

Letters to the Editor

The Real Meaning of the World Federation of Neurological Societies 2013 Meeting in Seoul

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In September 2013, the largest event in the history of the Korean Neurosurgical Society was held in Korea : the World Federation of Neurological Societies (WFNS) meeting. The WFNS meeting was successfully held in the COEX Convention Center, where almost 4000 people participated.

The WFNS is an academy of the world's neurosurgeons¹⁾. The academy's goals include educating neurosurgeons in developing countries and promoting friendship among other nations' doctors²⁾. I have been interested in the education of foreign doctors for many years and this society rekindled my interest. All of our hospital's staff participated in advance registration for the first WFNS to be held in Korea and actively participated by giving presentations in sessions. I also presented, on the topic of "One World, One Neurosurgery".

1. "Our Mission" Neurosurgery education for Cambodian doctors : Over the last 10 years, since 2004, we have invited six Cambodian doctors to our hospital. We enhanced their education through a one-year neurosurgery fellowship program. The Cambodian Neurosurgical Society had 22 members in 2013, so these six neurosurgeons represented 27% of the total number of members. Our hospital's voluntary group focused on Cambodian doctors (Chairman, Prof. Won-Han Shin) was in charge of financial support, while accommodations were supported by a church located near our hospital, and I and another member were in charge of education. The curriculum included participation in operations, domestic seminars, conferences and management of all patients with a specialist. The education focused on treatment knowledge and techniques related to head and spine injury patient care. Four of the visiting doctors (Dr. Vy-cheth, Samnang, Nang, Vuthy) are currently based in Phnom

Penh, the Cambodian capital; one (Dr. Somony) is in Kampong Cham, and another (Dr. Kompheak) is in Siem Reap. After returning to their country, they have corresponded with both myself and our staff, and we have visited Cambodia to help with their treatment procedures. Following participation in a WFNS education seminar in January 2013 in Phnom Penh, I suggested to Dr. Yoko Kato, chair of the WFNS education committee, that for developing countries, neurosurgeon's education should correspond with each nation's actual situation.

2. Communication with Turkish neurosurgeons and learning about Turkish culture through neuroendovascular procedure education : In 2010, I gave a presentation titled "Standardization of catheter angiography training for neurovascular surgeons" at a neurosurgery seminar for the Turkey-Korean Friendship Conference in Antalya, Turkey. Subsequently, Professor Feridun Acar, head of Pamukkale University hospital, approached me and asked : "Could you teach my colleague? How long does it take to learn basic techniques?" I said that it takes one year. After the seminar, I returned to Korea and exchanged letters with Professor Acar. After that, two Turkish doctors came to our hospital and learned the techniques in three months training in 2010 and 2013. Under my supervision, they studied basic neuroendovascular anatomy, assisted in all procedures and surgeries, and documented all surgery records so that I could check and correct them. They also presented at a domestic seminar. During the training, I gained the impression that Turkish people were very proud of their participation in the Korean War and that their self-esteem was high. I was also able to get to know Turkish culture a little, thanks to them. I went to the Istanbul Culture Center in Seoul twice, and it proved a good opportuni-

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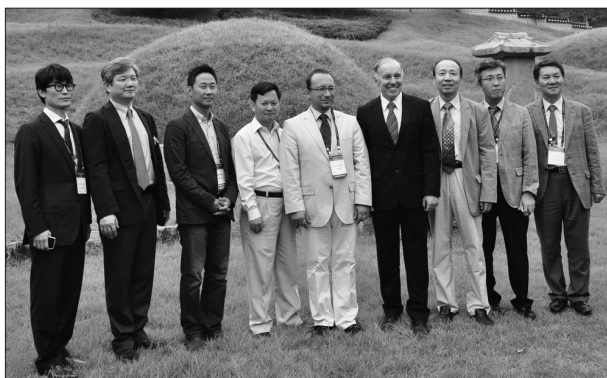


Fig. 1. Dr. Tae-Kwon Kim, Seung Won Park, Kee Park (USA), Heng Kompheak (Cambodia), Feridun Acar (Turkey), Robert Dempsey (USA), Bum-Tae Kim, Soo-Bin Im, Beob-Young Kim, from the left to the right.

ty to communicate and to boost friendship between the two countries. Additionally, I now have some understanding of the culture of the country that will host the next WFNS meeting. After the training, Dr. Mevi began working as an assistant professor at Pamukkale University and Dr. Ali is an assistant professor at Aden Menders University. We have exchanged letters regarding patients and treatments.

On September 9, the first day of the WFNS, I invited the doc-

tors who had taught me in the US and Japan, and the doctors whom I had taught from Turkey and Cambodia, to dinner (Fig. 1). My family participated in that meeting and the WFNS social meeting (welcome reception, Korean night and gala dinner). My daughter, a Yonsei University student, was on staff and volunteered to translate in those meetings. She said later that those occasions had been unforgettable experiences for her.

I feel I have learned many things through the WFNS 2013 meeting in Seoul. One thing stands out : it seems to me that people's minds share common properties, despite differences in nationality, race, language, and conditions. This is a basis for helping one another, and I believe that other neurosurgeons should have the same service opportunities that have been given to me. I think that this is the real meaning of the WFNS 2013 meeting in Seoul.

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