

## Editorial

# The Upcoming 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine

In 2010, the Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine (TJEM) will mark its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding. As a witness of this memorable transition, I, as Editor-in-Chief, am pleased to summarize the past and present of TJEM. The scientific impacts and the future of TJEM will be discussed in a forthcoming issue in 2010, the year of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

In 1920, TJEM was founded as an international journal, with passion of the three founding Editors, Professors Toshihiko Fujita, Toyoziro Kato, and Yasutaro Satake, Tohoku Imperial University, Faculty of Medicine, located in Sendai, Japan. The objectives of TJEM were to publish original research papers that make novel and important contributions to the understanding of Medicine and Physiology and to provide the information worldwide from Japan. Therefore, each article of TJEM was written in one of three languages, German, English, and French, but not in Japanese. Yet, the founding editors also provided the Japanese translation of TJEM (*Tohoku Jikken Igaku*) in the cover of the first issue (Fig. 1). Perhaps, the journal title of TJEM was named after *the New England Journal of Medicine* and *the Journal of Experimental Medicine*, both of which were the best models for the founding Editors in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, “*Tohoku*” means the east (*To*)-north (*Hoku*) region of the main island of Japan, where Sendai is located (Fig. 2); the geographic position of the Tohoku region is reminiscent of the location of New England in USA. It is also noteworthy that the founding Editors wanted to sell TJEM via a book and trading company, Maruzen, as shown in the bottom of the cover (Fig. 1). The pioneering strategy of the founding Editors has contributed to the worldwide distribution of TJEM; accordingly, readers may find the TJEM issues in a nearby library. TJEM is one of the oldest and the most prestigious periodicals in Japan and the world.

During the early phase of the TJEM development, there were two crises that interfered with its publication: Great Kanto Earthquake and the World War II. On September 1st 1923, Great Kanto Earthquake destroyed the city of Tokyo, including a print company that produced the TJEM issues. Under such difficult situations, however, the founding Editors were able to publish TJEM in 1924 (some issues of Volumes 4 and 5), thanks to the fantastic collabo-

ration between the Tohoku Imperial University and the Wistar Institute, Philadelphia, PA, USA; namely, the TJEM issues of 1924 were printed in Philadelphia by courtesy of the Wistar Institute. Accordingly, since its foundation in 1920, TJEM has been published continuously, except for the year of 1946 just after the World War II. Because the center of Sendai city was destroyed on July 10 1945 by air raids, the Editors during the postwar confusion were unable to publish TJEM in 1946. On the other hand, despite the severe situations for publishing TJEM, the wartime Editors managed to publish one issue (the combined issue of the issues 3 and 4 of Volume 48) in February 1945 before the air raids, with nine papers. As easily expected, six of the nine papers were written in German, while two in English and one in French. For the detailed information, readers are asked to visit the Archive at the TJEM website (<http://www.journal.med.tohoku.ac.jp/>). I would like to express my deep gratitude and great respect for excellent foresight and enormous efforts of the founding Editors, who also served as Editors during the World War II and the postwar confusion. I also thank the Wistar Institute for printing the TJEM issues in 1924 just after Great Kanto Earthquake.

In 1949, Tohoku Imperial University was converted to Tohoku University due to the reorganization of the prewar system. Accordingly, the publisher of TJEM was changed from Tohoku Imperial University Faculty of Medicine to Tohoku University School of Medicine; however, the scientific principle of TJEM remains unchanged. In 1956 (from Volume 64), English was determined as the sole official language in TJEM. In 1960, to ensure the rapid publication and high-quality printing, the Editorial board decided to produce the TJEM issues in Sendai with Sasaki Printing & Publishing Co., Ltd. Since 1981, the Tohoku University Medical Press is responsible for publishing TJEM, with a generous support by the Grant-in-Aid for Publication of Scientific Research Results from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

TJEM is published monthly in printed version as well as in electronic version through the “Japan Science and Technology Information Aggregator, Electronic” (J-STAGE), developed by Japan Science and Technology Agency. With this issue (Volume 218, Issue #3), TJEM has published 9,324 papers (from Volume 1, 1920). The current

doi: 10.1620/tjem.218.161

Correspondence: Shigeki Shibahara, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Molecular Biology and Applied Physiology, Tohoku University School of Medicine, Sendai, Miyagi 980-8575, Japan.

e-mail: shibahar@mail.tains.tohoku.ac.jp

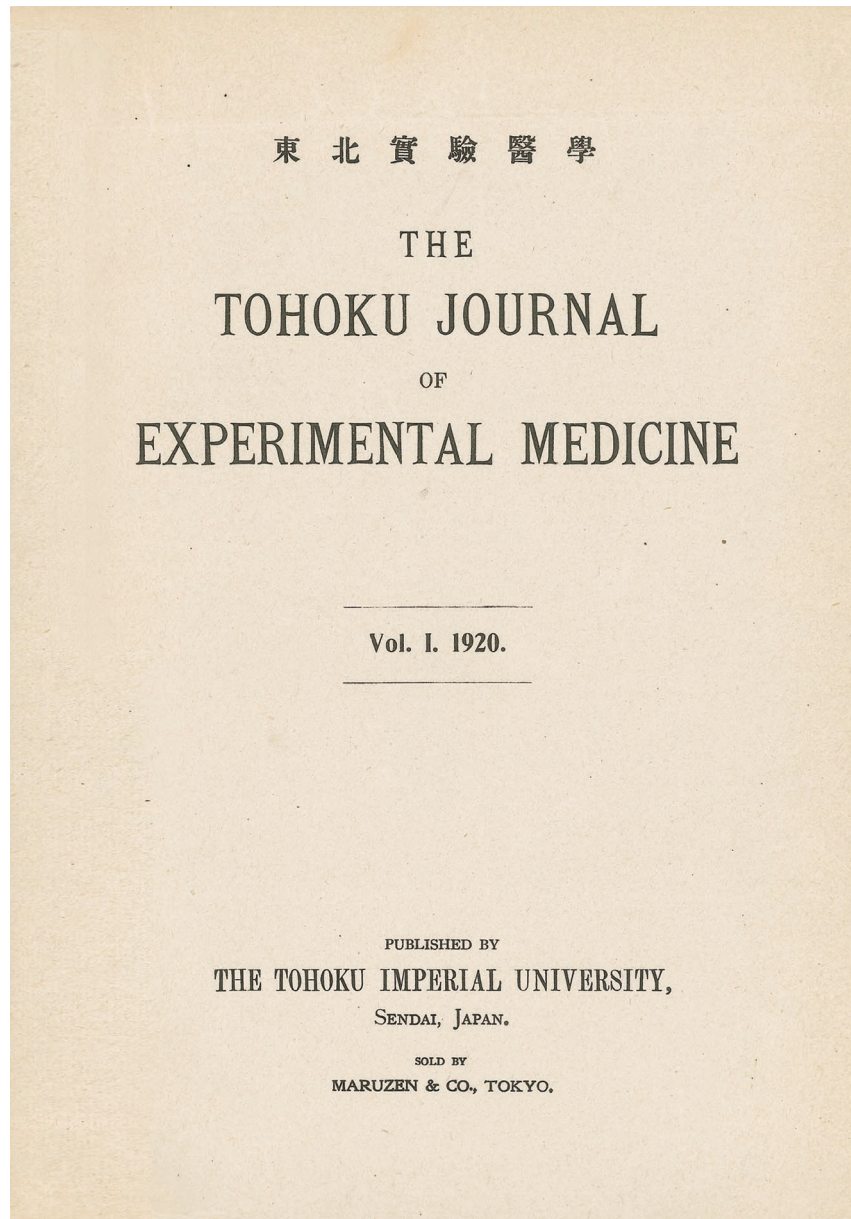


Fig. 1 The cover of the first issue of the TJEM.

articles published in TJEM (from 1981 to present) are available through PubMed, without any barrier to access. Indeed, a total of 150,000 TJEM papers were downloaded in 2008. Furthermore, all the articles of TJEM (from 1920 to present) are freely available to everyone through the TJEM website (<http://www.journal.med.tohoku.ac.jp/>).

In contrast to many journals that are associated with scientific societies, TJEM is unrelated to any scientific societies and thus publishes original research papers in all areas of medical sciences. It is therefore essential for Editors to find referees suitable for each submitted manuscript. Without volunteer work of excellent referees, we are unable to maintain TJEM. For example, in 2008, the TJEM editorial office received 416 manuscripts, with the acceptance rate of 29%. A total of 543 referees worldwide participated

in peer review of selected 283 manuscripts in 2008; namely, the remaining 133 manuscripts were rejected after Editorial judgment, without detailed review. It is also noteworthy that among the 416 manuscripts in 2008, 285 manuscripts (69%) were submitted from authors outside Japan. During the past five years, the overseas submissions consistently represented about 70% of total annual submissions. Moreover, the impact factor in 2008 is 1.286 and the cited half-life is 6.3 years. I am particularly interested in the cited half-life that may represent the longevity of an article published in TJEM. I hope that all the contributors appreciate the scientific principle of TJEM. As a part of the celebrations, I am pleased to announce the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary review series in the forthcoming issues of Volume 219 and in 2010.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to the

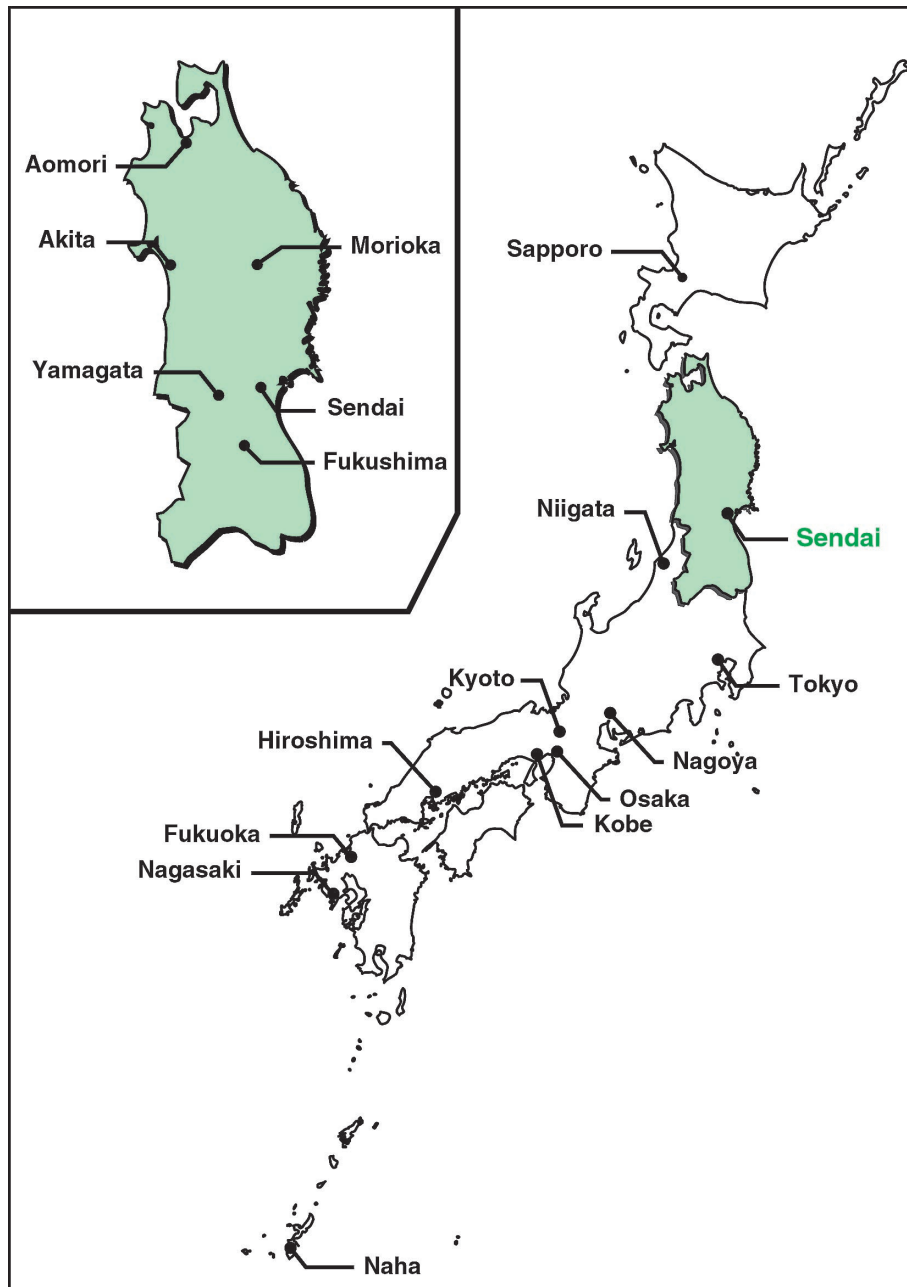


Fig. 2 The Tohoku region. The Tohoku region is also highlighted, with neighboring prefectural capitals.

founding Editors, the successive Editors, and coworkers in the Editorial office. I also thank many contributors, authors, referees, J-STAGE, and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

With profound respect, I dedicate this Editorial to Professors Toshihiko Fujita, Toyoziro Kato, and Yasutaro Satake, the founding Editors of TJEM.

Shigeki Shibahara  
 Editor-in-Chief  
 The Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine  
<http://www.journal.med.tohoku.ac.jp/>  
 June 8, 2009