

WFC Biennial Congress & Assembly

The 11th WFC Congress: Assembly Japan Country Report

April 4th 2011

Hello ladies and gentlemen. It is my great honour to be here today presenting our country report from Japan. My name is Kei Takeyachi, executive director of Japanese Association of Chiropractors (JAC).

First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to some of you who sent us your thought and support for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami happened on March 11 in Japan. A huge earthquake shook the northeast part of Japan and over 30,000 left dead or missing and many survived people in the afflicted areas have crowded into shelters. I was in Tokyo at the time of the earthquake which is 373 km away from the seismic center but we still felt strong quakes then inside our office was badly damaged. If anyone would like to help donations for the victims, please contact the Red Cross or Red Crescent in your country. We are also traveling to the affected areas next week to help volunteering activities such as sending supplies and offering chiropractic care.

Now I'm going back to the report. Japan has a long history of the chiropractic profession since a Palmer graduate Dr Saburo Kawaguchi's return in 1916. However, legislation has not yet been achieved. Currently it's believed there are more than 20,000 lay people practicing chiropractic and only about 650 chiropractors who fulfill the WHO educational standards. JAC has about 390 members including student members which cover majority of those 650 chiropractors.

Still nowadays some Japanese DCs are teaching chiropractic techniques to lay people and some run their local own schools. But recently the number of substandard schools decreased and the number of foreign DCs teaching techniques to local substandard practitioners also dramatically decreased due to our political effort.

In recent times with JAC's financial support, the JCR (Japan Chiropractic Registers) administered the first chiropractic standardization exam for registration purposes with the assistance of IBCE (International Board of Chiropractic Examiners). It's a historical moment that graduates of three different schools, RMIT University Chiropractic Unit Japan, International Chiropractic College and Murdoch University International Study Centre Japan, voluntarily took the exam on February 11 this year.

Last May, 2010 it was a big turning point of JAC's legislation lobbying activities that the WHO chiropractic guidelines were mentioned for the first time at the Japanese parliament, the Diet. A member of the Diet, Mr Masao Akamatsu of Komeito Party debated on the WHO guidelines and a

possible review of the Miura report. This report is an impediment to regulation for the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Moreover, for the first time, the government admitted and recognized the growth of the chiropractic profession overseas.

Last September, at one of 47 prefectures in Japan, Kumamoto, at their prefectural Assembly, Mr Kazuki Ikeda of the Liberal Democratic Party spoke about the need for legislation and regulation of chiropractic based on WHO guidelines. In reply the prefectural government also agreed with this suggestion to be as early as possible. This is the JAC's second time achievement at the prefectural level following the Oita prefecture in 2007.

Another enthusiastic politician, Mr Katsuhito Yokokume of a current ruling party, the Democratic party held a private meeting with the JAC executives to help in establishing the Federation of Diet members supporting WHO standard chiropractic legislation with all parties. This federation is now under discussion and will be formed sometime this year with many politicians from different parties involved. We also have monthly regular contact with several politicians from different parties to keep them updated with professional information.

Currently JAC are dealing with following issues for professional recognition;

- Having regular meetings with members of the Diet to negotiate about the approval of university based chiropractic education programs, and, the recognition of JCR registered chiropractors by government for regulation.
- Encouraging local chiropractors to enroll in a planned new conversion course and then take the JCR/IBCE exam on completion.
- Encouraging local chiropractic schools to upgrade to the international accreditation standard. Recently one of local chiropractic schools in Osaka agreed with this.
- Making reimbursement of chiropractic care with traffic accident with private insurance.

Let me end by saying this. Chiropractic legislation is not an ultimate goal of our journey and it's only a part of it. To continue on our journey we need to be well prepared ourselves with establishment of a respectful and ethical profession in Japan. Then we will really be ready for when chiropractic legislation happens anytime. Thank you for your attention.

Prepared and presented by Dr Kei Takeyachi