

Closing Remarks of Dr. Arun Mahizhnan, Chair of AMIC Board of Directors

Mixed feeling at end of each conference.

Have attended almost 20 conferences. Though small in number of attendees rich in content and the opportunity to have deeper engagement

The organisation was superb given that it was short time, small team, new team and new region

Credit goes to AUD as a whole, its leadership
SHEIK MOHAMMED BIN RASHID AL MAKTOUM
PRESIDENT LANCE DE MASI
PROVOST JIHAD NADER
DEAN ALI JABER

and of course the personal stewardship of Dr Bradley Freeman. As I mentioned at the opening day, our connection to West Asia and Dubai should be seen as the recognition of a larger Asia than the one we have concentrated on.

On the other side of the Indian Ocean, Ramon Tuazon lead another team including Dr Rachel Khan and the AMIC pillar Ivy Alcantara and gently and judiciously guided by our previous Secretary General Dr Martin Hadlow. I mention Martin in particular to demonstrate how AMIC does well through continuity and ONLY through continuity. I really hope this tradition of continuity will endure despite the many disruptions that are inevitable in life.

Of course no conference is possible nor beneficial if not for the participants. Whether as speaker or commentator or as listener, each of you have been a critical part of this conference, So on behalf of AMIC I want to thank each and everyone of you.

AS this is my swan song, I also wan to take this opportunity to publicly record my deep appreciation for their support, guidance, and I might add, forbearance of my Board of Directors. They are ultimately responsible for AMIC and they hold

the key to the future directions. While all Board members are equal, one is more equal than other and therefore I am obliged to single out Professor Ang Peng Hwa who has been my greatest source of support and good counsel. As Past Chairman, he was always there during my term and I have made sure that he shall remain so in the next Board as well to assist my far superior successor DR Crispin Maslog. At this moment, I should also mention who is no longer in the Board but who has had perhaps the greatest influence on AMIC's life in general and at the Nanyang Technological University in particular, Professor Eddie Kuo. He was my mentor and colleague in AMIC and my former boss in Wee Kim Wee School as was Prof Ang Peng Hwa.

Before I take my leave, I just want to say a few words about AMIC's mission. In my personal view, one of the most important aspects of our mission is to focus on the first word of the name of our organisation -- ASIAN.

While we have indeed provided numerous opportunities to share the Asian experience in conferences and workshops and even books, we have a long way go in establishing an Asian perspective and Asian theories of communication. This has been a deep concern of mine for quite some time.

We have far too long submitted and submerged ourselves in Western perspective, Western theories, and worst of all, Western validation of our own nascent attempts to create anything Asian. We must rid ourselves of this blind subservience.

Unfortunately, it is going to be even more challenging to do this than before, For one thing, many of our universities have embarked on a paper chase for ranking and citation that will certainly focus the minds of many of our best and the brightest on getting past the Western gatekeepers.

The other, even bigger challenge is the advent of global communciations which is increasing by the day and sweeping across a world that seems to be homogenizing all the time. But personally, I don't believe that to be the case.

I think there is a clear research agenda ahead for us. How do we differentiate and distinguish Asian communication practices and build theories based on them? I have seen a number of attempts in the past and even in this conference there were papers that were strongly grounded in local practice though again some were trying to fit them to Western theories.

As we all know, communication theories are not invented by scholars sitting in laboratories but through observation and analysis of practice. Some are seriously observing and analysing Asian practice. We need more such people. We need more work on this area.

So my final plea to the members and managers of the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre is to focus more on the first word in our name. Let this name be not taken in vain.

Shukran!

~ Arun on the move