

Re: big ships (was Re: Cos-B: 30 Years On...)

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William C. Keel wrote:

Short form - in China, one group not only made policy but could define what was acceptably behavior for everyone else. Whereas in Europe in its age of exploration, the English, French, Italians, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch... didn't much care what the others thought they should be doing. Contemporary application is left as an exercise.

I have a book "The Genius Of China" that goes into the failure to exploit numerous technologies that were developed and used as parlor tricks and novelties on the part of China.

They developed a three axis-gimbal assembly; they use it to hold an oil lamp inside a perforated metal globe so that it stays upright no matter how it is placed...and that's as far as it goes.

They had toy hot-air balloons made out of paper since around 200 BC - it never occurs to them that if they make a big one they can put people aboard it.

They were playing around with bladed helicopter toys - the kind where you pull a cord wrapped around a stick, or rotate it quickly between your hands- since before 400 AD; that goes no place either.

They have a differential gear device; they use it in a novelty set-up where a wagon has a statue of the emperor on it that faces the same direction no matter which way the wagon turns on the road.

The whole thing is reminiscent of all those Greek inventions, such as water clocks, automatic door openers, and steam powered mechanisms like Hero's Aeolipile.

All the parts of the puzzle are there, and no one is bothering to put

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them together.

Pat

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