

MCBC Reception at the New Chinese Embassy: A Visit with Friends

The new Chinese Embassy at International Place in Washington, DC was the setting for an Embassy-hosted reception for the Maryland-China Business Council. The stone edifice, an architectural marvel by two sons of the renowned I.M. Pei, befits the stately significance of China's position in the world.



MCBC members arrived--wet from a soaking of an early summer thunderstorm but spirits undampened--eager to tour and to share the evening with our friends.

The reception and visit to the new organized by Minister-Counselor Zhang Ping and

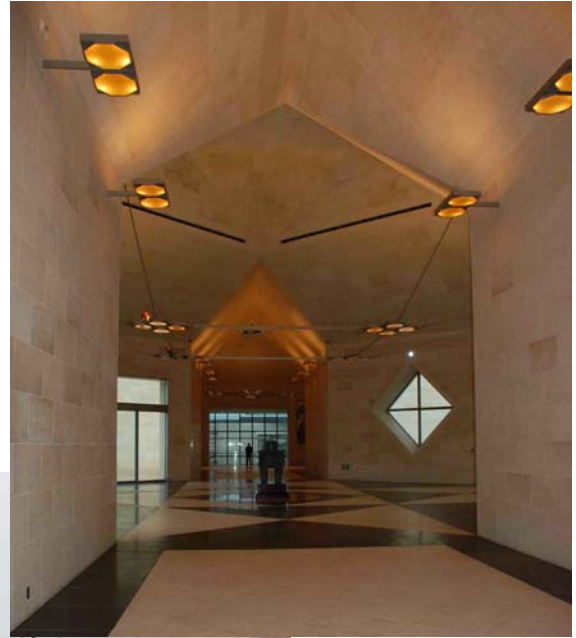


Counselor Li Liansheng.

US-China friendship and cooperation constitutes "the most important bilateral relationship in the world," said MCBC Chairman and President Steve Drake in his remarks to the group. Our friends at the Embassy, Charge de Affairs Xie Feng, along with Minister-Counselor Zhang and Counselor Li, welcomed the group of about 50 MCBCers to the grand reception hall. Dr. Martin Ma, a Commissioner on Governor O'Malley's Commission on Asian-American Pacific Affairs, also spoke regarding the importance of Maryland's relationship with China.

We were treated to a tour of the building, which is spare in its features, but long in solemn and stately grandeur. We toured fine meeting rooms, arranged in traditional Chinese style: two chairs at the head, with seating arranged on each side and enjoyed the welcome in the large reception room. Limestone from France make up the walls. The floors are made from granite from China.

The event was held just a day after the Chinese "Dragon Boat Festival," which commemorates the death of Qu Yuan, an ancient (ca 380 BC) Chinese poet and philosopher from the house of Chu that took his own life rather than supplicate himself to



the conquering Qin.

The legend is that his admirers threw rice into the river to keep fish away from his body. This is the origin of *zongzi*, a sticky

rice treat that is eaten at this time of year and was part of the fine fare served by our hosts. The legend also holds that Qu's friends took boats out to save his body or to keep fish away from him. This is the origin of Dragon Boat Racing, which in modern times is a fine festival celebrated in many Asian cultures where teams of rowers compete against each other in elaborately-decorated boats. The rhythm of the rowers is maintained by a drummer in each boat.

But racing wasn't on our minds. Cooperation and camaraderie were. Charge de Affairs Xie warmly welcomed the attendees and offered his congratulations and appreciation for the long-standing success and friendship between MCBC and the Chinese Embassy.

The reception has been a special feature of the MCBC for the past several years.



We are thankful to have had an opportunity to share the success of the completion of the embassy, but mostly we are pleased that the Embassy-MCBC friendship endures. Maybe “the second most important relationship in the world,” in the words of President Drake will endure as long as the legend of Qu Yuan.

Congratulations to the Diplomats and Staff of the New Chinese Embassy!

and 謝謝!

Mike Violette
May 31, 2009

