





# PLAIN SAILING

## 古舟揚帆

TEXT/文 MIKEY LEUNG

Bangladesh's ancient boat-building traditions find safer waters

孟加拉的傳統造船技術得以保存下來

Boat conservationist Yves Marre with his wife Runa Khan and son Wasama Doja (above)

矢志保存孟加拉傳統帆船工藝的Yves Marre與妻子Runa Khan和兒子Wasama Doja (上圖)

The orange sails of the restored B613 Bangladeshi boat catch the wind (left)

修復後的B613號帆船揚起橙色的船帆 (左圖)

**FLY WITH US**  
港龍航程

Dragonair flies five times a week to Dhaka

港龍航空每周有五班航機飛往達卡

**W**HEN YVES MARRE gazed at the rivers of Bangladesh for the first time, what he saw convinced him never to leave. The intricate water network of the Ganges/Brahmaputra river system, one of the world's largest river deltas, is home to a unique kind of boat craftsmanship little known in the West. Rural families in Bangladesh have built these wooden sailing vessels for centuries, with the tradition and technique passed orally from father to son.

"I was very impressed by these traditional boats," says Marre. "It was marvellous, like travelling in the past, because these boats were built with traditions and technologies that are several thousand years old."

After seeing these relics, Marre immediately set about trying to preserve the craftsmanship associated with them. In the past 15 years, the keen sailor has renovated some of these ancient vessels and also created a collection of model boats that has been displayed at museums worldwide.

"We don't even know this form of boat-building technology in the West," says Marre. "In Bangladesh, people build the boats like empty spoons, without any reinforcement on the outside. In the Western traditions, we build the skeleton of the boat and then on top of the skeleton we put planks with nails. Here in Bangladesh they have boats that are more fluid or hydrodynamic. You see these hulls here and they are beautiful and it is this beauty of a boat that makes it extremely efficient in the water."

**當**

YVES MARRE第一眼看見孟加拉的河川景致，便一見傾心，更為此定居下來。縱橫交錯的恒河和布拉馬普特拉河流域，是全球最大的河流三角洲之一，也是一種在西方世界鮮為人知的獨有造船技術的發源地。孟加拉漁民幾個世紀以來，一直以父子口耳相傳的方式，讓這種造船的傳統和技術，一代又一代地傳承下去。

Marre說：「這些傳統帆船實在不可思議，令我印象難忘，因為它們都是以有數千年歷史的傳統方法和技術建造，讓我有走進時光隧道的感覺。」

他在見識了這些文化遺產後，便決定要保存這種造船技術。過去15年，這位滿腔熱忱的帆船好手，修復了數艘這種古老的帆船，並且建造了一系列模型，送到世界各地的博物館展出。

他指出：「西方世界並不認識這種造船技術；孟加拉的帆船外型就像是一隻空的湯匙，毋須在外層加固。西方的傳統造船方法，是先建造船隻的支架，然後把船板釘上去。孟加拉的傳統帆船外型更流暢、更符合流體動力學的原理。你看這些船身多漂亮，而這些優美的設計可以讓帆船在航行時更有效率。」

可是，隨著鋼船的出現，以及利用從中國進口的灌溉泵改裝為推進器，孟加拉大部分船隻已棄用帆船。

Marre解釋說：「這些年來，我和妻子Runa見證著這種令人讚嘆的傳統帆船以驚人的速度逐漸消失。」傳統帆船日趨式微，促使他坐言起行，和妻子合力把造船匠找來，請他們到兩人在達卡的車庫打造傳統孟加拉帆船的模型。

他說：「我們自掏腰包，把僅存的造船匠都找來，大約找到15名工匠，就連他們的兒子也來幫忙。孟加拉有各式各樣的傳統帆船，我請他們盡可能為各個式樣都建造模型。我



Unfortunately, with the advent of steel ships and the availability of modified Chinese irrigation pumps for propulsion, most Bangladeshi boats no longer use sails.

“As the years went by, [my wife] Runa and I could see that these marvellous traditional boats were disappearing at an incredible rate,” explains Marre. The dwindling numbers spurred him into action. Along with his wife, he contacted boat carpenters and asked them to build models of the boats in their Dhaka garage.

“With our own money we started to gather the last carpenters,” says Marre. “We had about 15 artisans and their sons. And they started building boat models – as many models of boats as there was types of boat in Bangladesh. We found out there are still about 40 different types of boat in Bangladesh, most with this characteristic spoon-shaped hull.”

Marre also set about restoring some boats. One of the first was the *B613*, a luxuriously furnished wooden cargo boat fitted with a large orange sails.

“We decided that tourism on the waterways of Bangladesh could help preserve this art form,” says Marre. “Bangladesh has the biggest fleet in the world – in terms of numbers of boats – and it is the largest river delta in the world. From that we started locating and identifying the most beautiful traditional boats. We got one of the biggest sailing boats and totally overhauled it for tourism purposes.”

The 93-foot vessel has six double cabins, accommodating 12 overnight passengers and up to 40 people for day trips.

們發現孟加拉現時仍有約40種不同類型的帆船，大部分都擁有像湯匙一樣別具特色的船身。」

他也著手修復部分古舊的帆船，第一批的船隻當中，包括裝飾華麗並擁有橙色大船帆的B613號木貨船。

Marre表示：「我們相信開發孟加拉的水上旅遊，有助保存這種傳統的造船藝術。以船隻的數目而言，孟加拉擁有全世界最大規模的船隊，亦擁有面積最大的河流三角洲。因此，我們開始尋找當中最為漂亮的傳統帆船，並將其中最大的一艘進行全面改裝，以供觀光旅遊之用。」

這艘93呎長的帆船擁有六個雙人船艙，可容納12名旅客住宿，以及多達40位參加一日遊的客人。觀光船一般會沿著賈木納河和博多河行駛，並停靠沿岸的小村莊。

Marre還擁有另外兩艘可作一日遊的觀光船。72呎長的Fleche d'Or號最多可載40名旅客，而小巧的Little Prince號，則可以接載六名旅客。（有關河上觀光資訊，請瀏覽[www.contic.com](http://www.contic.com)）

**Traditional Bangladeshi wooden boats are built by hand**

**傳統孟加拉木船均由人手建造**





A typical journey takes guests out on the Jamuna and Padma Rivers, stopping at villages along the way.

Marre has two other boats available to tourists. The 72-foot *Fleche d'Or* conducts daytime river cruises for up to 40 people while the more intimate *Little Prince* can take up to six people on day trips. (For cruise information visit [www.contic.com](http://www.contic.com)).

Over the years, Marre has also created more than 100 boat models and in an effort to make the Bangladeshi public aware of its historical heritage the collection was exhibited in the Bangladesh National Museum. After receiving international accolades, the collection moved to Paris' Navy Museum. It's now travelling around Europe.

"These boats have reached the level of an art and this is what we want to protect," says Marre. "As it is an oral tradition, there are hardly any drawings, boat plans and very few documents. Already many of these boats have disappeared, perhaps forever."

**The restored B613 has six double cabins for overnight stays and can take up to 40 people out on day trips**

修復後的B613號帆船有六個雙人船艙供乘客留宿，另外還可容納40名參加一日遊的旅客



這些年來，他建造了超過100艘模型船，為了喚醒孟加拉民眾重視這種歷史文化遺產，整個系列的模型船曾在孟加拉國家博物館展出。這批船也得到國際社會的讚譽，曾應邀於巴黎海事博物館展出，目前則在歐洲進行巡迴展覽。

Marre說：「這些傳統帆船已經昇華為藝術品，我們希望能保存這種造船工藝。由於這是口頭傳承的文化遺產，很難找到造船圖或結構圖，文字記載也很少，很多式樣已不復見，可能已永遠地消失。」 ■

## A REAL LIFESAVER 救援醫療船隊

**Y**ves Marre has never been alone in his quest to preserve Bangladesh's boat-building traditions. Since his arrival in 1994, he and his Bangladeshi wife Runa Khan have married their twin passions: sailing the spectacular waterways of Bangladesh and providing assistance to the poorest and most remote of the country's river people.

Their non-profit organisation is called Friendship to symbolise the most prized relationship in Bangladeshi culture. The organisation's chief achievement is the creation of two floating hospitals, which bring modern medical treatment and international doctors to Bangladesh's poorest people and those hardest to reach.

Travelling up and down the Jamuna River, the hospitals provide healthcare to those living near the riverbank. Each hospital, with a staff of up to 40 people including doctors, nurses and crew, moves to a new location every two to three months.

Doctors from overseas arrive throughout the year to provide medical camps and to train local staff.

"Health is one of the most essential components – if not the most essential component – to any development project," says Khan.

**在**保存孟加拉傳統造船技術的旅程上，Marre走的路並不孤單。1994年在孟加拉定居下來之後，他和孟加拉籍妻子Runa Khan便攜手實現他們的兩大



共同理想，那就是揚帆暢遊風光明媚的孟加拉水域，以及向身處這個國家最偏遠水域的貧民提供援助。

他們所創辦的非牟利組織命名為「友誼」，突顯了孟加拉文化中最受重視的人際關係。該組織的主要成就是創辦了兩艘醫療船，為孟加拉偏遠地區的貧民，帶來世界各地的醫生和先進的醫護援助。

醫療船沿著賈木納河航行，為居住在河岸的居民提供醫療保健服務。每一艘醫療船上駐有多達40名工作人員，包括醫生、護士和船員，每兩到三個月就轉移到不同的地點。來自全球各地的醫生源源不絕的到來，提供醫療服務以及培訓當地職員。

Khan指出：「對於任何發展計劃而言，醫療保健就算不是最重要的一部分，也肯定是當中最主要的環節之一。」

**A patient receives treatment on Friendship's Floating Hospital in Keranigonj, Dhaka**

病人在停靠於達卡Keranigonj的「友誼」醫療船上接受治療