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History What If?  
World Civilizations I

What if China “discovered” Mexico and the Aztec Empire opposed to Europe. If the oceans were switched, the Pacific Ocean placed China closer to the Americas instead of Europe. Would China have conquered the Aztec Empire like the Europeans did? I don’t think they would because that was not a part of their goal or mission with maritime. Under the command of Zheng He, the Chinese fleets that were sailing through the Indian Ocean were created to show the majesty and power China held under the ruler Yongle. I think if China came into contact with the Aztec Empire, they would try to develop a form of trading with them since the Aztec Empire held valuable resources and items. Although the goals of Europe were not that much different, I think the major difference between China and Europe were what was being traded. Europe traded gold and slaves (people) which allowed them to eventually conquer the Aztec Empire since they sold the people of the empire into slavery. China’s goals of trading were very different. They sold goods and Chinese products to enhance the wealth of the kingdom. Although there were armies on board of the Ming Fleets, that wasn’t the overall goal or purpose of the fleets. The armies were there to establish power. Zheng He would probably report back to Yongle about the riches and goods found in Mexico and began to establish a trading system with the empire through friendliness, not take over it like Europe.

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