

## Cultural Inheritance and Innovation of Wood & Wood Products

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Wood Culture

The China-ASEAN International Wood Culture Forum took place in Nanning, China on November 19, 2010. The event was organized by the International Wood Culture Society (IWCS) and supported by the China Timber and Wood Products Distribution Association and IUFRO Division 5.

The forum attracted some 100 representatives from China, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore. With the theme of *Cultural Inheritance and Innovation of Wood and Wood Products* in China-ASEAN, the forum covered five topics:

- (1) Resources and historical cultural characteristics of wood and wood products in China-ASEAN
- (2) The culture integration and innovation of wood products based on cultural market trends
- (3) Wood culture for corporate identity
- (4) Wood industry's responsibility
- (5) Platform for learning and developing wood culture for the betterment of wood

In Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar wood artifacts such as ancient wood carving, wood framed constructions and wood decoration, while maintaining their local symbolism, were deeply influenced by Chinese culture, Indian Buddhism and western cultures. In Thailand wood products are part of the cultural and religious life and in furniture design and interior wood decoration great emphasis is placed on details. All aspects of Thai daily life are characterized by a blend of past traditions and present-day innovation.

In Malaysia wood is widely used in daily life and wood culture has played an important role in the development of Malaysian culture. The wood carvings of Jepara in Indonesia started during the Majapahit dynasty and were influenced by Islam. The design of the carvings developed from floral ornaments to calligraphy and figural motifs. The artistic quality of wood carving increases the value of the wooden products.

With regard to the raw material problems with Hongmu, a very rare wood, Singapore entrepreneurs presented three solutions that take account of the conditions that tropical forests are not destroyed and domestic and international laws are not violated.

Sixteen Chinese speakers made presentations on the culture of Chinese traditional Hongmu furniture, wood decoration, wood carving, wooden floors, and wood and health. The situation of the industry and challenges concerning the production of wooden stairs, doors and toys were also discussed. Chinese wood product enterprises are gaining in experience both from China and abroad and are in a transition phase from imitated to innovative products.



*Pictures taken by IWCS staff:  
Group photo with speakers (top); Discussion session of  
2010 China-ASEAN International Wood Culture Forum*

During the forum delegates also visited the 2010 China – ASEAN Expo. At the Chinese Pavilions and the ASEAN Pavilion, timber merchants exhibited many competitive wood products with unique characteristics. At the Wood Culture Pavilion with the theme *Beauty of Wood*, visitors enjoyed traditional Chinese wood culture and art such as classical collections of wonderful Ming and Qing dynasty furniture and extant works of art.

The 2010 event was the first that offered a platform for discussions on culture of wood and wood products in China. The forum provided a good foundation for further communication and cooperation in the region. The idea of “*Wood is Good*” as promoted by IWCS was endorsed by the delegates. IWCS will set up a working group for the continuous exploration of wood culture of China-ASEAN region.