

Johann Schreck Galileo's Friend in China

Learning Leaflet: 2-minute stories

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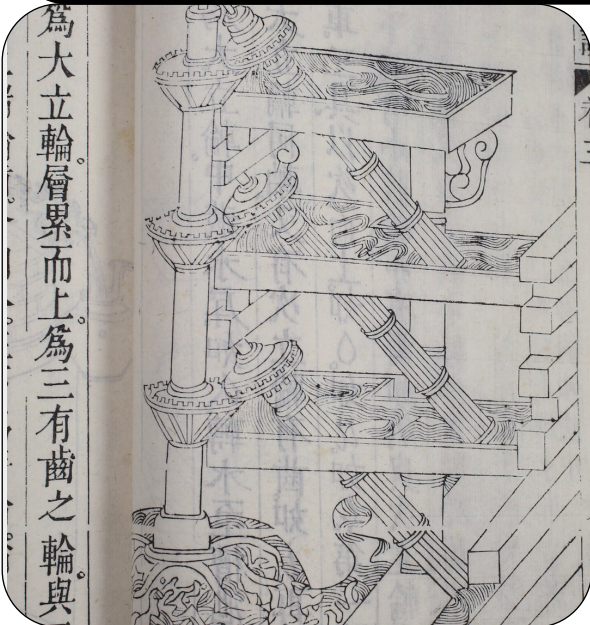


Johann Schreck, *Ensei kiki zuzetsu rokusai* (Japan, 1830; “Wonderful Machines of the Far West”)

Exhibit: Galileo's World | Gallery: Galileo and China, no. 2

Read more in the Exhibit Guide. Download learning leaflets: lynx-open-ed.org

How did knowledge spread in Galileo's world?



Johann Schreck: Galileo's Friend in China

During Galileo's early telescopic observations of sunspots, Johann Schreck assisted him. In 1611, at the villa of Federigo Cesi, Schreck observed the satellites of Jupiter through Galileo's telescope. Galileo was the 6th member invited to join Cesi's Academy of the Lynx; Schreck became the 7th the following week. Shortly thereafter, Schreck traveled with Galileo to Rome to demonstrate the telescope at the Villa Medici.

At this time, Nicolaus Trigault was traveling through Europe explaining the China mission of Matteo Ricci and soliciting the help of astronomers. In December of 1611, Schreck became a Jesuit in order to join Ricci and Trigault in China. Schreck prepared for the trip by collecting an extensive scientific library of approximately 7,000 volumes as well as a Galilean telescope. During the four-year journey to China, both on the ship and during a winter layover in India, Schreck tutored his fellow Jesuits in advanced astronomical techniques.

Once he arrived in China, Schreck wrote this engineering work, first printed as *Qi qi tu shuo* in 1627. This is the first edition printed in Japan, with Sino-Japanese notes and Japanese-style illustrations. As is evident from a comparison of the images, one of Schreck's sources for this work was a work by Agostino Ramelli on display in the gallery *Galileo, Engineer*.



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