

### A voyage to Tel Aviv

The 182nd Council Session of the World Medical Association (WMA) was held in Tel Aviv, Israel, from 13 to 15 May, 2009. The timing of the meeting unexpectedly coincided with the Roman Catholic Pope's visit to Israel. Although this did not influence our discussions directly, they seemed to gain an added depth with respect to humanitarian issues.

Before the meeting in Israel, I had a transit stay in Milan, where I had the opportunity to view and appreciate 'the Last Supper' by Leonard da Vinci. This painting is truly a world heritage for humanity and suggests a new perspective on the religious epoch in light of the outpouring of humanitarianism in the current of the Renaissance. I could feel the impressively static presence of Jesus Christ in the center of the perspective drawing contrasting with the dynamic postures of the surrounding Twelve Apostles.

The Twelve Apostles are clustered in four groups of three. The eloquent depiction of the hands of the each member of these groups adds to the characteristic appearance of each apostle's face. As I gazed at the precious painting, I noticed the strange shape of the hands to the right side of Judas. There seemed to be two arms: one grasping a knife and the other holding the wrist of this arm. Strangely, the number of hands appeared to be more than would be expected for three persons. My impression was that this phenomenon showed images of the drama in transition over time but in present time. Examples of this can be seen in series of stained glass in churches or in ancient Japanese scroll pictures representing certain stories instead of a single instant in time.



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I think the right hands of Judas express dual actions: one is grasping a sack of coins while the other is holding a knife to hurt Jesus and its wrist is held by St. Peter's right hand, suggesting the inevitable unfolding of the drama as well as the destiny of the each person depicted.

We stayed in Jerusalem at the kind hospitality of the Israel Medical Association as part of the excursion programme for dinner in the city of David, and we passed by the place where the last supper was held through a path to the Mount Zion. It was a fascinating experience!

I feel very honored to have been appointed as the Vice-Chair of the WMA on this occasion and will make all-out efforts to fulfill this responsibility as a member of the WMA.

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