

WOA Aviators Gathering: Aviation Experts Share Insights

They describe exciting growth taking place in Asia's GA scene



(Left & above:) Ng Yeow Meng welcoming members to the third WOA Gathering. Just park your plane outside the SYFC hangar

small affair and the second one was held in the Philippines as we want to rotate it regionally. This year very nicely coincided with the Singapore Airshow so our members from all around

IT is no mean feat to gather 270 private aviators and their friends and families from around the region all under one roof. But WingsOverAsia did it for its Asian Aviators Gathering which was held inside the hangar of the Singapore Youth Flying Club (SYFC) on 18th February 2012.

The day started (with those with their own aircraft) taking off on a flight to Kuala Lumpur then Malacca; and after some sightseeing, shopping and a meal, 26 private aircraft flew back to Seletar to join in the Networking Seminar and Gala Dinner at SYFC.

Mr Ng Yeow Meng, the founder and Managing Director of WOA, spoke to SIAE Magazine and explained that this was the third such gathering organised by the social networking platform for aviation lovers. He said: "The first was a

the region can also visit the show." He also pointed out: "There is something of a mini-airshow here as well. To have 26 airplanes parked in front of the SYFC's hangar itself is a first for the Singapore general aviation scene. To organise the trip up Malaysia and back for the Gala Night, this is what WOA is all about - the friendships, the sharing and the passion for flying."

A series of speakers were lined up who shared their stories and knowledge on various subjects related to General Aviation. A big treat for many was the talk and video shown by Yoshihide Muroya, Asia's first pilot in the Red Bull Air Race Championships. Apart from his exploits he shared how he trained and was able to fly high speed in Japan! Briefly, following are some of the speakers' highlights and insights:

○ **Joseph Gotuaco**, Chief Financial Officer of WOA, said Singapore still has a long way to go in offering the type and cost of loans for purchasing aircraft compared to markets like the USA as well as in the way we assess the market valuations of new and used airplanes. And currently, he said financing here is not readily available for pre-owned planes. WOA is now looking into how to enhance the availability of financing for its members.

○ **Mark Diaz**, Director of Sales, Daher-Socata, gave invaluable tips on acquiring light aircraft. Previously, he was an airline Captain and has been in aircraft sales and corporate aviation, based in the US, Australia and most recently France. For example, he started with one important piece of advice for the tech-savvy: even with all the advantages of the Internet, be very cautious about sourcing or relying information on the 'net because there are many in cyberspace who prey on people's ignorance. He said: "Build relationships with repu-

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(From left:) Yoshihide Muroya; Joseph Gotuaco; Li Chen and Purnardi Djojosedirdjo



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table local brokers who have been in the business for the last five years or companies that have been around the last 20 or 50 years is the best way to begin." Mark then went through the process and all the choices, helping potential buyers answer the questions: why one wants to buy a plane and what are the types suitable, budgets etc.

○**Li Chen**, the founder and director of Jin Gong (Beijing) General Aviation, painted an exciting picture of the future of private aviation in China. Since 2011, many districts are beginning to open up their airspace for this purpose.

Flight regulations are expected to ease as the Chinese government recognises the fast pace of economic devel-

opment taking place in the country and along with it, the growth of private aviation. Currently there are 1,100 GA aircraft and 2,500 PPL (private pilot licence) holders in China.

The country allows an individual to own a private aircraft but requires the owner to hire a company to manage the use of the aeroplane. He estimates there are now more than 70 GA airports and the country has plans to build 244 more GA airports by 2020.

The first and largest group of Chinese private aviators are the enthusiasts who fly ultralights and microlights aircraft; followed by more wealthy Chinese who fly Cessnas, Sirius and helicopters. At Li Chen's own club he has private pilots

from 17 to 70 years old. So the dream of flying for the Chinese is strong and growing.

○**Purnardi Djojosudirdjo**, the President of Alfa Flying School, said the main activities of airports in Indonesia currently centre on air charter, agriculture support, flight training, company owned aircraft use, sports and hobby and finally for the police. There is a great demand for pilots to support these activities.

However, he singled out the main problem facing aviation in Indonesia is in the area of aircraft maintenance as the rapid increase in the country's airline fleets have resulted in a shortage of aircraft maintenance crew and companies.