

Chinese inventions

The Ancient Chinese were famous for their inventions and technology.

Gunpowder, paper, printing, and the compass are sometimes called the Four Great Inventions of Ancient China. Kites were first used as a way for the army to signal warnings. Umbrellas were invented for protection from the sun as well as the rain. Other inventions include the wheelbarrow, iron casting, hot air balloons, seismographs to measure earthquakes, matches and stirrups for riding horses.

Here are some details of some inventions and discoveries made by the engineers and scientists of Ancient China:

Gunpowder

Gunpowder was invented in the 9th century by chemists trying to find the Elixir of Immortality. Not long after, engineers figured out how to use gunpowder for military uses such as bombs, guns, mines, and even rockets. They also invented fireworks and made great beautiful displays of fireworks for celebrations.

Chinese Rocket

After inventing gun powder, the Chinese began experimenting with the gunpowder-filled tubes. At some point, they attached bamboo tubes to arrows and launched them with bows. Soon they discovered that these gunpowder tubes could launch themselves just by the power produced from the escaping gas. This was the first rocket. The Chinese used rockets as weapons in their wars against the Mongols.

Silk

Silk was a soft and light material much desired by rich people throughout the world. It became such a valuable export that the trade route running from Europe to China became known as the Silk Road. The Chinese learned how to make silk from the cocoons of silkworms. They managed to keep the process for making silk a secret for hundreds of years.

Paper

Paper was invented by the Chinese as well as many interesting uses for paper like paper money and playing cards. The first paper was invented in the 2nd century BC and the manufacturing process was later improved around 105 A.D.

Printing

Wood block printing was invented in A.D. 868. This was actually hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in Europe.

The Compass

The Chinese invented the magnetic compass to help determine the correct direction. They used this in city planning at first, but it became very important to map makers and for the navigation of ships.

Boat Rudder

The rudder was invented as a way to steer large ships. This helped the Chinese to build huge ships as early as 200 A.D., well before they were ever built in Europe.

Project

Choose 4 Chinese inventions.

Write a sentence about it in your own words.

Explain why this invention helps us today.

Draw a picture for each.