



The 19th World Congress of Psychotherapy is history already! The Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 22–26 August, 2006. Prof. Thambu Maniam, president of the Malaysian Psychiatric Association, and myself collaborated as co-chairpersons of the organizing committee, while Prof. Zain Azhar acted as president of the scientific program committee. Once again, the World Congress of Psychotherapy was a wonderful experience, both scientifically and socially! Please find Prof. T. Maniam's congress report further down in these IFP News.

During the World Congress, the IFP General Assembly as well as the Council held their business meetings. In my presidential report, I detailed the IFP's achievements over the last four years, mentioning in particular the excellent work of the secretariat in Zurich (Cornelia Erpenbeck: many thanks!), the new mission statement, the co-operation with *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* and the WPA, the development and realization of a completely new website, the preparation of a new information leaflet and poster, the sponsoring of congresses and workshops. I also reported on our past president Edgar Heim's writing up the history of IFP, which over the years has developed into a book project on the history of psychotherapy, with a special emphasis on psychotherapy organizations. The manuscript will be edited by the IFP and published in about 1½ years' time. Suggestions were made for the future distribution of an electronic Newsletter in pdf format in order to save mailing costs (Robertson), to publish general information in the 'IFP News' in *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, and to publish more specific information on the IFP website (Siwiak-Kobayashi). Following the Board's suggestion, the IFP statutes were revised: future Boards will now consist of the President, the Past President and the President-elect, and up to six (6) members-at-large, three of whom shall serve as Vice-President, Secretary General, and Treasurer. The suggested changes of the statutes were unanimously accepted by the General Assembly.

Furthermore, I feel honored to inform you that I was unanimously re-elected by the General Assembly to serve as president of the IFP for the presidential term 2006–2010. I accepted this re-election and stated that the world needs a society like the IFP: a professional society that emphasizes interdisciplinary, intercultural exchange and mutual learning in the field of academic psychotherapy. I also thanked the former General Secretary Alfried Längle for his loyalty and cooperation throughout the past four years. According to my nominations, the following new Board members were unanimously elected: Vice-President: Alfried Längle, Austria; Secretary General: Mechthild Neises, Germany; Treasurer: Michael Rufer, Switzerland.

As mentioned earlier already, we have started introducing international, IFP-sponsored master classes, seminars and workshops, thus promoting the dissemination of evidence-based psychotherapeutic approaches. In addition, IFP-sponsored workshops will provide an opportunity for psychotherapists to become individual members of the IFP, workshop participants will be offered a substantially reduced registration fee if they are already IFP members or choose to apply for IFP membership. Training sessions are conducted by internationally recognized experts. In the first workshop, Prof. Edna B. Foa, Ph.D. (Philadelphia, USA), gave a four-day training workshop on prolonged exposure therapy for chronic PTSD. The workshop took place 15–18 March, 2006, in Zurich, Switzerland, and I can only say it was a great success!

The second IFP-sponsored workshop was held in Venice, Italy, on 22/23 September, 2006: Prof. Giovanni Fava, M.D. (Bologna, Italy), a member of the IFP Council, together with Drs. Fedra Ottolini and Chiara Ruini, gave an introductory course on well-being therapy, a novel psychotherapeutic technique for enhancing psychological well-being. The presenters provided information about the background, structure and applications of this approach, which has been applied to mood and anxiety disorders in controlled studies. Treatment of individual cases were described, with plenty of opportunities for discussion. Participants were highly satisfied with this two-day workshop.

Finally, my 'ceterum censeo': all our members, including individual members of the IFP as well as individual members of associations who have membership status with the IFP, are offered the IFP's official journal *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, at a substantially reduced subscription rate. For details, please contact Karger Publishers directly at:

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With my best regards

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19th World Congress of Psychotherapy, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 22–26 August, 2006: Well-Being across Cultures: Psychotherapy in a Biological Era

The 19th World Congress of the IFP was successfully held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, last August. It was organized in collaboration with the Malaysian Psychiatric Association (MPA) and was held simultaneously with the annual conference of the MPA. While the overall attendance could have been better, a pleasing feature was the strong representation of countries from the Middle East and South Asia, something that has been rarely seen during earlier conferences in Malaysia.

Scientific Aspects

The Congress had a very diverse scientific program, so diverse that I can only highlight a few events. It began with pre-conference workshops, teaching and sharing skills in various aspects of psychotherapy. About 200 people attended these workshops.

The Congress proper, beginning with the masterly keynote address by Prof. Russell Meares of Australia, and ending with a thought-provoking closing session on future challenges for psychotherapy in Asia by Prof. Bachtiar Lubis of Indonesia, provided a stimulating environment for the discussion of issues pertaining to psychotherapy. In between, among other topics, Dr. Robertson spoke on the interesting aspect of the Western model of psychological trauma and its applicability to other cultures. Prof. Schnyder presented, in his usual inimitable fashion, the current state and future of psychotherapy for PTSD, a topic that has stimulated tremendous interest since the Indian Ocean tsunami and the earthquake in the Indian subcontinent. There was strong input also from the fields of IPT and CBT as well as issues relating to sexuality, culture, women, and children. Two sessions were devised especially for trainees and younger therapists, one by Prof. Lubis on psychodynamic psychotherapy and another during the 'Meet the Experts Session' at the end of the Congress.

A particular feature of this conference was the prominence given to religio-cultural factors and their influence on the process of therapy. This was particularly interesting to participants from Asian countries, where such issues often emerge to the forefront in therapy situations. In one particular symposium ably chaired by Dr. Längle, speakers from the major religious traditions of the world shared their approaches to religious patients. It was followed by very interesting comments from the audience, and some participants stayed back to continue the discussion.

We are thankful to the many who expressed their appreciation of the quality of the Congress, though the organizers felt there was much room for improvement.

Social Aspects

As with all such conferences, a particularly salutary aspect was the opportunity afforded to delegates to mix, make friends and renew acquaintances, enabling networking and future collaboration. Some delegates and accompanying persons were given a tour of Putrajaya, the sparkling new administrative capital of Malaysia. Others enjoyed a social evening with dances showcasing Malaysia's multi-cultural society. At the end of the evening many would remember the IFP Council Members doing the Malaysian dance! All had the opportunity to explore Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, a vibrant city representing a potpourri of cultures. We hope they took back pleasant memories.

Overall, the conference was successful in promoting collegiality and the sharing of knowledge, skills and ideas. On the financial front, contrary to initial fears, it was also modestly successful. The local organizers would like to thank the IFP and the Council, especially Prof. Schnyder, for trusting us with this demanding task and for assisting us all the way. We have found not only new colleagues but also new friends.

Prof. T. Maniam

Chair, Organizing Committee

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