

Travel Report from ASP-DAC 2001

<http://www.aspdac.com/>

February 20, 2001

Flavius Gruian
Lund Institute of Technology
<Flavius.Gruian@cs.lth.se>

The Asia-South Pacific Design Automation Conference (ASP-DAC) is the far east brother of the big Design Automation Conference (DAC). This year's ASP-DAC was hosted by Yokohama, Japan, between January 30 - February 2. My purpose of being there was centered on presenting a paper (*LEneS: Task Scheduling for Low-Energy Using Variable Supply Voltage Processors* by myself and Kris Kuchcinski) and meeting many of the great names in design automation.

The conference started with five parallel full day tutorials. I had a hard time deciding which to attend since *Software Development Methods for Embedded Systems* was only one of the several interesting tracks. Finally I chose *SpecC: Specification Language and Design Methodology* tutorial inspired by D.D. Gajski. SpecC was born at UCI, but its development has just recently been moved to eastern Asia, and Japan especially. TOSHIBA is working on a SpecC based modeling and synthesis tool which will be freely available for non-commercial use.

The actual conference span over three days, each containing 4-5 parallel tracks. The first day also contained the University LSI Contest which contained a multitude of working systems, fully designed by students. Throughout the conference I mainly followed the low-power and low-energy oriented tracks, so my impression was formed only based on these. And I have to confess, I expected a bit more from such a big conference. Most of the papers & presentations I was interested in contained dated methods and results or of mediocre quality. Yet, some (the embedded tutorials) delivered the high standard I was expecting. Only to mention here: *New Directions in Compiler Technology for Embedded Systems* by N. Dutt (UCI) and *Power Optimization and Management in Embedded Systems* by M. Pedram (Univ. of Southern California).

Apart from the formal frame of the conference, I came in contact with many researchers, from US mainly. It seems like the universities from US and Japan are quite interested in getting people for post-docs or graduate studies. I also found a korean research group involved in ARTES, which works in the exact same area as myself. Hopefully I will pay them a visit in Seoul soon.

Finally, the conference venue, Pacifico Yokohama Conference Center and the surroundings were absolutely marvelous. And the traditional japanese courtesy was at times almost embarrassing for me, as a westerner. I also managed to take a few days off and visit all the ex-capitals of Japan.