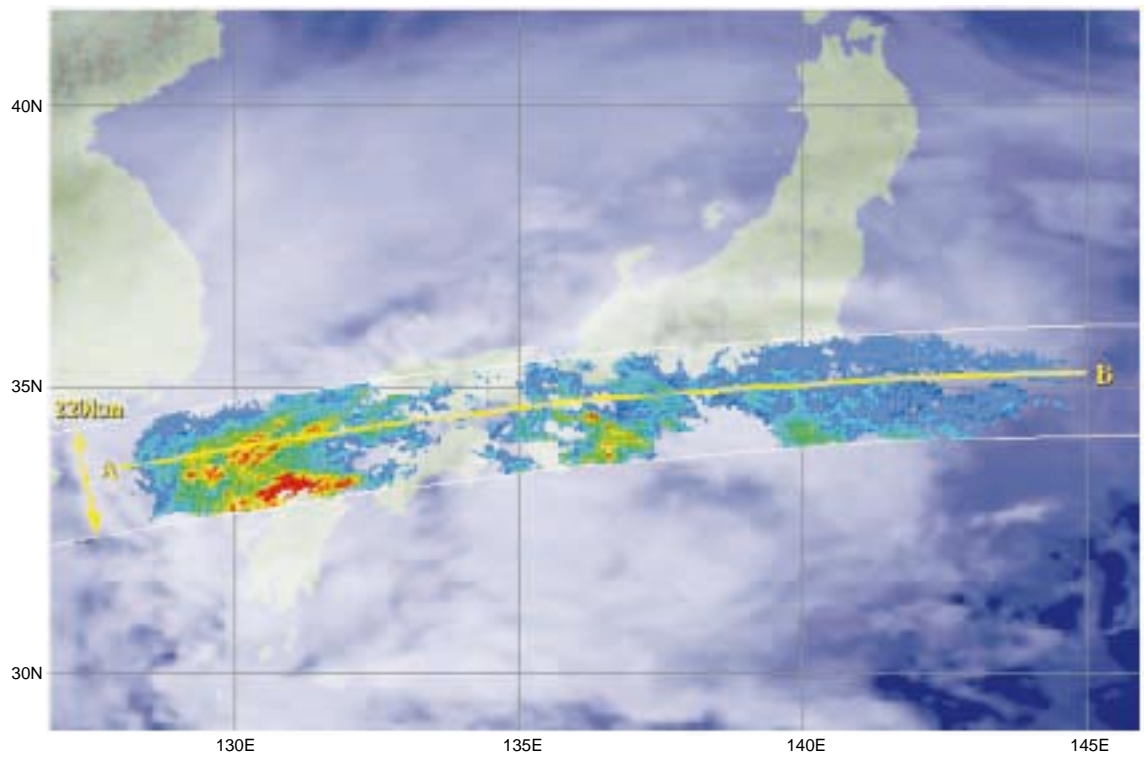




Heavy Snow, Kanto Area, Japan (PR)



GMS IR 18:00 (UTC) by JWA

Fig.1 Horizontal Cross Section of Rain at 2.5km Height

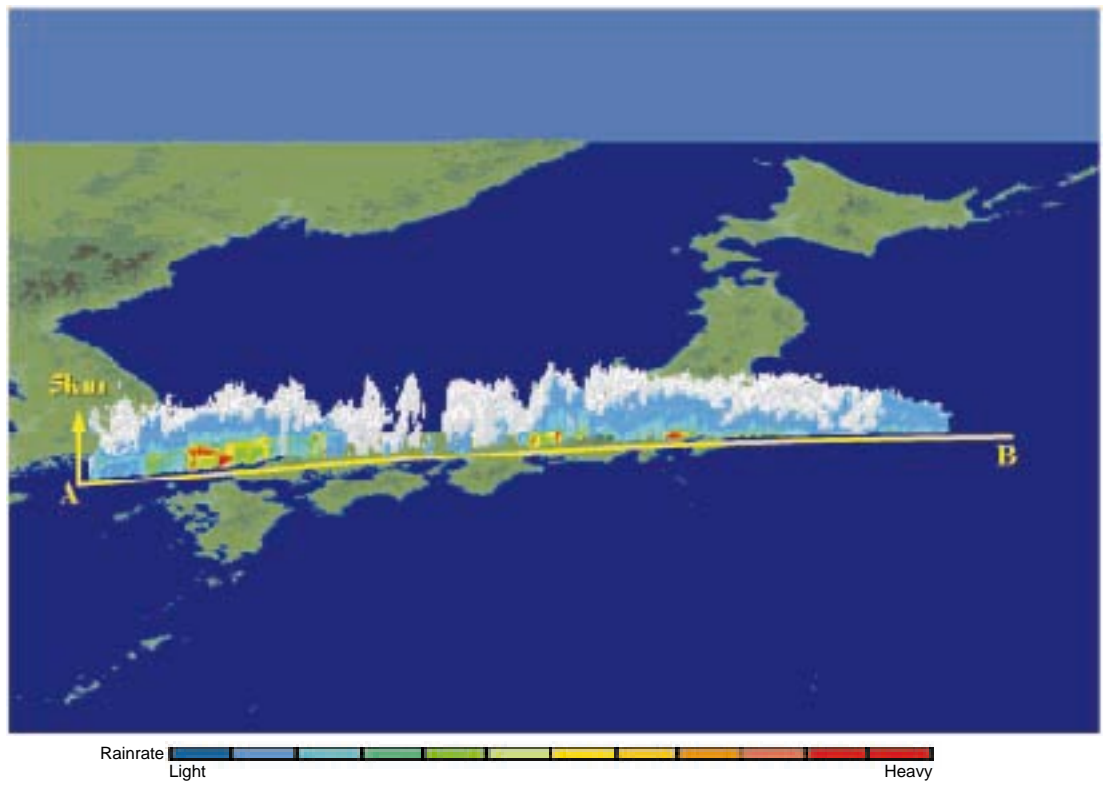


Fig.2 3-D Rain Structure

Heavy snow in the Kanto area of Japan

These figures show the horizontal cross section at a height of 2.5km (Fig. 1) and three-dimensional image (Fig. 2) acquired by the TRMM Precipitation Radar (PR) which passed over Japan from 03:10 to 03:15 (JST) on Jan. 15,1998. The PR observed a wide area of the three-dimensional precipitation structure which extends approximately 1500km to the east and west over Japan. The red or yellow horizontal layer indicated by over Chugoku and Kyushu areas is a melting layer where snow melts into rain and much stronger radar reflectivity is observed than from real rain. Another melting layer near the surface reflects to the fact that sleet or watery snow fell over the Kanto-Koushin area.

After that, the heavy snow that disrupted traffic in the metropolitan area fell after the movement of a extratropical cyclone from off Shikoku to the south coast of Kanto. Though many cyclones which bring heavy snow pass over Japan in early spring in a normal year, several pressure patterns identical to these could be seen in January this year because the winter pressure pattern could not be sustained due to the El Niño effect.