

Kamide Reflects on *JGR* and the Role of Editor

After serving the space physics community for more than 11 years, Y. Kamide of the Solar-Terrestrial Environment Laboratory at Nagoya University in Toyokawa, Japan, retired as editor of the *Journal of Geophysical Research-Space Physics* for the Asian/Pacific region. He had been a *JGR* editor since AGU first opened two editorial offices in Europe and the Asian/Pacific region in 1989. Even as the initial *JGR* editor in Asia, Kamide was not new to AGU editorial business. Before accepting the *JGR* position, Kamide served 3 years as the editor in Japan for *Geophysical Research Letters*.

According to Kamide, over the last 5 years, the number of high-quality submissions to *JGR* in the Asian/Pacific region has increased dramatically, by a factor of 2.5. This increase came mostly from the younger generation of scientists, which bodes well for the future of *JGR* and space physics in general. Together with the substantial contributions to *JGR* from the European community, this achievement has been recognized by AGU as proof that *JGR* is truly an international journal of the highest editorial standards.

Kamide feels that being an editor is somewhat like being in a court of law, where the editor, as "judge," must listen without bias to the "lawyers" representing the opposing interests of the author and the referees, objectively evaluating the merits of each party's arguments and occasionally intervening when the conflict reaches an impasse. In his experience, it is quite rare in fact for a paper to be recommended for publication without the referees first requiring substantial changes. And it is not uncommon for papers to be rejected categorically by the referees.

"Some, if not many, scientists, particularly those of the younger generation (and even some senior scientists), do not seem to understand fully the implications of peer review,"

says Kamide. For example, a rather large number believe incorrectly that it is the referee who decides whether a paper will ultimately be accepted or rejected. This misconception ignores two fundamental rules of peer review, i.e., that the referees' primary function is to assist the editor and that the editor has complete authority to accept or reject a submission and to confer with the reviewers in making his/her decision. To the scientists who ignore or fail to appreciate these principles, the rejection of a paper is merely the arbitrary result of an unfortunate choice of referees.

Kamide notes that papers tend to be rejected for one of four reasons:

- The paper contains one or more major errors. (Such errors can include, for example, unrealistic assumptions used as the basis for a paper that details extensive computer simulations.)
- The scientific level of the paper is below the established standards of *JGR*, even though no mistakes or errors in the science are presented.
- The author fails to respond meaningfully to the referees' comments. (If a referee insists that a portion of a paper is incorrect, the author is duty-bound to rebut the allegation in writing and demonstrate clearly and persuasively where the referee is mistaken.)
- The author fails to observe the ethical standards required for submissions to *JGR*. For example, an author might simultaneously submit the paper to another journal for consideration.

One would think that, having retired from being a *JGR* editor, Kamide might be ready for a vacation. That would be a mistake. Already juggling a number of new responsibilities and duties, he has agreed to take on the additional job of Associate Editor of *Reviews of Geophysics*. He was also elected recently to be a member of the Editorial Board of *Space Science Reviews*.—Peter Woods, Solar-Terrestrial Environment Laboratory, Nagoya University, Toyokawa, Japan