

SIRIUS
STAR

SÃO GABRIEL

10

TREASURE
SHIPS

SHIPS that Rocked THE World

LADY
PENRHYN

RAINBOW
WARRIOR

Gillian Richardson

Art by Kim Rosen

H.L.
HUNLEY



annick press
toronto + new york + vancouver

EXODUS
1947

KOMAGATA MARU

GRANMA

USS
SUSQUEHANNA

This one's for you, Dad—G.R.
For Sadie, Emily, Blake, and Dylan—K.R.

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Introduction

FOR AS LONG AS PEOPLE HAVE TRAVELED BY WATER, ships have been at the center of their stories. Some ships have even changed the world in surprising ways while sailing through human history.

From earliest times, people used ships to fish, travel, and trade, but because there weren't many good maps or tools for navigation, sailors tended to stay close to their own shores. Beginning in the 15th century, explorers set sail to learn about other cultures, gain wealth from trade, or conquer distant lands. When wars broke out in the 19th and 20th centuries, ships became vital instruments for combat. People displaced by wars often seek a better future in a different land, and even in peacetime they've relied on ships to take them to new homes.

Early exploration by sea helped people understand the world. Zheng He's **TREASURE SHIPS** sailed little-known routes from China

An old ship in port
in Genoa, Italy



at a time when few had traveled so widely. And when explorer Vasco da Gama's **SÃO GABRIEL** set out from Portugal, no one was sure if there was a way into the Indian Ocean around the tip of South Africa. Once travel became more common in the southern Atlantic, England began transporting convicts on ships like the **LADY PENRHYN** to build settlements in Australia. Then, in the 1800s, the United States showed its power at sea, sending the **USS SUSQUEHANNA** to Japan to push for more open communication and trade. Back at home, the embattled American South developed a unique weapon during the Civil War—the submersible **H.L. HUNLEY**—inspiring a new type of warship that made huge impacts in the First and Second World Wars.

The **KOMAGATA MARU** and **EXODUS 1947** both played key roles in helping people seek better and safer lives in new lands. In the 1950s, the **GRANMA** gave passage home to leaders of a revolution that would spark drastic change in a small island nation, and later pose a major threat to global security.

In the 21st century, the world has watched as determined groups of people have used ships to make a big impact. A ship called **RAINBOW WARRIOR** has become a crucial tool in the environmental revolution, while in the impoverished African nation of Somalia, people desperate to make a living sent a jolt through the global economy when they hijacked the oil tanker **SIRIUS STAR**.

Each of these 10 ships caught the world's attention, shining a spotlight on a larger piece of history. Read on to discover how events touched off by these sea journeys have sharpened our understanding of other countries and the people who live there, and of the struggles they've endured. The 10 ships you'll encounter are the source of far-reaching changes that continue to influence the lives of so many.

SHIPS VS. BOATS

What's the difference between a ship and a boat? The answer isn't simple. The term "ship" usually means a seagoing craft, while a boat sails on lakes or rivers. Also, ships are bigger: a ship is big enough to carry a boat. A mariner (sailor) will never call a ship a boat, so the best rule might be to call the ship (or boat) whatever the captain calls it!

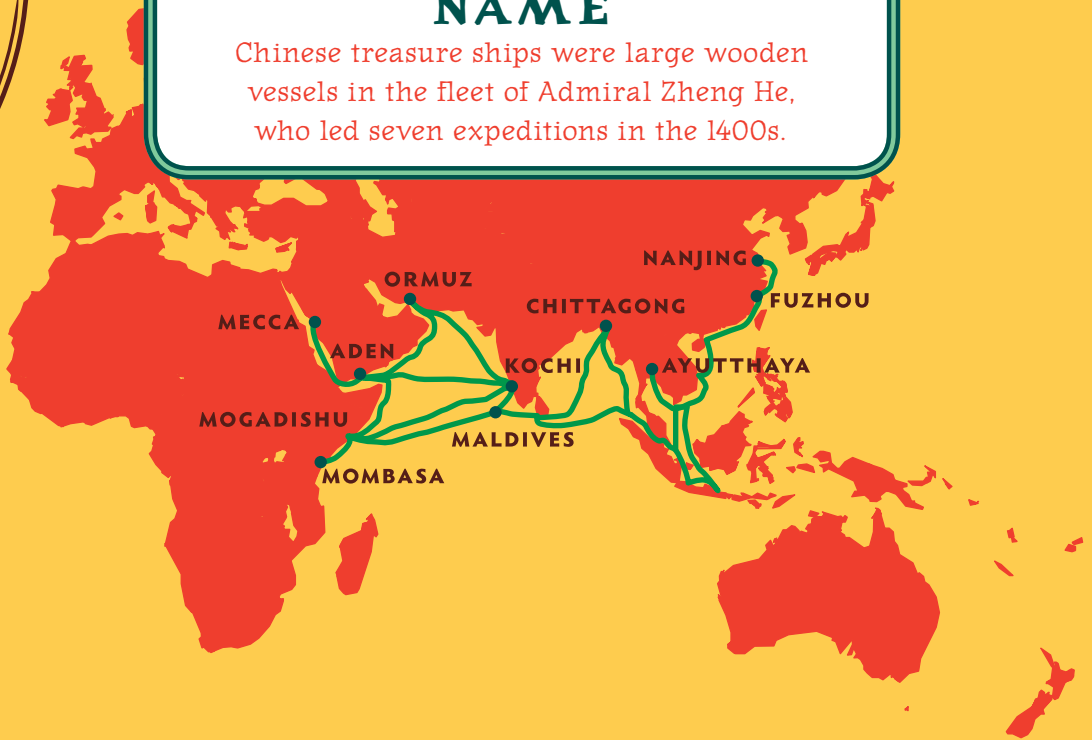


TREASURE SHIPS

Zheng He's Fabled Fleet

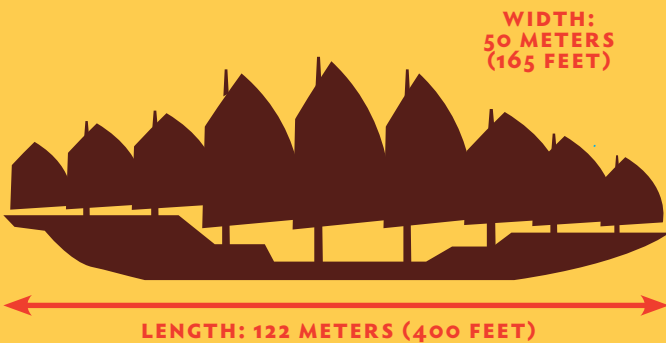
NAME

Chinese treasure ships were large wooden vessels in the fleet of Admiral Zheng He, who led seven expeditions in the 1400s.



DESCRIPTION

Treasure ships were huge—about half as long but almost twice as wide as the *Titanic*! Their astonishing size has been determined by examining pieces found in archaeological digs in the Nanjing dry docks. The fleet also included seven-masted supply ships; six-masted troop ships; five-masted warships; and smaller, faster oared warships, along with tankers carrying fresh water.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

After their seventh voyage, all the ships were destroyed, along with most plans and records of the journeys.

BUILT

Beginning in 1403 in Nanjing, China, at seven long dry docks (basins that are pumped dry to allow shipbuilding or repair) next to the Yangtze River. Up to 30,000 workers were involved in their construction, including carpenters, sail and rope makers, and ironsmiths.

CLAIM TO FAME

Columbus, da Gama, Magellan, and... Zheng He? The Chinese explorer might not be as famous as the others, but their fleets were dwarfed by his massive armada of treasure ships. His voyages, stretching from 1405 to 1433, extended China's influence across the Eastern world.





CHINA [1405]

Tai can barely stand still, so great is his excitement. He's been allowed to journey from his family's farm to the banks of the Yangtze River to be part of the crowd watching the departure of a magnificent fleet of ships. Musicians play, flags wave, people shout and laugh, and the summer sun sparkles off the water. Tai knows the huge ships are special, not just for their size and lavish decorations. He knows this expedition will show China's strength and riches to the world. What an impression the cargo of treasures will make! Of course he's joyful and proud.

But Tai's feelings are mixed. Today he has bid farewell to his father, a soldier sailing with the fleet. Tai might not see him again for two years, or more. As the eldest son, he has been entrusted to look after their farming family in his father's absence. He hopes he will be worthy of that trust.

Tai wishes he were old enough to go on the expedition too. He admires the great commander Zheng He for his courage and skill. What he wouldn't give to see the fabled lands he's heard stories about, to talk with their people and learn about their cultures! As he watches the ships set sail, he vows to work hard at the farming skills his father has taught him. Maybe there will be more expeditions, and Tai can be a soldier on one of those ships someday.



The Story of the Treasure Ships

WHERE CHINA'S YANGTZE RIVER FLOWS into the Pacific Ocean, an armada of 317 awe-inspiring ships, some of the largest and most elaborate ever built, proudly raised their sails and set out to sea. The year was 1405. Over the next 30 years, Commander Zheng He would lead six more expeditions, giving China authority over the Southeast Asian region. But the aim of these voyages was not to invade or conquer countries. Rather, China intended to show off the empire's extreme wealth, intelligence, and power. These grand adventures would leave a profound impression on the 15th-century world. But what inspired them in the first place?

China's Ties to the Sea

RECORDS OF CHINA'S HISTORY dating back to 1600 BCE show times of both war and peace with its neighbors. Because much of the country is bordered by ocean, deserts, and mountains, its leaders could choose how much contact to have with the outside world. Goods and ideas were exchanged with lands to the west over a difficult overland trading route called the Silk Road. But China was a seafaring nation, so its merchants also sailed to trading posts throughout Indonesia and India.

Many dynasties—kings or emperors belonging to the same family—have ruled China. In the late 13th century, aggressive northern invaders called Mongols, led by Kublai Khan, seized power. Eventually, though, the Mongol tribes were driven out, and the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) began to bring new order and economic prosperity to the country. Zhu Di, the third Ming emperor, wanted other countries to recognize China's superiority and magnificence. He planned to expand the country's trade by sea and bring back a traditional system called *tribute*. As part of the plan, China would show off its expertise in shipbuilding and sailing with a series of expeditions to Southeast Asian countries.



Emperor Zhu Di

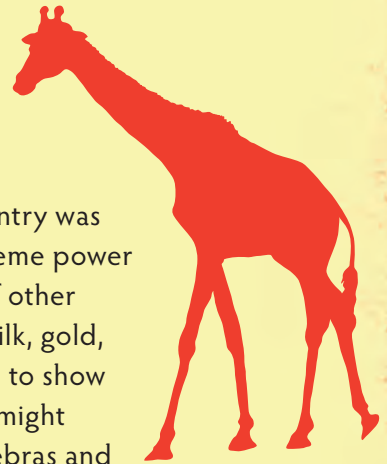


TRIBUTES

In centuries past, the Chinese believed their country was the center of civilization, and its emperor a supreme power whose authority came straight from heaven. So if other countries wanted to trade for China's wealth of silk, gold, and other luxuries, they first had to "pay tribute" to show their high regard for China's power. The tribute might be special gifts unique to their region, like the zebras and giraffes ambassadors brought from Africa. Gifts were respectfully presented by performing kowtow—kneeling and bowing the head to the floor. In return, the Chinese emperor would give valuables, permission to trade with China, and the promise of China's military protection if needed. Both sides gained: the traders got the goods

they wanted, and China's position in the world was continuously strengthened.

During the Ming dynasty, more than 100 countries sent ambassadors with tributes for the emperor.



Statue of Confucius in Shanghai, China

A Bold Plan with a Bold Leader

SOME DISAPPROVED OF Zhu Di's grand plans. Confucians, a powerful group that believed peace and harmony were all-important, feared too much foreign trade would unsettle the country. But the emperor's ambition could not be crushed. He chose his trusted general, Zheng He, to command the fleet. As a Muslim, Zheng He's knowledge of the Islamic religion and Arabic languages would help him convince foreigners that a close trading connection with China, the world's most powerful empire, was a good idea.



CONFUCIANISM

Confucius (551–479 BCE) was a philosopher whose ideas strongly influenced thought in China for over 2,000 years. Confucianism is based in peace and harmony and teaches that everyone should know his or her proper place. Rulers must be powerful but honorable and guide their people in a calm manner. They are accountable to heaven if their conduct is not correct.

Similarly, families were expected to work within the rules of their community and show consideration for the needs of others.

For instance, parents should protect their children, and a person should do his job well since his performance will reflect upon his family's good name.



The Voyage Begins

OCEAN WINDS BALLOONED the fleet's massive, brilliantly colored sails on that July day in 1405. As far as the eye could see, ships rode the waves, their bows pointed south along China's coast. Their destinations? Zheng He would spread his emperor's message of peace and order to Vietnam, then west to Siam (now Thailand), Malacca (in Malaysia), and Sumatra (in Indonesia). He would offer extravagant gifts to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Malabar, India. Among the riches were silk and porcelain, cotton, tea, fragrant oils, and majestic ceremonial clothing embroidered with dragons—the ancient Chinese symbol of power, representing the emperor. These treasures would be exchanged for tributes of precious tropical spices and foods, ivory, pearls, rare fragrant woods, exotic animals, textiles, and minerals, as well as other goods that China didn't have.

The fleet would cover around 6,000 kilometers (3,726 miles)—about the distance from New York to London—and would not return home for two years.

A puppet show depicting Zheng He

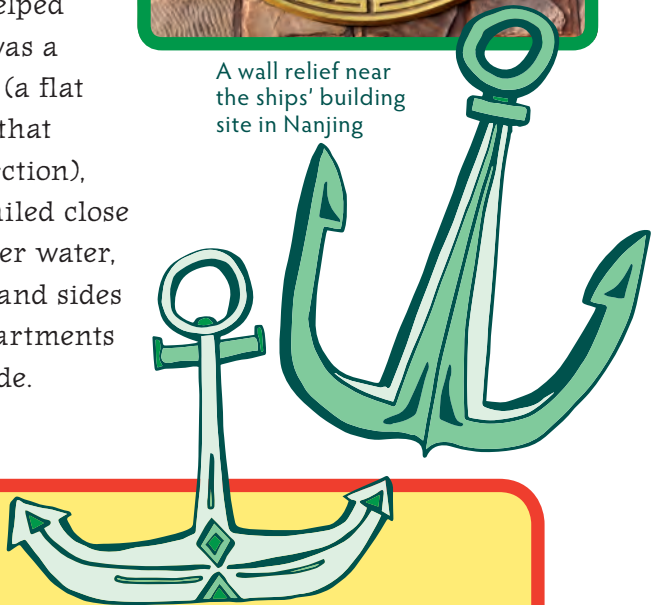


No Ships to Compare

AMONG THE 317 VESSELS in Zheng He's first fleet were at least four massive treasure ships, believed to be the largest ever built completely of wood. Unique Chinese craftsmanship meant there was no need for the iron supports normally used to strengthen such huge vessels. On each ship, 12 square red silk sails on 9 masts, staggered on several levels of decks, captured the wind efficiently. Enormous anchors on either side helped to steady the cumbersome ship. It was a marvel of originality for its rudder (a flat piece of wood at the back of a ship that is moved to change the vessel's direction), which could be raised if the ship sailed close to shore and lowered again in deeper water, and for its double hull (the bottom and sides of the ship), with water-tight compartments to protect the valuables stowed inside.



A wall relief near the ships' building site in Nanjing



BURIED TREASURE

Since most records of the treasure ships were destroyed long ago, how do we know their size? In 1962, a rudder was dug up during excavations of the dry docks in Nanjing where the ships were apparently built. Archaeologists believe that at 11 meters (36 feet) long, it had to have been made for a ship over 122 meters (400 feet) in length.

Treasure ship
replica in Nanjing



That kind of engineering wasn't seen in Europe until almost 400 years later. For a show of power, the ships carried 24 cast-bronze cannons, each with a firing range of about three city blocks.

The passengers—Ming dynasty officials, foreign-language translators, astronomers to study the stars for navigation, physicians, and others—sailed in regal style. Luxurious cabins opened onto hallways lined with windows and balconies. The prow (the front of the boat) had carved animal heads and dragon eyes to “guide” the fleet. The stern (the back of the boat) was decorated with symbolic dragon, phoenix, or eagle designs. The ships were brightly painted, with the bottom whitewashed up to a red waterline (where the surface of the water touches the side). Above that, a pattern of suns and moons circled the hull. Imagine seeing these incredible ships sailing toward you! You couldn't help but feel awe for the empire that displayed such splendor.

Taking Care of Every Need

MANY SMALLER SUPPLY VESSELS accompanied the treasure ships, carrying horses, tools, and materials to repair ships at sea, and food for an astounding crew of 28,000 seamen and workmen. Since the expedition might not touch land for weeks at a time, tanker ships carried fresh water to transfer to other ships while at sea. Navigators used compasses (invented in China, and first used around 1100 CE) and star maps to chart their course over the southern oceans.

Ships kept contact with each other using bells, drums, or gongs. Information could also be shared by using banners, flags, lanterns, or even carrier pigeons. Troop ships had soldiers on board. A number of smaller, faster warships could put the run to pirates with cannons that used gunpowder (invented in China around 900 CE). This show of force was only meant to discourage conflict, though, as Zheng He's primary mission was peaceful contact.

Pirates and Peace

BUT HUGE SHIPS carrying such wealth tempted bold pirates like Chen Zuyi, who had long prowled the narrow Strait of Malacca. He was one of the most feared pirates in the region, with 10 ships and thousands of men in his command, but met a costly end after pretending to surrender to Zheng He while actually preparing an attack. The story goes that a local spy revealed the foolish trick to Zheng He, and in the resulting battle, 5000 pirates were killed. Chen Zuyi was captured and held for execution back in China. The spy, on the other hand, was well rewarded for his loyalty to the emperor. He became the new ruler of the former pirate-controlled city of

