

José Florencio F. Lapeña, Jr., MA, MD

Department of Otorhinolaryngology  
College of Medicine, University of the Philippines  
Manila, Philippines

Department of Otorhinolaryngology  
Head and Neck Surgery  
East Avenue Medical Center, Diliman  
Quezon City, Philippines

## Blood and Foliage: Coral Red and Jade Green

The crimson and forest-green chevrons and piping on the long black academic gowns of surgeons and physicians, respectively, are symbols of blood and foliage, of healing with the knife or with medicaments.<sup>1</sup> Most of us are strangers to neither calling, having trained intensively in both these arts and sciences, and many proudly don the red-piped garb of the College of Surgeons as well as the green-striped garments of our Society of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery. The latter has seen 60 years come and go, and with these years, many highlights, lowlights, and colleagues who have gone before us.

Red and green are also colors that mark a 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with coral and jade, both regarded as precious gems from antiquity. *Corallium rubrum* (red coral) “combined myth and magic,” as “its bright red color fascinated people in the East and West alike.”<sup>2</sup> It has been regarded as the “blood of Medusa, soft and diaphanous under water, as hard as stone in the air,” or a procreative “tree of blood” that “link(ed) with the divine and the supernatural.”<sup>2</sup> Green jade, “the Emperor’s Stone,” has been mined and worked in China since prehistoric times, eventually becoming the “royal gem.”<sup>3</sup> Red coral, green jade – precious stones on the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the Philippine Journal of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery. Coral red, jade green – precious colors that reflect our noble profession.

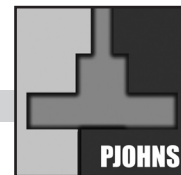
Red and green are also the colors of Christmas, and their use may be traced back to the “spatial and spiritual border marked by **rood screens**” in 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century medieval churches,<sup>4</sup> whose symbolism may have carried over to the temporal boundary between the end of one year and the beginning of the next.<sup>4</sup> These elaborately designed dividers featured edifying illustrations of saints and holy scenes in multicolored splendor, but were predominantly green and red. “Iron was one source of red pigment, and copper a source of green pigment, that colored the screens” and because “metallurgy was determined by astronomy,” also closely associated were “Iron with Mars, the masculine, war, and fire” and “Copper with Venus, the feminine, love and water.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, the colors people encountered held multiple planes of meaning for them, as they celebrated another year over, a new one begun. (Figure)

Correspondence: Prof. Dr. José Florencio F. Lapeña, Jr.  
Department of Otorhinolaryngology  
Ward 10, Philippine General Hospital  
Taft Avenue, Ermita, Manila 1000  
Philippines  
Phone: (632) 554 8467  
Telefax: (632) 524 4455  
Email: lapenajf@upm.edu.ph

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**Figure.** Rood screen in the 14th-century gothic *Église Saint-Pierre-Le-Jeune*, Strasbourg, France. Behind is the famous pipe organ of Johann Andreas Silbermann on which Helmut Walcha recorded a large part of his performances of Bach's organ works. (Photo by José Florencio F. Lapeña, Jr.)

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We hope that this further concretizes our response to the Manila Declaration on the Availability and Use of Health Research Information<sup>6</sup> and eventually qualifies us for inclusion in the Directory of Open Access Journals.<sup>7</sup> In support of this, we conducted a Basic Medical Writing Workshop for authors last March 19, 2016 and a two-day Research Technical Review Workshop for reviewers last April 29-30 hosted by the PJOHNS, and plan to continue doing so. We are seriously negotiating for migration from our current online platform to one that will better serve our needs, and those of our readers. We will soon activate our social media presence as well.

Indeed, we all are yin and yang, you and I, red coral and green jade. We draw blood, and apply herbal poultices. We swim with the flow, yet solidly stand our ground. We don gay apparel of coral red and jade green, and merrily yet solemnly celebrate. *Mabuhay!*

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