

China astronauts float water blob in kids' lecture

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In this image taken June 20, 2013 and made from CCTV, Chinese female astronaut Wang Yaping shows motion behavior of two spinning objects in microgravity during the broadcast live from onboard the Tiangong 1 prototype space station. China's astronauts spun gyroscopes and implanted tiny knots into sheets of suspended water during their first classroom lecture from the country's orbiting space station, part of efforts to popularize the successful manned space flight program among young people.(AP Photo/CCTV via AP Video)

Astronauts struck floating martial arts poses, twirled gyroscopes and manipulated wobbling globes of water during a lecture Thursday from China's orbiting space station that's part of efforts to popularize the space program among young people.

Wang Yaping demonstrated principles of weightlessness and took questions live from among the 330 grade school kids gathered at a Beijing auditorium during the 51-minute class from aboard the Tiangong 1 [space](#) station. Her fellow crew members Nie Haisheng and Zhang Xiaoguang answered questions about living, working and staying fit in space.

"I want to know how you know which way is up," said one student.

During one playful moment, Nie adopted the mythical cross-legged lotus position familiar to all fans of Chinese martial arts films.

"In space, we're all kung fu masters," Wang remarked.

In a later demonstration resembling a magic show, Wang injected droplets into an increasingly larger suspended ball of water, drawing exclamations of "wow" and polite applause from the students, another 60 million of whom were watching the live TV broadcast in their classrooms. The astronauts also spun [gyroscopes](#) and swung a ball on its tether to show how [weightlessness](#) affects objects in motion.

The lesson was "aimed at making space more popular," Zhou Jianping, designer-in-chief of China's [manned space program](#), was quoted as saying by the official [Xinhua News Agency](#). "The spirit of science among youth is an important drive for the progress of mankind," Zhou said.



In this image taken June 20, 2013 and made from tv via Xinhua News Agency, female astronaut Wang Yaping, of Shenzhou 10 spacecraft, demonstrates gyrosopic motion in space during a lecture to students on Earth, aboard China's space module Tiangong 1. China's astronauts spun gyroscopes and implanted tiny knots into sheets of suspended water during their first classroom lecture from the country's orbiting space station, part of efforts to popularize the successful manned space flight program among young people.(AP Photo/CCTV via Xinhua)

China's second female astronaut, Wang smiled her way through the carefully rehearsed class, which more closely resembled a children's TV science program than Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield's recent free-wheeling YouTube videos from the [International Space Station](#).



Elementary school students are reflected on the screen of a television showing a lecture delivered by Chinese female astronaut Wang Yaping onboard the Tiangong 1 prototype space station, in Taizhou in eastern China's Zhejiang province Thursday June 20, 2013. China held its first classroom lecture from its orbiting space station as part of efforts to popularize the successful manned space flight program among young people. (AP Photo)

The lectures come as China's human space program enters its second decade, after going from a simple [manned flight](#) to space lab link-ups in a series of methodically timed steps in just 10 years. China launched its first crewed mission in 2003, becoming the third nation after Russia and the U.S. to achieve that feat.

The current Shenzhou 10 mission is the second crewed trip to the Tiangong 1, launched in 2011 and due to be replaced by the larger, three-module permanent station, Tiangong 2, seven years from now.



In this image released by China's Xinhua News Agency, students watch the live video broadcast of a space lecture by female astronaut Wang Yaping, seen on the screen, at Baochuta Experimental School in Hangzhou, China's Zhejiang Province, Thursday, June 20, 2013. China's astronauts struck floating martial arts poses and twirled gyroscopes during their first classroom lecture from the country's orbiting space station, part of efforts to popularize the successful manned space flight program among young people.(AP Photo/Xinhua, Ju Huanzong)

The future station will weigh about 60 tons, slightly smaller than NASA's Skylab of the 1970s and about one-sixth the size of the 16-nation

International Space Station. China was barred from participating in the International [Space Station](#), largely on objections from the United States over political differences and the Chinese program's close links with the military.

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