

## Dr. Han Shik Park

Dr. Han S. Park is a professor of public and international affairs at the University of Georgia and the director of The Center for the Study of Global Issues (Globis). During his 40 years of service at the University of Georgia, he has worked as an educator, a peacemaker and a humanitarian. Currently, he is at the forefront of peacemaking initiatives between the United States and North Korea.

Park was born in China during the violent years of the Chinese revolution. He witnessed firsthand the chaos and horrors of war. In order to escape these dire circumstances, he and his family fled to a divided Korea. However, the horrors of human conflict did not escape him, as he found himself amidst an even bloodier war in Korea (1950-53). Although he was too young to be drafted into the military, he was old enough to be deeply impacted by the devastating effects of war. As a refugee, he realized that the only way to escape a life of poverty and deprivation was through higher education. Following his graduation from Seoul National University, his quest and hunger for knowledge drew him to the United States. He initially received his master's from American University in Washington D.C, followed by a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Minnesota.

His passionate desire to prevent yet another war in Korea has resulted in tangible consequences. During the presidency of Bill Clinton, he was instrumental in securing an invitation for former President Jimmy Carter to visit North Korea, a visit that most probably averted a certain conflict. In 2003, when Washington was fully prepared to initiate a surgical strike at the site of the *Yongbyon* nuclear program, Park successfully hosted an informal and unofficial (Track-II) meeting between influential representatives from Pyongyang and their American counterparts. Again, this Track-II diplomacy likely averted yet another military clash. Against the predominant public sentiment that North Korea is an evil and terrorist state, Park has spoken publicly through countless international and domestic media to demystify and portray North Korea the way it actually is, not the way it is presumed to be.

As a humanitarian, he has single-handedly helped hundreds of separated families to locate and reunite with their long-lost family members. With a video camera in hand, he personally videotaped families torn apart by the Korean War and living in either China or North Korea, bereft of the knowledge as to where their loved ones were.

Park and the University of Georgia created the Center for the Study of Global Issues (Globis). As the founding director of Globis, he has helped expand the global awareness and literacy of American students through study abroad programs spread across Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Under his leadership, Globis has also developed interdisciplinary certificate programs in global studies to prepare students to meet challenges of the emergent global era.

Park views peace as a moral imperative, an active state that is much more than simply the absence of war; such a state must be fully supported and encouraged by a culture of peace rather than the culture of security that has dominated human history

## **Culture of Peace for the Global Village**

**Han Shik Park**

Peace is not simply an ideal; it is an imperative for the survival of the human race! If we hope to sustain our species beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the course of historical evolution must be altered. History has witnessed a steady progression towards the ultimate calamity of human extinction by the adverse consequences of industrialization, post-industrial development, and now globalization. This process brought us to the current age of a global village, a village with an integrated market system, a village of standardized information technology, a village with an integrated network of communication and transportation, a village with one ecosystem shared by all on this planet. But, this village lacks a culture, a value system by which an orderly pattern of relationships may be maintained. A culture is a system of values and norms, without which the dynamics of interaction between members of the village become random, disorderly, and unpredictable. Without a culture, therefore, social interactions are forced to be managed by a system of laws, not common sense or cultural conventions. Where legal jurisdiction does not reach, the society will become lawless. Such is the state of our global village today! The old order in which the powerful reigns and the weak submits is no longer tenable; small states or even non-state entities are seemingly committed to achieving their goals by whatever means necessary. The wars currently being waged in the Middle East and elsewhere are resorting to such unconventional means as suicide bombing and the use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), with no clear demarcation of battle lines. Conflict of this nature is open-ended, for there is no precise definition of victory or defeat. Now more than ever, it is critical that we as a global community work to alleviate the pressures that encourage such desperate measures.

It is clear that security and safety in today's global village will not be possible as long as the strong desire to dominate while the weak continue to be defiant. For two thousand years, our history has maintained a world-order based on a hierarchy of military forces, spiritual authority, economic power, technological ability and information access and control. But such a vertical hierarchy cannot be continued in this global era, for small states have become increasingly assertive of their sovereignty in the global community. Further, the paradigm predicated on domination is not feasible, for the small, legitimate or illegitimate, can now incur massive and irreversible damage to the strong with unconventional but deadly weapons of mass destruction. We must replace the security-based world order with one that captures this reality of the global village. That is, the security paradigm that has provided stability for centuries must be replaced by the peace paradigm.

Security presumes the presence of enemies and relies on military force; and it often depends on alliances with other countries of shared interests against a common enemy. Its purpose is to gain the position of domination. Peace, on the other hand, pursues the harmony of differences, not the imposition of homogeneity; it requires accommodation, not assimilation or suppression of diversity. Accommodating differences begins with understanding these differences. Understanding is not agreement; rather, it is the agreement to disagree -- the ultimate civility. Understanding can only be achieved through dialogue, and dialogue begins with open mindedness - the willingness to listen to others no matter how alien they may appear to be and no matter how different their views or value positions might be. Meaningful dialogue also requires one's inclination and ability to put oneself in other peoples situations – empathy. Indeed, empathy is the most desired norm and the essence of a truly global culture. What we need is not a consensus on a system of values that claims to be superior to all others. We need a culture of empathy.

We are all global citizens, and we must develop this norm of global citizenship through education and other means of socialization. The cultivation of peace through education involves transforming our dispositions from being closed minded with pre-conceived stereotypes to becoming open minded towards diverse life situations and belief systems. What the great pioneers of peace, Gandhi, King, and Ikeda, have imparted among us is the truth that peace transcends religious, cultural, and political differences. We must all join forces in the name of peace to help divert humanity from the course of extinction ---and to charter a new path towards harmony. Ultimately, we must trigger a paradigmatic shift from security to peace through transforming individual thoughts and perceptions and creating harmonious relationships at all levels in this global village. Then, and only then, will we be able to sustain ourselves long enough to embrace the arrival of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century and beyond.