

# AP WORLD HISTORY

Q3 READING 1: ASIAN TRANSITIONS, GLOBAL CHANGE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Questions

### Francis Xavier's "Letter on the Missions"

1. How does St. Francis Xavier view the Indian people – specifically their openness to the gospel and the prospects for successfully converting them to Christianity? Why does he think this?
2. How would you rate Xavier as a primary source? What bias(es) does he have, and why?
3. At the end of this excerpt, Xavier believes he will have much success with his mission in the land of Japan. Do you agree? Why or why not?

### Zheng He Documents

4. How do the texts treat the royal family (Yongle, the Ming)? What are the authors' tones? Remember, these are essentially government documents.
5. What justifications do the texts supply for these very long (2-3 year) voyages?
6. When the Yongle Emperor says "I look on all equally," do you buy his claim? What other parts of the Ming documents suggest that this is not quite true?
7. How does the supernatural world impinge upon the natural world, according to the author? How does the supernatural world relate to empire?
8. What were the relationships between the Chinese and the various people they encountered, according to these texts? How reliable a source of information might the chronicle be for knowing about 15th-century non-Chinese? What does "double translation" mean?
9. Do these texts describe an imperial venture (that is, one officially commissioned by the empire)? Explain.

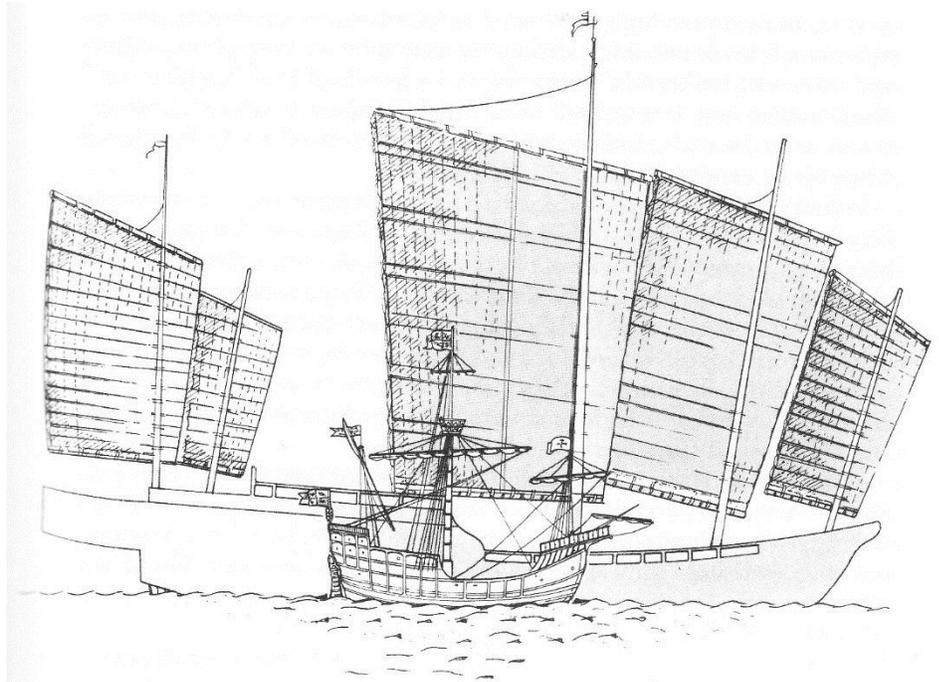


Figure 16 Fifteenth-century ships from China and Europe.

These ships could never have been seen side by side because the great vessels of Zheng He's fleet had been scrapped before European boats entered the Indian Ocean, and no more of comparable size were built. There has been controversy about the Chinese vessels' dimensions, with estimates for length at the keel mostly over 100 metres. This drawing does not represent such an enormous size. If the three-masted Spanish ship with a lateen mizzen sail is 30 metres long, the corresponding measurement for the Chinese vessel is 84 metres.

(Illustration by Hazel Cotterell; for evidence of the size of Zheng He's ships, see Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, volume IV, part 3, pp. 480–2.)

## “Letter on the Missions”

*St. Francis Xavier in India to St. Ignatius de Loyola in Rome, 1549*

May the grace and charity of our Lord Christ always be with us!  
Amen.

My own and only Father in the Heart of Christ, I think that the many letters from this place which have lately been sent to Rome will inform you how prosperously the affairs of religion go on in these parts, through your prayers and the good bounty of God. But there seem to be certain things which I ought myself to speak about to you; so I will just touch on a few points relating to these parts of the world which are so distant from Rome. In the first place, the whole race of the Indians, as far as I have been able to see, is very barbarous; and it does not like to listen to anything that is not agreeable to its own manners and customs, which, as I say, are barbarous. It troubles itself very little to learn anything about divine things and things which concern salvation. Most of the Indians are of vicious disposition, and are adverse to virtue. Their instability, levity, and inconstancy of mind are incredible; they have hardly any honesty, so inveterate are their habits of sin and cheating. We have hard work here, both in keeping the Christians up to the mark and in converting the heathen. And, as we are your children, it is fair that on this account you should take great care of us and help us continually by your prayers to God. You know very well what a hard business it is to teach people who neither have any knowledge of God nor follow reason, but think it a strange and intolerable thing to be told to give up their habits of sin, which have now gained all the force of nature by long possession.

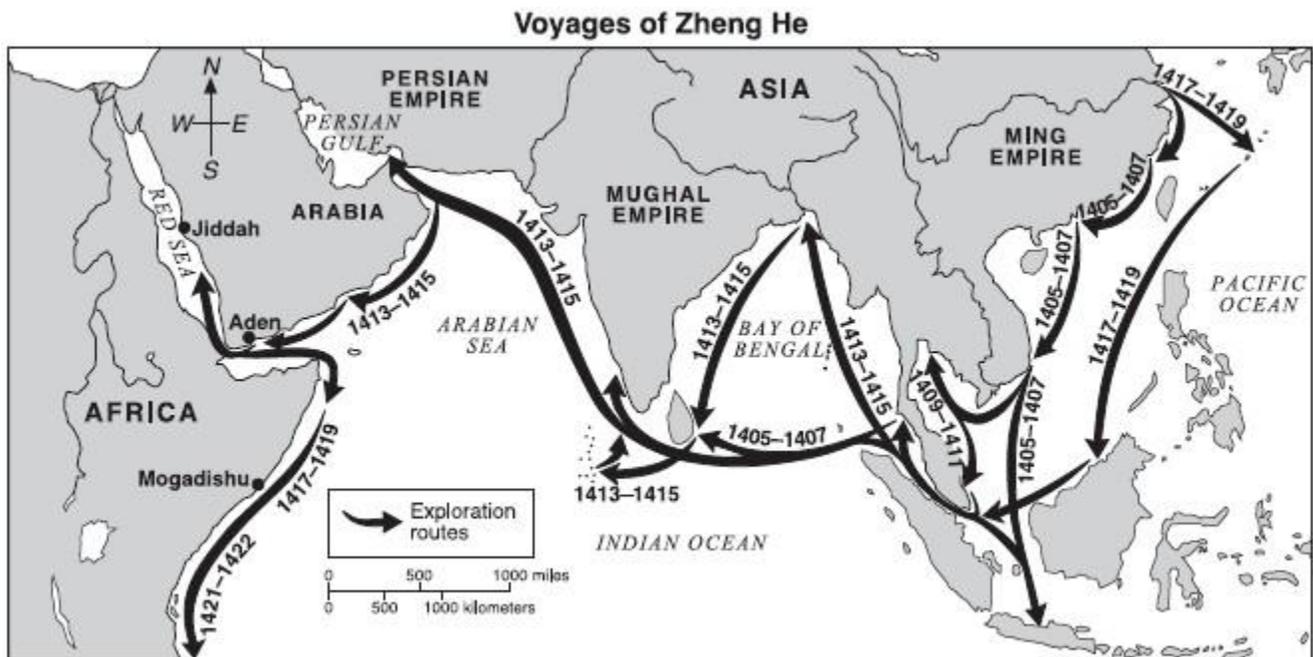


The experience which I have of these countries makes me think that I can affirm with truth, that there is no prospect of perpetuating our Society out here by means of the natives themselves, and that the Christian religion will hardly survive us who are now in the country; so that it is quite necessary that continual supplies of ours should be sent out from Europe. We have now some of the Society in all parts of India where there are Christians. Four are in the Moluccas, two at Malacca, six in the Comorin Promontory, two at Coulan, as many at Bazain, four at Socotra. The distances between these places are immense; for instance, the Moluccas are more than a thousand leagues from Goa, Malacca five hundred, Cape Comorin two hundred, Coulan one hundred and twenty, Bazain sixty, and Socotra three hundred. In each place there is one of the Society who is Superior of the rest. As these Superiors are men of remarkable prudence and virtue, the others are very well content.

The Portuguese in these countries are masters only of the sea and of the coast. On the mainland they have only the towns in which they live. The natives themselves are so enormously addicted to vice as to be little adapted to receive the Christian religion. They so dislike it that it is most difficult to get them to hear us if we begin to preach about it, and they think it like death to be asked to become Christians. So for the present we devote ourselves to keeping the Christians whom we have. Certainly, if the Portuguese were more remarkable for their kindness to the new converts, a great number would become Christians; as it is, the heathen see that the converts are despised and looked down upon by the Portuguese, and so, as is natural, they are unwilling to become converts themselves. For all these reasons there is no need for me to labor in these countries, and as I have learnt from good authorities that there is a country near China called Japan, the inhabitants of which are all heathen, quite untouched by Mussulmans or Jews, and very eager to learn what they do not know both in things divine and things natural, I have determined to go thither as soon as I can....

## Zheng He Documents (Ming Dynasty, 1400s)

<http://www.lasalle.edu/~mcinneshin/356/wk03/zhenghe.htm>



Source: Elisabeth Ellis and Anthony Esler, *World History: Connections to Today*, Prentice Hall (adapted)

The Ming (royal family 1360s-1640s) court in China began sending out massive state-financed naval ventures in 1405, sending seven expeditions within three decades. These expeditions, which each included dozens and perhaps hundreds of ships, sailed from the coast of China to arrive in the ports of Southeast Asia, "India," the Arabian Sea, and even East Africa. The documents below should give you some idea about their **stated motivations** and **claimed activities** around the Indian Ocean rim. (This map offers a comparison with Portuguese expeditions around Africa at the same time. These charts were composed by sailors aboard the Zheng He fleets.)

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### Temple Inscription

The inscription below was carved in 1431 on a new temple (for the Celestial Goddess) in the Fujian province (the southeastern coast of China--the mainland opposite Taiwan).

**Source:** Teobaldo Filesì, trans. David Morison, *China and Africa in the Middle Ages* (London: Frank Cass, 1972), 57-61.

The Imperial Ming Dynasty unifying seas and continents, surpassing the three dynasties even goes beyond the Han and Tang dynasties. The countries beyond the horizon and from the ends of the earth have all become subjects and to the most western of the western or the most northern of the northern countries, however far they may be, the distance and the routes may be calculated. Thus the barbarians from beyond the seas, though their countries are truly distant, "with double translation" have come to audience bearing precious objects and presents.

The Emperor, approving of their loyalty and sincerity, has ordered us (Zheng He and others at the head of several tens of thousands of officers and flag-troops to ascend more than one hundred large ships to go and confer presents on them in order to make manifest the transforming power of the (imperial) virtue and to treat distant people with kindness. ... We have traversed more than one hundred thousand li of immense water spaces and have beheld in the ocean huge waves like mountains rising sky-high, and we have set eyes on barbarian regions far away hidden in a blue transparency of light vapours, while our sails loftily unfurled like clouds day and night continued their course (rapid like that) of a star, traversing those savage waves as if we were treading a public thoroughfare. Truly this was due to the majesty and the good fortune of the Court and moreover we owe it to the protecting virtue of the divine Celestial Spouse. ... When we arrived in the distant countries we captured alive those of the native kings who were not respectful and exterminated those barbarian robbers who were engaged in piracy, so that consequently the sea route was cleansed and pacified and the natives put their trust in it. All this is due to the favours of the goddess ["Celestial Spouse"].

We, Zheng He and others, on the one hand have received the high favour of a gracious commission of our Sacred Lord [the Ming Emperor, Yongle], and on the other hand carry to the distant barbarians the benefits of respect and good faith (on their part). Commanding the multitudes on the fleet and (being responsible for) a quantity of money and valuables in the face of the violence of the winds and the nights our one fear is not to be able to succeed; how should we then dare not to serve our dynasty with exertion of all our loyalty and the gods with the utmost sincerity? How would it be possible not to realize what is the source of the tranquillity of the fleet and the troops and the salvation on the voyage both going and returning?

## Ming Shi-Lu Excerpts

The following are further selections from the Ming Shi-lu – the imperial annals of the Ming emperors.

**Source:** Geoff Wade, translator, *Southeast Asia in the Ming Shi-lu*: an open access resource, Singapore: Asia Research Institute and the Singapore E-Press, National University of Singapore, <http://epress.nus.edu.sg/msl>

### 28 Dec 1416

To the East, extending to the sea, to the West reaching to the shifting sands and stretching to the limits of North and South, culture and civilizing influences reach to the four seas. I [The Yongle Emperor] rule all under Heaven and soothe and govern the Chinese and the *yi* ["non-Chinese" southerners]. I look on all equally and do not differentiate between one and the other. I promote the ways of the ancient Sagely Emperors and Perspicacious Kings, so as to accord with the will of Heaven and Earth. I wish all of the distant lands and foreign regions to have their proper places. Those who respond to the influences and move towards culture are not singular. The country of Cochin [southern "India"] is far away in the South-west, on the shore of the vast ocean, further distant than the other *fan* countries. It has long inclined towards Chinese culture and been accepting of civilizing influences. When the Imperial orders arrived, the people there went down on their hands and knees and were greatly excited. They loyally came to allegiance and then, looking to Heaven, they bowed and all said: 'How fortunate we are that the civilizing influences of the Chinese sages should reach us. For the last several years, the country has had fertile soil, and the people have had houses in which to live, enough fish and turtles to eat, and enough cloth and silk to make clothes. Parents have looked after their children and the young have respected their elders. Everything has been prosperous and pleasing. There has been no oppression or contention. In the mountains no savage beasts have appeared and in the streams no noxious fishes have been seen. The sea has brought forth treasures and the forests have produced excellent woods. Everything has been in bountiful supply, several times more bountiful than in ordinary times. There have been no destructive winds, and damaging rains have not occurred. Confusion has been eliminated and there is no evil to be found. This is all indeed the result of the civilizing influences of the Sage.'

### **3 Mar 1421**

The envoys from the 16 countries of Hormuz [Persian Gulf] and so on departed on their return to their countries. Paper money and *biao-li* of silks were conferred upon them. In addition, the Eunuch Director Zheng He and others were sent with Imperial orders, together with brocades, fine silks, silk gauzes, damasks and thin silks to confer upon the kings of these countries. They departed together with the envoys.

### **29 Jun 1430**

The Eunuch Director Zheng He and others were sent with an Imperial proclamation to go and instruct the various *fan* countries. The proclamation read: "I have respectfully taken on the mandate of Heaven and reverently inherited the Great Rule from the Tai-zu Gao Emperor, the Tai-zong Wen Emperor and the Ren-zong Zhao Emperor. I rule over the ten thousand states, manifest the supreme benevolence of my ancestors and spread peace to all things. I have already issued a general amnesty to all under Heaven and declared the commencement of the Xuan-de reign. All has begun anew. You, the various *fan* countries far across the ocean, will not yet have heard. Now I am especially sending the Eunuch Directors Zheng He and Wang Jing-hong carrying this proclamation with which to instruct you. You must all respect and accord with the Way of Heaven, care for your people and keep them in peace. Thus will you all enjoy the prosperity of Great Peace."

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## **Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan* (1451 [probably finished ca. 1433])**

The Overall Survey of the Ocean Shores *was a book compiled by Ma Huan, a high-level member of Zheng He's staff on the fourth, sixth, and seventh expeditions. Ma was born along the Chinese coast, had adopted Islam in his youth, and sailed in part due to his expertise as a translator.*

### **The Country of Calicut**

This is the great country of the Western Ocean [Indian Ocean] ....In the fifth year of the Yongle period the court ordered the principal envoy, the grand eunuch Zheng He, and others to deliver an imperial mandate to the king of this country and to bestow on him a patent conferring a tide of honor, and the grant of a silver seal, also to promote all the chiefs and award them hats and belts of various grades. So Zheng He went there in command of a large fleet of treasure-ships, and he erected a tablet with a pavilion over it and set up a stone which said, "Though the journey from this country to the Central Country [China] is more than a hundred thousand li [about 30,000 miles] yet the people are very similar, happy and prosperous, with identical customs. We have here engraved a stone, a perpetual declaration for ten thousand ages."

The king of the country is an upper-caste man; he is a firm believer in the Buddhist religion [actually, he was a Hindu] and he venerates the elephant and the ox... The king has two great chiefs who administer the affairs of the country; both are Muslims .... The king of the country and the people of the country all refrain from eating the flesh of the ox. The great chiefs refrain from eating the flesh of the pig.

The people are very honest and trustworthy. Their appearance is smart, fine, and distinguished. Their two great chiefs received promotion and awards from the court of the Central Country. If a treasure-ship goes there, it is left entirely to the two men to superintend the buying and selling; the king sends a chief and an accountant to examine the account books in the official bureau; a broker comes and joins them; and a high officer who commands the ships discusses the choice of a certain date for fixing prices. When the day arrives, they first of all take the silk embroideries and the open-work silks, and other such goods which have been brought there, and discuss the price of them one by one; and when the price has been fixed, they write out

an agreement stating the amount of the price; this agreement is retained by these persons. ... The chief and the Che-ti, with his excellency the eunuch, all join hands together, and then the broker then says, "In such and such a month on such and such a day, we have all joined hands and sealed our agreement with a hand-clasp; whether the price be dear or cheap, we will never repudiate it or change it." [The discussion over prices may last one to three months.]

Whenever they weigh goods ... they mostly use a pair of scales ...

The people of this country also take the silk of the sil-worm, soften it by boiling, dye it all colors, and weave it...

As to the pepper: the inhabitants of the mountainous countryside have established gardens, and it is extensively cultivated. When [the tenth month] arrives, the pepper ripens; and it is collected, dried in the sun and sold. Of course, big pepper-collectors come and collect it, and take it up to the official storehouse to be stored. ...

Foreign ships from every place come there; and the king of the country also sends a chief and a writer to watch the sales; thereupon they collect the duty and pay it to the authorities.

**Source:** Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan*, J. V. G. Mills, ed. (1970), 137-41.

### **Yang Rong, *Yang Wenming gongji* (1410 [recorded 1515])**

*Sometimes local leaders and people did not do what the emissaries of Zheng He's fleets wanted. In 1410, a monarch on Sri Lanka refused to perform Chinese rituals and continued warring with rivals. Accusing him of being a pirate, the Chinese landed an army from the Treasure fleets, and soon defeated and captured the monarch. A poem was written about the event years later.*

Straightaway, their dens and hideouts we ravaged,  
And made captive their entire country,  
Bringing back to our august capital,  
Their women, children, families and retainers, leaving not one.  
Cleaning out in a single sweep those noxious pests, as if winnowing chaff from grain...

Those insignificant worms, deserving to die ten thousand times over trembling in fear...

Did not even merit the punishment of heaven.  
Thus the august emperor spared their lives,  
And they humbly kowtowed, making crude sounds and  
Praising the sage-like virtue of the imperial Ming ruler.

**Source:** . Translation from Louise Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas* (1994), 115.