

## Fired Tsukuba professor's defense FREE

Herbert L. Berk; Nathaniel J. Fisch



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discovery process, Tsukuba has now been forced to reveal facts that undermine any presumption of fairness and honesty that would normally be accorded an academic institution in the preparation of such a report. I and my coauthors have an online response to the Tsukuba report (see <http://www.cho-teruji.org/ScientificExplanationFigss.pdf>).

## References

1. T. Cho et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **97**, 055001 (2006).
2. T. Cho et al., *Phys. Plasmas* **15**, 056120 (2008).

**Teruji Cho**  
Tsukuba, Japan

**Hiroshi Mizubayashi's letter** defending the University of Tsukuba's action against Teruji Cho suggests that we and our nine letter cosigners might not have had a full grasp of the incident and the procedure followed by the university. We did, however, have access to the reports that summarized the university's evidence and found them seriously wanting in reaching the conclusion of any falsification of data. It seems to us that it is the university that lacks access, since its report fails to consider the subsequent clarifying article published by Cho in *Physics of Plasmas*.<sup>1</sup> Mizubayashi observes that following his investigation, 23 coauthors—all at Tsukuba—asked *Physical Review Letters* to withdraw their names from the paper. Yet Vladimir Pastukhov, one of four coauthors dissenting from the university's findings and the only one outside the university's disciplinary influence, stands by the original publication. He believes that it is one of the more significant works of the GAMMA-10 group. In summary, Mizubayashi's letter does not allay our and our cosigners' concerns about whether an accurate, fair, and transparent academic procedure has been followed.

## Reference

1. T. Cho et al., *Phys. Plasmas* **15**, 056120 (2008).

**Herbert L. Berk**  
University of Texas at Austin  
**Nathaniel J. Fisch**  
Princeton University  
Princeton, New Jersey

**Mizubayashi and Akahira reply:** The University of Tsukuba finds no reason to alter its position that Teruji Cho's conduct in the preparation of the *PRL* paper<sup>1</sup> constitutes scientific misconduct (*PHYSICS TODAY*, February 2009, page 12). Cho claims that any error or insufficiency in the *PRL* paper is inadvertent and innocuous. The Investigation Committee, which included three internationally known plasma physics experts from outside the university, did not find them so after a fair and thorough investigation.

Cho also claims that the *Physics of Plasmas* paper explains any deficiencies,<sup>2</sup> and furthermore reaches the same conclusion as the *PRL* paper. It is our view that the *PoP* paper, which was submitted after the investigation started and without Cho's giving notice to the Investigation Committee, cannot be used to judge whether Cho carried out scientific misconduct in the preparation of the *PRL* paper. Needless to say, the conclusion of a paper reached through misconduct is meaningless.

Cho has brought a civil suit against the University of Tsukuba. We are confident that the court will fully sustain the university's position on this issue.

## References

1. T. Cho et al., *Phys. Rev. Lett.* **97**, 055001 (2006).
2. T. Cho et al., *Phys. Plasmas* **15**, 056120 (2008).

**Masafumi Akahira**  
([akahira.masafumi.ff@un.tsukuba.ac.jp](mailto:akahira.masafumi.ff@un.tsukuba.ac.jp))

**Hiroshi Mizubayashi**  
([mizubayashi.hiroshi.ga@un.tsukuba.ac.jp](mailto:mizubayashi.hiroshi.ga@un.tsukuba.ac.jp))  
University of Tsukuba  
Tsukuba, Japan

## Reviewer dislikes Hoax, perhaps intensely

Every author has to expect that some reviewers will dislike his book, perhaps intensely. That is par for the course. But one might hope that even a scathingly negative review would be accurate in its summary of the book's contents and principal arguments. Alas, Peter Saulson's review (*PHYSICS TODAY*, December 2008, page 56) of my book *Beyond the Hoax: Science, Philosophy and Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2008) fails to meet that minimum standard.

Saulson implies that the whole book is a rehash of the stale science wars debates from the mid-1990s—a characterization that could at best apply to the first third of the book, whose function is simply to set the stage for the rest. Saulson does not even mention the two chapters on the philosophy of science or the long chapter on pseudoscience; and he mentions the chapter on religion only to grossly misrepresent it (see below).