

IYA2009 in mainland China

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Abstract

The preliminary ideas and schemes of the Chinese Astronomy Society (Nanjing) for IYA2009 are presented.

Introduction

IYA2009 activities in mainland China are led by the Chinese Astronomy Society (Nanjing), which comprises the three professional research observatories (National Astronomical Observatories, Purple Mountain Observatory, and Shanghai Observatory) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, institutions and universities with astronomy or astronomy-related research interests, as well as educational astronomy organisations such as the Beijing Planetarium. The Popularisation Working Committee of the Chinese Astronomy Society, located at the Beijing Planetarium, will be mainly responsible for organising and proposing the preliminary plan for IYA2009 in China.

The Planetarium Committee of the Chinese Association of Natural Science Museums was approved by the State Ministry of Civil Affairs on 7 June 2007. The Planetarium Committee is also located at the Beijing Planetarium, with about 40 institution members, mostly planetariums inside middle schools or city science and technology centres, planetarium-related companies etc. and will contribute to the organisation of IYA2009 activities in mainland China.

Current considerations for IYA2009 activities in mainland China

The current considerations for regional IYA activities include events connected with the total solar eclipse on 22 July 2009; the Astronomy Week around 30 October; the Astronomy Festival for amateurs in July and August; planetarium shows and exhibitions on IYA2009; and producing and distributing telescope kits. Some special efforts directed towards IYA2009 are contained in the following four proposals:

1. To make astronomy a formal course in the middle school curriculum. We hope that this could be achieved in one or two cities in China at least.
2. To have more professional astronomers involved in CAP activities. We are considering some convenient ways to interest all professional astronomers in CAP activities, such as giving public lectures, TV or radio interviews, writing articles for newspapers or magazines on astronomy, or just introducing briefly recent progress in their fields via a website.
3. To encourage amateur astronomers who are involved in popularising astronomy.

4. To investigate the ways to cooperate with different media (TV, newspaper, radio, portals etc.). These considerations are still under discussion and will be revised and improved later.

The partial phase of the solar eclipse on 22 July 2009 will be visible across the whole country, and several very populous cities along the Yangtze River including Chengdu, Chongqing, Wuhan, Hefei, Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Shanghai are inside the total eclipse area. Detailed discussions on activities connected with this event are under way. Organisations for observations of 2009 event should not be difficult considering the convenient facilities in these cities, but the weather conditions may not be so good in this area at that time. The weather conditions for the total solar eclipse in northwest China on 1 August 2008 are likely to be better, although the duration of the total eclipse (maximum about 2 minutes) is not as long as the 2009 case (approximately 5 minutes), and there is almost no big city along the total eclipse area.

A nationwide sidewalk astronomy activity named *Watching the Moon in the Golden Autumn* is being organised jointly by the Popularisation Working Committee of the Chinese Astronomy Society, the Planetarium Committee of the Chinese Association of Natural Science Museums, the Beijing Planetarium, the Amateur Astronomer magazine, and SOHU.com Inc. for the period 19–30 October 2007. Hundreds of amateur astronomers and astronomical clubs are expected to provide their telescopes freely to hundreds of thousands people for moon observations. The launch of the first Chinese moon probe “Chang’e-1” also takes place during this period. Experiences from this activity will be helpful to the preparations for IYA2009.

Planetariums will be very good places for some IYA activities. It seems that there are already some countries preparing to include some planetarium shows for regional activities. It might be interesting to have a “Planetarium Festival” during IYA2009.

The website for IYA2009 mainland China¹ will be fully revised during the coming months.

References

- Wu T.T. (2007), Activity Scheme for IYA2009 in mainland China, undergraduate thesis, Beijing Normal University

¹ www.astronomy2009.org.cn