

Preface

One of the central goals in current biology is to understand the mechanisms that underlie the processes of morphogenesis and pattern formation, which are studied in a wide range of research fields from molecular biology to ecology and medicine. Morphogenesis refers to the processes involved in causing changes in form during embryonic development. Pattern formation, on the other hand, refers to the processes that generate spatially inhomogeneous structures in various biological systems. It is recognized that a close and effective collaboration between experimentalists and theoreticians is essential to a great progress in the study of morphogenesis and pattern formation.

Given the latest advances in technology, we felt that the time was ripe to have an international meeting, in which both experimentalists and theoreticians in various research fields are equally involved to exchange information and also interact with each other. An international meeting entitled “Morphogenesis and Pattern Formation in Biological Systems—Experiments and Models” (**mpb2002**) was held at Chubu University, Japan, September 24–27, 2002, and was co-chaired by Professor Philip K. Maini of University of Oxford and myself.

In the conference, Professor Ryuji Takaki of Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, Editor-in-Chief of *FORMA*, made a proposal to publish a special issue of *FORMA* by collecting papers presented in the poster session. I agreed to this proposal and decided to edit this issue jointly. As one of the organizers of **mpb2002**, I am very pleased to have included five papers in this issue. The papers involved in this volume are all in high quality and are from a wide range of research fields.

I hope that the reader will enjoy the papers and feel the atmosphere of the conference. Finally, in addition to this special issue of *FORMA*, we have published another proceedings volume of **mpb2002** from Springer-Verlag Tokyo, entitled “Morphogenesis and Pattern Formation in Biological Systems—Experiments and Models” edited by Toshio Sekimura, Sumihare Noji, Naoto Ueno, and Philip K. Maini. I hope that the reader will catch the recent progress in this field through the papers of the two volumes, the special issue of *FORMA* and the proceedings of **mpb2002**.

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