

Conference Report

International Conference of World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies (WFAS) Tokyo/Tsukuba 2016

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The International Conference of WFAS Tokyo/Tsukuba 2016 was held at Tsukuba International Congress Center on November 5 and 6, 2016. Headed by Shuji Goto as Conference President and Shuichi Katai as Head of Vice President, and co-hosted by the Japan Society of Acupuncture and Moxibustion and the Japan Traditional Acupuncture and Moxibustion Society, some 1,800 guests attended from throughout the world. Under the theme of “The Art of Acupuncture and Moxibustion,” it spotlighted the advancements that have been made in the field of acupuncture and moxibustion over a period of 23 years since the conference was last held in Japan.

The venue was filled with an air of excitement, and all the sessions were packed full of avid guests.

Keynote Lectures

In this session, Dr. Baoyan Liu, President of WFAS, first gave a comprehensive lecture, followed by a lecture by Dr. Tadashi Yano, titled “Formation of Japanese Acupuncture and Role in Future Society.” Dr. Yano presented a wealth of information that ought to be disseminated more and more widely, such as that acupuncture has a significant effect in preventing the impairment of motor activity among elderly people, and that applying acupuncture strengthens the immune system and helps maintain a healthy mind and body in today’s stressful society.



Dr. Tadashi Yano



Dr. Kenji Kawakita gave a lecture that focused on how Japanese acupuncture exerts an effect with shallow insertion. His scientific approach to evaluating such Japanese acupuncture deeply impressed the audience.



Dr. Kenji Kawakita

Hari-Kyu Technical Sessions

These sessions were divided into seven categories, each featuring lectures that centered on three to four themes.

1. Diverse Hari-Kyu Therapeutics from Newborn to Young Adults
2. Dealing with Young Adults to Patients in the Mature Stage of Life
3. Coping with Mid-Life Symptoms with Hari-Kyu
4. Coping with Mid-Life Symptoms with Hari-Kyu
5. Acupuncture Solutions for the Elderly Patients
6. Hari-Kyu Exhibition: When History and Art Meet
7. Acupuncture for Common Diseases

The speakers used their allotted 25 minutes to the fullest to demonstrate their own practice or the practice of the school of acupuncture to which they belong. They demonstrated acupuncture on model patients while explaining each procedure, and showed the changes that such treatment can bring about.

This was a groundbreaking idea. What everyone had been seeking for long, but what no one had so far attempted, was realized at WFAS Tokyo/Tsukuba 2016. The audience turned its undivided attention to the joint performance by each school of practice, and gave a round of applause to each technique.

These technical sessions also included a 60-minute luncheon technical seminar on both days of the conference.

Luncheon Technical Seminar 1: Meridian Therapy

Luncheon Technical Seminar 2: Wisdom of Japanese Acupuncture and Moxibustion

Theory is important to acupuncture and moxibustion, but the technical aspect is just as important. Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion blossomed in diverse ways from the late 16th century to the mid-17th century, and thereafter developed by adopting Chinese acupuncture and moxibustion practices that were standard at the time.

However, ongoing developments have produced diverse acupuncture and moxibustion techniques today, such that we are poised to once again welcome

an era of technical profusion. The joint performance was a showcase of remarkable demonstrations by each school of practice, and provided a glimpse of the diverse nature of Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion.

Just as diseases differ depending on age, so do the practices of acupuncture and moxibustion. The series of presentations that demonstrated this also spotlighted the detailed and meticulous skills of Japanese acupuncturists. For example, Dr. Satoru Yamaguchi's approach to treating headaches by drawing fully upon all available information, is probably unique to Japan.



Dr. Satoru Yamaguchi

This WFAS conference will no doubt go down in history as one where differing schools of practice came together and put on a joint performance. These schools included Daishi-Style Shonishin Association, The Japanese Society of Ryodouraku Medicine, Toyo Hari Medical Association, Shakuju Association, Tohokai, Tokyo Kyuushin Kenkyukai, Koshinkai—A Society for the Studies of Acupuncture, Moxibustion and Meridian, General Incorporated Association Hokushinkai, Nagano Method Clinical Study Society, The Japan Society of Pediatric Acupuncture and The Society for the Meridian Therapy. The conference will furthermore mark a new starting point for Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion hereafter.



A scene from a Hari-Kyu Technical Session

A future issue lies in making sure each technique leads to studies based on clinical evidence. Toward this end, it is important to present case reports to media that is recognized by large numbers of people.

Well-written case reports outweigh poorly conducted RCTs. Moreover, sharing each school's standard treatment methods for various diseases provide a good reference to many people. Each school of practice should aim to achieve universality, instead of remaining in its own shell. In this sense as well, the technical sessions provided a good opportunity for all acupuncturists to think about the future of Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion.

Dr. Yong-Suk Kim from South Korea and Prof. Jing-xian Han from China also participated in the technical sessions. In particular, the presentation on "San Jiao Acupuncture Method and Cognitive Impairment," which introduced the joint study carried out by Prof. Jing-xian Han and Prof. Akira Hyodo in Japan and the results thereof, captured the attention of the media. Warm support and encouragement are extended to the two gentlemen for their study and practice that address head-on the issue of dementia, which is claiming an increasing number of patients both in China and Japan.



Prof. Jing-xian Han

Videos of the Hari-Kyu Technical Sessions, along with videos of other sessions, will soon be released for sale as a DVD set by the WFAS 2016 executive committee. It is expected to benefit front-line acupuncturists.



WFAS Tokyo/Tsukuba 2016 • Set of 15 DVDs

Japanese Acupuncture Overseas

This session introduced Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion that are practiced around the world. Mr. Junji Mizutani, a Canada-based acupuncturist involved in the publication of *North American Journal of Oriental Medicine* (NAJOM), introduced the significance of the bilingual journal. Mr. Yoshihiro Odo from Brazil outlined the history of acupuncture and moxibustion in Brazil, and described their somewhat tangled status in today's medical industry. Mr. Haruo Yamaki from Nicaragua discussed the history of Japanese acupuncture in Nicaragua since 1987, with a sense of pride and confidence as one who has played a central role in its dissemination. The establishment of the University of Oriental Medicine's five-year program is particularly worthy of mention, and high expectations are pinned on the university's graduates. Dr. Mitsuharu Tsuchiya, who boasts 40 years of clinical experience in Portugal, spoke about the potentials and practice of Japanese acupuncture and moxibustion. Mr. Tadanori Takada, who works at the National Center of Traditional Medicine, Ministry of Health in Cambodia, discussed the possibilities of utilizing traditional medicine in ASEAN developing countries, and introduced cases of acupuncture and moxibustion treatment in the country.

Japanese acupuncture is also widely practiced in countries in addition to those introduced in the conference. For the future of traditional medicine, it shall become important to view Japanese acupuncture from a comprehensive, global perspective, and consider new styles that befit its global status.

Public Seminar

Academic conferences generally offer a public session, and this conference was no exception. Two highly interesting lectures were offered to general visitors under the theme of "Moxibustion can change the World," and introduced the practice of Japanese-style moxibustion in Africa and Nepal.

Ms. Yuki Itaya is a California licensed acupuncturist, lives in the U.K. She lectured on the

activities of Moxafrica, where she works as a trustee. Surprisingly, the activities attempt to provide relief to tuberculosis and AIDS patients in Africa, through Japanese-style moxibustion. That is, the organization teaches the patients the simple method of applying moxa to just two points—the Zu San Li on both legs—through a doctor or nurse, so that the patients can apply the moxa by themselves. In her lecture, she spoke fervently about how many tuberculosis and AIDs patients can be saved using this simple method.

Ms. Minae Hata, representative of Yomogi No Kai, is working to establish an acupuncture and anma massage school and a moxa production factory in Nepal, to export moxa from Nepal to Japan, and to spread Japanese-style acupuncture and anma massage in Nepal. She is also aiming to spread Nepal moxa sticks in Japan.

These two women deserve our utmost respect for their strong will to contribute to people's health around the world through moxibustion, and their energy and capacity to realize that goal.

Moxibustion is a treatment that was developed in China, but Japan is today the only country that practices the original moxibustion method of burning moxa directly on the skin. Based on Dr. Shimetaro Hara's study, Moxafrica has developed a treatment against tuberculosis and AIDs, and has applied it to clinical practice, with remarkable results. Numerous people have regained their health and prolonged their life.



A photo showing a Moxafrica team applying moxa to the Zu San Li



Ms. Yuki Itaya lecturing about Moxafrica

Hari-Kyu Scientific Session

This session was composed of two parts.

1. Pleasantness in Acupuncture Therapy
2. Treatment of Tuberculosis Using Direct Moxibustion

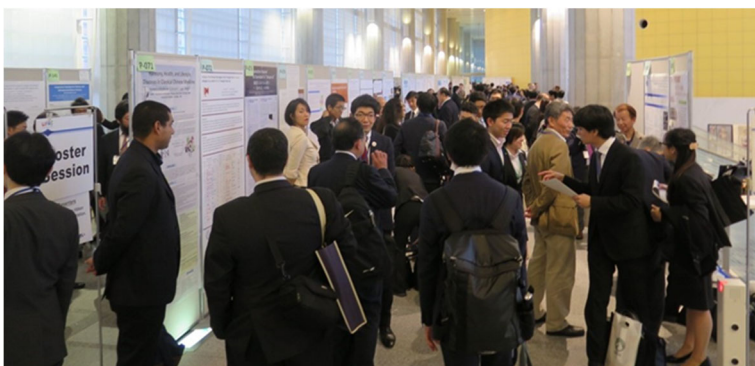
The first part on acupuncture focused on the roles of tactile afferents and reward system. Among the lectures, Professor Kenji Kawakita's lecture proved to be a highly significant one that emphasized the strong importance of shallow insertion with soft stimulations that are characteristic of Japanese acupuncture. The second part on moxibustion discussed the future potentials for implementing deeper studies and more widescale treatment activities, in reference to the fact that studies that form the foundation of Moxafrica's activities, which had already been implemented in the 1930s, have been revived today. In Japan, there is the expression, "onko-chishin." In English, it means "developing new ideas based on a study of the past, and learning from the past." Dr. Shimetaro Hara's study of moxibustion for tuberculosis had long been forgotten, but its revival by Mr. Merlin Young illustrated to us that the spirit of the saying is still alive today. Mr. Young is the founder of Moxafrica.

Oral Presentation

Tsukuba International Congress Center has many rooms with a capacity of approximately 50 people. The oral presentations were held in these rooms, each of which were filled with a lively air of excitement. The lectures were diverse, ranging from acupuncture and moxibustion case reports, to an introduction of new technologies and a rediscovery of old technologies, as well as reports of basic research and studies of history of medicine. There is not enough space to introduce them all, so let us introduce an exemplary moxibustion study by Mr. Sumikazu Nakayama, on "Direct Moxibustion for Japanese and Non-Japanese Pilgrims; Researching Differences in Research in Reaction to the Protocol." In his study, Mr. Nakayama applied ancient direct moxibustion, which is practiced only in Japan today, on Japanese pilgrims and foreign visitors to Japan, and asked them to answer a questionnaire. As a result, the negative image of moxibustion decreased, and a positive image increased in both groups of people. The study provided useful reference for predicting whether the direct moxibustion method, also practiced by Moxafrica today, will spread on a global scale hereafter.

Poster Presentation

Poster presentations, which were divided into two days, as they were so many of them, attracted large crowds of people on both days. Particularly conspicuous were scenes throughout the venue, where visitors and presenters were seen engaged in heated discussion, asking and answering questions, in front of each poster presentation.

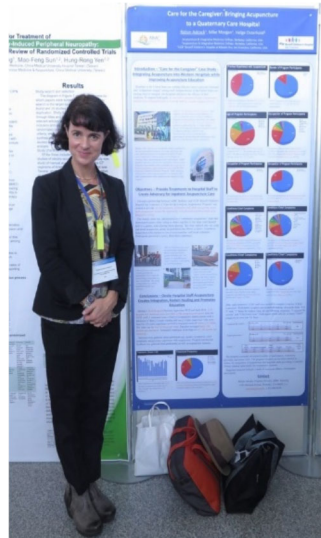


Crowds of people at the poster session

There were also many presentations by overseas presenters. The WFAS Tokyo/Tsukuba 2016, being an international conference where the official language is English, attracted many presentations from English-speaking countries.

For example, the photo at right shows a presentation by Ms. Robyn Adcock from Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine College, Berkley (AIMC) in California.

An interesting point about her study is that she examined the effects of acupuncture applying acupuncture to medical staff members of a hospital in San Francisco. Because the subjects were medical staff members, they understood their own conditions well, and applying acupuncture treatment to such people meant that it was possible to acquire direct feedback from medical specialists.



Ms. Robyn Adcock from
AIMC Berkeley in California

The hospital has recognized Ms. Adcock's study, and will offer a grant to her group next year.

Summary of the Conference

WFAS Tokyo/Tsukuba 2016 was well planned overall, and was implemented in great detail. It was a remarkable event that illustrated how an international conference should be implemented.

The seven Keynote Lectures, the Hari-Kyu Technical Sessions that included a Luncheon Seminar, lectures on Japanese Acupuncture Overseas, Hari-Kyu Scientific Sessions, 24 Oral Presentations, 212 Poster Presentations, and 32 Student Poster Presentations, filled the entire venue.

The conference was an *international* conference, but taking advantage of its being held in Japan, the acupuncture and moxibustion community in Japan launched full-scale efforts to provide the best they

could offer. This was perhaps the first time that the acupuncture and moxibustion community in Japan came together as one and demonstrated its capabilities to foreign organizations and societies. In this sense as well, WFAS Tokyo/Tsukuba 2016 was a truly groundbreaking event.

Other photos



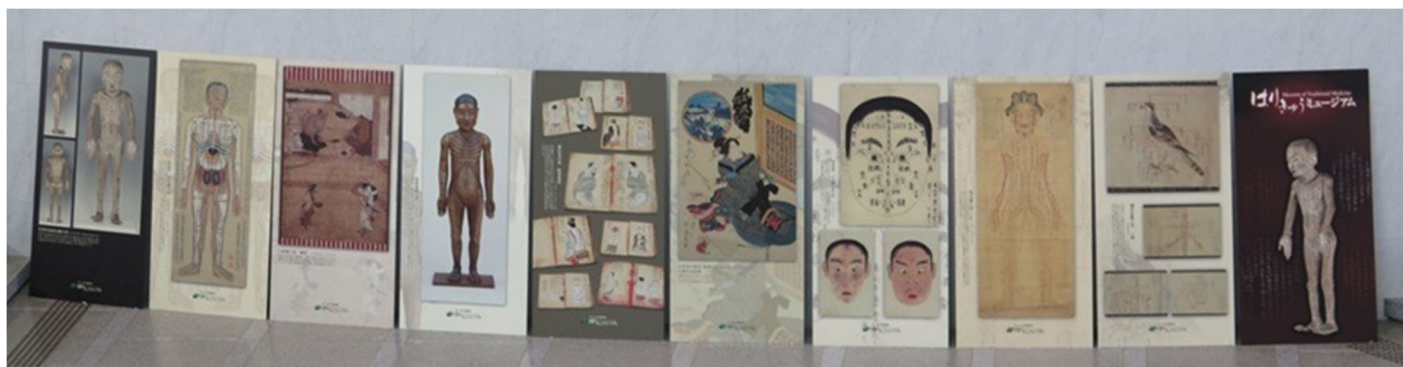
Registration for the conference



Exhibition hall filled with visitors



Scene from the gala banquet



Impressive displays of the Hari-Kyu Museum