

REPORT ON FELLOWSHIP MEETING, ARCASIA 36TH COUNCIL MEETING

23 Fellows attended the Fellowship Meeting held on Wednesday 11 November 2015 in Classic Kameo Hotel, Ayutthaya.

The Chairman welcomed all the Fellows and called the meeting to order at 2.00pm.

In appreciation of the Fellows' attendance, the Chairman invited all presence to pen a few words of advice/wisdom during the meeting, which would be published in the next issue of Architecture Asia to provide some guidance or inspiration to young Asian architects. 11 Fellows submitted their thoughts at the conclusion of the meeting at 4pm. These words of wisdom from ARCASIA's elders will be published with the photographs of the authors in the next issue of Architecture Asia magazine.

The lively discussion could be grouped under five main topics as follows:

1. ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Architecture has been said to be the mother of all the arts, but unfortunately, today, contemporary Asian art is very much absent from or not integrated with current Asian architecture. We need to integrate art and craft in architecture as exemplified in traditional architecture such as the exquisite heritage buildings in Ayutthaya.

Some Fellows recommended that ARCASIA set up a foundation to promote Asian art in architecture, however, many felt that while the idea was good, the is too big a task for ARCASIA to undertake. Meeting agreed that a more practical approach could be to encourage member countries to enhance the collaboration between art and architecture. Some member countries reported that they had already been holding talks such as architecture and sculpture, architecture and photography, architecture and music and dance, etc. in their institutes.

For a start, the meeting recommended the inclusion of articles on furniture, sculpture and art in Architecture Asia.

2. ARCASIA WEBSITE AS CENTRAL REPOSITORY OF RESOURCES

The meeting felt that more information and resources could be uploaded on ARCASIA's website:

- a. Information and contacts on disaster relief efforts to be uploaded in a timely manner so as to garner wider support and collect more contributions;
- b. Listing of experts for those in needs of expertise such as disaster shelters, hospital and school designs, and conservation, etc.;
- c. The ARCASIA archive currently housed in PAM to be completely uploaded on the Web;
- d. The Fellowship membership list to be continuously updated regularly.

In short, making everything and anything easily and readily accessible in ARCASIA'S website.

3. ASIAN WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE

The Meeting concurred that there has been a marked increase in the number of women architecture students, however, the attrition rate of women architects in the profession is also still very high mainly due to childbirth and family commitments. This is an unfortunate waste of

talents and valuable human resources. The Fellowship suggested that ARCASIA to look into ways of helping women architects to stay or go back into the work force through:

- a. The provision of child-minding facilities such as creches and breastfeeding rooms at work places;
- b. The implementation of flexible work hours or working from homes;
- c. The retraining of women architects to get back into the workforce after years of absence from the work force due to child birth or other family commitments.

(One of the lady student volunteers said that she was too passionate about architecture to be deterred by child births and family obligations as she wanted to be like Zaha Hadid. One Fellow cautioned that Zaha Hadid is a divorcee!)

4. JOINT EFFORTS IN ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

On the education front, the Fellowship meeting noted that there had been some bilateral student exchange programmes between universities of member countries but some thought it would be good if ARCASIA could do more by promoting and coordinating more exchanges among faculties of architecture among the ARCASIA member countries.

Some Fellows would also like to know the status of the ARCASIA School of Architecture, especially the common architecture modules that were suggested to be taught across all schools of architecture in ARCASIA member countries.

5. ACCREDITATION OF ARCHITECTURE COURSES IN ASIA

The Fellowship thought it would be a good idea for ARCASIA to form a central accreditation body modelled after CAA's and European Union's methods in accrediting all the schools of architecture in Asia so as to make Asian educated architects not only more mobile within Asia but also allowing them to move out of Asia armed with a high standard of commonly recognized qualifications. However, this was seen as too daunting a task for ARCASIA to undertake at the moment as some countries like Thailand is still experiencing difficulties in accrediting their schools of architecture within the country.

Some members also opined that currently Asian architecture graduates have been able to move easily within Asia and even outside of Asia such as in Australia, Europe and North America.

Some other issues that were raised at the meeting were as follows:

- i. Some Past Chairmen of ARCASIA commented that the recruitment of new members should be pursued with caution as history has shown that those who came to ARCASIA in their own accord have been more active compared with those who were cajoled to join ARCASIA;
- ii. The extension of the Presidency of ARCASIA from 2 years to 3 or 4 years term was briefly discussed, some Fellows thought that this would allow more time for the President to accomplish more long-term programmes;
- iii. The celebration of ARCASIA DAY as part of the World Day of Architecture to be disseminated more prominently on ARCASIA's website.

