The 77th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Japan Society of Ultrasonics in Medicine (JSUM) and the 7th Congress of the Asian Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology (AFSUMB) took place May 17–21, 2004 with great success. The meeting was held concurrently with the 29th Meeting of the Japanese Society of Sonographers May 15–16, 2004. Consequently, we can clearly call this week “the week of ultrasound.”

We were honored that Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino graciously attended the opening ceremony and the science and technology equipment exhibition, and we were especially pleased that Their Imperial Highnesses honored us with their presence at the evening’s welcome reception.

The formal opening ceremony was held in the Tochigiken Sogobunka Center, Utsunomiya-city, at 3 p.m., May 17, 2004. Takashi Okai, Chairman of the Hospitality Committee, declared the meeting open. Kouichi Itoh, President of 7th AFSUMB and 77th JSUM meeting, presented the opening remarks and the presidential address. Afterward, His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino gave us the major address.

Fumimaro Takaku (President of the Japanese Association of Medical Science), Akio Fukuda (governor of Tochigi Prefecture), Kittipong Vairojanarong (president of the AFSUMB), Marvin C. Ziskin (president of the WFUMB), and Hirohide Matsu (member of the Science Council of Japan) presented the congratulatory speeches. Yuktaka Atomi (president of the JSUM) and Eiichi Toda (president of the 29th JSS) followed with welcome addresses. Takashi Okai then presented the closing remarks.

I consider it a measure of our success that these meetings had attracted so many doctors, researchers, and engineers not only from Japan but also from many other parts of the world. Furthermore, the attendance of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino at the opening ceremony motivated us to pursue our studies and medical practices. I was also grateful for the support extended by officials from Tochigi Prefecture; the city of Utsunomiya; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology; the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare; the Foundation for Development of the Community; the Tochigi Prefectural Police; and many others.

It was encouraging to note that these meetings, which focused on advancements of ultrasonics in medicine, had attracted a number of distinguished doctors and researchers from not only Japan but also other Asian countries, Australia, Europe, Russia, Tunisia, and the United States. In particular, the exhibition of scientific equipment and technology highlighted advanced ultrasonic equipment, providing Asian researchers with useful information for their future studies and clinical applications.

At the science and technology exhibition, moreover, we took pleasure in the fact that researchers from more than 25 countries had assembled to exchange information that will aid their medical practices and expand fellowship within the field. The meetings were attended by up to 3645 participants and included many lectures and original papers on as many as 810 topics. We are confident that the excitement generated by these events will create momentum that can contribute to further progress in the field.

Tochigi, our host prefecture, boasts a number of attractions, including Nikko, which has been designated a World Heritage site. Moreover, the region features beautiful streams and mountains that were covered with trees sprouting new buds, draping the mountainsides with greenery. The symbol of the congress was a picture of Mt. Nantai, a major landmark in Nikko, and Lake Chuzenji combined with the image of an ultrasonic pulse. It depicts the water flowing from the mountains into the lake and the new light emerging from the surface. I believe that the members of meetings enjoyed the nature and memorial products of the World Heritage in Nikko.

I am pleased to announce that JSUM and AFSUMB 2004 gave special prizes to Dr. Jan Somer, Mr. Takasuke Irie, and Dr. Samuel Maslak for their developments in ultrasound equipment. Dr. Somer researched and developed a real-time ultrasound diagnosis system. We are proud of his achievements, as we are of Mr. Takasuke Irie for his pioneering work in the development of the electronic real-time diagnosis system in Japan. Dr. Samuel Maslak was a legend in the field of ultrasound in medicine for his great achieve-
ments in this area. His most outstanding contribution was the development of computed sonography, which paved the way for today’s fully digital diagnosis. His innovative ideas made him a true pioneer in the field of ultrasonics. The equipment he used is now on display at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC in permanent tribute.

The 7th AFSUMB and 77th JSUM combined meetings comprised a total of 700 lectures, symposiums, and presentations. With the addition of the meeting of the Japanese Society of Sonographers, which was held concurrently, the number swelled to about 810. Moreover, at the science and technology equipment exhibition, 25 manufacturers demonstrated their products. In total, these 7 days of meetings attracted more than 3654 participants. It is my firm belief that the results of these activities will represent a tangible contribution to the advancement of ultrasonography in medicine in Japan and other Asian nations.

I am pleased to note that the next Congress of the Asian Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology will take place in Bangkok 3 years from now, in 2007. I am sure that the congress will attract just as many doctors and researchers as we had here.

We came together at this meeting to discuss the effects of ultrasound on living organisms and safety to advance the field of ultrasonics. We are in the process of opening the door to basic medical ultrasonography, ultrasound diagnosis, the state of ultrasonic treatment, and future directions. This is one of the most important points that has emerged from the congress of the AFSUMB and JSUM. The papers presented here will be accorded the same importance as those presented at the many symposiums held during these two meetings. Some of the papers presented here today will be published by Elsevier and used as reference material to promote future study.

Address by His Imperial Highness Prince Akishino

It is my pleasure to be at the opening of the 7th Congress of the Asian Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology in conjunction with the 77th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Japan Society of Ultrasonics in Medicine in the city of Utsunomiya.

Ultrasound in medicine is a science that contributes to clinical diagnosis and treatment by using sound waves to enable imaging of the internal human body. Many Japanese researchers have been involved in development of ultrasound in medicine and real-time ultrasonic tomography, which was invented both in Japan and The Netherlands and has facilitated diagnostic capabilities in clinical medicine worldwide. Color Doppler, a real-time two-dimensional blood flow imaging method using the Doppler effect, was also invented in Japan.

The Asian Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology was founded in 1987. I have been informed of its contribution to the development of ultrasound in medicine and biology in Asia. At this international congress attended by doctors, scholars, and researchers from all over the world, I am sure that all of you will participate in discussions and exchange opinions on the issues of fundamental research and clinical application of the ultrasonics in medicine, which has made remarkable progress.

I am confident that the results of your efforts will contribute greatly to the health care, medical treatment, and welfare of Japan and other countries and regions in Asia. There is also the expectation that it will have a favorable effect on veterinary science, animal husbandry, and various other fields.

The Japan Society of Ultrasonics in Medicine was established in 1961 for the purpose of learning and sharing the knowledge and technology of the medical and biological applications of ultrasonics in medicine. The society is affiliated with the Japanese Association of Medical Sciences and the Science Council of Japan, and it plays an active role under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology as an incorporated body. The society established its own fellowship system to invite students from other Asian countries and other regions, and it promotes friendly relationships.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that the scientific exchange on ultrasonics in medicine among Asian countries and regions will further promote the development of research and advance diagnostic and therapeutic capabilities in clinical medicine to contribute to local residents.

Opening remarks and presidential address by Kouichi Itoh

I am pleased that we are assembled here today to open the 7th Congress of the Asian Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology and the 77th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Japan Society of Ultrasonics in Medicine in the gracious presence of Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino. For the next 5 days, we will do our utmost to ensure that these meetings contribute to the exchange of information dedicated to the further advancement of ultrasonography in medicine.

The Asian Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology was established in 1987 with the aim of highlighting the findings of basic research and its clinical application to the use of ultrasound in medicine in Asian countries. The first meeting took place in Tokyo that same year. Meetings were then held at 3-year intervals in various locations, including Bali, Seoul, Beijing, Taipei, and Kuala Lumpur.

During the 1997 meeting of the administrative councilors of the federation, a motion was submitted to select candidate venues for the seventh meeting. The next administrative council meeting, held in October 1998, chose Japan as the venue. Following this decision, Kouichi Itoh, a professor at Jichi Medical School, was appointed president of the Seventh Congress of the Asian Federation of Societies for Ultrasound in Medicine and Biology, and the Japan Society