Cardiovascular diseases such as myocardial infarction, cardiomyopathy and myocarditis are the most common and fatal, culminating in the common entity of chronic heart failure (CHF). CHF represents a complex clinical syndrome characterized by abnormalities of left ventricular systolic and/or diastolic mechanical dysfunction based on the neurohormonal malregulation, which are commonly accompanied by effort intolerance, fluid retention, and reduced longevity. Although a number of recent advances have been made in Japan and western countries, both prevalence and incidence of CHF continue to increase due to the aging population and the improved survival of patients with cardiovascular diseases. Since CHF needs frequent and prolonged hospitalizations, the cost to treat CHF highlights an enormous economic impact. Most of all, the final treatment of CHF is heart transplantation for which medical and social costs are uncountable.

To reduce these individual and social burdens, it is an emerging subject to develop the approach to protect the heart against the deleterious sequels in CHF. Most importantly, patients who suffer from CHF should be saved for themselves and their families to enjoy happy and longer lives. Our predecessors have investigated effective strategies of the treatment of CHF with drugs, and we are the group or team working toward a novel treatment of CHF. Prof. Tohru Izumi has been the top runner and leader of this group.

Prof. Tohru Izumi has worked on the cellular mechanisms of myocarditis, since acute myocarditis is linked to very high mortality and morbidity. However, his keen and enthusiastic interest has not been limited to the pathophysiology of acute or chronic myocarditis but extended to the investigations of the cause, diagnosis, and treatment of CHF because he has noticed the importance of CHF from the very beginning of the CHF era. Now he is thinking of issues far beyond the pathophysiology and treatment of CHF, and that is the diminution of the economical burden of CHF, production of new healthcare system or the care strategy for the aged to avoid CHF per se, and impacts derived from CHF in Japan, which would be the “Message to the Next Generations.”

I have known Prof. Izumi, the highest ranked professor in the cardiovascular field not only in Japan but also worldwide, for more than 20 years. He has established his career as an expert in myocarditis and heart failure and has become one of the most esteemed professors and leaders of the Japanese Circulation Society. He was elected president of Japanese Heart Failure Society, and has provided uncountable valuable ideas and information to the Japanese Circulation Society and to all cardiologists including myself.

I have collaborated with Prof. Izumi and Prof. Nagai for a large-scale trial of acute heart failure. The scenario was as follows. When treating CHF, there has been a paradigm shift away from treatments based on inotropic agents towards treatments that focus on end-organ protection effects. Even in acute cardiac failure, it is important to provide treatment that considers organ protection, as the results of the RALES study (the Randomized Aldactone Evaluation Study) demonstrated that non-selective aldosterone receptor antagonists improve the prognosis of cardiac failure patients. We are therefore exploring a treatment for acute cardiac failure that focuses on aldosterone receptor blockade, to establish a new treatment option for acute cardiac failure patients in the acute phase can improve their prognosis, by means of a multicenter, randomized, placebo-controlled, parallel-group, double-blind, comparative study. This is an IIT (Investigator Initiated Trial), and
Kitakaze

we will submit the data to the PMDA (Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency) for the approval of the use of these drugs.

Moreover, this is a perfect example that shows Prof. Izumi's leadership skills. I have learned a lot of other things from him as well—not only concerning basic and clinical science but also how to conduct my research and manage my academic life. Most of all, I truly admire and respect Prof. Izumi for his successful work and for his great and warm personality. He has a special magic that captivates everybody he knows.

Last but not least, we deeply appreciate Prof. Izumi for organizing this prestigious symposium because this symposium will be a tremendous opportunity to learn things from cardiovascular science and on to how to conduct our private lives. Now let's begin our new lives with our many new goals!