

ILC2021 Asia Pacific, August 20: Session V – Culture as a Bridge Towards Reunification

Robert Kittel
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Asia Pacific -- The fifth session of the August 19-20 International Leadership Conference 2021 (ILC2021) for UPF's Asia Pacific region was held on August 20, on the theme, "Culture as Dynamic Bridge towards Reunification: Analyzing Korean Culture, Civilization and Worldview." Four esteemed speakers from South Korea, Thailand and Cambodia presented.

In total, 1,165 people registered for the event. Three-hundred and forty-three (343) participants watched it live on Zoom while thousands did so on YouTube and Facebook Live.

Dr. Sung Bae Jin, *president of the Unification Thought Institute International, South Korea*, proposed the philosophy of "Godism," stating, "The solution means unifying the essence of these two antagonistic philosophies into one rather than denying or excluding one or the other." He looked back at the common history of North and South Korea and emphasized the ideals of loving Heaven, humankind and the nation that arose because of that history.

Prof. Dr. Sombat Benjasimongkol, *chairman of the Thai-Korean Friendship Association, Thailand*, spoke about the role of youth in pushing the reunification process forward "very seriously," in a way that is peaceful and not violent. He also said the cultures of North and South Korea are very important because they have the same root.

Dr. Sirjana Thapa, *an assistant professor at Namseoul University, South Korea*, emphasized the "vital role" the Unification Policy campaign plays in shifting perspectives from negativity and division to positivity and unity. She explained the recent history of the development of the cultural and political environment and said that the environment could assist in the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas.

The final speaker, **Mr. Khem Reaksmeay**, *founder and CEO of Dewey International Co., Ltd, Cambodia*, said: "We believe that the Korean Peninsula will experience more and more prosperous development due to the power of unity between the South and North Korean people" because they were once one strong nation. He expressed that he believes the combined strengths of North Korea's military and South Korea's economic foundation will make a unified Korea a strong nation.

A QandA session followed, which was conducted by **Ms. Mee Hwa Atimalala**, *president of the International Association of Youth and Student for Peace (IAYSP) Oceania*.

Rev. Santosh Neupane, *director of UPF-Central Pacific*, served as the moderator.