

Astronaut conducts first spacewalk by Chinese woman

November 8 2021



In this image released by the Xinhua News Agency, a photo taken on a screen shows Chinese astronauts Zhai Zhigang and Wang Yaping conducting extravehicular activities outside the space station's Tianhe core module, from the Beijing Aerospace Control Center on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021. Wang Yaping has become the first Chinese woman to conduct a spacewalk as part of a six-month mission to the country's space station. Wang and fellow astronaut Zhai Zhigang left the station's Tianhe core module on Sunday evening Beijing time, spending more than six hours installing equipment and carrying out tests alongside the

station's robotic service arm. Credit: Guo Zhongzheng/Xinhua via AP

Wang Yaping has become the first Chinese woman to conduct a spacewalk as part of a six-month mission to the country's space station.

Fellow astronaut Zhai Zhigang left the station's main module on Sunday evening and Wang followed later. They installed equipment and carried out tests alongside the station's robotic service arm, according to the China Manned Space Agency. The spacewalk lasted until early Monday.

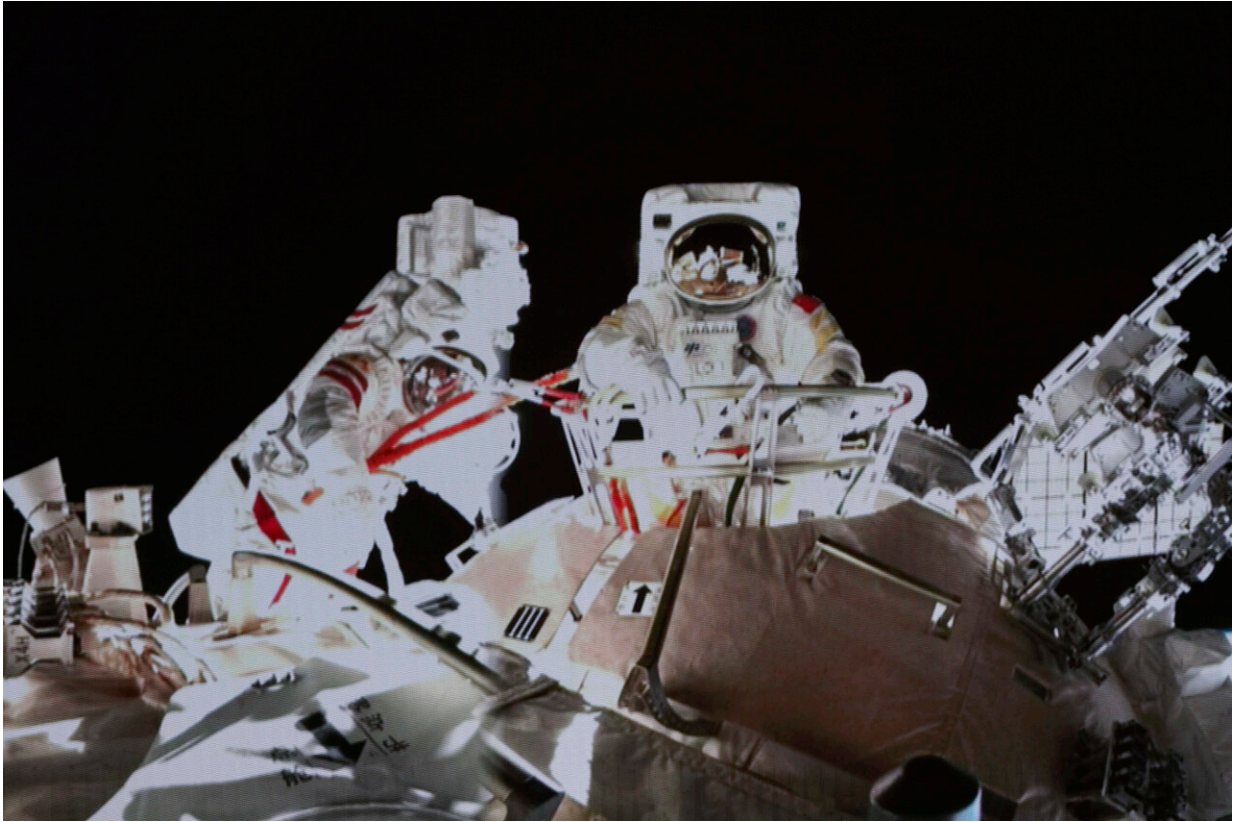
The third member of the crew, Ye Guangfu, assisted from inside the station, CMS said on its website.

Wang, 41, and Zhai, 55, had both traveled to China's now-retired experimental space stations, and Zhai conducted China's first spacewalk 13 years ago.

The three are the second crew on the permanent station, and the mission that began with their arrival Oct. 16 is scheduled to be the longest stretch of time in space yet for Chinese astronauts.

The Tianhe module of the station will be connected next year to two more sections named Mengtian and Wentian. The completed station will weigh about 66 tons, much smaller than the International Space Station, which launched its first module in 1998 and weighs around 450 tons.

Three spacewalks are planned to install equipment in preparation for the station's expansion, while the crew will also assess living conditions in the Tianhe module and conduct experiments in space medicine and other fields.



In this image released by the Xinhua News Agency, a photo taken on a screen shows Chinese astronaut Wang Yaping steps out from the space station's Tianhe core module, at Beijing Aerospace Control Center on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021. Wang Yaping has become the first Chinese woman to conduct a spacewalk as part of a six-month mission to the country's space station. Wang and fellow astronaut Zhai Zhigang left the station's Tianhe core module on Sunday evening Beijing time, spending more than six hours installing equipment and carrying out tests alongside the station's robotic service arm. Credit: Guo Zhongzheng/Xinhua via AP



In this image released by the Xinhua News Agency, a photo taken on a screen shows Chinese astronaut Wang Yaping conducts an activities outside the space station's Tianhe core module, at Beijing Aerospace Control Center on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021. Wang Yaping has become the first Chinese woman to conduct a spacewalk as part of a six-month mission to the country's space station. Wang and fellow astronaut Zhai Zhigang left the station's Tianhe core module on Sunday evening Beijing time, spending more than six hours installing equipment and carrying out tests alongside the station's robotic service arm. Credit: Guo Zhongzheng/Xinhua via AP

China's military-run space program plans to send multiple crews to the station over the next two years to make it fully functional.

Soviet cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya was the first woman to walk in

space in 1984. Kathryn Sullivan became the first American woman to do so later the same year.

In 2019, NASA astronauts Jessica Meir and Christina Koch participated in the first all-female spacewalk to replace a faulty power control unit outside the International Space Station. The walk lasted more than seven hours.

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