CHAPTER 10

Figure 10.11 Use of Enumeration in Textbooks

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MARITIME EXPANSION

Ming period Naval expeditions When? Who?

Naval history

Relative power?

Portugal power when?
Purpose of expeditions?
Tribute system??
2 motives?
Contender – who?

Admiral? 1st expedition

Ship's size?

Sea route?

3 consequences?

Another dramatic development of the Ming period was the series of naval expeditions sent out between 1405 and 1433 under Hong Wu's son Yong Lu and Yong Lu's successor. China had a strong maritime history stretching back to the eleventh century, and these early fifteenth-century voyages were a continuation of that tradition. The Ming expeditions established China as the greatest maritime power in the world—considerably ahead of Portugal, whose major seafaring reconnaissances began a half-century later.

In contrast to Hong Wu, Yong Lu broadened Odiplomatic and commercial contacts within the tribute system. Yong Lu had two basic motives for launching overseas voyages. (First) he sent them in search of Jian Wen, a serious contender for the throne whom he had defeated but who, rumor claimed, had escaped to Southeast Asia. Second he launched the expeditions to explore, to expand trade, and to provide the imperial court with luxury objects. Led by the Muslim eunuch admiral Zheng He and navigating by compass, seven fleets sailed to East and South Asia. The (first) expedition (which carried 27,800 men) involved 62 major ships, the largest of which was 440 feet in length and 180 feet in the beam and had 9 masts. The expeditions crossed the Indian Ocean to Ceylon, the Persian Gulf, and the east coast of Africa.

These voyages had important consequences. They extended the prestige of the Ming Dynasty throughout Asia. Trade, in the form of tribute from as far as the west coast of southern India, greatly increased. Diplomatic contacts with the distant Middle East led to the arrival in Nanjing of embassies from Egypt. The maritime expeditions also led to the publication of geographical works.

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Source:
Pauk, W., & Dwens, R.J. Q. (2008) How to Study in College.
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