

4th H-IIA launch

(Yoshiaki Suzuki)

The 4th H-IIA launch vehicle was successfully launched from Tanegashima Space Center as scheduled at 10:31 AM on December 14th, 2002. The rocket carried an earth observation satellite named ADEOS-II with other three piggyback satellites. The satellites were all successfully put into the designed orbits.

The weather was fine and almost windless and was in perfect condition for the launch. I could observe the launch from a parking space next to the Takesaki Range Control Center located about 3km away from the launch pad. Before the launch, all of the attendees got a lecture on the H-IIA launch sequence and schedule at the visitor center close to the control center. The attendees included the persons from USA, France and Australia, since there are American and French sensors onboard the ADEOS-II and one of the piggyback satellites is the Australian experimental satellite named FEDSAT. The other piggyback small satellites launched with FEDSAT are WEOS developed by Chiba Institute of Technology aiming whales ecology observation and Micro-LabSAT developed by NASDA.

The launch was perfectly well. At the lift off, the vehicle started the ascension quietly at first and then enormous sound reached the observation point. The rocket continued to ascend penetrating the clouds emitting roaring sound covering whole sky.

The fact that the launch was successfully done exactly at the scheduled date and time as well as the 3rd H-IIA Launch shows the significant improvement in the Japanese launch reliability.



Launch



Ascension