CONTRIBUTION

In Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of MRMS

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Congratulations to Magnetic Resonance in Medical Sciences (MRMS) on its 20th anniversary! As the third Editor-in-Chief, serving from 2008 to 2018, I am delighted to celebrate this momentous occasion.

My first involvement with the Japanese Journal of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (in Japanese) was in 1986 when I published my first paper on Gd-relaxometry in rats. I still remember how happy and proud I was that my first paper had been published in a medical journal. Around the year 2006, a few years after MRMS was established, I became a member of the editorial board. Since then, I have been involved in constructing and improving the platform for peer review within the J-STAGE system: the first phase was the introduction of online submission in December 2009; the second phase was moving over to ScholarOne in October 2011; and the third phase began in 2015 when MRMS outsourced peer review management to Medical Tribune.

Fig. 1 Seated next to the present Editor-in-chief, Takayuki Obata (front center), and surrounded by other members of the editorial board at the 46th Annual Meeting of the Japanese Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine in Kanagawa, Japan, on September 7, 2018.
Even though my main task as Editor-in-Chief was to modify and improve the peer review system, I also made a few other changes for the sake of MRMS. Due to restrictions on travel expenses, the editorial board was initially limited to members who lived within the Tokyo metropolitan area. However, I successfully lobbied the secretariat to increase the number of editorial board members from areas other than Kanto. I also initiated awards to authors with the highest number of citations and to reviewers who showed great cooperation in completing many peer reviews.

MRMS received its first impact factor in 2012. The initial value of 0.966 was disappointing because it was less than one, but I felt confident that it would grow to at least two within ten years. So, I am very pleased that MRMS now has an impact factor greater than two on its 20th birthday. The number of submissions to MRMS has also been steadily increasing. It is a far cry from my earliest days with MRMS when it was common for us to hasten the peer-review process so that we had enough manuscripts to publish in the next volume.

I succeeded to the role of Editor-in-Chief after the late Dr. Tsuneya Watabe, who was a scholar and a man of great administrative ability who managed to do almost everything by himself. One of his main achievements was to negotiate for the inclusion of MRMS manuscripts on Medline. He also applied for the impact factor and set up the original electronic submission system via email attachments. It seems incredible that Dr. Watabe managed to do all these tasks by himself, but his efforts contributed greatly to the subsequent development of MRMS. Under Dr. Watabe’s leadership editorial board meetings were routinely held at Gakushi Kaikan in Jimbo-cho, followed by a small gathering with Dr. Watabe, Dr. Hasuo, the associate Editor-in-Chief, and myself at Brussels, a Belgian beer bar in Jimbo-cho. The editorial board meeting was moved to Hamamatsu-cho in 2012, but we continued to gather afterwards to relax at a nearby yakitori restaurant, “ICHIRIKI”. It is unfortunate that this ritual is presently suspended due to the COVID-19 situation.

Finally, I believe that MRMS plays an essential role amid the current turmoil of open access journals of various quality because its content is guaranteed and supported by the rigorous peer-review system of the Japanese Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine. I sincerely hope for further development of MRMS in the future.