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## Conference of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Olga V. Chistyakova  , Denis I. Chistyakov 

*RUDN University, Moscow, Russia*

 [chistyakova-ov@rudn.ru](mailto:chistyakova-ov@rudn.ru)

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## Конференция Гавайского университета в Маноа

О.В. Чистякова  , Д.И. Чистяков 

*Российский университет дружбы народов, Москва, Россия*

 [chistyakova-ov@rudn.ru](mailto:chistyakova-ov@rudn.ru)

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The 12<sup>th</sup> East-West Philosopher's Conference (2024 EWPC) was held May 24–31, 2024, at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu, USA, with 329 participants representing more than 30 countries from almost every continent.

The conference was organized and co-hosted by the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and the East-West Research Center of the same university. Scholars from different countries had the opportunity to make presentations, share ideas, and participate in various panels, sessions, and roundtables. The central theme of the conference was *Trauma and Healing*.

This year's conference celebrated its 85th anniversary. In 1939, three University of Hawai'i Professors – Charles A. Moore, Wing-tsit Chan, and Gregg Sinclair–initiated the first philosophy conference in Honolulu to explore Eastern thought as a unique complement to Western thought. The key goal was to synthesize Western and Eastern ideas and approaches theoretically. Since 1949, twelve conferences have been held to establish a dialog between Eastern and Western cultures and to ground comparative philosophy as the creative foundation for this intersection of cultures, religions, and values.

In the course of developing ideas for establishing a dialogue between the philosophical traditions of East and West, and as a result of the success of the conference goals, the journal *Philosophy East & West* was founded at the University of Hawai'i in 1951, and in 1960 the East-West Center was established on the University's campus. Thus, the University of Hawai'i today is an essential point of intersection between East and West cultures, where cross-cultural interactions between peoples of the North and South are not excluded.

The 12<sup>th</sup> East-West Philosophical Conference was dedicated to discussing the theme of *Trauma and Healing* in all its manifestations – anthropological, psychological, social, political, religious, and cultural. The topic, which emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic and was discussed at the conference from the position of global cooperation and united response to threats to humanity, became an example of an everyday fundamental discourse of scholars representing many countries and continents. Global and local traumas, caused by various causes and leaving a deep imprint on generations and individuals, were philosophically considered in several plenary sessions and numerous parallel sections of the conference. The conference program was so extensive that it could reasonably

claim to be a world congress of philosophers. The relevance of the problems examined, and the representativeness of the conference participants made it a bright and significant event not only for the philosophy of the Pacific but also for the world's philosophical thought.

Let us highlight some of the most profound and exciting, from our point of view, speeches and discussions, which, in one way or another, reveal the essence of trauma in the personal and social planes and the possibilities of overcoming the consequences of this state.

The first plenary session (*Trauma and Healing in the Zen Buddhism of D.T. Suzuki*) was devoted to Japanese culture and philosophy in the person of its brilliant representative and follower of Japanese Zen Buddhism, Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki, known for his ideas of rapprochement between Western and Eastern intellectual cultures. Professor of Nanzan University (Japan) Tomoe Moriya, Professor at Florida International University Steven Heine, and Steve Odin, Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i, highlighted Suzuki's ideas, which can be considered as universal values for the unity of Eastern and Western cultures.

Plenary sessions on classical Indian philosophy about the interpretation of suffering and being (*Classical Indian Philosophy and the Suffering of Being*) and Chinese philosophy with a focus on Confucianism and overcoming trauma in Confucian ethics (*Philosophy of Trauma and World Development*) were presented from the perspective of trauma specific to Eastern cultures, and Eastern thought in general.

Of particular interest was the plenary session on the Arab East and the social conditions of the post-Arab Spring Times, – *Trauma and Healing in Post-Arab Spring Times*. The presentations of philosophers were united by the principle of cross-cultural philosophy aimed at uniting people of different cultures and religions. The presentation by Tamara Albertini, Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i, was incredibly insightful. With her presentation (*The Arab City: The Trauma and Healing Written in its Walls*), Professor Albertini literally "mesmerized" the audience with the mysticism of the letters of the Arabic language, which, with their multiple meanings, depth, and coherence, may influence personal and social behavior, history and psychology of people. Professor Ashraf Mansour of Alexandria University (Egypt) showed the social and psychological consequences of the "Arab Spring" on the example of Egypt from the perspective of cross-cultural research.

Continental European understanding of trauma, embodied in the works of European philosophers such as Derrida, Levinas, Gadamer, Celan, Freud, etc., was presented during the plenary session on the Western tradition of philosophy (*Continental Perspectives on Trauma and Healing*). The speech of Kevin Newmark, Professor of the Department of Romance Languages and Literature of Boston College, showed the perspectives of overcoming various kinds of traumas and resistance to the thinking of turning a person into a victim in the concepts of E.

Levinas, J. Derrida, and A. Rimbaud, was bright and literary-sophisticated. Psychological and psychoanalytic possibilities for dealing with trauma were contained in a presentation by Joseph Tanke, Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i, with the promising title *Time Heals all Wounds?*

Over several days, parallel panels with key-speakers were followed by discussions of the papers and a dialog of ideas from the perspectives of different ethnic cultures and religions. We want to single out the sections on *Comparative Philosophy in Contemporary Times*, *Emotion and Desire*, *Healing from the Trauma of Fascism*, *Trauma and Resilience*, and *Religiousness and Healing*.

The authors of this article, who represent RUDN University at the conference, spoke in the latter two sections. Denis Chistyakov's speech, *Trauma, Power, and Societal Structures: A Framework for Healing*, emphasized the role of social structures and collective efforts to overcome personal shocks inflicted on a person. The author emphasized the concepts of collective and cultural traumas, which can constantly replicate and repeat themselves even if an external factor is excluded, as well as the possibilities of recovery expressed in the works of T. Adorno, J. Habermas, and H. Arendt.

In the presentation *Religion as Healing from Social Violence's Trauma (Context of Byzantine Church Fathers' Legacy)*, Professor Olga Chistyakova presented the ideas of Byzantine philosophers and theologians as a basis for moral healing from the consequences of social violence. The teachings of the Eastern Christian Church Fathers – Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Maximus the Confessor – were presented. Their ethical ideas and value philosophical orientations were considered as grounds for rehabilitation not only from different kinds of social violence but also from the consequences of religious violence. The role of religion in overcoming psychological traumas aroused great interest and discussion among the conference participants.

We want to express our appreciation and gratitude to all the organizers of the conference<sup>1</sup>, to the philosophy students of the University of Honolulu who assisted the Department of Philosophy in organizing and conducting such a significant event, and, of course, to Professor Tamara Albertini, Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i, for her fundamental role in this conference, which has undoubtedly become a meaningful phenomenon in contemporary world philosophy.

#### **About the authors:**

*Chistyakova Olga V.* – DSc in Philosophy, Professor, Professor of the Department of History of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, RUDN University, 6 Miklukho-Maklaya St., Moscow, 117198, Russian Federation. ORCID: 0000-0002-1074-0913. SPIN-code: 4066-5279. E-mail: chistyakova-ov@rudn.ru

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<sup>1</sup> More on the conference is available on <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/ewpc/>

*Chistyakov Denis I.* – CSc in Sociology, Deputy Director for Science and International Collaboration, Higher School of Management, RUDN University, 6 Miklukho-Maklaya St., Moscow, 117198, Russian Federation. ORCID: 0000-0001-8805-297X. SPIN-code: 4222-9058. E-mail: chistyakov-di@rudn.ru

**Сведения об авторах:**

*Чистякова Ольга Васильевна* – доктор философских наук, профессор, профессор кафедры истории философии, факультет гуманитарных и социальных наук, Российский университет дружбы народов, Российская Федерация, 117198, Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, д. 6. ORCID: 0000-0002-1074-0913. SPIN-код: 4066-5279. E-mail: chistyakova-ov@rudn.ru

*Чистяков Денис Игоревич* – кандидат социологических наук, заместитель директора по научной работе и международному сотрудничеству, Высшая школа управления, Российский университет дружбы народов, Российская Федерация, 117198, Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, д. 6. ORCID: 0000-0001-8805-297X. SPIN-код: 4222-9058. E-mail: chistyakov-di@rudn.ru