

## EDITORIAL

### A short history of SFRR-Asia, its current status and significance

On behalf of the Society for Free Radical Research-Asia (SFRR-Asia), I wish all the readers of 'Free Radical Research' a very happy and prosperous new year. We, SFRR-Asia, are very happy to be associated with 'Free Radical Research' as our official journal and to send our representative, Prof. Shinya Toyokuni, as an Associate Editor of this nice journal.

Countries in the Asian region are among those that are growing at a rapid rate in recent years, both in terms of quality of life as measured by standard of living and scientific research. People in this region are also becoming more health conscious and issues pertaining to diet and nutrition, in relation to the advancements in disease prevention and therapy are attracting more attention. In this context, research on free radicals and antioxidants is emerging as a major area of biomedical research. In many countries in the Asian region there is a realization that combining ancient wisdom, as envisaged in the oriental systems of medicine with rapid recent advancements in biomedical research can yield rich dividends in human health. Many natural products originating in the Asian countries have tremendous scope for health related applications. SFRR is playing a significant role in the above mentioned aspects, especially in promoting interaction among both basic and clinical scientists by organizing national and international conferences. This is more so in the last few years in major Asian countries where SFRR is active.

SFRR, as a scientific society, was formed by the great effort of Prof. Trevor Frank Slater and Prof. Robin Willson and had its first International meeting at Uxbridge, England in 1982. One of the major objectives of SFRR is to promote research on free radicals and antioxidants with particular reference to medical and industrial importance for the benefit of mankind. Initially, only a few Japanese members from Asia joined the society. In 1988, the fourth biennial meeting of SFRR International was held at Kyoto in Japan (President: Osamu Hayaishi, Chairman: Etsuo Niki, Secretary-General: Toshikazu Yoshikawa) with the idea of enrolling more Asian members. After the success of this Meeting in Japan, SFRR International

was divided into four regions – SFRR Europe, SFRR Americas (presently Society for Free Radical Biology and Medicine), SFRR Australasia and SFRR Japan. SFRR Japan tried to expand the influence of the society to include other Asian countries. First, Prof. Yoshikawa contacted Prof. Myung-Hee Chung (Department of Pharmacology, Seoul National University) from Korea. Then SFRR Korea and Japan, together founded SFRR Asia. The SFRR Asia region, now a regional branch of the Society for Free Radical Research International, was formally founded in 1995.

In the initial few years there were mainly interactions between scientists and groups from Japan, Korea, India and China. In 1999, a conference in India organized by Prof. D.K. Das and Prof. Chandan Sen at Goa, sponsored by SFRR-Asia and other agencies on 'Emerging potentials of antioxidant therapy' induced India to become more active. SFRR India (with Dr. Lele as its President and Dr. T.P.A. Devasagayam as its Secretary-General) joined SFRR-Asia in 2000. This also initiated a chain of events that resulted in SFRR-Asia becoming more active. During the process of building the society, a number of Asian members showed interest in joining our society. They are mainly from China, Malaysia, Taiwan and Indonesia. After joining with India, SFRR Asia started gaining members year by year.

Presently, SFRR-Asia has six units affiliated to it, from Japan, Korea, China, India, Thailand and Malaysia. A number of other countries, such as Indonesia and Taiwan, have also showed interest in joining the SFRR-Asia region, and scientists from these countries regularly attend conferences of SFRR-Asia and its units. SFRR-Asia holds biennial meetings and its component country groupings hold annual or biennial meetings. These meetings attract a lot of participation, especially from students and other young participants. A number of awards are being given for best poster and oral presentations by young researchers to encourage them. The first official meeting of SFRR-Asia was held at Seoul, Korea in 2003, the second one in Shanghai, China in

2005 and third in Lonavala, India in 2007. The fourth biennial meeting is scheduled to be held at Langkawi in Malaysia during July 9–12, 2009 (to be organized by Dr. Kalanithi Nesaretnam). The earlier Presidents of SFRR-Asia were Prof. T. Yoshikawa (Japan), Prof. H.T. Chung (Korea), Prof. T. Ozawa (Japan) and Prof. Baolu Zhao (China). The current President is Dr. T.P.A. Devasagayam (India) and the President-Elect is Dr. Kalanithi Nesaretnam (Malaysia). The current Secretary-General is Prof. Y. Naito (Japan) and the Treasurer is Dr. H.J. Majima (Japan). SFRR-Asia has approximately 500 active members from its various units.

The idea that 'Free Radical Research' could become the official organ of SFRR-Asia was mooted by Prof. Helmut Sies, Editor-in-Chief of this journal and the key person behind my entry into SFRR, during the SFRR-India annual meeting held at Jaipur during February 2008. This suggestion was then made officially by Matthew Pacey on behalf of 'Informa Health Care', and this proposal was given

formal approval by SFRR-Asia during the SFRR-Asia business meeting held in Beijing on October, 2008. So from now on, 'Free Radical Research' will be official journal for both SFRR-Europe and SFRR-Asia, two of the most active constituents of SFRR-International. I would like to thank all the office bearers of SFRR-Asia and the journal's editorial board for their co-operation in this venture. I am sure both the journal and our society will be mutually benefited by this association, and I wish 'Free Radical Research' a very bright future.

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