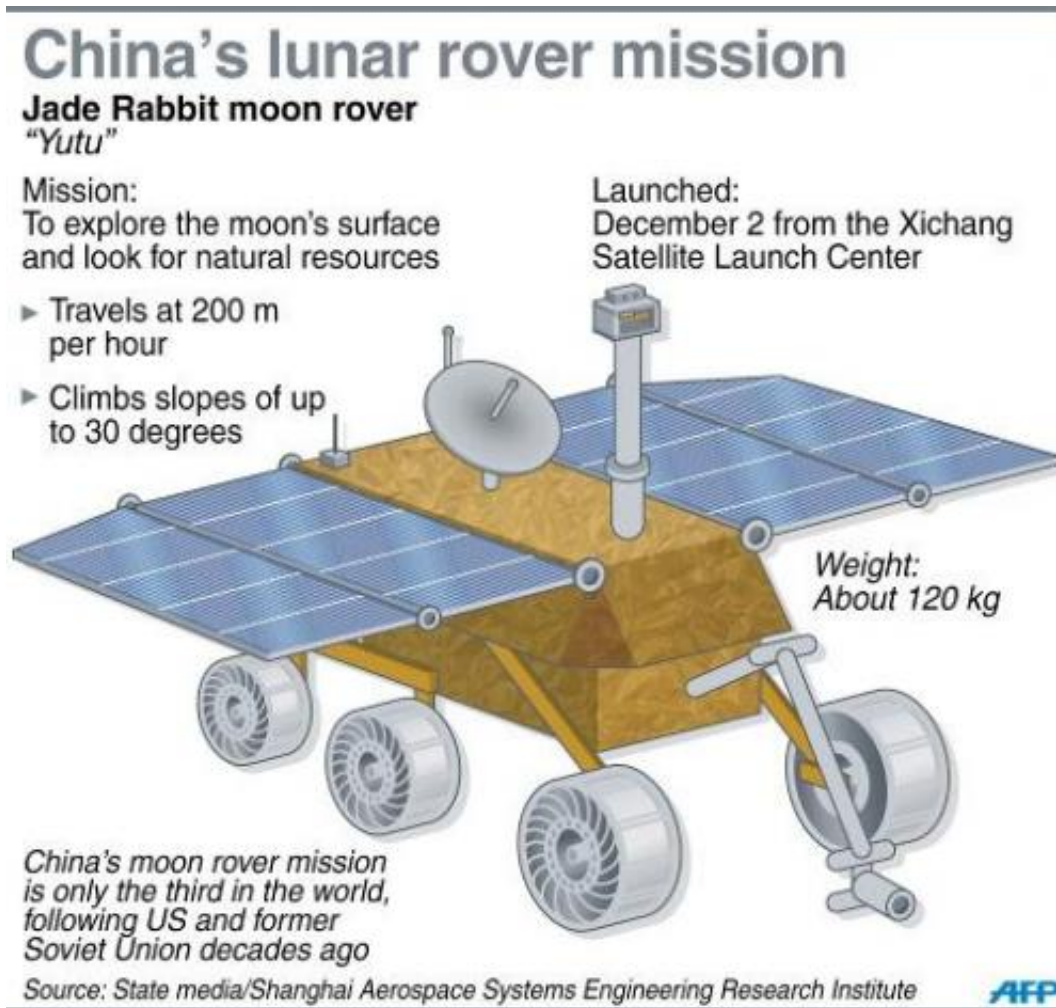


# Chinese moon rover designer shooting for Mars

July 4 2014



A graphic on China's lunar rover vehicle the Yutu, or Jade Rabbit

The man who designed China's Jade Rabbit moon rover hopes a more

advanced version of his creation will be sent to Mars, state media reported, underscoring Beijing's increasingly ambitious space programme.

Jia Yang also told the official Xinhua news agency of his despair when the [lunar rover](#) lost contact with Earth six weeks after it was deployed on the moon's surface.

He led the team that designed the Jade Rabbit, named Yutu in Chinese after the pet of Chang'e, the goddess of the moon in Chinese mythology.

"I hope before my retirement, the Chinese people can begin exploring Mars," Jia said in an interview released late Thursday.

"I hope we can send a rover better than Yutu to Mars."

The Jade Rabbit suffered a "mechanical control abnormality" on January 25 and lost contact with Earth, leading scientists to worry that it might not survive a bitterly cold 14-day lunar night.

"It's like that a monster is going to swallow you, while your mind is very clear, but you cannot move," Jia said of his feelings at the time. "We've done everything we can do. There is nothing else. Maybe it's time to say goodbye."

But [space](#) officials reestablished contact with Yutu in February, to the relief of domestic media and space enthusiasts.

China has declared the mission a "complete success", but mechanical problems have continued to plague Yutu and the most recent reports in May said the rover was gradually becoming "weakened".

Beijing sees the space programme as a symbol of China's rising global

stature and technological advancement, as well as the Communist Party's success in reversing the fortunes of the once-poor nation.

The landing—the third such soft-landing in history, and the first of its kind since a Soviet mission nearly four decades ago—was a huge source of pride in China, where millions across the country charted the rover's accomplishments.

China's military-run space programme has plans for a permanent orbiting station by 2020 and eventually to send a human to the moon.

A chief scientist told state media in 2012 that China planned to collect samples from the surface of Mars by 2030.

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