



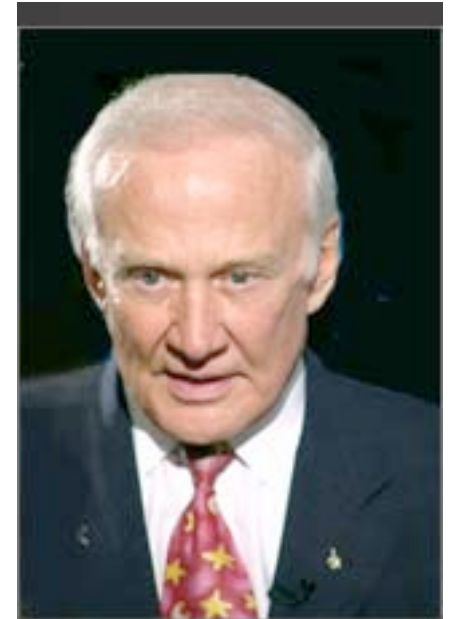
October 15, 2003

Dr. Aldrin, who came to Japan for the 18th Planetary Congress of the Association of Space Explorers, kindly accepted JAXA's request for a video interview despite his very busy schedule. Our interview was held in front of a life-size model of the lunar module (LM), a main exhibit in the "Exhibition of Human Space Activities" at the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation. Standing in front of the LM model, Dr. Aldrin answered our first question, "How did you imagine human space activities in the early 21st century when you traveled to the moon." We asked him to answer this question with his eyes closed.

Q: How did you imagine human space activities in the early 21st century when you traveled to the moon?



A: I see a possibility of a vision for the future, a stated objective of reaching a Gate Port close to the moon, and a neutral place between the gravity of the earth and the gravity of the moon. It's called a libration point. That can be a location where we can construct a Gate Port where objects and spacecraft from the earth can go through this location and then reach the surface of the moon, reach asteroids, telescopes, eventually travel to the moons of Mars and to Mars. I see this vision is coming soon, within months, I hope, perhaps even on the anniversary of the Wright brothers' flight in this Wright Flyer 100 years from Dec. 17. That is the vision that I hope to see in the near future.





Q: What kinds of space activities do you expect human beings will have completed by 2069?

A: It makes a wonderful story, I do believe, that in 2069, that we will see a permanent base on the moon, and we will have had a permanent (base) established in a renewing way on the surface of Mars. When we go to Mars, I believe we will visit the moons of Mars first, and then go to the surface. But I believe all those things, going to the moon, going to Mars, (visiting asteroids and telescopes,) will be done through a Gate Port, (close to the moon) and that's what we should start. It would only be a guess, but perhaps we could have that completed close to the moon within 10 years, maybe 15. I would hope that it is in 10 years (that) we could join and have that Gate Port close to the moon completed.

In a future where everybody can freely travel to the moon and Mars.... How does Dr. Aldrin imagine the way to achieve this vision? We then asked his image of realizing his vision, and that could be good advice for young generations who are going to take responsibility for future space development.

Q: Could you tell us how we can expand space activities for the future?

A: I think what will be needed is to establish an industry of space travel, of adventure travel of ordinary people into earth orbit. And I believe that that will be done by sponsored people, perhaps people who win a lottery, or a game show or are sponsored by particular companies, or they are very wealthy and can purchase the ticket themselves. But I think this industry of (sending) thousands and thousands of people into earth orbit initially just for one day then for a week staying at a hotel, this will open up the ability for governments to then carry on exploration of the moon and Mars.



Astronauts and cosmonauts are always front runners for our space challenge. JAXA astronaut Souichi Noguchi is scheduled to be onboard the next Space Shuttle flight, the first flight since the Columbia accident, and to participate in the assembly mission of the International Space Station. We asked Dr. Aldrin to send a message to Astronaut Noguchi.



Q: Could you give Astronaut Noguchi, who is going to be onboard the next Space Shuttle, a message?

A. Well, of course, I wish everyone who flies in to space to have a most enjoyable training period, launch and experience in flight, and to return safely. And, of course, that goes for anyone from any country. So, I wish that he will have a most enjoyable and a beneficial (journey) for all the people in Japan and people in the world.

One of the JAXA's future missions is "to develop a new launch vehicle with low cost and the highest reliability in the world". If we have a highly reliable and cost-effective launch vehicle, which is not necessary a JAXA rocket in general, a door to space will be opened to more people. We asked Dr. Aldrin what kind of impression he had of Japanese space technology and how he felt about a launch vehicle with higher reliability.

Q: Could you tell us what comes to your mind when we say "Japanese space technology"? Also, how do you feel about the development of a launch vehicle with improved reliability?

A: I visited the launch site in Kyushu many years ago, (and I've been in Japan earlier than that,) I was in the Korean War. I have had growing admiration for the technical expertise of the Japanese people and their technicians, and I see great evidence of this in the development of the Japanese experiment module for the Space Station. It is very well ordered discipline and laid out, it is very ambitious. And the ambition of Japanese space activities is evidenced by the space plane HOPE and the development of rockets, and looking at varieties of rocket launch facilities, it is a testament to the very serious dedicated interest of the Japanese government and Japanese people in the exploration of space.



I have great wishes for anyone attempting to make a more reliable and a cost-effective launch vehicle. I believe that, eventually, the reliability must depend upon our reusing the elements of the launch vehicle bringing them back and not in an ocean landing on a runway,

examining the engine and the components of the rocket to see where they might possibly be wearing out. We will then increase the reliability and travel into space much more safely. So, reusable rockets, the investment in reusable rockets will pay off in increased reliability and safety.

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The real-size mockup of the lunar module is attracting the most attention at the "Exhibition of Human Space Activities" (being held till the end of November, 2003.) Many people look at it with deep emotion murmuring, "It is amazing that such a huge object went all the way to the moon, and it happened 34 years ago..." Some must think back to the time when the first moon landing took place.

When human beings first arrived at the moon, what were you doing? Some of you must have not been born. The people who were at the moon at that time commented on future space activities as follows. "It is gradually, slowly but gradually, coming true."

http://www.jaxa.jp/article/interview/vol2/p6_e.html