

The 100th Anniversary Meeting of the Japanese Pathological Society

The recent earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima Nuclear Power Station disaster brought untold misery and suffering to a large number of people in Japan. The Japanese Pathological Society had scheduled to celebrate its 100th anniversary meeting between April 28th and 30th. Under these difficult circumstances, the appropriateness of these celebrations was carefully considered. It was subsequently decided to curtail parts of the celebration and support was extended to rebuilding the devastated areas. However, it was also decided to hold the meeting and continue to fulfill the society's prime responsibility, which was to better understand the pathological basis of disease.

The main ceremony was attended by Prince Hitachi(Masahito) of Japan, who is well known for his philanthropic activities and his contribution to cancer research. Prof Andrew Wyllie represented the Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland. I was also fortunate to attend the meeting as a trainee representative of the Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland. This was part of an exchange program to foster better relation between the Japanese and UK pathological societies.

Although majority of the session were in Japanese there were quite a few that were in English. Eminent speakers included Prof Andrew Wyllie on "DNA copy numbers in colorectal cancer", Prof Ralph Hruban on "Pancreatic cancer", Prof Thomas Krichner on "Cancer stem cells" and Prof Vincenzo Eusebi on "Breast Cancer". A whole afternoon was dedicated to pathology education in Asia and speakers included guests from China, Korea and Taiwan. These sessions gave real insight into the changes that were taking place in both undergraduate and postgraduate education across these countries. A separate special workshop entitled "Young Investigator Session", which was chaired by Dr Daichi Maeda and formed a new addition to the Japanese society's usual programs, was entirely in English. I was a participant at this session and this gave me an opportunity to present my research work in front of eminent pathologists. In addition, I also got an opportunity to talk briefly about the current state of postgraduate histopathology education in UK.

On a lighter note, the hospitality was excellent and there were invitations for dinner everyday of the conference. There was of course the formal welcome dinner on the first day for all the foreign guests, when the president of the Japanese Pathological Society, Prof Masashi Fukayama, kindly handed out gifts to all foreign delegates. There was a reception the next day for the Japan-Asia and Japan-UK & Ireland exchange program delegates. On all occasions the quality and variety of the food was excellent.

The 100th Anniversary Meeting was a huge success. The exchange program combined with the young investigators sessions helped to showcase some excellent research done by both Japanese and UK pathologist. Such programs would definitely help us to maintain the links between the societies and may perhaps form a springboard to develop international collaborative work.

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