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Space as an Artistic Medium (4)

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NEW CHALLENGE OF LIBERAL ARTS ON BOARD “KIBO”/ISS

Abstract

Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) had conducted the feasibility study on possibilities of the Japanese Experiment Module “KIBO” utilization in the field of arts, culture, humanities, and social science (hereinafter referred to as “Liberal Arts”) from 1996 through 2007 in cooperation with International Institute for Advanced Studies of Japan. In the mean time, Space Activity Commission of Japan recommended JAXA to prioritize Liberal Arts as one of the most important fields of KIBO utilization in June, 2004. Based on this recommendation, JAXA started the Liberal Arts pilot mission. The objectives of the pilot mission are as follows: 1. To contribute to the cultivation of people on Earth, 2. To discover the new frontier of human beings, 3. To create a new value of space utilization. JAXA set to the first phase of this pilot mission by releasing the announcement of opportunity (AO) for the proposals of artistic themes. And, ten proposals from various artists and university professors were selected in 2006 and have been conducted on board KIBO since KIBO started its operation in 2008. Through the first phase activities, JAXA has tried to verify the possibility and effectiveness of this field under the microgravity condition of space environments, then to accumulate the know-how to demonstrate such themes in space and to produce essential tools and procedures. Following the successful implementation of the first phase themes, JAXA proceeded to the second phase of the pilot mission with three new objectives as follows: 1. To link it to human future, 2. To create a new vision in space, 3. To see a new world in the microgravity condition. Eight proposals were selected by AO in 2009 and some of them have been conducted already. We expect these new challenges will give us answers to the fundamental questions of human being; where do we come from? what are we? where are we going? We think this challenge is very unique not only in JAXA but also in all space activities of the world. Several examples such as “Space dance”, “Clay modeling”, etc. will be introduced in my presentation at the conference.