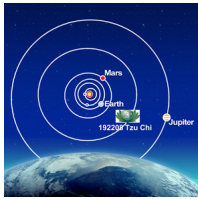


Asteroid in the Galaxy Named After Tzu Chi

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

Wednesday, 13 October 2010 17:09



The spirit of the Tzu Chi has reached the sky – in the form of a asteroid in a distant galaxy named after it. The scientists who made the discovery decided to name it after the foundation in honour of its contribution to charity, medicine, education and culture around the world.

On October 2nd, the president of the university, the head of the observatory which discovered the asteroid and others went to the foundation's headquarters in Hualien to report their findings to Master Cheng Yen in person. Jiang Weining, president of National Central University (NCU), whose observatory found the asteroid, told her that the 'Great Love' of Tzu Chi had no national boundaries and that the naming of the asteroid would allow its light to shine across the universe; the foundation also represented one of the spirits of Taiwan which had climbed to the heavens, he said. "I hope that, in future, our university can work closely with Tzu Chi and, through science, provide information to prevent disasters and improve the relief work that follows. When science and humanity work together, they create a great strength and help even more people. Tzu Chi people are like a guardian spirit for the earth," he said. This is the first time a asteroid in the galaxy has been named after a religious organization in Taiwan.

In response, [Master Cheng Yen](#) said that, more than 2,000 years ago, the Buddha already explained to us that our world is continually undergoing change. Indeed, within this vast universe, everything is changing and impermanent. So the efforts of Tzu Chi to protect the environment, to collect and recycle plastic bottles and turn them into clothing and using matter a second time are part of a process of renewal, she said. "I hope that every Tzu Chi member will earnestly strive to understand that through astronomy we can understand the earth and that the earth and the sky are intimately related," she said.

Lin Hung-chin, director of the Lulin observatory, said the discovery of the asteroid followed years of observation and tracking its orbit; they obtained a permanent number for the asteroid last year. It is in the solar system, between Mars and Jupiter. The discovery of the asteroid was made on May 11, 2007 by Shih Chia-you, an observation assistant at the observatory in Chungli, north Taiwan, together with Ye Quanzhi, a student from Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou who was working at the observatory. The asteroid takes 5.62 years to circle the sun and the closest it comes to the earth is 300 million kilometers. They decided to name the asteroid 'Tzu Chi' and submitted their proposal to the International Astronomical Union (IAU) for its approval. The IAU gave its approval on July 26 this year and accepted the proposal. From that date, the asteroid was formally known as 'Tzu Chi'. It will reflect the brightness of the foundation across the cosmos.