

## Chiropractic Developments in East Asia

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Australia is an Asian country with a history of providing educational programs in countries throughout its region. In particular, RMIT University has a long and proud record of quality courses being delivered in a number of major countries throughout East Asia, and in several cases, from our own campus in a particular country.

Here are a few simple but interesting facts about RMIT University: it is Australia's largest university with over 40,000 enrolled students; it has one of the greatest number of international students of any university in the world (including those in the U.S.); it is established under a specific act of Parliament; and it is the only institution in the world educating chiropractors which is older than the chiropractic profession itself, having been founded in 1887.

RMIT's chiropractic course commenced in 1975 and became the first chiropractic program in the world to be fully funded and accredited by government. The events of that time have set the pattern for our establishment of new chiropractic programs in the countries of our region. It is essential that three objectives are undertaken simultaneously, namely chiropractic education must be housed within a quality organisation with the vision, resources and commitment to the task; appropriate opportunities for clinical learning and subsequent clinical practice must be provided to ensure validity of the educational program through the delivery of chiropractic services to all sectors of the community; and efforts must be made to achieve legislative supportive of the practice of chiropractic in that country.

In Australia, the establishment of the chiropractic course in what is now RMIT University provided a high quality environment. The Australian Chiropractors Association and the International College of Chiropractic ensured that a wide variety of clinics and a six month internship in an external clinic became a pre-requisite for registration. Chiropractic has been recognised and protected under subsequent Victorian legislation since 1978. Today about half of the practicing chiropractors in Australian are RMIT alumni, and our graduates can be found in successful practices around the world.

In Japan, RMIT chiropractic proudly works with the Japanese Chiropractic Association (JCA) which, through its visionary leadership, has established an extraordinarily fine chiropractic educational facility in the heart of Tokyo. The Chiropractic Unit - Japan is housed on six floors of three buildings and our students also study on the campuses of a university in Tokyo and at RMIT in Melbourne. The resultant graduates will be highly trained doctors of chiropractic with a unique international perspective. In addition to the first-professional program, a large number of practicing chiropractors in Japan are undertaking the highest form of continuing and standardisation education, namely a university conversion degree in chiropractic science to bring them to a level appropriate for initial registration in Japan.

The work of Kazuyoshi Takeyachi, DC, the members of the education board of the JCA, and the dedicated chiropractic educators of the RMIT Chiropractic Unit Japan are having a profound effect on the chiropractic profession in Japan.

The same three principles are being applied in Korea. A university with great vision and irrevocable commitment to the young people of its country has dedicated a high level of funding and support to chiropractic education. The co-founder of Hanseo University, Professor Kee-sun Ham, is bringing extremely highly qualified academics into the university to ensure that all components of the course are taught at an exceptionally high level. The Korean Chiropractic Association is participating through the course advisory committee to ensure the course identifies and meets the unique needs of the Korean community.

An extensive "Teach the Teacher" program has been established to educate chiropractors as clinical teachers to implement the RMIT chiropractic integrative clinical curriculum design.

A network of clinics is being developed throughout the country to meet the needs of clinical placement for students. Many of these clinics are equipped at a higher level than most other private chiropractic clinics in the world, and, as at RMIT Melbourne, procedures such as bone densitometry can be undertaken on-site as part of the patient work-up where indicated. Associate Professor Hongmo Yang of Hanseo University has worked for a number of years to establish this network and provide basic introductory programs in chiropractic to ensure a smooth assimilation into the Korean health care community.

Our university is working towards the inclusion of a period of rotation in major teaching hospitals for students from Japan, Korea and the other countries in East Asia which will be commencing their chiropractic programs over the next five years. It may be very well for "the doctor of the future to give no medicine," but the clinical reality is that the doctor of the future, especially in our region, must possess the highest level of competency in differential diagnosis. Our graduates will be functioning as key components of the primary health care system in each country, and it has long been recognised by leading chiropractic educators that the appropriate diagnostic skills of a primary care physician are best learned in the environment of a major teaching hospital.

Integral to the establishment of our network is the development and delivery of the advanced RMIT Chiropractic integrative clinical curriculum design (ICCD), which has been developed for a decade by Professor Andy Kleynhans. A specific team of chiropractic educators with over 100 years in total of experience and wisdom led by Dr. Kleynhans, Professor of Chiropractic Science with RMIT University and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Biomedical and Health Science, has developed extensive learning materials for implementation. A feature of the new curriculum is its ability to be continually updated to reflect the literature and to integrate current concepts with fundamental sciences.

The course materials and modes of delivery have been rigorously field-tested over a year and were found to achieve a high level of competency in the practice of chiropractic with high-order integrative skills and a mastery level of learning. The ICCD will be introduced at all of RMIT's chiropractic units in 1998, and will be the standard curriculum in each new chiropractic unit as they come online over the next six years.

There would seem to be ample evidence to suggest that as we head into the second century of chiropractic education, the axis will swing from the east-west axis of North America to a north-south axis through east Asia. The chiropractic staff and students of RMIT University are clearly putting into action their commitment to excellence in chiropractic education in the global context.

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