

A fascinating experience

ISOI DGZI-Japan Annual Meeting

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After the first invitation two years ago was “only” possible as an online presentation due to the ongoing pandemic travel restrictions at the time, I gladly accepted to give a presentation at the annual conference of the Japanese partner organisation ISOI on 19 November 2023 in Tokyo. This time, the title of the lecture was “Clinical Application of Zirconia Implants”, while two years ago the focus was on the immunology of the implant materials titanium and zirconium.

The conference was preceded by a 13-day guided tour for me, luckily in a small group of friendly fellow travellers. From the south of the main Japanese island of Honshū

with stops in the old imperial city of Kyōto and its incredible 2,000 temples, pagodas and shrines, 17 of which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, to Beppu/Ōita with its hot springs and the adjoining volcanic landscape of the “Japanese Alps” in Aso-Kuju National Park, on to the port city of Nagasaki, which was Japan’s gateway to the world in pre-modern times. There we visited the deeply touching Atomic Bomb Museum and the atomic bomb memorials, as well as Hiroshima with a visit to the Peace Museum and the Peace Park. The memory of the people killed (approx. 80,000) and the extensive destruction of the cities by the two atomic bombings is still deeply remembered and honored by the people today.





From Hiroshima by regional train and ferry to the sacred island of Miyajima with a visit to Itsukushima Shrine, probably Japan's most beautiful Shinto place of worship. The famous and frequently photographed gate of the shrine is reflected in the water at high tide. Continued with the Shinkansen Super Express via Fuji Hakone National Park to Tokyo. Tokyo, the largest city in the world with a total of almost 36 million inhabitants, 9 million of whom live in the city centre alone, is fascinating, attractive, technically absolutely modern and altogether overwhelming.

The extremely positive experiences include the cleanliness in general, the considerate and helpful interaction

with tourists, the safety and not to forget the impressive punctuality of public transportation such as the subway or the Shinkansen (super express), they were literally always "on time". This country with its harmonious blend of tradition and modernity touched and inspired me deeply. As the trip preceded the congress, I had enough time to adapt in every respect. On the evening before the conference, there was a social gathering with around 30 invited colleagues in a Spanish restaurant, as Japanese restaurants cannot offer so many seats together. The official greeting was given by the acting president of the ISOI, Dr Shinya Yoshioka.

All the speakers, including myself, briefly introduced themselves and the content of their presentations. The present colleagues were very communicative, interested and courteous.

My presentation the next morning was simultaneously translated from English into Japanese. The room was filled with over 200 listeners. After the presentation with a brief introduction to immunology and a detailed presentation of the clinical application and long-term results with one- and two-piece ceramic implants, which lasted a total of 80 minutes, there was a lively discussion. As I do not speak Japanese, I was unable to follow the other contributions in the local language, but used the time to explore this fascinating metropolis.

My "ISOI supervisor", Dr Masahiro Sugiyama, with whom I had a lively correspondence beforehand and who was responsible for the organisational matters, proved to be extremely hospitable, approachable and a perfect English speaker. I had an extremely positive all-round experience on this trip, which motivates me to travel to this wonderful country again.

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Fig. 1: Tokyo in the twilight, the holy mountain Fujisan (Fujijama) on the horizon. **Fig. 2:** The auditorium filled with over 200 participants. **Fig. 3:** ISOI (board) members: Dr Masahiro Sugiyama (4th from left) and Past-President Dr Minoru Yoshie (3rd from left). **Fig. 4:** Surrounded by speakers and organisers. **Fig. 5:** Tokyo's modern skyline on the banks of the Sumida River with the Sky Tree television tower (634 metres). **Fig. 6:** Cheerful guests at dinner.