
NONSTOP BEIJING: SJ Airport Employees Receive Cultural Training Before New Service Begins



Group Photo: (l. to r.) Kimberly J. Becker, Director of Aviation, Mineta San Jose International Airport, Deanna Tryon, Chief of Protocol, Silicon Valley Office of Protocol, Dr. Ming K. Chan, Stanford University and Hoover Institution

By Susan C. Schena (Patch Staff)

The Silicon Valley Office of Protocol and Mineta San Jose International Airport conducted a series of cultural sensitivity training sessions for airport employees in advance of Hainan Airlines' first nonstop flights from San Jose to Beijing, China, June 15.

Sessions were held on May 4 and May 20 at the airport administration headquarters, and were coordinated by Deanna Tryon, Chief of Protocol. SVOP provided distinguished speakers for airport employees and executives, some of whom will be traveling on the inaugural flight to Beijing.

The speakers covered a broad range of topics involving culture and etiquette, as well as tips to help avoid misunderstandings.

"To have friends coming in from afar, how delightful!" said Dr. Tsu-Hong Yen, Professor and Chair, Department of Hospitality Management, San Jose State University, who also quoted Confucius from 551 BC.

Dr. Yen provided a cultural overview which included courtesy and etiquette, and what to expect with visitors arriving directly from Beijing. He also gave the airport executives tools and issues to consider in providing amenities to international travelers. He also taught about language and communication.

"This type of training is so important and I am so impressed with the leadership at Mineta San Jose airport for recognizing this" stated Tryon.

She added: "It is important that we, at times, move away from our usual way of thinking, and our own perceptions of what is proper, and realize that we are surrounded by people who may not think in the same way due to normal cultural differences. Opportunities can be easily lost due to simple misunderstandings. We want to make sure that everyone treats international visitors with respect."

Well-known lecturer, historian and former research fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University Dr. Ming K. Chan spoke about the current state of affairs in China, including Chinese history, US/Chinese relations and current events.

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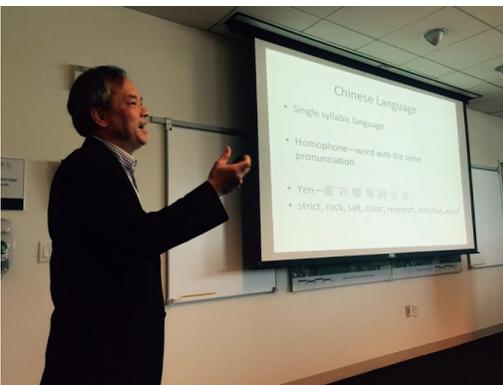
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Dr. Chan spoke on changes in China, and provided perspective on current economic and political issues. Lydia Han of the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco covered Chinese business etiquette with airport executive staff, and highlighted cultural differences between Western and Chinese, including office hierarchy.

The Silicon Valley Office of Protocol assists government and business leaders in Silicon Valley and internationally in matters of protocol. Representatives of SVOP will be traveling with the inaugural delegation to Beijing.

At Podium: Deanna Tryon, Chief of Protocol, Silicon Valley Office of Protocol



In front of the screen: Dr. Tsu-Hong Yen, Professor and Chair, Department of Hospitality Management, San Jose State University
