

From the Symposium with the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Message

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I offer my heartfelt congratulations to this extremely significant joint symposium of the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy held on the highly auspicious occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. For the past decade, the Institute of World Religions and the Institute of Oriental Philosophy have engaged in an expanding series of discussions on Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and the need for dialogue between modern civilization and religion. The celebrated Buddhist scholar Yang Zengwen honored this fourth symposium, the theme of which is "Modern Society and Religion", by sharing his observations on Sino-Japanese learning and cultural exchanges.

In May, 2009, I had a chance once again to meet Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China, when he visited Japan. During our talks, we mentioned his proposal to the United Nations on building a harmonious world and further advanced our ideas about intensifying exchanges between the cultures and young people of our two nations. I discern behind his idea of a harmonious world the Chinese spirit of concord and symbiosis evident in venerable historical ideas of the union of heaven and humanity and the philosophy of the Great Harmony. As Arnold J. Toynbee also perceived, this Chinese spiritual current agrees with the Buddhist philosophy of dependent origination and symbiosis that has permeated all Asia. It is immeasurably important that China, permeated with this profound philosophy and spirituality, should propose a future image of a harmonious world because lasting peace for humanity will arrive when the Chinese and all the other peoples and nations of the world cooperate on the basis of a concept of harmonious coexistence.

Through mutual prosperity resulting from multidimensional exchanges in all areas—cultural, educational, scholarly, political, and economic—

while shedding light on the younger generations, China and Japan can make significant contributions to the future of Asia and all humanity. As part of this process, I hope that the fruits of this symposium will be intellectually creative for the human race and deepen mutual understanding in the scholarly dimension.

In conclusion, in connection with the sixtieth anniversary of its foundation, I should like to express my hope that the People's Republic of China will continue to develop and be honored eternally into the future as China the Great.