

USA AND CHINA: FOUNDATIONAL CULTURAL VALUES FOR DIALOGUE

Presented by
Dwight N. Hopkins

Introduction

The USA and the Peoples Republic of China are the World's Two Biggest Economic Superpowers.

From World War II, the USA has Clearly Established Its Economic Dominance.

And Since the 1978 Opening Up and Reform Movement, China has Emerged as the Second Largest GDP.

- There are Different Ways to look at these Two Global Economies in the 21st century.

- We can compare and contrast their two Powerful Economies:
 - One is a centralized 5 year Planned Economy.
 - The Other is a Free Market system with government occasional intervention.

- We can compare and contrast their different Political Systems:
 - One is governed by One Major Party.
 - The Other is run by Two Political Parties.

- We can compare and contrast their Histories:
 - One has a Five Thousand Year tradition.
 - The Other was created in 1787, Two Hundred and Twenty Five Years ago.

- In fact, Economics, Politics, and History are three important ways of understanding China and the USA, as world leaders today.

-- However in this presentation, we will examine the differences between the Cultures of the USA and of China.

-- To develop a Healthy Dialogue between the USA and China, we ask the question:
What Are The Foundational Cultural Values That Are the Foundation of Each Country?

-- By Cultural Values, we mean the Transgenerational, Transcendental, Life-Giving, and Ultimate Values that are the foundation of the Identity of each country.

-- These values influence how the two societies believe in business negotiations, economic institutions, political organization, education, family relations, perceptions of right and wrong, spiritual worldviews, and cultural formations.

-- Even when political systems change; even when economies develop in different ways; even when there are various interpretations of history, Underneath economics, politics, and history is the Foundation of Cultural Values.

-- To increase Healthy Dialogue and perhaps further Friendship between the USA and the PRC, we suggest a Conversation based on the foundational cultural values of each country.

-- By Culture, we mean the Entire Way of Life of a People – all that Human Labor produces; the Artistic Creativity of a people; and the Spiritual Personality of a civilization.

-- Each country has Four Foundational Values.

-- The USA has, at least, 4 Foundational Cultural Values that are passed on to each Generation:

(1) Compassion (which comes from its Jewish heritage).

(2) Individual Rights (from its ancient Greek lineage)

(3) Representative Government (from ancient Rome)

(4) Hope (from Christianity).

-- These are some of the Basic Values that mix together to produce American Culture.

-- The Peoples Republic of China also has, at least, 4 Foundational Cultural Values that are passed on to each Generation:

(1) Focus on the Family.

(2) Harmony and Balance.

(3) Learning from Foreigners.

(4) To Get Things Done.

-- All four of these Foundational Cultural Values grow out of the way of life of Taoism, Confucianism, and Chinese Buddhism.

-- These are some of the Basic Values that mix together to produce Chinese Culture.

Conclusion

-- There are many ways to engage a conversation between the USA and the PRC – the world's two major economic powers. If the goal is to foster mutual harmony and friendship for each country, the world, nature, and the cosmos, we suggest digging deeply into the cultural values that are transcendent and underneath the history and current political and economic systems in both countries.

-- What is the foundational personality of a nation? After things come and go, after people pass from youth to old age, after countries change their economic and political systems, what is the core identity of a country?

-- We suggest that a more fruitful dialogue between the USA and the PRC will happen when each side engages the foundational cultural values from each country.

-- For the USA, those cultural values are (1) compassion; (2) individual rights; (3) representative government; and (4) hope.

-- And China has a tradition of its own four cultural values – (1) focus on family; (2) harmony in balance; (3) learning from foreigners; and (4) to get things done.