

Science editing and publishing in Asia

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On July 2, the inaugural assembly of the Council of Asian Science Editors (CASE) was held in Seoul. Over 140 science editors from 10 Asian countries attended the meeting and expressed their enthusiastic support for the establishment of the CASE. I believe this is an important first step toward an organized effort in developing scientific editing and publishing in Asia rapidly.

Modern science has been created and developed by the efforts made mainly by scientists in Europe and North America during the last few centuries. Science journals were also invented by the Westerners, and even nowadays Europe and the US dominate the scientific publishing industry in the world. Since the latter part of the last century, many countries in Asia have undergone rapid economic development, which in turn lead to developments in many disciplines of science. Currently, the level of science in Asia is close to the global level both quantitatively and qualitatively. Asian scientists contribute well over 45% of the entire contents of all scientific publications in the world. Nevertheless the level of science journals published in Asia remains disproportionately and regrettably low.

There are many reasons why the level of scientific publishing in Asia is so low. I think the lack of tradition and experience in journal publishing, the insufficient education and training of publishing professionals, and the society's inability to recognize the importance of the scientific publishing industry are the main reasons for this situation. The main motivation for establishing the CASE is that science editors in Asia need to share a common recognition of the problem and collaborate intimately to raise the level of scientific publishing in the region to the level comparable to that of scientific research in Asia.

I believe the rapid expansions of the use of the internet in the publishing industry and online and open access journals provide a rich opportunity for late starters to catch up with more advanced publishers. Asian countries have long histories and unique cultures and have long traditions in academic research including science. By melding old traditions with new ideas, it will be possible for Asians to create new trends in scientific publishing, and thereby contributing to the development of human culture and well-being. I hope the CASE will grow to be an organization that can pioneer such a movement.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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