

Prospect of Japanese Space Science and JAXA

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More than two and half years have passed since JAXA was founded in October 2003 as a result of merger (or restructuring) of three governmental, space-related organizations. Tremendous, chaotic efforts have been made inside JAXA for establishing JAXA's mission and strategic plan. One of the outputs from these efforts was a long-term vision entitled 'JAXA 2025' released in March 2005.

The vision has been criticized by space science communities as lacking clarity and straightforwardness, however. This is partially because there is misunderstanding about JAXA's basic mission in the science communities; JAXA is not an institute for space science alone but rather an organization covering all space-related activity including industries. In order to achieve mutual understanding between JAXA and space science communities, it is of crucial importance for scientists inside JAXA, as a starting step, to speak their own vision(s) by their own words.

Motivated as written above, I will try to briefly explain the 'JAXA 2005' vision, especially its space science related portion, and discuss what we have achieved in the past 50 years of Japanese space science history, what was the limitation of the old framework, what is the current status after the foundation of JAXA, and how we can develop our space science in the new framework.