

China announces Space Station plans

April 28 2011, by Deborah Braconnier

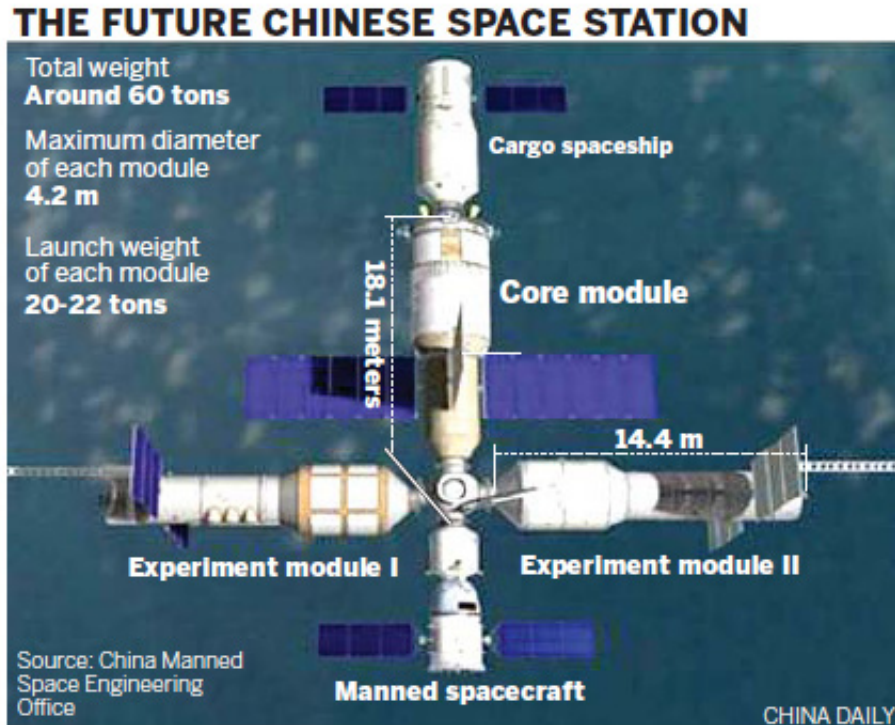


Image: China Daily

(PhysOrg.com) -- Less than a decade after launching their first astronaut into space, the China Manned Space Engineering Office announced in a news conference this week their plans to build and develop a 60-ton space station with three capsules and a cargo spacecraft.

The space station, much smaller than the [International Space Station](#) which is 419 tons, will be comprised of three different modules. The

core module will be 18.1 meters long, a diameter of 4.2 meters and will have a launch weight of between 20 and 22 tons. This module will be launched first, with the experiment modules launched to dock later. The experiment modules will be 14.4 meters long and will have the same launch weight and diameter as the core.

The cargo [spacecraft](#) will have a maximum diameter of 3.35 and its launch weight will be less than 13 tons. This craft will be used to transport supplies and lab equipment to and from the space station.

Their current five year plan has them launching an unmanned module and spacecraft later this year to work on their docking technology, with the hopes of manned missions sometime next year.

Initial plans for the space station and its name were “Tiangong,” meaning heavenly palace. However, China’s Manned Space Engineering Office officials have announced they are turning to the public to submit names for the station and the cargo ship. Names for the cargo ship must be submitted by May 20th and they plan to announce the final name sometime in June. Names for the space station can be submitted until July 25, with the name being chosen by the end of September.

With the development of this space station, China is also hoping to increase their international exchanges in the world’s space programs. Everything within their station will be compatible with that of the International [Space Station](#) and they are welcoming all space science researchers to participate.

According to reports, [China](#) is also hoping to make its first landing on the moon within the next two years and the hope is to have an astronaut on the moon by 2025.

More information: via [China Daily](#)

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Citation: China announces Space Station plans (2011, April 28) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-04-china-space-station.html>

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