

AAPPS and APCTP

Michiji Konuma

The Association of Asia Pacific Physical Societies (AAPPS) has supported the creation and activities of the Asia Pacific Center for Theoretical Physics (APCTP).

The AAPPS was formally constituted on 15 October 1989 as an umbrella organization of physical societies in the Asia Pacific region. The objectives are that *the AAPPS aims to promote the advancement of knowledge in physics in the Asia Pacific region, including research, application and teaching, especially through international collaboration in these activities in this region.*

The First General Meeting was the gathering of representatives of member societies. It was held at the Allen Hall, Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea on 10 August 1990, where Chen Ning Yang, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Formation of AAPPS, declared the formal inauguration of the AAPPS and the Council members were elected. The next day the first Council Meeting was held where C. N. Yang was elected as the First President of the AAPPS. Two days later (on 13 August 1990) the Fourth Asia Pacific Physics Conference (APPC) for five days was opened at the same University. This Conference was organized by the Korean Physical Society for the AAPPS.

It was the first Conference for the AAPPS and the fourth one of the series. Why? Some physicists in the Asia Pacific region had occasionally discussed possibilities to strengthen regional collaboration since 1970's. Discussions included holding some regional physics conferences, establishing a regional physical society and creating a research institute like ICTP [International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, Italy]. The start of the series of APPC and the formation of the AAPPS were on the same line.

The Asia Pacific Center for Theoretical Physics (APCTP) was established in June 1996. The Inauguration Conference

of APCTP was held in Seoul, Korea from 4 through 10 June 1996. The AAPPS was formally involved for formation of the APCTP two years before.

On 2 March 1994 Jin Ho Park, President of the Korean Science and Engineering Foundation, and Jewan Kim, President of the Federation of Basic Science Institutes of Korean Universities, jointly wrote a letter to the AAPPS. The text is the following:



Professor Michiji Konuma

Professor Yong Min Cho of Seoul National University informed us of the on-going discussion among the Working Group of the Regional Center for Theoretical Physics (a suggested tentative name is the Pacific Center for Theoretical Physics).

According to the summary of the meeting's discussion held at Sokcho, Korea on Feb. 25, 1993, the group recommended either Korea, Japan, China or Taiwan as possible sites for the proposed center. Although any one of the four countries mentioned above would be an excellent choice, Korea seems to be particularly good since Korea is centrally located geographically; and also it has other favorable aspects.

We, the Korean Science and Engineering Foundation, would like to express our interest in contributing our financial share to the proposed center including all initial costs either by using our own resources or by acting as intermediary in securing other funding within Korea.

We will greatly appreciate your help in convincing your colleagues that Korea is indeed the best choice among the four countries.

On 2 July 1994 this letter was discussed at the 4th AAPPS Council Meeting held at Brisbane, Australia. I was the Chairperson. It was my first day as the President of the AAPPS.

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Fig. 1: The unveiling of the door plate of the APCTP at POSTECH on 24 August 2001. From left, Jiaer Chen (The Third President of AAPPS, China), Michiji Konuma (The Second President of AAPPS, Japan), Wokyung Sung (APCTP Advisor, Korea), Sung Kee Chung (The Third President of POSTECH, Korea), Bok Keun Chung (The Second Executive Director of APCTP, Korea), Se Hee Ahn (The Former President of KPS, Korea), Hee Sung Song (The Former President of KPS, Korea), Jewan Kim (The Former Standing Trustee of APCTP, Korea).

One of the agenda was “Pacific Center for Theoretical Physics.” Yong Min Cho, then a member of the AAPPS Council, distributed the Recommendation issued by the International Planning Committee of the Pacific Center for Theoretical Physics at the Meeting held in Seoul on 1 and 2 May 1994.

The Minutes of the 4th Council Meeting includes the following record:

Professor Cho reported on the proposal by the international planning group to establish a Pacific Center for Theoretical Physics (PCTP) in Korea. It was explained that

- (a) *the center was meant to be international, though situated in Asia;*
- (b) *the arrangements would be similar to CERN, in having member states which make contributions determined by their GDP (rather than the arrangement that pertains at ICTP [International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, Italy]).*

The Korean Science and Engineering Foundation (KORSEF) had already pledged substantial seed money, to allow the project to start, and this was one reason for the recommendation to site it in Korea.

The planning committee for PCTP is seeking the endorsement of UNESCO, IUPAP [International Union of Pure and Applied Physics], AAPPS and ASCA (Association of Science Cooperation in Asia — a minis-

terial level inter-government committee, of which Prof. Nguyen Van Hieu is a member).

In the ensuing discussion, it was emphasized that such an international initiative would attempt to seek funding from the foreign affairs arms of governments, rather than the education and/or science arms, and therefore ought not to compete with local research centers for funding. After lengthy discussion, the meeting passed the following motion, and agreed that the motion would be passed to the planning committee.

1. *AAPPS, having considered the request from the International Planning Committee for the Pacific Center for Theoretical Physics to establish this Center in Korea, endorses this proposal.*
2. *AAPPS suggests for the consideration of the International Planning Committee the possibility of enlarging the coverage of fields from theoretical physics to theoretical science.*
3. *AAPPS further suggests for the consideration of the International Planning Committee the possibility of changing the name from “Pacific Center” to “Asia-Pacific Center.”*

In these motions the AAPPS expressed (1) their support to the proposal of the International Planning Committee, (2) their hope that the center should cover not only the core problems of theoretical physics but also interdisciplinary subjects like research topics in the ICTP, and (3) the importance of collaboration among Asia and Pacific countries/regions.



Fig. 2: The participants at the Relocation Ceremony at POSTECH on 24 August 2001.

The Minutes of the 5th Council Meeting held in Hanoi, Vietnam, from 11 through 14 January 1996, includes the following record:

Y. M. Cho reported that the Asia Pacific Center for Theoretical Physics was to be opened and that many countries especially the Korean Government decided to financially support it. He also reported that the name of the center was changed following the suggestion made at the 4th AAPPS Council Meeting.

In the first two years of APCTP, 1996 and 1997, the AAPPS donated 2,000 US Dollars in total to the APCTP for their activities (1,000 US Dollars each year).

On 27 October 1999 Won Namkung (then a member of the AAPPS Council; the 4th President of AAPPS from 2001 through 2004) submitted a Report from the APCTP to the 8th Council Meeting held at Hanoi, Vietnam. After discussions the AAPPS Council decided to ask the APCTP to provide their status report to the later AAPPS Council and to the AAPPS Bulletin.

From 24 through 25 August 2001 the 10th AAPPS Council Meeting was held in Gyeongju, Korea. Bok Keun Chung, Acting Director, APCTP, reported on the Center and announced that the Center was relocated at the Pohang University of Science and Technology (POSTECH). The APCTP Relocation Ceremony from Seoul to Pohang was held in the afternoon, 24 August 2001 and all the AAPPS Council members were invited to attend.

Since the 13th Council Meeting of AAPPS held in October 2004 Seunghwan Kim (Executive Director of APCTP; AAPPS Council member from 2005) has given a detailed report on the activities of APCTP at the AAPPS Council Meetings.

From 16 through 17 November 2006 the 17th AAPPS Council Meeting is scheduled to be held in Pohang, Korea. An AAPPS-APCTP Joint Forum on Women in Physics will be held in the afternoon of 17 November 2006.

These are a chronological record of the formal relation of the AAPPS with the APCTP. These are, however, not all.

As the first milestone to the APCTP, it is written at the website of the APCTP and in the AAPPS Bulletin Vol. 5 Nos. 3 & 4, on p. 37, that on 23 November 1989 *the proposal [idea] of an international center for theoretical physics in the Asia Pacific region [was] first discussed at KEK in Japan*. As I mentioned already there were discussions on possible creation of regional center for theoretical physics at many chances of gatherings. Key figures in the early days, other than persons already mentioned, included Yoshio Yamaguchi (Japan), Kok Khoo Phua (Singapore), Swee Ping Chia (Malaysia), and Nguyen Van Hieu (Vietnam). The discussion at KEK in November 1989 was at one of these meetings. I was there. My memory is that it was at an occasion of a physics workshop.

I am sure the importance of the APCTP will increase more in the future. The member countries/regions should increase their support.