

# The controversial voyages of zheng he: bloody conquests or achievements of trade ...

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Imagine a man who traveled vast distances but got little to nothing in return. Think about a man who thought that bringing safety to trade routes was all about killing innocent people. One such man did exist, with the name of Zheng He. He was a Chinese admiral who sailed everywhere from China to the east coast of Africa, along with other places in the Indian Ocean. In addition to his travels, He had an enormous fleet with massive treasure ships. Some might say how He should be recognized because of his achievements, but should we actually celebrate all of Zheng He's voyages? Despite being able to accomplish a lot, Zheng He's voyages shouldn't be celebrated because he didn't do anything influential or remarkable with his voyages, he would later put his country in debt because of his ships, and he killed anyone who got in his way. But one key factor of why he shouldn't be celebrated is how Zheng He's voyages didn't achieve much at all.

Although Zheng He went on vast voyages, he really didn't discover anything that would make his voyages remarkable, all he would get was small gifts from the local leaders of the places he visited. According to Document D, it can be determined that all He got for his voyages are items such as "pepper, local products, and a variety of animals." He really didn't get anything out of his voyages, all he got was a few everyday products, and foreign animals that have no apparent use. In addition to He not getting anything valuable from his voyages, he also didn't discover anything that would make him unforgettable, He only sailed the regions of "Calicut, Hormuz, Malinda, Mogadishu, and Mombasa" (Document A). Based upon this it can be determined that He only sailed to regions that were already discovered, and he just went to the port cities that are stated in Document A.

With this all, it looks just as if He was just an average sailor instead of an explorer.

Zheng He did manage to make trade routes, but in order to accomplish this he killed anyone who got in his way. He even thought that he was helping his country, but in reality, he was actually putting them in debt. As stated in Document E, "barbarian bandits who invaded and plundered we wiped out." This statement goes to show that He really did kill anyone who wasn't on his side, they might call them barbarians, but in reality they were anybody who wasn't on He's side. Another thing to take into consideration is the fact that He's ships were simply too large to fund, "He's treasure ship was 400 feet in comparison to Columbus's Santa Maria which was 85 feet" (Document B). Based upon this, it can be determined that the size of Zheng He's boats was unnecessary, because Columbus managed to achieve an even greater goal with a boat that is about 4 times smaller. Also take into consideration how much funding the boats needed, He's ships required so much funding that it would later put his country into debt.

Although Zheng He doesn't deserve to be celebrated, he does manage to accomplish some things worth noting. One thing that He could get credit for is his enormous fleet, according to Document B, "He had 255 ships and 27,500 crew members on his first voyage." Handling this massive number of people does take a lot of leadership, but even an immensely smaller crew would be able to accomplish the same goal, but at a much lower cost.

Another thing to take into perspective is how large his ships were, many people wouldn't even dare to get onto such large ships. "He's treasure ships

were 440 feet long, 180 feet wide, and 20 feet tall” (Document C). Based upon this it can be inferred that managing such large ships takes a great deal of determination, which many people don’t have. Despite being able to manage the ships, the costs for maintaining those ships must be gargantuan, along with the cost of the ships, there are factors of not being able to travel in most rivers because of how massive the ships are.

In the end, Zheng He really didn’t accomplish much with his voyages. In fact, he actually had consequences for his voyages. Because of all that he did, is he really worth celebrating? Maybe in the future a few port cities might be celebrating him, but in general, He really has no global effect. In the modern world not many people know about Zheng He, because of this, He should be considered a great sailor, but not a historical explorer.