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BBC: China To Test Space Shuttle In Oct

From: **Steven J. Dunn** <SDunn@logicon.com>
Date: Thu, 13 May 1999 09:41:16 -0700
Fwd Date: Fri, 14 May 1999 08:07:43 -0400
Subject: BBC: China To Test Space Shuttle In Oct

China to test 'space shuttle' in October

Thursday, May 13, 1999; Published at 13:20 GMT 14:20 UK

By BBC News Online Science Editor Dr David Whitehouse

The Chinese space programme will try to launch its first spacecraft designed to carry astronauts on 1 October.

Officials quoted in the Yangcheng Evening News said preparations of a recoverable capsule were far ahead of schedule.

If the date can be achieved the flight would coincide with the communist state's 50th anniversary celebrations.

Although there had been rumours that China was planning a mission to test its new spacecraft design no specific timing has previously been given, other than "by the end of this century or the beginning of the next."

The October flight would be unmanned and used to test the technology. But Li Jianzhong, director of the Chinese Academy of Launch-Vehicle Technology, said that a manned launch was "under preparation", and indicated it would follow not far behind the test flight.

He said that their Long March 2E rocket already had a lift capacity of 10 tonnes and that China was about to complete research for a rocket capable of launching 20-tonne payloads.

Astronauts have been trained and research into life support systems had made "great progress," he said. The helmets, pressure suits and feeding system were ready to go.

In recent months, China has refurbished its fleet of satellite tracking ships. Experts say that if such an important mission does take place in October then these ships would be positioned in the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

Li Jianzhong has also said that China is developing a spacecraft similar to the US Space Shuttle.

Western experts believe that this is a mis-translation. They expect the spacecraft to have more in common with the Russian Soyuz manned spacecraft than the US shuttle which it is believed is far beyond China's technical abilities.

Hi everyone.

At the next full moon (May 30), I wonder how many of you are able to see another very human looking face on the Moon.

Unlike the very impressive but small New Face on Mars (about 6 miles across) which cannot be seen from Earth, even with a telescope, the Old Face on the Moon is over 1000 miles across (about 1/4 of the area of the Moon). It can be seen with the naked eye - or with glasses if you are nearsighted like me.

This face is a profile of a woman with dark hair (the "Seas" of Serenity and Tranquillity). Her nose is located near the center of the lunar disk and her eye, lips and chin are clearly visible. She is wearing a bright pendant on a chain around her neck (the rayed crater Tycho). Could this be the same Artemis or Diana, the goddess of the Moon, that the ancients mentioned about?

In the near future the New Face on Mars may also get a name and could possibly give birth to a new religion or belief just like Erich Von Daniken has created through his interpretation of ancient images and objects on Earth.

Nick Balaskas

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