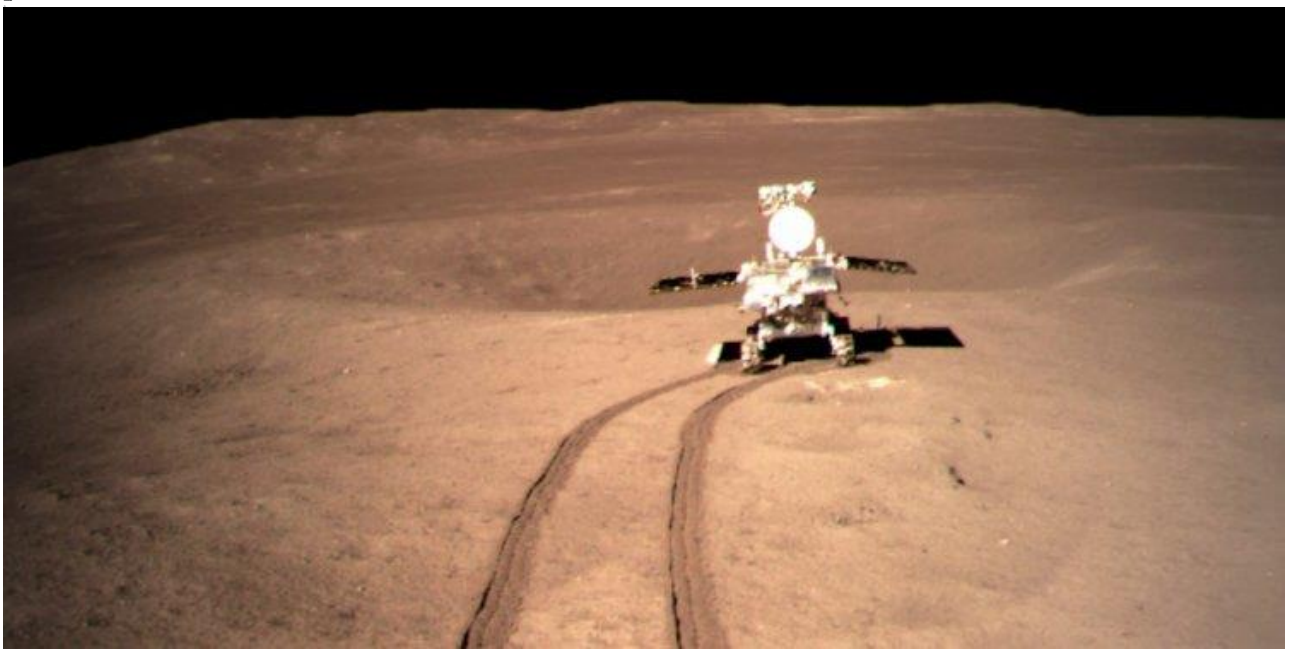


Chinese lunar rover making tracks on the far side of the moon as it starts its historic exploration mission



China's Yutu 2 rover moving across the far side of the moon.

China National Space Administration

China has released photos of its lunar rover leaving track marks on the far side of the moon after the country's historic landing.

China's Chang'e 4 craft on Thursday became the first to land on the far side. The craft's rover, called Yutu 2, has started to make its way across the lunar surface.

New photos from China's space agency show its lunar rover leaving tracks on the far side of the moon, at the start of [a historic exploration mission](#).

China on Thursday landed its [Chang'e 4 spacecraft on the moon's far side](#)— also known, mistakenly, as the "dark side"— which no nation had done before.

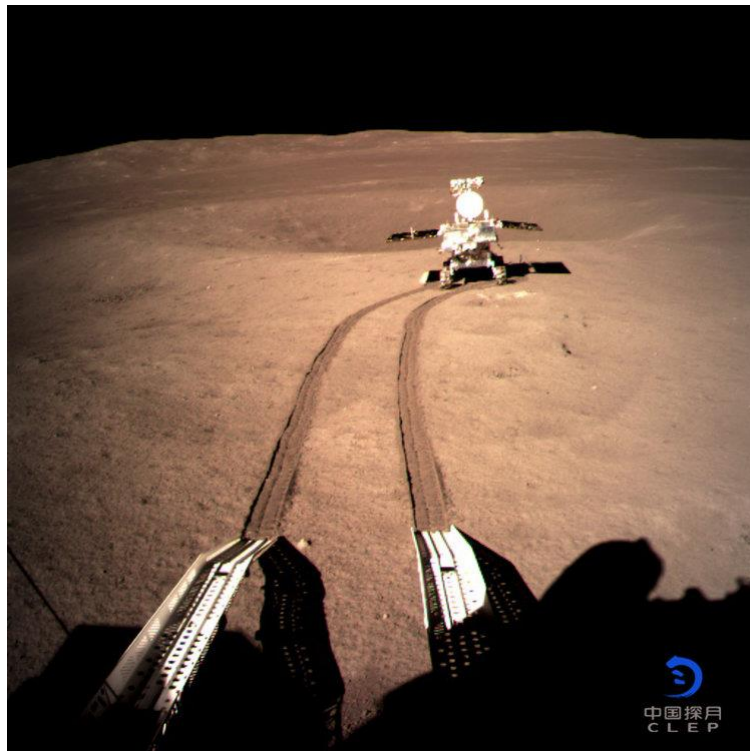
The new images show the craft's rover, called Yutu 2, beginning to move across the lunar surface.

The first shows it at the end of a ramp:



Yutu 2 leaving track marks as it begins to explore the surface of the far side of the moon. China National Space Administration/Xinhua News Agency via AP

Another showed it starting to drive off into the distance:



The Yutu 2 rover moving farther across the moon's surface. China National Space Administration

China's mission is to learn more about the little-understood region of the moon and compete with the US and Russia as a powerhouse of space exploration.

The first photos from the landing, shared by the China National Space Administration on Thursday, [show the first close-ups](#) of the far side of the moon's cratered surface.

Read more: [China releases photos from the first mission to land on the far side of the moon](#)

The rover, also known as Jade Rabbit 2, has six powered wheels, so it can keep working even if one fails, [according to The Associated Press](#). It has a maximum speed of 0.1 mph and can climb a 20-degree hill or mount an obstacle up to 8 inches tall, the report said.

The rover's designer, Shen Zhenrong of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, described the far side of the moon's surface to the state broadcaster CCTV as "soft" and "similar to that when you are walking on the snow," the AP reported.

Wu Weiren, the chief designer of the Lunar Exploration Project, told CCTV it was "a small step for the rover, but one giant leap for the Chinese nation," according to the AP.



China's Chang'e 4 craft captured a close-up photo of the far side of the moon. China's National Space Administration

China was the first to complete a "soft landing," without damage, on the far side of the moon. The first human-made object to hit the far side was NASA's Ranger 4 craft in 1964; it crashed after a system failure.

Read more: [Humanity's coolest achievements in spaceflight since Apollo 8, from walking on the moon to touching interstellar space](#)

[China's space agency has said](#) its objective is to learn more about the far side of the moon — including about things like mineral composition and the structure of its surface — as well as about the sun, other planets, and the origin of the stars.

Is there a base on the moon already ????

