

Third Asian Zoo Educators (AZEC) Conference, Taipei Zoo, Taiwan

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The Asian Zoo Educators Conference (AZEC) was instigated from the International Zoo Educators Association (IZE). It provides a platform where professional zoo educators in Asia could meet every two-years to share their ideas and discuss topics of common interest. The first Asian Zoo Educators' Conference took place in 2007 at Singapore Zoo and the second at Ocean Park, Hong Kong in 2009.

The third Asian Zoo Educators' Conference was held at Taipei Zoo from September 18-22, 2011 with the theme "**Focus On Rainforest · Eco-System Thinking**". Seventy-seven participants representing 38 organizations from 14 regions attended the conference. This writer participated in the conference as a sponsored delegate and presented a paper on "Teacher Training Programme on Human Elephant Coexistence" and carried ZOO education materials to give sample copies to all participants. A display of the material was appreciated by all delegates.

Registration and ice breaker was held at the Taipei zoo on the 18 September evening. The conference covered 5 presentation sessions, a field trip to Dongyshan Nature Centre and Leofoo Village Theme Park Zoo, poster presentations, inaugural of the 2nd Cross-Strait Symposium on Giant Panda Conservation (CSGPC) and a workshop.



Poster symposium-sixteen posters were presented at the conference

On 19 September, the conference was inaugurated by Jason S. C. Chin, Director of Taipei zoo followed by the speech of Ms. Ya-Wen Ding, Commissioner, Department of Education, Taipei City Government. Mr. Stephen McKeown, Head of Discovery and Learning, Chester Zoo gave a keynote speech on "Yes we can! Zoo Education as a catalyst for behaviour change".

Two presentation sessions were held. **Bill Street**, SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, USA moderated the first session. **Sarita Jnawali**, NTNC-

Central Zoo, Nepal : Zoo as a Living Classroom; **Emily Lin**, Taipei Zoo: Focus On Rainforest Eco-System Thinking; **Hiroyuki Takahashi**, Chiba Zoological Park, Japan: "Feel the Forest in the Zoo" Program; **Henny Noertiningsih**, Surabaya Zoo, Indonesia: Ecosystem Sustainability Surabaya Zoo as Forest City; **Elaine Y. J. Lin**, Endemic Species Research Institute, Taiwan: Biodiversity and Wildlife Education Programs of Wildlife First Aid Station, ESRI; **Kasumi Nagakura**, NogeYama Zoological Gardens, Japan: How are Orangutan and Our Life Connected.



Zoo Outreach Organisation displayed a range of educational materials for distribution to participants

After lunch the delegates were taken to behind the scene tour in Taipei Zoo after which **Jung Tai Chao**, Taiwan Forestry Research Institute moderated the second session, 7 presentations were held. **Ya Li Bai**, Nanjing Hongshan Forest Zoo, 2011 Year of the Bat Themed Events: "Month of the Bat Protection"; **Wing Chi Tsui**, Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, Hong Kong: Learning in the Dark; **Shiang Fan Chen**, Providence University, Taiwan: Fun Bats at Taipei Zoo; **Ming Shih Hung**, Hsinchu Zoo, Taiwan: Tree Climbing Education and Conservation; **Julia Man**, Ocean Park Corporation, Hong Kong: Young Child Education in Ocean Park Summer School; **Lucia Ju**, Taipei Zoo: The Role of Fragrant Flowers in Forest and Smell in Taipei Zoo; **Carol Hsieh**, Taipei Zoo: Zoo On Air.

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Taipei zoo staff teaching games at the amphibian and reptile house during behind the scenes tour

On 20 September forenoon we visited Dongyanshan Nature Education Center with primary objectives as education, conservation, culture and recreation for students, teachers and public. The staff briefed on their activities for different audiences. We entered Dongyanshan National Forest Recreation Area for trekking through a guided walk. Staff also taught few environmental games. Afternoon we visited the Leofoo Village Theme Park Zoo housing African animals in safari style with train and bus rides.

AZEC participants attended an Opening Ceremony of the 2nd Cross-Strait Symposium on Giant Panda Conservation (CSGPC) September 21, followed with presentations by **De Sheng Li**, China Conservation and Research Center for the Giant Panda : The Impact of Pro-release Training on Giant Panda Infant Growth and Development, and **Jang Jaer Lee**, National Taiwan University: Maintenance of Oral Health for Giant Panda.

The third presentation session featured **Jason S. C. Chin**, Director, Taipei Zoo & **Shan Nning Zhang**, China Wildlife Conservation Association as moderators. And the presentations are: **May Lok**, Wildlife Reserves Singapore : Zoolympix 2011-Intl Year of Forest; **Guangze Luo** : Practice and Exploration of NGO Academic Institutions to Carry out Giant Panda Conservation Knowledge Education; **Tracy Lau**, Ocean Park, Hong kong: Report & Sharing Education/Guest Experience at Giant Panda Adventure; **Julian C. L. Lin**, Taipei Zoo : Making Good Use of Main Attraction to Intensify a Zoo's Educational Function; **Yun Hsuan Chiu**, Pingtung Rescue

Center, Taiwan : Starting from the Head of the River: Thematic Conservation Education in Endangered Wild Animal Rescue Center.

After 16 poster presentations the 4th presentation session was held moderated by May Lok, WLR, Singapore. Presentors: **Francis Tsang**, Ocean Park Corporation, Hong Kong : Together We Are Stronger! Human Resources Strategies for Zoo Education; **Tim Hsu**, Aletheia University, Taiwan : Learning Experiences of School Pupils of a Hands-on Exhibition: A Case Study of the Travelling Exhibition - "Biodiversity 911"; **R. Marimuthu**, ZOO, India Human Elephant Coexistence HECx; **Jessica Andin**, Penang Butterfly Farm, Malaysia : Bring Back the Endangered Yellow Birdwings. Delegates enjoyed a tour to Wetland Ecological Park,

Amphibian and Reptile House and Insectarium.

Tzu Chau Chang of Natl Taiwan University moderated final presentations 22 September, e.g., **Hideto Okuyama**, Chiba Zoo, Japan : Penguin Walk-Visitor's Perceptions and Interests of Penguins; **Carl Leong**, Ocean Park Corp. HK: Volunteer Work-Great Opportunity to Educate Companies; **Sung-Lin Wu**, Taipei Zoo: Learning in Games: the Taipei Frog as an Example; **Joann Chang**, Taipei Zool Foundation : S is for Snail; **David Chen**, Natl Museum of Marine Biology & Aquarium : The Way to Take a Photo in an Aquarium.

After this, a workshop was conducted by **Bill Street**, SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, USA called "Importance of Innovation in N American Zoo Education". The history of Japanese Zoo and Aquarium Educators was presented by Koji Takada of Marine World Uminonakamichi who is the next host of AZEC 2013. Taipei Zoo volunteers conducted Taipei Zoo Children's Theatre. The day ended with a Taipei zoo free visit and a gala farewell dinner at which Dr. Tim T.Y. Ting, Dy Mayor of Taipei City Government participated and gave a farewell speech.

As AZEC's main goal is to share ideas and discuss topics of common interest, it was a platform for Asian Zoo educators to share with one another.

Note: Thanks to Taipei Zoo for my sponsorship to attend and present my paper and also for arranging a wonderful occasion.



AZEC delegates with the host near the Panda House