

Sonjuku-Trip to Hunan Shang, China

From April 14 through 17, 2016, 13 members of Shimada Sonjuku and myself visited Hunan province of China. More specifically, we visited Changsha-city, the capitol city of Hunan Province and a neighboring mid-size city of Loudi. We visited in addition to site seeing spots, universities and a firm, and met many and a variety of people and exchanged views. This trip was highly enlightening and informative, and above all greatly fruitful for us. Let me describe interesting and important aspects of the trip as well as noting my impressions and some thoughts I was inspired during the trip.

Professor Duan Yuezhong

The idea of visiting Hunan province emerged a year ago as an optional trip of Shimada Sonjuku program, for the class of 2014. This was inspired by my friend, Duan Yuezhong, the initiator and the chief editor of Nihon Kyo-ho sha (Japan Bridge Press co.), who dedicates himself to bridge Japan and China culturally, educationally, journalistically and in terms of information sharing.

While he has published 300 books during the last 15 years for mutual understanding, he has been conducting a remarkable program for the last 12 years to solicit Chinese young people(students) throughout the country who have never been to Japan to write essays in Japanese. Every year, a few thousands, at times as many as 5000, students submit their Japanese essays. The total number of students who have participated to this "Composition competition" as a whole is said to have amounted to more than 30,000. Noteworthy is the fact that the number of young students who participated to this competition never really declined even in the yeas when Chinese and Japanese governments had a conflict over the issue of Senkaku islands. Indeed, this kind of activity should be promoted by Japanese government. I respect his earnest effort.

Having finished higher education in Hunan Sheng, he went to Beijing where he worked several years as a press journalist and then came to Japan in 1991 to join his wife who were already working in Japan. When he arrived in Japan, he had no skills to handle Japanese language. He wanted to work, though, to earn a living. For a Chinese who knows nothing about Japanese language, finding and getting a job was extremely difficult. Luckily, however, he found a casual job in a small tavern inside the campus of Ueno railroad station. His job was to bring liquor or some food to the customer. Every night, the boss of the shop tested how well Mr. Duan can read a small newspaper articles. After some time, he was able to read the

whole article well. The boss was so glad and gave Mr. Duan a dish of baked thin pork and rice. Professor Duan said that he can never forget the taste of this dish and the warm heart and good will of the boss. This was the introduction of Japanese language to Mr. Duan.

Currently, he is an amazingly eloquent speaker of Japanese. He does many things to promote mutual understanding of grass root level between the two countries. In addition to the activities I cited above, he has been conducting Sunday gathering, entitled "Chinese language corner" since 9 years ago for those who are interested in China and Chinese at a corner near Ikebukuro railway station. Every Sunday, hundreds of people gather there. Many of them are Japanese who worked for some years in China and miss Chinese years after returning to Japan. Members of this gathering now amount to dozens of thousands. He also plays the role of secretariat of a friendly association of Hunan Province, the board of the association consists of eminent experienced diplomats, scholars and opinion leaders.

I happened to have been acquainted with Professor Duan Yuezhong as he participated to a policy oriented international conference, entitled "Round Table Japan", and also as he taught Chinese at Chiba University of Commerce where I serve as president. More I leaned about his activities, more I admire his objectives and dedication. One day, he visited one of the bi-monthly workshop of Shimada sonjuku. When he sensed that we are interested in visiting China, he kindly and earnestly recommended that we visit Hunan Province where he was born and brought up.

For the last year, he gave a couple of lectures explaining about Hunan Province, and one day also introduced the winner of Japanese composition contest to the members of Shimada sonjuku, in an attempt to prepare for our trip to Hunan Province.

Day 1.(April 14, 2016,Thursday)

On April 14, we left Haneda airport in the morning to fly for Shanghai airport. In Shanghai, Professor Duan had asked Shanghai office of Hunan Province to arrange a luncheon meeting before we get on a bullet train from Shanghai to Changsha-city of Hunan Province. Dr. Duan asked the office to invite executives of Shanghai city government in addition to representatives of Hunan Shang Shanghai office. Above all, an eminent political leader not only in Shanghai but also of Chinese central government, Mr. Zhao Qizheng. He once was a minister of the central government, and is well known as an opinion leader nationwide.

We took a lunch box and enjoyed conversation. Mr. Zhao Qizheng was quite friendly. Professor Duan in fact has published a book recently on the theme of communication, which is an edited version of dialogue of Mr. Zhao and an experienced diplomat in front of student audience at a university. Professor Duan also has published a book compiled by Mr. Zhao's younger brother who wrote a series of books on the wisdom of life encompassing a very broad perspective of different cultures, religions and thoughts, particularly of Chinese traditional wisdom led by eminent thinkers in ancient times. Mr. Zhao talked about many things such as Shanghai, China, Japan and his brother etc. I was particularly impressed by his detailed explanation of Japanese emperor who visited Shanghai.

After the lunch, we got on a bus to move to the railway station of bullet train. The station was crowded. We passed the gate and walked to the bullet train which was waiting at the platform. The station was quite large. The bullet train left the station a minute after 15:00.

As the train increased speed, female attendants walked through the corridor to give us small package of snacks and candies. They are also prepared to sell such items in response to the request of the passenger such as coffee, beer, cakes, fruits etc. Their service is not bad. Perhaps the only problem passengers, particularly of our group, complained was the toilet. Which is what is congenially called "Turkey style" and worse. Many toilets were not cleaned.

To reach the city of Changsha by the bullet train was a kind of challenge for us. One is a not good image of Chinese bullet train. We tend to be reminded by a serious accident several years ago when Chinese government blamed that they developed the bullet train by their own technology. But as soon as the business started a bullet train dropped from the high bridge. This was a seized accident which was broadcasted throughout the world. But more surprising was the action which the authority took immediately afterwards. They buried the dropped car of the train into the ground, which is utterly opposite from what the authority should do in the global common sense.

The global common sense is to preserve the site just as it is until most of the investigation is completed on the site. This is imperative to discern the causes of the accidents and to compile the data for the subsequent prosecution. Burying the car immediately would make all this due process unclear and unworkable. We wondered if this kind of mal-practice would still be there.

Another challenge was the time of riding on the train. From Shanghai to Changsha, the distance is just about 1000 km, it takes around 4 hours and a half, which is a long ride. The long and monotonous trip on the train will be boring and

tiring. Taking a “could be” risky Chinese bullet train for such a long time was thought to be a “challenge.”

However, our real experience was much different from such a preoccupation. The train and the railway are apparently well made, traveling is smooth, on train services were not bad. For the recent years, China made a gigantic investment in the infra-structure of the country. One of the major areas of this investment has been the development of railway system and particularly bullet train system. China is trying to develop the bullet train system as a major strategic export item of the country. A recent news that China won against Japan in selling the bullet train system to Indonesia reflects a part of their strategic effort of selling the system internationally.

Riding on the bullet train for a lengthy time, I thought of how many and how long railway lines of the bullet train system have been constructed in the country. Since China's land is vastly large and the distances among major cities are far apart. Having built the bullet train which I was riding throughout the country should mean that China has already learned a lot by accumulating a vast amount of experience.

Another keen impression was the sight beyond the windows of the train. Out of the window, there spreads a broad land on which spectacular views developed. That is, the succession of clusters of high buildings as high as 30 to 40 stories which seem to have been designed for offices and partly residences. Also, there appears beyond the window, one residential district and another. Most of them consist of fairly large and well designed houses. Most of these tall buildings and good residential houses seem to have been within the last decade of even more recently. Amazing is the fact that such succession of clusters of buildings and houses never stopped. The succession continued, though at times dense and other times sparse, but nevertheless continued for the entire course of one thousand kilometers.

And the most impressive was the fact that more than a half of these buildings and houses are apparently vacant, or at least not used. It is easily seen because they are not lit up in the darkness after the sunset. The train trip of 1000km was very impressive, informative and enlightening. Riding the bullet train and watching the sceneries along the railway, we were able to witness a massive volume of infra-structure investments of China in a recent decade on the one hand, and at the same time, how serious and horrendous the collapse of the bubble which threaten the current Chinese economy, on the other.

We arrived at Changsha station shortly before 8:00. The Changsha station is amazingly vastly large. However, unlike other stations we passed by on the way of the bullet train ride, Changsha station had many passengers although much fewer

than Shanghai. The female tour guide, Ms. Chen Xiangying who speaks fluent Japanese came to pick us up and introduced herself to us. She explained that the bullet train station was opened on December 26, 2009. There is a reason why the station started to operate on this day. This is the birthday of Mao Zedong. She went on to introduce us many such things which are named after Mao Zedong. She said Mao Zedong is respected, loved by people here. He is indeed a de facto "God."

Professor Duan has arranged for us a visit to a family like dinner party of his friends. They were gathering in a small family like restaurant on the 20th or so high floor of a tall residential building. There exist many of such relatively new and tall residential buildings in the city. They served typical Hunan dishes, which is well known for their hot taste. His friends consist of many talented people as architect, journalist, writer etc. We enjoyed the hot Hunan food and friendly interaction with Professor Duan's friends up to quite late at night. At the end of dinner, they gave us a gift, which is a special fortune stone of the region. In return, I sang a Chinese song for them, named, "Yue Liang Dai Biao Wo de Xin". My friend, Mr. Hasegawa, whispered to me "Your talent helps your life!"

When we arrived at the hotel, "Inter-Continental Hotel Changsha" it was shortly before the midnight. It was a large, gorgeous, and fairly new hotel. A Chinese service person who spoke fluent Japanese came to greet us and said that he would do whatever he can do to make our stay comfortable.

I went to my room which was on 23rd floor. The room was a large, deluxe type. Shortly afterwards, Professor Duan knocked the door and introduced me his friend, who is a high rank executive of Changsha city government and at the same time a well known calligrapher. He brought to me a couple of beautiful works. I thanked them a lot.

After having settled somewhat, I wanted to reach the front desk by indoor phone. I pushed the button, "Reception" but no answer, not even a slightest sound. I realized that the phone is not connected. I searched around the phone, the desk and connecting code etc. No way. I can not find how to get the phone work. I was praying warm water into the luxurious bath tub in order to warm up myself before going to bed.

I stopped pouring hot water. Put on clothes once again and went down to the floor where I believed the reception desk was. The floor I arrived was the garage. I went back and redone the whole process. The floor was so big that I arrived at a sector which is far apart from the sector where the reception was. I went to the reception and complained using English that phone was not working. I asked them to send someone to fix it. Several minutes later, a man came. I wanted to let him

understand the problem. But he was unable to understand English. My Chinese is not good enough to let a man understand this sort of trouble. He somehow fixed it.

I realized that to initiate the phone you need to push a different button which has no instruction such as "To start the phone, you need to push this button first." The machine was designed perhaps to minimize the use of electricity. When there is no one to use it, the machine probably sleeps. This kind of "Eco" product seems to be a "fashion" recently. It is OK, but if the customer does not understand how to start using it, it will cause inconvenience and uneasiness on the part of customer, which will result in low evaluation of the service quality of the hotel. I complained this systematically to the front desk attendant and advised them to put clear instruction and also do something for me since they caused me a considerable inconvenience.

Day 2(April 15,2016, Friday)

Breakfast in the hotel was good. There were a whole variety of foods which were tasty. Having enjoyed the meal, we got on a bus to visit the famous riverside park, where a huge stone sculpture of the face and the breast which represents the image of Mao Zedong when he was young sits like a sphinx. That huge construction of the image of Mao is 32m high and 41m wide. These sizes do have special meanings such as Mr. Mao has been president of People's Republic of China for 42 years so that the sculpture of this size is symbolic to provide protection of this city in his honor.

The park is wide. It is known for fragrant of tangerine. Indeed there were many tangerine trees with flowers. Many people throughout the country and even from outside the country like us visit this park. On the way to the next destiny, Ms. Chen Xiangying pointed to a red tower on the top of high rising building far away and asked what it meant to represent. It was designed to mean a red pepper which is a favorite of Mao Zedong. We were impressed that Mao Zedong is indeed a god in the region.

Perhaps inspired by our visit of this place, Professor Duan suggested a possibility of organizing a tour for Chinese visitors to Japan to visit home towns of Japanese leaders such as famous prime ministers in Japanese modern history. We talked that it is hard to find Japanese towns where local people respect and preserve the tradition of such leaders. In the US, some great presidents are remembered by monuments such as sculptures of faces of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln etc graced on the cliff of Mt. Rushmore. But in Korea, people never even respect the presidents. Most of the presidents in the post war period have been either killed, jailed or indicted after they

left the office.

In the sense of respecting the great leader, China may be a special case. I thought that at least Hunan Sheng is outstanding, if not special, in this respect. Mao Zedong is a symbolic great leader who was born and brought up in Hunan Sheng. But he is not an exception. Hunan Sheng produced many great leaders such as Hong Xiu Quan, who was a great military leader to have controlled the rebellion of Tai Pin Tian Guo but also a great thinker of Chinese modern history.

Hunan Sheng produced still other great leaders of the country such as Huan Xi, a powerful leader of revolution, who supported Sun Weng or Sun Zhong Shan to achieve Xinhai revolution which eventually terminated the Qing Dynasty, Song Jiao Ren, who also helped Sun Weng to establish Nan Jing Government and tried to make it a genuinely national government, and regrettably was assassinated by the order of Yuan Shikai when he was chairman of national assembly.

In the post war period, Liu Shaoqi led the early development of People Republic of China side by side of Mao Zedong, Hu Yangbang, who ran the country as the president after the rein of Mao Zedong, and Zhu Rongji who managed Shanghai development as the mayor and then became prime minister of People Republic of China to achieve remarkable economic development of the country. Having produced such great leaders of the country, it is easy to imagine how proud the people of Human Shang of their own home land.

We moved on to visit Hunan University. Hunan University one of the top dozen famous university of entire China. In this region, the university is outstanding. The visit of Hunan University is the major event of today, or indeed, the major event of our entire trip to Hunan province.

Above all, it is planned that we would have two hour seminar with about 200 students of the university. The seminar is mainly to exchange views and discuss on matters of our mutual interest between ourselves and the students. Professor Duan suggested about a month earlier in his process of arranging this seminar that I will make a brief introduction of our visit, say in Chinese if I wish, and then devote the rest of the time in discussion with the students basically using Japanese partly because there would be quite a few students who are specialized in Japanese studies.

I, however, proposed another idea. That is, I would provide at the beginning not only a brief introduction of our visit but also some substantial key note remarks not in Japanese but in Chinese. I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to provide a comprehensive picture of Chinese and Japanese economies with special

emphasis on their historical developments and suggest policy implications of cooperation between the two countries for the future.

I wrote first Japanese manuscript and asked professor Duan to translate into Chinese for me. Shortly afterwards he sent me a Chinese manuscript. When I read it I was somewhat disappointed because he translated only the first and the last 5 percent of my manuscript. Perhaps he thought that it would be too much to try to speak the entire manuscript in Chinese. It would take time, and moreover, students may not understand my Chinese. I started to learn Chinese as an old man only two years ago.

But I insisted that I would like to speak the entire manuscript in Chinese. This is a challenge for me. I would like to challenge in this special opportunity. He kindly translated all the manuscript. I asked professor Shi Min of our university to put pin in. With pin in attached the entire manuscript turned out to be 7 pages. I tried to read it many times. After a while, I was able to read the whole sentences within half an hour. This is my special reason that visiting Hunan university and have seminar with 200 students is the high light of this entire trip.

We arrived at the campus of the university around 10:00am. The campus is very broad. Arrays of green trees were particularly impressive. It is interesting to see that many cars are being driven inside the campus just as though the roads were public streets. There were hills at the outskirts of the campus. At the foot of such hills exists the famous "Yuelu Academy".

This study hall has a long history stemming from a couple of thousand years where scholars and students studied in the tradition of the Chinese great thinker "Konzi" who initiated "confucianism" the Chinese traditional school of thoughts some 2500 years ago. We were guided by a professor of Japanese language and culture. She was kind and articulate. We took a walk within the campus of "Yuelu Academy" to see and learn from historical remains.

We were then guided to a conference room where we were welcomed by vice presidents of Hunan University. They welcomed us and acknowledged that our visit will be highly meaningful for the future development of Hunan University and Chiba University of Commerce.

Then, we were invited to a luncheon meeting held by the president of Hunan University, professor Duan Xiazhong. He had strong personal appeals in his way of providing warm hospitality, joyful conversation, and sincere attitude to listen to others before he speaks out. While enjoying delicious lunch, he solicited our Sonjuku members to speak about their impressions, questions or anything.

Mr. Ishii asked a question as to what is the matter of concern from president's point of view. In responding to his question, the president asked me also to respond. We started to talk about the attitude of students nowadays. Interestingly, our impression of students of each other country turned out to be surprisingly similar. Perhaps because we are aged and have had many experiences we wished the young students to think about their roles of changing or creating the country. As educators, we agreed that we need to teach more about histories of our societies and the world so that the young people can develop their fresh thoughts building on such experiences.

Conversations of the table went on as the president solicited the members to speak out and responded or commented based on the notes he took while the Sonjuku member was speaking. This was remarkable and impressive. When the lunch is more or less over, president said regrettably that he had to go for another appointment and wished our afternoon seminar would go well.

Prior to move on to the lecture hall of the university where the seminar will be held, we dropped by a cozy tea room where we enjoyed a formal and traditional tea serving. The tea master across the bar from us cordially and carefully prepared the tea and served to us one after another. It was refreshing and impressive. Our group paid the price and went out of the tea room.

We learned later that a small but a great thing happened on this occasion. In the next morning, when we were on a bus to go out for the suburb, Mr. Ishii who paid the price received a correspondence from the tea house through "We Chat", an increasingly popular new SNS system, that they took 99 Yuan too much so that they would like to pay back by means of transaction using "We Chat." Mr. Ishii accepted the offer and the 99 Yuan was paid to him.

This anecdote is remarkable for two reasons. One is to prove the wide prevalence of the use of "My Chat" even as a means of money transaction. Ant the other is more important. This small action captured Mr. Ishii and our minds in the sense that Chinese people, at least in this case, are honest, kind, thoughtful and trustful.

We arrived at the lecture hall shortly after 14:00 pm. The hall is of good size to enroll a few hundred audience in a stepwise structure of seats and tables. The room was already filled with students. Following the opening statement and brief introduction of this seminar by the master of the ceremony, Professor Zhang Peixia, who is a dean of the department introduced, spoke his wish to this seminar, and to our surprise, he introduced each one of the 13 members of Sonjuku by calling names with brief introduction of who they are. The seminar was extremely well organized.

Before I will speak my speech, another ceremony is conducted. That is, Hunan University kindly nominates me as a guest professor of the university. They asked me if I would accept the offer. I accepted it with honor and pleasure. All this must have been prepared well by coordination of Hunan university officials and professor Duan Yuezhong. Although this might be only nominal, I thought of the possibility of visiting and staying for some lengthy period Hunan University sometime in the near future. It may well help me to deepen my understanding of China and also help brush up my Chinese somewhat.

I was given a floor for my speech. Although the Chinese sentences were not particularly easy to read, I thought that I was able to read somewhat more smoothly than the times of practice. I was able to see by watching the faces of the students that they were listening sincerely and earnestly.

Since I will attach with this English report, Chinese and Japanese versions of my speech, I will not elaborate on the contents of my 25 minutes speech. At the beginning of the speech, I said to the audience that I will present my keynote speech in Chinese, and after the speech, I asked those who can use Japanese speak in Japanese, and all the others in English.

Once the discussion session started, amazingly, those who spoke in Japanese translated their speeches in Chinese, and English speaking students also translated into Chinese to make sure all the participants will understand what is being discussed.

The discussion in this manner took about an hour and a half. 10 or so students raised their hands and asked me questions or gave comments. About a half of them spoke in Japanese and the rest in English. Their language competence was quite high. All of us were able to understand what has been discussed. Sometimes, a professor of Japanese studies translated supplementary, which also helped to make our understanding flawless. In order to assist their understanding, I asked in advance Ms. Chida, Maki, my secretary, who accompanied us and a few staff of the university to distribute my Chinese manuscript to the audience after the end of my initial presentation. This may have helped to understand my speech correct. But the questions they asked soon after my speech indicated that they understood my speech while I was speaking. Indeed, some of the students told me that they understood most of what I spoke in my speech. What an achievement to make me proud!

In addition to language competence, more impressive was their articulate understanding of the subjects, and even more impressive was their profound grasp of the subjects on which to build sharp and creative questions. Their

academic level seems extremely high. Furthermore, they seem to have excellent sense of policy implications.

Let me introduce only a few example just to illustrate their proficiency and academic excellence.

Question 1 (In Japanese): “I understand that professor Shimada served as a member of the government tax panel from 1997 to 2006 and therefore let me ask you a question to an expert of tax policy. Abe administration raised consumption tax up to 8% in spring of 2014, and is planning to raise further to 10% in April 2017. The Japanese economy, however, is not doing well recently. The another hike of tax rate may well induce a recession for Japanese economy. While many experts began to worry about the negative impacts of the another hike of tax rate, Prime minister Abe keeps saying that he would increase the consumption tax rate as scheduled unless Japan suffers from a serious setback as much as the Lehman shock. Is he serious?”

Responding to his question, I began explaining the broad background of the need to increase consumption tax which Japanese government committed to the international policy community since 2009 in order to show the government will to restore fiscal discipline. On the question of whether prime minister Abe really meant to increase again the consumption tax rate at this timing will depend upon his political judgement of the reactions of consumers.

Question 2 (in Japanese): “Professor Shimada almost singles out in his presentation as the reason of prolonged deflation symbolically described as the lost two decades the much delayed execution of austerity policy of Japanese government worrying too long the demand of the US to maximize Japanese domestic demand and consequently having to excessively stringent to suppress the bubble, I wonder if there were many more important reasons such as industrial structure, aging of population and even education.”

While I highly evaluate the question, I added still other major reasons such as competition with low wage countries such as China, and the decline of domestic demand due to slowing down of the economy.

Question 3 (in English): “While many Chinese students go to Japan to study, there are much fewer Japanese students study in China. In order to promote Japanese understanding of China, is it not necessary to increase Japanese students in studying in China. Also, we are under the impression that Japanese companies seem to have lost power as, for example, they lose completion against Korean companies in such areas as electric appliances, smart phones etc. What would you think and explain such trends of Japanese businesses?”

In responding to this question, I called attention to the historical fact that wage levels in China have been very low relative to Japan which made Japanese students uninterested in coming and studying in China. This is however changing rapidly recently. With the dramatic development of Chinese economy and consequent rapid increase of incomes, Japanese students' interest in China and comparative advantage of industrial products of the two countries will change significantly.

Question 4 (in Japanese): "I understand that Japanese population is aging rapidly and at the same time fiscal deficit is increasing dramatically. In what direction and how Japan is going to overcome these problems?"

Responding to this question, I emphasized the urgent need for Japan to alter the basic structure of income redistribution, most notably the social security system, which was formulated more than half a century ago when the age structure of population was much younger. However, it is extremely difficult to materialize such major reforms of the income redistribution in a "democratic" country such as Japan where major policy decisions have to be endorsed by people's choices through elections. I added further that China, which faces basically the same problem, may be able to overcome much more easily taking advantage of the political system which is kept 70 years without national election.

Question 5 (in English): "On the issue of the relations between corporations and the government, there is a whole variety of relations ranging from nationally owned corporations to purely private companies. Japan is the country where private companies occupy the main proportion of the economy. However, Japanese government does provide assistance to private companies in the form of, for example, various types of subsidies. What do you think of forthcoming changes in such relations of the government and corporations?"

Responding to this question, I explained the historical changes of such relations from the time when the government policy strongly influenced corporate sector to the time when the government influences have become much less as seen during the half a century experience of Japanese economy, and hinted that the relationships may well change with time even in China for the future.

Question 6 (in Japanese): "I am currently majored in Japanese studies and plan to obtain Ph.D degree in Japan. Would you advice how to get appropriate jobs in Japan after obtaining the degree?"

In responding to this question, I explained that the job market tends to become more specialized and individualized as the level of study(hence academic degree) becomes higher. My advice therefore is that you should pay greater attention and effort to learn and know specific realities of the job area you are interested and

looking for in terms of not only formal knowledge and information but also, and perhaps more importantly, informal information such as specific individuals who could be of help to you. I suggested that the Sonjuku members attending today could be a good sample of such human resources.

These are only a few examples of those who asked questions. In addition to the mastery of three languages, the level of understanding and the keen interest to the subject is superb. We received a profound impression of the excellency and strong will for study of the students. Since I have had many experiences of interacting with students of various countries, I can say that they are unquestionably the top rate students in the world. I was deeply impressed by the fact that China has been making enormous progress in fostering young students because I have known the level of Chinese students a quarter of century ago through my experience of conducting annual forums with Asian students including Chinese. It is highly curious to imagine, say for 10, 20 or 30 years ahead, how China will be like when these excellent young people bear the role of running the country.

Since we spent much more time in this seminar than planned, the time budget for the next program became very short. We planned to visit “Heiwa-Do”, a major Japanese department store operating in Changsha-city. The time left for us was not more than 15 minutes. The Japanese CEO and Chinese executives were waiting for us. “Heiwa-Do” is obviously one of the most successful Japanese companies operating not only in Changsha but also in Hunan Sheng. They recently built the fourth store.

The company met a bitter experience 5 years ago by having been attacked by rioters who broke windows and destructed much of the store in the turmoil which prevailed rapidly many places of China due to heightened confrontation of the governments of the two countries stemming from the issue of Senkaku islands.

The trouble took place only a few months after the arrival of the current Japanese CEO. He, however, explained to us that the local government took a good care afterwards of restoring the store and compensating the damages, and they currently enjoy good relations with customers. It is good to know this story since the media only reports about the violence and the damage at the time.

The reason why the time budget was limited for the visit of Heiwa-Do was that we needed to join the dinner party held by the city of Changsha. This was a gorgeous dinner. We were invited by the host, an executive of the city, to sit around a huge round table where a variety of Hunan dishes were prepared. At the beginning he explained major characteristics and advantages of Changsha city and Hunan province both in China and internationally. Following his remarks, I made a

brief greeting thanking their goodwill to have invited us to this very special event using Chinese. He brought with him an excellent Chinese interpreter who works in the division of liaison activities. Professor Duan also interpreted so that we have had great time together both in terms of mutual communication and enjoying the famous Hunan cuisines.

Day 3: (April 16, 2016, Saturday)

Having finished breakfast fairly early, we departed the hotel at 7:30 by bus heading at Loudi city which is located next to Changsha-city. Loudi city has grown remarkably as a mid-size city. The main activity of the city has been agriculture. In fact, Hunan Sheng is known as an agricultural center of China. Loudi city is a main contributor to this reputation of the region.

This morning, we were to be guided by two tour guides. Ms. Chen Xiangying brought her younger colleague Ms. Huang Qing. Ms. Huang told us that she badly wished to join us once she learned our visit this time. She spoke fluent Japanese, sings Japanese songs well, and prepared earnestly to give guidance of Loudi city.

The feature object of the city is the old house of Zeng Guofan. He is a well known and highly respected political, cultural and military leader of modern China. When the rebellion of Tai Ping Tian Guo took place in the southern province of China in mid-19th century, the declining Qing dynasty was unable to control it. It was Mr. Zeng who led his army and finally controlled the turmoil. He was not only famous as such a powerful military leader but also a great thinker, writer, and philosophical leader of the country at the time. It is well known that Mao Zedong said that Zeng Guofan is the only Chinese he respects. Ms. Huang Qing explained well and in detail about Zeng Guofan and also important political developments at the dawn of modern China.

Since the planned driving time to reach the Loudi city was nearly two hours, professor Duan proposed an unique exercise. That is, letting the two guides to read paragraphs of the Japanese pamphlet of the city, and asked each of the 13 members of Sonjuku to read the same paragraphs in turn so that the Chinese guides could compare their Japanese with native Japanese and hence they could learn to improve their Japanese.

My frank impression was that they read the Japanese better than our native fellow Japanese except for a few very tiny and slight differences which may make us notice that the speakers are not native Japanese. Listening to their reading, I wonder how my Chinese is heard by the native Chinese. When reading Japanese, they must know well what should be the right pronunciation and intonation which

they follow carefully except only few subtle pronunciations which they may not be fully aware. I realized that there is a long long way to go for me to approach in studying Chinese.

After getting off the highway, we drove for a while the road of country-side where both sides were paddy field for rice. Incidentally, this is the city where professor Duan was born and brought up. Professor Duan told us that when he left the home country 27 years ago, there were no buildings and shops which were built during the recent decades of development of Chinese economy.

Shortly before the location of the old house of Zeng Guofan, we were welcomed by a few executives of the city of Loudi. Since the road to the old house of Zeng Guofan was fully packed by cars of visitors, we stepped out of the bus and walked. The house was nearly revived to its original shape and has been kept in a good condition. Many visitors were visiting continuously.

Having taken a look of the house, professor Duan suggested us that we altogether draw calligraphic signature on a blank sheet with a brush of China ink. I first took a brush and wrote our wish for the development of mutual relations before writing my signature. All the others followed. It looked good. Professor Duan gladly took pictures of this. My impression of the old house is not really of the house and remains themselves but more of the admiration and respect of the people who visit this place.

After visiting and leaning about the old house of Zeng Guofan, we were guided to a restaurant where traditional Hunan food a la Loudi city were provided. Since there was not a big enough room to accommodate some 30 guests of us and the city executive, we sat around the tables of three different rooms. Soon after lunch has began, both Sonjuku members and the city executives and local people started to cheer to solicit drinking local strong liquor. Shouting and cheering for drinking kept on going.

As far as I remember, I was solicited to drink 20 small cups in the first room. I stood up and visited other two rooms. There again I was recommended strongly to dry up cups 7 more times. Although the cup was tiny, drinking this much in a row made me wonderfully intoxicated. This was not only me. Sonjuku members were well high by the local liquor. At the end, I was asked to sing a few Chinese songs, The festa was over. We got on a bus and immediately fell asleep. This was a great welcome courtesy of the local community.

I got awake after a lengthy drive of a couple of hours or so. The bus was just at the gate of Hunan University of Humanities, Science and Technology. This is a leading university in Loudi city. Amazing was the scene that at the entrance

doorway to the campus, there hung a long flag(banner) at the gate on which the message is written to welcome Shimada sonjuku visit to the university.

The campus is obviously very big. There stand many new building which are shining reflecting the sunshine of late afternoon. We were welcomed by vice president, Ms. Shi Xiaochun. She and her colleague explained the major feature of the university as having 15,000 students and 3,000 teaching and administrative staffs. The university was founded in 1989 and currently has 9 major areas of education and research which consist of 55 specialities.

Before we went to a conference hall, we were invited to take a look at calligraphy demonstration. A famous calligrapher drew a beautiful image of ancient Chinese characters. He gave it to me as a memory of visiting this university. Calligraphy which has a few thousand years of history is certainly an outstanding cultural advantage of this country.

We were guided to a conference hall. The large conference table was beautifully arranged. At the beginning the president and vice president of the university welcomed us and then gave us comprehensive explanation of the structure and accomplishments of the university. I then responded to thank their reception and explained in some detail as to what the Shimada sonjuku aims at, and in particular, the reason of our choice of Hunan Sheng for this visit.

After the conference, I was interviewed by the local TV crew to give them the reason of our visit this time and our impressions of Hunan Sheng. This interview was televised in the evening news of this area, which was seen on internet by the office of strategic PR of Chiba University of Commerce later on.

Leaving the campus, we went on to the restaurant which is located at the busy district of the city where the Loudi city representatives were waiting to welcome us. Again, the table was covered by the hot and rich Hunan dishes. At the table, a researcher who is specialized in Japanese studies took the role of translating our conversation. An executive of the city who invited us to this splendid dinner gave us cordial welcome message.

The dinner started. Many of the sonjuku members talked about their impressions responding to the solicitation by the host. Out of various topics, the focus turned out to be employment of Chinese workers by the Japanese company. Ms. Kasai is the right person to make comment on this question because Dentsu Co. the Japan's largest advertising service company, which she works employs at least a few hundred Chinese workers in Japan and more abroad. She said that there has been no particular talents expected for Chinese workers except for Chinese language capability, but she added that there would be more expertise expected

for Chinese workers as well depending upon the expected roles they play in the future.

I added a comment based upon my experience as an independent auditor of Dentsu some years ago. During my service of several years, Chinese subsidiaries of Dentsu in China were noticeable examples of problems out of a few hundred subsidiaries in many areas of the world. The problems were concentrated in the areas of delays and incorrectness reporting, especially in accounting, and delays in handling particularly payment. While this topic was discussed, professor Duan who had been translating left the table.

While he was away, the city executive began to talk on the topic. He seemed to have been insisting that the problem was with the headquarter of Dentsu rather than on the part of Chinese. Since translation by the staff of the university was not good enough to communicate correctly and tended to risk some misunderstanding. Ms. Chen joined to help us. I emphasized that Chinese subsidiaries were noticeable among many other subsidiaries so that the problem is not with the headquarter. I also argued that there may be peculiar attitude about reporting and information sharing by Chinese workers which are somewhat unique among workers of many other subsidiaries. We somehow agreed that these findings make us recognize there exist even greater need to learn and understand with each other between the two countries.

Since the discussion became suddenly sensitive and somewhat serious, other participants were under some tension. With this much of lively discussion, however, the wonderful dinner arranged by the executives of Loudi city was completed. We thanked their goodwill once again for inviting us to this great opportunity. We took picture altogether in the hall downstairs.

We went back to the hotel fairly late at night. Next day early we took off from Hunan airport to Shanghai, and then flew from there to Japan using much of Day 4, April 17.

All this has been the major thrusts of our trip to Hunan Sheng. The trip was exciting and learning. We are very grateful for earnest arranging and leading of professor Duan Yuezhong, presidents and professors of Hunan University and Hunan University of Humanities, Science and Technology executives of Hunan Sheng, Changsha-city and Loudi city.