

Happy New Year.

2016 has been a wonderful year, in which I have travelled extensively and met many old friends and made new ones. Thanks to the marvels of modern communications and travel I feel that the pulse of the Asia Pacific Orthopaedic Association is getting stronger and the life blood in its veins is rejuvenating us. The last few years have been particularly exciting for the Association with the infusion of the Federation system pioneered by Dr. David McNicol and ably constructed by my predecessor Dr. Ted Mah. Ted in particular remains a powerhouse who will continue to strengthen and improve the Federation as Chairman of the Federation Committee. Thus far the Association has 15 National Associations in the Federation. The older Chapter system remains strong and will provide a more exclusive environment for members wishing to have independent closer ties.



With this huge growth in our membership, comes greater challenges. The APOA Executive, Council and I will need to find more effective ways to engage the membership and to keep you informed and excited about our aims and objectives. I am greatly indebted to an excellent team that has supported me in my pursuits. The Kuala Lumpur secretariat under the stewardship of Dato K S Sivananthan has been building up our ability to communicate with the establishment of an ever-increasing database of members and emails. It maintains Chapter membership records and also the links to National Federation members. However, with such large numbers and the separation of time and distance, this is a daunting task. I would ask you to help us by pointing out our deficiencies so that we can improve.

Our secretary Dr. Jamal Ashraf is a master of social media who somehow manages to track everyone through Facebook, Whatsapp and other channels. He is indefatigable and miraculously manages to find time to ring key people for a chat. He is perfecting the art of day-to-day communications with the Executive and Council via the Kuala Lumpur secretariat although he is based in Lucknow, India. He is also the chief architect of the APOA app, which is available for Android and IOS. If you have not already downloaded this app, I greatly encourage you to do so. All these technologies represent a new stage for the APOA to display its talents and bring us closer together.

The Journal of Orthopaedic Surgery is on the cusp of a major transformation under the able stewardship of Professor Kenneth Cheung. It is already indexed on Medline/Index Medicus, Science Citation Index Expanded, SCOPUS and Index Copernicus with an impact factor of 0.542. The journal receives a large number of submissions worldwide. We are in the midst of moving from our traditional free access model to open access via SAGE publications. As you know, the open access model will ensure greater visibility of our articles and most likely greater recognition and impact. Of course the downside is that authors will need to subsidize the publications in this model. There is great news for those who are already ready to submit their articles. The APOA will pay for the publication of your accepted articles in the interim period of two years starting next year. So, if you are ready, then submit your masterpiece the moment we go online. Demand is very high and so is the quality of papers we receive.

Dr. Ted Mah handed over the reins (or yoke?) of office to me at a splendid Biennial Congress in Melbourne that was organized superbly by Dr. John Bartlett and Dr. Graham Mercer. Many older presidents turned up. Dr. Hiroshi Yamamoto gave a great plenary speech outlining the history of the spine section and I was surprised to find that Prof. Yoshiharu Takemitsu still plays tennis regularly. It was amazing to see him bounding along from room to room during the conference. The younger presidents, Prof Kamal Bose, Prof John Leong, Dato KS Sivananthan, Dr. Robert Bauze Prof Po-Quang Chen and Prof Charoen Chotigavanich were all there looking very dapper and well. The Australian chapter donated special lapel badges that were handed out to Past Presidents at a special ceremony by Ted Mah. The Malaysian chapter donated gold orchid brooches that were handed out to their accompanying spouses by myself and my wife Jessie. Two special Honorary Fellow awards were presented to Prof Keith Luk our longstanding Treasurer and Prof. David Fang our journal Editor who guided us for many years. Many papers were presented in all specialties and the sectional and Council meetings proceeded in specially assigned rooms. The association also sponsored eight young ambassadors from 6 regions as did the spine and arthroplasty sections,

The Melbourne meeting was an undoubted success. I feel that there is a great need to build on this to improve on the quality and increase the participation from outside the host nation. A larger multinational body is needed to increase the visibility of the meeting and to implement a truly Asia Pacific feel to all our future meetings. As such the Executive has recommended to Council to expand the composition of the Congress

Committee to include one member nominated from each section, chapter and Federation. This Committee will vet future bids for Congress venues and work together with the local organizers to internationalize the look, content and attendance of the meeting. In accordance with our future aims this Committee will function through digital communications. Both the next venues, Turkey and Malaysia have agreed to collaborate with this Committee if it is formed.

Our Association has grown immensely in this century. Whereas it was a smaller and cosy group, which served our purpose well in the past, the sections of the Association are themselves almost as large as the original Association and yearning for a place of their own. The association has recognized the desire to have a space in which sub specialists can gather to discuss the finer exotic points of their trade. However we in the Executive also recognize that the young are our future and need much support. To this end the Executive has recommended to Council that the Association be allowed to form Specialty Societies under the APOA aegis, which will have their own funding and Board. The president of each of these will be the de facto Chairman of the corresponding Section of the Association. Sections will hitherto serve the needs of general orthopaedic surgeons and younger trainees with the assistance of the specialist Societies. In addition, we are in the process of forming a young surgeons Section to give voice to our future leaders.

A set of resolutions was sent out to Council, after approval by the Executive. Voting on these changes took place by a special online poll created and run by our Secretary. I will keep you posted soon about these new developments. As you see, radical changes involving much work are now being mooted. If they are passed I am sure that your Executive has the talent to make it succeed. However, with the assistance of Council members and the general membership these changes will happen faster. Please join us to make our Association a success.

The first port of call in this new model of the APOA is the Trauma and Infection meeting in Putrajaya in 2017. You can find details of this at www.apoatrauma.com. This meeting is a standalone meeting of two sections of the Association. In the past these meetings were organized entirely by the Sectional Chairmen with little support from the central body. The use of a central organizer will improve the consistency of future meetings as 'corporate memory' is engendered and forward planning made possible. Much of our efforts with this meeting has been to set up lines of communication and getting the professional organizer to understand our needs. Lines of payment have also had to be established. Now that the model is established and working the Association should have an easier time for future meetings.

In parting I wish you the best in this New Year. May 2017 be a great year for you at work and at home.

David Siew-Kit Choon
President APOA 2016-2018