

Fleet and Wall 1405 -1435: The Zheng He expeditions and Ming Empire policy

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<A>.Introduction

Back in the 1420s, the expeditionary fleets of China's Ming Dynasty reached Australian shores. For centuries, the Chinese sailed across vast seas and settled down in what they call South Land, or today's Australia.[2]

These sentences are parts of a speech by the Chinese President Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) in the Australian Parliament on Friday morning, October 24, 2003. I watched the TV broadcast and made notes at the Australian National University. There were many Australian Chinese watching the presidential speech, too. At that time, the spectacular imperial fleets of Zheng He came to my mind, and one significant question as well - Why did the Ming Empire cease the expeditions of Zheng He? What obstacle was there to continuing the imperial fleets? Then I started my research.

The Republic of Singapore and overseas Chinese communities in Southeast

Asia are the most significant legacies of Zheng He's voyages. The historical site of Melaka in Malaysia perhaps is the most essential. While Ma Huan's book *Ying Ya Sheng Lan* has still not been translated into modern Chinese, there is already a good English translation and notes - checked against data from various countries. Admiral Zheng He is a great man in world history, not just Chinese history.

Relevant Chinese classical books of the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties carry implications of Sinocentrism, prejudice, territorialism, and a confusion between tribute and trade, which often distort the reality of history. My thesis uses resources from different countries to appraise historical works and documentations from the Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty, in order to analyze the real situation of international relations in the early Ming Period.

There are several explanations of the original chief motive for the expeditions of Admiral Zheng He. In my thesis I put forward an entirely new theory. Zheng He's voyage, I argue, included a secret military mission, and forty-nine considerations are used to support my interpretation.

What obstacle was there to continuing Zheng He's fleets? This is a significant question because this episode marked a turning point in Chinese history[3]. Zheng He's expeditions underlined the sophistication of Chinese navigation and shipbuilding technology. By 1500 the early Ming Empire was the most powerful and advanced nation of its time[4][5]. However, the Ming Empire, whatever the cause, then retreated from the ocean and China lost its position. In my thesis, I will discuss this question.

Notes:

[1]. This paper was presented to the 15th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia in Canberra 29 June-2 July 2004. It has been peer-reviewed and appears on the Conference Proceedings website by permission of the author(s) who retain(s) copyright. The paper may be downloaded for fair use under the Copyright Act (1954), its later amendments and other relevant legislation.

- [2].The Canberra Times. October 25, 2003.
- [3].Elvin, Mark. The Pattern of the Chinese Past. Stanford. Stanford University Press. 1973-1998. p203
- [4].Daniels, Patricia S. and Hyslop, Stephen G. Almanac of world history. Washington D.C.:National Geographic Society. 2003. P170
- [5].Kennedy, Paul. The rise and fall of the great powers - Economic change and military conflict from 1500 to 2000. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1992. Chapter one - Ming China.

.Allying with the Timur Empire to destroy the Mongol Empires.

I had studied history at Peking University, climbed different sections of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall, and visited the Forbidden City. I have travelled to Nanjing, Shanghai, Quanzhou, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. Singapore and Zheng He historical sites of Melaka in Malaysia were visited by me several times, they gave me much inspiration. Because twenty-nine considerations have been presented in English in Singapore, and I have limited space here, so only five considerations are presented.

1.Hormuz, Samarkand and Herat all belong to the Timur Empire, 1400-1447

Hormuz, Samarkand and Herat all belonged to the Timur Empire, and the Timur Empire controlled the whole of Persia from 1400 to 1447. Ma Huan's Ying Ya Sheng Lan, Fei Shen's Xing Cha Sheng Lan, Chen Cheng's Xi Yu Xing Cheng Ji, Xi Yu Fan Guo Zhi, Yan Cong Jian's Shu Yu Zhou Zi Lu and the Foreign Records of the Ming History which misread the reality. Zheng He's fleet visit to Hormuz was actually to visit the Timur Empire.

The period of Timurid government in Iran extends from 1405 to 1507.[1]

"Under his rule (1409-1447), it remained a coherent dominion of considerable extent in central Asia and the Near East.[2]

(1) The capital of the Timur Empire moved to Herat, not Samarkand

Shah Rukh (Timur's fourth son, 1405-1447) and his remarkable wife, Gawhar Shad, emerged as undisputed masters of an empire stretching from the Tigris River to the borders of the Chinese Ming Empire. From their capital at Herat they led a cultural renaissance by their lavish patronage of the arts, attracting to their court artists, architects,

philosophers and poets acknowledged today among the world's most illustrious.

Shah Rukh declined to move to Samarkand and conducted the government of the Timurid empire from Herat until his death in 1447. His eldest son was appointed governor of Samarkand. Thus during this time the capital of the Timurid Empire was at Herat - at present day west of Afghanistan. Its location is between Samarkand and Hormuz. From Hormuz to Herat was an important section of the silk road. Many exquisite examples of Timurid architecture remain in Herat today. Though ravaged by man and nature, they remain as glorious monuments to the artistic genius of their creators and an inspiration to all who view them. [3]

(2) 1405-1435, The Timur Empire was still quite strong

Under the reign of Shah Rukh, the Timur Empire was still quite strong and had quite high scientific and cultural achievements. It was so distant that its military forces could not threaten the Ming Empire, but it could confront the Oirat or Tartar Empire. Because the Timur Empire was strong, an alliance with the Timur Empire to destroy the Tartar and Oirat was a reasonable decision for the Ming Imperial government.

Notes:

[1]. Jackson, Peter. The Cambridge History of Iran, volume 6, The Timurid and Safavid Periods. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986. P98

[2]. Jackson, Peter. The Cambridge History of Iran, volume 6, The Timurid and Safavid Periods. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986. P104

[3]. Anderson, Ewan W Dupree, Nancy Hatch. The Cultural basis of Afghan nationalism. London: Pinter, 1990

2. The Timur Empire's language - Persian: the Sri Lanka Stele 1409.

Summary: Persian was used only in the Timur Empire at that time. Zheng He had still not been to any Persian area, but Persian is used in the Sri Lanka Stele in 1409. The stele has just three languages - Chinese, Persian and Tamil. It may be considered that the Timur Empire is the goal of Zheng He's voyage.

大明皇帝遣太監鄭和王貴通等昭告於佛世尊，同仰慈尊...惟錫蘭山介乎海南，言言梵刹，靈感翕彰。比者遣使詔諭諸番，海道口開，深賴慈佑，人舟安利，來往無虞。永惟大德，禮用報施。...永樂七年二月...謹施。[1]

(1) Persian was the Timur Empire's language

In 1409, on the second month, Admiral Zheng He set up the Sri Lanka Stele during his second voyage[2]. This stele was found in 1911, and now is preserved in the Sri Lanka Museum[3]. There is an interesting fact about this Stele. It uses three languages - Chinese, Tamil and Persian. Tamil is the local language. Why use Persian in Sri Lanka? I checked this with Indian, Sri Lankan and Iranian scholars at ANU. They agree that Persian was the Timur Empire's language and that Sri Lankan people did not understand this language.

(2) All the areas using Persian were ruled by the Timur Empire

During 1405-1435, Persian was used only in the Timur Empire. Or perhaps it could be said that all the areas using Persian were ruled by the Timur Empire. There was a small group called Parsees - Zoroastrians - who used ancient Persian (Parsee, one dialect of Persian, before Islam) in the western Indian subcontinent. They fled to India from Persia in seventh to eighth century for avoiding religious persecution from Muslims. However Parsee and Persian (after Islam) are different, this stele is written in Persian not Parsee. Besides, Admiral Zheng He has no reason to address this small group.

(3) If the inscription was addressed to Muslims, it should be in Arabic

The Chinese and Tamil inscription in this stele talk about the Buddha, but in the Persian inscription, this is changed to "Light of Islam". Sri Lanka was a Buddhist and Hindu country. Admiral Zheng He and his colleagues were Muslims. If the inscription had been written for themselves, it should have used Arabic not Persian. [4]

(4) In the Indian subcontinent has more than 20 important languages

In the Indian subcontinent there were more than 20 important languages at that time, but Persian was not among them[5]. Admiral Zheng He had visited countries speaking several different languages, including Thai, Malay, Burmese, Bangladesh, Arabic and Indis (Vietnam's writing was Chinese during that time), but they were not used in this Stele. One Chinese scholar says, "Persian was an international language at that time", I can not agree. Checking with Indian history, there was no "international language" at that time.

(5) In 1409 Zheng He's fleet had still not reached any Persian area

By the second month, 1409, Admiral Zheng He's fleet had still not been to any Persian area including Hormuz. However, Hormuz - the most important port of the Timur Empire was designated as a future destination in the next month (the third month) by Emperor Yongle. To return to China from Sri Lanka and send a report to Nanjing or Beijing, one month would have been necessary. Thus when Zheng He returned to Nanjing, almost immediately, Emperor Yongle designated Hormuz as the chief destination for the next voyage.

(6) The inscription of stele involves the authority of the Ming Emperor

The Sri Lanka stele and other steles of Zheng He are substantially different[6]. This stele speaks of the orders of Emperor Yongle, not of Admiral Zheng He. It makes clear that the Chinese Ming Emperor has dispatched Grand Eunuch Zheng He, Wang Guitong and so on to proclaim the Ming Empire's power and friendship to some particular audience.

(7) 1398 Timur invaded Delhi: his military capacity was famous in India

Because this stele uses the language of the Timur Empire - Persian - it may be considered that the stele intended audience is the emperor of the Timur Empire. In 1398, Timur's invasion through Punjab went as far as Delhi, where he massacred 100,000 Hindu citizens and pillaged the city. Such cruelty and strong military capability would become his trademark [7]. These events were well understood - 1409, only a few year later.

(8) Conclusion

Thus Admiral Zheng He's goal was alliance with the Timur Empire for a large-scale military action to destroy Mongol powers. The use of Persian on the stele is substantial evidence for this. The Persian inscription indicates that Zheng He wanted to take some message to the Timur Empire, and thus that the Timur Empire was the chief original destination of Zheng He's voyage.

Notes:

[1].鄭鶴聲.《鄭和遺事彙編》.台北.臺灣中華書局.1970. P90

據日人內藤虎次郎(Naito Torajiro) 所拓碑文。

[2].費信.《星槎勝覽 . 錫蘭山條》.[明朝].馮承鈞校注.北京.中華書局.1954.

「永樂七年皇上命正使太監鄭和等齎捧詔〔來力〕，金銀供器，彩妝織金寶幡，布施於寺。及建石碑，以崇皇圖之治。」

[3].This stele now is in the Sri Lanka National Museum in Colombo.

劉如仲.《鄭和下西洋》.北京.中華書局.1983. P22

1911年初在錫蘭加里城內克瑞普斯路拐角附近發現。碑石略帶綠色，高四尺五寸，寬二尺五寸，碑首為龍頭雕刻。

[4].Arabic being the language of the Koran and the Islamic faith in general.

[5].

List1 Languages of India

Hindi*	28 %
Telugu*	8 %
Bengali*	8 %
Marathi*	8 %
Tamil*	7 %
Urdu*	5 %
Gujarati*	5 %
Kannada*	4 %
Malayalam*	4 %
Oriya*	4 %
Punjabi*	3 %
Assamese*	2 %
Santali	1 %
Kashmiri*, Sindhi*	1 %
Sanskrit*	--
English*	--
Other	12 %

List2 Languages of Sri Lanka

Sinhalese*	66 %
Tamil	33 %
Other	1 %

[6]. For example:

< 鄭和行香先賢墓碑 > :

欽差總兵太監鄭和前往

西洋忽魯謨廝等國公

幹永樂十五年五月十

六日於此行香望靈

聖庇祐鎮撫蒲和日記立

< 鄭和法名碑 > :

大明國太監鄭和，法名福吉祥，發心書寫，金字金剛經，
觀音經，彌陀經，摩利支天經、天妃靈驗經，心經，楞嚴
咒，大悲咒，養勝咒，百字神祝永遠看誦供養

皇國永固 佛日增輝，凡奉○○○○

命於四方常均恩於○○○○○○○○

三寶自他祺利○恩有均霑吉祥如意者

永樂十二年三月吉日謹題

< 鄭和印度古里碑 > :

此去中國，十萬餘里，民物咸若

熙皞同情，永樂萬世，地平天成

< 鄭和印度柯枝碑 > 。

乃封可亦里為國王，賜以印章，俾撫治其民，

並封其國中之山為鎮國之山，勒碑其上，垂示無窮。

[7].Barnes, Ian. The history atlas of Asia. New York: Macmillan. 1998.

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3.Hormuz was designated by Emperor Yongle before 3rd voyage, 1409

Summary: Hormuz was designated by Emperor Yongle in the third month of 1409, before the third voyage of Zheng He. It is distant and Zheng He had not been there. Hormuz was an important port of the Timur Empire. Four months later, Qiufu 邱福 commanded 100,000 calvary, launching the first large-scale expedition to attack the Northern Yuan.

Regarding the present dispatch of Grand Eunuch Zheng He on an official affair to Hormuz and other countries of West Region. I order the use of Gantai? to move money and food for officers and soldiers. you and other people according to number for specifying and payment immediately, no delay.[1]

今遣太監鄭和往西域忽魯謨斯等國公幹，令用槓檣搬運錢糧官軍，爾等即便照數差撥，勿得稽延。 [1]

(1) In 1409, the Fleet had not visited distant Hormuz

In 1409, (the 3rd month of the 7th year of Yongle) Emperor Yongle sent an Imperial Edict to the Imperial son-in-law (Military Officer) in Nanjing - Song Biao 宋彪 and Commandant of Nanjing - Li Long 李隆, to prepare for the third expedition of Admiral Zheng He. In this year the Ming Imperial Fleet still had not visited Hormuz which was so distant, farther than from Spain to America.

(2) There is no mention of Hormuz in the Twenty-Three Histories

There are no records that Chinese had sailed to Hormuz before Zheng He in "Dynastic Histories". However before the imperial fleet departed from China for the third voyage, Emperor Yongle is designating Hormuz as the

chief destination. There is no mention of Hormuz in the "Twenty-Two Dynastic Histories". From the Record of History (Shi Ji) 史記 down to the Jin History 金史.

The first record concerning Hormuz is in the Yuan History 元史, just a single place name with other forty-five place names in a big area[2]. Of course, the "Records of Foreign Countries" 外國傳 in the "Twenty-Three Dynastic Histories" would be a significant reference for the Emperor Yongle.

The second record concerning Hormuz in the Twenty-Five Dynastic Histories is in the Ming History, in the 10th year of Yongle (1412) [3]. The third mention is in the 13th year of Yongle (1415) [4], which records the first tribute (trade) from Hormuz to the Chinese Ming Empire, and it is the first tribute from Hormuz in the Chinese official record in the whole of Chinese history.

(3) Hormuz, Herat and Samarkand all belonged to the Timur Empire

In reality, during this time 1405-1435, Hormuz 忽魯謨斯, Herat 哈烈 and Samarkand 撒馬兒罕 all belonged to an Empire - the Timur Empire or Timurid Dynasty. This fact was not understood until the early Qing Dynasty (Ming History), and some Chinese historian still have not understood this. It was possibly due to intentional misstatement because of the strategic considerations of the early Ming Period.

Because Emperor Yongle wanted to ally the Timur Empire to destroy Mongol powers and did not want to stimulate the Mongol cavalry empires - the Tartar and Oirat. The Ma Huan's book - Ying Ya Sheng Lan - intentionally misread the situation, let Hormuz, Herat and Samarkand be read as three different country. Other Chinese books followed this mistake.

(4) Why did Emperor Yongle use the two characters "official affair"?

Why did Emperor Yongle use the two Chinese characters "official affair" 公幹 ? The 1417 Quanzhou Stele of Zheng He uses the same expression. Why it did not say for tribute or trade?

(5) In the same year the first expedition of Emperor Yongle was launched

In the same year, just four months later (in the seventh month), the Duke of Qiguo - Qiufu 淇國公邱福 commanded 100,000 "Outstanding Cavalry" 精騎, launching the first large-scale expedition to attack the Northern Yuan Regime during Yongle Period. The next year, from 1410 to 1424, Emperor Yongle himself commanded five great desert expeditions. Of course, preparations for these expeditions would have required three or four years.

(6) Conclusion

Therefore, Emperor Yongle designated Zheng He going to Hormuz for "official affairs" in 1409, not just for tribute or trade. It was a more serious mission, in my opinion aiming at a secret military alliance - an activity corresponding to the northern military expedition.

Notes:

[1]. 《明成祖實錄》.卷九四?.永樂七年

鄭鶴聲.《鄭和遺事彙編》.台北.臺灣中華書局.1970. P91

[2]. 《元史 . 志第十五 . 地理六 . 西北地附錄 . 不賽因》

不賽因 (包含 46 地名)

八哈刺因 . 怯失 . 八吉打 . 孫丹尼牙 . 忽里模子 . 可咱隆 . 設刺子 . 泄刺失 . 苦法 . 瓦夕的 . 兀乞八刺 . 毛夕里 . 設里汪 . 羅耳 . 乞里茫沙杭 . 蘭巴撒耳 . 那哈完的 . 亦思法杭 . 撒瓦 . 柯傷 . 低廉 . 胡瓦耳 . 西模娘 . 阿刺模忒 . 可疾云 . 阿模里 . 撒里牙 . 塔米設 . 贊章 . 阿八哈耳 . 撒里茫 . 朱里章 . 的希思丹

．巴耳打阿．打耳班．巴某．塔八辛．不思忒．法因．乃沙不耳．撒刺哈歹．
巴瓦兒的．麻里兀．塔里干．巴里黑．

[3]. 《明史．列傳第二百十四．外國七忽魯謨斯》

忽魯謨斯，西洋大國也．自古里西北行，二十五日可至．永樂十年，天子以西洋近國已航海貢琛，稽顙闕下，而遠者猶未賓服，乃命鄭和齎書往諸國，賜其王錦綺、綵帛、紗羅，妃及大臣皆有賜．王即遣陪臣已即丁奉金葉表，貢馬及方物．十二年至京師．命禮官宴賜，酬以馬直．比還，賜王及妃以下有差．自是，凡四貢．和亦再使．後朝使不往，其使亦不來．宣德五年復遣和宣詔其國．其王賽弗丁乃遣使來貢．八年至京師，宴賜有加．正統元年附爪哇舟還國．嗣後遂絕．

[4]. 《明史．本紀第七．成祖永樂十三年》

是年，琉球山南、山北，爪哇西王，占城，古里，柯枝，南渤利，甘巴里，滿刺加，忽魯謨斯，哈密，哈烈，撒馬兒罕，火州，土魯番，蘇門答刺，俺都淮，失刺思入貢．麻林及諸番進麒麟、天馬、神鹿．琉球中山入貢者再．

4.Hormuz was chief goal; Zheng He's military role; Quanzhou Stele 1417

(1) Hormuz, mentioned on the Quanzhou stele, was a chief goal

Hormuz was the most significant goal of Zheng He's voyage. The Quanzhou Stele in 1417 has a clear inscription. Secondly, on the stele Zheng He is called General Military Commander, revealing his military role. Thirdly, Hormuz was always the first place in the Middle East for Zheng He's voyage.

The Imperial mandated General Military Commander Grand Eunuch Zheng He proceeding to Hormuz and other countries in the Western Ocean for official affairs, offers incense and prays for God's blessing on the 16th day, fifth month, fifteenth year of Yongle. Governor Fu Heri recorded this and set up the stele.[1]

欽差總兵太監鄭和前往

西洋忽魯謨廝等國公

幹永樂十五年五月十

六日於此行香望靈○

聖庇祐鎮撫蒲和日記立 [1]

In 1417, the Quanzhou Stele of Zheng He was set up, it has an inscription recording that Admiral Zheng He's mission is to go to Hormuz and other countries in the Western Ocean, for official missions. In 1420, Emperor Yongle ordered some military officers to upgrade their ranking because they had visited Hormuz.[2] It was very clear that Hormuz was the main destination. This means that the Timur Empire was the chief goal.

(2) On the stele, Zheng He is called General Military Commander

Admiral Zheng He is called - "General Military Commander" in this stele. This underlines the military role of Zheng He. This was a military mission, not a commercial mission.

(3) Hormuz was always the first destination in Middle East

From the third voyage of Zheng He, every expedition went first to Hormuz, before going to other places in the Middle East.[3] Why is Hormuz given such an important place? [4] It was not a small country at that time[5], but a city in the Timur Empire, which in Iran extends from 1405 to 1447.[6]

Notes:

[1].福建省泉州.<鄭和行香先賢墓(回教)碑>

[2].《明成祖實錄》.卷二二五.永樂十八年

永樂十八年五月辛未，命行在兵部，凡使西洋忽魯謨斯等國回還官旗二次至四次者，俱升一級。於是升龍江左衛指揮朱真為大寧都指揮僉事，掌龍江左衛事。水軍右衛指揮使唐敬為都指揮僉事。[2]

[3].陳炎.《海上絲綢之路與中外文化交流》.北京.北京大學出版社.1996-2002.

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[4].費信.《星槎勝覽》：「宣德六年，隨正使太監鄭和等往諸番，直抵忽魯謨斯等國，開讀賞賜。至宣德八年回京。」

[5].Personal conversation with Australian National University, Faculty of Arts, Iranian scholar Dr. Seyed Torabi.

This is a substantial key question. Many Chinese records exist serious mistakes. For example, 《瀛涯勝覽》, 《星槎勝覽》, 《殊域周咨錄》 and 《明史》 and son on. They put Samarkand 撒馬兒罕 and Hormuz 忽魯謨斯 becoming two countries. 《明史》外國傳, includes 撒馬兒罕傳 and 忽魯謨斯傳.

My explanation is that the mistakes are based on an intention to mislead. They were all misled by 馬歡《瀛涯勝覽》 and 費信《星槎勝覽》. Because Zheng He's voyage was a secretary military mission, they want to ally with the timur Empire without the Mongols knowing. 明朝

黃省曾著《西洋朝貢典錄》自序：「西洋之跡，著自鄭和」。

[6].Jackson, Peter. The Cambridge History of Iran, volume 6, The Timurid and Safavid Periods. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1986. P98

5.Marco Polo's sea route. Persia and Yuan China were allies

(1)Marco Polo's routes: Hormuz to Beijing, land, Beijing to Hormuz, sea

Between 1271 and 1295, Marco Polo went from Venice to Hormuz, then from Hormuz through Central Asian cities such as Shibarghan and Balkh - very close to Samarkand[1], then went to Beijing by land.[2] Marco Polo went from Beijing via Nanking and neighboring cities to Quanzhou, then from Quanzhou through the Singapore strait to Hormuz by sea, then returned to Venice.

He convoyed the Yuan Dynasty princess Kuokuozhen 闊闊真 to the Il-Khan Empire, landing at Hormuz[3]. The Il-Khan Empire was established by Hulagu 旭烈兀, elder brother of Kublai Khan[4]. Thus from Hormuz he went to Samarkand, then from Samarkand to Beijing, and from Beijing to Hormuz by sea. There is nothing extraordinary about this route. In reality, Marco Polo's sea route and Admiral Zheng He's were very similar.

(2) Persia and Yuan China were allies in Marco Polo's period

When Kublai Khan called himself the Great Khan of all the Mongols, the other four Khanates did not all agree. The Khan of the Ogodei Empire refused to recognize it. Civil war broke out. The Khan of the Chagatai Empire and the Khan of the Golden Horde Empire supported the Khan of the Ogodei Empire (Kublai Khan and these three Khans were cousins). Only Il-Khan (in Persia) supported Kublai Khan.

So the situation became that Yuan China and Persia were allies confronting the other three Khanates in Central Asia and South Russia. Emperor Yongle would have known this history. The chief original motive of Zheng He's voyage - allying with the Timur Empire to confront the Northern Yuan - the purpose is similar to that of the mission of Marco Polo. Both targets were the capitals of Persian countries, going to Hormuz by sea, then going to the capital by land.

(3) The situation of West Asia was understood in the early Ming period

The Yuan History (Yuanshi) was written in the early Ming Period. According to the record of the Yuan History. In the seventh year of Yuan Taizu (Ghengis Khan), the army of the Mongols had intensively looted the Arab Empire. In the third year of Yuan Xianzong, Hulagu commanded troops to conquer the West Region - Caliphate, Baghdad and other countries. Thus the situation of West Asia was understood in the early Ming period.

Notes:

[1].From Hormuz, via Shiraz, Mashhad, Samarkand, Kokand, Turfan to Dunhuang was the famous "Silk Road".

Philip's Atlas of World History. London: George Philip. 1999. P104

[2].Polo, Marco, 1254-1323? tr. and ed. with notes by Sir H. Yule. The book of Ser Marco Polo the Venetian concerning the kingdoms and marvels of the East. London: J. Murray. 1903. Edition 3rd. Vol.1. P108, P145

Polo, Marco, 1254-1323? The travels of Marco Polo. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987. (translated [from the Italian] and with an introduction by Robert Latham) has same data.

馬可波羅.《馬可波羅遊記》.中譯本.呼和浩特.遠方出版社.2003. Map.

[3].元朝資料：至元二十七年(1290)派遣90人使節團，「取道馬八兒(印度南部)往阿魯渾大王(伊兒汗國可汗)位下」，出自《經世大典·站赤》，見

《永樂大典》卷一九四一八，此和《馬可波羅遊記》相符合。

[4]. 《元史·宗室世系表·睿宗皇帝》

睿宗皇帝，十一子：長憲宗皇帝，次二忽都，次三失其名，次四世祖皇帝，次五失其名，次六旭烈兀大王，次七阿里不哥大王...

[5]. 《元史·本紀第一·太祖十七年》

十七年壬午春，皇子拖雷克徒思、匿察兀兒等城，還經木剌夷國，大掠之，渡撈撈闌河，克也里等城，遂與帝會，合兵攻塔里寒寨，拔之。

[6]. 《元史·本紀第三·憲宗三年》

夏六月，命諸王旭烈兀及兀良合台等帥師征西域哈里發八哈塔等國，又命塔塔兒帶撒里、土魯花等征欣都思、怯失迷兒等國。

<C>.The Great Wall replaced the Imperial Fleets.

1.Surrounded by the colossal empires of Ghengis Khan

In 1368, Emperor Hongwu drove the Mongols back to Mongolia and founded the Ming Empire. He guarding against Mongol incursions and aiming to rule like the splendid Tang Empire. However the shadow of Ghengis Khan still covered the new Dynasty.

Emperor Shun left Yuyang to the north and moved around in the deserts. He restored the former capital, with its old possessions intact. The Yuan dynasty had "fallen", but in truth it had never begun to fall.

順帝北出漁陽，旋與大漠，整復故都，不失舊物，元亡而實未始亡。 [1]

The Emperor Hongwu's concerns were fixed on the northern deserts, and his attention never slackened for a single day.

高皇帝憂在漠北，意未始一日釋也[2]

The 14th century was the Mongol century in world history[3]. In the 15th century, the influence [4] of Ghengis Khan's gigantic, cruel empire and its conquests still remained. The Ming Empire was surrounded by the great empires that were the legacy of Ghengis Khan. The heirs to his empire were still a serious threat to the Ming dynasty.

Notes:

[1]. 《明史紀事本末》卷十，故元遺兵。

[2].談遷.《國權》.[明朝].張宗祥校點.北京.古籍出版社.1958

[3].O'Brien, Patrick K. .Oxford - Atlas of World History. New York: Oxford University Press. 2002. 13th century.

[4]. 《元史》. 《元太祖紀》. 十七年壬午. 經過木剌夷國，進行大規模虜掠。

2. Moving the capital to Beijing for northern defense

Moving the capital from Nanjing to the Beijing was just a step in the process of transferring resources north for national security. Except for the spectacular expedition of the fleets led by Zheng He, the actual orientation of the Yongle emperor was to the inner Asian land frontier and China's fierce opponents on the Mongolian plateau. Nothing demonstrates that more clearly than his decision to transfer the capital to Beijing. Many reasons have been given for this decision, including:

1. Northern frontier's defense[3]
2. Returning to the city that had been the capital under the Jin and Yuan dynasties.[3]
3. Returning to the site of his former principality.[3]
4. Managing the reaction to his usurpation and regicide.[4]
5. Recognition that the capital of a united and strong China had usually been in the north.

All these may have been contributing reasons, but undoubtedly the primary reason was northern defense. With more than 900,000 troops permanently on the northern frontiers[5], how could the capital of the Ming empire be located in the South? The Emperor Hongwu had conducted wars in the desert. What had been the real situations there? The answer must be "terrible casualties". More than 100,000 soldiers from the Ming empire died in these wars.[6] If Fang Xiaoru 方孝儒 [7] has been much admired by historians for his self sacrificing nobility, what are we to say about these 100,000 soldiers sacrificed under the early Ming? They died in the service of their emperor and defending their country. Everyone of them are their country's heroes.

Emperor Yongle was obsessed with the northern borders. By

placing his capital within the zone exposed to the steppe, he could at all times oversee its problems and take immediate action against them.[8]

Notes:

[1].《太宗實錄》.卷一二八.永樂十四年十一月.壬寅.

六部都察院等官上疏。

[2].《太宗實錄》.卷二三一.永樂十八年十一月戊辰.

永樂下詔。

[3].南炳文,湯綱.《明史》.上海.上海人民出版社. 2003. P135

[4].張奕善.《朱明王朝史論文輯-太祖,太宗篇》.台北.國立編譯館.1991.

P280

[5].My calculation.

[6].My calculation.

[7].Fang Xiaoru (方孝儒) 1357 - 1402

[8].Mote, F.W. .Imperial China 900-1800. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 2003. P619

3.Delay - three incidents delayed Zheng He's next voyage

The duty of defending Nanjing is not light, so you need not go to Beijing on ceremony. Every thing should be consulted about with the Grand Eunuch Commandants - Zheng He and Wang Jinghong. Day and night carefully manage the troops, and organize the garrison meticulously to prepare against incidents. Emphasize discipline among the officers and soldiers, bringing stability to the military and civilians alike, so as to fulfill important duties of the state.

守備南京厥任匪輕，其免赴京朝賀。凡事同守備太監鄭和、王景弘計議，晝夜用心，整肅軍伍，嚴固守備，審察機微，以防不虞。戒戢將士務循禮法，使軍民皆安，以副國家委任之重，欽哉。 [1]

From 1427 to 1430 the Annam War of the Ming Empire entered a decisive period. The "Western ocean expedition forces" were appointed to join the Annam War[2]. In my judgment, the three emperors all trusted Admiral Zheng He and his "Western ocean expedition forces". The delay of the next ocean expedition occurred because of just three reasons .

1. Emperor Yongle had died in the desert expedition.
2. The rebellion of "the King of Han" had to be countered.
3. There was war between Annam and the Ming Empire.

Notes:

[1]. 《明宣宗實錄》卷二十,洪熙元年六月辛亥條

[2]. 《明宣宗實錄》卷二十六,宣德二年三月

「武昌護衛官軍一千人，成都護衛一千二百人，南京原下西洋精銳官軍一萬人，中都留守司、湖廣、浙江、河南、山東、廣東、福建、江西、雲南、四川都司并福建、四川行都司官軍三萬三千人從安遠侯柳升、黔國公沐晟等征交趾。 [1]

4. Start of large-scale construction of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall

In 1434, After a series of military engagements, the Tuohuan defeated and killed Alutai. China now faced a strong, unchallenged Mongol group on its borders and encountered

difficulties in employing the policy of divide and rule.[1]

Yuan people returned to northern, and often wanted to restore their empire. Since the first year of Zhengtong (1435), the threat from the enemy grew greater.[2]

元人北歸，屢謀興復。正統以後，敵患日多。[2]

In the winter of this year, the Duke of Chengguo Zhu Yong reported: "Recently, the Oirat Tuohuan used military force to pressure the Tartar Duoerjibale. I am worried that if he annexes this area he will become stronger. I request that all frontier forces be ordered to prepare and provision themselves comprehensively in case of incident." Emperor Yingzhong congratulated him and accepted the advice.[3]

是冬，成國公朱勇言：「近衛喇特托歡以兵迫逐韃靼多爾濟巴勒，恐既吞併，日益強大，乞敕各邊廣儲積以備不虞。」上嘉納之。[3]

The last expedition of Admiral Zheng He ended in 1433. According to my statistics, 98% of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall was constructed between 1434 and 1644, and enormous resources were transferred from the southern to the northern frontier. (I intend to present more work on this point) Thus it could be said that the great oceanic expedition of Admiral Zheng He was brought to an end by the northern crisis of the Ming Empire, and the Ming Dynasty Great Wall replaced the Ming Dynasty Imperial Fleets.

Notes:

[1].The Cambridge History Of China - the Ming Dynasty 1368-1644 Part2.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998. In the section, "The Ming and Inner Asia" Written by Morris Rossabi. P232.

[2].《明史》卷九一 . 兵志三 . 邊防

[3].夏燮.《明通鑒》.[清朝].改革出版社.1994. P734

5.Horses - the key to the northern defense of the Ming Empire

Mongol grew up on horseback, hunting, playing and fighting from the backs of their tough, grass-fed mounts. A mounted Mongol was a formidable force, a superb cavalryman. However if they down to the ground, they will be same with the Ming army in fighting capacity. This is the reason why the Great Wall was effective. Existing an interesting detail; soldiers could climb the Great Wall by rope or ladder but living horses are very difficult to move passing the Great wall, especially, if the quantity is too great.

Our Empire from Liaodong in the East to Gansu in the west stretches over more than 6,000 Li. We have only 100,000 horses suitable for warfare. In the area around Beijing, there are no more than 20,000. If we were to encounter a cavalry force of 100,000, the most famous generals of ancient times would find such an engagement difficult! Even though we have infantry forces, we can merely use them interspersed with our cavalry to buttress our strength on the field. If we were to try to mount a pursuit to the north to capture enemy forces, it would be impossible. Now our lack of horses means that if the nomads mobilize their cavalry in the hundreds of thousands their military superiority will be total. Throughout history, the steppe people have long been the greatest threat to China.[1]

我朝自遼東至於甘肅，東西六千餘里，可戰之馬僅得十萬，北平之外馬悉數不過二萬，若逢十萬之騎，雖古名將亦難野戰，縱有步軍，但可夾馬以助聲勢，若欲追北、擒寇則不能矣！今吾馬數少，胡人上馬，動計十萬，兵勢全備。自古及今，胡虜為中國患久矣。[1]

The horse was the key to why the Ming Empire could not win the war with the Mongols, and keep the peace completely. Thus enormous resources had

to be put into the northern frontier. This was inevitable. In the Asian continent there were three important breeds of horse: the Mongol, Manchu and Arab breeds. Mongol and Manchu horses just enjoying the cold or cool climate. Because of geography, the summer seasons were too hot for breeding Mongol and Manchu horses in Ming Chinese territories, so the Chinese Ming empire was ineffective at producing horses. This factor led to the Ming army's difficulties in face of the cavalries of the Mongols and Manchus. It was a cruel reality of history. This is another point on which I plan more detailed research.

Notes:

[1]. 《明太祖實錄》 P3658.

亦見於談遷. 《國權》 [明朝]. 張宗祥校點. 北京. 古籍出版社. 1958.

卷十, P775

<D>.Conclusion

The country of Aborigine: >From Vietnam south past Java and Timor by sea, one arrives at this country. Its territory needs four months to walk from east to west, and forty-five days from south to north. The countrymen are familiarly with throwing boomerangs, the size of a mirror, with a hole in the center and an edge like a saw. From distance to throw people never miss.[1]

婆利國，自交趾浮海，南過赤土、丹丹，乃至其國。國界東西四月行，南北四十五日行。……國人善投輪刀，其大如鏡，中有竅，外鋒如鋸，遠以投人，無不中。[1]

According to the Suishu 隋書, in the Sui period (AD589-618) the Chinese had some knowledge of a huge land, to the south of Annam, whose people were familiar with throwing something which perhaps could be boomerangs. Might this be Australia? More evidence would be needed to prove this. My translation is just for reference. Singapore - as an overseas Chinese state - is the greatest heritage[2] of Zheng He's voyage for the Chinese in my opinion [3]. However if the expedition of Zheng He, after reaching present-day Singapore, had changed direction to Australia or had the voyages continued, the overseas Chinese state might not be just Singapore, but the much larger Australia.

In China, Emperor Yongle died in 1424, but Admiral Zheng He still went on his last expedition which lasted till 1433, after which the splendid imperial fleet was abandoned. In Portugal, between 1424 and 1434, Prince Henry paid Portuguese sailors to explore the coast of Africa, and built a school of navigation at Sagres in Portugal, to train sailors for further expeditions. After he had dispatched 15 ships, one finally rounded Cape Bojador in 1434. After this event, the pace of exploration increased. Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1487, and Columbus discovered the West Indies in 1492. Then Europe dominated the ocean, and China lost its opportunity forever.

In 1444, invading Thai armies forced the Khmer to abandon the superb Angkor Wat. From then on Cambodia was conquered by the Thai kingdom of Siam. In 1453, the final fall of Constantinople ended the 1000 years of the great Byzantine Empire (the East Roman Empire). These two once brilliant civilizations disappeared forever. In 1449, the Ming Empire almost faced the same fate. Because, however, more resources had been put into the northern frontier, including the construction of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall, the Ming Empire still flourished for a considerable period.

The Ming Empire's obsession with defending the northern frontier against the threat of Mongol incursions seriously limited its capacity to respond to opportunities elsewhere.[4]

The Great Wall is an echo of imperial glory. It could be said, however, that ironically, the Ming Dynasty Great Wall was the great obstacle to continuing the Ming Dynasty's Imperial Fleets. Because of the serious northern defense crisis, the great southern maritime opportunity was lost forever. Only one thing may console us. Recently, China has expanded its relations with the outside world through trade, and the well-known writer on the fate of nations - Paul Kennedy - has forecast that the gross national product of China will again become the world's largest in 2040 [5]. Of course, China needs more investment in education and economic construction for this opportunity to be realized.

There exists a link between the serious threat from the north border and the abandonment of Admiral Zheng He's voyages. Between the northern crisis and the Southern opportunity the Ming Imperial government attended to the north. That was a reasonable decision. However this decision has had a enormous consequences. Europe had its Industrial Revolution earlier than China, in part at least because of its continuous maritime development.

I summarize my conclusions below.

1.The original chief motive of Admiral Zheng He's voyage was a military

alliance with the Timur Empire for the purpose of destroying "the North Yuan" - the Tartar and Oirots empires.

2.The continual serious threat from the Mongol Empires' Khans, meant that for reasons of national security, the resources of the Ming Empire moved to the north, and this brought an end to the expeditions of Admiral Zheng He.

3.The construction of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall replaced the expeditions of the Ming Dynasty Imperial Fleet.

4.The critical requirements of Northern Defense had a comprehensive impact on the development of the politics, economy and culture of the Chinese Ming Empire.

Note:

[1]. 《隋書》卷八十二 <南蠻列傳 . 婆利 >

This connection is suggested by Menzies, Gavin. 1421 - The year China discovered the world. London: Bantam. 2003. P202.

[2].吳振強.《東南亞史綱》.新加坡.青年書局.1966. P152.- 「鄭和七下西洋後 , 華人更大批的南來。」

[3].I hope to expand on this point and provide more support in my future research.

[4].Mote, F.W. Imperial China 900-1800. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 2003. P693

[5].Paul Kennedy. "Dreaming with BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China): The Path to 2050". Quoted in "Awakening giants tipped to tilt balance of world power", in The Australian, November 24 2003. P19

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