

“VOYAGE OF CHENG HO” TO BE EXHIBITED IN THE MARITIME MUSEUM

To celebrate Tamkang's 55th anniversary, the Maritime Museum will have a special exhibition, “600th Anniversary of the Voyage of Cheng Ho”, from November 5th to 30th. Various ship models, including the “Treasure Fleet” of Cheng Ho, maps of and a series of posters about his seven voyages will be displayed.

Six hundred years ago, the emperor of Ming Dynasty, Chu Ly, dispatched an eunuch officer, Cheng Ho, to western seas to “demonstrate the imperial military and financial power” and to “show friendliness to foreign countries.” The maps of Cheng's seven voyages to western seas will be displayed on the second floor of the museum. Visitors can survey Cheng's detailed routes and related information about his voyages across Asia and Africa. The mileage of his voyage was estimated to reach 15000 miles, and the farthest land he visited was to the east coast of Kenya, Africa. Visitors to the museum can see each routes of voyage by following instructions on different buttons.

The model of Cheng “Treasure Fleet” has been displayed in Tamkang for 15 years. A staff of the Maritime Museum, Lin Su-hui states that the model of “Treasure Fleet” was ordered by an alumnus, Huang Tan-Chung, to be made in Mainland China. On November 8th, 1990, the model of “Treasure Fleet” was given to Tamkang as the gift for the school anniversary. It is about 120 centimeters long, and 55 centimeters in width, 80 centimeters in height. It looks extremely real with a figure of admiral Cheng Ho on it.

At that time, the fleet of ships led by Cheng Ho were much larger than any other on the seas, and all sailing skills were also extremely advanced than Columbus's. These historical facts are even recorded in textbooks for US navy.

For this specific theme, the museum also prepare a series of posters entitled “Five Episodes of a Sea Epic.” The posters feature Cheng's background and the motivation his voyages, Cheng's fleet of ships in

different categories, comparison between Cheng' s fleet of ships and Western ships, the techniques, equipment, and gifts in Cheng' s fleet. (~ Johnny Chu)

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