

Feature:

Contemporary Civilization and Environmental Crisis

From Public Lectures

This issue features a series of public lectures on the common theme of “Contemporary Civilization and Environmental Crisis,” which were hosted by the Institute of Oriental Philosophy in 2007.

The first of the four lectures, by Professor Yoshinori Yasuda of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, was titled “A Geography of Human Life and My Life.” While speaking about A Geography of Human Life by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi—both a geographer and the first president of Soka Gakkai—he appealed for the 21st century to be a century in which civilization centers on a way of living with nature that is grounded in the laws of life.

Director Hideo Kitano of the Japan Environmental Education Forum (JEEF) gave the second lecture, “Environmental Education and Biodiversity: Creating a Society in Symbiosis with Nature.” In it, he described biodiversity as the vitality of life and the energy of living beings. He advocated the importance of education in providing an experience of such biodiversity.

Shigeyuki Okajima, Chief Executive Director of JEEF, gave the third lecture, on “Global Warming and Environmental Thought.” He explained that with regard to environmental problems, humanity is forced to examine its “way of living” and “philosophy of life,” and in that case it is necessary to have an idea which goes beyond the law of the jungle.

The final lecturer was Chief Shuichi Yamamoto of the Soka University’s Center for Environmental Research. He spoke about “The Middle-way of Buddhism and Environmental Problems.” While describing the present status of global warming and its prospects, he explained how Buddhism can contribute to environmental issues.