

# Hong Kong Maritime Museum



Museum Guide





Swatow ware dish, Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

*The Ocean is Wide  
and the Sky is High*

海闊天空



HONG KONG  
maritime  
museum  
香港海事博物館

Museum Guide





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OVERLEAF *An armada of fishing vessels of the da tuo  
type at the western entrance of Aberdeen Harbour.*



# Thanks from the Chairman

**I**t has been an action-packed eight years since a maritime museum in Hong Kong was just a hoped-for dream. In the Hong Kong Maritime Museum's short life it has matured from a boutique-sized, two-galleried museum on Hong Kong's south shore to the hi-tech centre of heritage and learning that it has become today, with thirteen permanent galleries and two special exhibition areas in a re-designed and converted pier in Hong Kong Central.

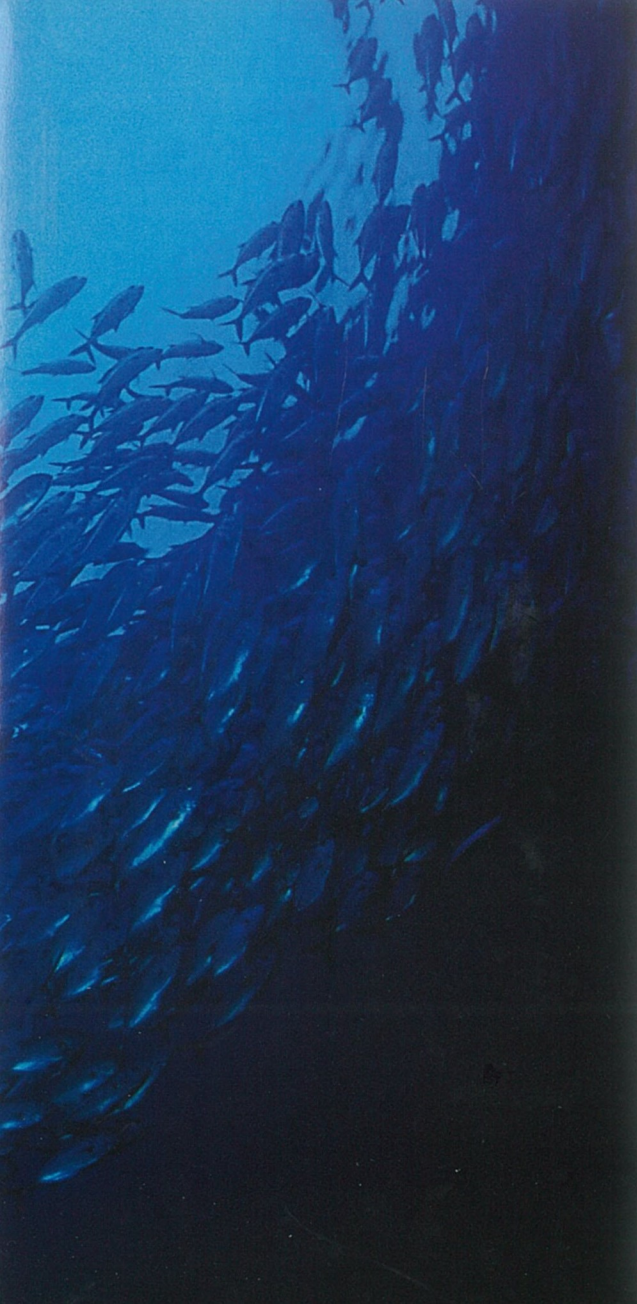
There are very many people to thank for this achievement. Without the initial backing and continuing enthusiastic support from the Hong Kong shipping community, the dream would never have become reality so quickly. Without the Hong Kong Government's offer of Pier 8 on the new Hong Kong Harbour Waterfront, and their much appreciated part-subvention, the great leap up to what the Hong Kong Maritime Museum is today could not have been achieved. Truly, pride can be taken in what has been a concerted effort to create a focal visiting point for an industry that is so important to Hong Kong's history and economy in the ideal spot as a prominent feature of Hong Kong's new Waterfront in Central.

**Anthony J. Hardy**  
Chairman  
Hong Kong Maritime Museum



ABOVE Anthony Hardy  
(Chairman - right) and  
Richard Wesley (Director)  
supervising the anchor's move.

LEFT The 36 ton anchor  
belonged to the supertanker  
Jahre Viking, formerly Seawise  
Giant which was once the  
world's largest ship at 564,763  
dwt. Its new location on the  
Hong Kong Waterfront by the  
museum will be a symbol of the  
importance of maritime trade  
to Hong Kong.



# An invitation from the Director

**T**he Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM) is proud to introduce you to its brand new premises at Pier 8, a location so fitting for the celebration of the maritime culture of the South China Coast, with space to learn and think.

HKMM is not a place where dust settles. It is a vibrant community, with interactive displays, semi-permanent and special exhibitions and a Maritime Resource Centre that provides opportunities to debate and discuss how we as humans interact with the great oceans of the world.

The museum contains collections covering a wealth of topics ranging from early local watercraft to modern large commercial and passenger ships, from the struggle against piracy to the developments in search and rescue, and from trade to water sports.

My team and I welcome you to HKMM, an exciting and innovative attraction designed to tempt the young and old, pupils and collectors alike. It is a space to learn, play, think, debate and meet people. Please come and join us.

**Richard Wesley**  
Museum Director  
Hong Kong Maritime Museum



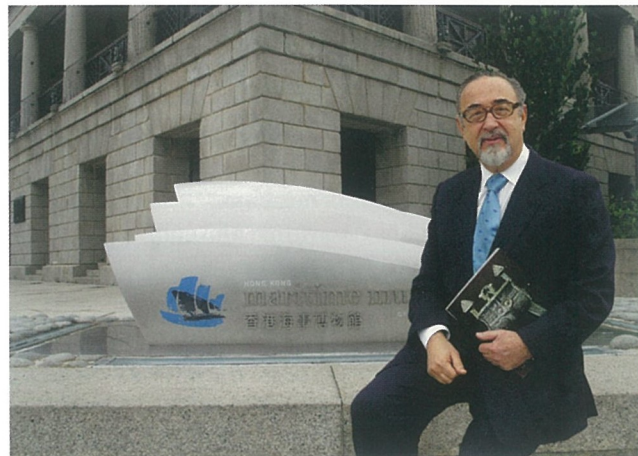
# A keen sense of history

The Hong Kong of the nineteenth century, a group of insignificant islands inhabited by bandits and stonecutters, could not have become the thriving, bustling place it is now without ships, trade and its Fragrant Harbour.

The maritime community that the shipping industry inspired in Hong Kong became the early backbone of the territory's economic success and, for generation after generation, a source of employment for a myriad of people, including seafarers, lighter operators and dock workers; shipbuilders and naval architects; ship chandlers, sail makers and engineers; government officials and financiers; maritime lawyers and insurers and many more. With goods now hidden in containers and docks moved out of sight, it is easy to forget that over 90 per cent of the world's trade is transported by sea in ships big and small, from continent to continent and mainland to island. These goods, as varied and as many as there are fish in the sea, range from raw materials to coveted luxuries: without ships and boats they would be hard to come by and much more expensive. Rivers and the sea are nature's own highways.

This maritime story, with its windows on the past and its lessons for the future, grows and grows in the telling. But without a maritime museum to tell new generations about the inventiveness of their ancestors and the wonders of the sea, how could that story be told?

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum, a twinkle in the eye of some prominent members of the maritime community in the 1990s, became a reality in the twenty-first century through the vision and tenacity of Anthony J. Hardy, a member of the maritime community in Hong Kong since 1961 and former chairman of one of the oldest shipping companies



ABOVE Anthony Hardy together with the close support of Tan Sri Dr Frank Tsao, K.L. Tam and others succeeded in setting up the Hong Kong Maritime Museum at Murray House in Stanley Bay.

LEFT Murray House, itself a nineteenth century building, was originally located overlooking Hong Kong harbour, but was dismantled in the 1980s and reopened overlooking Stanley Bay in April 2001.

in the territory. Spurred on by a keen sense of history and a determination to preserve Hong Kong's heritage, Anthony Hardy set about enlisting the maritime community's help in the cause. He received the close support of Tan Sri Dr Frank Tsao, K.L. Tam and others and together they succeeded in setting up the Hong Kong Maritime Museum at Stanley Bay in Murray House. It was a fitting and auspicious first home for the fledgling museum.

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum, with its charitable status, started as a purely private enterprise, funded, filled and nurtured by Hong Kong's own maritime community. The museum opened its doors on the ground floor of Murray House in September 2005. Less than eight years later, it has expanded to fill a specially designed and reconstructed Pier 8 in Hong Kong Harbour Central. It is a tribute to Hong Kong's merchant fleet, to the shipowners, shipmanagers and seafarers, shipbrokers and agents who underpin it, without whom Hong Kong would be a very different place.

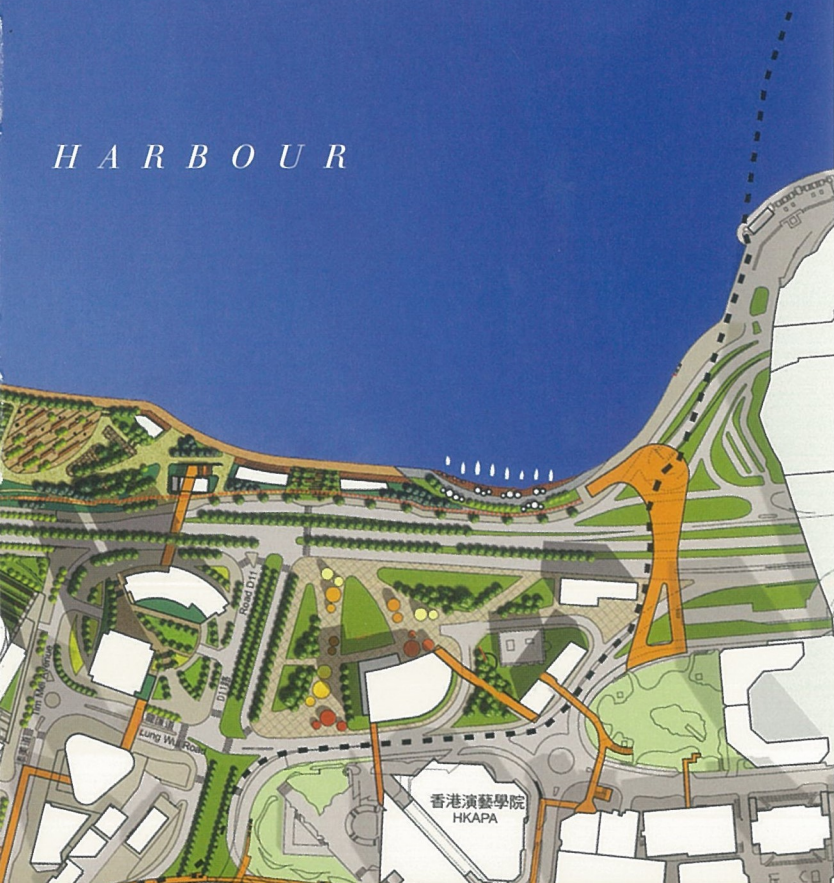
*The ship's figurehead of the goddess Kwan Yin, carved in wood in the nineteenth century, was a centre piece in one of the Hong Kong Maritime Museum's ground floor galleries at Murray House in Stanley.*







H A R B O U R



## Hong Kong Maritime Museum

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Victoria Harbour

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*The Hong Kong Maritime Museum's new location is an ideal spot in the centre of Hong Kong's new Harbour Waterfront development. (Image courtesy of Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront, Planning Department, HKSAR)*

# A new museum on the edge of Victoria Harbour

When the pirate fleets of Zheng Yi and Zhang Bao (known to every Hong Kong school child) terrorized the waters around Hong Kong at the turn of the nineteenth century, the current site of the Hong Kong Maritime Museum would have been the best part of a kilometre from the original shore line. Such has been the impact of land reclamation in Hong Kong over the last 150 years. Today, the museum is a central part of a dramatic expansion of waterfront parkland for the city, scheduled for completion in 2017. This planned greenbelt will become a much needed community playground for one of the world's most densely populated cities and a key to Hong Kong's future social amenities.

The closure of the Star Ferry service to Hung Hom, announced in 2009, created a unique opportunity for the not-for-profit company Hong Kong Maritime Museum Ltd to successfully lobby government for access to the now largely redundant Pier 8. Supported by leading figures in government, the maritime industry and the Legislative Council, the museum was granted a ten year lease over two-thirds of the pier - and some HK\$115,000,000 for the redevelopment of the precious 4400m<sup>2</sup> site.





Sitting on the final boundary of land to be claimed from Victoria Harbour, Pier 8 provided Hong Kong's renowned architects P&T Architects and Engineering Limited (P&T) with an intriguing challenge; how to turn one of two interconnected ferry terminals into a world class maritime museum. Forced by town planning concerns to retreat from the initial adoption of a bold, multi-coloured form which sought to maximize the visual impact of the museum and floor space, P&T subsequently favoured a subtle but impressive reworking of the existing pier design. Use of the museum's traditional blue two tone corporate colour scheme in the installation of a wrap around glass curtain wall achieved an effective counterpoint to the heavy columns which were central to the original design.

Internally, low deck heights and regimented internal columns on the lower two levels severely constrained the capacity of the architect to create airy open spaces normally associated with museums. Fortunately these constraints on C-Deck and D-Deck have not unduly affected the creation of behind the scenes facilities including a comfortable office, library and storage, along with an excitingly lit 'jewel box' exhibition space for the more traditional displays. UK exhibition design firm HSD was required to work with similar challenges, including a client-imposed





requirement to create fifteen new galleries. Together with the architects, the decision was taken to create the most significant internal change to the structure: a mezzanine level which would overlook the whole of B-Deck. This new element provides visitors with the opportunity to view the numerous large, ceiling suspended artifacts from a multiplicity of angles. A requirement to install a sophisticated climate control system throughout the museum to cope with Hong Kong's sub tropic climate and the statutory provision of fire escapes and associated services has by necessity reduced the amount of public space available. The very provision of these public health and safety provisions, however, underlines the very sophisticated nature of the facility that has been constructed. Architecturally compact, HKMM is an outstanding demonstration of what can be achieved on a constrained but spectacular site - indeed a very Hong Kong story.

**Richard Wesley**  
 Museum Director  
 Hong Kong Maritime Museum

*A special exhibition and function area located on B-Deck.*



# History of maritime trade

China's maritime roots extend back to the earliest principal East Coast culture in the Shandong Province and can be followed through the maritime expansions of the Song and Ming Dynasties, and the opening of the selected ports on the China Coast to foreign trade and shipping in the Qing Dynasty.

By the end of the Song Dynasty, China already had a very rich variety of vessel types and had developed China's nautical technology, port cities - notably Ningbo, Quanzhou, and Guangzhou - and seaborne trade as far away as Arabia in the west, and Korea and Japan in the east.

The highpoint of dynastic China's maritime achievements came during the early Ming Dynasty, when China had the world's largest merchant and naval fleets and the world's largest and most sophisticated ships. In July 1405, a massive fleet of some 255 vessels set sail from Nanjing under the command of Zheng He, on the first of seven voyages that ranged as far west as Jiddah in the Red Sea and Malindi in East Africa.

FAR LEFT Novus Atlas Sinensis, published by J. Blaeu in Amsterdam, 1655, was the first European Atlas to illustrate China's provinces. This map illustrates the Shandong Peninsula with an image of a south seas perahu boat.

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM (1) An unusually large Eastern Han (25-220 CE) model pottery boat from Sichuan Province. (2) A model of a Tang Dynasty (618-907) river boat which has a mature hull form, married to an early and simple square sail rig. (3) Blue and white porcelain water container, Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). (4) Zheng He set sail with treasure boats like this one on the first of seven exploratory voyages in July 1405 (Ming Dynasty 1368-1644).



China's indigenous sea trade systems and naval architecture reached a new high point under the Qing Dynasty Emperors. By the mid-19th century overseas Chinese merchants were based in Siam, British Malaya, Spanish Manila and Dutch East India.

The products traded around Asia's network of sea trade routes included spices, aromatics and the 6,951 tons of silver imported from Japan and from the Americas via Manila between 1550 and 1700.



*This presentation screen, with eight leaves, depicts a view of Guangzhou (Canton) in around 1690, as a busy trading port before the arrival of westerners.*







Self-sufficient and more advanced than most of East and Southeast Asia, China was selective in its links with the world beyond its shores. Trade and contact were welcomed, but on its own terms.

An Imperial decree issued in 1685 technically allowed western ships to call at any of China's main ports, but a further Imperial edict, effective from 1757 onwards, limited westerners to trading from just one port - Guangzhou, known to Europeans as Canton. This was the true beginning of the Canton Trade.

Under the system, Western traders arrived at Macao and waited for permission to go to Whampoa, where inward and outward cargo was unloaded.

HERE AND OVERLEAF *Named the Gentiloni paintings after their provenance, these large watercolours, dated post-1760, are rare and unusual. These two are part of a set of four owned by HKMM and are illustrations of Macao and Whampoa Anchorage respectively.*



*Weather-bound western ships in Yalong Bay,  
Hainan, 1784/5.*







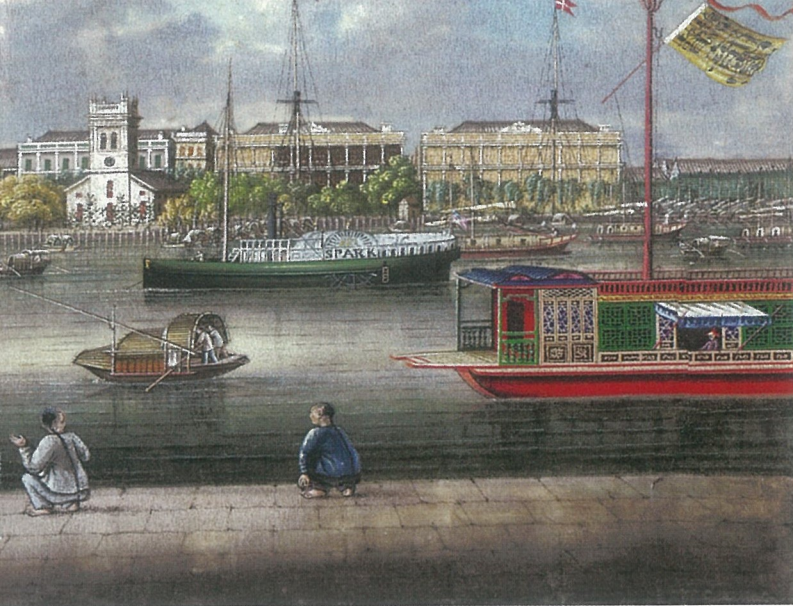
The shapes and variety of China's ships and boats over the centuries were regionally diverse, but they retained certain common properties with enough similarities that westerners refer to them all by the word 'junk', either from the Javanese 'djong' or the Hokkien 'zun'. The fully battened, balanced lug sail – the junk sail – was invented during the first millennium of the Common Era (CE). As a rig it was efficient, easy to control from deck level, robust, and easy to repair and steer.

The *Keying*, left, was a fine example of a junk, proving her capability in an extraordinary journey in 1846, sailing from Hong Kong around the Cape of Good Hope to America and then on to Britain.

RIGHT This Barbarian Suppressing and Pacifying 'General' Cannon was part of the arsenal in the forts guarding the narrows at Hûmén (translated as Bocca Tigris, Tiger's Mouth or the Bogue by foreigners).







Under the Canton Trade system, traders from ships moored at Whampoa rented temporary ‘factories’ in arrangements made via the Hong merchants or Co-Hong. These were Chinese traders who acted as guarantors for the unloading and sale of the inward cargoes, for servicing vessels, and for the purchase and loading of outward cargoes. Eventually, when permanent western trade representatives could stay in China all year, the trading season was spent in Canton’s famous Thirteen Factories and the rest of the year in Macao.

By the standards of the 17th and 18th centuries the Canton system was well organized and efficient.



ABOVE FAR LEFT *Howqua* (伍秉鑒; *Wu Bingjiàn*, 1769–1843) was the senior and most important of the Thirteen Factories merchants (the *Go Hong* 公行) in the Canton Trade system. Fujinese by birth and highly respected, he became a very wealthy man with extensive business interests in America as well as China.

ABOVE RIGHT *View of the waterfront at Canton* (*Guangzhou*) in around 1855, looking across the river at the foreign factories from the island of Honam.

LEFT When their original Thirteen Factories in Canton were burned down during the second Opium War, the foreign hongts moved to Honam temporarily in 1856. They remained there until 1859, when their new premises were ready on Shamian Island.



*Tea was the main item in cargoes returning to the West from China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with British appetites for it being particularly insatiable. Keen competition to reach home first to secure the best prices gave birth to the tea clipper, an elegant class of racing ships, of which the Taitaing (below) is a fine example.*

OVERLEAF *Examples of Chinese export porcelain from the Hong Kong Maritime Museum's collection.*





# Dangerous waters

The China Seas were home to the world's largest fleets of sea bandits, resulting in a string of skirmishes between them and the Chinese Imperial authorities. The earliest evidence of attacks emerged in the fourth century BCE during the Zhou Dynasty (1046–256 BCE). Thereafter the topic recurs in waves.

Clashes between the Chinese authorities and its home-grown sea bandits peaked in three episodes: 1520 to 1575; 1620 to 1684; and 1780 to 1810. The story of the final confrontation is told in the Hong Kong Maritime Museum's Qing Dynasty scroll which depicts the largest sea bandit fleet ever known battling against Chinese Imperial forces.

*The Qing Scroll, given the name 'Pacifying the South China Sea' by HKMM, is some 18 metres in length and tells the story of how Bailing, Governor General of the Liangguang (Guangdong and Guanxi) achieved his assigned task of subduing pirates in the South China Seas. Wonderfully detailed drawings provide almost endless possibilities for research. This scene (RIGHT) is entitled 'Accepting the surrender in Pinghai'. OVERLEAF 'Beseiging the Pirates in Lantau'.*

