

Developmental Project of Thalassotherapy in the Japanese Coastal Area

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The Japanese Society for Thalassotherapy Research was born in 1989, and at least three projects of the Thalassotherapy Center have been announced by Japanese journals. This new type of utilization of the seaside in Asia is recognized in the fields of ocean resort industries etc. The present paper deals with the definition of thalassotherapy, its history and background, marine environments, the differences between spatherapy and thalassotherapy, therapeutic technics, the comparison of climatotherapy both closed and open sea-area, and the potentials for development of Japanese thalassotherapy etc.

Although Japan is called a country of the sea, there is no center of thalassotherapy in Japan such as in Europe. However, the Japanese Society for Thalassotherapy Research was founded in 1989, and four reports of this society have been issued (Nomura, 1990). This is a first for Asia and Pacific coastal areas. Furthermore, Japanese journals have announced already at least three progressing projects for construction of thalassotherapy centers, and other programs are also proceeding (Fig. 1).

Definition

The vocabulary thalassotherapy is composed of therapy and thalassa (ocean from Greek), named by Dr. De La Bonnadiere, of Arcachon near Bordeaux in 1867, the capital of the oyster. The present author has translated it as Kaiyo-ryoho in Japanese (Nomura, 1978). The definition of thalassotherapy is subtly different from various authors:

«the therapy carried out under the climate of the ocean by the seawater, marine algae and marine muds (French Medical Academy, 1960)»

«French Ministry of Health, in the circular dated July 1961, defined thalassotherapy in the following terms: exploitation for the purpose of effective therapeutics combined with seawater, the air and the marine climate.»

«In a privileged marine site, according to the President of "Sea and Health Federation", Dr. Badelon, thalassotherapy means simultaneous use (under strict condition and medical survey) of the benefits of marine medium components with a view to preserving or curing. Marine medium components are: sea climate, muds, weeds, sand and other agents coming from the sea (Badelon, 1989).»

It is thence thought that thalassotherapy is one of the natural therapeutics as is spatherapy. At present, there are about 40 centers of thalassotherapy in France, 25 centers in USSR, 22 centers in Germany, 5 in Italy etc. Over 100 centers in total are recognized in the world. In Japan, as described above, three projects are proceeding in Mie, Chiba, Fukuoka (Otomo, 1988; So-go-yunikomu, 1989).

History

It is generally accepted that the ancestor of thalassotherapy is the Greek medical authority Hippocrates. In Japanese history, there were traditional and folkloric bathing, e.g. seawater balneotherapy, algal bathing (Nomura, 1978). However, the first seawater bathing had been introduced in the begin-

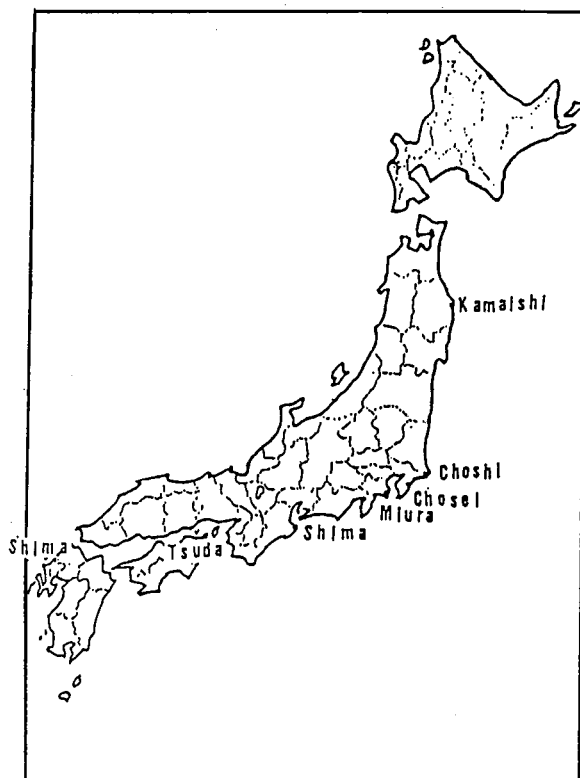


Fig. 1. Projects of Thalassotherapy in Japan

chronic pains, such as rheumatology pains, arthritis, osteoporosis, painful cellulitis, sequels of accidents, sport traumatology, tendinitis, circulatory disorders, overweight, oedema, psoriasis, gynecological diseases, rhino-dental diseases, esthetics, contra-aging etc.

Techniques

The thalassotherapy includes many techniques as follows: anaemotherapy, heliotherapy, hydrotherapy, balneotherapy, pressotherapy, physiotherapy, mechanotherapy, arenotherapy, psamotherapy, pelotherapy, fangothrapy, algotherapy, phytotherapy, phycotherapy, diethetics, aromatherapy, electrotherapy, cinesitherapy, ergotherapy, crenotherapy, cryotherapy, massotherapy, thermotherapy, ionotherapy, psychotherapy, lasertherapy, musicotherapy, Kneips, shiatsu, peduluve, manuluve, aquapuncture, etc.

Enviromental condtions for establishment of a Thalassotherapy Center

The main difference between urban thalassotherapy and true thalassotherapy consists in the viewpoint of climatotherapy. As for spatherapy, there is also a change of air-effect in the thalassotherapy. The stress from urban life makes it necessary to get a change of air, and to have amenities in the

ning of the Meiji era from Germany. Oguci (1989) has reported these detailed descriptive data. On the other hand, Matsuo (1989) has found a note that a thalassotherapy center, like a hospital named "Ryoyokuin" at Mahanashijima, Miyagi Prefecture, had been established in 1890 by Dr. Kenzo AKABOSHI (Court Physician of the Meiji Emperor, Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University). After his activities, there was no record on therapeutics concerned with seawater and sea-climate etc.

Recently, esthetic salons in big cities, have been importing various marine products from France, and new japanese products have also been found in the market. This is called urban thalassotherapy.

Virture of Thalassotherapy

The treatments in thalassotherapy are carried out for the symptoms as follows: asthenia, tiredness,

seaside. Negative ions in the beach, the fresh fishes and coquillages for dietetics, aromatherapy for seashore algae such as silvi-bathing (Sugisawa and Nomura, 1988), microelements in seawater and marine aerosol (Aubert *et al.*, 1979). These factors are essential for establishment of a Thalassotherapy Center.

Thalassotherapy in both closed and open seas

It is generally thought that thalassotherapy in an open sea area is better than one in closed coastal seas, because of the views of changing of seawater currents, and seaside atmospheric purities. According to our historical knowledge, many marine coastal big cities in the world had developed in enclosed coastal seas. It is also necessary to ensure that the development of a Thalassotherapy Center in enclosed coastal seas should consider careful protection and maintenance natural environmental conditions.

Comparison between spatherapy and thalassotherapy

Special characteristics and differences between spatherapy and thalassotherapy are summarized as follows: i) osmolarity difference, ii) variety of water quality and chemical composition, iii) virtue of aromatherapy, iv) usual bathing water temperature, v) utilization of marine factors (algae, muds, seawater, marine products, sea-climates etc.), vi) traditional and philosophical view-points. As we can find each specificity in either thalassotherapy or spatherapy, it is thought that ensemble activation on their developments are possible without competition in the resort industries.

Possible development and potentialities in Japan

According to the diminution of working hours in Japan, many Japanese will develop a tendency to consume time in resorts or travelling etc. Therefore, the concept of thalassotherapy (Hatano, 1989) might fit well to Japanese future life. Thalassotherapy is not only therapeutic, but also a broad healthy park industry. Some problems relating to their development should be cited:

- i) polyhedral effect of thalassotherapy
- ii) all season resort style
- iii) Japanese character favours the spa
- iv) increasing numbers of women who have free time
- v) fashion to esthetics, even for young men
- vi) further augmentation of marine sport population
- vii) development of cruising type thalassotherapy
- viii) influences of propaganda by urban thalassotherapy
- ix) ecotechnological or eco-engineering point of view in the developmental future industries

It is necessary at any rate to create Japanese and Asian adaptable thalassotherapy. So, we anticipate fundamental scientific research for thalassotherapy in Japan.

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