP). As the first and second series, *The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* was translated. As the third and fourth series, new books were published for sale as translated and annotated editions of *Annotations of The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra* (1) by Dr. Hiroshi Kanno and Dr. Hideyuki Matsumori (November 2020) and *A Clarification of the Precepts* by Dr. Kenichi Maegawa (March 2021).

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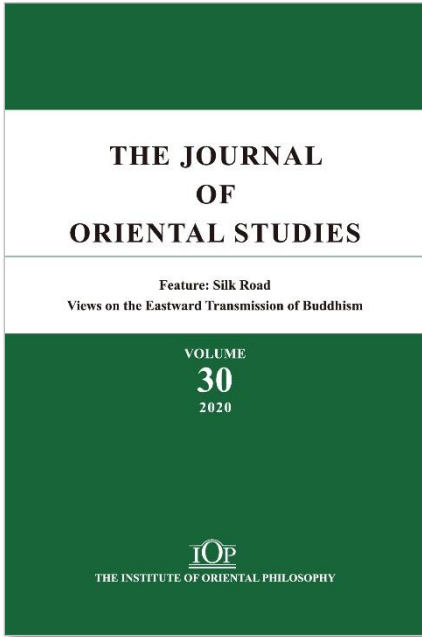
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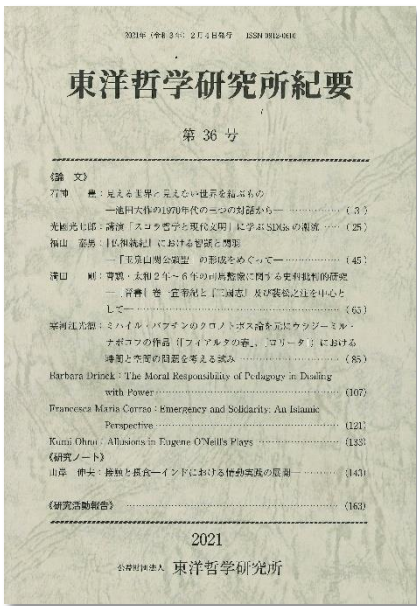


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