

Annual visit to the United States

I had an opportunity to visit Chicago and Boston this June.

In Chicago I attended the annual meeting of the American Medical Association with the inaugural ceremony of Dr. Cecil B. Wilson as the new president. In his speech, Dr. Wilson spoke about President Obama's health care reform for universal healthcare in the US.

It will take a few more years to formulate a feasible plan to cover the lower middle income group that had previously been denied support. Enormous energy will be required to find a balance in the current, skewed health insurance system available for the upper class since the imbalance between these two classes has grown to such a monstrous gap. This disequilibrium seems to have begun to destroy the original creativity and power of the US to promote progress in the medical field. One unique and strong feature of the US is a combination of goodwill among individuals and donations from the upper class which enhances public assets and enriches American society enormously.

Nevertheless, such an autoregulatory system in the private sector cannot solve the issue of increasing demands of patients for health care, with rapidly growing legal costs that seem to be out-of-control and have only continued to rise sharply in recent years. This increased expenditure incurred by patients has not been reimbursed to medical workforces, consequently causing tremendous dissatisfaction among health care professionals.

Recently, the House of Representatives passed the Health Care Reform Bill. The open discussion on the health care system in the US moved into a new dimension of real action to build a solid program within the tight framework of legislative bills. I hope that Dr. Wilson, the new president of the AMA, will be able to steer the ship of health care on good winds for all Americans.



Takemi Fellow Presentations

After Chicago, I flew to Boston to join meetings with the Dean of Academic Affairs, Takemi fellows, and Japanese researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health. The Takemi fellows have come from around the world and are engaging in various research themes. As I listened to each of their short presentations on their particular research, I saw very enthusiastic and vital spirits in them as well as sincere attitudes regarding the complicated and difficult issues facing global health at present. I felt confident to support the activities of the Takemi Program as a responsible board member of the JMA.

During this visit, I had the pleasure of listening to Latin jazz in Chicago and the great movie music of Rogers and Hammerstein in Boston—both were quite enjoyable. I was especially deeply impressed by the ending piece from “The Sound of Music,” played by the Boston Pops Orchestra, which expressed an earnest desire for freedom through the sound of music.

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