

A University-Based Chiropractic Program for Japan

Andreis M. Kleynhans, DC, OAM, FICC

TOKYO -- On March 16, 1995, Professor David Beanland, vice-chancellor (president) of RMIT University, with its main campus in Melbourne, Australia, and Dr. Hiroaki Takeyachi, president of the Japanese Chiropractic Assoc., signed an international agreement witnessed by Australian Ambassador Ashton Calvert at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo, Japan. Sharing in the signing ceremony were Mr. Terry White of Austrade (an international Australian government initiative); Dr. Kazuyoshi Takeyachi, Dr. Brian Budgell, Dr. Nobuyoshi Takeyachi, Mrs. Beanland, and other members of the embassy staff.

Persons not present at the signing ceremony who played a major role in this development included: Dr. Masahiro Yoshihashi, chairperson of the Education Committee of the Japanese Chiropractic Association for several years, and members of the committee.

Professor David Beanland is a man of great vision. His leadership and guidance, based on an exceptional understanding of educational research and innovation, has played the major role in the amalgamation of the Phillip Institute of Technology and RMIT into the biggest, multisectoral university in Australia. The university has innovative educational strategies, including extensive off-shore courses in many countries. Construction of a large campus in Penang, Malaysia has recently begun.

Hiroaki Takeyachi, DC, president of the Japanese Chiropractic Assoc., will head the RMIT Chiropractic Unit-Japan. Dr. Takeyachi has a great love for chiropractic, which he enjoys practicing for long hours. He is well qualified for the position of head of the Unit, being a National College of Chiropractic graduate (1976), and a qualified orthopedic surgeon with MD and PhD degrees.

Dr. Kazuyoshi Takeyachi will be the coordinator of the RMIT chiropractic program in Japan. A National College chiropractic "Alumnus of the Year" for 1994, Dr. Takeyachi received his DC degree in 1968 and has been an eminent chiropractic leader in Japan for decades. He is very well known and is highly regarded internationally. He was greatly inspired by Dr. Joseph Janse, former president of National College, a close friend who he emulated. It is Dr. Takeyachi's vision and hard work of many decades that made it possible to mount a chiropractic program of this magnitude in Japan via the Japanese language. He was responsible through his leadership and inspiration for a number of Japanese DCs to translate most major chiropractic texts into Japanese; to write many papers on chiropractic in Japanese and to translate significant journal publications. Without this impressive body of chiropractic knowledge in Japanese, RMIT University could not have contemplated the introduction of a chiropractic course in Japanese. A longstanding friendship between Dr. Kazuyoshi Takeyachi and myself led to the development of a visionary plan for chiropractic education and legitimization in Japan, which required a great deal of work both in Japan and in Melbourne to culminate in the program described below.

Dr. Brian Budgell, a 1986 Canadian Memorial Chiropractic graduate who holds an MS degree, lectures

at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto and has agreed to serve as RMIT's resident liaison in Japan. Dr. Budgell spends three days a week at Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology where he is exploring important research in somatovisceral reflex study with Dr. Akio Sato, a well-known world authority in this field. Dr. Nobuyoshi Takeyachi, a 1976 graduate of National College of Chiropractic, is in charge of implementing the RMIT curriculum in Japan on a day-to-day basis.

The two degree programs were thoroughly scrutinized by an accreditation committee of RMIT University, including experts in various areas who recommended to the academic board that the program be accredited for a period of five years. The committee included Dr. John Drinkwater, Dr. Kevin Collins, an expert on higher education in Japan, Dr. Graham Hunt, Dr. Angela Todd, Dr. Bruce Walker, and Professor Michael Ramsden, the pro-vice chancellor for academic projects.

In 1988, I raised the notion with Dr. Kazuyoshi Takeyachi that it was possible to have a university level chiropractic program in Japan. (Editor's note: Professor Kleynhans is the inaugural chiropractic professor of the university and the first chiropractor to have been appointed a university professor in the British Commonwealth. He had to meet the selection criteria set by RMIT University and Phillip Institute of Technology, and had to be interviewed by a selection committee consisting of the chief executive officers of two institutions, an external expert from Melbourne University, external experts appointed by council, and members of the university staff. At RMIT, as at other Australian universities, full professors are normally appointed only upon demonstration of significant contribution in the three areas of academic leadership, professional leadership and research.)

The education committee of the JCA played a major role in negotiations for a long time, and were very precise about the needs which had to be met by a chiropractic course in Japan. During 1994 the committee members accepted appointment to the RMIT University course advisory committee for Japan -- a highly regarded appointment by the university which greatly values input from its advisory committees to ensure the currency and standard of its courses. The members include: Drs. Nakatsuka, Murakami, Yoshihashi, Igarashi, Budgell, Ohnishi, Inoue, Hiroaki, Takeyachi, Kazuyoshi Takeyachi, and Nobuyoshi Takeyachi.

The Future

I see the development in Japan as a logical extension of the pioneering efforts of RMIT University and its predecessors, since Phillip Institute of Technology was the first mainstream higher education institution in the world to introduce a fully government funded and accredited university level degree course in chiropractic.

Other persons who will play an important role in implementing the RMIT chiropractic program in Japan are: Dr. Phillip Ebrall, head of the Chiropractic Unit at RMIT in Melbourne. He will be the program director based in Australia. Dr. Ebrall is well known internationally because of his numerous publications on chiropractic and attendance at international meetings of the Consortium on Chiropractic Research and other forums. Dr. Ebrall will be responsible for supervision of the program and the selection of students in liaison with the program coordinator in Japan. Dr. Russell Banks, a fellow of the Australasian College of Chiropractic Science, will be responsible for the coordination and development of curriculum materials which, translated into Japanese, will drive the program and ensure high standards. Dr. Banks will be working with staff from the relevant basic and diagnostic departments and units of the university. He will also coordinate and be the in loco parentis for Japanese students who come to Melbourne each year for practical laboratory work.

A number of university staff in various departments see the chiropractic program in Japan as a major challenge and have formed an important team which is designing and developing materials to guide student learning in the most modern context of the word.

The staff responsible for the chiropractic science program in Japan are those mentioned above. The basic sciences will be implemented by highly qualified staff from three different medical schools, including: professor Aikawa (biological chemistry); associate professor Takayanagi (biological medicine); associate professor Ichikawa and Shimada (anatomy). Practicing orthopaedist Dr. Inoue, who holds a PhD in anatomy, will also assist with the course.

The Agreement

In terms of the agreement, RMIT University will provide consultative advice and input based on some 20 years of experience with chiropractic education at the university level; will enroll students for the RMIT degrees; will monitor the assessment of students to ensure the same standards are met as those at the home campus in Australia; and will develop modular teaching materials to guide staff and students and form the driving force for the program. The RMIT Chiropractic Unit-Japan will be operated by the Japanese Chiropractic Association, which will be responsible for the appointment of staff, promotion of the program in Japan, interviews and recommendations to the university on selection of students; implementation of the teaching; responsibility for student discipline, welfare and the creation of an appropriate learning environment. Caveats to ensure high quality of the program are: that staff may only be appointed with the approval of the university; promotional publications and advertising must be approved by the university; the curriculum prescribed by the university must be taught; the University must be directly involved in student assessment.

The Program

The RMIT University-Japanese Chiropractic Association program in Japan consists of two important degrees. The bachelor of applied science (clinical science) is the first three year degree, followed by a three year bachelor of chiropractic science (BCSc).

The nomenclature for the degrees is based on the British Commonwealth system where first professional degrees in medicine (MBBS), dentistry (BDSc), veterinary medicine (BVSc) are bachelor degrees; recipients using the courtesy title of doctor. After many years of hard work, the double bachelor degree (BAppSc, BCsc) was approved for the RMIT first professional course in chiropractic and follows the highly regarded orthodox system of nomenclature in higher education for professional courses in Australia.

The double bachelor degree in chiropractic is only offered as an integrated, five-year program in Australia. The reason for the deviation in Japan, where the program has been split into two separate degree courses, is that on the advice of the JCA it seemed unrealistic to mount a single five or six year degree program, because there are only some 50 qualified DC-level practitioners in the country. There are somewhere between seven to nine thousand practitioners who claim to be and practice as chiropractors, most with very minimal or no real training. Chiropractic is not legally recognised in Japan, while three other groups, acupuncturists (62,000 practitioners), shiatsu practitioners (92,000), and bone setters (23,000) are all registered, and each group receives a three year course of training, almost exclusively in private training schools except for a few acupuncture colleges.

On the advice of the JCA, the university accepted that it was unrealistic in the first instance to

implement a full five to six year course and that a two stage benchmarking should occur to facilitate immediate overtures to the government for registration of the profession. In considering this matter, the accreditation committee, which made recommendations to the academic board of the university, recommended that within 10 years only a full six-year program should be offered. Initially, however, students completing a three-year BAppSc (clinical science) should be allowed to practice, albeit under guidance of fully qualified primary contact practitioners (such as DC level practitioners). All graduates will be encouraged to continue their studies until they have completed the full six-year program. The major professional aims of the two programs are: persons who hold only the BAppSc (Clin.Sc.) will not be registrable in jurisdictions where chiropractors are registered at DC-level throughout the world; persons holding both degrees should be eligible for registration on the basis of professional accreditation (in addition to university accreditation, which is already in place).

A condition of the agreement is that JCA and RMIT would take all possible steps to pursue establishment of an international agreement with a Japanese university for joint delivery by all three partners of the RMIT degree program on the campus of that university. Discussion with an excellent university commenced in 1994.

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that the courses being introduced at the RMIT Chiropractic Unit-Japan have been carefully designed, will meet the needs of the people and profession in Japan, and will take great cognisance of standards and quality control. The program involves an impressive body of staff responsible for the preparation and delivery of the curriculum and will meet unique requirements in Japan but also bring education there to an international level within 6-10 years.

The program is commended to the chiropractic community to be embraced as an important development which allows people of a great Asian nation to receive education in chiropractic in their own language -- a first for the rapidly developing internationalism of a great profession.

*Professor A.M. Kleynhans
RMIT University, Bundoora Campus,
Plenty Rd., Bundoora, Victoria, 3083
Australia*

MAY 1995