Welcome, dear readers, to the wind-swept, rain-battered and earthquake-rocked third issue of Volume 27 of your journal. In my last Editorial I had used the sub-head; "Rain, Rain, Go Away ....", but little did I know how prophetic that wish would be. We have just been suffering through one of the hottest summers in record in Japan with an unprecedented number of heat-related deaths and problems with the short supply of fresh vegetables owing to the drought-like conditions: temperatures in Tokyo actually beat those in Korea, reversing the usual trend. This was in sharp contrast to the heavy rain in south-west Japan and Hiroshima in early July. The death toll from floods and landslides topped 200, with over 7,000 residents ordered to evacuate. That was bad enough. Typhoon Jebi, the strongest typhoon to hit Japan in a quarter of a century, has just battered us, and although as I write it has passed on over the western mainland and is now visiting its wrath on Russia, it has left devastation behind in its path. Kansai airport is still closed with the runways flooded, a significant problem since that airport is a major commercial hub for Japan. This was further escalated by severe damage to the main bridge connecting the airport with the mainland (Kansai airport is built on a reclaimed island) caused by a collision with a large tanker vessel which was blown out of control into the bridge.

To add to the already existing misery of those living in Hokkaido, the northern Japanese island was rocked by a magnitude 6.7 earthquake early on September 6th, just as I was preparing to send this Editorial off to the printers. The death toll has reached 40 and homes were buried under large landslides as a ridge in the countryside, near the epicenter of the quake, collapsed, inundating homes with mud, soil, trees, rocks and all. The transport services and Chitose airport have been quickly restored to normal service, but power outages are a remaining problem for many large areas affecting over 3 million households and businesses. So, it has not been a wonderful summer for us in Japan, and it would appear that the Rain in Spain has Fallen Mainly in Japan. Let’s hope for a pleasant autumn as compensation.

I was asked what the difference is between a typhoon and a hurricane. When I investigated the answer, I found it interesting that they are location-based names for the same weather phenomenon, the former occuring in the Atlantic and Northeast Pacific, and the latter in the Northwest Pacific. The Japanese actually have a love/hate relationship with typhoons (called 台風 [taifuu] in Japanese), since history points to two massive 13th-Century Kublai Khan-led Mongol invasions of Japan having been thwarted by two well-timed typhoons that became known as ‘divine winds’, or kamikaze, as they were believed to have been sent by the Gods to save Japan. However, since then typhoons have not been welcomed at all, especially when they are followed by an earthquake.

Take Note: Two Important Forthcoming Congresses

The 16th congress of the Asian-Pacific Association for Laser Medicine and Surgery (APALMS) will be held in the palatial Berkeley Hotel in beautiful Bangkok, Thailand, on Friday and Saturday October 19th and 20th under the theme “Paradigm Shift of Laser Therapy”. By the time you read this there’s not much time left, so make sure you are booked up to attend and support this Asian-Pacific focused group of medical laser clinicians and scientists from all aspects of laser, light-based and energy-based medicine. The 2018 APALMS President, Professor Apirag Chuangsawanich and the Secretary-General Dr Pichansak Bunmas have communicated their real enthusiasm for hosting the meeting, and for ensuring the meeting’s success. Prof Chuangsawanich has expressed great support for running an International Laser Licence System (ILLiS) course at some stage during the meeting, and this is good timing for new candidates for certification, and for recertification for those who previously were granted certification.

I encourage all who read this to consider taking an ILLiS course. Held under the auspices of a national or international congress and underwritten by the World Federation of Laser Societies for Laser Medicine and Surgery (WFSLMS) and the International Society for Laser Surgery and Medicine (ISLSM), the two-day ILLiS course gives a thorough grounding in all the basic photobiological aspects of laser-based and light-based medicine including laser types and characteristics; laser- and light-tissue interaction and how to use the latter to get the desired clinical result; and characteristics of cutaneous lesions and
their response to laser treatment. This is partnered with the all-important tenets of theoretical and practical laser safety, including international laser safety standards. These sections are given by internationally-respected leaders in their fields. A hands-on course is offered, including where possible as many laser and non-laser systems as are available. Finally candidates have to sit a written examination. Where practical, successful candidates are usually announced and receive their certification on the final day of the congress associated with which the ILLiS course was held. ILLiS certification is offered in several fields and in 4 grades: International Medical Laser Specialist (IMeLaS) for medical doctors, IMeDLaS for dental surgeons and IMeVLaS for veterinary surgeons; for laser physicists and laser scientists holding at least a PhD degree, P-ILaS is offered; ILNuS is awarded to laser nurses; and for laser engineers, the appropriate certification is ILES. So, dear readers, make sure you get your name forward as a candidate. I am not sure if there will be enough time for the ILLiS course at the 16th APALMS, but Prof Cheng-Jen Chang, President of the impressive WFSLMS/ISLSM meeting in Taiwan next year, has already promised an ILLiS course during that meeting.

And that brings me to the second meeting I mentioned above, the joint extravaganza led by Professors Ming-Chien Kao and Cheng-Jen Chang in Taipei next year. By the time the final issue of the year is ready to come to you, we will have the full details of this meeting. I had hoped the First Announcement would have been in our hands by now, but unfortunately it hasn’t arrived in time to make this issue. Good things are however worth waiting for.

Editorial Board New Members

In keeping with the ‘spring cleaning’ of the journal which I have referred to in the previous Editorials, I am also looking at streamlining the Laser Therapy International Editorial Board. As a first step, to top up the Board after the retirement of some members, I am happy to introduce to you two new members to the Board who have accepted our invitation to participate in making Laser Therapy a continuing success. First is Professor Dana Jianu MD PhD from Romania. Prof Jianu is a plastic surgeon with special interest in the use of the laser in aesthetic plastic surgery. She is currently the President of the European Society for Laser Aesthetic Surgery (ESLaS), and one of our Laser Therapy sister societies), the International Society of Regenerative Medicine and Surgery (ISRMS) and the Romanian Aesthetic Surgery Society (RASS). She is also National Secretary of the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISPAS). Second we have Laurence Imhof MD. Dr Imhof is in charge of the Laser Dermatology Department of the Department of Dermatology at the University of Zürich, in Zürich, Switzerland. Dr Imhof is actively involved with research into and practical application of cutaneous indications of the nanosecond and picosecond Nd:YAG laser, surgical and aesthetic CO2 laser, and she is extremely interested in clinical indications using LED low level light therapy on its own or as adjunctive to other procedures to shorten downtime and enhance results. I am sure we will be hearing more from Drs Jianu and Imhof.

End notes

And so we come to the end of this Editorial. The semi (cicadas) are currently singing (or droning) us through summer in Japan, at least those of them that haven’t been blown away by Typhoon Jebi! By the time you read this, I will be expecting the unique song from the cicada which is presaging the onset of the cooler weather of October, and the end of these hot (and sometimes very wet) summer days. You can hear (and see) an example of this semi at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOW4wMfuLOM.

Our commitment to the use of laser surgery or laser therapy in obstetrics and gynecology was reaffirmed earlier this year when the 13th congress of the Japan Association for Laser Reproduction (JaSLaR) was successfully held. Please take a look at the abstracts which appear elsewhere in this issue. Once again, please do take note of the ILLiS events in both Thailand in October of this year, and in Taipei next year. And finally, remember that the period in the current volume for submitting your article to be judged for one of the really worthwhile financial prizes and award certificates offered by the journal and myself (for authors of any age), and Professor Ming-Chien Kao (for first authors under 40), is getting shorter. In fact, you are three-quarters of the way through the year! You only have the final issue of the current volume to go, and remember, if you don’t submit an article then there is no chance of winning. Please refer to the information elsewhere in the journal for the details. Have a great autumn, or fall for our North American readers. Actually, delighting as I do in trivia, ‘fall’ for autumn is not actually born in the US of A, but is a contraction of both the 16th-Century middle English phrases, ‘fall of the leaf’ and ‘fall of the year’, so may I wish you a good ‘fall of the year’!

Tokyo, September 2018