

# PREFACE

This book offers a short survey of a large topic: Japan's space program, including its space organizations, laws, and policies, as well as a look at some of the important and interesting players in Japan's space industry today. It is meant for readers who have a general interest in Japan's space development or who (whether in or outside Japan) may be considering participation in a growing and increasingly diverse array of Japanese space-related business opportunities.

Japan was an early pioneer in space technology and, in 1970, became the fourth spacefaring nation.<sup>1</sup> As of the writing of this book, the Japanese satellite *Hayabusa2* has recently returned to Earth from a pioneering mission to collect surface and sub-surface samples from an asteroid. Yet Japan was relatively slow to embrace the commercial potential of space and, relatedly, was “a latecomer in the field of national space legislation,” with enactment of a foundational Basic Space Law only in 2008.<sup>2</sup> This book addresses the reasons for this circumstance while tracing the history of Japan's space organizations, policies, and laws in Chapter 1.

The focus of this book, however, is on the present day. Chapter 2 delineates the current organizational mainstays of Japan's space program. These leading organizations are the product of a long process of consolidation, and Japan now has a coordinated centralized administration to conceive, plan, and execute its space objectives. One of these goals, as discussed, is to encourage the private sector – major established corporations, mid-sized firms, and young start-ups alike – to consider and take advantage of the wide-ranging commercial possibilities of space development and use.

Supporting new business opportunities while managing the attendant risks, especially in an area such as space development that carries not insignificant hazards and also is the subject of international treaty obligations, entails the need for more specific national legislation. Chapters 3 and 4 address in some detail the two laws Japan enacted in 2016 to regulate its space activities: the Act on Launching of Spacecraft, etc. and Control of Spacecraft, and the Act on Ensuring Appropriate Handling of Satellite Remote Sensing Data.

In addition to these two space laws, non-Japanese participants in Japan-based space activities should be aware of more general Japanese foreign investment legislation, which is introduced in Chapter 5. This chapter also discusses the possibility that such

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1 See S. Aoki, “Current Status and Recent Developments in Japan's National Space Law and its Relevance to Pacific Rim Space Law and Activities” (“Current Status and Recent Developments in Japan's National Space Law”), 35 *Journal of Space Law*, Issue 2, 2009, p. 363, at <https://spacelaw.sfc.keio.ac.jp/sitedev/archive/current.pdf>.

2 *Id.*

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participants may be subject to space-related laws of their home jurisdiction in addition to those of Japan.

Since 2008, pursuant to its Basic Space Law, the Japanese government has issued several versions of the country's Basic Plan on Space Policy. This important document sets forth broad policy goals and specific programs of Japan's space development. Chapter 6 examines the most recent version of the Basic Plan on Space Policy issued in mid-2020.

Chapter 7 describes a number Japanese companies – some large, some small – which currently are involved in various space-related businesses. The firms featured in this chapter are just a sample of Japan's private sector engaged in the commercialization of space, but they are illustrative of the sophistication and creativity being brought to bear as Japan and the world enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century's third decade.