For the Record

This Special Issue marks an important milestone for the *Journal of Biomedical Science (JBS)*. I feel particularly privileged to share with you my thoughts on more than a decade of struggle, soul-searching, exhilaration and dejection during the development of *JBS*, along with my wholehearted appreciation for the many who have dedicated their best in making *JBS* what it is.

A Humble Beginning

JBS had a humble beginning. It was not unanimously accepted by the biomedical community when the idea that the National Science Council (NSC) should establish an international journal in biomedical science, with an editorial board based in Taiwan, was proposed by Prof. C.C. Chang, our Founding Editor-in-Chief. In fact, responses during several public hearings with biomedical scientists were split between endorsement and rejection. The latter was primarily from skeptics who felt that the biomedical community in Taiwan is too small to sustain an international journal. Others were concerned that, being international and sponsored by the NSC, this new journal will be competing unfairly with journals sponsored by various biomedical societies in Taiwan. The tide turned to our favor when a questionnaire survey conducted in February, 1992, showed that more than 60% of the 334 respondents agreed that an international journal dedicated to biomedical science should be established. On approval by the NSC upper echelon, preparation for the

new journal soon commenced, with Prof. C.C. Chang appointed as the Editor-in-Chief. With S. Karger as our publishing partner, the first issue of *JBS* appeared in January, 1994.

The Initial Struggle

There were three aspirations for *JBS* right from the onset. First, to become a truly international journal. Second, to be among the top 1,500 journals listed in the Journal Citation Report (JCR) published by the Institute of Scientific Information (ISI), with an impact factor of 2. Third, to provide a medium for budding scientists in Taiwan to introduce their work to the international community. To accomplish these seemingly formidable tasks, the Editorial Board decided that *JBS* must adopt a high academic standard in its reviewing process. The balance between this stringent practice and the relatively small number of submitted manuscripts during the early years of *JBS* has become a constant and soul-searching struggle. At the end, we resolved to publish *JBS* as a quarterly to maintain a regular publication schedule, while maintaining a rejection rate of around 45–50%. Looking back, this resolution was on the right track, since we soon established *JBS* as a reputable international journal of high standard. Despite a high rejection rate, we were able to change to a bimonthly in 1996, and scientists based outside of Taiwan submitted about 50% of our manuscripts.

The Number Talks

One crucial turning point in the development of *JBS* came in 1997 when the ISI began to include *JBS* in *Current Contents/Life Sciences*. After a 2-year period of tabulation, the impact factor for *JBS* was 0.99 in the 1999 JCR, followed by a big jump to 1.798 in the 2000 JCR. With an impact factor of 2.322 in the 2002 JCR, we have achieved one of the most formidable goals that we set 10 years ago. We now rank 933 among 5,876 journals in the ISI database, and rank 4th among the 279 listed journals published in Asia.

My Appreciations

JBS would not have existed without the foresight and determination of Prof. C.C. Chang, our Founding Editor-in-Chief. Another pillar is Prof. D.S. Chen, whose devotion and persuasion have sustained *JBS* during the lowest point of its development. The unfailing efforts of Prof. K.T. Jeang to promote *JBS* to the Chinese biomedical scientists at large are also instrumental to our success right from the beginning. His idea of appointing Regional Editors to receive and process manuscripts turned out to be a major asset to *JBS*. Together with Profs. J.Y. Wu, B. Berkhout and Y.S. Chan, the capable hands of our 4 Regional Editors are now handling manuscripts from North America, Europe and China. I am also indebted to our former and current Editorial Board members who are based in Taiwan. Their efforts and dedications are pivotal to making *JBS* where we are. The continuous support and advice from our Advisory Board members are deeply appreciated.

The hard work of our former and current Assistant Editors, Ms. T.L. Yang and Ms. T.J. Hsu, has lessened

greatly my workload. Their expediency in editorial processing is crucial to our commitment to speedy review and publication of manuscripts. Last but not least, my wholehearted appreciation goes to Tom Karger. Under his personal attention, our relationship with S. Karger AG in the publication of *JBS* has been one of partnership. The cordial manner extended formerly by the late Peter Schäfer or Pamela Koppay, and currently by Rolf Steinebrunner and Deborah Lautenschlager in the production of *JBS* makes this project my most enjoyable experience.

My Thoughts

In the *Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens opens with the remark, 'This is the best of time; this is the worst of time'. This remark has been on my mind as I look back at *JBS* over the past 12 years and ponder on its future. We are at the moment riding on clouds because we have attained, and perhaps surpassed, our original aspirations. Whether we are able to stay high, however, will depend on several factors. Chief and foremost among these is the attitude of NSC towards *JBS*. Although we are often hailed as a success story, the relationship between NSC and *JBS* has always been one of granting agency and grantee. A long-term financial commitment from the NSC upper echelon and an attitude of partnership towards the Editorial Board are therefore imperative to the future success of *JBS*. It is my observation that the biomedical community, the Editorial Board and the publisher are committed to set sail into the next decade. Whether we are 'at the best of time or at the worst of time' 10 years from now will depend on the determination of our sponsor.

Samuel H.H. Chan
Editor-in-Chief