Preface

I.	Ichiro	Kanazawa
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Tokyo

1997 is the 180th anniversary of the publication of 'An Essay on the Shaking Palsy' by James Parkinson in London. Even after the appreciation of the essay by Jean M. Chacot in France, the treatment of patients suffering from Parkinson's disease remained an empirical issue. In this respect, we now have strong tools to treat Parkinson's disease patients: levodopa, dopamine receptor agonists, degradating enzyme inhibitors, stereotaxic operations, and so on. This is an exceptional situation in the neurology of neurodegenerative disorders. Once a year, since 1993, we have held a meeting focussed on the treatment of Parkinson's disease. This issue contains the proceedings of the 5th Symposium held in Tokyo on November 8-9, 1996.

Not a very long time has past since the existence of multiple dopamine receptors in the brain was proposed from purely pharmacological studies. Surprisingly, more recently progress in molecular biology has revealed the actual presence of dopamine receptor molecules in terms of their amino acid sequences, corresponding with pharmacological concepts. Although knowledge on the characteristics of dopamine receptors derived from molecular biology is now essential for understanding the mechanisms of the effects and side effects of drugs in Parkinson's disease, there are still many problems concerning the pathophysiology of Parkinson's disease apart from molecular biology. In this symposium, therefore, we focussed on the static and dynamic pathology of Parkinson's disease and the clinical problems in managing Parkinson's disease patients. Moreover, the symposium includes the final report of a nation-wide, multicenter, prospective 10-year follow-up study on the long-term effects of bromocriptine in Parkinson's disease. The organizers express their sincere gratitude to all the speakers and participants in the symposium.

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