



China germinates first seed on Moon

Giant leaf for mankind!

That's one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind. Words said when Armstrong first stepped onto the Moon (20 July 1969).

Now the step was taken on the moon. A sprout has emerged after a cotton seed germinated onboard a Chinese lunar lander, scientists said.

"This is the first time humans have done biological growth experiments on the lunar surface," said Xie Gengxin, who led the design of the experiment, on Tuesday.

Harvesting food in space, ideally using locally extracted water, would mean astronauts could survive for far longer without returning to Earth for supplies.

In addition to cotton seeds, Chang'e 4 also carried potato seeds, yeast and fruit fly eggs to the moon, all of which are insulated inside a protective biosphere.

Images sent back by the probe show a cotton plant has grown well, but so far none of the other plants had sprouted, the university said.

