Social Activities (Get-Together, Banquet, Technical Visit) Held in ICF 11

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Abstract

Get-together, Banquet, and Technical Visit were held in the ICF 11 as social events. They warmed up the conference, promoted friendship of the participants, and made participants enjoy not only culture and traditions but also beautiful scenery and marine science of Okinawa. You can find further information on Okinawa culture by inserting underlined bold letter key words on internet search.

Key Words: ICF 11, Okinawa, Social activities, Get-together, Banquet, Technical Visit

I. GET-TOGETHER

Get-together party was held from 17:00 to 21:00 in the evening of April 15, at the restaurant "Taiyou Ichiba" in the Okinawa Convention Center (conference site). After registration, around one hundred participants joined the party to deepen friendship with each other. The special dishes of vegetables from the restaurant’s own farm and the Okinawa brand beer “Orion Beer” were served.

II. BANQUET

Banquet entitled “Evening for Enjoying Okinawa Traditional Culture” was held at Hagoromo room in the Laguna Garden Hotel in the evening of Wednesday 17th. Until the doors were opened at 18:00, one hundred and thirty participants waited for thirty minutes, taking a welcome drink. The Banquet opened with dramatic Okinawa traditional music dance called “Kagiya defu”. Two dancers from the Ryukyu Dance House “UDUI” danced very slowly to the music played by traditional musical instrument “Sanshin”, addressing “Mensoore!” (Welcome!). After the welcome address for the banquet by Prof. Mitsuo Sugimoto, the Conference Chair, a toast was proposed by Dr. Michael J. Ruthner (GMBH, Austria, Europe), an elder of ICF, saying “Ka-N-Pa-I !”. All the participants enjoyed the multicultural cuisine (Japanese, ethnic, and Western) and drinks.

The members of “UDUI” also played other two kinds of traditional dances called Ryukyu Buyou: Onnanodori, an elegant dancing of women in beautiful “Bingata” costume and with “Sanba” (castanets) in their both hands, and “Zouodori” with comical conversation between a farmer and a fisherman.

During the banquet, the traditional tea ceremony “Bukubuku cha” was offered to the participants. Traditionally dressed ladies frothed up the powdered tea and served it to us with a sweet cookie. The “Sanshin” music played in between the

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attractions relaxed us to make conversations enjoyable. Prof. Eiji Kaneko of Ryukyu University (ICF 11 Local Arrangement, Okinawa) precisely explained the meaning of every attraction.

The latter half of the banquet started with “Eisa” dance played by the students of Ryukyu University. The sounds of finger whistle drastically changed the atmosphere of banquet room to that in deep forest. The synchronized motions of dancers were very energetic and we were excited by the sharp and dry beats of the large drums under their arms. The “Eisa” is a traditional dance performed mainly in the “Bon” period in which the ancestors are believed to be called back to spend with their family for a short time.

The Banquet finished with a traditional dancing “Kachasi (Stirring)” which every participant joined. Lifting the hands up and moving them from side to side repeatedly, we danced vigorously with strong beat of “Sanshin” music, calling “Ha-i-ya-i-ya-sa-sa!”. There was feeling of oneness in the banquet room with the “Stirring” dance.
III. TECHNICAL VISIT

Technical Visit to Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium was took place on Friday 19th. The aquarium is one of the most attractive facilities of the Okinawa Ocean Expo Park located at the waterfront of north part of Okinawa Main Island. It was established to dedicate to the Okinawa Ocean Expo in 1975.

By chartered buses started at 8:00 from Omoromachi and Laguna Garden Hotel, we arrived at the aquarium and gathered in the Event Hall of the aquarium at 9:45. The lecture entitled “Research Activity in Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium - Contribution to The Science of Conservation Biology” was given during 10:00-10:30 by Dr. Keiichi Sato of Okinawa Churashima Research Center. He explained his research concerned with the sharks living in deep sea, showing many strange photographs of deep interest. Especially, the viviparity of shark was very intriguing. After the lecture, the participants were freely looking around the aquarium and the park. The aquarium has the world’s largest fish tank, “Kuroshio Sea”, holding 7,500 m³ of water and features an acrylic glass panel measuring 8.2 by 22.5 m with a thickness of 60 cm. We were surprised to see whales, sharks and rays spaciously swimming in the gigantic tank. The various facilities in the park, namely Aquarium, Native Okinawan Village and Omoro Arboretum, Oceanic Culture Museum, Tropical Dream Center, Dolphin lagoon, and Emerald beach, were enough to understand the culture and beauty of Japanese southernmost prefecture “OKINAWA”. Especially, Emerald beach was fascinating and relaxed us very much. We left from Okinawa Ocean Expo Park at 15:00 by the buses.

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