

## Final glimpse

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## Retired spacesuit to help design upgrades

By ZHAO LEI  
zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

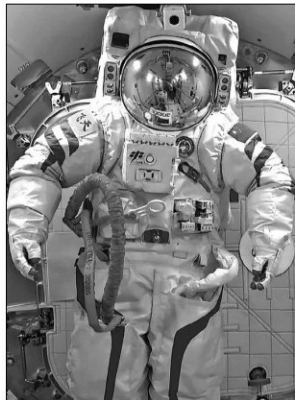
Chinese engineers will carry out research and examine a retired spacewalk suit brought back from the Tiangong space station on Monday.

The suit, dubbed the extravehicular spacesuit B, was flown back to Earth aboard the Shenzhou XX return capsule, and is the first Chinese spacewalk suit to return from space, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

It has "extremely high scientific research value and commemorative significance", the agency said.

Subsequently, researchers will conduct a series of tests and analyses on it, and the results will provide accurate and authentic first-hand data for further in-orbit life extension and design optimization of spacewalk suits. They will also lay a solid foundation for the research and development of the nation's lunar suit meant for use in manned moon landing missions, the agency added.

The suit was sent to the Tiangong by the Tianzhou 2 cargo spacecraft in May 2021, and was first used in the Shenzhou XII crew's first spacewalk in July that year, which was also the first-ever spacewalk outside the Chinese space station.



**Left:** The retired spacewalk suit brought back by the Shenzhou XX return capsule. XINHUA  
**Right:** The spacewalk suit is lifted out of the return capsule by a crane following its safe landing on Monday. CHENG LIN / FOR CHINA DAILY



“I have deep feelings for this suit. From the first time I wrote my name on its back, we built a kind of bond. I took care of it and it protected me.”

**Chen Dong**, Chinese astronaut

Tang Hongbo, a crew member of the Shenzhou XII, wore the suit during a spacewalk that spanned

six hours and 46 minutes, completing several assignments including installing a robotic arm and other equipment as well as testing the suit's performance.

Since then, the suit has been used by 11 astronauts across eight manned missions, becoming the first — among the five similar spacesuits used by Chinese astronauts — to have supported 20 spacewalks.

On Aug 15, it was used for the last time, supporting Chen Dong, commander of the Shenzhou XX flight, during the crew's third spacewalk.

In an interview with China Central Television, Chen, who, with six spacewalks under his belt, used

the suit the most, said, "I have deep feelings for this suit. From the first time I wrote my name on its back, we built a kind of bond. I took care of it and it protected me."

According to an earlier report by Xinhua News Agency, each of the first three Chinese spacewalk suits weighs about 120 kilograms, features advanced technologies and high safety designs, and costs nearly 30 million yuan (\$4.3 million).

In July, two new spacewalk suits were transported to the space station aboard the Tianzhou 9 cargo vessel. The new model features an optimized design and a longer life span, and can support more spacewalks, according to designers.