

From the Two Symposiums

These articles are to introduce presentations made at two symposiums that were cosponsored by the Institute of Oriental Philosophy in 2007.

One of the symposiums was held in collaboration with India's World Poetry Society Intercontinental. It was held on October 5 in Chennai, where the Society's headquarters is located.

The World Poetry Society Intercontinental was founded in 1960 with the participation of over 3,000 poets from the world over. Its monthly magazine, "Poet," is circulated and read in approximately 50 countries. The symposium's theme was "Poetry for World Peace, Harmony and Humanism." During the symposium, the Society conferred the title of "World People's Poet"—the first of its kind—upon Daisaku Ikeda, founder of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy and president of Soka Gakkai International (SGI) in commendation of his continuous efforts to give hope and courage to people throughout his poetry.

Another symposium was held in collaboration with the European Academy of Sciences and Arts. The event was held in Bingen am Rhein, Germany, on September 15 in celebration of the publication of a Japanese book whose translated title is "The Humanist Principle—Compassion and Tolerance." The book is a compilation of a dialogue between SGI president Ikeda and the Academy's president Felix Unger.

The Academy was founded under the spirit of promoting more humanistic sciences and arts. Since 1997, representatives from the Institute of Oriental Philosophy have attended symposiums on dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism as well as conferences among the four major religions that include Judaism and Islam, both of which were hosted by the Academy.

The theme of the symposium in Bingen am Rhein was "Life and Death Today." In Part One, president Unger, a heart surgeon, discussed life and death from a medical perspective. This was followed by a presentation by Shinichi Kogure, a researcher of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy. In Part Two, Dr. Karl M. Woschitz, professor of theology of the University of Graz in Austria, discussed life and death from a philosophical and theological perspective. This was followed by presentations by Director Yoichi Kawada and researcher Tatsuya Yamazaki of the Institute of Oriental Philosophy.