

# China's first female astronaut becomes mom, resumes training

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China's first female astronaut has begun training for her next mission after having a baby, state media reported Friday.

The selection of China's female astronauts had been somewhat controversial because of a reported preference for married women who have children, purportedly to guard against radiation damaging their [reproductive health](#). Those fears have so far proven unfounded, although no pregnant woman has flown in space as far as is known.

The official China Daily newspaper quoted Liu Yang as confirming at an award ceremony this week that she had given birth but the report gave no more details about the child.

She was quoted as saying she was training for her next mission, an attempt to dock with a future [space station](#) for which no firm date has been set.

Liu, 37, was a member of the three-person Shenzhou 9 mission that flew the first trip to China's experimental space station Tiangong 1 in 2012. China plans to launch a more permanent Tiangong 2 space station in about five years.

China sent its first astronaut into space in 2003, becoming the third nation after Russia and the United States to achieve manned space travel independently.

Soviet cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space in 1963. Twenty years later, Sally Ride became the first American to travel to space, flying twice on the space shuttle Challenger before leaving NASA in 1987. A total of 59 women have flown in [space](#).

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