

Mahayana Buddhism and Modern Civilization

From the symposium cosponsored by the IOP and Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

The second joint symposium organized by the Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy was held over the two days of September 5 and 6 2001, at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. The topic for the symposium was “Mahayana Buddhism and Modern Civilization.” The opening ceremony on the first day included a welcome speech by Professor Ji Xianlin of Peking University, a leading Chinese authority in the fields of Indian and Buddhist studies. This second symposium followed on from the success of the first in May 1999, the theme of which was “The Historical Significance of the Lotus Sutra and its Role in the 21st Century.” At this latest gathering, seven scholars from China and Japan presented their findings on the relationship between Mahayana Buddhism and our modern civilization. Of this research, in this issue we present “Peace, Ecology and Mahayana Spirit” by Du Jiwen, A One-time Director of the Institute of World Religions; “The Practice of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging in the Lotus Sūtra and Its Reception in China and Japan” by Professor Hiroshi Kanno of Soka University; “The Place of the Soka Gakkai in Buddhist History in Japan” by Professor Koichi Miyata, also of Soka University, and “Environmental Ethics in Mahayana Buddhism: The Significance of Keeping Precepts (śīla-pāramitā) and Wisdom (prajñā-pāramitā),” presented by Shuichi Yamamoto, also a professor at Soka University, plus the opening comments by Professor Ji Xianlin.