

The Second IMIA Japan Chapter International Symposium
in Tokyo, Japan on October 9, 2015

Introduction

The first IMIA Asia Symposium held in Tokyo on November 9 in 2014 gathered 250 attendants from the world. This event made it clear that professionalization is a key to successful advancement of medical interpreting in Japan and Asia. Combined with the central government's move toward establishing a system before the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, international-minded hospitals and conference interpreting agencies started to look for ways to secure qualified medical interpreters. Freelance interpreters and volunteers started to look for ways to get trainings and employment. With this momentum in mind, some educational institutions and/or companies started to provide trainings, however, "certificate" and "certification" were totally confused. Japanese members who learned about CMI have considered a CMI qualification would be the only way to be recognized as professionals in Japan, the country in its fetus stage of development.

Under these circumstances, the IMIA Japan Chapter found it indispensable to provide Boot Camps by CMI certified instructors (Ms. Yoshie Ng. *and Ms. Gi Eun OH**) who used the IMIA Code of Ethics and the Standards of Practice as the materials for the Boot Camps. The IMIA Japan Chapter also found it indispensable to educate stakeholders on the importance of "Certification: CMI" testing for Japan. To achieve the following objectives, the IMIA Japan Chapter asked the President of the IMIA, Ms. Juana Horton to speak about WHO the IMIA are, HOW the IMIA have made a history of the profession not only in the United States but also across the world, and WHAT the IMIA can do strategically for Japan and Asia.

Objectives

- 1) To promote the IMIA and increase new members.
- 2) To inform stakeholders of the IMIA's Code of Ethics, the Standards of Practice and CMI testing.
- 3) To educate stakeholders about newly growing needs across the nation.
- 4) To advocate for sign language interpreters as our colleagues by organizing the event at the Capitol Hill area.

5) To network with the stakeholders and among the IMIA members.

Results

1) Identification of key players to promote the IMIA and to increase new members

- Among the total applicants for the Boot Camps, some 35 were our members, while some 105 participants were not yet IMIA's members. Upon taking the Boot Camps, some 13 participants filled in the membership forms included in the booklets. Although the event was held on Friday, not on weekends, it gathered over 200. So, the IMIA Japan Chapter expects to increase new members by contacting them from now on.

- As a result of advocacy activities, the IMIA Japan Chapter identified key players most interested in helping us. Among them, Dr. Kazuyuki Hamada, Senator, who strongly supports the IMIA and is expected to take issues regarding medical interpreting for the Parliamentary discussions.

- Thanks to Dr. Hamada, the IMIA Japan Chapter could be well known to the Japan Medical Association (JMA: equivalent to AMA in the United States). Dr. Hideo Kasai, the Board of Directors of JMA participated in our Boot Camps. General participants (mainly freelance interpreters and interpreting agencies) were encouraged by Dr. Kasai's congratulatory remarks and told us, "With JMA's remarks, I understood, medical interpreters are much more recognized than I thought." The President of the IMIA, Ms. Juana Horton and the IMIA Japan Chapter Chair, Dr. Kazumi Takesako spoke with Dr. Kasai regarding collaborative approach between the IMIA and JMA. It is a great step forward in order to win recognition of our profession from medical providers. Dr. Kasai said, "Due to recent influx of foreign patients into clinics and hospitals, medical doctors have been suffering from a lack of medical interpreting. We consider qualified medical interpreters as a key to solve these problems in medical encounters."

2) Promotion of the IMIA's Code of Ethics (COE), the Standards of Practice(S/P) and CMI testing

- The participants of the Boot Camps were impressed with (COE) and (S/P). They were so satisfied with the trainings by the experts who shared generously examples based on their on-site experiences. Some said, "Compared with other trainings, the IMIA's Boot Camp was great to have such wonderful Standards." Others said, "Trainers are really talented. I am happy to understand how to deal with issues on site." Generally speaking, training courses in Japan have been focusing on medical terminology and medical knowledge. Therefore, the IMIA Japan Chapter can distinguish itself from other trainings in that we have own standards, such

dedicated trainers and the goal of CMI testing.

- The speech by the President of the IMIA, Ms. Juana Horton, inspired medical interpreters to get certified to post their names on the IMIA website. Interpreting agencies understood the importance of CMI as an international certification and started to ask for requirements for testing. The IMIA Japan Chapter finds huge demand for certification testing by all the stakeholders, however, the CMI testing in Japanese language has not been prepared yet. The US based Japanese medical interpreters participated in our symposium. They showed strong interests in working for the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games in their home country. They also work as remote medical interpreters, therefore they insist on CMI certification.

3) To educate stakeholders about newly growing needs across the nation

- Ms. Julia P. Fortier, the principal researcher of the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health Care for the US Department of Health and Human Services, reported on the survey results titled, “Improving health care for foreigners in Japan: National Survey results and recommendations for action”. This marked the first research from foreigners’ viewpoints at national level.
- Panelists, Dr. Katsunobu Takenaka, Vice President of Japan Red Cross Takayama Hospital, referred to an influx of foreign tourists surpassing the number of residents, while Ms. Peggy Prosser shared her experience as a foreign deaf in Japan.
- The panelists’ talks caught attention from the audience as well as the media. NHK, a nation-wide TV station televised Ms. Fortier’s presentation, the organizer’s comment and the panelists’ session across the nation.

4) To advocate for sign language interpreters

- Since the IMIA has ASL interpreters, the IMIA Japan Chapter called for political and public attention to include JSL interpreters to serve the deaf. As a result, several JSL interpreters became our members upon the event. Mr. Terashima will lead the sign language committee.

5) To network with the stakeholders and among the IMIA members

- Through three seminars prior to the event, stakeholders including the five biggest conference interpreting agencies became interested in the activities by the IMIA Japan Chapter.
- The second IMIA Japan International Symposium enabled Japanese members to feel united under the IMIA through the IMIA President’s coming to speak with them in the same way as the IMIA Asian Chapter Chairs felt.

October 20, 2015, reported by Kazumi Takesako, Ph. D. organizer of the event, the IMIA Board of Directors and Japan Chapter Chair on behalf of the team members listed below:

Ms. Atsuko Kato, the Symposium Committee Leader, IMIA East Japan Chair

Ms. Izumi Morimoto, IMIA Japan Secretary and Accountant

Mr. Akio Imai, IMIA Japan Website and Webinar Manager

Mr. Koji Terashima, IMIA Japan Sign Language Committee Leader

Ms. Chikako Miyawaki, IMIA Japan Chapter Vice-Chair

Ms. Sayuri Nakamura, IMIA West Japan Chair

We are grateful for the following advisors' help:

Dr. Tetsuo Sakamaki, IMIA Japan Medical Advisor

Ms. Kiyomi Takizawa, IMIA Japan IT Advisor

Ms. Sachie Takizawa, IMIA Japan Event Advisor

We are grateful for the members of Symposium committee:

Ms. Chieko Sakihana(former IMIA West Japan Chair), Ms. Sayoko Tanaka(English Interpreters' Committee leader), Ms. Yoko Onoue, Ms. Andrea Kamidozono, Ms. Sachiko Kishida, Ms. Masako Senda, Ms. Makiko Hida, Ms. Yoko Shimizu, Ms. Masae Yasumura, Ms. Yoshie Kato, Mr. Koichi Ushioda (Chinese-English-Japanese interpreter), Ms. Ling Chang (Chinese-Japanese interpreter), and Ms. Linda Joyce.

Note:*Ms. Yoshie Ng.is a CMI in Mandarin and Cantonese, an interpreter at Tufts Medical Center, Former IMIA Boston director, and Professional Trainer for Boston University's training course.

**Ms. Gi Eun OH is a CMI in Korean, Korean Chapter Chair, founder of Gieun Oh's Medical Interpreting Training Center, and a visiting assistant professor of Yonsei University's Wonju College of Medicine.