Everyone recognizes the importance of compiling the results and the intellectual processes of research and development in reports. That is why we try to leave a record of these activities, even if they might just be in the form of notes and drawings, because these become a “storehouse of technology,” with value both for the authors and for the organization. When it comes to putting this type of information in organized form as papers for publication, however, I think there are many people who think it is just too difficult or troublesome. One reason for this is that, unlike a PowerPoint presentation, which can be put together from paragraph points and graphics, a paper places one’s writing ability on the line.

A certain novelist used to say that we should write “difficult things so they are simple, simple things so they are profound, and profound things so they are interesting.” This certainly makes sense, and I wish that I could write that way. No doubt the ability to do so is one of the secret arts of a master writer who has to describe people and things related to them.

In the case of a technical paper, it is more likely to be mathematical formulas that are essential, and specialized terminology that must be used in order to explain the subject. When the readers are experts, the writing may be made more understandable not by making it simple but rather by stating the matter clearly and concisely and using the appropriate technical terminology. A paper for the Technical Review, however, should be written so that it can be understood even by people from other specialized fields, just as long as they have the necessary technical foundation. That is what we consider important.

Engineers are not professional writers, so it’s no simple matter for them to write like a master, even if they wanted to. The first step is to create writing that is logical and unambiguous, and does not cause stress for the reader. I would like to see our engineers keep the idea of writing “difficult things so they are simple” somewhere in their minds, and go ahead and write and write. Then they can publish the results. They should read many, many papers and write a great deal, and by doing so, they may find that they, too, are approaching that realm of the profound and the interesting.

(Toru FUJIHIRA)