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Star Named To Exalt Professor Charles Kao's Achievement

A minor planet in the Solar System was named after Professor Charles K Kao, the Vice-Chancellor of The Chinese University of Hong Kong in recognition of his heraldic work in optic fibre communication and contribution to Hong Kong's scientific development and exchanges with China.

This is the first time a Hong Kong scientist and educator's name was given to a star. The "Kao Kuen Star", originally numbered as 3463, was discovered in December 3, 1981 by the Purple Mountain Observatory, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China.

The naming of a minor planet is an unusually great honour as the star will be observed by people worldwide. Before, stars discovered by the Purple Mountain Observatory was named after Chinese cities or ancient great Chinese Scientists. Since 1990, the Observatory has named stars after personalities with unprecedented contribution in the fields of science, education, economy, culture and the like.

An internationally known expert in communication technology, Professor Kao, as the principal author, published a paper on the theory and practice of optical fibre for communication applications in 1966. It brought about a revolutionary change in the use of telecommunication medium and ushered the world into a new information era. The low cost and high performance of the optic fibre would permit powerful new information services to be introduced. For his pioneering work, Professor Kao is called "Father of Fibre Optics".

His pioneering work and many contributions to the field of fibre optics have won him over 20 prestigious awards worldwide since 1976. Among the numerous awards are the Marconi International Fellowship; the Faraday Medal of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, UK; the Alexander Graham Bell Medal of the institution of Electrical and Electronic Engineers, USA; and the Ericsson International Medal of Sweden. Recently, he was honoured with the Japan Prize in the field of Information, Computer and Communication Systems by The Science and Technology Foundation of Japan and Prince Philip Medal- the premier distinction of Royal Academy of Engineering, UK.

He was granted over 30 patents, and published and presented over 100 papers. Among his many writings are two technical books: *Optical Fiber Systems: Technology, Design and Applications* (1982) and *Optical Fibre* (1988).

Professor Kao also contributed to the education and scientific development of Hong Kong. He took up the founding Chair of Hong Kong's first Department of Electronics at The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1970 and built up both an undergraduate and a postgraduate programme. He continued his effort in telecommunications and information network development in Hong Kong when he served as the Vice-Chancellor of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. His two books: *Technology Road Maps for Hong Kong* and *A Choice Fulfilled: The Business of High Technology* indicate the orientation of scientific development in Hong Kong and how the society will benefit from technology advances. In 1990, under his leadership, the Hong Kong Institute of Biotechnology was set up. The Institute not only forms the infrastructure of biotechnology-based industry in Hong Kong but also fosters all purpose cooperation among local and Chinese research institutes and overseas business organisations.

Recently elected as Academician of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Professor Kao has also actively promoted the academic exchange between Hong Kong and China as well as other parts of the world. Under his leadership, the Chinese University has established links with hundreds of higher academic institutes and research centres worldwide and the number of distinguished scholars, visiting professors and experts who have visited the University has exceeded tens of thousands.

Professor Kao is a Member of National Academy of Engineering (USA), Fellow of The Royal Academy of Engineering (UK), Fellow of IEEE (USA), Fellow of IEE(UK), Fellow of HKIE(Hong Kong), Fellow of The Academia Sinica (Taiwan), and Foreign Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences IVA (Sweden).

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