

31 May, 2006

Dr. Akira Fujiwara
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Dear Dr. Fujiwara:

As Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Science*, it is my pleasure and honor to write and formally congratulate you and your colleagues on your outstanding achievements from the Hayabusa mission. *Science* and its publisher, AAAS, the science society, are delighted to be sharing the first peer-reviewed set of Hayabusa mission results with the world.

I would also like to thank the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) for hosting this event today and for your efforts to communicate these exciting findings to the public.

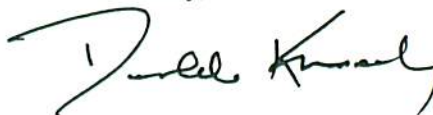
As the first mission designed to travel into deep space and bring back samples of an asteroid, Hayabusa has been a trail-blazing success. If pieces of the asteroid Itokawa make it back to Earth in 2010, that will be a further triumph. Even now, however, this ambitious mission is providing us with many crucial lessons on how to plan and execute the sample-return missions of the future.

The wealth of scientific information about asteroid Itokawa, being described by the researchers here today, helps to answer many important questions about these ancient objects and the early solar system in which they formed. These findings also have practical implications, since we will need to know about asteroids' structure and composition if one ever approaches Earth.

Asteroids have long captured our imaginations; scientists and schoolchildren – not to mention movie directors – have wondered what they're made of and what they look like up close. Perhaps in future decades, space scientists will remember being inspired by one of Hayabusa's striking photographs of Itokawa.

Once again, thank you for entrusting this important research for publication in the journal *Science*, and thanks also for effectively communicating the research to the public. It is an honor to be publishing this research, which is evidence of Japan's thriving space-science initiatives and the quality of Japanese research overall.

Sincerely,



Donald Kennedy, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief, *Science*

Office of Public Programs

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