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Toward the Renewal of Cordial Sino-Japanese Relations

—*The view of the Kyoto Museum for World Peace on recent bilateral tensions*—

As widely reported in the media, triggered by disputes over the so-called *Senkaku* or *Diaoyu* islands, the friendship between Japan and China is under serious threat.

Territorial issues must be resolved with the utmost care. Rationality must prevail in the steps taken, which must be based on the detailed historical facts of the relationship between China and Japan. If either country takes abrupt unilateral political action without respecting the sincere and steady efforts to build consensus based on processes appropriate and acceptable to both nations, the confrontation may further intensify. This will only serve to make the parties to the conflict more aggressive, with a propensity to violence that will make the dispute harder to resolve.

Since the restoration of diplomatic relations between Japan and China 40 years ago, many non-governmental groups have made strenuous efforts to preserve and strengthen this rapprochement. As globalization progresses, solidarity beyond borders has also been established in the fields of economic and cultural relations as well as academic exchange. Ritsumeikan University has been promoting a number of study abroad projects such as the “*Campus Asia Program*” and creating new research exchange paradigms between the two countries. Now is the time to act wisely if a grave situation, that can damage the many friendly relations fostered by the work of countless citizens in both China and Japan, is to be avoided.

Based on its fundamental aim of a commitment to “face the past in good faith”, the Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University displays exhibits that reflect on Japan’s war responsibility during the so-called “*Fifteen Year War*” and has built a warm, enduring relationship with the “*Nanjing Massacre Museum*” in Nanjing, China. In order to promote peace and friendship in Asia, the government and people of Japan must honestly face the historical fact of the nation’s past aggression and the toll of Japanese militarism, and work to chart a fresh course of mutual understanding with all affected lands and their peoples.

In conclusion, we at the Kyoto Museum for World Peace remain seriously concerned by the sudden deterioration in Sino-Japanese relations triggered by the current territorial dispute. We fervently hope that the bilateral dialogue to mitigate the confrontation will be tenaciously pursued with a focus on building international peace. We further hope that this conversation will help inaugurate a New Asia, where future generations can foster active exchanges throughout the region in an atmosphere of peace, friendship and profound mutual respect.

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