

AJ General Assembly

26th November 1998

Minutes of the assembly

Due to traffic problems, the Assembly started at 7.15 pm.

17 members were present and 8 guests participated to the Assembly.

1. Introduction

Ms Nadia Nibbio (NN), the AJ President, opened the third General Assembly. For the new members all AJ committee members were presented: Mr Amédée Zryd (AZ), Vice President, Mr Emile Tasev (ET), Secretary, Mr Jean-Michel Henchoz (JMH), and Ms Nathalie Piguet (NP).

NN thanked the speakers, namely Mr Sonderegger, Mr Holzer and Mr Miyahara, for their excellent conferences. NN also warmly welcomed our Japanese guests, Mr Hashimoto, First Secretary at the Japanese Embassy, Mr Maekawa, Vice Consul of the Geneva Consulate, Mr Kikuchima, JETRO General Director, and Mr Imai, Assistant Director.

2. Report on 1998 activities

NN presented the activities done during the last year and made special thanks to Mr Sanne Stijve who took care of the Web site and of AJ Bulletin's graphic design.

Highlights of last year:

- Preparation and creation of the first AJ Bulletin and directory
- Preparation of graphic design for AJ Bulletin and web pages
- Work on the new logo
- Contacts with Swiss-Asia Foundation
- Summer barbecue on 23rd June in Sullens

Status of these projects is described in section 4.

3. Account 1998 and budget 1999 presentation

In a very lively manner ET presented the accounts for the last year, as well as the budget, creating a relaxing atmosphere in the audience. Both auditors (Mr Olivier Chappuis and Mr Jean-Luc Hefti) declared themselves very satisfied. The Accounts were then accepted by the members.

Then, it was proposed to reduce yearly members' contribution from 50.- to 30.- CHF. This proposal was welcomed with enthusiasm by the audience.

The budget 1999 which was presented already took into account the reduction of the members' contribution and forecasted no exceptional expenses beside the activities already planned in 1998. Consequently, it was accepted without any long discussion or any other remarks.

NN pointed out that our goal is to find other financing sources to realise our projects. For example, the AJ Bulletin has been financed by EPFL who decided to give us a financial support. Members' financial contribution will be used mainly to finance our general expenses.

About the decrease of member financial contribution, it has been remarked that it may not necessarily give us more members. Along this line, a proposal was made to make Japanese students free of fee membership. This proposal was accepted with a large majority.

The end of ET speech got a strong applause.

4. Projects status and proposals for 1999

NN introduced the current projects, namely: 1) the AJ Bulletin, 2) the Members' Directory, 3) the presentation leaflet, and 4) the Internet site.

The project managers presented the status of each project:

- The AJ Bulletin is managed by AZ. A final draft will be ready within a month and published as soon as possible. A draft was presented to the Assembly which has a positive feeling about the work done. The graphic design is done by Mr Sanne Stijve who has proposed a very pleasant design.
- The Members' Directory is managed by NP. The job is quite long but will be finished until April 1999. About 40 members returned our questionnaire and this will give us the opportunity to create a useful product. Two EPFL students will use this data for their STS ("Science, Technique et Société") project and will also interview a few AJ members to analyse the experiences of engineers in Japan.
- The presentation leaflet is managed by JMH. Together with Mr Marc Takikawa, a new logo is being worked and a first draft has been presented. This logo will be integrated in the AJ Bulletin. The content still must be more precisely defined.
- The Internet site is going to be managed by Mr Sanne Stijve. No specific work is planned but Sanne has a "GO" for any improvement.

The members agreed with the work done and are waiting for the final products. For the coming year, the Committee plans to finalise those projects and to produce a second bulletin.

As for the last years, a barbecue will be organized during the summer. NN insisted on the necessity to increase contacts with other Swiss-Japanese organisations. Those contacts were not strong enough due to the lack of time.

5. Discussion and proposals

Prof. Bleuler proposed to contact Japanese students living in Switzerland in order to become members. He will care for EPFL and Mr Eric Fragnière for CSEM and maybe IBM Center.

Prof. Bleuler raised the question of the opening of the association to non-technical persons. NN answered that a better understanding of other associations' orientations and increased contacts are better for the short term and the Assembly accepted this proposition.

Some members asked the Committee to create more opportunities to meet together. Mr Hashimoto took the opportunity to invite us to visit their new Cultural Center. He also encouraged us in our ongoing projects.

Prof. Bleuler also informed us that he will make a conference on 1st June during EPFL pedagogical days. The title will be: "A short History of Sciences in Japan".

Mr Hashimoto presented the Cultural Center that they have created in Bern next to the Embassy. They want to organise events, for example, a speech contest. He also gave the Internet address of the Japanese Embassy (www.embjapan.ch).

Mr Mahekawa told us that the Geneva Consulate will have an Internet site in French very soon.

At last, JETRO representatives told us that they want to contact Swiss companies that want to export their products to Japan. NN said that the members will be informed through a letter.

6. Greetings - Apéritive - Sushis Party

NN thanked all members for their active participation and wished with all Committee Members to see all of you very soon.

As for last year, members and guests shared shusis and sake. Mr Mine, who could not come, offered us a bottle of sake.

For the AJ Committee

Jean-Michel Henchoz

19th April 1999