

Source: [KBhHIST201MingChina1500](#) [KBhHIST201MannMing](#)

1 | Ming China's Seafaring

Zheng He's Expedition: Famous official overseas official expedition

The Fleet

Hugely built ships:

- Dry docks @fact
- Precious metals
- High tech
 - Double hulls
 - Watertight compartments
 - Rustproofed nails
 - Mechanical pumps
- Zheng He's flagship was the largest ship ever constructed

The Guy

- Zheng He @fact
 - Captured from war
 - Supported a uncle-usurp-nephew coup
 - Put in charge of the sea expeditions

The Goals

- Viewed as way of announcing China's prowess @ [KBhHIST201MannMing](#)
- Sought tribute and coordination from other nations @fact
- Forced others to acknowledge Beijing
- Kept peace in the surrounding regions of the expedition
 - Subjugated a misbehaving Chinese enclave in Sumatra
 - Intervened in a civil war in Java
 - Invaded Sri Lanka
 - Wiped out Sumatran bandits
- Politically announced China's presence @ [KBhHIST201MannMing](#)
 - Sheer size of the ships scared the bejessus out of everyone
 - Added tribunes to China
 - Ships returned with great gifts/weird things
 - Giraffes — as... entertainment
 - A chief — for he did not acknowledge the emperor

The Expeditions

- Began 1405 ended 1433 @fact
- Traveled around much of the Indian Ocean => Southern Africa

The End

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- Became target in political infighting
- Son aligned with opposition party's ideas, cancelling the trips

The exact causes and reasons why this happened is still speculated. According to KBhHIST201MannMing (C. Mann's) 1500s Ming, this ending of the expedition marked a point at which China turned inwards from a trade perspective.

See KBhHIST201ChinasDeclineWRTZhengHe China's Decline w.r.t. Zheng He

#disorganized

- European => war power
- Zheng He => huge ships but mostly for trade
- China establishes tribute relations by getting others to acknowledge China's superiority and legitimacy => China's version of a trade treaty instead of actually trade ("trade" = "helping + tribute")
- Read: Cook Zheng He
- Decline of Zheng He could also be sacrificed between eunuchs vs. scholars
- No reason for China to have huge ships if they could just travel to Indonesia to get all the goods in the world