

Prof. Dr. Bee Scherer  
*Chair, Buddhist Studies*

9 March 2021

Re: Letter of support UN WIHW

*Lectori Salutem,*

I am writing today to express my full support for the *UN World Interfaith Harmony Week*.

The particular event I was honoured to speak at was entitled *"Healing the Mind and Finding Inner Joy in a Post-Pandemic World"*. It was held via Zoom in two parts on February 2<sup>nd</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> and was organised by one of the largest charitable Buddhist movements, the Fo Guang Shan, founded by the Ven. Master Hsing Yun.

In these sessions during the UN WIHW, we came together as faith and community leaders from Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, as academics and activist on a journey of life-long learning, and exchanged our hopes and perspectives for harmony during the times of the COVID-19 hardship worldwide. In the harmony of our good intentions, wishes and prayers, we tried to give a living example of a society of mutual respect and understanding across, civilisations, cultures and religions, just as envisioned by Ven. Master Hsing Yun.

Harmony holds a special place in Classical Chinese thought and practice. That is true equally for Daoism Confucianism, and the rich panoply of Chinese Buddhist traditions. In Ven. Master Hsing Yun's teachings, respectful and warm affinities within any social unit require careful tending to harmonies. Such harmonies flow from the *harmony in one's own heart* (自心和悦), reaching wider and wider – like circles from a stone thrown into the water. The outer rings of harmony also echo back into individual relations and into our own heart: Just as without harmony in ourselves, there is no peace and friendship between religions, without religious peace we individually can not fully relax into our heart's natural peace.

Hence, my gratitude, hence, goes out to the *Parliament of the World's Religions* for encouraging and facilitating such beautiful and empowering events, so that we may be part of healing the world from disharmony.

*Bee Scherer*

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