

# Do Pluto and Ceres Deserve to be Planets?

By ARTHUR WIEGENFELD

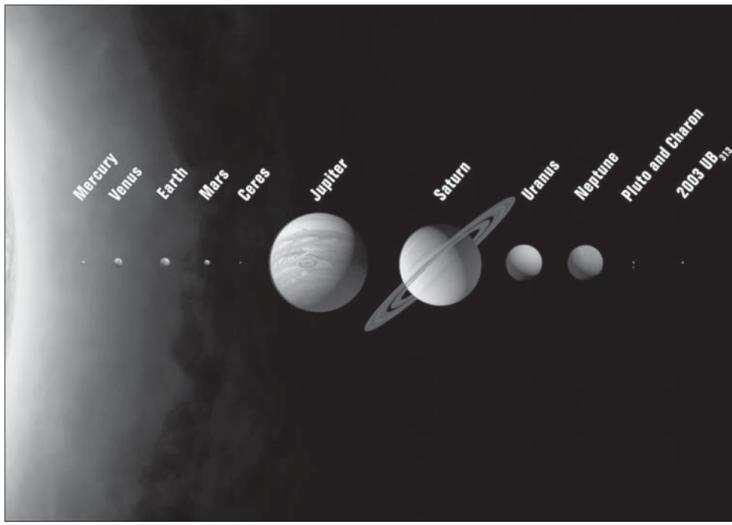
The International Astronomical Union (the "IAU") is a widely recognized group of professional astronomers who classify astronomical "bodies" (planets, comets, asteroids, and so on). In 2006, it demoted Pluto from the status of planet to that of a dwarf planet. Some astronomers disagreed, as did much of the public. The ensuing controversy reached monumental proportions. Other bodies were also designated to be dwarf planets, including Ceres (previously classified as an asteroid), and Eris, a recently discovered ice world beyond Pluto.

Until 2006, the definition planet meant (1) an object which orbits the Sun and (2) whose size was of sufficient magnitude such that the force of gravity would force it into a round shape. This is called hydrostatic equilibrium. A third criterion was then added: (3) a planet should "clear its orbital path" of most bodies (such as asteroids)—otherwise it would be designated a dwarf planet. I will refer to this as "Criterion 3." The effect of Criterion 3 was to reduce the potential number of planets, since some bodies are round, but are not large enough to clear their orbits, especially if they are located in a dense neighborhood.

Because of my background in financial instruments and data processing, I have been extensively exposed to classification issues. I can therefore state emphatically that the debate was long on emotion and short on logic.

Classifications are simply educational devices designed to simplify the learning process. As long as they are (a) true, (b) consistent, and (c) logical, they should be judged solely on their usefulness. None of the facts I discuss are in dispute—just their interpretation.

Not long ago, I found my weight increasing. My doctor referred me to a nutritionist. If I had suggested that, instead of actually losing weight, I could lower my weight



SOLAR SYSTEM: An artist's rendition made for an International Astronomical Union conference held in 2006 shows the solar system with 12 planets, including four objects whose status is in dispute—Ceres, Pluto, Charon, and 2003 UB131. IAU/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

classification by simply putting obstructions in my apartment (thereby removing the "clear path"), she would probably have provided an additional referral—to a psychiatrist. Yet the logic of Criterion 3 could result in two identical bodies being classified differently solely because of what objects are nearby.

There were a number of other factors that led some astronomers to vote to demote Pluto: (a) some of the bodies in question are small—both Pluto and Ceres are smaller than the Moon; (b) their orbits are not in the (relatively) flat plane that the traditional planets traverse and (c) Pluto resembles other icy bodies that lie beyond its orbit, in an area called the Kuiper Belt.

However, they ignored other issues. To begin with, the public views planets as worlds comparable to the Earth, where people may live in the future. The most important requirement is that there is a surface! In fact the gas giant (or gas chamber) planets such as Jupiter and Saturn are (almost) completely devoid of surface, and therefore have less in common with the Earth than the dwarf planets.

Moreover, Criterion 3 is to a large degree just an attempt to reduce the number of planets by imposing a planetary size minimum, yet the public (including scientists) is comfortable with many nomenclatures that encompass large ranges of size, such as cities, nations, and mammals.

Furthermore, as the world increasingly faces a crisis of inadequate fresh water, the perceived importance of the ice worlds as potential homes will increase.

Finally, the word "dwarf" has been largely dropped from acceptable discourse outside of astronomy. And since most size classification systems include at least three categories, where is the third one? We only have dwarf planets and regular planets.

When we look at both the problem associated with Criterion 3, as well as these plausible alternative considerations, it is difficult to fathom the decision that the IAU made. I must therefore conclude that while science played a significant role, so did disdain for popular culture—after all, Pluto was the Roman god of the dead, as well as a famous Disney character.

Science should be neutral, neither favoring nor disfavoring the popular culture. It is not that the vote went against me that disturbs me—it is the complete lack of the acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the dissent, epitomized by the widely used phrase "Pluto had it coming."

I must confess a bias toward Ceres, the dwarf planet that I think deserves planetary status. Ceres (pronounced like the word "series") was the Roman goddess of agriculture, from which the word "cereal" is derived. Ceres is as romantic a figure as Venus, and adds a female name to an environment over weighted with male names. As a Pluto fan I lost when Pluto was demoted, but as a Ceres fan, I had a partial victory when its designation changed from asteroid to dwarf planet.

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# Chinese Scholars Aren't Buying Lang Lang's Explanations

By XIN FEI  
Epoch Times Staff

While some in the U.S. media have been sympathetically reporting Lang Lang's claims of ignorance, some Chinese scholars are holding him responsible together with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for his performance at the White House state dinner for President Barack Obama and his guest Chairman Hu Jintao.

Chinese-born pianist Lang Lang responded to critics in an interview with NPR on Jan. 24. He said he knew nothing about the background of "My Motherland," the Chinese propaganda song he played at the end of the state dinner. It is the theme song for "Battle on Shangganling Mountain," a 1956 anti-American movie about the Korean War. He said he had performed the piece many times simply because he likes the melody.

Zhang Kaichen is the former liaison director of the Propaganda Department of the Shenyang City Communist Party Committee and moved to the United States a year ago. He said: "I don't believe it was Lang Lang's decision. It must have been planned and instigated by the Chinese regime. After Lang Lang received criticism, the CCP did not stand up to take responsibility but continued to push Lang Lang to the front of the stage to explain himself in those ridiculous, pathetic, and naive words."

Zhang said: "Lang Lang has enjoyed many benefits from living in a free society. However, he chose to stand on the side of the CCP, a regime that persecutes its own people, and it happened in the White House. It is a very shameful act."

Hu Ping, a well-known scholar and commentator, pointed out that "Lang Lang himself said that he had played the song many times before. As a world-class Chinese artist, how could he not know the background?"

"According to diplomatic practice, the CCP must have known the song in advance, especially during Hu's visit. Both countries were very cautious this time and planned everything very carefully. Under these circumstances, both parties would have

communicated every detail," said Hu.

Lang Lang wrote in his blog on the night after the performance: "I once again played 'My Motherland,' one of the most beautiful songs in the eyes of Chinese. ... As if I was telling them about a powerful China and a unified Chinese people. I feel deeply honored and proud."

Tang Baiqiao, a well-known human rights activist and international affairs expert, commented: "Lang Lang is self-contradictory in his responses. 'Powerful China and a unified Chinese people,' 'has nothing to do with anything else,' 'the strong feelings for the motherland,' and 'don't add political themes to the arts,' all suggest that he is fully aware of the background and is confused about the difference between China and the CCP."

"As an artist, he has played the song many times before and the song was carefully selected. If Lang Lang knew nothing about the background, how did he express his 'feelings' through the song?"

Lang Lang used what is a standard arrangement of "My Motherland." It includes a quotation from another famous anti-American song—the theme song of "Heroic Sons and Daughters," a propaganda movie that, like "Battle on Shangganling Mountain," concerns the Korean War (<http://www.amazon.com/Heroic-Daughters-Chinese-English-Subtitle/dp/00015MS9FU>).

The lyrics corresponding to the section quoted from "Heroic Sons and Daughters" are "Why is the flag as beautiful as a painting? Because it is dyed by the blood of heroes. Why is the spring eternal? Because the lives of the heroes are blooming."

This section of the music from the Heroic Sons and Daughters is at 7:45 to 8:15 in this video clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kroEprEptvA>.

Zhang Kaichen said: "Playing these two anti-American songs at the state dinner communicates an angle, a feeling, and a mood that obviously carry a political intention. Especially in China, art serves politics. Whatever the CCP does is done with a political agenda. The objective for having Lang Lang play the 'red songs' cannot be more obvious."

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The 'Nine Commentaries' is the book that is disintegrating the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and changing China. This award-winning Epoch Times editorial series discloses the true history and nature of the CCP. Now it is serialized here.

## Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party

### Commentary Four (cont.) On How the Communist Party Opposes the Universe

The Evil that Transcends the Law of Mutual Generation and Mutual Inhibition

Lao Zi said,

Under heaven all can see beauty as beauty only because there is ugliness. All can know good as good only because there is evil. Therefore having and not having arise together. Difficult and easy complement each other. Long and short contrast each other; High and low rest upon each other; Voice and sound harmonize each other; Front and back follow one another.<sup>1</sup>

Simply put, the law of mutual generation and mutual inhibition exists

in the human world. Not only are humans divided into good and bad individuals, but good and evil also coexist within a single person.

Dao Zhi, an icon of bandits in ancient China, told his followers, "Bandits should follow the Way as well." He went on and elaborated that in being a bandit one should also be "honorable, courageous, righteous, wise, and benevolent." That is to say, even a bandit cannot do whatever pleases him, but has to follow certain rules.

The history of the CCP can be said to be full of trickery and betrayal without constraint. For example, what bandits honor the most is "righteousness." Even their place to share the booty is called "the hall of righteousness for dividing the spoils." But whenever a crisis arises among comrades within the CCP, they expose and accuse one another, and even fabricate false charges to frame one another, adding insult to injury.

Take General Peng Dehuai for example. Mao Zedong, coming from a peasant background, of course knew that it was impossible to produce 130,000 jin of grain per mu<sup>ii</sup> and that what Peng said was all true<sup>iii</sup>. He also knew that Peng had no intention of taking his power, let alone

the fact that Peng has saved his life several times when Peng fought Hu Zongnan's 200,000 troops with only 20,000 troops of his own during the CCP-KMT war.

Nevertheless, as soon as Peng expressed his disagreement with Mao, Mao immediately burst into a rage and threw into a garbage can the poem he wrote in praise of Peng—"Who dares to ride ahead on horseback with sword drawn—only our General Peng!" Mao was determined to put Peng to death, despite the nobility of Peng's life-saving comradeship.

The CCP kills brutally rather than governs with benevolence; it persecutes its own members in contempt of comradeship and personal loyalty; it barter away China's territory, acting cowardly; it makes itself an enemy of righteous belief, lacking wisdom; it launches mass movements, violating the sage's way to govern the nation.

All in all, the CCP has gone so far as to abandon the minimal moral standard that "even bandits should follow the Way as well." Its evilness has reached well beyond the law of mutual generation and mutual inhibition in the universe. The CCP completely opposes nature and humanity for the purpose

of confounding the criteria for good and evil and overturning the law of the universe. Its unrestrained arrogance has reached its zenith, and it is doomed to come to collapse completely.

<sup>i</sup> Tao-Te Ching, Chapter 2.  
<sup>ii</sup> jin is a Chinese unit for measuring weight. 1 jin = 0.5 kg; mu is a Chinese unit for measuring land area. 1 mu = 0.165 acres.  
<sup>iii</sup> General Peng Dehuai criticized Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward movement, which is widely seen both within China and outside as a major economic disaster. As a consequence, he was removed from all posts and placed under constant supervision and house arrest. His humiliation and disgrace at the hands of the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution continued until he died due to a liver disorder in 1974.



## QUITTING THE CCP



Inspired by the 'Nine Commentaries,' as of January 27, at 5:27 p.m.

88,456,298

Chinese people have announced their intentions to quit the Chinese Communist Party and its affiliated organizations on a special Web site established by The Epoch Times. Many others, unable to break through the Chinese Internet blockade, have posted their withdrawal statements on poles or buildings. Others have written them on Chinese currency. Read recent statements of Chinese quitting the Party, the latest news on the "Nine Commentaries," and more at <http://www.NineCommentaries.com>

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