

New Tales of the South China Sea

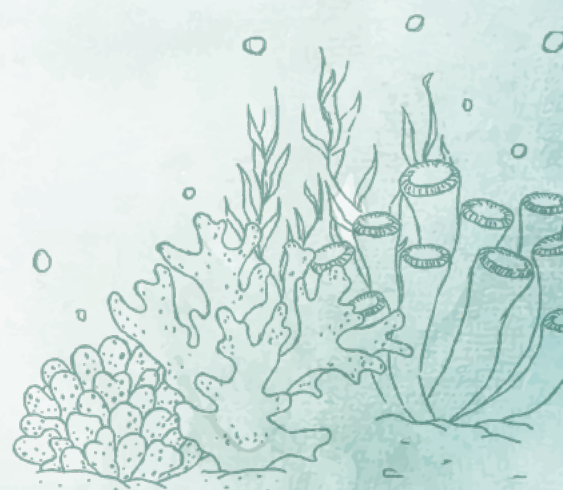
The South China Seas tend to be mentioned in the news media today only in connection with politicized boundary disputes.

That's a shame, because those waters have long had an incredible history, and were home to some remarkable characters—events and individuals who should not be forgotten.

- Pirate Queen Ching Shi had a fleet of 1,800 ships with more than 40,000 pirates—bigger than some national navies.
- Then there was “reverse pirate” Zheng He, a Chinese Muslim who sailed to other lands to give away gifts—and brought back a giraffe on one of his journeys.
- The South China Seas were the start and end point of the “floating” Silk Road during ancient times, with Arabian, Chinese and Persian sailors buying and selling goods.
- A brilliant Italian, Matteo Ricci, came via that sea to land in Macao in 1582. He adopted Chinese clothing, learned the language, and became a one-man East-West bridge.
- Ming Dynasty shipwrecks were found in 2022—one taking Chinese manufactured goods to the world, and the other bringing a cargo of ebony wood to China.
- In recent centuries, Europeans colonized the coast of south China settled in Macao and then Hong Kong—sometimes at gunpoint.

So, as you can see, there are lots of ideas there to spark your imagination. Can you imagine yourself as a spice trader, from China or Arabia or Persia, dealing with pirates and trying to avoid being shipwrecked? Start with daydreaming about this topic. Then choose a fun idea, do some research, and write a wonderful story, or essay, or poem, or create an artwork. Remember, we are interested in your mind, your thinking processes, and your research abilities, so please do not use AI to help you write or draw. And any AI research should be double-checked with trustworthy human sources. Your natural creativity is better than that of any machine.

Get dreaming!



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