

Marco polo vs. zheng he essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Both Marco Polo and Zheng He were excellent world navigators in their time. However, Zheng He's voyages and travels were much better and more important because they had much more of a profound impact on the world. His expeditions caused much more prominent change in China, directly and indirectly, than Marco Polo's did in Western Europe. Zheng He's voyages largely helped educate Ancient China as well as establish it's a world power ahead of its time. Because of these voyages, he also led to much downfall in Chinese success later on in Ancient China.

Marco Polo, while much more famous, only told the western world about all of the experiences on Ancient Trade routes. It is possible that of Marco Polo's writing was embellished and not accurate to certain areas. Zheng He's voyages were more meaningful because they were commissioned by more important people and his work would change the world landscape much more. As a teenager, Marco Polo traveled many years and much distance away from his native Italy. He must have been intellectual beyond his age because he left behind a comprehensive recollection of his travels which became a de facto guide for Europe on Asian regions.

As a teenager traveling with his father and uncle(s), Marco Polo got to travel the world and learned of traditions and societies throughout. He left Venice, Italy and went across the Mediterranean Sea and into present day Saudi Arabia. There was able to meet many Middle Eastern merchants and African merchants. He traveled the Silk Road extensively and went all through out China. He also dipped into Southeastern Asia (India and Indonesia). He was one of the first to provide extensive written accounts of the progressive Chinese Empire to Europe.

It is said he and the Chinese emperor Kublai Khan were amiable with each other. Historians debate if Marco Polo's writing is accurate because his description at the time does not include major things occurring like the Great Wall of China. Some records do not hold up his claims. Marco Polo's family was no more than a merchant's family and probably only had the basic technologies for the time. Zheng He was an ex-slave who through association with a prince became a man of power. He was named in charge of a large maritime expedition. He was given a massive fleet with hundreds of ships and several thousands of men.

Because the trips were government funded and of high importance, He also had the latest maritime technologies such as better Astrolabes, Compasses and Sails. He commanded his fleets into Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East and Eastern Africa. At this time he and his convoy engaged in commerce with many different kinds of people. They also used their voyages as a chance to flex their muscle and show off how far ahead they were in the world. Zheng He's voyages proved to a large portion of the world that China was the most advanced society on the planet.

In terms of size and technology, Zheng he's voyage was far superior. Both the experiences of Marco Polo and Zheng He are considered major historical travels. However, when they each returned Zheng He's accomplishments were more lauded and important than Marco Polo's. That is only natural because Zheng He was part of a large government operation while Marco Polo was just a merchant unrecognized by the majority in Europe. However, even after Marco Polo's book became publicized and oft-read, most of

Ancient Europe did not believe his stories until quite some time after his death.

His recollections were never adopted as truth by any government and were never consulted when making decisions regarding foreign affairs in Asia by any nations. Among European merchants, Marco Polo was more respected and merchants heeded his advice and used his wisdom from his book. In Ancient China, Zheng He's results were well received by the current government. He brought many new items and goods to support his case. Zheng He's expedition was regarded as a success by China. His goods were fascinating. For a while, the relationships that he established led to much more trade.

His new information and discoveries stimulated new developments in an already over achieving China. His results were taken very seriously by the government and its people. His mission and its results galvanized change in his society. However, down the road Zheng He's voyages came to have a negative effect on the world. Among one of the things observed was that china was not only superior, but far superior to the rest of the world in technology and especially maritime technology. When the Yongle Empire's rule ended, the new rulers of China were paranoid about their naval success.

They didn't want anyone stealing their strategies and technologies. So they discontinued the fleet and destroyed what they already had. Within a hundred years China went from the leading navy in the world to a nonexistent one. They got rid of their advantages, became isolationists and stopped looking to interact with other nations. All that flowed from Zheng

He's discovery of Chinese superiority. However, all of Zheng He's expeditions tremendously affected China and therefore the rest of the know world. In contrast, Marco Polo's travels had a lesser effect on the world.

In a world where merchants led interactions between countries, both the treks of Marco Polo and Zheng He were centralized on trade. They were both able to have an effect on the world economy during their life and even after their death. As a merchant himself and traveling with a family of merchants, they were able to have a minor impact on the world economy by trading throughout. However, when Travels was released, it had its own impact on the economy. In society as a whole, the book was believed to be too far fetched.

But to merchants, especially those who had heard of the Polo clan, they took it for its worth and by doing it slightly altered trade in the world economy. As the book became more accepted, more in more people of society, people of importance and new merchants began to read use his book for tips. This caused more alteration in the global economy. Those miniscule changes pale in comparison with change from the voyages of Zheng He. The extent to where he traveled and the sheer quantities Zheng He had were enough to modify the economy.

And that it did. But Zheng He also established new relationships and set maritime precedents for China. China became a trading power and an ideal place for merchants to trade with. Zhen He was able to establish China on a global scale while also bringing back different commodities which encouraged trade and made commerce more appealing. As aforementioned,

while it was not a direct result and not intended for, the Chinese government after his time soon flipped their maritime and foreign policies as an outcome his discoveries.

The restricted access to such an advanced economy like China's had a large ripple affect. By taking themselves of the map, they forced merchants who had been trading there for decades to have to find other places to find certain goods. Some goods could not be found outside of China. China was dominant in the sea lanes and their withdrawal shook things for sailors in that area. China had the resources to sustain itself and di not need outside trade. However, whenever a trading power and its unique goods become unavailable, it causes a large change in the Merchant community and everyone has to adapt.

Zheng He was able has a large impact on the world economy from both ends of the spectrum, while Marco Polo added to it minimally. Both Zheng He and Marco Polo have lasting legacies in ancient history. Zheng He's voyages and travels were much better and more important because they had much more of a profound impact on the world. Marco Polo is more glamorized due to the game after him and having his own book about his travels. Zheng He is not common knowledge to most people. While Marco Polo was a good merchant, and an excellent story teller, his trips were of much less value to the world than Zheng He's.

Marco Polo was able to travel far into Southeast Asia and write of his accomplishments, but where he went and what he technologies he had were inferior to the expeditions of Zheng He. The initial receptions and

implantation of his knowledge from his travels took a long to time to come near the level of change that Zheng He's discoveries had on China. And while any merchant has some effect on the economy, Marco Polo's real economic impact derived from his book. His book adjusted the ways of travel and trade for many Europeans overtime. But Zheng He's voyages had an immediate and delayed substantial impact on the world economy.