

Video Message by Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, on the occasion of “Global Hindu-Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness”

3 September 2015

I heartily welcome today’s symposium “Global Hindu – Buddhist Initiative on Conflict Avoidance and Environment Consciousness” in New Delhi.

I would first like to express my sincere respect for the efforts of all those involved in realizing this symposium.

This symposium seeks to reflect upon the religions, thought and history of Asia, and learn from the lessons of history wisdom for our future. This aim of the symposium deeply chimes with my belief.

Buddhism was introduced to Japan from India by way of China in the 6th century. Since then, Buddhism has played a significant role in forming the ideological foundation of Japan.

In Japan, Buddhism can be viewed as one of the origins of the “rule of law” on which Japan places great value. Prince Shotoku, who was a devout believer in Buddhism, had, by the 7th century, already formulated Japan’s first constitution.

The Golden Light Sutra, which was reportedly brought to Japan in the 8th century, teaches that unless a king rules under the law, he demolishes his own realm, just as an elephant destroys a lotus pond. The Golden Light Sutra was viewed as the main pillar of political doctrine by political leaders of that time.

The reason why the Western concept of the “rule of law” was able to take root in Japan was because from ancient times similar concepts were already deeply embedded through Buddhism.

This concept can also be found in Dharma of the Indian philosophy.

Freedom, democracy, respect for basic human rights, and peaceful resolution of disputes.

These are universal values that are inherent in Asian religions and

philosophies and run through our ideological foundation.

There is one more characteristic of Asia that we should not forget. That is a spirit of tolerance that appreciates diversity.

In Asia, Buddhism and Hinduism teach compassion, Confucianism teaches Ren, benevolence, and Islam teaches fraternity.

Vivekananda stated that there is more than one path to spiritual heights. Diversity is not weakness. Diversity is a source of creativity.

I would like to conclude my message by wishing you all a fruitful discussion on the international order of Asia and the world based on such universal values and diversity at today's symposium. Thank you very much.