

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY
THE UNIVERSAL VALUE OF BUDDHIST THOUGHT
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In an effort to bridge what is often viewed as an unbridgeable gulf between Western and Eastern thought, the Institute of Oriental Philosophy (IOP) is dedicated to making Asia's rich philosophical heritage accessible to people throughout the world. A non-profit organization established in 1962, the IOP conducts independent research on topics such as Buddhist thought, comparative religion, and the interrelations between religion and science, as well as religion and society.

The Tokyo-based IOP has offices and centers in India, France, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Russia (St. Petersburg). It sponsors original research, and a variety of exchanges between Western and Eastern scholars through seminars, symposiums and public lectures. In addition to compiling a 25,000-volume library of primary source materials on Indian, Chinese and Japanese thought, philosophy and religion, the IOP also catalogued its reference works collection on a computerized database system.

The Institute's stated purpose is "to advance scholarly inquiry on Buddhist thought so as to clarify its universal value and make it a part of humankind's rich spiritual heritage." Toward this end, the Institute publishes *The Journal of Oriental Studies*, focusing on the application of Buddhist thought to today's society.

In volume six of *The Journal of Oriental Studies*, Dr. David W. Chappell of the University of Hawaii writes on the Lotus Sutra's significance in the modern world: "The significance of the Lotus Sutra for the coming century is not an abstract question, but involves the visions, decisions, and work of these who are devotees of the Lotus Sutra. For it to be a guiding life for the dawn of a new age, it must become 'the light that shines in the darkness' of our world. Certainly there are perennial forms of darkness that are shared in all ages by humanity, such as sickness, old age, and death, that the Lotus Sutra will continue to alleviate.

"However, there are also specific challenges that dominate each historical period, and already it is clear what some of these major problems will be for the twenty-first century: namely, religious pluralism, the environment, economics and the need for global ethics. How devotees of the Lotus Sutra are responding to these problems in the present can serve as a barometer to measure the significance of the Lotus Sutra for the future."