

## Preface

**T**HIS issue seeks to provide a broad review of ongoing work in space propulsion around the world. Special attention is given to recent advances in space propulsion technologies and future prospects for space transportation. The issue embraces the following subject areas: 1) primary-stage propulsion, 2) upper-stage and on-board propulsion, and 3) theoretical and experimental approaches. A total of 29 papers, prepared by experts in these areas from eight different countries, are included, to provide an even balance of fundamental scientific and technological work. Each paper focuses on a specific aspect of space propulsion systems, and is incorporated into the issue in a cohesive fashion.

The origins of this issue lie in an ongoing effort by a group of practitioners and researchers to advance the engineering science of space propulsion and to promote cooperation at an international level. Most of the papers published in this volume were originally presented as invited contributions to the Third International Symposium on Space Propulsion, held in Beijing, China, August 11–13, 1997. The presented papers were then rigorously reviewed and revised before their inclusion, and additional papers were solicited to produce a more comprehensive collection. The electric propulsion section in particular was expanded to represent the breadth of current work in this dynamic field.

This issue was made possible through the substantial contributions of a number of individuals and groups. We would first like to thank the authors, who are recognized in the issue, and the reviewers, who are listed on p. 585, for their excellent work. A special acknowledgement is deserved by the symposium organizing committee, led by Guoqiu Liu. In addition to the fine facilities and logistical support provided at the meeting in Beijing, the attendees were treated to a hospitality and cultural experience that few people have the opportunity to enjoy. It is fitting that the introduction to the issue was written by Xinmin Ren, who is regarded as a founder of Chinese space propulsion.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere thanks to Woody Waesche, the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Propulsion and Power*, for his extremely valuable support and encouragement throughout this effort. The invaluable assistance of Adrian Chindgren of the AIAA

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