

## **Visits to Korea, Myanmar and Hungary in 2008**

Win Aung  
December 11, 2008

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings for the Holiday Season!

We have just returned from a 2-week visit to South Korea and Myanmar. We are very excited about the visit and would like to share some of photos we have taken. While we are at it, we are also pleased to give you brief reports on two other trips we made this year in conjunction with special events overseas. We are by no means globe trotters like some of you, but we are grateful and honored for this opportunity to share these photos and brief notes with you in this holiday season. We invite your advice, comments, and suggestions.

### **(A) South Korea, November 2008**

In Seoul, Korea, Win reviewed the plans for ICEE-iCEER 2009 Conference (Seoul, Korea, Aug. 23-28, 2009). The conference will be the seminal networking event sponsored by iNEER, of which Win is serving as a volunteer as the Secretary-General. The conference is being organized by Hanyang University, Korea University of Technology and Education, and the Korean Society of Engineering Education. During our stay, we met with leaders of the organizing committee and their conference technical experts. We discussed in detail the various aspects including the technical and cultural programs, and special tours. As you know, Korea is not a top tourist destination, but that is precisely what makes it attractive to us. We expect the conference next year to be an exciting event that will live up to the always high expectations of participants for iNEER conferences. Other than Taiwan and Australia, this will be only the third country that iNEER will be sponsoring a conference in the Asia-Pacific region, and it will be an outstanding conference for iNEER, a global network of 36,000 members spread across 98 countries.

We also attended the annual conference of the Korean Society of Engineering Education (KSEE) held in scenic Jeju Island in the southern part of Korea, where Win gave two talks, one in plenary session. The papers at the conference show a lot of similarity in interest between the iNEER community and KSEE members. The Korean economy is heavily dependent on exports and daily reports in the press continue to focus on the current global economic crisis. Still, engineering educators in Korea appeared confident about their mission and the important work ahead in channeling international cooperation to further advance the

frontiers of engineering education.

To see a collage of selected photos taken during the trip to Korea, please visit (click or copy URL and paste on your browser address box):

[http://www.ineer.org/Events/ICEE\\_iCEER-2009Info/2008-12-05\\_Scenes-from-Planning-Meeting-November-2008.pdf](http://www.ineer.org/Events/ICEE_iCEER-2009Info/2008-12-05_Scenes-from-Planning-Meeting-November-2008.pdf)

Professor Kwang-Sun Kim, the Dean of Graduate Studies at Korean University of Technology and Education and a Director of the Korean Society of Engineering Education, is the general co-chair of ICEE-iCEER 2009. He will be visiting us on January 15-18, 2009 and will be a guest at our house. If any of you are interested in meeting him, please let us know by replying to this e-mail.

### **(B) Myanmar, November 2008**

After our visit to Korea, we spent a week in Myanmar where we visited the University of Computer Studies. We also spent time in Yangon with the family of Annie's sister, Joan Wu. Some of you may remember Joan. She immigrated to the U.S. more than 10 years ago, but after 3 months with us in Potomac, she and her husband left to return home to Myanmar where she has stayed ever since. We have visited her every so often. During the November 18-24 visit, we had the most wonderful time with her and her happy family. We (especially Win) developed quite a rapport with her two lovely granddaughters, aged 4 and 2. The older girl has a most remarkable and unforgettable name: Chit Myat Hnoe Htike. Can you imagine? On a visit to the house of a friend, this 4-year little girl fell in love with a wooden carving that she hugged the entire time, a carving that I swore was a cow, a "nwar" in Burmese, but that she insisted was a pig, a "hwat" (???!!!), and we argued the whole time we were there. Anyway, you can see for yourself who was right, because Win took several pictures in Yangon and have posted some of them at (click or copy URL and paste on your browser address box):

[http://www.ineer.org/Events/ICEE\\_iCEER-2009Info/2008-12-05\\_Scenes-from-Myanmar-Visit.pdf](http://www.ineer.org/Events/ICEE_iCEER-2009Info/2008-12-05_Scenes-from-Myanmar-Visit.pdf)

At the University of Computer Studies (UCS) in Yangon, Win met with Dr. Ni Lar Thein, Rector of the University. We both met Dr. Ni Lar Thein for the first time in 2005 during the Third Conference on Computer Applications held at the Sedona Hotel in Yangon. At that time, the Rector of the University was Dr. Pike Tin, now retired. In 2005, Dr. Pike Tin expressed a desire to bring the iNEER community to Myanmar by hosting an iNEER conference. In my meeting with Dr. Ni Lar Thein last week, she reiterated her interest to host the conference, perhaps as early as 2009. She and Win are continuing their discussion.

The UCS in Yangon has over 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

Interestingly, the female-male split in the student body at UCS is 80:20. In many other parts of the world, the split is quite different, and I have heard that in the U.S. it is 20:80. Nowadays, many universities around the world are trying to attract more female students to studies engineering, and the success of UCS in attracting many female students is worthy of note.

### **(C) Hungary, August 2008**

We visited Hungary in summer 2008 to participate in the International Conference on Engineering Education (ICEE), organized jointly by the Budapest University of Technology and Economic and the University of Pecs, during July 28-31 in the cities of Budapest and Pecs. Win played an important role in putting this conference together as a part of an ongoing series that started in 1994.

On this trip, we renewed friendship with many of the almost 500 participants from over 50 countries. We all shared a common goal, that of furthering the frontiers of engineering education through international cooperation. In today's globalized economy, it is important that faculty and students acquire a global perspective, and develop an appreciation for cultural differences in order to be effective as future engineers. These ICEE conferences provide a unique platform for faculty and students alike to learn and share experiences with their counterparts from other countries.

We sampled exquisite white wine in the wine country in southern Hungary and marveled at their excellent cuisines. You have not tasted the real Hungarian Goulash until you visit Hungary. And you will experience hospitality from friendly people everywhere. The touristic spots, the culture, the history, the people, the places of religious significance were simply unforgettable. A picture is worth a thousand words, so for some selected scenes from our experience in Hungary in the summer of 2008, please visit (click or copy URL and paste on your browser address box):

[http://www.ineer.org/Events/ICEE2008Info/2008-08-05\\_Scenes-from-ICEE\\_2008.pdf](http://www.ineer.org/Events/ICEE2008Info/2008-08-05_Scenes-from-ICEE_2008.pdf)

### **(D) Hungary, March 2008**

In March, 2008, we were invited by Professor Gabriel Robert, the Rector of the University of Pecs in Pecs, Hungary, to a very special ceremony. The occasion was the award of the Doctorem Honoris Causa (the Honorary Doctorate degree, that is, "Dr.h.c." that is customarily attached to the end of the name of an awardee, just like the "Ph.D." is) for Win, given to him for his accomplishments in engineering research and education. We were told that the University of Pecs, a 700-year university that is one of the oldest in Europe and the biggest in

Hungary with 50,000 students, rarely gives out the Dr.h.c. award. Last year, the recipient was Jose Carreras, the renown tenor. During a memorabile one week in Hungary, we were totally spoilt by the pomp and circumstances, but especially by the kindness and generosity of our hosts. Every meal turned out to be a feast. To see some selected scenes from our experience in March 2008, please go to (click or copy URL and paste on your browser address box):

[http://www.ineer.org/Events/ICEE2008Info/2008-03-25\\_Scenes-from\\_Dr-hr-C\\_Award\\_Ceremony.pdf](http://www.ineer.org/Events/ICEE2008Info/2008-03-25_Scenes-from_Dr-hr-C_Award_Ceremony.pdf)

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