

Present status of The Curation Facility of Japan

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Japanese planetary research programs are going to achieve planetary sample returns in near future. Based on their necessities, a planetary sample curation facility has been built in JAXA for these three years and will have just finished at the end of March, 2008. This is a status report of the facility and its specification.

A variety of instruments and equipments has been installed in clean rooms of the facility; such as those for cleaning, evaluation of cleanliness and both initial description and preservation of the samples. Especially, clean chambers has been installed there, that realize a sample handling in both highly purified nitrogen condition of atmospheric pressure and controllable pressure from atmospheric pressure down to ultra high vacuum. They are specified for treating small planetary samples, so that they can sample residual gases in a sample capsule to measure heavy noble gases in there, weigh the samples by a microbalance and distribute them by specified instruments such as sample enclosure.

The facility will go through both a test operation and an evaluation of its function and specification for a year.