



Congress Report ICMART Congress Berlin 2001

by Dr. Thomas Ots, MD, Graz, Austria

When after four intense days of lectures, workshops, panels and poster-sessions the Congress came to its end, probably everybody in the main auditorium was convinced that he/she had encountered an important event. There had been good presentations and some outstanding ones, yet no revolutionary findings on acupuncture had been reported, neither in clinical nor basic research. What then had made this congress become so special? It was its atmosphere of cordiality, mutuality, familiarity, good feelings and maybe even happiness. How was this possible? It wasn't a small congress where everybody knew each other. There were more than 1000 acupuncturists from 38 countries attending, there were – at times – up to ten parallel talks and workshops – what a pain of choice! Thus it was a big congress by figures, and it had become a great congress by heart.

The 'secret' of the special atmosphere of this congress must be seen in the special event of two birthdays; DÄGfA became 50 years old. DÄGfA is the oldest German acupuncture society, founded by famous Gerhard Bachmann, a student and follower of French acupuncturist Roger de la Fuÿe. DGfAN was founded 30 years ago in the German Democratic Republic. Its founder, Hans Becke, had led the organization until recently, when he retired and was awarded the title, Honorary President. It was him and the other "Old acupuncture hand", Jochen Gleditsch, Honorary President of DÄGfA, who left their imprint to this congress by giving a flash back of the history of their associations. Most of the West German and foreign listeners had never been aware about the difficulties, even political dangers, which acupuncturists had to deal with and endure in former socialist Germany. They were touched by the talk of Becke and moved by the words of Gleditsch. The auditorium was absolutely silent when these two gentlemen talked about the way they had conspired during those difficult times. Becke expressed his gratitude for how DÄGfA (i.e. Gleditsch) had supported him and his East German acupuncture delegation on their way to the ICMART conference in Rome, shortly after the downfall of the Berlin wall.

All of a sudden an atmosphere of mutuality and friendship aired through the auditorium, with feelings otherwise rather unknown in the process of East-West-German reunification. West German politicians and businessmen should learn from the way of conduct of these gentlemen and our associations.

What Becke and Gleditsch had begun was carried out on in an equally great manner by the two presidents, Walburg Maric-Oehler and Rainer Wander, who inspired everybody by their seriousness as well as fidelity and infinite lightness of being.

This atmosphere held until the closing ceremony. It was a great finale: The ICMART prizes were awarded to outstanding lectures and posters, among them J. Boucinhas from Brazil, Ann-Kathrin Lehr and Torsten Kupke from Germany. Boucinhas was honoured for his research of 'Colorpuncture on YNSA Points' Boucinhas had delivered his lecture only a few hours prior, thus it became clear that the jury had been on duty until the end of the scientific program. Lehr won the prize for her adaptation of a pain questionnaire to Chinese conditions. In order to fulfil this transcultural task she learned Chinese and spent two years in Tianjin, testing and retesting her questionnaire. Kupke got the prize for his lecture on pelviphathy.





The final event of this congress was the proclamation of the Acupuncture Charter of Berlin. Francois Beyens announced and read the Charter in such a way that in a letter to the editor of the 'Deutsche Zeitschrift für Akupunktur' (German Journal of Acupuncture) a doctor of Hanover called him a 'shaman'. The same doctor described the atmosphere of the congress as 'the spirit of Berlin' which he had felt absolutely inspiring during all the days in all lectures, panels and workshops.

During the four days of congress there had been very fine weather and lots of sunshine over Berlin. Half an hour after its end, the sky turned dark and then rain poured down from heaven, flooding the streets so that traffic broke down in some parts of Berlin. Heaven cried, or to say it in Chinese words: Qi of the air had returned to the earth. Maybe to moisten the flower of the next ICMART congress in Edinburgh?

Thomas Ots

Graz/Austria

P.S. If you are interested to get to know more about the history of DÄGfA and DGfAN, you may order the special Congress edition of "Deutsche Zeitschrift für Akupunktur", Vol 44, 2a. It contains 27 pages of history and 60 pages of Abstracts. Please, place your order to Karl F. Haug Verlag, Fritz-Frey-Str. 21, D-69121 Heidelberg, c/o Beate Krautzberger. Tel: 0049 - 711 - 89 31 130.

