

AASP Conference 2005: Global Perspectives on Asian Social Psychology

AASP Celebrates its 10th Anniversary and 6th Biennial Conference in New Zealand

The 6th biennial conference of the Asian Association of Social Psychology (AASP) was held at **Victoria University of Wellington** in Wellington, New Zealand, April 2-5, 2005.

Jointly sponsored by the Centre for Applied Cross Cultural Research and the **School of Psychology** at **Victoria University**, 222 delegates from 18 countries attended.

The largest single national contingent of 64 delegates came from Japan. This was followed by the host country New Zealand with 31, 21 from Thailand, 19 from Australia, 17 from S. Korea, 10 from Taiwan, 9 from the USA, 8 from Indonesia, and 7 from Malaysia. The large number of Australasians is not surprising given the host country, and the presence of several Australasians on the AASP executive. Perhaps more importantly, the strong showing from Southeast Asia indicates that AASP is establishing a presence in this region.

The 2003 conference was held in Manila, and 2007 is scheduled for Sabah, Malaysia, so the systematic move on the part of AASP to seek out engagement in Southeast Asia and Australasia appears to be paying dividends. Compared to the first three conferences in Hong Kong, Kyoto, and Taipei, there has been much less numerical dominance by East Asia in the last three conferences in Melbourne, Manila, and Wellington. The last two conferences have seen a marked increase in participants from Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

The past, present, and future of Asian social psychology



The theme of the conference was “**Global Perspectives on Asian Social Psychology**”.

Keynote addresses were given by AASP President-Elect **Colleen Ward** (Australasia), JGDA Past-President **Tomohide Atsumi** (Japan), and four delegates representing other parts of the world:

Geert Hofstede (Europe, pictured), **Kwok Leung** (East Asia), **Janak Pandey** (South Asia), and **Kaiping Peng** (USA/China).

Ward and Leung provided detailed talks about the past, present, and future of **Asian social psychology**, coming to a consensus

that the accomplishments of Asian social psychology are considerable in terms of international visibility, but that theory development and systematic testing of theory identified with Asia is still lacking.

As former editor of Asian Journal of Social Psychology (AJSP), Leung remarked on the incredible progress the journal has made, with a 2004 impact rating of 0.97, comparable to both EJSP and JCCP, but exhorted Asians to work harder to make a stronger enduring impact in terms of systematic theory.

Atsumi portrayed **Asian social psychology** as a field with two wings, one an **experimental, scientific** wing and the other an **action-oriented, applied** wing, and called upon the field to address the task of getting the two wings to fly together.

Pandey’s talk, while focusing on the development of **social psychology in India**, echoed this point of view in terms of the centrality to application in Asian contexts.

Hofstede, the senior researcher in the group, and one of the fathers of **cross cultural psychology**, described the process and content involved in the development of the **dimensions of cultural variation** he is so closely associated with.

Picture: Keynote speaker Geert Hofstede discussing the past, present, and future of cross cultural and Asian social psychology from the perspective of personality and dimensions of cultural variance

Music and cultural performances



The 15 symposia, 146 papers, and 50 posters presented during the conference were liberally interspersed with music and cultural performances; a gamelan orchestra provided entertainment for the cocktail reception at **Wellington Town Hall**. The conference dinner at the Michael Fowler Centre was made especially memorable by a stirring performance by Whiterea Performing Arts, who welcomed delegates into the dining room with a ferocious display of Maori (indigenous people of New Zealand) taiahia or spears, and performed a range of modern and traditional Polynesian dances of both New

Zealand and the South Pacific during dinner.

The contrast between that energetic performance and the genteel performance of the string quartet that softly drew delegates upstairs to the Renouf Foyer was striking. It provided perfect accompaniment to the weather that evening, which turned from cloudy and mild to pouring with rain, typical of “windy Wellington”. It was rumoured that the affinity of the Koreans, who are known for their passionate performances in cultural arts, and tangata whenua (Maori indigenous people) was perhaps responsible for the magic of them winning most of the prizes in the evening’s prize draw.



Pictures:

Above: A Maori (indigenous people of NZ) haka danced and sung by Whiterea Performing Arts at the conference dinner. Below: Inspired by the performance, Michael Bond and James Liu give a pale imitation of indigenous NZ expressions

Academic diversity

The academic content of the conference was notable for its diversity. In contrast with some previous AASPs, where culture dominated proceedings, AASP Wellington contained a liberal mixture of **cultural and cross cultural social psychology**, **mainstream social psychology**, and **applied or action-oriented psychology**.

While traditional topics in **cross cultural psychology** such as **self-construal**, **acculturation**, and **subjective well-being** were well-represented, these were paralleled by sessions examining such diverse topics as **lay theories of social cognition**, **campus education**, **language and communication**, **personality**, **terror management**, **health**, **gender**, **environmental and community issues**, **achievement orientation**, and **implicit processes**. New Zealand, the host nation, and its neighbour Australia were particularly well-represented in the study **immigration and acculturation**, reflecting their vibrant and growing multi-culturalism.

Posters continued to be a popular method of presenting research. The placement of the poster sessions next to the areas where lunch was served ensured a large amount of traffic for the sessions. One particularly striking poster session was organized by **Tim Takemoto** on the “**Quality of life in Korean society: Indigenous psychological analyses**”. The importance of poster sessions for AASP was underscored by the high representation of posters among the large number of papers (35)

submitted to the conference proceedings (formerly entitled **Progress in Asian Social Psychology**, but with new publisher **Marshall Cavendish** taking on the series, now renamed **Contributions to Asian Social Psychology**).

AASP Executive Committee

The Annual General Meeting saw the election of a new executive.

Colleen Ward was elected as new AASP President, with KK Hwang becoming Past President, and Sik-hung Ng President Elect. James Liu remained as Secretary General, while Masaki Yuki was elected as Treasurer.

Among appointed executives, Yoshi Kashima was appointed to Chair the Publications Committee as Editor of AJSP, with out-going editor Kwok Leung serving as Managing Editor. Allan Bernardo was re-appointed as Chair of the Education and Training Committee. Young-shin Park (East Asia), Rogelia Pe-Pua (Insular Pacific), Duangduen Banthumnavin (Southeast Asia), and Neelam Kumar (South Asia) were appointed as regional representatives, with Janak Pandey and Jiro Takaiserving as supporting regional members.

KS Yang Travel Award

Shamsul Haque of Islamic International University won the KS Yang Travel Award for his paper "Gender variation in reminiscence phenomena: A cross-cultural investigation". The KS Yang Award is a continuing reflection of AASPs commitment to social psychology in developing countries, and affording young scholars with opportunities to participate in our conferences.

Misumi Awards



hui Yeh

The **Misumi Awards** for papers of the year in the **Asian Journal of Social Psychology** were presented to **Kwang-hui Yeh & Olwen Bedford**, for "**A test of the Dual Filial Piety model**" (2003), and shared by **Li-li Huang, James Liu, & Maanling Chang** for "**The double identity of Taiwanese Chinese: A dilemma of politics and culture rooted in history**" and **Michael Morris, Sheen Iyengar, and Kwok Leung** for "**Person perception in the heat of conflict: Negative trait attributions affect procedural preferences and account for situational and cultural differences**" (2004).

The success of two Taiwanese scholars (Yeh and Huang) in winning the Misumi Awards for the first time was a great source of delight for Taiwanese Past-President **KK Hwang**, who exhibited the Asian tradition of parents and teachers being more proud of their progeny's success than their own. Having known Prof Hwang for a long time, I can attest to never having seen him so happy.

Picture: Misumi Award winners Kwok Leung, Li-li Huang, and Kwang-

Jung-Heun Park Young Scholar Awards

One of the most moving moments of the proceedings was when Young-shin Park presented the inaugural **Jung-**



Heun Park Young Scholar Awards to new PhDs **Sylvia Xiaohua Chen** and **Tasuku Igarashi**. **Mr. Jung-huen Park** is the father of founding member and current regional representative **Young-shin Park**.

Dr. Park told the story of how her father, a simple farmer, has always valued education, encouraging her to do her best and strive for academic excellence. In his late years, rather than simply transmit his inheritance to his children, Mr. Park wanted to share his good fortune more broadly, to promote educational values in future generations. The story was made all the more poignant in that it was introduced by **Past-President KK Hwang**, who is of the generation that experienced the hard times when hunger was always knocking at East Asia's door.

It made all the delegates aware of the debt of gratitude they owe to their parents, and that the virtues of hard work and self-sacrifice should not be lost on future generations. It also brought home the family nature of AASP, not in just a metaphorical but literal sense, just as in the first meeting ten years ago in Hong Kong when I presented a paper co-authored with my father, Professor Shu-hsien Liu, a neo-Confucian philosopher.

Picture: Young-shin Park presents the Jung-Huen Park Young Scholar Award to Sylvia Xiao-Hua Chen

Developing AASP traditions

What made the **JH Park Award** especially meaningful is the awareness it brought that AASP is developing its own traditions, rooted in values that enabled the creation and prosperous development of the Association. As we look back on the conference that celebrated the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Association, the organizing committee sincerely hopes that delegates will retain fond memories of New Zealand, and continue to grow in a manner that is in keeping with the spirit of the best values of Asia that are finding a place in global consciousness.

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