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Seminar on Soleprints in Bangkok (Summary)

1. What is a soleprint?

A soleprint is a dermatoglyphic pattern on the sole of the foot. As in the case of a fingerprint, it remains durable and unchanged throughout one's life, which enables identification in a scientific way. Unlike fingerprints, the use of soleprints in criminal investigation has been largely ignored in Japan.

2. Identity confirmation in Japan = Scientific methods for identification

Needed to identify victims of crimes, accidents or natural disasters and those with amnesia or dementia

(1) General methods for identifying a corpse

A reasonable assumption is made through interviewing family members and checking other characteristics of the deceased, such as his/her height, build, moles, (operative) scars, and tattoos, as well as his/her belongings and clothes

(2) Scientific methods for identification

- a. Fingerprints---kept for only those with criminal records; samples taken from his/her house, workplace, etc.
- b. Teeth---Medical records written by dentists
- c. DNA---Whether he/she has identical DNA with his/her next of kin; samples taken from his/her house, workplace, etc.

There is NO fingerprint database for all Japanese nationals in Japan.

* In Japan, from the standpoint of protecting privacy and personal information, there is no "public consensus" that authorities establish fingerprint database for all the citizens

3. Increased interest in soleprints

We have had a long history of using fingerprints in the field of criminal investigation. The public has a sense of caution against the police. After the March 2011 disaster, a number of samples went missing, and fewer family members could provide their fingerprints for comparison. We now live in an environment where we cannot simply apply conventional scientific methods. Can the soleprints replace them?

(1) Have the soleprints ever been used for criminal investigation? We

have had such cases in the past, but the cases are extremely rare.

- (2) Projected huge earthquakes and tsunami in Tokyo and along the Nankai megathrust may cause thousands of casualties.
- (3) As of today, 18,460 people died or went missing and a little over 6,000 people received injuries in the March 2011 disaster. The identities of more than 100 victims have not been confirmed up to date. There was also a significant rise in the number of crimes overseas involving Japanese, and the number of missing persons with dementia is expected to increase to more than 10,000.

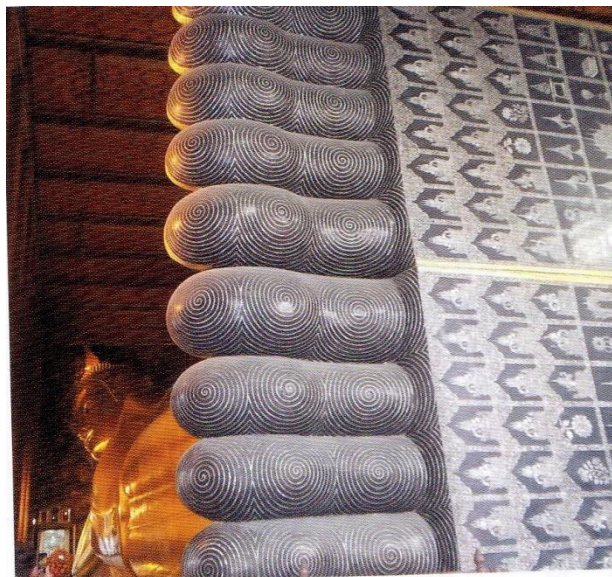
(4) Advantages in the use of soleprints

Numerous characteristic points (munitias) over a wide area; samples are easily taken, as they are well preserved with shoes and socks; High technical skills are not needed

4. Underlying issues to be solved

- (1) Proper administration of personal information; Which authorities will be in charge; Close coordination among relevant authorities
- (2) Measures on how to avoid identify theft and altered soleprints

Categorical names for soleprints



Reclining Buddha of Wat Pho in Bangkok has soleprints, too

“Fingerprints (soleprints) are great masterpieces created by the God of the Evolution”

by Masaru IBUKA, former chairman of Sony Corporation