

NERVAL's DIARY

Le voyageur enthousiaste observe ...

Tokyo, Keio Plaza Hotel, April 5–9, 2001

A Splendid Celebration: The 100th Birthday of the Japanese Dermatological Association

3,200 participants convened at this place to celebrate the centenary of the Japanese Dermatological Association (JDA) exactly 100 years after its first scientific meeting (April 8–9, 1901) [1]. (Figure 1 shows the Congressional Banner, a present of the JDA and Prof. Takeji Nishikawa to the Vienna Institute for the History of Medicine.)

Under the presidency of Prof. Takeji Nishikawa of Keio University (at the time also secretary of the International Committee of Dermatology), an illustrious assembly of Japanese and foreign dermatologists held a 3-day meeting worthy of the society and country. Stephen I. Katz, president of the ICD, several other members of this gremium, Robin Marks, Melbourne, Jean-Paul Ortonne, Nice, and Klaus Wolff, Vienna, as well as Martin M. Black, president of the EADV, Atsushi Kukita, president of the Tokyo World Congress in 1982, and many other Japanese and foreign dignitaries in the field were among the attendees. The Centennial Dohi Lecturer was Prof. Jean-Hilaire Saurat, Geneva, who elaborated his specialty of retinoid action, metabolism and application in dermatology. The meeting was begun with a festive reception at the place, continued with a 4-hour historical session and peaked with a centennial remembrance celebration on Saturday, April 7, the centennial day. 382 posters were presented, and English and Japanese flowed in an easy mix.

At the congress, an issue of the *Japanese Journal of Dermatology* was presented which contained several commemorative articles outlining the past 100 years and the growth of the field in Japan. Four articles from abroad, from Austria, the UK, France and the USA, went into some detail in this respect, and it may be worth drawing the readers' attention to these publications [Jap J Dermatol 2001;111:659–697]. According to the preferred topic of T. Nishikawa's research, a special pemphigus symposium was held, uniting many leading investigators in discussion including L.A. Diaz and J.R. Stanley. At the closing ceremony, a series of dermatological prizes was distributed to the winners of



Fig. 1. Banner of the Meeting, displaying the portraits of K. Dohi, U. Matsuura, I. Toyama, S. Minami, M. Ota, M. Ito, K. Kitamura (courtesy of Prof. Takeji Nishikawa and the JDA).

Fig. 2. Label of the centenary wine of the JDA served at the Meeting (courtesy of Prof. Takeji Nishikawa and the JDA).

the respective concourses. The short version of all the papers presented will be published in the November issue 2001 of the *Japanese Journal of Dermatology*.

Most memorably, it shall be mentioned that the JDA gave to the participants a special commemorative tie displaying an allusion to the national symbol of a red sun in a white field (on dark-blue ground). Moreover, a special brand of red and white wine was served, carrying a remarkable label, designed by Dr. Manabu Ohyama, member of the staff of the Keio Department (fig. 2). A big '100' in the center of the

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label is printed over a multitude of dermatological diagnoses: eczema, lichen, psoriasis vulgaris, dermatitis herpetiformis, keratoacanthoma, basal cell epithelioma, etc., unmistakably a *dermatological vocabulary*. The author of these lines was flabbergasted when seeing it, because it somehow paralleled his logo of the ESHDV, created for this society last year.

In the lecture opening the history symposium, the Japanese community of dermatologists was stimulated to create a 'Japanese Society for the History of Dermatology', thereby paralleling the 'international society tripod' of investigative dermatology (SID, ESDR, JSID) by another such 'tripod of history societies' of our discipline (American History of Dermatology Society, ESHDV and a new Japanese corollary, to be founded).

On this occasion, Prof. Klaus Wolff and I donated to the JDA a life-size historical portrait bust of Moriz Kaposi (1837–1902), Keizo Dohi's first teacher in dermatology during his time in Vienna. The bust was stylishly displayed in a historical exhibition at the congress venue together with many other memorabilia of early Japanese dermatologists.

The last day (Monday, April 9) was spent paying respects to the national geographical landmark, to be looked at from Hakone, south of Tokyo. Railway, a zig-zag tram, a cable car and a funicular bring the traveller up to 1,044 m at Ohwakudani. It was a sunny day, but, alas, Fuji-San was shrouded in mist. Nevertheless, down and across Lake Ashinoko by boat and back to Hakone-Yumoto to the railway station was a scenic ride. The concluding flight aboard a 747 out of Narita eventually got me from economy into business class because a doctor was needed, and this transfer expressed the gratitude of the airplane's crew, anxious to have to consider an emergency landing between the Amur and Lena rivers of Eastern Siberia.

Reference

- 1 Holubar K, Saurat J-H: The centenary of the Japanese Dermatological Association: Editorial. *Dermatologica* 2001;202:85–86.

à bientôt,

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