

Abbreviated Early History of Global Awareness Society International

(Excerpt from Chang S. Roh's book *Watermelon Tiger*, used with the author's permission)

It was Mexico City, 1990, that the initial organizational activities for the Global Awareness Society International began. More specifically, as the founder of this organization, I, C.S. Roh, believed that most existing professional organizations, were greatly segmented in scope and limited by geographical boundaries, whether they were country, region or internationally based. I believed we needed an organization encompassing discipline on a global scale, as the process of global orientation throughout the world is increasing with the rapidly developments modern science and technology. We need to address issues and, moreover, understand the new dynamics of an increasingly interdependent global village. Therefore, the concept of "GLOBE" came to my mind but I did not know exactly what the idea or direction should be. While wrestling with this idea with Daniel B. Lee (Loyola University of Chicago), he suggested that "AWARENESS" might be a part of my thinking. Thus, the name of our organization, Global Awareness Society International, emerged.

At even those early stages, colleagues like Wold Zemedkun (Norfolk State University), Lewis Mannerick and Mehrangiz Najafizadeh (Kansas University), all supported organizing a new society.

Based on the encouragement of these colleagues and others, I started to formulate the goals and ideas of the Global Awareness Society International. Namely we thought that mutual understanding among people of the global village, with a humanistic orientation and the eventuality of global peace seemed paramount. The draft of the constitution was also prepared

with the assistance of my daughter, Shi Kyung Roh, who was visiting the United States from Germany at that time. At this meeting the basic philosophy was established.

3. Process of Official Non-profit Professional Organization

An official birth did not take place until May 4, 1991, in Washington, D.C. Four members were present consisting of colleagues Shah Mehrabi (Montgomery College), James H. Huber, James C. Pomfret and myself (Bloomsburg University). Daniel B. Lee (Loyola University at Chicago) gave me his proxy. After reviewing the submitted text paragraph by paragraph, we finally adopted the constitution. Following the adoption of the constitution, I became founder, and first president while the other four colleagues became founder members. In order to become official non-profit professional organization we had to go through legal processes of receiving both state and federal government. As the first executive director who laid the basic framework of the organization. James H. Huber applied to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of State Corporation Bureau for the Global Awareness Society International's incorporation on May 10, 1991, and received the State's approval by Entity Number: 2024493; Microfilm Number: 091290421-0422. We also needed the tax exempt federal approval. This was done by James C. Pomfret and through his dedicated and time-consuming efforts, the Internal Revenue Service District Director granted the approval of Non-profit Professional Tax Exempt Status under section 501 (a) on February 14, 1992. Later we heard we were the only organization gained these state and federal government approval without the aid of any lawyers. Of course we did not have money to pay lawyers fees.

The first task of the society was not only working with a broad base of colleagues and friends, but also planning for the first Global Awareness Society International Conference in

Crystal City, Virginia, in 1992. With well organized and committed executive officers, colleagues and friends who assumed session chairs in all areas of the conference agenda initiated a successful first conference. All were impressed by the leadership roles of those in their conference sessions.

By April 12, 1992, total paid membership reached 79 and at the first annual conference on May 1-3, 1992, at the Marriot Hotel in Crystal City, Virginia, a total of 127 individuals participated. Among those attending were colleagues and friends of ten, twenty, thirty and even forty years who believed not only in the ideal goals of the society but also trusted us personally. For example, Stan McKeeman who serves as a consultant was a long time friends who I met in the Korean War, as far back as 1952.

Prior to the formal participation of Bloomsburg University, an institutional member, I communicated with Dr. James H. McCormick, Chancellor of the Pennsylvania State system of Higher Education, who encouraged us to develop this global organization because this organization reflected one of the goals of higher education. Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania, encouraging the academic and professional excellence of its faculty also sets the goal of focusing on multiculturalism and multicultural education as a mission of the State System of Higher Education in Pennsylvania.

Within this framework, the Bloomsburg University administration continuously supported this newly emerging Global Awareness Society International. The Administration, President, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as other University Constituents such as the Bloomsburg University Foundation and the Alumni Association showed their support. Bloomsburg University became the first Institutions Member in 1991.

Our individual membership started to grow and expanded throughout the United States and other countries literally on a global scale and also institutional members like Loyola University and other universities.

We thought we needed to expand to other countries. During those early days I traveled to China. Jim Pomfret and I taught at Shenyang Teachers College now Shenyang Normal University. We considered the possibilities of having a GASI meeting there. However at that time Shenyang, being a distant from Beijing or Shanghai, the university was reluctant to host this kind of open organization. Still they appeared to be very sensitive about political impact.

At the Third International Conference in Chicago, 1994, we were pleased to report that under the leadership of Madhav P. Sharma, over 30 students participated with support from the Bloomsburg University Foundation and the Alumni Association as well as our Society. We hope that this practice will continue and spread to all colleges and university, and in the future to every corner of the global village.

In 1994, I had a visiting scholar's lecture program during my sabbatical leave. This lecture serves many members of Chinese universities, including East China Normal University in Shanghai. I was giving a lecture on population at that time. I asked Professor Bao Shu Eoo, director of popularity study, about GASI and whether his university was interested in sponsoring our conference. Professor Shi was not only interested in our organization but also enthusiastically supportive to have a meeting in Shanghai. I was very impressed with him because in those days any outside organization other than their political ideologies were not considered to be acceptable.

We had one of the most successful conferences in Shanghai with hundreds of government representatives focusing on population in China. After the initial United States meetings our

annual conferences were held in many continents of the world. San Francisco in 1996, Montreal, Canada in 1997, Istanbul, Turkey in 1998, New Orleans in 1999, revisited New York in 2000, Accra in 2001, Ghana in 2001, Vancouver, Canada in 2002, Washington, DC in 2003, Moscow in 2004, Rome in 2005, Chicago in 2006. -By our overwhelming majority votes at the business meeting held in Rome, 2005, GASI decided to meet in Seoul, Korea in the year 2007.

In organizing any conference with this amount of people requires a tremendous amount of careful planning and work. It involves both coordination from the headquarters to the local sites where the annual conference takes place. I traveled throughout the five continents and different cities to assure where the annual conference would take place. For example in the summer of 1995, Dr. Anna Lubeck a representative of the Poland chapter, recommended to me to visit her university in Krakow to hold our annual conference there. With Martin Hagen, we left Frankfurt, Germany to Krakow. We had a wonderful visit not only with her but also the University Administration at Jagiellonian University. Our discussion and general agreement to hold our conference was made tentatively. However at our 1996 GASI membership meeting the proposal was defeated and instead the membership chose Istanbul, Turkey which was successfully held in 1998. The proposal to be held in Krakow was defeated simply because we had active members from Turkey.

The Global Awareness Society International believes in the diversity of global villages and encourages their participation. Because of this philosophy we have been providing scholarships to students and limited conference support to scholars and professionals from countries whose monetary situations are not conducive to attendance. In addition my own scholarship and the "Roh Family" Scholarship, Leland Stan McKeeman memorial individual scholarship was established. This year the president of Crown Products also established the Kee

Hynn Lee Scholarship. Our society is grateful especially to the professors who do not have a lot of money establish and contribute scholarships including the Dr. Ronald Myers Scholarship and the Dr. Midori Yamanouch, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Lackawanna College provided scholarship to several Japanese students in Japan to presents papers in Seoul. However the most important resources of our society is the Human Resource which is over and above financial asserts. There are so many people who help this organization to be successful. They are contributing significantly utilizing their effort and talent. For example, James Pomfret has been selflessly working since the founding of the society. There have been executive directors like James Huber and James Parsons, just to name a few. Even journal editors should be recognized, at the beginning was Dr. Huber, and currently Dr. Jay Nathan at St. Johns University and his institutional support.

Thus, a globally competent educational approach including global fieldwork, student exchange, and conferences should be aggressively pursued for the sake of world peace, and moreover, to create a livable global human community which will be an everlasting challenge of globalization.