Welcome to the festive season issue of your journal! By the time this issue is in your hand (or on your computer screens), we will be bidding farewell to 2014 and welcoming 2015, watching the Year of the Horse gallop off, and the Year of the Sheep (or Ram, or Goat, whichever version you prefer) amble its ovine way in. Strictly speaking, the sheep makes its entrance from February 19th 2015, the start of the Chinese New Year for 2015. If you were born in 1907, 1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991 or 2003, then your sign on the 12-animal Oriental zodiac is the sheep, but what are the sheep’s personality traits? Basically, and briefly, on the plus side sheep people are tender, polite, filial, clever, and kind-hearted. On the negative side, sheep year people are often worriers who tend to be shy, pessimistic, indecisive, over-sensitive, weak-willed and puzzled about life: of course, there are always exceptions to every rule, so if you are a sheep person, don’t be too worried about the minus points!

Much more relevant to Laser Therapy and its readers is the fact that 2015 has been designated by the United Nations as the “International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies” (IYL 2015 - please visit http://www.light2015.org/Home.html), so every laser or light-based system usually reported on in this journal will have its very own year, as will light itself. Long-term Laser Therapy readers will know my predilection for the strong and undeniable connection between Light and Life, so I am very excited and gratified that the UN has actually named a year for this elemental force, which is for us terrestrial born of the sun and harnessed in lasers and light-based devices for the good of mankind. I am sure that there will be a number of specific celebrations of IYL 2015, but every congress on light-based surgery and medicine will in its own way be paying homage to IYL 2015. Of course, we will be keeping you informed of these, so to help us do that most efficiently, anyone reading this who knows of an appropriate meeting we have not mentioned in our meeting calendar (see elsewhere in this issue), please email the details to lasertherapy@jmml.co.jp and we’ll happily publish the details.

Laser Therapy Awards Reborn

As you are aware, or for those who remain in the dark (as it were), for the past several years the journal has been offering cash prize awards for the Best Paper (JPY ¥500,000) and two Good Papers (JPY ¥200,000 each) published in the journal for each volume. This program was due to end next year, but in honour of the IYL 2015, to spur on contributions to the journal and in recognition of the excellent papers whose authors have enjoyed the fruits of their research or clinical endeavours, I have decided to fund these awards personally so that they will continue for the foreseeable future, under the name of the Ohshiro-Laser Therapy Awards. The Ming-Chien Kao Award for Young Researchers is also being offered again for Volume 24 of the journal. For full details of the Ohshiro-Laser Therapy awards and the Ming-Chien Kao Award for Young Researchers, please see the full page spread elsewhere in the journal.

Meetings of Interest

APALMS 2014: Before looking at the meetings of special interest to Laser Therapy readers due to take place in 2015, let me say a few words about the ill-fated APALMS 2014 meeting which was due to have taken place in Singapore in November of 2014. Very sadly, despite his careful planning and a very interesting-looking program as seen in previous issues of Laser Therapy, the Congress President and APALMS President-Elect, Professor Fong Poh Him, was forced to cancel the meeting and resign his presidency and APALMS presidency-elect. Coupled with the small pool of experts available within Singapore to form the backbone of the congress, there had been a dearth of
abstracts from outside Singapore and poor support from industry which led to the necessity to cancel the meeting. A full report is expected from Prof Fong which I had hoped would be published in this issue, but at the time of writing it had not arrived. It will therefore appear in the first issue of Volume 24.

Despite cancellation of the full congress program, a specialized course was still held in Singapore on laser safety, moderated by Ms Penny Smalley, whose expertise in laser regulatory affairs, laser nursing and overall laser safety techniques is well-recognized by readers of this journal. The registration fees were kept low and the audience was restricted to nurses. This course was extremely well received.

16th APALMS, 2016: However, there is nearly always a silver lining behind the darkest cloud, and that has been provided by another well-recognized figure in the international arena of laser medicine and surgery, Professor Peter Hasan of Indonesia. He was handed the APALMS flag from Dr Fong Poh Him. Because of health-related problems, Prof Hasan could not take on the mantle of APALMS President-Elect, but he has passed on the task to Dr. Abraham Arimuko, President of the Indonesian Society for Laser Medicine, who has accepted the role and has tentatively planned for the 16th APALMS to be held in Borobudur, central Indonesia, in April, 2016. This will be confirmed with the final dates in the very near future. This area is a lush tropical paradise showcasing the largest Buddhist temple in the world, the Borobudur Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. I am sure that Prof Hasan will keep the Organizing Committee on the right road so that we can make the 2016 APALMS meeting one to remember.

Laser Europe: Laser and Aesthetic Europe 2015: The 2015 Laser Europe meeting will take place in Athens’ Greece, in the Royal Olympic Hotel, from June 25th – 27th, under the presidency of Dr Vakis Kontoes. This meeting is convened by the European Laser Association (ELA), and is hosted by the European Society for Laser Aesthetic Surgery (ESLAS) who will hold their 14th annual conference during this meeting. Laser Therapy is the official journal of ESLAS, so we have a special interest in this meeting. The Dutch Aesthetic Laser Association (DALA) is supporting the meeting, which is being held under the auspices of the Hellenic Society of Plastic, Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgery. June in Greece is a perfect time to visit, and the strong scientific programme will be backed up by an outstanding social programme.

The congress venue offers spectacular panoramic views from the rooftop bar and restaurant of the Parthenon on the Acropolis, the Temple of Zeus, Lycabettus Hill and other examples of architecture from the Cradle of Civilization. Visit the website www.lasereurope2015.com for full details, and watch for the First Announcement and Call for Abstracts.

6th IPTA, 2015: Professor Jean-Paul Rocca will preside over the 6th Congress of the International Phototherapy Association (IPTA), to be held on July 9th and 10th, 2015, in the beautiful city of Nice, situated on the Côte d’Azur otherwise known as the “French Riviera”. The congress website, www.ipta6congress.org, is in the final stages of construction. I therefore urge you to bookmark this URL and keep checking it out for full details of the meeting program, accommodation and abstract submission. The IPTA was one of the first societies to have Laser Therapy as its official organ, and the previous 5 meetings have been very successful. I’m sure the 6th will be even more so, particularly with Professors Carlo Fornaini and Leonardo Longo assisting Prof Rocca! It has already been agreed that a course of the International Laser Licensing System (ILLIS) will be offered, so candidates for one of the ILLIS certification categories should watch the website carefully in order to get their application in promptly.

21st ISLSM, 2015: A very much-looked-forward-to meeting is the 21st Congress of the International Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery (ISLSM), which will take place from the 20th to the 22nd of August, 2016, in the luxurious Hotel Fortune Landmark, Indore, in the very heart of central India. The Congress President and ISLSM President-Elect is Dr Sharon Rau, and Professor Krishna Rau is Chairman of the Organizing Committee, aided by Drs Amitabh Goel and Vandana Bansal as the Organizing Secretaries. The website is under construction (www.amitabhgoel.com), and once again please keep checking to get the full details of this exciting meeting in its exotic venue. The scientific program runs the gamut of all specialties using laser and light-based medicine, and the social program promises to be one that attendees will not forget. Mark these dates in your diaries. I am currently negotiating with the Organizing Committee to hold an ILLIS course at this meeting, too: once I have confirmation, I’ll put the information in the next issue of Laser Therapy, and information will also appear on the meeting website.
As you can see, we have a feast of special interest meetings for Laser Therapy readers over the summer months. With Laser Europe 2015 and the 6th IPTA meeting in Athens and Nice, respectively, and quite close together both temporally and geographically, it would be possible to take the holiday of a lifetime and attend both meetings as they are less than 2 weeks apart. From Athens to Nice is a short flight: enjoy the beauty and history of Athens and the sparkling Aegean Sea followed by the romantic, sun-kissed beaches of the Cote d’Azur (as well as two excellent laser- and light-based medicoscientific meetings, of course, both dedicated to the UN 2015 International Year of Light)! Then, after a brief interval of working hard to replenish the coffers, you can make your way the heart of India for the 21st ISLSM meeting in Indore!

The Editorial Team at Laser Therapy are always looking for ways to improve distribution of the journal in this electronic age. We already have full online archiving of all past issues of the journal with free access to all full articles older than 6 months. My team and I are now looking at offering an electronic version of the journal (e-Journal) available by subscription, just as the hard copy version is now, although the cost will probably be less. This is in the planning stage only at the moment, but I hope we will have reached a decision by the time Volume 24:1 hits the press. Of course the hard copy version will still be available for all who request it: I know there are those among the readers who prefer the printed word to reading their journal on computer or tablet screen, but I think, to keep up with the times, we should also be offering the option of an e-Journal as well.

It only remains for me, on behalf of the Laser Therapy editorial team, to wish all our faithful readers the compliments of the season, may your holiday season have been a happy one, and may 2015, the Year of the Sheep, bring you and yours everything good that you could wish for!

Tokyo, December 2014