



Italian astronaut becomes online star

ROME — Besides “wow” and “great,” what else would you say when flying over the Earth in space? Samantha Cristoforetti, the first Italian female astronaut in space, posted several lines of a famous ancient Chinese composition on Twitter to share her joy.

She first wrote in Chinese, and then attached an accurate translation of the lines in both Italian and English to help more people understand.

“Looking up, I see the immensity of the cosmos; bowing my head, I look at the multitude of the world. The gaze flies, the heart expands, the joy of the senses can reach its peak, and indeed, this is true happiness,” it says.

The text she quoted is from the *Preface to Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion*, a Chinese calligraphy masterpiece by Wang Xizhi (303-361) of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420).

She also attached three photos taken in space of China's Bohai Bay and the day-night view of Beijing.

Two days before she landed on Earth, the beauty of space and Chinese literature resonated on her Twitter account. Before long, her posts went viral on Twitter with thousands of retweets, likes and replies.



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European Space Agency website

The poem and views are both magnificent; if everyone could enjoy the same sight, a lot of pain in the world would be dissipated, one user comments.

A European astronaut in space recites Chinese ancient poetry, how romantic, says another.

As the first Italian female astronaut in space, Cristoforetti carried out her first space mission on Nov 23, 2014. She started the second mission in April and returned to Earth on Friday night after a 127-day stay in orbit.

When not traveling for work, she is an avid reader and has a great passion for languages.

“Always looking to the future, Samantha (Cristoforetti) is learning Chinese in her spare time,” the European Space Agency says on its website.

Meanwhile, Cristoforetti has been active in Sino-European cooperation in the field of manned spaceflight. She was a working group member tasked with liaising with Chinese counterparts to define and implement cooperation in the field of astronaut operations. In 2017, she took part in a sea survival exercise organized by the Astronaut Center of China in the Yellow Sea, which was the first joint training of Chinese and foreign astronauts in China.

An agreement was signed in 2015 between China and Europe on cooperation in the field of manned spaceflight, specifying the participation of China and Europe in each other's astronaut training activities. Speaking clear Chinese, Cristoforetti once told the media that the teams from China and Europe were working very well together in the field of astronaut training.

She joined the Italian Air Force in 2001 and had accumulated more than 500 hours of flight experience. In May 2009, Cristoforetti was one of the six chosen from 8,000 European applicants to join the ESA astronaut corps.