

the edicts of the Son of Heaven and giving gifts to their rulers and chieftains. Those who did not submit were pacified by force.

In the ninth month of the fifth year (*1 to 30 October 1407*) [of Yongle, Zheng] He and the rest [of his fleet] returned, and the envoys sent by the various countries accompanied Zheng He to an audience at court. Zheng He presented the [pirate] chieftain of the Old Harbor, whom he had captured. The Emperor was delighted, and [rewarded the officers] with titles and gifts according to [their deserts]. Old Harbor was the former country of Sri Vijaya. Its chieftain Chen Zuyi was a pirate who plundered merchant shipping. Zheng He sent an envoy to summon and instruct him. Chen Zuyi promised to surrender but secretly planned to intercept and ambush [Zheng He's fleet. Zheng] He heavily defeated his forces, took Chen Zuyi prisoner, and presented his captive to be beheaded in the capital marketplace.

In the ninth month of the sixth year (*20 September to 18 October 1408*) [of Yongle, Zheng He set sail] once again and went to the country of Ceylon. The King [of Ceylon] Alagakkonara lured Zheng He into the interior of the country, demanded gold and silk, and sent troops to plunder Zheng He's ships. Zheng He's scouts observed that, since the main army of the bandits had gone out [to plunder the ships, the] interior of the country was empty, so [Zheng He] led forth over two thousand men of those he commanded, assaulted [the capital] by surprise, breached [the walls, and] took prisoner Alagakkonara along with his wives, children, officials, and subordinates. Those who were plundering Zheng He's ships heard about this and returned to come to the rescue themselves, [but the Ming] Imperial Army heavily defeated them once again. In the sixth month of the ninth year (*21 June to 20 July 1411*) [of Yongle, Zheng He] presented his captives to the court, but the Emperor pardoned them, did not execute them, and freed them to return to their country. As of this time the prefectures and districts of Vietnam had already been captured and destroyed, and the many other foreign countries had become increasingly agitated. [The number of embassies] coming to verify this increased day by day.

In the eleventh month of the tenth year (*4 December 1412 to 2 January 1413*) [of Yongle, the emperor] again ordered Zheng

He and the others to go as envoys, [this time] to Semudera. Before this, Sekandar, who pretended to be the son of a king, had been plotting to murder his lord and set himself up [as king, and he] was angry that Zheng He did not present him with [imperial] gifts. Leading his troops in person, he confronted and attacked the Imperial Army. Zheng He battled him forcefully, pursued him to Lambri, and took him prisoner, also capturing his wives and children. When [the expedition] returned to the Imperial Court in the seventh month of the thirteenth year (*5 August to 2 September 1415*) [of Yongle, the] emperor was very pleased and rewarded the officers and men according to their deserts.

In the winter of the fourteenth year (*21 October 1416 to 17 January 1417*) [of Yongle] Malacca, Calicut, and others, nineteen countries in all, sent ambassadors to the Imperial Court with tribute. When the emperor dismissed them to return to their home countries, he again commanded Zheng He and his associates to accompany them, bringing gifts to their rulers and chieftains. In the seventh month of the seventeenth year (*23 July to 20 August 1419*) [of Yongle, the expedition] returned.

In the spring of the nineteenth year (*2 February to 1 May 1421*) [of Yongle, Zheng He] went forth again, returning in the eighth month (*17 August to 15 September 1422*) of the following year.

In the first month of the twenty-second year (*1 to 29 February 1424*) [of Yongle, the] paramount chieftain of the Old Harbor, Shi Jisun, asked for imperial assent to succeed to the office of Pacification Commissioner, [and Zheng He] was entrusted with the official seal and imperial commission and sent to confer them. When he returned Chengzu had already passed away.

In the second month of the first year of Hongxi (*18 February to 19 March 1425*), Renzong (*Emperor Yongle's son and successor*) ordered Zheng He to use the military forces [that he had led] down to the foreign [countries] and to take command at Nanjing. The establishment of [the post of] Commandant of Nanjing thus originates with Zheng He.

In the sixth month of the fifth year of [Yongle's grandson Emperor] Xuande (*21 June to 19 July 1430*), the emperor reflected on the fact that, though it had been several years since he ascended the eastern steps [on becoming emperor], those foreign countries that were distant had still not sent tribute to the