



## Marko Polo's Diary

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### EADV Meets in the Arctic – the 4<sup>th</sup> Spring Symposium in Lapland, Saariselkä, February 8-12, 2006

All that I have heard of Finland, of its magic nature, particular cordiality of its inhabitants, of unforgettable experience in Finnish saunas and spas, happen to be true. Not really crazy about cold or subarctic climate (and the weather forecast was predicting many degrees below freezing), I prepared myself for the worst. Surprisingly, it was one of the most unique experiences I had. And it is always like that. Actually not far what de Botton claimed in his *The Art of Travel* pinpointing that if our lives are dominated by the search for happiness, then indeed not many activities reveal as much about the dynamics of that quest – in all its ardour and paradoxes – as our travels. They express a message of what life might be, beyond the constraints of the struggle for survival. Lapland is an exotic region covering 100,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Saariselkä, located in northern Lapland of Finland, in the middle of the fells near Urho Kekkonen National Park, is an enchanting tourist center and a lively village. It is offering lots of challenging activities from ski trails, husky or reindeer safaris to snow mobile tracks, long walks or just let you be charmed by genuine Lapp mentality. Reindeer, wolf, bear, and sea and land birds are the main forms of animal life. Altogether, a real pleasure of landscape, nature and rare purity. The kingdom of white sparkling light at all times of day or night made an impression of being if not in a fairytale, then certainly within rare corners of the world where the nature is still untouched. Although it actually was not spring, it was the perfect place to proceed with a Spring EADV Symposium and its main topic of *Skin and Climate*. The latest facts on photoaging were given by Professor Jouni Uitto, and plenary lecture session by Professor Ring on Friday morning. These were preceded by modern standards in the management of bullous diseases by Professor Bruckner-Tuderman, then topics on Arctic der-

matology dealing with the threat and challenge of arctic climate, and so on and so forth. Of course, the history session was on the program too. Very well visited, it gathered us all in our enthusiasm and love for the history of medicine/dermatology. Most of all we were delighted with the presentation of Professor Emeritus Kimmo Mustakallio who gave the 4<sup>th</sup> *M&M Wolf Lecture* and told us the story of Finnish dermatovenerology, starting from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century on. The first professors were Swedish speaking, while the fifth Juho Karvonen nominated in 1903 was the first who held his lectures in Finnish. In 1910 he was elected president of the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim, and in 1916 he founded the Finnish Dermatological Society. There are five University Central Hospitals and 16 Central Hospitals in Finland, 15 of them including dermatology services. The next lecture was by myself dealing with illustrations by doctor-artists, a unique specialty of Vienna scene; it was followed by a presentation by Professor Holubar who elaborated *The Early History of the International League of Dermatology*; then there was *A Blue Success Story of the History of AAD Journal* by Jeffrey Bernhard, and finally the presentation given by Braun Falco Jr. on *The Depiction of Prostitution in Picasso's Paintings of the Blue Period*. Unfortunately, during my stay I had no opportunity to see Aurora Borealis, the most beautiful natural light show because the nights were not bright enough. However, a unique experience of the light and white, the magic of soundless beauty of nature, was far enough to fuse all this experience into an unforgettable memory of my mind.

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The world is waiting, sretan vam put!  
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