

## Feature: The Lotus Sutra:

### Historical Development and Contemporary Issues

From the 36th International Congress of Asian and North African Studies (ICANAS 2000)

*The International Congress of Asian and North African Studies—ICANAS 2000 was held in Montreal, Canada between August 27–September 2, 2000. The Institute of Oriental Philosophy organized panels for the Congress on the subject of the Lotus Sutra. The authors of the essays presented by this panel have revised their work for inclusion in this issue of the Journal. ICANAS, the world’s largest international congress for researchers of the history, philosophy, religion and science of Asia and North Africa, was launched in 1873 as the International Congress of Orientalists, and the Montreal ICANAS was the 36th Congress to date. The theme for this 36th Congress was “Oriental and Asian Studies in the Era of Globalization: Heritage and Modernity—Opportunities and Challenges.” The theme for one panel was “Lotus Sutra—Past, Present, Future,” in which four panelists: Jonathan A. Silk, associate professor at Yale University (“The Place of the Lotus Sutra in Indian Buddhism”); Soka University professor Hiroshi Kanno (“The Reception of the Teaching of the Lotus Sutra in China”); Prof. Koichi Miyata, also of Soka University (“The Reception and Impact of the Lotus Sutra in Japan”) and He Jinsong, associate professor at the Institute for Study of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (“SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and the Lotus Sutra”) gave presentations on how the Lotus Sutra was received and its development at different times and locations. The theme for the other panel was “The Lotus Sutra and Global Issues.” Panelists Soka University professor Toru Shiotsu (“Mahayana Buddhism and Human Rights”); A. Walter Dorn, visiting professor at Royal Military Collage (“Lotus on the Lake—How Eastern Spirituality Contributes to the Vision of World Peace”); Prof. Shuichi Yamamoto of Soka University (“Mahayana Buddhism and Environmental Ethics”) and Yoichi Kawada, director of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (“Buddhism and Bioethics”) discussed the wisdom of the Lotus Sutra as a response to the many issues faced by modern society.*