

Conference for Asian Partnership of National Trusts

23rd May 2008, Seoul, Korea

Report by Oliver Maurice, Director of Membership Development and Services, INTO

Introduction

I was invited to attend the Conference by Mr Sangkoo Yun, Co-Chair, Executive Committee, The National Trust of Korea, in order to 'announce the establishment of INTO and introduce its plans to the participants and the Korean people and to have an opportunity to listen to what Asian National Trusts are doing and their challenges and hopes'.

The main purpose of the conference was to 'lay a foundation for a lasting relationship among those in the region under the umbrella of INTO'.

The Korean National Trust (KNT) had laid on a sightseeing tour for the all the overseas participants on the eve of the Conference and eight of us attended. A full list of the representatives of the various Trusts is attached.

The Tour

We were collected from our hotel in a small minibus and were driven firstly to Gyeongbokgung Palace, a magnificent royal palace of the Joseon Dynasty, comprising a labyrinthine complex of 330 buildings. One of the buildings houses the excellent National Folk Museum of Korea.

From there we visited 2 KNT properties, firstly Choi Sunu House, the Trust's first civil cultural heritage property, built in the 1930's, and named after the renowned writer of books on Art and Art History, who lived there from 1976 until his death eight years later.

The second property was the Kwon Jin-kyu Atelier, a workshop built by a famous sculptor and also named after him. It is a modern but traditional style building and was donated to the KNT by his sister in 2006.

Dinner that night was in a restaurant where the chef was a one-time Buddhist monk and served vegetarian temple food gathered from the mountains and forests. Squatting on cushions on the floor, eating with chopsticks and drinking Korean Saki made for a convivial evening!

The Conference

This was held at a Won-Buddhism Centre in the north of the city. The Conference arose as a result of the Delhi ICNT at which the KNT was present and it was decided there was a need to strengthen the network among the Asian countries for mutual benefit, through a regional conference. In January this year the KNT agreed to host it under the theme, *Creative Asia*.

After the introductions I spoke about the National Trust model in England, Wales and N Ireland and about INTO. All the foreign delegates then gave a presentation on their own organisations.

A discussion at the end of the proceedings concluded that:

- i) the conference had been beneficial to the delegates in sharing information about activity and achievements among the Asian Trusts.
- ii) a similar conference should be held every two years in the years when there is no ICNT – provisionally agreed on Japan as the next venue.
- iii) INTO should prepare a strategy for Asian countries showing how it could help them in practical terms; I agreed to take this on board but said it might take a little time!
- iv) there was a need for a directory of natural and cultural heritage organisations from each country..UNESCO has a list of Asian heritage trusts on its website (last updated in 2000). I have asked each country represented to let me have their updated list as far as they are able to provide it
- v) INTO should promote heritage conservation in China
- vi) networking was vital but need to check existing networks e.g. Unesco, the Royal Asiatic Society, before reinventing the wheel
- vii)the INTO website should have the contact details of all members.
- viii)all known heritage trusts should be informed of INTO's existence
- ix) it was important to ensure that we do not only rely on previous ICNT lists of invitees for the Dublin Conference otherwise some extant trusts will slip through the net; it is very important that developing countries in particular do not miss the opportunity to attend.

I summarised by saying that it had been a very beneficial day for me, learning about the immense variety of work that was being done and the different structures by which the Trusts were set up. INTO was here to help and that all present should avail themselves of what we are offering by keeping in touch with the Secretariat.

Conference Dinner

This turned out to be a fundraising dinner for KNT sponsored by Yuhan Kimberley (as indeed was the Conference itself) on the lawns of Mr Sangkoo Yun's residence. There were around 200 guests, entertainment from a folk band and a number of speeches, including one that I was asked to give with no notice at all, which gave me the opportunity to raise awareness of the existence of INTO to a wide audience, if nothing else!

Conclusion

I believe it was definitely worthwhile INTO being represented and having the opportunity to spread the word. There was a strong sense of family amongst the delegates who were clearly delighted to be there and to be able to network freely. Whilst it was less of a conference and more of a workshop with only around 30 delegates in total, this led to a more relaxed atmosphere with more people involved in the discussions that ensued

Some afterthoughts of my own which the Executive may wish to consider:

- i) Whilst it is clearly advantageous to have as many members as possible, there are many small trusts, some run by volunteers, particularly in the developing world, for whom the lowest level of subscription is too much. Yet many of these would like to be associated with INTO. Are we going to turn them down or can they enjoy the same benefits as a fully paid up member? And if they can, will that lead to some of the less altruistic members resigning and continuing to enjoy the benefits for free? Or are we really saying that the only real benefits of being a member are having voting rights and being able to attend meetings of Congress?
- ii) In article 5 of the Charter (headed INTO Members), there is no mention of either Associate Members or Affiliate Members. This implies that 'Members' covers all forms of membership. If that is not the case then the first paragraph in Article 5 should include the

words 'and operating at a national level'. That, in turn, means that Associates and Affiliates cannot be part of Congress and enjoy voting rights irrespective of whether they signed the Charter in Delhi or not. It would be helpful to know exactly what is intended to avoid confusion.

Oliver Maurice
30 May 2008

Representatives from the Asian Countries present

National Trust of Korea:

Prof. Byoung-E Yang President

Mr Sang Koo Yun Co-Chairman

Prof Myoungrae Cho Trustee

Taiwan National Trust

Prof Juju CS Wang President

Association of National Trusts in Japan

Mr Shigenori Matsuura Manager of Public Relations

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage INTACH

Mr SK Misra Chairman

Badan Warisan Malaysia

Ms Lim Ee Lin Heritage Centre Manager

Nurzaifullah Binti Mansor Assistant

Penang Heritage Trust (Malaysia)

Ms Leong Sin Yee Office Manager
(Magdeline)

Indonesian Heritage Trust

Ms Catrini Pratihari Kubontubuh Executive Director

North Sumatra Heritage

Mr Edy Suhartono Executive Director