In this issue, we have four articles addressing the recent advances in four subspecialties of orthopaedics. This includes spinal surgery, hand and microsurgery, joint replacement surgery and sports injuries. In fact in the last 50 years, orthopaedics has much development in areas other than these four subspecialties. The progress is made possible mainly because of the better understanding of different diseases, improved knowledge of the applied anatomy and the new development of different equipment and instruments.

The growth of knowledge in the field is tremendous. I recall when I joined the specialty around 20 years ago, there was only one to two large textbooks in orthopaedics covering all topics. Nowadays, there are numerous textbooks and journals on individual subspecialty. Knowledge on the vascular anatomy of different body tissues opens up an unconquered land and numerous flaps were described in the 70s and 80s. Microsurgery was widely applied to treat difficult diseases like digital and limb re plantation, open fractures, chronic osteomyelitis and tumours. The development of arthroscopic instruments makes it possible to treat many joint diseases with one to two small incisions. The technology is now extended to the field of spinal surgery. The development of material science improves a lot the durability of the total joint replacements. With the recent interest and development in image-guided surgery, minimal invasive and minimal access surgery, we are heading towards accurately and precisely performed surgery, yet with small incisions, better cosmetic outcome and speedy recovery.

While we are heading enthusiastically towards the future, the local orthopaedic community has summarised the achievements in the past and published a monograph on: “Repair, Reconstruct and Rehabilitation — Half a century of Orthopaedics in Hong Kong”.

The many memorable photos not only give the orthopaedic surgeons an account of their past, they also captured the valuable moment in life of the orthopaedic surgeons. The orthopaedic community has summarised the achievements in the past and development in image-guided surgery, minimal invasive and minimal access surgery, we are heading towards accurately and precisely performed surgery, yet with small incisions, better cosmetic outcome and speedy recovery.