

We had our 7th area meeting in mid-November this year at the Language Center inside Sun Yat Sen University, Guangzhou, China. It is one of the most famous universities in China, where three key persons of Servas China are teaching; Dr. and Mrs. C.Y. and Prof. J.H.

The conference was held on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17, but most of the participants arrived in Guangzhou City on the previous afternoon to check in at the Zi Jin Yuan Hotel inside the university campus.

It was attended by nearly 40 members from China (17), Hong Kong (1), Korea (11), Mongolia (2), and Japan (8). No one could participate from Taiwan this time, but two guest members joined us from Malaysia, K. and J. We also had L.A. from Israel. J. and A. happened to visit us on their way back from Tibet, while K., National Secretary of Malaysia, came over to attend our meeting by herself.

Day 1 Saturday, November 16, 2013

At 7:30 all the participants met at the restaurant next to the Zi Jin Yuan Hotel to have breakfast. Then we moved to the language center across the street.

At 9:00 Prof. J.H., the chairperson, declared the meeting open, and Dr. C.Y., National Secretary, gave a welcome address, followed by M.N., Area Coordinator for East Asia. Then L.A. gave a speech on behalf of Servas International.

At 9:30 Mr. D.Y. L. showed us Guangzhou City with a video player. As he played it, he talked about the history and cultures of the city. "Gourmet food is in Guangzhou," he cited as a matter of course.

At 9:50 each National Secretary said a word and introduced members from his / her country. Mr. H.J., Korea, was the first to talk, to be followed by Mr. K. T., Japan, Ms. H., Mongolia, Mr. J.K., former Hong Kong Secretary, and Dr. C.Y., China. Dr. Y. introduced not only 10 Chinese members but also 7 volunteers. It was really worthy of mention that Ms. H. attended as a representative from Mongolia. It was the first time in the history of the East Asia Meeting to have Mongolian members join us. There are

4 members in Mongolia, she said!

At the end of the greetings, a “mouse” was presented to all the participants by Ms E. Z. She did not teach us how to feed it, though.

At 10:30 a welcome party started with Ms T.Z. as MC. It was supposed to take place on the previous evening, but we postponed it since Mongolian members arrived at the hotel so late the previous night.

First of all, the Chinese members sang in chorus “You and Me,” a well-known piece in a beautiful harmony. Then the Korean team delighted us all with a chorus of “Arirang,” which was recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage in December, 2012. Mr. R.T.G. chanted a traditional folk song called “*pansori*.” Then Mr. C.B.W., vice president of Servas Korea, showed us a list of “Thank-you” phrases in various languages. Under his introduction all of us repeated “Thank you” in many languages and sang a “Thank you” song in chorus! Wasn’t it really suitable for a Servas meeting?!

The third was a chorus by Japanese members. With a flower in their hands they sang “Hana Wa Saku,” a song to wish for recovery from the *tsunami* in March 2011. The title means that flowers will be in bloom. Next appeared Mr. D. from Mongolia with a harp called *batokin*. He played a beautiful melody with his instrument. Ms. H., Secretary of Mongolia, introduced him as the best player of *batokin* in the country. After his performance was over, they presented all of us with a disc of DVD in which his performance is recorded. It was such a beautiful music. Then appeared Ms T. Z. herself in a charming dress and showed us a very enticing dance!

After her dance was over, L. A. talked about Israel, his mother country, using a video player.

At 13:00 we had lunch together at the restaurant. After taking a rest for a while, at 14:50 we met again at the lobby of the language center and enjoyed a tour of the center listening to a lady official’s explanation. It is called “Base for International Chinese Teaching Materials Development and Teacher Training.” We could see a lot of books and materials in each floor of the building.

At 15:20 each NS told about his / her activity. Mr. H.J., Korea, the first speaker, overwhelmed us with his country’s versatile activities. For example, they issued their first Servas Korea Newsletter in November, featuring events and assemblies in 2013. In May they had a walking pilgrimage attended by nearly 100 members and their families. In July they experienced Multicultural Creativity Camp in liaison with

UNESCO, officially sponsored by the government. In October a 330 km cycling was held along the DMZ, attracting as many as 20 members including 2 Japanese members. In the same month about 20 Japanese members attended Servas Korea's national meeting after they enjoyed the World Garden EXPO 2013 at Suncheon.

Mr. K.T., NS, Japan, said that Servas Japan could recruit a young lady as an official in charge of youth activity. He also said they are thinking of organizing Servas Japan into an NGO in the near future so that they can broaden their activities. As a result of *tunami* 20 members withdrew, he said with regret. He also said, "We must do something for our future, though a lot of problems await us."

Mr. J.H., China, said that the 7th East Asia Meeting was held in good time and it was encouraging enough to make Servas China members united and become motivated. He also said that it must be good for China to recruit younger members, since the number is not large enough. The more members they have, the more often they will be able to send members abroad or accept travelers from abroad. Then they will broaden their knowledge and become more interested in Servas activity. China is thinking of holding a national meeting as soon as possible, J. added as well.

Mr. J.K., former Secretary of Hong Kong, said that their EXCO is a troika system, not represented by a single Secretary. Three representatives are in charge of communication, membership and interview, and homepage or website. Of 20 hosts 18 are day hosts and 2 are hosts, so they can accept travelers from abroad. They issue a newsletter online regularly, and often meet at a café whenever they have travelers from abroad. They are also thinking of recruiting young members. V., one of the representatives, attended SI conference in Poland last year.

Ms H., Mongolia, told about her activity in her country at the welcome party when D., the music teacher, played his *batokin*. But let me report here what she said. She said that she worked as hard as she could to recruit new members making use of every chance she took. As a government official for the Ministry of Education, she is blessed with attending public meetings. By her endeavor, Mongolia has 4 members including herself and D., the famous musician. Isn't it really good news?!

At 17:10 all the participants were divided into two groups for discussion. Group A talked about "Opportunities and Challenges." On the other hand, Group B discussed "How to increase members."

At Group A their discussion was carried out featuring the situation of Servas China. In East Asia, especially in China, social and economical conditions are changing for the better so quickly and widely. It has made more Chinese people obtain a chance to go abroad, by which they can broaden their knowledge of the culture and people of the world. The more developed China becomes, the more it will become open to the outside world. As a result, it will create a better climate for the growth of Servas China and other NGOs in the country.

However, such a rapid change does not always offer us delightful harvest alone. A radical change cannot but produce instability and very severe competition among the society. The rationalization of industry will deprive younger people of a chance of employment, ending in dampening their interest and motivation to take a leap outside.

Now is the time to be patient. As the proverb goes, haste makes waste. We should try to make a slow and steady progress as Servas and at the same time we have to make it known far and wide not only in China but in other East Asian countries. In this way we will be able to make Servas East Asia grow as an organization to aim at world peace and friendship.

Servas East Asia may be slow in its progress, but it will grow surely by our care and persistent challenge. Therefore, let us hold such a meeting and recruit young and active members in each country.

Group B discussed "How to increase members," a permanent topic for Servas. Since Mongolian members joined it, various suggestions were proposed for them to obtain more members.

The membership in Taiwan was not so large up to several years before. Then a lady member working for a travel agent wrote an article in a traveling magazine. Since it was not only attractive but she mentioned Servas in it, many readers showed interest in Servas. As a result the membership soared to about 100. Such a thing happened in Korea as well. A Japanese teacher of English has a lot of opportunities to see people from abroad. He makes it a rule to talk about Servas to them. By and by he could make some of them to join Servas, though it was not in Japan alone. Ms H. also would talk about Servas whenever she took a chance, and thanks to her earnest solicitation they have 4 members now, two male and two female.

On the other hand, it is not always good to increase members. We should be careful not to give a misleading impression that Servas is a cheap means to travel. And a host is required to be tolerant to travelers from abroad, because they many visit us from a

country with a very different culture.

To hold events such as a picnic or cycling like Korea does will lead to an increase in new members, a participant said.

At 18:00 we took a picture altogether in front of the language center, and then we went out to a downtown restaurant. All of us returned to our hotel at 20:00.

At 20:30 a meeting was held by NSs at Room #2604, where Masahiro Nishiyama intimated his intention of resigning from his post as Area Coordinator for over 10 years. It was approved unanimously. Then Mr. S.D.W., former NS for Servas Korea, was elected as a new Area Coordinator for East Asia. They also discussed when and where to hold the next area meeting. After careful discussion it was decided to be held in Korea in 2016 on the condition that Ms H., Mongolia, will agree to it. She was absent because an urgent situation arose with Mr. D., her companion

Masahiro Nishiyama, former AC, met her the following morning and explained to her what they discussed on the previous night. Ms H. gave her consent to it. She showed her interest in holding the next area meeting in Mongolia, but we thought it better for her to observe the next meeting in Korea and get prepared in holding it in Mongolia.

Day 2 Sunday, November 17, 2013

We started for breakfast at a well-known restaurant by a gorgeous bus at 8:15. It was by a lake and many Chinese citizens were seen having breakfast with their family members. While we were enjoying it, Mr. J.H. stood up and announced a surprise news! He read a message from J.S., President of Servas International. It was really encouraging to us all. After breakfast we strolled around the lake till noon.

Then we got in the bus and enjoyed sightseeing of the old town and two museums, and dropped in at a restaurant featuring Sichuan food. Mrs. C.Y., NS, is from the province, and she selected it for us. Every food was so good but very hot! During the lunch hour Masahiro Nishiyama announced the decision of the meeting by NSs the previous night; his resignation, new AC, and the next meeting in Korea in 2016.

At 14:40 we reached another well-known park on top of which stood a sculpture of five rams. It is said to be a symbol of Guangzhou City. We enjoyed walking round the park till 16:00. During our rambling K., NS, Malaysia, proposed us to join their area meeting next year, and some of us agreed to it. She also proposed a joint meeting by East Asia and Southwest Asia in the near future. Isn't it such a nice dream for us?!

At 17:15 we took an early dinner and strolled around a public square downtown Guangzhou, which was illuminated with colorful neon and electric lights. Lots of citizens were seen walking round in a happy mood. Peace is the most important and most desirable thing, these bright lights seemed to talk to us.

At 20:10 we came to the pier of the Pearl River to get on board a leisure boat. The 1 hour and half cruise was very pleasant. On the boat we could watch a Chinese tea ceremony and a performance by a harp musician, too. It was about 22:00 when we came back to our hotel.

A greeting from Masahiro Nishiyama, former Area Coordinator for East Asia

I would like to express my gratitude to all the National Secretaries of East Asia for their supporting me for such a long time. It was in February in 1998 when I called for the first area meeting in Fukuoka City, Japan. At that time our area was called Far East Asia. Since then we had our meeting almost every two years.

My gratitude goes to Mr. E.J.R., former NS for Servas Korea. Without his whole-hearted cooperation this area meeting would not have been put into practice. He has been always understanding and kind to me. I must also thank Ms M.J.M., former Vice President of Servas International. It was in Barcelona in July, 2004, when I met her first. She not only taught me what to do as an AC but came over to Pusan, Korea, in April, 2007 to attend our 4th area meeting. At her instruction I felt as if the scales had been fallen from my eyes. My post as AC started in that year officially, because I was elected by the NSs present there.

It is a matter of course that I deeply appreciate the kindness of all the members of each country in East Asia. I thank them very much for their cooperation. At the same time I feel very happy to have Mr. S.D.W., new Area Coordinator, from Korea. I am sure Servas East Asia will make a further development by his leadership.

Last but not least, let me express my deep gratitude to present EXCO. Thank you very much. I wish Servas spirit will reach farther and wider all over the world.