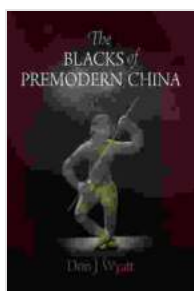


# Exploring the Hidden History: The Blacks of Premodern China

## The Forgotten Diaspora

For centuries, the history of the African diaspora in China has remained largely untold and overlooked. However, recent research has uncovered fascinating evidence of significant encounters and contributions by the Black community in premodern China, stretching from ancient times to the Ming dynasty.

This article delves into the captivating history of the Blacks of Premodern China, exploring their origins, interactions, and the profound impact they had on Chinese society. From merchants and artisans to scholars and explorers, the Black community played an integral role in shaping China's rich and diverse cultural tapestry.



## The Blacks of Premodern China (Encounters with Asia)

by Don J. Wyatt

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 7425 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 208 pages



## Ancient Roots

The earliest known interactions between Africans and China date back to the Han dynasty (206 BCE - 220 CE). During this period, Chinese envoys traveled to the Indian Ocean region, where they encountered African merchants and traders. These encounters were documented in Chinese historical texts, providing valuable insights into the early presence of Africans in the Far East.

During the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE), the African diaspora in China grew significantly. Many Africans were brought to China as slaves or laborers, while others came as traders or envoys from various African kingdoms. The Tang capital, Chang'an, became a cosmopolitan hub where people from all over the world, including Africans, interacted and exchanged ideas.

### **The Song and Yuan Dynasties**

The Song dynasty (960-1279 CE) witnessed a flourishing of trade and cultural exchange between China and the Indian Ocean region. This period saw an influx of African merchants and traders, who established communities in coastal cities such as Guangzhou and Quanzhou. These communities played a vital role in the spice and silk trade, bringing exotic goods from Africa and Southeast Asia to China.

During the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368 CE), the Mongol conquest of China brought about significant changes in the social and cultural fabric of the empire. Many Africans were employed in the Mongol military and administration, and some even rose to positions of prominence. The Yuan court also welcomed African envoys and scholars, who shared their knowledge and expertise in various fields.

### **The Ming Dynasty**

The Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE) marked a period of both continuity and change in the history of the Blacks of Premodern China. While the African diaspora continued to thrive in coastal cities, the Ming government also implemented stricter policies regarding foreigners. This led to some restrictions on the activities of African merchants and traders.

Despite these restrictions, the African community in China continued to make significant contributions to society. Many Africans served in the Ming military, while others were skilled artisans and craftsmen. Some even rose to high positions in government and academia.

### **Contributions to Chinese Culture**

The Blacks of Premodern China left a lasting mark on Chinese culture. They introduced new musical instruments, such as the gong and the drum, which became integral to Chinese music and theater. They also introduced new agricultural techniques and crops, such as cotton and sorghum, which had a profound impact on Chinese agriculture.

In addition, Africans contributed to Chinese literature and art. They were depicted in Chinese paintings and sculptures, and their stories were recorded in Chinese folklore. Some Africans even became renowned scholars and writers, contributing to the development of Chinese philosophy and thought.

The history of the Blacks of Premodern China is a fascinating and complex one. It is a story of encounters, interactions, and contributions that have shaped the cultural and historical tapestry of China. From ancient times to the Ming dynasty, the African diaspora in China played a vital role in the development of Chinese society.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the history of the Blacks of Premodern China. This has led to important research and the rediscovery of forgotten stories. As we continue to explore this rich and diverse history, we gain a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between people and cultures across the globe.

To learn more about the Blacks of Premodern China, I highly recommend the following resources:

- The Blacks of Premodern China: Encounters with Asia by Michael E. Berry
- Africans in the Ming Dynasty: A Survey of Historical Records by Wei Cao
- Africans in China: A Historical Perspective by Akinwumi Ogundiran

## Image Gallery



A group of African merchants in a Chinese port during the Tang dynasty.



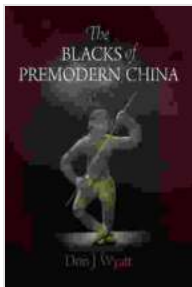
An African soldier serving in the Ming military.



A gong and a drum, musical instruments introduced to China by Africans.



A Chinese painting depicting an African woman.



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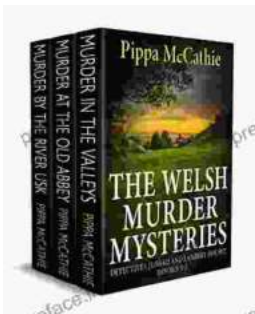
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