



ASIA/JAPAN - "Monks Without Borders" has been formed, to unite religious sects in tackling global issues

Kyoto (Agenzia Fides) - A group of Buddhist monks in Japan have formed an organization called "Monks Without Borders", which aims to unite Buddhist religious communities, and other religions in tackling global issues such as poverty. The new non-profit association, which echoes similarly-named establishments famously created by doctors and reporters, is the result of the idea of two monks: Hiroaki Nakajima, 43, chief priest at Jokoji Temple in Kyoto city, and Eryo Sugiwaka, 53, chief priest at Hokkeji Temple in Kameoka. As reported to Fides, the NGO aims to transcend the many different schools of Buddhism existing in the world, with the goal of addressing international problems such as the eradication of poverty, discrimination and other social issues. It also wants to encourage collaboration with religious communities of other faiths, in tackling global problems. Buddhism is widely practiced in large parts of South and East Asia but also in India, Taiwan, China, Korea. According to information sent to Fides, in addition to tackling humanitarian issues, the organization may well also be hoping to boost the profile of Buddhism in Japan in the process, having suffered a dramatic decline in followers and financial support in recent years. It is, however, an attempt, notes a source of Fides, to perceive Buddhism not only as a philosophy or interior path but also as a lever to works of charity and for the specific commitment in social work. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 20/12/2013)