



The regional chapters of ASE function independently under the general direction and guidance of the international Executive Committee. The chapters are represented on the Executive Committee and are responsible for developing and supporting ASE activities and engaging member astronauts and cosmonauts in the respective regions.

# ASSOCIATION OF



## Association of Space Explorers (ASE) Regional Chapters...

The international Association of Space Explorers is represented by over 375 space fliers from France, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.

# SPACE EXPLORERS - ASIA

## Founding Members of Association of Space Explorers - ASIA

Soichi Noguchi (President pro tempore) - Japan

Sheikh Muszaphar (Secretary pro tempore) - Malaysia

Toyohiro Akiyama - Japan

Jugderdemidyn Gurragchaa - Mongolia

Chiaki Mukai - Japan

Sultan bin Salman - Saudi Arabia

Rakesh Sharma - India

Koichi Wakata - Japan

Yi Soyeon - Republic of Korea

from 35 different countries, including Afghanistan, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, United

# FOUNDING MEMBERS...

**President, pro tempore**

**Soichi Noguchi**  
Astronaut  
Japan



Soichi Noguchi is a Japanese Astronaut and ASE Executive Committee Member. He is the Chief of the JAXA (Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency) astronaut office.

Noguchi was selected as an astronaut candidate by the National Space Development Agency of Japan (now part of JAXA), in June 1996.

In August 1996, he reported to NASA's Johnson Space Center for NASA astronaut training, and qualified as a mission specialist two years later. He received training on Russian space systems at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in 1998.

He was assigned to technical support for the Japanese Experiment Module of the International Space Station, and then in April 2001, to the crew of STS-114 as a Mission Specialist.

Noguchi flew to the ISS on Soyuz TMA-17 on December 20, 2009, serving as a flight engineer on Expedition 22 and 23. While in space, he took many photographs of Earth which he shared via Twitter. He returned to Earth on 2 June 2010. He has completed 177 days in space and has done 3 spacewalks.

**Secretary, pro tempore**

**Sheikh Muszaphar**  
Astronaut  
Malaysia



Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor, born Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor Al Masrie bin Sheikh Mustapha on July 27, 1972) is a Malaysian orthopaedic surgeon and was the first Malaysian to go into space. He was launched to the International Space Station aboard Soyuz TMA-11 with the Expedition 16 crew on October 10, 2007. Sheikh Muszaphar flew under an agreement with Russia through the Angkasawan program, and returned to Earth on October 21, 2007, aboard Soyuz TMA-10 with the Expedition 15 crew members, Fyodor Yurchikhin and Oleg Kotov.

Soyuz TMA-11 carrying Whitson, Malenchenko, and Sheikh Muszaphar, successfully launched at 13:22 UTC, Wednesday, October 10, 2007. After 11 days in space, Sheikh Muszaphar boarded Soyuz TMA-10 for his return. TMA-10 undocked from the ISS at 07:14 UTC on October 21, and deorbit occurred at 09:47. During atmospheric re-entry, the spacecraft transitioned to a ballistic reentry, resulting in it landing west of Arkalyk, approximately 340 km (210 mi) northwest of the intended Kazakhstan landing site. The trajectory was reported by the crew as soon as they came out of the communications blackout caused by plasma surrounding the spacecraft. A ballistic trajectory is a backup re-entry mode that takes over if something fails during normal re-entry. A Commission of Inquiry determined that the ballistic re-entry was caused by damage to a cable in the spacecraft's control panel, which connected the control panel with the Soyuz descent equipment. Landing occurred at 10:36 GMT.

**Toyohiro Akiyama**  
Astronaut  
Japan



**Jügderdemidyn  
Gürragchaa**  
Astronaut  
Mongolia



**Toyohiro Akiyama**, born July 22, 1942 is a Japanese TV journalist best known for his flight to the Mir space station aboard a Russian Soyuz spacecraft in 1990.[1] Akiyama is the first person of Japanese descent to have flown in space. [2] He was known as the “Space Journalist” in Japan.

Akiyama attended and earned his bachelor’s degree at the International Christian University located in Mitaka, Tokyo. He then joined TBS as a journalist in 1966. He worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation World Service from 1967-1971 before becoming a correspondent for the TBS Division of Foreign News. From 1984 to 1988, Akiyama served as TBS chief correspondent in Washington D.C.

Akiyama was selected for cosmonaut training in August 1989 in a deal between TBS and the Soviet Union. Akiyama’s flight became the first commercially organized spaceflight in history. After successfully completing a Research Cosmonaut training course at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in present-day Russia, Akiyama launched aboard the Soyuz TM-11 mission to the Mir space station on December 2, 1990 along with mission commander Viktor Afanasyev and flight engineer Musa Manarov. During his time aboard Mir, Akiyama gave live reports each day documenting life aboard the station. He returned just over a week later aboard Soyuz TM-10 along with Gennadi Manakov and Gennady Strekalov on December 10. Akiyama’s mission marked the first flight of a person of Japanese descent in space as well as the first commercially sponsored and funded spaceflight of an individual in history.

**Jügderdemidyn Gürragchaa**, born December 5, 1947 was the first Mongolian and the second Asian in space.[1] He was Mongolia’s defense minister from 2000 to 2004. Born in Gurvanbulag, Mongolia, Gürragchaa studied in Ulaanbaatar to become an aerospace engineer. He then joined the air force, rising to the rank of Major General.

He was selected as part of the eighth Intercosmos program on March 1, 1978. His backup was Maidarzhavyn Ganzorig. Gürragchaa, along with Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Dzhanibekov, departed from Baikonur Cosmodrome on March 22, 1981. They docked with Salyut 6. While in orbit, Dzhanibekov and Gürragchaa carried out experiments on earth science. After 124 orbits and 7 days, 20 hours and 42 minutes in space, Gürragchaa and Dzhanibekov landed 170 km southeast of Dzhezkasgan.

After Mongolia removed the Communist-era ban on clan names in 1997, and unable to identify his original clan heritage, Gürragchaa chose the clan name Sansar – Mongolian for “cosmos”. Clan names have only symbolic significance today and should not be confused with western style “family names”, which are unknown in Mongolia. (See Mongolian names for details.) Jügderdemidyn Gürragchaa was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union on March 30, 1981. The Zaisan Memorial, a monument south of Ulaanbaatar dedicated to Russian–Mongolian friendship, includes a mural which depicts amongst its scenes Gürragchaa’s 1981 flight.

Before becoming minister of defense, Gürragchaa worked as the chief of staff of air defence for the Mongolian Armed Forces. He is married and has two children.

# FOUNDING MEMBERS...

**Chiaki Mukai**

Astronaut  
Japan



**Chiaki Mukai**, born May 6, 1952, Tatebayashi, Gunma, Japan[1]) is a Japanese doctor, and JAXA astronaut.[2] She was the first Japanese woman in space, and was the first Japanese citizen to have two spaceflights.[1] Both were Space Shuttle missions; her first was STS-65 aboard Space Shuttle Columbia in July 1994, which was a Spacelab mission. Her second spaceflight was STS-95 aboard Space Shuttle Discovery in 1998. In total she has spent 23 days in space.

Mukai was selected to be an astronaut by Japanese national space agency NASDA (now called JAXA) in 1985. Prior to this, she was an assistant professor in the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery in Keio University, the oldest university in Japan.

Mukai graduated from Keio Girls Senior High School in Tokyo, in 1971. She received her doctorate in medicine, Keio University School of Medicine, 1977; a doctorate in physiology, Keio University School of Medicine, 1988; board certified as a cardiovascular surgeon, Japan Surgical Society, 1989.

Mukai is a member of the following organizations: The American Aerospace Medical Association; Japan Society of Microgravity Applications; Japan Society of Aerospace and Environmental Medicine; Japanese Society for Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery; Japan Surgical Society.

**Sultan bin Salman**

Astronaut  
Saudi Arabia



**Sultan bin Salman**, born 27 June 1956 is a former Royal Saudi Air Force pilot who flew aboard the STS-51-G Space Shuttle mission as a payload specialist, and a member of the House of Saud. He is thus the first astronaut of royal blood, and the first Arab and Muslim to fly in outer space.

Sultan bin Salman started his career in 1982 as a researcher in the department of international communications at the Ministry of Information in Saudi Arabia.[10] His tenure lasted until 1984. He served as deputy director of the Saudi media committee for the Saudi athletes participating in the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. Later that year, the department of TV advertising was created at the Ministry of Information, and he was appointed its acting director. From 17 June through 24 June 1985, he flew as a payload specialist on STS-51-G Discovery. As one of a seven-member international crew, which also included American and French astronauts, he represented the Arab Satellite Communications Organization (ARABSAT) in deploying their satellite, ARABSAT-1B. Sultan also holds the record for being the youngest person to fly on the Space Shuttle, at the age of 28. Later, he assisted in establishing the Association of Space Explorers, an international organization comprising all astronauts and cosmonauts who have been in space, and served on its board of directors for several years.

In 1985, Sultan recorded a commercial message that was broadcast on MTV during the Live Aid concert event. His message mentioned his recent trip on the Space Shuttle and was one of 33 such by notable individuals including Caesar Chavez, Coretta Scott King, Carl Sagan, Jesse Jackson and Peter Ueberroth.

**Rakesh Sharma**  
Astronaut  
India



**Koichi Wakata**  
Astronaut  
Japan



**Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma, AC,** Hero of the Soviet Union, (born January 13, 1949) is a former Indian Air Force test pilot who flew aboard Soyuz T-11 as part of the Intercosmos program. Sharma was the first Indian to travel in space.

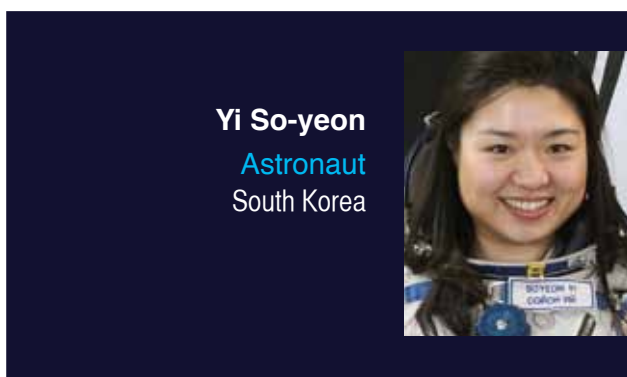
The first Indian to fly into space, Rakesh Sharma was born on January 13, 1949 in Patiala, Punjab to Hindu Gaur parents, Sharma joined the Indian Air Force in 1970 as a pilot officer after joining the NDA as an IAF cadet in 1966. During the 1971 War, Sharma flew missions in his MiG aircraft with considerable success. He was a squadron leader with the Indian Air Force, when he flew into space in 1984 as part of a joint programme between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Soviet Intercosmos space program. He spent eight days in space on board the Salyut 7 space station. He joined 2 other Soviet cosmonauts aboard the Soyuz T-11 spacecraft which blasted off on April 2, 1984. Sharma joined the Indian Air Force and progressed rapidly through the ranks. Sharma, then a Squadron Leader and pilot with the Indian Air Force embarked on a historic mission in 1984 as part of a joint space program between the Indian Space Research Organisation and the Soviet Intercosmos space program, and spent eight days in space aboard the Salyut 7 space station. Launched along with two Soviet cosmonauts aboard Soyuz T-11 on the 3 April 1984, Sharma was 35-year-old. Rakesh, along with the Soviet Cosmonauts, spend 7 days, 21 hours and 40 minutes in space and board the Salyut 7 space station, a low earth orbit space station, conducting an earth observation programme concentrating on India. He also did life sciences and materials processing experiments, including silicium fusing tests. He is also reported to have experimented with practicing Yoga to deal with the effects of prolonged orbital spaceflight.

**Koichi Wakata,** born 1 August 1963 is a Japanese engineer and a JAXA astronaut. Wakata is a veteran of four NASA Space Shuttle missions and a long-duration stay on the International Space Station. During a nearly two decade career in spaceflight he has logged five months in space. Wakata is currently assigned to the Soyuz TMA-11M/ Expedition 38/Expedition 39 long duration spaceflight scheduled for 2013-2014. He will be the first Japanese commander of the Space Station during Expedition 39.

Wakata was born in Ōmiya, Saitama, Japan, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering in 1987, a Master of Science degree in Applied Mechanics in 1989, and a Doctorate in Aerospace Engineering in 2004 from Kyushu University. He worked as a structural engineer for Japan Airlines.

Wakata was selected by the National Space Development Agency of Japan (NASDA) (now JAXA) as an astronaut candidate in 1992, and trained at NASA's Johnson Space Center. Wakata has held a number of assignments, and during STS-85, Wakata acted as NASDA Assistant Payload Operations Director for the Manipulator Flight Demonstration, a robotic arm experiment for the Japanese Experiment Module of the International Space Station (ISS) In December 2000, he became a NASA robotics instructor astronaut. In July 2006, he served as the commander of the 10th NASA Extreme Environment Mission Operations (NEEMO) mission, a seven-day undersea expedition at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Aquarius laboratory located off the coast of Florida. In August 2006, he started flight engineer training for Russian Soyuz spacecraft in preparation for a long duration stay on the ISS.

# FOUNDING MEMBERS...



Yi So-yeon, born June 2, 1978 is a South Korean scientist and Ph.D. graduate of KAIST (Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology). On April 8, 2008, she became the first Korean and the second female resident of a country in East Asia at the time of her spaceflight[2] to fly in space, after Chiaki Mukai.

Yi So-yeon was born to father Yi Gil-soo and mother Jeong Geum-soon and raised in Gwangju, South Korea. Yi studied at Gwangju Science High School. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees with a focus on mechanics at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) in Daejeon. Her doctorate in biotech systems was conferred on 29 February 2008 in a ceremony at KAIST although she was unable to be present due to her training commitments in Russia.

Yi was one of the two finalists chosen on 25 December 2006 through the Korean Astronaut Program. On 5 September 2007, the Korean Ministry of Science and Technology chose Ko San, over Yi So-yeon, following performance and other tests during their training in Russia. On 7 March 2008, she was selected to train with the primary crew, and on 10 March the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology announced that Yi would replace Ko. This was after the Russian Federal Space Agency asked for a replacement because Ko violated regulations several times at a Russian training center by removing sensitive reading materials and mailing one back to Korea. On 8 April 2008, Yi was launched into space on board Soyuz TMA-12, with two Russian cosmonauts. South Korea is reported to have paid Russia \$20 Million for Yi's space flight.[10] She makes South Korea the third country, after the United Kingdom and Iran, to have a woman as its first space traveler.

<b>KSA</b>
HRH Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud
<b>CHINA</b>
Haipeng, Jing
Liwei, Yang
<b>INDIA</b>
Sharma, Rakesh
<b>JAPAN</b>
Akiyama, Toyohiro
Mukai, Chiaki
Noguchi, Soichi
Wakata, Koichi
<b>MALAYSIA</b>
Shukor, Sheikh Muszaphar
<b>MONGOLIA</b>
Jugderdemid, Gurragchaa
<b>REPUBLIC OF KOREA</b>
Yi, Soyeon
<b>SYRIA</b>
Fares, Mohammed



For more information, please visit: [www.ase-asia.org](http://www.ase-asia.org)





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