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The Chinese goals in maritime activity were to rediscover and confirm what the emperor ruled indirectly and how he could bring the benefits of his policies to more of the world's peoples. He ruled indirectly by giving away porcelain as gifts which sent a powerful message because giving things away as gifts created moral allegiances and debts. In doing so, Emperor Yongle received gifts in return such as African giraffes. He also did exchanges for foreign goods which prompted private trading between China and the rest of Asia. This was interpreted as tribute asserting his empire's supremacy and place in society.

The Europeans goals in maritime activity were to cooperate with private merchants and states that were only interested by mercantile interests, influence other European hierarchies, and generate network wealth. Because they were successful in doing so, soon after all of Europe followed suit in this method. The explorations gave them a profit of gold and slaves.

China "discovering" Mexico and the Aztec Empire instead would've looked differently from the European discovery. China would have most likely built massive projects in the Mexico/Aztec Empire making it very grandeur to the eye. They'd most likely trade valuable goods with them to create an allegiance and debt with them to establish their dominance and superiority over them. This differs from the European discovery because the Europeans left mesoamericans with war, sickness, and death, leaving a bad taste in their mouths.