



Preface



Kazuo Nakajima

Director

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to bring out *KINKEN Research Highlights 2008*, which is the second-annual report with a collection of research output during the past year from Institute for Materials Research (IMR), Tohoku University. KINKEN (short Japanese name of IMR, which is familiar to materials community, particularly in Japan) determined to launch this report annually since last year so that our colleagues around the world can recognize our research activities. In this report, research activities of individual research laboratories, research centers, as well as joint projects with other academic institutions are provided especially for following four key research fields: (1) Nano/Micro Structure Controlled Materials, (2) Future Energy/Environmental Materials, (3) Innovative Electronic Materials, and (4) Advanced Nuclear Energy Materials.

The Institute was established at Tohoku Imperial University in 1916 by Professor Kotaro Honda as a steel research organization known officially as the 2nd Division of the Provisional Institute of Physical and Chemical Research. In 1987, the Institute was reorganized into its present form as a national collaborative research institute attached to Tohoku University. The name of the institute was consequently changed to the Institute for Materials Research (IMR). Since its establishment, IMR has become known for its excellence in both basic and applied research on metals and a wide range of new materials. A variety of functional materials have been studied and developed at the Institute, including the KS magnet steel, new KS magnet steel, SiC fiber, compound alloys, metallic glasses and others.

IMR has greatly contributed to the advancement of the materials science. As one example, our study of magnetism results in the invention of the strongest permanent magnet, the KS magnet, which dramatically improves the performance of electrical machines. IMR has been paying great attention to basic research that opens up the most advanced areas of applications. More recently, IMR has created a wide array of new materials, including high-performance, high-quality and multifunctional materials such as amorphous alloys, bulk metallic glasses, intermetallic compounds, quasicrystals, oxides, ceramics, nanostructured metals, Si, Ge, III-V, II-VI and oxide semiconductors, optical and electronic materials, solar cell crystals, biomaterials, organic materials, hydrogen storage alloys, and shaped crystals.

Now, we are facing the serious issue of the deteriorating global environment and the depletion of worldwide natural resources and energy sources. IMR will further promote materials research to address the problems associated with the global environment and energy resources, aiming at sustaining human development and ensuring a high standard of living for all people. In this way, we will offer a brighter future for the next generation.

We earnestly hope that *KINKEN Research Highlights* will help you recognize and support our research activities and serve as the medium to promote world-wide collaborations in materials research with our institute. We sincerely ask for your continuing support and welcome any suggestions.

Sincerely yours