Preface

Shiro Iino

Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Department of Internal Medicine,
St. Marianna University, School of Medicine, Kanagawa, Japan

This issue covers the proceedings of a one-day symposium "Researching Hepatocellular Carcinoma in Japan: A Message to the World" held on July 29, 2000, in Tokyo under the auspices of Hepatitis Virus Foundation of Japan and the Study Group for Hepatocarcinogenesis and Prevention. It was supported by the Japanese Cancer Association, the Japan Society of Hepatology, the Japanese Society of Gastroenterology and the Liver Cancer Study Group of Japan.

The meeting was the third annual gathering of the Study Group for Hepatocarcinogenesis and Prevention – *Yuzawa Symposium*. It is the wish of all members of the group to announce throughout the world the knowledge on hepatitis C virus (HCV) and hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) induced by HCV that has accumulated in Japan. Because HCV spread decades earlier in Japan than elsewhere in the world, Japan has conducted a great deal of research and has obtained much data on HCC associated with HCV infection.

It is my sincere desire that the efforts and goodwill of all our collaborators who have agreed to our project and joined our symposia, including Professor Shinichi Kakumu of Aichi Medical University and Professor Yoshio Yamaoka of Kyoto University, will be conveyed to

all researchers in the world working on HCV-associated HCC, and help them pursue and extend research projects on this most challenging health care problem in this new millennium.

I wish to thank Dr. Hiroshi Suzuki who is a Professor Emeritus of Medicine and the Former President of Yamanashi Medical University for his energetic help and useful advice in editing this issue. He also contributed the last of the 18 papers to this special issue of *Oncology*. The figure '18' (*Juhachiban* or *Ohako*) is present in Japanese script on the cover of this issue. It has a distinguished connotation in the Kabuki canon, meaning *the best 18 specialties*.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this issue to the late Mr. Tokuma Utsunomiya, the founder and former president of Minophagen Pharmaceutical Company who supported our project and symposia. One of his staff members, Mr. Kazue Hanadate has put in a great deal of effort to catalyze and combine the wish of many contributors and editors. This issue would not have been completed within a reasonable time, if it were not for the skills that Mr. Hanadate has gained during the past 35 years and the enthusiasm which he continues to muster.