

# MESSAGE FOR THE 50TH VOLUME

## Congratulations on one half century of publication of the Journal

Tai Akera

*Vice President, Merck Research Laboratories, Rahway, NJ, USA  
Senior Vice President, Banyu Pharmaceutical Company, Tokyo, Japan  
(Advisory Editor from 1988 to 2000)*



All the wooden buildings of Keio University School of Medicine were burned to ashes during World War II. Only three buildings located on the west side of the campus remained. Just seven years after the end of the war, Dr. Yoshio Kusama started the Keio Journal of Medicine in English as a part of brave efforts to reestablish the prestige of Keio University School of Medicine. This was by no means a modest undertaking, as most faculties here and at other medical schools in Japan were under the influence of German medicine at the time. Very few faculties had been trained in English speaking countries such as the United Kingdom or the United States. It is noteworthy that more than half of the first authors in the first volume of the Journal were professors who were likely more fluent in German than in English.

Keio Journal of Medicine was fortunate to have Dr. Kusama, a graduate of Stanford University and faculty of the School of Medicine, as the first editor. It must have been daunting for Dr. Kusama to get the Journal started, then to continue. Thanks to Dr. Kusama's foresight, coupled with enormous efforts by editors and contributors, and also continued support from readers and medical school administration, the Journal has now established its unique position. The Journal is one of a few international journals that is published by a Japanese medical school and listed in the *Index Medicus*. Producing such a Journal in English is the pride of Keio Medical School.

In recent years, as medical science has become so diverse, maintaining a general journal such as the Keio Journal of Medicine has become more difficult. Except for a few very prestigious journals, like the New England Journal of Medicine, many have disappeared or merged. Even attendance at scientific societies has

shifted from the more general, such as FASEB, to the specialized, like the Society for Neuroscience or the American Heart Association. One approach to survive these changing times is to become a tool of publication for thesis papers. Although this would guarantee the number of articles to keep the necessary volume, we would lose the interest of the general audience.

The Keio Journal of Medicine has been fortunate to have outstanding, innovative, and dedicated editors in recent years, namely Dr. Fujino and then Dr. Aikawa. When Dr. Fujino became editor, the Journal struggled for survival amidst paucity of manuscripts, delays in publications, and lack of reader interest. With the editors' tireless efforts and innovative ideas, the Journal has now established a strong tradition with a stable number of manuscript submissions.

As a novice scientist, I first submitted two original articles to the Journal in the 1960s. A few years ago, I submitted an original article that I wished to publish quickly. I received valuable and compassionate advice from the editors. The experience was one of editors working with the authors to get quality articles published in the Journal in a timely fashion. My manuscript, originally submitted in early September, was published in the same year. This collaborative atmosphere of helpful advice and speedy publication attracts authors to publish quality work in the Journal.

The future style of scientific publication will likely change. Electronic media allow rapid publication and easy retrieval. I trust that Keio Journal of Medicine, which has developed a strong tradition, will take the new challenge of changing journal styles and retaining its inclusion in *Index Medicus*, and emerge as a leading journal on general topics and education of the medical society throughout the world.