

Remarks upon receiving the Sverdrup Medal

25 January 2017, Seattle, WA

I'd like to thank the AMS, and the Research Awards Committee for the recognition. I'd like to thank Art Miller, Niklas Schneider, and other colleagues for the nomination. I am deeply honored and humbled.

30 years ago in 1987, I was looking for a thesis topic in graduate school. The 1980s was truly an exciting time when meteorology and physical oceanography converged in studying El Nino/Southern Oscillation. The ocean-atmosphere coupling explains why El Nino grows while ocean waves are shown to make the tropical Pacific oscillate between El Nino and La Nina. I was fortunate to be among the first generation of graduate students who wrote theses on coupled ocean-atmosphere interaction dynamics.

My daughter likes to paint. Watching her paint made me realize a parallel between art and science. She sees nuanced shades of color I do not see. Likewise, we scientists would occasionally know a secret of Nature nobody else knows. I'd like to thank all those who helped me see the rich colors of Nature.

Ocean University of China laid down a solid foundation for me in math and physics. The Physical Oceanography Laboratory of Tohoku University gave me the courage to venture into coupled ocean-atmosphere dynamics.

Postdoc with George Philander at Princeton/GFDL was an important turning point of my career. We proposed the WES feedback to explain the northward displaced ITCZ. I did not have much confidence in this new idea but the encouragements from Isaac Held, and Taroh Matsuno kept me going. At that time, I was very theoretically oriented. At JISAO University of Washington, I learned from Mike Wallace how much observations can reveal. Ed Sarachik showed the importance of taking a broad perspective and connecting dots.

Toshio Yamagata and Jay McCreary inspired me to look for coupled modes over the Indian Ocean, which had long been thought to be a mere slave to ENSO.



Hokkaido University gave me the first teaching job. At International Pacific Research Center of University of Hawaii, and Scripps Institution of Oceanography, I have the privilege to work with many talented students and postdocs from both sides of the Pacific. They helped me expand in new directions.

Finally, I'd like to thank my wife Changtu for her understanding and support, and for keeping in perspective that the world is much bigger than our science. Thank you, 谢谢, どうも有難うございました.

