

EDITORIAL

The legend of 1952

Naoki Aikawa
Editor-in-Chief

The Keio Journal of Medicine

With this issue, the Keio Journal of Medicine celebrates its 50th volume. The journal was established in 1952 when Japan was struggling to reconstruct the country from the ruins of World War II. Multiple air raids during the War almost completely destroyed the campus of our medical school and the university hospital, located in the center of Tokyo, leaving only the Kitasato Memorial Medical Library, the Institute of Preventive Medicine, and an annex building of the Keio University Hospital. Not only the buildings, medical records, books, and laboratory facilities, but tragically many researchers, teachers, and physicians were also lost during the War.

The Journal was conceived during these difficult times and born several years later, the accoucheurs being the faculty members of the School of Medicine, Keio University, who thought that the medical school needed its own medical journal as a medium for disseminating their original findings and opinions to the world. Under the strong leadership of the late Yoshio Kusama as the first Editor-in-Chief of the journal, the editors and contributors from our medical school and the alumni strove toward its publication.

From its inception, they had the foresight to choose English as the journal's language, despite the fact that German was the primary foreign language used for medical education and research in Japan, even after the War. For them, it must have been a painstaking task to publish an English journal at that time, as most authors were not very fluent in English and many important medical articles were still published in German. In fact, in the very first paper of the first volume of the Journal, entitled "Pathological studies on malnutrition", 45 of the 57 references were German papers.¹ However, if they had insisted on using German as the language of their new journal, the accomplishments we are now witnessing 50 years on, could not have been made.

Their foresight to change from German to English must be highly acknowledged, but such wise decision-making is not unprecedented in Keio society. Almost a century before the launch of the Keio Journal of Medi-

cine, Yukichi Fukuzawa, the founder of Keio, had abruptly abandoned Dutch for English in his teaching, and this critical change contributed to Keio University becoming the leading educational institution in the modern history of Japan.

Since the first issue of our Journal, the editors have been eager to publish the best material available and have worked as dedicated medical missionaries to fulfill their desire to inform readers around the world of what was being found in our medical school. Their dedication soon made a landmark in 1961 when the Journal was cited in the *Index Medicus*. This was truly a great achievement of our journal as there are currently only 67 English journals published in Japan cited in the *Index*.

Among the past five editors (Table 1), Toyomi Fujino, MD, FACS, the immediate past Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, deserves special recognition for renewing the Journal in the mid-1980s when publications were almost 2 years behind. It was during this time that basic medical sciences differentiated into specialized fields and clinical specialties became subdivided. With this wave of differentiation and specialization, most researchers became reluctant to submit their papers to our journal, which was considered a general medical journal. Dr. Fujino, who was the professor of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at the time, showed his passion and ability to reconstruct the Journal by creating several new features.²

One successful new feature was to publish papers from invited guest speakers attending traditional Keio Medical Society Meetings. The topics in these papers were very specific to a narrow field, but as most distinguished researchers authored them, these papers of high quality have attracted the attention of readers from various fields of medical science.

In addition, Professor Fujino invited Tai Akera, MD to be the Advisory Editor of the Journal. Dr. Akera, a former professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology at Michigan State University, gave us invaluable advice about our editorial judging whenever needed. As Dr.

Table 1 Historical Roster of the Editors-in-Chief

Yoshio Kusama, MD	1952–1968
Hisakichi Matsubayashi, MD	1969–1969
No appointment*	1970–1972
Toshio Toyama, MD	1973–1984
Yonosuke Watanabe, MD	1984–1984
Toyomi Fujino, MD	1984–1996
Naoki Aikawa, MD	1996–Present

* Four members of the Board of Editors; Hitoshi Hatano, MD, Hideo Hosaki, MD, Tadao Mitsui, MD, and Toshio Toyama, MD, were editing the Journal during these years.

Akera retired from the position of Advisory Editor on the completion of the 49th volume, it is appropriate to take advantage of this occasion to acknowledge his dedicated service over the last 12 years.

During the past decade the Journal has expanded rapidly in its contents as well as in its pagination. Since 1999, the Journal has been publishing papers from the Commemorative Lecture of the Keio Medical Science Prize awardees, one of whom later became a Nobel Prize laureate. In addition, abstract books for the Keio University International Symposia for Life Sciences and Medicine have been published as supplement issues of the Journal. Currently, the journal is received by 84 medical libraries in Japan and 351 libraries throughout the world.

To commemorate the 50th volume, the editorial committee has been planning renewals and new features. First, to change the journal's cover, we invited

subscribers to submit ideas for new designs. As you may notice, the new design provides less space for the Keio colors of blue, red, and blue, than the old cover, implying the future of the Journal to be more open to the outside, rather than being confined to our medical school and the alumni. Secondly, we have started publicizing our web page so that articles in the Journal can be read worldwide as soon as it is published. The third and most important new feature is the publication of Festschrift issues, including mini-review articles, to commemorate the 50th volume. The topics in these mini-reviews have been chosen to characterize the achievement of our medical school. The articles will describe either prominent alumni or distinguished achievements constituting a historical review of the major accomplishments achieved in our medical school during the late 20th century.

The five-decade tradition is an obligation for us, but it is also a challenge for authors and editors. Having considered the latest developments of the Journal, I am confident that the outlook for the 21st century is very bright, and I hope the readers and contributors will join me in taking a new step forward toward the Golden Anniversary, to be celebrated next year.

References

1. Aoki T, Nakamura I: Pathological studies on malnutrition, particularly the pathology of the liver and kidney. *Keio J Med* 1952; 1: 1–19
2. Fujino T: Congratulations for the 50th volume. *Keio J Med* 2001; 50: 3