



**CHINESE/RUSSIAN MANNED SPACE LAUNCH
COMES AS NO SURPRISE FOR ASTRONOMERS AT
CHABOT SPACE & SCIENCE CENTER**

— Chabot to display Russian spacesuit on which China’s spacesuit is modeled —

OAKLAND, CA (15 October 2003) — News yesterday of China’s launch of a manned space flight, in cooperation with the Russian space program, was received with enthusiasm yesterday by astronomers at Oakland’s **Chabot Space & Science Center**. Members of Chabot’s professional staff of astronomers and scientists are well aware of China’s long history of space exploration, and also have ties to scientists involved in the Russian space program. In response to the Chinese launch, this weekend Chabot will have on display a Russian Sokol KV-2 spacesuit, which is similar to that worn by Chinese astronaut Yang Liwei. Chabot will also provide updates on the Chinese Manned space program in their live “Sky Tonight” planetarium shows. Next year, Chabot will unveil a major exhibit that highlights the history of Chinese astronomy, called *Dragon Skies: Astronomy of Imperial China*.

Chabot’s executive director Alex Barnett said: “Chabot Space & Science Center offers a perfect venue for discovering many of the technological advances that have made this Chinese launch possible. Of course, the Chinese were among the earliest people to map the heavens thousands of years ago. Chinese astronomers even developed the first small rockets, and were the first to attempt to put a man in flight using gunpowder to power the blastoff—and this occurred centuries ago.”

Chabot is also working on a blockbuster ‘Living and Working in Space’ exhibit which will include some impressive examples of space artifacts, including a Soyuz capsule, similar to the Chinese Shenzou (heavenly vessel) capsule.

In addition to offering expertise, Chabot’s astronomers can show first-hand how modern Chinese space technology is based on Russian models, as many examples can be found in Chabot’s large collection of Russian space artifacts, including a Soyuz spacecraft and space suits worn by cosmonauts. China’s Shenzou (heavenly vessel) craft is based on similar technologies as the Russian Soyuz, with its similar shape and cramped accommodations (the Chinese vessel is about 13% larger than the one seen at Chabot.) Chabot’s astronomers can also demonstrate the workings of a space suit similar to the one worn by orbiting astronomer Yang Liwei, a direct copy of the Russian Sokol KV-2 suit.

In July 2004, Chabot will unveil the exhibit *Dragon Skies: Astronomy of Imperial China*, presenting a dramatic, immersive adventure into the fascinating 5,000-year old story of Imperial Chinese astronomy. The exhibition will offer 32 artifacts spanning thousands of years, including some of the

world's most ancient astronomical tools, alongside 20 specially commissioned interactive exhibits. A number of exquisitely crafted rare astronomical artifacts from the Nanjiang Museum and replicas of royal astronomical instruments that are on permanent display in the Beijing Ancient Observatory will be seen for the first time in the United States at Chabot next summer. More information is available at www.dragonskies.org.

Chabot Space & Science Center is located at 10000 Skyline Blvd., Oakland, in Joaquin Miller Park. Chabot's public hours are: Fridays, 5 pm–10 pm; Saturdays, 10 am–10 pm; Sundays 12 noon–5 pm. Telescope viewing on Fridays and Saturdays from dusk–10 pm, weather permitting. Tickets may be purchased at the door, or by calling (510) 336-7373.

PLEASE NOTE SPECIAL HOURS THIS WEEKEND, due to Chabot Science Award Gala:
Saturday, October 18th, the Center closes at 2 pm – there will be no shows, exhibits or telescope viewing this evening.

For more information, call (510) 336-7300, or visit www.chabotspace.org

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