

Lunar orbiter Kaguya overview

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Japanese lunar orbiter Kaguya SELENE has been successfully launched from Tanagashima Space Center TNSC on September 14, 2007. The Kaguya mission has started in 1999 JFY as a joint mission of ISAS and NASDA, which have been merged into a space agency JAXA in October 1, 2003. The SELENE project is certainly identified as a JAXA's science mission. On October 4 the Kaguya has been inserted into large elliptical orbit circulating the Moon after passing the phasing orbit rounding the Earth. After lowering the apolune altitudes the Kaguya has reached the nominal observation orbit with 100 km circular and polar on October 18. On the way to nominal orbit two subsatellites Okina(Rstar) and Ouna(Vstar) have been released into the elliptical orbits of 100 km perilune, and 2400 km and 800 km apolune, respectively. After the checkout of bus system the extension of four sounder antennas with 15 m length and the 12 m mast for magnetometer, and deployment of plasma imager were successfully carried out to start checkout of science instruments. Each instrument has received performance test in the checkout term for about 1.5 months, then nominal observation term for ten months has been started on December 18. Most instruments show excellent performance in checkout term.