

IAAP USA Webinar: West Meets East in Northeast Asia: A Values Proposition

Michael Jenkins
April 20, 2021



United States - On April 20, 2021, the International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) held a webinar on the theme "West Meets East in Northeast Asia: A Values Proposition" in what is planned as a series of sessions under this theme. A panel of distinguished academicians explored the impact of traditional culture and values on modern society and politics in Northeast Asia from the two prevailing values systems of West and East in the one-hour session. Lively interaction between panelists followed their presentations. Almost 550 viewers attended the meeting.

Central to the theme was the question: "To what extent does the interplay of the East's Confucian and the West's Christian values influence the political dynamics of democracy and authoritarianism in South and North Korea, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and Japan?"

Two esteemed academicians led the charge in this most timely discussion.



Dr. Thomas Ward, president of the Unification Theological Seminary in New York, presented the perspective of Western values history and its effect from the colonial to the post-colonial periods on traditional Asian societal values, particularly in the Philippines, where he did his doctoral work.

Dr. Thomas Selover, president of SunHak Universal Peace Graduate University near Seoul, Korea, spoke on the underlying Confucianist values that permeate Asian society, including societies of a more authoritarian nature. He particularly referenced the founding myths of the Korean people, which could potentially play a role in a future reconvergence of the peoples of the two nations on the Korean Peninsula.

To what extent do the competing value systems, particularly on the Korean Peninsula, harbor the potential to resolve troubling conflicts among peoples and states, heal historical resentments and deliver an elusive peace?



To what extent are the value systems of East and West competing, and to what extent are they compatible?

In this initial exploration of the role of value systems on the social and political life of this region, our panelists began a conversation that may prove truly useful in opening the discussion of external realities to their sources of inspiration in the inner realm of thought, custom and traditional behavior.

Chaired by an experienced moderator, Dr. Michael Jenkins, president of UPF International, this session represents an ongoing series of programs designed to highlight the central pillars of UPF's mission to create an environment for peaceful interaction and reflection on world conflicts, with a view to finding new solutions through the cross-pollination of ideas, experts and people of goodwill.

These programs in which Dr. Jenkins convenes a panel to focus on projects for peace from a variety of perspectives: the media, the arts, parliamentarians, religious leaders, business leaders and others are launched every Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. New York time. They are available free of charge to all and followed by a large audience.

Currently, with much of the world focused on the relationship between the United States and China, the potential inflection point of change on the Korean Peninsula is being explored extensively.

We look forward to each opportunity to examine aspects of the seminal issues that characterize the pivotal role, both geopolitically and culturally, of the Korean Peninsula in the resolution of world conflict and the realization of world peace.