

APacCHRIE and Evolution of the Asian Paradigm of Hospitality

Abstract

This article chronicles the birth of Asia Pacific Federation of CHRIE which is known today as APacCHRIE. It covers the story behind the foundation of APacCHRIE, its development, and its significance to hospitality and tourism education and industry to Asia Pacific and the world, especially in light of the development of the new Asian paradigm in hospitality.

Keywords: APacCHRIE, Asian Wave, Asian Paradigm, Hospitality in Asia

The Asian Wave

There has been three significant points in the history of hospitality and tourism education. In 1892, the world's first hotel school, Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, was established in Switzerland (Chon 2019). Commonly referred to as EHL, the institution was instrumental in formalizing hospitality education and establishing the professional standards for hospitality industry practices. The second wave came when the first four-year hotel management degree was offered at Cornell University in the United States in 1922, which marked the beginning of the American wave in hospitality education (Chon 2019). The third wave, the Asian wave, started in 1964 when Bandung Institute of Tourism was established in Indonesia as the first school of hospitality and tourism in Asia. In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of universities and colleges in Asia started offering diplomas and bachelor's degrees in hospitality and tourism including The Hong Kong Polytechnic University which established its hospitality and tourism school in 1979.

With a rapid development of hospitality and tourism industry in the Asia Pacific region in the late 1990s, there was a corresponding increase in the number of educational institutions in hospitality and tourism. The ICHRIE for many years had an aspiration to establish a strong Asian chapter of CHRIE, similar to that of Euro-CHRIE which was earlier established. There were several previous attempts to establish an Asian chapter of ICHRIE but with little success. Asia is a vast continent often with long flight distances between countries and it was not economically feasible for members to visit other Asian countries to attend a meeting. But this situation changed in late 1990s with increase of mobility of

population in Asia, thanks to the fast growing Asian economy and development of air transport infrastructures.

In May 2002, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) hosted the “Fourth Biennial Conference on Tourism in Asia: Development, Marketing and Sustainability” at the Miramar Hotel in Hong Kong. Using this occasion, I organized a planning meeting for the establishment of the Asia Pacific Chapter of CHRIE. Two Executive Committee members of International CHRIE, Bob Bosselman from Florida State University and Agnes DeFranco from the University of Houston, were present at the meeting together with a dozen of ICHRIE members from Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Mainland China, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia. The meeting formally proposed and accepted the charter of a new “Asia Pacific CHRIE Chapter” or “APacCHRIE Chapter.” The meeting also elected me as the Founding President, Eliza Tse as Vice President, Ilsun Yang as Secretary, and Carol Pido as Treasurer. The Chapter was duly integrated into the I-CHRIE governance structure during the annual ICHRIE Conference in Orlando, Florida in July 2002. The Secretariat of APacCHRIE was established at Hong Kong PolyU, the founding institution, and was registered with the Hong Kong SAR Government as a non-profit organization. The Secretariat has since served the operational need of APacCHRIE on a voluntary basis.

The inaugural conference of APacCHRIE was held at Lotte Hotel in Seoul, Korea, on 21-23 May 2003. Yonsei University of Korea and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University were the co-organizers of the conference and was co-chaired by Ilsun Yang at Yonsei University and myself. Owing to the outbreak of the SARS epidemic in China which soon spread to other Asian countries and regions, it was a difficult time to organize an international conference. To comply with the South Korean government’s direction, any conference delegates arriving from the SARS affected countries and regions were required to bring a physical copy of chest X-rays to prove that they are SARS free. A medical doctor and a nurse were arranged to be on standby at the conference site in order to deal with potential medical emergencies. Despite many challenges, Ilsun Yang and her colleagues did a marvelous job in staging the conference at the five-star Lotte Hotel in downtown Seoul with more than 200 international and domestic participants. Fred Mayo, who was the then the president of I-CHRIE, joined the conference and offered a congratulatory speech. In my own speech to kick off the conference, I reflected

on the significance of the theme of the conference “Hospitality, Foodservice and Tourism Research and Education: The Asian Waves.” I asserted that Asia was rapidly emerging as the new global center of excellence in hospitality and tourism and this trend would continue in the following years. I made a reference to the Vision 2020 Report of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) which predicted that Asia Pacific would be the fastest growing region for international tourism in the next 20 years due to a rapid increase of regional and international tourism as a result of a massive development of tourism infrastructure across the newly industrialized economies in Asia (Chon 2019). This phenomenon was referred to as the “Asian Waves” and hence the term Asian Waves was born at the conference and the concept of Asian Waves has been studied in different contexts, for example in the proliferation of research output coming from Asia (Leung, R., Au, N, and Law, R., 2011; Tolkach, Chon and Xiao, 2016; Leung, Leung, Bai and Law, 2011).

Subsequent annual conferences were held in Phuket, Thailand (2004), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2005), Hualien, Taiwan (2006), Beijing, China (2007), Perth, Australia (2008), Singapore (2009), Phuket, Thailand (2010), Hong Kong (2011), Manila, Philippines (2012), Macau (2013), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2014), Auckland, New Zealand (2015), Bangkok, Thailand (2016), Bali, Indonesia (2017), Guangzhou, China (2018), Hong Kong (2019) and Hong Kong (2020).

When APacCHRIE Chapter was founded in 2003, Australia and New Zealand still belonged to the jurisdiction of EuroCHRIE. Some ICHRIE members residing in these two countries were somewhat hesitant to see a bylaw change of ICHRIE to switch the jurisdiction of Australia and New Zealand from EuroCHRIE to APacCHRIE. This required some extra political process of communicating with members in these two countries and persuading them to vote for the change of ICHRIE bylaws. The APacCHRIE Chapter made a successful petition to ICHRIE to change its status from a Chapter to Federation in late 2005 and this was subsequently approved by the ICHRIE Board at the Winter Board meeting in Washington D.C. in February 2006 which made Australia and New Zealand under the jurisdiction of the APacCHRIE Federation. APacCHRIE was formally recognized as a Federation within the I-CHIRE structure at I-CHIRE’s 60th annual conference in Washington in July 2006. The APacCHRIE Federation now consists of four

geographical areas: East Asia, Southeast Asia, Oceania and Indian Sub-continent.

At the 7th annual conference held in Singapore in 2009, the conference chairman Andy Nazarechuck started a new tradition of organizing an APacCHRIE Youth Conference where undergraduate students in hospitality and tourism can present their research and class projects and to network among themselves. This tradition of the annual Youth Conference continues and the 12th Youth Conference will be held in Hong Kong on 27-28 October 2020.

APacCHRIE over the years have acquired a reputation for staging annual conferences of highest standard and quality with excellent programming, quality cultural and entertainment programs, and generosity in hospitality. The 2011 annual conference in Hong Kong attracted a higher number of conference participants than the ICHRIE Annual Conference which was held in Denver, Colorado. The conference served as a tipping point which has since put APacCHRIE ahead of any other CHRIE events elsewhere with a greater number of participants.

Since 2017, APacCHRIE and its closest sibling EuroCHRIE had a common interest in hosting a joint conference every once in a while and it was agreed that the first such conference would be held in Hong Kong in 2019. The conference attracted more than 700 delegates, primarily from the jurisdictions of APacCHRIE and EuroCHRIE but from all other continents of the world. The next joint conference is to be hosted by EuroCHRIE in 2023 with the location yet to be confirmed.

The year of 2020 has been a difficult year due to an outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. The annual APacCHRIE conference was originally planned for 26-28 May 2020 in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. The conference was postponed to 27-28 October and relocated the venue from Kaohsiung to Hong Kong and was held in a hybrid format, with some participants attending in person and the others to attend online. The fact that APacCHRIE did not simply cancel the conference and came up with a plan offer the conference in a hybrid format tells how resilient and strong APacCHRIE has been as an organization. For this I look forward to continuous development of APacCHRIE in the next years to come.

In recent years, there has been an observation that the center of the gravity of world tourism has gradually moved to Asia. The emergence of Asian countries, powered by economic growth, has set the stage for Asia's tourist destinations and hospitality companies to stand out in the global sphere. Subsequently, the concept of the Asian paradigm was revisited to demonstrate the unique service provision and care for guests that forms the basis for Asian hospitality and tourism (Chon, Park and Zolton, 2020). The cultural and historical phenomenon prevailing behind the Asian Paradigm, for example the ancient Chinese philosophy of Confucianism, has been studied as an important ingredient for the development of the Asian paradigm in hospitality (Chon and Hao, 2020). APacCHRIE is expected to continue to influence the hospitality industry practices and education in the years to come.

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