



No. 11

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy
NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER No. 11 covers news of research projects that the Institute of Oriental Philosophy carried out from April 2024 to March 2025. (Affiliations, titles, etc. current at that time.)

Introduction

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy

Founder: Daisaku Ikeda (President of Soka Gakkai International)

Director: Ryohei Tanaka

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.

Contact Detail

Address: 1-236 Tangi-machi, Hachioji-shi, Tokyo, 192-0003, JAPAN

TEL: +81-42-691-6591 / FAX: +81-42-691-6588

Opening Hours: 10:00 – 17:00 (Weekdays)



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



“The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” Exhibition



**International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization
– 2,700 Visitors –**

On September 8, 2024, the exhibition “Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” was launched at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, International Islamic University Malaysia (ISTAC-IIUM) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This marked the second time the exhibition was held in Malaysia since 2014.

The exhibition was organized by the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP), Dunhuang Academy China, and Soka Gakkai Malaysia (SGM), with support from multiple institutions including ISTAC and the Centre for Civilizational Dialogue, Universiti Malaya (UMCCD). The exhibition was part of the jointly organized commemorative event “Shared Values on Peace and Harmonious Coexistence,” with ISTAC presenting “Islam on Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” as another component of the event at the same venue.

A symposium featured ISTAC Professor Emeritus Osman Bakar, ISTAC Research Director Nurul Ain Binti Norman, IOP Director Ryohei Tanaka and IOP Research Fellow Christopher Chiong-Meng Boey.

SGM published a new “Lotus Sutra Exhibition Guidebook” in English and Chinese. The exhibition concluded on September 28, 2024, attracting 2,700 visitors.

From the Opening Ceremony and Symposium



Ministry of National Unity
Malaysia
Deputy Minister

Saraswati Kandasami

From Minister Datuk Aaron
Ago Dagang's Message
(Summary)



ISTAC
Prof. Emeritus
Osman Bakar

From the lecture "What is
Islam—From the Perspective
of Peace and Harmonious
Coexistence"
(Summary)



ISTAC
Research Director
Nurul Ain Binti Norman

From the lecture "Thinking,
Accepting, and Believing—
Humanity's Journey through
Thought and Faith"
(Summary)

The Lotus Sutra exhibition introduces the teachings of the Lotus Sutra, one of the most profound scriptures of Mahayana Buddhism, which emphasizes respect for the dignity of life, the potential for enlightenment of all beings, and the importance of compassion.

This conveys a significant message to the contemporary world, demonstrating that the teachings of the Lotus Sutra are not merely historical artifacts, but rather a living philosophy that continues to guide and inspire us in today's world.

The teachings of Islam and the Lotus Sutra share common ideals of peace and harmonious coexistence. The Quran particularly encourages respect for and understanding of all sacred books, and I believe it is important for us Muslims to study other scriptures, including the Lotus Sutra.

Moreover, the lotus in Malay culture symbolizes peace, a goal which is common to both Islamic mysticism and Buddhist teachings. SGI President Ikeda's philosophy of peace and harmonious coexistence aligns with Islamic teachings. Through the Lotus Sutra exhibition, dialogue and mutual understanding between Islam and Buddhism will deepen, and peacebuilding based on the shared values of both traditions is essential.

Islam and Buddhism share many commonalities. I have been contemplating the development of human thought and faith using the metaphor of plant seeds, which also connects to the theme of the Lotus Sutra exhibition: "Peace and Harmonious Coexistence." Both religious traditions share a common process of seeking divine guidance or enlightenment through thought, accepting truth with the heart, and deepening beliefs with the soul. Dialogue and mutual understanding are extremely important. I believe that the essence of different religions is the same, like light, representing the process of humanity's spiritual growth. This aligns with the significance of interreligious dialogue that SGI President Ikeda has long advocated.

Johor Bahru, Malaysia



“The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” Exhibition



SGI Asia Culture and Education Center (ACEC)
- 44,000 Visitors -

On October 18, 2024, the exhibition “Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” was launched at the SGI Asia Culture and Education Center (ACEC) in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. This marked the third time this exhibition was held in Malaysia since 2014, following previous showings at the Malaysia Integrated Cultural Centre in February 2014 and ISTAC in September 2024.

The exhibition was organized by the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP), Dunhuang Academy China, and Persatuan Soka Gakkai Malaysia (SGM), with support from multiple institutions including the Department of National Heritage, Arts and Culture.

The exhibition featured approximately 200 manuscript replicas and Buddhist artifacts, including the “Petrovsky Sanskrit manuscript” and “Gilgit manuscript,” alongside panels introducing Buddhist history,

Dunhuang Mogao Cave murals, and IOP founder Daisaku Ikeda's inter-civilizational dialogue history. All panels were presented in both English and Chinese.

The opening ceremony on October 20 was attended by 650 people, including prominent figures from Johor Bahru's political, business, and academic circles, with live-streaming attracting 1,500 online viewers.

The exhibition concluded on December 29, 2024, having attracted 44,000 visitors. Together with the September exhibition at ISTAC in Kuala Lumpur, which attracted 2,700 visitors, the total number of visitors to the Lotus Sutra exhibition in Malaysia in 2024 reached 46,800.

Planner and Producer: The Institute of Oriental Philosophy

Organizers: The Institute of Oriental Philosophy, Dunhuang Academy China, and Soka Gakkai Malaysia

Supported by: The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the International Academy of Indian Culture, the Ministry of National Unity, the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Universiti Malaya Centre for Civilisational Dialogue, and the Department of National Heritage, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture*, Malaysia.

*Supported only the exhibition at SGI Asia Culture and Education Center

Venue and Date: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, Kuala Lumpur

September 8 to 28, 2024

SGI Asia Culture and Education Center, Johor Bahru

October 18 to December 29, 2024

Commemorative Lectures Featuring

Dunhuang Academy Scholar Wang Huihui

Commemorative lectures celebrating the Lotus Sutra exhibition were held over two days, December 14 and 15, 2024. These lectures featured Wang Huihui, Deputy Director of the Dunhuang Academy Research and Exhibition Centre, who was invited from the Dunhuang Academy, which has maintained an academic exchange agreement with the Institute of Oriental Philosophy since 2018.

On December 14, a lecture titled “Historical Artifacts of the Lotus Sutra and Their Message to the Modern World” was held at ACEC, attracting 1,500 participants (300 in person and 1,200 online). Wang explained the geographical characteristics of Dunhuang and its history of multicultural coexistence, emphasizing its deep connection with the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. She noted, “The Lotus Sutra's concepts of ‘equality of all living beings’ and ‘Buddha nature in all people’ fundamentally align with the spirit of multiethnic and multicultural coexistence expressed in the Dunhuang Caves.” She further emphasized that “SGI President Daisaku Ikeda's vision of ‘the resurrection of all humanity from the depths of life and the transformation of the whole world into a land of true peace’ represents the fundamental purpose of the Lotus Sutra.”

The following day, December 15, a second lecture titled “Chang Shuhong and Daisaku Ikeda” was delivered at the Malaysia Cultural Centre in Cheras, Selangor, drawing 2,000 participants (550 in person and 1,450 online). Wang discussed the life of Chang Shuhong, the first director of the Dunhuang Academy, and his profound friendship with SGI President Ikeda. She detailed their first meeting in 1980, their cooperation in protecting Dunhuang art, and their shared lofty ideals and dedicated practice. “President Ikeda would always answer the question ‘Where would you like to go in the world?’ with ‘I want to go to Dunhuang in China.’ This destined connection led to significant cooperation in both Sino-Japanese friendship and in the protection of Dunhuang art,” Wang remarked.





“The Lotus Sutra— A Message of Peace and

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) plans and produces “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 the sutra’s teachings and the history of its dissemination in simple, easily assimilable language. In response to the vision of our founder, Daisaku Ikeda, the IOP has created for the public “The Lotus Sutra and Its World: Buddhist Manuscripts of the Great Silk Road” (1998-2000), “The Lotus Sutra Manuscripts: The World’s Spiritual Heritage” (2003-04), and “The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” (2006-present). Additionally, IOP also produced the “Buddhist Sutras: A Universal Spiritual Heritage—Manuscripts and Iconography of the Lotus Sutra” exhibition (2016-present).

“The Lotus Sutra and Its World: Buddhist Manuscripts of the Great Silk Road,” the very first Lotus Sutra exhibition of the IOP, was launched in 1998 with 47 treasured items including original Buddhist manuscripts and woodblock prints in 14 languages. Selected from among the approximately 100,000 artifacts 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. This exhibition eventually 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 Lotus Sutra manuscripts, reproductions of the Dunhuang Mogao Cave murals, and various other Buddhist items and reference materials. The exhibits include such writings as the Petrovsky Sanskrit Lotus Sutra manuscript, which is believed to have been copied in the eighth century and the Gandhari Dharmapada manuscript, which is thought to have been copied some time from the first to the second century. Moreover, the exhibition shows reproductions of the paintings of flying beings in the Mogao Caves, replicas of materials found at Dunhuang related to the Lotus Sutra, and such objects as replicas of iron pens and birch bark used for copying. On display are approximately 160 items. The IOP also edited the guidebook to the exhibition that has been published in four languages: Japanese, English, Korean and Chinese (simplified and traditional characters).

Based on the idea of “visualizing the Lotus Sutra,” the exhibition, as of 2019, had attracted 900,000 visitors in 17 countries and territories around the world: 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 (see table). To date, Lee Soo-sung (former prime minister of South Korea), Vira Rojpojchanarat (Minister of Culture, Thailand), Jao Tsung-I (emeritus professor 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.

Held in 17 Countries and Territories Across the World



Harmonious Coexistence”



Madrid, Spain (2009)



Singapore (2017)



Kobe, Japan (2012)



Sao Paulo, Brazil (2011)



Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2014)



Taoyuan, Taiwan (2015)



Nonthaburi, Thailand (2017)

The following are comments shared by some of the guests:

I have viewed a variety of Lotus Sutra manuscripts. These are the best materials through which we can develop our understanding of the spirit of Buddhism and spread the message of the Lotus Sutra all over the world. (Carlos Manuel Rúa, director of Escuela de Estudios Orientales, Universidad del Salvador, Argentina)

This is a historic exhibition that clearly shows the universal nature of Buddhism and makes it a part of the spiritual heritage of humanity. (Mushirul Hasan, director general of the National Archives of India)

List of host country or territory and year of “The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” exhibition

1	Hong Kong	2006-2007, 2015
2	Macau	2007
3	India	2007, 2008, 2009, 2010
4	Spain	2009, 2012
5	Nepal	2010
6	Brazil	2010, 2011
7	Sri Lanka	2011, 2013
8	United Kingdom	2011
9	Japan	2012, 2013, 2014
10	Taiwan	2013, 2015
11	Malaysia	2014, 2024
12	Argentina	2014
13	South Korea	2016, 2018, 2022
14	Peru	2016
15	Thailand	2017
16	Singapore	2017
17	Indonesia	2019

The Lotus Sutra Exhibition Reaches 1 Million Visitors Worldwide



On November 3, 2024, the exhibition “Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” at the SGI Asia Culture and Education Center (ACEC) in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, reached a historic milestone when the cumulative number of visitors across 17 countries and territories hit one million. No other exhibition focusing on a single Buddhist sutra has achieved such widespread international circulation and attendance.

At the million-visitor celebratory event on November 3, Mr. Koh Sia Feai, General Director of Soka Gakkai Malaysia (SGM), delivered congratulatory addresses. Mr. Ryohei Tanaka, Director of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP), and IOP staff delivered congratulatory comments via video message.

Video messages celebrating this milestone were also received from many distinguished academic leaders: Dr. Zhao Shengliang, Party Secretary (Former Director) of the Dunhuang Academy; Dr. Irina Popova, Director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Prof. Dr. Abdelaziz Berghout, Rector of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC); and Prof. Tan Sri Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, Honorary Professor and Former Rector of International Islamic University Malaysia.

Video Message

Dunhuang Academy

Dr. Zhao Shengliang, Party Secretary (Former Director)

The Institute of Oriental Philosophy has devoted itself to promoting world peace initiatives for many years while fostering heart-to-heart connections between people. The Lotus Sutra, as one of the oldest scriptures of Mahayana Buddhism, has exerted influence widely across Asian countries for over a millennium through its teachings of “equality,” “wisdom,” and “compassion.”



The Institute of Oriental Philosophy planned the “Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” exhibition with the Lotus Sutra philosophy as its theme, utilizing the rich documentary materials of the Lotus Sutra, various cultural artifacts, and visual materials including the Dunhuang cave murals (replicas). This exhibition, rich in content with clear themes and high viewing value, comprehensively demonstrates Buddhism's advocacy for “equality” and “coexistence.” Thanks to such exhibitions, the Lotus Sutra philosophy continues to inspire an increasing number of people to pursue goodness, oppose war, and move toward peace.

For many years, the Dunhuang Academy and your institute have maintained excellent cooperative relations. We are deeply honored that the Dunhuang Academy has been able to provide related materials for the Lotus Sutra exhibition, thus contributing to its smooth progress and success.

SGI President Daisaku Ikeda, Soka Gakkai, and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy have shown tremendous interest and support for the Dunhuang Academy's cultural preservation and research work, making significant contributions to the development of Sino-Japanese friendship and cultural exchange. Going forward, we will further deepen academic and cultural exchange between our institutions, continue to support the holding of Lotus Sutra exhibitions, and jointly promote international peace and the further development of humanistic culture. We pray that the Lotus Sutra exhibition will continue to be held around the world, achieve continuous success, and spread the voice of peace throughout the world.

International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC)
Prof. Dr. Abdelaziz Berghout, Rector

Congratulations for this excellent endeavor in spreading and promoting the message of peace and harmonious coexistence among people of different cultures and civilizations. It is a great honor for us at ISTAC to collaborate with the Institute of Oriental Philosophy in this exhibition and in spreading the values of peace and coexistence.



Reaching one million participants is truly a wonderful indicator of the great success of the discourse of peace and coexistence demonstrated by the Lotus Sutra philosophy and teachings. We hope that millions more people will join in this message of peace and coexistence in the future, and we pray for your continued success.

Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences Dr. Irina F. Popova, Director

Our fruitful cooperation with the Institute of Oriental Philosophy began in November 1996. I take pride in the fact that the first major joint project was the “Lotus Sutra and the Silk Road” exhibition held in November 1998, which ultimately became the predecessor of this current exhibition.

Since then, replicas and originals of manuscripts and woodblock prints related to Buddhism in 14 languages from our institute's collection have been displayed. The main theme has always been the Lotus Sutra, one of the most influential and venerated Mahayana Buddhist sutras. The Lotus Sutra consistently focuses on peace and serves as a key to understanding a world of different peoples. Therefore, this sutra has been translated into many languages. Among them are languages still in use today, as well as languages that have already disappeared. However, the sutra editions in these lost languages continue to live on, proving the imperishable value of the Lotus Sutra.

I am confident that this exhibition will achieve great success and captivate many visitors interested in Buddhist culture, ancient documents, and Asian history.

Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series (18 titles, 20 items)

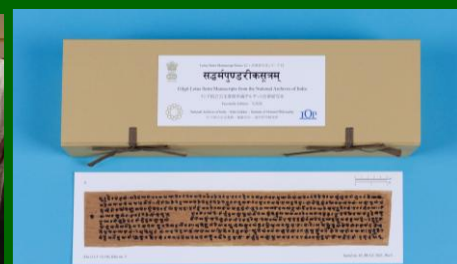
The Lotus Sutra and other Buddhist scriptures have historically been preserved and transmitted in the form of manuscripts that were handwritten on birch bark, palm leaf (palmyra palm or tala), or paper. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra manuscripts are generally classified according to the locations where they were found or copied, and at present there are three such groupings: the Nepalese group, the Gilgit group, and the Central Asian group. Among the Central Asian mss., the manuscript acquired in 1893 by the Russian consul general in Kashgar, Nikolai F. Petrovsky (1837–1908), is noteworthy. It is known not only as the Petrovsky manuscript, but also as either the Kashgar manuscript or the Khotan manuscript. Nearly 80 percent of the manuscript is extant, and it has had a major influence on the study of the Lotus Sutra. The Gilgit mss. were discovered in 1931 at a Buddhist stupa in the precincts of the Gilgit area of Kashmir (now Pakistan). These are thought to be the source material of the Nepalese group.



The Nepalese mss. consist of relatively recent manuscript copies from Nepal and Tibet. Because of their large number and good condition, they are considered indispensable in the comprehensive philological study of manuscripts.

These precious manuscripts are preserved in institutions and libraries in various countries, but because many of them are several hundred years old, not all the material has been accessible.

In January 1994, at the suggestion of IOP's founder, Daisaku Ikeda, the Soka Gakkai and IOP launched a joint project and formed a committee to publish the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series. Since then, in cooperation with various institutions and specialists, the committee has organized and supported the publication of both facsimile editions that contain detailed color facsimile prints using the newest printing technologies and romanized editions that offer romanized transliterations of the manuscripts. Among the titles in the Manuscript Series, two include both facsimile and romanized texts, five are exclusively facsimile editions, nine are exclusively romanized editions, two are critical editions (romanized texts with notes on variant readings), and two are Xixia language facsimile editions with commentary. The publications in the Manuscript Series add up to a total of 20 items under 18 titles.



List of the Lotus Sutra Manuscript Series (Not for Sale)

1. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Fragments from the Lüshun Museum Collection, Facsimile Edition and Romanized Text
- 2-1. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 4-21), Facsimile Edition
- 2-2. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 4-21), Romanized Text 1
- 2-3. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 4-21), Romanized Text 2
3. Fragments of a Manuscript of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra from Khādaliq
4. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from Cambridge University Library (Add. 1682 and Add. 1683), Facsimile Edition
5. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the University of Tokyo General Library (No. 414), Romanized Text
6. Xixia Version of the Lotus Sutra from the Collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Science
7. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (No. 6), Romanized Text
8. Manuscript sanscrit du Sūtra du Lotus de la Société asiatique (No. 2), Texte romanisé [Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the Société Asiatique (No. 2), Romanized Text]
9. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the British Library (Or. 2204), Facsimile Edition
10. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from Cambridge University Library (Add. 1684), Romanized Text
11. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the British Library (Or. 2204), Facsimile Edition
12. Gilgit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the National Archives of India, Facsimile Edition
13. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscripts from the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Facsimile Edition
14. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (No. 4079) Romanized Text
15. Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Manuscript from the National Archives of Nepal (No. 5-144), Romanized Text
16. Tangut Version of the Lotus Sutra in the Collection of Princeton University Library, Facsimile, Text and Linguistic Studies
17. A Critical Edition of the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Based on Gilgit-Nepalese Manuscripts (C3 Collated Text)
18. A Critical Edition of Sanskrit Lotus Sutra C4 with Comparison Readings from Nepalese, Gilgit and Central Asian Manuscripts

The 38th Annual Academic Conference of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP)

Symposium Theme:

“Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Faith, Religion and Thought”



The 38th Academic Conference Symposium held in hybrid format (online and in person) at Soka University in Hachioji, Tokyo, with participation of nearly 100 IOP researchers from Japan and overseas.

The 38th Annual Academic Conference was held on May 25 and 26, 2024, at Soka University in Hachioji, Tokyo, with both in person and online participation (the conference was streamed via Zoom to YouTube with limited access, allowing domestic and international research fellows to participate). The Institute's academic conference provides an opportunity for domestic and overseas research fellows and commissioned research fellows to gather and present research findings on the Lotus Sutra, interreligious and intercivilizational dialogue, peace and human rights, environmental issues, and other topics, with presentations based on themes related to each participant's area of expertise and research field.

The symposium on the first day (May 25) was planned to explore how humanity should engage with artificial intelligence (AI), which is an urgent issue for human society especially as AI is said to transcend human understanding. The year 2024 also marked the 30th anniversary of the publication of “Science and Religion,” a dialogue between IOP Founder Daisaku Ikeda and theoretical physicist Dr. Anatoly Logunov, making it an appropriate time for

discussions encompassing the domains of science and religion, faith and reason.

Prof. Junichiro Inutsuka (Jissen Women's University) and Prof. Yo Hamada (Teikyo University) were invited as keynote speakers. Representing IOP, Chief Researcher Shuichi Yamamoto and Commissioned Research Fellow Norihiko Shinomiya presented their papers. After the opening remarks by IOP Director Ryohei Tanaka, the following lectures and presentations were delivered:

A Pain-Free Society and Artificial Empathy: When AI Can Understand Pain, Will It Be a Singularity?

(Norihiko Shinomiya, Commissioned Research Fellow)

While AI produces sophisticated results after consuming vast amounts of data and computational resources, humans can generate qualitative power through their hearts. “Pain” is directly related to the fundamental sufferings of life, and Mr. Ikeda referred to modern civilization's attempt to distance itself from pain as the workings of the “demon of the sixth heaven.” In our contemporary pain-free society, examining whether AI can truly understand pain,

empathy, and suffering represents a crucial theme.

How Can AI Contribute to the Buddhist World? (Shuichi Yamamoto, Chief Researcher)

AI's knowledge transcends generations without being lost, existing in a dimension separate from what humans have created.

As AI's potential to surpass human intelligence is increasingly recognized, religion is also compelled to respond. While digitization of scriptures and books, and applications for building human relationships are conceivable, an AI without emotions cannot be said to be able to become human. Accurate discussions regarding its careful usage are necessary.

How to Face the Incomprehensibility of Artificial Intelligence: Considering Amidst the Transformation of “Being” and “Pain”

(Yo Hamada, Teikyo University Professor)

AI is often called a “black box,” with even engineers unable to fully understand all its operations. The current situation involves absorbing vast quantities of information and generating something from it. While ethical constraints are said to exist, special manipulations can produce unexpected words. Although AI can accomplish some things humans cannot, its power is fundamentally different from human capabilities. While AI counseling may work theoretically, it cannot resolve fundamental worries and pain. In suffering that has no ultimate solution, the existence of religion ultimately becomes important.



From the left are Prof. Junichiro Inutsuka (Jissen Women's University), Prof. Yo Hamada (Teikyo University), and IOP Commissioned Research Fellow Norihiko Shinomiya.

The Language World of LLM-AI and the Experience of Koto-ba (Language)

(Junichiro Inutsuka, Jissen Women's University Professor)

AI already is applied in our daily lives in autonomous driving and big data utilization, complementing human capabilities. However, Large Language Models (LLM) attempt to manipulate language without human involvement—something previously considered impossible to mechanize.

The words AI learns are not processed through pathways of understanding meaning, but by recognizing symbols from which meaning has been excluded. The current situation, where AI performs humanlike functions and appears to exceed human capabilities, represents a maximization of a crisis of humanity. In this context, questioning what it means to be human and what constitutes humanity becomes crucial.



IOP Director Ryohei Tanaka (far right), Chief Researcher Shuichi Yamamoto (center), and MC Commissioned Research Fellow Eiichi Tsutaki.

Exchange with Universiti of Malaya Centre for Civilisational Dialogue

On June 26, 2024, a delegation from the Universiti of Malaya Centre for Civilisational Dialogue (UMCCD) led by Deputy Director Asmawati Muhamad visited the Institute of Oriental Philosophy. IOP has maintained an academic exchange agreement with UMCCD since October 2012, fostering continuous collaborative research activities. Deputy Director Asmawati remarked, “Like the Institute of Oriental Philosophy, we are advancing research on coexistence and diversity. We hope that through mutual exchange, research activities can be conducted in various forms.”



Research Report Meeting with Overseas Research Fellows



On February 6, 2025, IOP held an online research report meeting via Zoom to commemorate “February 4th, IOP Day.” Overseas Research Fellows from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Malaysia participated in the meeting, presenting reports on their past research activities and discussing plans for future collaborative projects.

Exchange with Dunhuang Research Academy, China

A delegation from China's Dunhuang Research Academy visited the Institute of Oriental Philosophy on October 30, 2024. The two institutions have maintained exchanges since SGI President Daisaku Ikeda established friendship with the Academy's honorary director Chang Shuhong. The Academy has supported “The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” exhibition since 2017. Former Director Zhao Shengliang stated, “The Institute of Oriental Philosophy and Dunhuang Research Academy will continue to work together through the Lotus Sutra exhibition to promote world peace.”



Exchange with Spanish Academics

Professor Emeritus Juan José Tamayo from Universidad Carlos III de Madrid visited the Institute of Oriental Philosophy on November 21, 2024. The meeting included an overview of “The Lotus Sutra—A Message of Peace and Harmonious Coexistence” exhibition previously held in Lleida (2009) and Madrid (2012), Spain, and discussions on Professor Tamayo's specialty of “Liberation Theology.” Professor Tamayo commented, “Dialogue connecting Eastern and Western philosophy is crucial. Through such exchanges, we can create new values together.”



Exchange with Institute for Religious and Civil Culture Studies, South Korea



A delegation from Kyung Hee University's Institute for Religious and Civil Culture Studies visited the Institute of Oriental Philosophy on February 12, 2025. Director Song Jae-ryong said IOP's work conveying the Lotus Sutra's humanistic perspective to the public and young people through exhibitions is “extremely important at this critical turning point of civilization.”

Visitors from Overseas Institutions

June 26 - Malaysia

Universiti Malaya Centre for Civilisational Dialogue

- ① **Asmawati Binti Muhamad** (Deputy Director, UMCCD)
- ② **Siti Arni Basir** (Senior Lecturer, Academy of Islamic Studies, UM)
- ③ **Muhamad Alihanafiah bin Norasid** (Senior Lecturer, Academy of Islamic Studies, UM)
- ④ **Nadiah Binti Abdul Rahma** (Lecturer, TAR UMT)
- ⑤ **Nurliani Natasha Binti Muhammad Aris Fadzilah** (Research Assistant, UMCCD)

October 30 – China, Dunhuang Research Academy

- ① **Zhao Shengliang** (Party Secretary, Former Director)
- ② **Wang Zhuo** (Researcher, Conservation Institute)
- ③ **Yang Zhijie** (Reception Department Staff)

November 21 – Spain, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

- ① **Juan José Tamayo** (Professor emeritus)

February 12, 2025 - South Korea, Kyung Hee University Institute for Religious and Civil Culture Studies

- ① **Song Jae-ryong** (Director)
- ② **Seo Dong-eun** (Research Team Leader)
- ③ **Liu Guangxi** (Research Coordinator)

Public Lecture Series

Theme: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Faith, Religion, and Thought

Amid widespread excessive expectations and anxieties about artificial intelligence (AI), this lecture series was organized to examine the essence of human intelligence and spirit, as well as the nature of the relationship between AI and humanity, drawing from the perspective of the dialogue *“Science and Religion”* (published in 1994) between IOP founder and SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and the former rector of Moscow University, Dr. Anatoly A. Logunov.

The series explored the potential for science and religion to develop in harmony while contributing to human happiness. The Institute of Oriental Philosophy's online public lecture series, which has been conducted since 2020, has been well-received as it allows participation beyond the constraints of time and location. This lecture series also attracted over 2,500 viewers from around the world, including Asia, Europe, and the Americas, as well as from within Japan, demonstrating the high level of interest in the universal theme of harmony between humans to people, science, and religion in the AI era.

- ◆ **Lecturer:** Hiroshi Ishiguro (Professor, Graduate School of Osaka University; Distinguished Professor, Osaka University)
- ◆ **Date:** November 16, 2024
- ◆ **Theme:** “AI and Human Beings”

- ◆ **Lecturer:** Takashi Okinaga (President and Chancellor, Teikyo University of Science)
- ◆ **Date:** November 30, 2024
- ◆ **Theme:** “What Does It Mean to Be an AI? ”

- ◆ **Lecturer:** Tae Kameda (Professor, Soka Women's College)
- ◆ **Date:** December 14, 2024
- ◆ **Theme:** “Toward the Use of AI Based on the Philosophy of the Dignity of Life”

- ◆ **Lecturer:** Shigeki Moro (Professor, Hanazono University)
- ◆ **Date:** December 21, 2024
- ◆ **Theme:** “Blasphemy or Revelation? Artificial Intelligence and the Recreation of the Dead and Saints”

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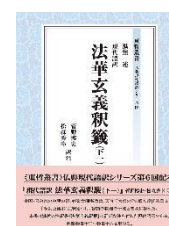
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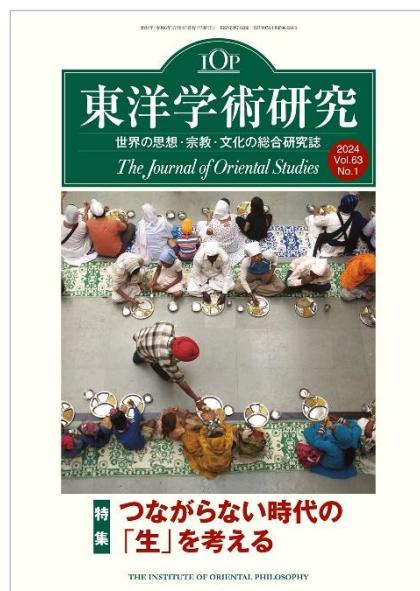


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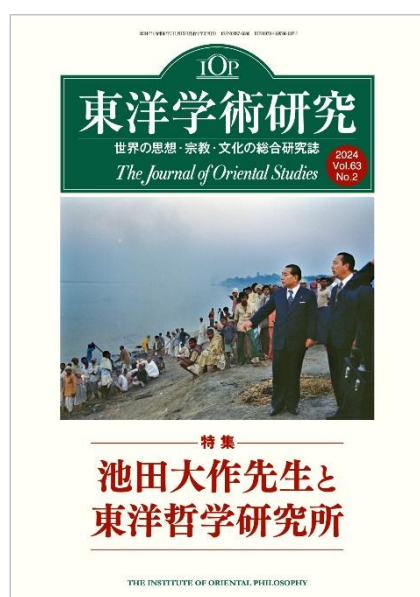
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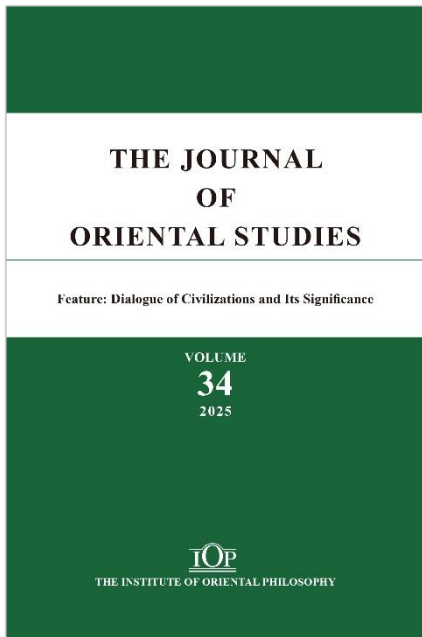
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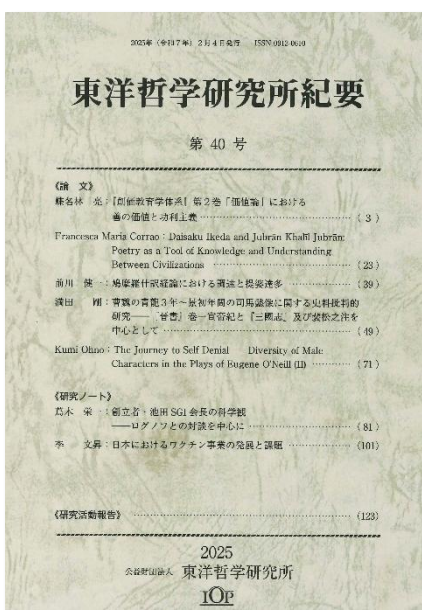
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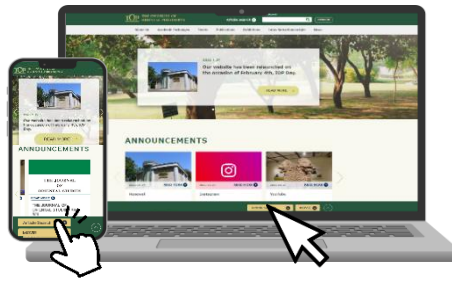
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The Institute of Oriental Philosophy

Address: 1-236, Tangi-machi, Hachioji-shi, Tokyo,
192-0003 Japan

Tel: +81-42-691-6591

Fax: +81-42-691-6588

Official Website: <https://www.totetu.org/en/>

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