

### Happy Diwali!

I watched fireworks, shooting up randomly from all over the town in various shapes and beautiful colors until midnight, with Japanese colleagues through the wide windows on the top floor of the Lalit Hotel New Delhi in India. It was the night of 17 October, 2009, the grand finale of the World Medical Association (WMA) General Assembly as well as the festival day of Diwali, an official holiday for new year in India, known as the "Festival of Lights."

The General Assembly discussed many issues and produced fruitful results in the form of new declarations and resolutions. The new Declaration of Delhi will play a necessary role as an urgent appeal concerning climate change and health from the WMA to the world. This WMA General Assembly itself was full of drama with many unanticipated occurrences, and carried out with tremendous energy by participants representing national medical associations all over the world. As Vice Chair of the Council, I was involved in various aspects of conducting the assembly, assisting Chair Dr. Hill who brilliantly chaired the lively and heated discussions. Dr. Desai of the Indian Medical Association was selected as the President-elect, with Dr. Hanson of the Canadian Medical Association becoming President and Dr. Blachar of the Israeli Medical Association becoming Past-President in the process.

This year's WMA GA was special to the members of the Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania (CMAAO) that it was hosted by the Indian MA, one of the CMAAO members. Indian MA also hosted a business lunch meeting for the CMAAO members, where we exchanged very productive discussions.

India is a country with a long history and dozens of world heritage properties. Moreover, there is an enormous degree of bubbling human energy in this, the world's largest democratic country. Here in this place of rich human interactions we can also find highly refined cultural, scientific and spiritual achievements. I had a delightful surprise when I found on the wall of a tea shop in the city excerpts from the 'Book of Tea,' written by Tenshin Okakura, one of the founders of modern Japanese culture more than one hundred years ago who later worked as Chief Curator of Eastern Fine Arts at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and possessed a vast knowledge of Asian culture. He also desired to build a kind of spiritual bridge between East and West during his time.

It was a special moment to be surrounded by the seemingly everlasting fireworks on the night of the Diwali Festival celebrations in New Delhi.

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Diwali Candles in the Lalit Hotel