

National Chiropractic Unity: A Japanese Perspective

Editor's note: While there has long been the notion that one national chiropractic association in the United States would best represent the chiropractic profession in this country, as the American Medical Association does for medicine, the ACA and ICA continue to work separately in pursuit of greater representation for chiropractic, splitting precious resources, often duplicating each others' efforts, and vying for attention and membership within the profession.

Will chiropractic in the U.S. ever have one national unified association? How would such an eventuality come to pass? There are some precedents for chiropractic national unity in other countries: Japan and Australia, for instance.

With this in mind, "DC" asked the co-chairman of the Chiropractic Council of Japan, Dr. Mitsumasa Endo for his insights on the subject of national chiropractic unity. Perhaps his perspective will be of value.

Since the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) Sydney meeting in 1988, we have devoted ourselves to making a unified chiropractic profession in Japan. Before May of 1991, we had meeting after meeting for a period of two and one-half years. We still were not able to accomplish our aim after all that time and effort.

Looking back on the whole struggle, we realize that we were attached by organizational ego. Naturally, everyone wishes to stand in a better place than others, and the same is said for organizations. However, if one stands in a better place, others are often placed at a disadvantage. When we were in that position, the idea of a co-chair system was suggested by executives of the WFC. The co-chair system unifies two organizations by excluding all the games of power politics. It is a rather difficult system for the bigger and stronger organizations to accept, but it is the only system that allows the smaller and weaker organization to unite with the larger and more powerful organization. We very much appreciated that sincere advice given by the WFC.

It is truly a waste of time and energy for chiropractic organizations to fight among each other. There are many rivals and enemies all around our profession seeking the chance to take in or destroy our profession. Moreover, in a country like Japan with no legislation guiding chiropractic today, there are always some possibilities that the prohibition of practicing chiropractic will be enforced by the government: witness the government or governing body of the health affairs in our neighboring Hong Kong and in France that are suppressing the chiropractic profession today. Also in many other countries, our profession is still under a threat of oppression by their government or medical profession.

In May 1991, during the WFC meeting in Toronto, we were finally able to conclude an agreement to form a unified organization called the Chiropractic Council of Japan under the co-chairman system. However, this does not mean that we accomplished our aim completely. This co-chairman system is not simply between two organizations. One of the organizations is composed of two

associations; the other organization is comprised of four associations. It will take years of time and extreme effort to pull down the walls among the associations. However, it is possible if we continue to work together for the common problems for the benefit of our profession and for our patients.

There are so many things we can do together: research projects; seminars; malpractice insurance programs; education programs; publications; patient education programs etc. We need many people from each organization working together to get these jobs done. By working together for these common tasks, we will be able to promote natural communication among the organizations and understand each other more clearly. Someday there will no longer need to be small separate associations under the umbrella of one organization.

We cannot delay our working together, waiting until all political problems among our own organizations are solved: otherwise our profession itself will face a crisis, and people will lose the the privilege of receiving this wonderful health care service of chiropractic.

Lastly, let me take this opportunity of expressing our deepest appreciation for all the research papers on the scientific validity of chiropractic effectiveness sent to us.¹ Thank you very much.

Mitsumasa Endo, D.C.

Co-chair

Chiropractic Council of Japan

1. Dr. Endo refers here to a request he made for research papers to educate the MDs in Japan responsible for an anti-chiropractic report published under the auspices of the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare (see "Japanese Government Study Condemns Chiropractic" in the November 22, 1991 issue of "DC").

FEBRUARY 1992