

MA HUAN
YING-YAI SHENG-LAN

'THE OVERALL SURVEY OF
THE OCEAN'S SHORES'

[I433]

*Translated from the Chinese text
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As to the marriage- and funeral-rites of the people in the country: all the people in each of the five classes follow their own forms and there is no uniformity.

Husked and unhusked rice,¹ hemp, pulse, glutinous millet, and panicked millet—all these they have; only they have no barley or wheat.² Elephants, horses, oxen, goats, dogs, cats, fowls, and ducks—all these they have; only they have no donkeys, mules, and geese.

The king of this country, too, sends chiefs who accompany the treasure-ships on their return from the [Western] Ocean, bringing local products to be offered as tribute to the Central Country.

THE COUNTRY OF KU-LI³

[CALICUT]

[This is] the great country of the Western Ocean.

Setting sail from the anchorage in the country of Ko-chih,⁴ you travel north-west, and arrive [here] after three days. The country lies beside the sea. [Travelling] east from the mountains for five hundred, or seven hundred, *li*, you make a long journey through to the country of K'an-pa-i.⁵ On the west [the country of Ku-li] abuts on the great sea; on the south it joins the

cent pure and weighing *1 fen 1 li*, had the same value as 5 *liang* of silver; that is, 891 *li* of gold had the same value as 1,000 *li* of silver, so that the value of gold was **5.61** times the value of silver, if the silver was pure. Again the *fanam* contained 9.9 *li* of gold; so that the 15 *tar* contained 55.53 *li* of silver; and as the 15 *tar* weighed 60 *li*, the purity of the silver in the *tar* was 92.5 per cent.

¹ *SU* (Giles, no. 10,340) at that date meaning 'unhusked rice'; at a later date, as explained by Shu Hsin-Ch'eng, quoting Li Shih-chen (1596), the name was applied to a fine variety of *liang* (Giles, no. 7023), 'the common spiked millet or canary seed'; at a still later date the name was used to denote the American maize. The editor is indebted to Professor Homer H. Dubs for making extensive researches on this point.

² Literally, 'the two wheats, great and small'.

³ Giles, nos. **6188**; **6870**; the Chinese name is a transliteration of the local name Kolikkotu, meaning 'the fortified palace' of the ruler, entitled Zamorin; Calicut or Kozhikode, 11° 15' N, 75° 46' E, lies in the State of Kerala; in Ma Huan's time the ruler's political importance was merely local, but Calicut constituted a great emporium of trade frequented by merchants from all quarters. For Calicut see Hsiang Ta, *Kung Chen*, pp. 27-32; Fei Hsin, ch. 1, pp. 34-5 (Rockhill, Part II, pp. **461-z**); *Ming shih*, p. 7920, row 3; Penzer, *Polo*, p. **135**; Yule and Burnell, p. **148a**; Menon, vol. I, pp. 227-39; Ayyar, pp. 83, 127-37; K. A. N. Sastri, *A History of South India* (2nd ed., Madras, **1958**), p. 260. (The history of Kerala is very fragmentary and confused, and few noteworthy events can be dated.)

⁴ Cochin. The distance to Calicut is 80 miles; Ma Huan made a very slow voyage.

⁵ Huang Sheng-tseng (ch. III, f. 3 v) gives the full form of the name as 'K'an-pa-i-t'i' (Giles, nos. 5870; 8510; 5397; 11,018), which Pelliot ('Voyages', p. **410**) identified with Koyampadi, modern Coimbatore, situated in about 11° N, 77° E, 76 miles nearly due east of Calicut. In giving the distance as 500 *li*, nearly 200 miles, Ma Huan was guilty of an exaggeration.

boundary of the country of Ko-chih; [and] on the north side it adjoins the territory of the country of Hen-nu-erh.¹

'The great country of the Western Ocean' is precisely this country.

In the fifth year of the Yung-lo [period] the court ordered² the principal envoy the grand eunuch Cheng Ho and others to deliver an imperial mandate to the king³ of this country and to bestow on him a patent conferring a title of honour, and the grant of a silver [Page 4.3] seal, [also] to promote all the chiefs and award them hats and girdles of various grades.

[So Cheng Ho] went there in command of a large fleet of treasure-ships, and he erected a tablet with a pavilion over it and set up a stone which said ' Though the journey from this country to the Central Country is more than a hundred thousand *li*, yet the people are very similar, happy and prosperous, with identical customs. We have here engraved a stone, a perpetual declaration for ten thousand ages.'⁴

The king of the country is a Nan-k'un⁵ man; he is a firm believer in the Buddhist religion;⁶ [and] he venerates the elephant and the ox.

The population of the country includes five classes, the Muslim people, the Nan-k'un people, the Che-ti people, the Ko-ling people, and the Mu-kua people.

The king of the country and the people of the country all refrain from eating the flesh of the ox.⁷ The great chiefs are Muslim people; [and] they all refrain from eating the flesh of the pig.⁸ Formerly there was a king who made a sworn compact with the Muslim people, [saying] 'You do not eat the ox; I do not eat the pig; we will reciprocally respect the taboo';⁹ [and this compact] has been honoured right down to the present day.

¹ Giles, nos. 3904; 8387; 3333; identified by Pelliot ('Voyages', pp. **410-11**) and Feng with Honore (Onore), now called Honavar, situated in 14° 16' N, 74° 27' E; it is on the coast, 199 miles northward from Calicut. See Yule and Burnell, p. 422a.

² The order was made in October 1407; but, although in nominal command of this, the second expedition, Cheng Ho did not accompany it (Duyvendak, 'Dates', pp. **364, 371**).

³ A new king, Ma-na Pi-chia-la-man, Mana Vikraman, had evidently succeeded since Cheng Ho was at Calicut in 1406-7 during the course of his first expedition (Duyvendak, 'Dates', p. 359).

⁴ *Yung shih wan shih* (Giles, nos. **13,504; 9953; 12,486; 9969**). For the second character, C and K have lo; hence Duyvendak (Ma Huan, p. **51**) translated 'May the period Yung-lo last for ever'; Feng preferred the reading *shih*, which appears in the *Hsi-yang chi*.

⁵ Probably Ma Huan wrote 'Nan-p'i' and meant the upper classes consisting of Brahmans and Kshatriyas.

⁶ Ma Huan is mistaken; the king was a Hindu.

⁷ Detestation of cow-slaughter is the most prominent outward mark of Hinduism (Smith, p. 52).

⁸ It is noteworthy that a Hindu ruler was employing Muslims as great officers.

⁹ Feng here adopts the reading of S; since it was the king who made the compact, it would seem reasonable to prefer C, 'You do not eat the pig; I do not eat the ox'; thus, they agreed to respect each others' convictions in the matter of diet. It scarcely needs to be said that the pig is anathema to Muslims.

The king has cast an image of Buddha in brass; it is named Nai-na-erh;¹ he has erected a temple of Buddha and has cast tiles of brass and covered the dais of Buddha with them; [and] beside [the dais] a well has been dug. Every day at dawn the king goes to [the well], draws water, and washes [the image of] Buddha; after worshipping, he orders men to collect the pure dung of yellow oxen;² this is stirred with water in a brass basin [until it is] like paste; [then] it is smeared all over the surface of the ground and walls inside the temple. Moreover, he has given orders that the chiefs and wealthy personages shall also smear and scour themselves with ox-dung every morning.

He also takes ox-dung, burns it till it is reduced to a white ash, and grinds **[Page 44]** it to a fine powder; using a fair cloth as a small bag, he fills it with the ash, and regularly carries it on his person. Every day at dawn, after he has finished washing his face, he takes the ox-dung ash, stirs it up with water, and smears it on his forehead and between his two thighs-thrice in each [place]. This denotes his sincerity in venerating Buddha and in venerating the ox.

There is a traditional story that in olden times there was a holy man named Mou-hsieh,³ who established a religious cult; the people knew that he was a true [man of] Heaven, and all men revered and followed him. Later the holy man went away with [others] to another place, and ordered his younger brother named Sa-mo-li⁴ to govern and teach the people.

[But] his younger brother began to have depraved ideas; he made a casting of a golden calf and said 'This is the holy lord; everyone who worships it will have his expectations fulfilled.' He taught the people to listen to his bidding and to adore the golden ox, saying 'It always excretes gold.' The people got the gold, and their hearts rejoiced; and they forgot the way of Heaven; all took the ox to be the true lord.

Later Mou-hsieh the holy man returned; he saw that the multitude, misled by his younger brother Sa-mo-li, were corrupting the holy way; thereupon he destroyed the ox and wished to punish his younger brother; [and] his younger brother mounted a large elephant and vanished.

Afterwards, the people thought of him and hoped anxiously for his

¹ Giles, nos. 8113; **8106**; 3333; Vogel suggested that the name might be a corruption of Narayana, a name for Vishnu (Duyvendak, *Ma Huan*, p. 52). All these references to Buddha, then, must be construed as references to a Hindu deity.

² After this passage C becomes defective, containing only 6 characters as compared with the 36 characters of Feng's recension.

³ Giles, nos. **8031**; 4363; 'Musa' (Moses). Ma Huan alleges that the incidents occurred at Calicut. Presumably he learnt the story of Aaron and the golden calf from Arab informants. A number of Old Testament characters, including Moses, figure prominently in the Koran.

⁴ Giles, nos. 9723; **8016**; 6942; 'Al-Sameri' (the Samaritan), the name appearing in the Koran.

return. Moreover, if it was the beginning of the moon, they would say 'In the middle of the moon he will certainly come', and when the middle of the moon arrived, they would say once more 'At the end of the moon he will certainly come'; right down to the present day they have never ceased to hope for his return:

This is the reason why the Nan-k'un¹ people venerate the elephant and the ox.

The king has two great chiefs who administer the affairs of the country; both are Muslims.

The majority of the people in the country all profess the Muslim religion. There are twenty or thirty temples of worship, [Page 45] and once in seven days they go to worship. When the day arrives, the whole family fast and bathe, and attend to nothing else. In the *ssu* and *wu* periods,² the menfolk, old and young, go to the temple to worship. When the *wei* period³ arrives, they disperse and return home; thereupon they carry on with their trading, and transact their household affairs.

The people are very honest and trustworthy. Their appearance is smart, fine, and distinguished.

Their two great chiefs received promotion and awards from the court of the Central Country.

If a treasure-ship goes there, it is left entirely to the two men to superintend the buying and selling; the king sends a chief and a Che-ti Wei-no-chi⁴ to examine the account books in the official bureau; a broker comes and joins them; [and] a high officer who commands the ships discusses the choice of a certain date for fixing prices. When the day arrives, they first of all take the silk embroideries and the open-work silks, and other such goods which have been brought there, and discuss the price of them one by one; [and] when [the price] has been fixed, they write out an agreement stating the amount of the price; [this agreement] is retained by these persons.

¹ Probably Ma Huan wrote 'Nan-p'i', and referred to the upper classes of Brahmans and Kshatriyas.

² Giles, nos. 10,284 and **12, 769**; 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., respectively.

³ Giles, no. 12,606; 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

⁴ Giles, nos. **12,606**; **8373**; **837**; Duyvendak suggested that the 'Che-ti Wei-no-chi' of the Chinese might be the 'Waligi Chitty' of Valentyn's account of Ceylon; Pelliot accepted the reconstruction 'Waligi', and would connect the word etymologically with the Tamil *valikkar*, Malay *berniaga*, and Portuguese *banyan*, all ultimately derived from Sanskrit *vanij*, 'a merchant'. The Chinese expression, then, would have some such meaning as 'Chetty trader' or 'Chetty broker'. See Duyvendak, *Ma Huan*, p. 53; Yule and Burnell, under 'Banyan', p. 63 a; P. Pelliot, 'Les Hoja et le Sayid Husain de l'histoire des Ming', *T'oung Pao*, vol. xxxviii (1948), p. 87, n. 8. Kung Chen writes 'mi-na-fan' for 'wei-no-chi', states that this was the name given to accountants at Calicut, and adds that the man in question was a broker; Kung Chen further notes that 'they wrote out a contract in duplicate, and each [party] kept one [document]'.

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The chief and the Che-ti, with his excellency the eunuch, all join hands together, and the broker then says 'In such and such a moon on such and such a day, we have all joined hands and sealed our agreement with a hand-clasp; whether [the price] be dear or cheap, we will never repudiate it or change it.'

After that, the Che-ti and the men of wealth then come bringing precious stones, pearls, corals, and other such things, so that they may be examined and the price discussed; [this] cannot be settled in a day; [if done] quickly, [it takes] one moon; [if done] slowly, [it takes] two or three moons.'

Once the money-price has been fixed after examination and discussion, if a pearl or other such article is purchased, the price which must be paid for it is calculated by the chief and the Wei-no-chi who carried out the original transaction; [and] as to the quantity of the hemp-silk or other such article which must be given in exchange for it, goods are given in exchange according to [the price fixed by] the original hand-clasp -[Page 46] there is not the slightest deviation.²

In their method of calculation, they do not use a calculating-plate;³ for calculating, they use only the two hands and two feet and the twenty digits on them; and they do not make the slightest mistake; [this is] very extraordinary.

The king uses gold of sixty per cent [purity] to cast a coin for current use; it is named a *pa-nan*;⁴ the diameter of the face of each coin is three *fen* eight *li* [in terms of] our official *ts'un*;⁵ it has lines⁶ on the face and on the reverse; [and] it weighs one *fen* on our official steelyard.⁷ He also makes a coin of silver; it is named a *ta-erh*;⁸ each coin weighs about three *li*;⁹ [and] this coin is used for petty transactions.

¹ Presumably the goods were unloaded, unless the Chinese left one or two ships behind; at any rate, on the seventh expedition the Chinese stayed only 4 days, from 10 to 14 December 1432, at Calicut.

² This instructive disquisition on administrative procedure illustrates the meticulous care taken to fix the rate of exchange in times prior to the advent of the Europeans.

³ The abacus, a wooden frame in which are fixed a number of beads strung on parallel wires; used by the Chinese for all kinds of arithmetic calculations upon the decimal system; it came into use in late Sung times.

⁴ Giles, nos. 85 ii; 812.8; representing the sound *fanam*. The king was an independent sovereign minting his own coinage; but doubtless, as in 1443, he 'lived in great fear' of Vijayanagar (Abdul Razzak).

⁵ As in K; C and S wrongly write 'steelyard' instead of 'inch'. The diameter of the *fanam*, being 0.38 of the Chinese *ts'un* of 1.22 inches, equalled 0.46 of an English inch.

⁶ Or 'characters'.

⁷ The gold content weighed 3.45 grains or 0.00719 ounce troy, and today would be worth **1s.** 9d.

⁸ Giles, nos. 10,485; 3333; representing the sound *tar* or *tare* (*tara*).

⁹ C has '2 *li*'; Feng adopted the reading of S and K, and Pelliot agreed ('Voyages', p. 414). If the silver was pure, the silver content, weighing 0.00359 ounce troy, would today be worth 0.4d.

In their system of weights,¹ each one *ch'ien* on their foreign steelyard equals eight *fen* on our official steelyard; and each one *Ziang* on their foreign steelyard, being calculated at sixteen *ch'ien*, equals one *liang* two *ch'ien* eight *fen* on our official steelyard.² On their foreign steelyard twenty *liang* make one *chin*, equal to one *chin* nine *liang* six *ch'ien* on our official steelyard.³ Their foreign weight is named a *fan-la-shih*.⁴

The fulcrum of [their] steelyard is fixed at the end of the beam, and the weight is moved along to the middle of the beam; when [the beam] is raised to the level, that is the zero position;⁵ when you weigh a thing, you move the weight forward; and according as the thing is light or heavy, so you move the weight forward or backward.⁶ You can weigh only ten *chin*, which is equivalent to sixteen *chin* on our official steelyard.⁷

In weighing such things as aromatic goods, two hundred *chin* on their foreign steelyard make one *po-ho*, which is equivalent to three hundred and twenty *chin* on our official steelyard.⁸ If they weigh pepper, two hundred and fifty *chin* make one *po-ho*, which is equivalent to four hundred *chin* on our official steelyard.⁹

Whenever they weigh goods, large and small alike, they mostly use a pair of scales for testing comparative weights. As to their system of measurement: the authorities make a brass casting, which constitutes a *sheng*, for current use; the foreign name for it is *tang-chia-* [Page 47] *li*; ¹⁰ [and] each *sheng* equals one *sheng* six *ko* [in terms of] our official *sheng*, 'Western Ocean' cloth, named *ch'e li* cloth¹¹ in this country, comes from the neighbouring

¹ K omits 168 characters treating of weights and measurements.

² The gist of this is that 1 *liang* (16 *ch'ien*) of Calicut equalled 1.28 Chinese *liang* or 1.6 ounces avoirdupois.

³ That is, 1 *chin* (20 *liang*) of Calicut equalled 1.6 Chinese *chin* or 2 pounds 1.6 ounces avoirdupois. C wrongly writes '3 *liang*' instead of '20 *liang*' as in S.

⁴ Giles, nos. 3383; 6653; 995. I. C wrongly writes *fan-tz'u-shih*; for the first character S writes *fa* (Giles, no. 3366), which Pelliot preferred ('Voyages', p. 408). Ma Huan previously represented the sound by the character *feng*. *Fan-la-shih* means the Arabic *farsala*, the normal sub-division of the *bahar*.

⁵ Following Hsiang Ta's edition of Kung Chen, we place the stop after the expression *ting p'an hsing* (Giles, nos. 11,248; 8620; 4602), 'zero on the steelyard, at which the weight is placed before the thing to be weighed is attached'.

⁶ This last paragraph *occurs* only in S.

⁷ That is, 21 pounds avoirdupois.

⁸ That is, 420.9 pounds avoirdupois. The *bahar* (Chinese *po-ho*) had a different value for different kinds of merchandise (Yule and Burnell, under 'Bahar', p. 47b).

⁹ That is, 526.2 pounds avoirdupois.

¹⁰ Giles, nos. 10,719; 1171; 6942; the expression has not been explained; 1 *tang-chia-li* contained 1.7 litres or 3 pints. Ma Huan here provides an example of the 'royal measures' such as are referred to in Indian inscriptions; see Sastri, *South India*, pp. 327-8.

¹¹ Giles, nos. 582; 6942; this name for 'Western Ocean' cloth has not been satisfactorily explained; but see Wheatley, *Khersonese*, p. 80, n. 1.

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districts of K'an-pa-i' and other such places; each roll is four **ch'ih five ts'un** broad, and **two chang five ch'ih** long;² [and] it is sold for eight or ten of their local gold coins.³

The people of the country also take the silk of the silk-worm, soften it by boiling, dye it in all colours, and weave it into kerchiefs with decorative stripes at intervals; the breadth is four or **five ch'ih**, and the length one **chang** two or three **ch'ih**;⁴ [and] each length is sold for one hundred gold coins.⁵

As to the pepper: the inhabitants of the mountainous countryside have established gardens, and it is extensively cultivated. When the period of the tenth moon arrives, the pepper ripens; [and] it is collected, dried in the sun, and sold. Of course, big pepper-collectors come and collect it, and take it up to the official storehouse to be stored; if there is a buyer, an official gives permission for the sale; the duty is calculated according to the amount [of the purchase price] and is paid in to the authorities. Each **one po-ho** of pepper is sold for two hundred gold coins.⁶

The Che-ti mostly purchase all kinds of precious stones and pearls, and they manufacture coral beads and other such things.

Foreign ships from every place come there; and the king of the country also sends a chief and a writer and others to watch the sales; thereupon they collect the duty and pay it in to the authorities.

The wealthy people mostly cultivate coconut trees-sometimes a thousand trees, sometimes two thousand or three thousand-; this constitutes their property.

The coconut has ten different uses. The young tree has a syrup, very sweet, and good to drink; [and] it can be made into wine by fermentation. The old coconut has flesh, from which they express oil, and make sugar, and make a foodstuff for eating. From the fibre which envelops the outside [of the nut] they make ropes for ship-building. The shell of the coconut makes bowls and makes cups; it is also good for burning to ash for the delicate operation of inlaying⁷ gold or silver. The trees are good for building houses, and the leaves are good [**Page 48**] for roofing houses.

1 Identified with Coimbatore by Pelliot ('Voyages', p. 413).

2 That is, **4** feet **7** inches broad and 25 feet 5.9 inches long.

3 The gold content of **8** coins weighed **27.6** grains or **0.05756** ounce troy and would today be worth **14s. 3d.**

4 The equivalent of **4 ch'ih** was **48.9** inches; **1 chang 2 ch'ih** equalled 12 feet 2.9 inches.

5 The gold content weighed **345.375** grains or **0.7195** ounce troy, and would today be worth **£8 19s. 10d.**

6 The gold content of **200 fanam** weighed **690.751** grains or **1.439** ounces troy, and would now be worth **£17 19s. 9d.**; thus, based on the present value of gold, the price of pepper at Calicut was **8.2d.** a pound; this is **34** per cent more than at Cochin.

7 Hsiang, Giles, no. 4213, 'a box', used for *hsiang*, Giles, no. **4250**, 'side rooms', which in turn is used for *hsiang*, Giles, no. 4272, 'to inlay'. Shu Hsin-Ch'eng omits to give the necessary information.

For vegetables they have mustard plants, green ginger, turnips, caraway seeds, onions, garlic, bottle-gourds, egg-plants, cucumbers, and gourd-melons'-all these they have in [all] the four seasons [of the year]. They also have a kind of small gourd which is as large as [one's] finger, about two *ts'un*² long, and tastes like a green cucumber. Their onions have a purple skin; they resemble garlic; they have a large head and small leaves; [and] they are sold by the **chin**³ weight.

The **mu-pieh-tzu**⁴ tree is more than ten *chang* high; it forms a fruit which resembles a green persimmon and contains thirty or forty seeds; it falls of its own accord when ripe; [and] the bats, as large as hawks, all hang upside-down and rest on this tree.

They have both red and white rice, [but] barley and wheat are both absent; [and] their wheat-flour all comes from other places as merchandise for sale [here].

Fowls and ducks exist in profusion, [but] there are no geese. Their **goats** have tall legs and an ashen hue; they resemble donkey-foals. The water-buffaloes are not very large. Some of the yellow oxen weigh three or four hundred **chin**⁵ the people do not eat their flesh; [but] consume only the milk and cream. The people never eat rice without butter. Their oxen are cared for until they are old; [and] when they die, they are buried. The price of all kinds of sea-fish is very cheap. Deer and hares [from up] in the mountains are also for sale.

Many of the people rear peafowl: As to their other birds: they have crows, green hawks, egrets, and swallows; [but] of other kinds of birds besides these they have not a single one, great or small. The people of the country can also play and sing; they use the shell of a calabash to make a musical instrument, and copper wires to make the strings; and they play [this instrument] to accompany the singing of their foreign songs; the melodies are worth hearing.⁶

¹ **Tung kua**, 'eastern gourd', the same vegetable as *tung kua*, 'winter gourd'.

² That is, 2.4 inches.

³ That is, **1.3** pounds avoirdupois.

⁴ Giles, nos. 8077; **9155; 12,317**; the tree is *Momordica cochinchinensis*. The editor is indebted to Dr J. Needham, F.R.S., for the information that *Momordica* seeds were prescribed in the form of paste for abscesses, ulcers, and wounds, as well as in other ways for other affections. The equivalent of 10 *chang* was **102** feet.

⁵ The equivalent of 300 *chin* was 394'6 pounds avoirdupois.

⁶ Music was cultivated at the royal courts, and numbers of musicians were employed in the temples (Sastri, *South India*, pp. 305,314-15). Conti, in his account of Vijayanagar city, records solemn singing at religious festivals, and the celebration of weddings with 'banquets, songs, trumpets, and instrumentes muche like unto ours' (Penzer, *Polo*, pp. 141-2). The instrument referred to by Ma Huan was probably the vina, a fretted instrument of the guitar kind, which was particularly favoured by Indian musicians; for Indian musical instruments, with sketches, see K. Ambrose, *Classical Dances and Costumes of India* (London, **1950**). p. **28**, and P. Thomas, *Hindu Religion, Customs and Manners* (third Indian edition, Bombay, 1956), pp. 113-14.

As to the popular [Page 491 customs and the marriage- and funeral-rites, the So-li people and the Muslim people each follow the ritual forms of their own class, and these are different.¹

The king's throne does not descend to his son, but descends to his sister's son; descent is to the sister's son [because]² they consider that the offspring of the woman's body alone constitutes the legal family. If the king has no elder or younger sister, [the throne] descends to his younger brother; [and] if he has no younger brother, [the throne] is yielded up to some man of merit. Such is the succession from one generation to another.³

The king's laws do not include the punishment of flogging with the bamboo. If the offence is slight, they cut off a hand [or] sever a foot; if it is serious, they impose a money-fine [or] put the offender to death; [and] if it is very [heinous], they confiscate his property [and] exterminate his family. A person who offends against the law is taken under arrest to an official, whereupon he accepts his punishment.⁴

If there is perhaps something unjust about the circumstances and he does not admit the offence, then [he is taken] before the king or before a great chief; [there] they set up an iron cooking-pot, fill it with four or five *chins* of oil and cook it to the boil; first they throw in some tree-leaves to test whether they make a crackling noise; then they make the man take two fingers of his right hand and scald them in the oil for a short time; he waits

I Hindu and Muslim usages differed in innumerable respects; in particular, Muslims worshipped one god, enjoyed a most lenient social code, held their feasts on days fixed according to the lunar year, ate meat (except pork), and buried their dead; Ma Huan, as a Muslim, must have observed such common Hindu usages as differed greatly from his own, that is, that the Hindus worshipped many gods as well as idols and cows and serpents, that they were inhibited by their caste system, that they held their feasts on days fixed according to the solar year, that they mostly adhered to a vegetarian diet (abhorring beef), and that they burned their dead. See Thomas, pp. 10, 11, 32, 34, 35, 93, 140, and Smith, pp. 66, 264. 2 S includes this word.

3 Ma Huan's statement is correct, subject to the qualification that the king's younger brother succeeds if he is older than his nephew. Thorne in 1921 stated the law 'The eldest male *in* the line of descent succeeds.' Menon, in 1924, considered that the law was modified by custom, 'It does not appear that the next in age always succeeded'. Ayyar, in 1938, agreed with Thorne, 'Succession was regulated by the Marumakkayam law, according to which the oldest male traced through the female becomes the chief.' The law prevailed in Cochin also. Adoption was resorted to when necessary for the continuation of the family. Kung Chen's statement resembles Ma Huan's; Conti says 'The sonne dothe not inherit his fathers lande, but hys sonnes sonne'; Fei Hsin does not mention the matter. Thorne and Dames (1921) wrote long notes on this topic. See Dames, vol. II, p. 11, n. 1; p. 43, n. 1; Menon, vol. I, p. 480; Ayyar, pp. 261, 262; Penzer, *Polo*, p. 135.

4 According to Barbosa, the official was governor of Calicut, and bore the title of 'Talixe', that is, Talachan (Dames, vol. II, p. 27). On the administration of criminal justice see Ayyar, pp. 282-90.

5 The equivalent of 4 *chin* was 5.2 pounds avoirdupois.

till they are burnt and then takes them out; they are wrapped in a cloth on which a seal is affixed; [and] he is kept in prison at the office.

Two or three days later, before the assembled crowd, they break open the seal and examine him; if the hand has a burst abscess, then there is nothing unjust about the matter and a punishment is imposed; [but] if the hand is undamaged, just as it had been before, then he is released.

The chief and other men, with drums and music, ceremonially escort this man back to his family; all his relations, neighbours, and friends give him presents and there are mutual congratulations; and they drink wine and play music by way of mutual felicitation. This is a very extraordinary matter.'

On the day when the envoy returned, the king of the country wished to send tribute; [so] he took fifty *liang*² of fine red gold and ordered the foreign craftsmen to draw it out into gold threads as fine as a hair; these were strung together to form a ribbon, which was made into a jewelled girdle with incrustations of all kinds of precious stones and large pearls; [Page 50] [and the king] sent a chief, Nai-pang,³ to present it as tribute to the Central Country.

THE COUNTRY OF LIU MOUNTAINS⁴
[MALDIVE AND LACCADIVE ISLANDS]

Setting sail from Su-men-ta-la,⁵ after passing Hsiao mao mountain,⁶ you go towards the south-west; [and] with a fair wind you can reach [this place] in

1 This ordeal by boiling oil is described in much the same terms by Barbosa (Dames, vol. II, p. 29).

2 That is, 59.95975 ounces troy; the present market value would be £749 9s. **11d.**

3 K has *nai na* (Giles, nos. **8113**; 8090), as has Kung Chen. Feng considers the characters to be interpolated. Since the words make no sense (Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. **414**), we take them to be a proper name; it may be a contraction for 'Narayana', a name often met with in south India. The *Ming shih* states that, because Calicut was a great country, its ambassadors took precedence *over* those of all other countries.

4 'Liu shan' (Giles, nos. 7219; 9663). Liu is a transliteration of *diu*, 'island', which, with other forms such as *dive*, *diva*, *diba*, was derived from Sanskrit *dvipa* (Yule and Burnell, under 'Maldives', p. 5466). The Liu mountains included the Laccadive islands situated about **200** miles from India, and the Maldive islands situated about **600** miles south-south-west of Cape Comorin; the groups extend for **770** miles from north to south and 100 miles from west to east. Politically insignificant, the islands had a certain economic importance based on the export of ropes, ambergris, bonito fish, and cowries. The Chinese claimed sovereignty over the islands. For the Liu mountains see Hsiang Ta, *Kung Chen*, pp. 32-3; Fei Hsin, ch. **2**, pp. 22-3 (Rockhill, Part **II**, pp. 390-2); *Ming shih*, p. 7922, row 1; R. H. Ellis, *A Short Account of the Laccadive Islands and Minicoy* (Madras, 1924); H. C. P. Bell, 'Excerpta Maldiviana', *Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. **VII**, 'Lonu Ziyarat': Male, vol. **XXXI**, no. **81** (**1928**), pp. **180-95**; no. **IX**, 'Lomafanu', vol. **XXXI**, no. **83** (**1930**), pp. **539-78**. For the location of the islands see British Admiralty Charts **66a**, **66b**, **66c** and **747**.

5 Semudera (Lho Seumawe) on the north coast of Sumatra.

6 Poulou Weh. The reading of C, *Hsiao Mao shan*, should no doubt be Nan-mao *shan*.

THE COUNTRY OF CHAO-WA'

[JAVA]

[Page 7] The country of Chao-wa was formerly called the country of She-p'o.² The country has four large towns,³ none of which is a walled city and suburban area.⁴ The ships which come here from other countries first arrive at a town named Tu-pan;⁵ next at a town named New Village;⁶ then at a town named Su-lu-ma-i;⁷ then again at a town named Man-the-po-i,⁸ where the king of the country lives.⁹

I Giles, nos. **484**; **12, 422**; 'Java'. Ma Huan limits his account to the realm of Majapahit in eastern Java; in his time this realm was the supreme power, politically and economically, of Indonesia; it comprised East Java, Madura, and Bali, and possessed a sphere of influence extending over the coasts of Java and Sumatra, of the Malay peninsula as far north as Nakhon (Ligor), and of the coasts of Borneo as far north as Brunei and as far east as Bandjarmasin (Wheatley, *Khersonese*, pp. 301-3; Meilink-Roelofs, p. 22; Coedes, *Etats*, pp. 431, 439. Hall (*History*, pp. 82-4), following Berg, limits the state of Majapahit to East Java, Madura, and Bali. For Java see Hsiang Ta, *Kung Chen*, pp. 4-10; Fei Hsin, ch. 1, pp. 13-17 (Rockhill, Part II, pp. **246-50**); *Ming shih*, p. **7916**, row 2 (Groeneveldt, pp. **160-7**); R. C. Majumdar, *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East: II. Suvarnavipa* (pt. I, Dacca, 1937), pp. **339-51, 404-7**; B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies* (pt. II, The Hague-Bandung, 1957), pp. **38-44**; C. C. Brown, 'Sejarah Melayu or Malay Annals', *Journal of the Malaya Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xxv, pts. 2 and 3 (1953), pp. 68, 82, 98; Coedes, *Etats*, pp. 430-6; Hall, *History*, pp. **87-9**.

² Giles, nos. 9783; 9412; the ancient Chinese pronunciation of the characters is said to have been 'Japa'.

³ *Kuo* (Giles, no. 6609), 'country', here, as in some other passages, meaning 'capital, large town'; *ch'u* (Giles, no. **2660**), 'place', is here a numerative (Duyvendak, *Ma Huan*, p. 29).

⁴ In the typical 'city and suburban area' of Ming times, the city was surrounded by an inner wall and the suburban area by an outer wall; see the sketch in Wang Ch'i, section *Kung-shih*, ch. 2, f. 31.

⁵ Giles, nos. 12,043; 8588; Tuban, a port on the north coast of Java, 6° 50' S, 112° 04' E. And see below on Tuban, Gresik, Surabaya, and Majapahit.

⁶ Hsin ts'un (Giles, nos. 4574; 11,968); Gresik, a port on the east coast of Java, 7° 09' S, 112° 40' E. Feng adopts the reading Hsin ts'un of S and K; for the first character C has Ssu (Giles, no. 10,296), 'latrine', which Damais, differing from Pelliot, would prefer to retain (L. C. Damais, 'Etudes Javanaises', *Bulletin de Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient*, vol. XLVIII (1957), p. 362, n. 3); Hsin, however, is also the reading of Kung Chen and Fei Hsin.

⁷ Giles, nos. **10, 320**; 7388; 7576; 5485; Surabaya, a port on the east coast of Java, 7° 12' S, 112° 44' E.

⁸ Giles, nos. 7622; 542; 9340; 7397; Majapahit; the ruins are probably near Trawulan, 35 miles south-west of Surabaya.

⁹ The king is designated 'Batara' in the *Sejarah Melayu*, 'Malay Annals' (Brown, p. 32, etc.). At the time of Ma Huan's last visit in **1432**, the ruler was Queen Suhita (**1429-46**), by religion a Hindu.

As to the place where the king resides: the walls are made of bricks, and are more than three *chang*¹ in height; in circumference they are something more than two hundred paces;² [and] in the [walls] are set double gates, very well-kept and clean.

The houses are constructed in storeyed form, each being three or four *chang*³ in height; they lay a plank [flooring, over which] they spread matting [made of] fine rattans, or else patterned grass mats, on which the people sit cross-legged; [and] on the top of the houses they use boards of hard wood as tiles, splitting [the wood into] roofing [material].

The houses in which the people of the country live have thatch for their roofs. Every family has a store-room⁴ built of bricks in the ground; it is three or four *ch'ih*⁵ in height; [in this] they store the private belongings of the family; [and] upon this they live, sit and sleep.

As to the dress [worn by] the king of the country: his head is unkempt, or else he wears a crown of gold leaves and flowers; he has no robe on his person; around the lower part he has one or two embroidered kerchiefs of silk. In addition, he uses [a piece of] figured silk-gauze or hemp-silk to bind [the kerchiefs] around his waist; [this] is called a 'waist-band'; [and in it] he thrusts one or two short knives, called *pu-la-t'ou*.⁶ He goes about bare-footed, and either rides on an elephant or sits in a carriage [drawn by] oxen.

As to the dress [worn by] the people of the country: the men [Page 8] have unkempt heads; [and] the women pin up the hair in a chignon. They

¹ The equivalent of 3 *chang* was 30 feet 7 inches.

² The *pu* (Giles, no. 9485), 'pace', consisted of two steps of 2.5 feet each; it measured 61.22 inches at that time; hence 200 paces equalled 340 yards, and a rectangle within such a circumference would measure approximately 1½ acres.

³ The equivalent of 4 *chang* was 40 feet 9 inches.

⁴ *T'u k'u* (Giles, nos. 12,099; 6279), Amoy colloquial *tho kho*, 'store-room, cellar'. Overseas, the expression underwent curious mutations; in Java the Hokkiens from Fukien province extended the meaning to 'shop'; and in this sense it became widely known in the Indonesian archipelago, and was commonly used even in Holland; from 'shop' it became successively 'factory', and 'citadel'; while in Malaya the expression came to mean 'godown', 'firm with a godown', 'big commercial house'. See Duyvendak, *Ma Huan*, pp. 30-4; J. V. Mills, 'The Expression Tho-kho', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. xvi, pt. 1 (1938), pp. 137-8. Ma Huan also mentions *t'u k'u* in Cochin.

⁵ The equivalent of 4 *ch'ih* was 48·9 inches.

⁶ Giles, nos. 9456; 6653; 11,441; the Malay word *beladau*, a curved single-edged dagger. Probably the word was not then utilized by the Javanese for this dagger, but was used in the *lingua franca* which must have been spoken with and by the foreign traders in the larger emporiums (Groeneveldt, p. 172, n.). Damais has pointed out that, in their relations with the Javanese, the Chinese used, not the Javanese, but the Malay language, which from the eighth century onwards remained the language used throughout the archipelago in communications with foreigners (Damais, 'Etudes', p. 363, n. 3

wear a garment on the upper part of the body,' and a kerchief around the lower part. The men thrust a *pu-la-t'ou* into the waist; from little boys of three years to old men of a hundred years, they all have these knives, which are all made of steel,² with most intricate patterns drawn in very delicate lines;³ for the handles they use gold or rhinoceros' horn or elephants' teeth, engraved with representations of human forms or devils' faces, the craftsmanship being very fine and skilful.

The people of the country, both men and women, are all particular about their heads;⁴ if a man touches their head with his hand, or if there is a misunderstanding about money at a sale, or a battle of words when they are crazy with drunkenness, they at once pull out these knives and stab [each other]. He who is stronger prevails.⁵ When [one] man is stabbed to death, if the [other] man runs away and conceals himself for three days before emerging, then he does not forfeit his life; [but] if he is seized at the very moment [of the stabbing], he too is instantly stabbed to death.

The country has no [such] punishment as flogging; no [matter whether] the offence be great or small, they tie both [the offender's] hands behind his back with a fine rattan, and hustle him away for several paces, then they take a *pu-la-t'ou* and stab the offender once or twice in the small of the back or in the floating ribs, causing instant death. According to the local custom of the country no day [passes] without a man being put to death; [it is] very terrible.⁶

Copper coins of the successive dynasties in the Central Country are in current use universally.⁷

1 Apparently this statement refers only to the women. K says that no garment was worn on the upper part of the body, and Kung Chen and Fei Hsin agree.

2 *Pin t'ieh* (Giles, nos. 9243; II,156), a very fine steel which was brought from Persia and made extremely sharp swords; in the twelfth century it was imported into China from the country of the Arabs (E. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches* (London, 1888), vol. I, p. 146, n. 395).

3 Literally, 'rabbit's-hair snow-flakes'.

4 Ma Huan said the same thing about the Chams. The feeling of the Javanese is mentioned also by Barbosa, do Couto, Castanheda, and Middleton; a touch on the head made the people of Malacca 'very angry'; and the Thai people, too, have great respect for the head.

5 A concise epigram in four characters; we might almost translate 'might is right'; Fei Hsin uses the identical expression, presumably copying from Ma Huan.

6 Judicial functions were performed by two Dharmadyaksas and seven Dharmadhikaranas. A stereotyped form of highly organized and efficient bureaucratic administration under an absolute monarch continued throughout the Hindu period, that is until at least 1513 (Majumdar, *Suvarnavipa*, pt. I, pp. 405, 433, 435).

7 Ma Huan mentions Chinese cash as current in other places; see the index under 'cash'. The Chinese government issued copper currency under the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C.--A.D. 8); the export of copper was first prohibited in 780, but despite frequent prohibitions which were usually ignored, there was a perennial shortage of

The Country of Chao-wa

Tu-pan, called by the foreigners 'Tu-pan',¹ is the name of a district; here there are something more than a thousand families, with two headmen to rule them; many of them are people from Kuang-tung² [province] and Chang chou³ [prefecture] in the Central Country, who have emigrated to live in this place. Fowls, goats, fish and vegetables are very cheap.

On a sandbank in the sea there is a small pool of water which is fresh and potable; it is called 'the Holy Water'. Tradition has it that in the time of the great Yuan [dynasty] [the Emperor] ordered the generals Shih Pi and Kao Hsing to attack [Page 9] She-p'o;⁴ a moon passed [and still] they could not land on the shore; the water in the ships was already exhausted; the soldiers of the army were at their wits' end; the two generals worshipped Heaven and prayed, saying 'We received the imperial order to attack the barbarians; if Heaven is with us, let a spring of water rise up; if [Heaven] is not with us, then let there be no spring'; the prayer ended, they thrust their spears with great force into the sandbank in the sea, and at once a spring of water bubbled up in the place where the spears were thrust; the water was fresh to taste; [and] all drank and were able to save their lives. Such was the help which Heaven granted. [This spring] has existed right down to the present day.

From Tu-pan, after travelling toward the east⁵ for about half a day, you reach New Village, of which the foreign name is Ko-erh-hsi;⁶ originally it

copper in and after the twelfth century; the increase in foreign trade during Sung times (960-1279) so accentuated the shortage that a cash famine occurred; Chinese cash were in demand from Japan to the Islamic lands of the West; vast quantities were exported to Java (Hirth and Rockhill, pp. **81-2**; Schrieke, pt. 1, p. 247, n. **100**; Jitsuzo Kuwabara, 'On P'u Shou-keng', *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, no. **11** (1928), pp. 25-7; Duyvendak, *Africa*, p. **17**; H. F. Schurmann, *Economic Structure of the Yuan Dynasty* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), pp. **131-2**, **135**). The 'copper cash' was an alloy of copper and lead.

¹ Giles, nos. **12, 049**; 8597; the characters must have been pronounced rather differently in Ma Huan's time. Tuban was a wealthy and important port with many Chinese settlers. Being the port of Majapahit and the point of departure for the Moluccas, it exported an abundant supply of foodstuffs, and imported a rich variety of products from the Moluccas (Meilink-Roelofs, pp. **105-7**). Tuban, Gresik, and Surabaya, Duyvendak thought, must have been much larger places than Ma Huan indicates (Duyvendak, *Ma Huan*, pp. 35, 36). ² Canton province.

³ A *fu* (prefecture) in Fukien province. S has 'Chang and T'ing', K has 'Chang and Ch'uan'; T'ing chou and Ch'uan chou were also prefectures in the same province, the latter being the famous 'Zaiton'.

⁴ The attack on Java occurred in 1293. Shih Pi, the commander of the expeditionary force, was a Chinese; he was assisted by I-k'o-mo-se (Ike Mese, Ihamish), a Mongol, who commanded the fleet, and Kao Hsing, a Chinese, who led the infantry. For the accounts in the *Yuan shih*, 'Yuan History', see Groeneveldt, pp. **147-55**.

⁵ Ma Huan omits to mention that from Tuban a ship has to travel almost due south for the last third of the journey.

⁶ Giles, nos. 6073; 3333; 4105; Gresik. Founded by Chinese between **1350** and **1400**, this excellent port rose rapidly in importance after **1400**; it obtained spices from the

was a region of sandbanks; [and] because people from the Central Country came to this place and established themselves, they therefore called it New Village; right down to the present day the ruler of the village is a man from Kuang tung [province]. There are something more than a thousand families [here]. Foreigners from every place come here in great numbers to trade. Gold, all kinds of precious stones, and all varieties of foreign goods are sold in great quantities.' The people are very wealthy.

From New Village, after travelling toward the south for more than twenty *li*,² the ship reaches Su-lu-ma-i, of which the foreign name is Su-erh-pa-ya.³ At the estuary the out-flowing water is fresh. From here large ships have difficulty in proceeding; [so] they use small ships, which travel for more than twenty *li* till they first reach this district.⁴ [Here] also there is a ruler of the village, governing more than a thousand families of foreigners; and amongst these, too, there are people from the Central Country.

In the estuary there is an island of dense jungle, in which there are thousands of long-tailed monkeys; [Page 10] over them all there is one black-coloured old male monkey who acts as their lord; while at his side he has an old foreign woman who keeps him company; childless women of the country prepare such things as wine, rice, fruit and cakes, and go to invoke the old monkey; if the old monkey is pleased, he first eats [some] of the things, and makes all the monkeys fight to eat what remains; they finish eating, [and] then two monkeys come forward and couple, as an omen; these women return home and at once become pregnant; if [the monkeys] had not [coupled], then [the women would] not have a child;⁵ it is very remarkable.

From Su-erh-pa-ya⁶ small ships travel for seventy or eighty *li* to a port Moluccas and sandalwood from Timor, and these articles were exchanged for rice, textiles, and ceramics. It later outstripped Tuban and became the most important spice-port (Schrieke, pt. i, p. 25; pt. ii, p. 296; Meilink-Roelofs, pp. 107, 109-10).

¹ Ma Huan does not expressly refer to pepper and spices, which formed a most important element in the trading system of eastern Java; compare Schrieke, pt. i, p. 22.

² About 7 miles.

³ Giles, nos. 10,320; 3333; 8514; 12,797; Surabaya. A certain amount of commerce was carried on here in the early fifteenth century, but by 1500 its trade moved via the port of Gresik, and at the end of the sixteenth century it was still a hamlet (Meilink-Roelofs, pp. 110, 269; Schrieke, pt. i, p. 24). Later it surpassed Gresik, and nowadays it is the most important town in Java after Djakarta (formerly Batavia).

⁴ About 7 miles. If Ma Huan's figure is correct, Surabaya must then have been further away from the estuary than the present-day 'old town', which is 3 miles away. Kung Chen states that the Chinese from the treasure-ships went about in a *san pan* (sampan, skiff); and this use of the term is earlier than the reference given in Shu Hsin-Ch'eng and others, *Tz'u hai* ('The Sea of Words', Shanghai, 1936-7). C omits the 25 characters which we have translated 'At the estuary' to 'this district'.

⁵ In the gloss to the account of Huang Sheng-tseng (ch. i, f. 8v) both the feeding and the coupling were necessary to ensure pregnancy.

⁶ Surabaya.

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called Chang-ku;¹ there you go ashore, and after travelling towards the south-west for a day and a half, you reach Man-che-po-i,² the place where the king lives. This place has two or three hundred families of foreigners, with seven or eight chiefs to assist the king.

The climate is continuously hot, like summer.

The rice in the fields ripens twice in one year;³ [and] the rice-kernels are small. They have both white sesame and lentils. Barley and wheat⁴ are entirely non-existent. The land produces sapan-wood,⁵ diamonds,⁶ white sandalwood incense,⁷ nutmegs,⁸ long pepper,⁹ cantharides,¹⁰ steel, turtles'

1 Giles, nos. 390; 6209; Canggū (Changgu, Changkir), on the left bank of the Kali Mas, about 25 miles (that is, about 75 *li*) from the mouth as the crow flies; though its trade increased with the rise of Majapahit, it was of only secondary importance as a trading centre; see Groeneveldt, pp. 158, 174; Schrieke, pt. 1, p. 24.

2 Kung Chen states that the land-journey from Canggū to Majapahit took half a day. King Kertarajasa Jayavarddhana built his *kraton* or royal palace at Majapahit in 1293 (Hall, *History*, p. 76); the site is in all probability the modern village of Trawulan where extensive ruins exist; the site has been described by H. Maclaine Pont and W. F. Stutterheim, but it has not been completely examined (Damais, 'Etudes', pp. 354-5; C. Hooykaas, 'A Critical Stage in the Study of Indonesia's Past', in *Historians of South-East Asia (1961)*, ed. D. G. E. Hall, ch. 24, p. 319). Kung Chen gives the same figure of two or three hundred families; Duyvendak regarded this as 'palpable nonsense' (Duyvendak, *Ma Huan*, p. 36); and Pelliot thought that Ma Huan might have spoken of Majapahit from hearsay (Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. 364).

3 Rice cultivation was of primary importance; not only did rice form the ordinary article of food, but it was exported to Malacca, Palembang, and Djambi, also to the Moluccas, where it was used to purchase spices which were in turn sold to Malacca or exchanged for Chinese and Indian goods (Schrieke, pt. 1, pp. 22, 29). The double-cropping proves the utilization of irrigated fields (*sawah*), in contradistinction to planting on dry ground (*ladang*), which soon exhausted the soil; see V. D. Wickizer and M. K. Bennett, *The Rice Economy of Monsoon Asia* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1941), pp. 33, 43, 287.

4 Literally, 'great and small wheat'.

5 *Su mu* (Giles, nos. 10,320; 8077) *su* being a contraction of *su-fang* (Giles, no. 3435), in Malay *sepang*, *Caesalpinia sappan*; the heart-wood of this small thorny tree produced a red dye; see Hirth and Rockhill, p. 217; Wheatley, 'Commodities', p. 108.

6 Diamonds would have come from western Borneo (Schrieke, pt. 1, p. 30); and see Wheatley, 'Commodities', p. 113. Possibly, however, Ma Huan refers to the wood of a tropical tree called 'diamond wood' from its white berries.

7 Sandalwood would have come from Timor (Schrieke, pt. 1, p. 21); and see Hirth and Rockhill, pp. 2083; Wheatley, 'Commodities', p. 65; Meilink-Roelofs, p. 87.

8 Nutmegs (seeds of *Myristica fragrans*) would have come from Banda and the Moluccas (Schrieke, pt. 1, p. 21); and see Hirth and Rockhill, pp. 210-11; Wheatley, 'Commodities', p. 100.

9 Pepper would have come from Sunda, the Lampung region, Indrapura, Djambi, and Pattani (Schrieke, pt. 1, p. 21); and see Hirth and Rockhill, pp. 222-4; Wheatley, 'Commodities', p. 100.

10 As translated by Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. 365; it is omitted in Groeneveldt's translation, p. 174.

carapaces, and tortoise-shell.¹ As to their strange birds: they have such varieties as white cockatoos large as hens, red and green parrots, five-coloured parrots² and the mina,³ all of which can imitate human speech, also guinea-fowl,⁴ 'hang-upside-down birds',⁵ pigeons with five-coloured markings, peafowl,⁶ 'areca-palm birds',⁷ 'pearl birds',⁸ and green pigeons.

As to their curious beasts: they have white deer, white monkeys, and other such animals. Pigs, goats, oxen, [Page 11] horses, fowls, and ducks—all these they have; but there are no donkeys and no geese.

For fruits, they have such kinds as the banana, coconut, sugar-cane, pomegranate, the lotus seed-case,⁹ the *mang-chi-shih*,¹⁰ the water-melon, and the *lang-ch'a*.¹¹ The *mang-chi-shih* resembles the pomegranate; inside the skin it looks like the case of an orange, having four lumps of white flesh, which have a sweet-sour taste [and are] very delectable. The *lang-ch'a* is like the loquat,¹² but rather larger; inside there are three lumps of white flesh; [and] these, too, have a sweet-sour taste. The sugar-cane has a rind which is white, coarse, and big; [and] each root attains a length of two or three *chang*.¹³ In addition, they have all the gourds and vegetables; [and] the only things wanting are peaches, plums, and leeks.

The people of the country have no beds or stools for sitting on or sleeping on; and for eating they have no spoons or chopsticks. Men and women take areca-nut and betel-leaf,¹⁴ and mix them with lime¹⁵ made from clam-shells; [and] their mouths are never without this mixture. At the times when they wish to eat their rice, they first rake some water and rinse out the dregs of

1 Tortoise-shell would have come from Timor, Solor, and other places (Schrieke, pt. 1, p. 68); and see Hirth and Rockhill, p. 238; Wheatley, 'Commodities', pp. 81-3.

2 On parrots see Hirth and Rockhill, p. 236; Wheatley, 'Commodities', pp. x22-3.

3 A bird of the starling family, able to articulate words; see Groeneveldt, p. 174, also Yule and Burnell, under 'Myna', p. 607a.

4 Literally, 'pearl fowl', identified by Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. 365.

5 A parakeet, with green plumage and red bill. The editor is indebted to Professor E. H. Schafer for this identification.

6 On peafowl see Wheatley, 'Commodities', p. 55.

7 Not identified.

8 Not identified, unless Ma Huan once more refers to the pearl fowl, which is here translated 'guinea-fowl'.

9 The lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*) is valued for tonics and aphrodisiacs; the tubers and seeds are articles of food.

10 Giles, nos. 7667; 909; 9906; Malay and Javanese *manggis*, the mangosteen (*Garcinia mangostana*). This is the earliest known description of the fruit; the earliest quotation in Yule and Burnell, under 'Mangosteen', p. 557a, is dated 1563.

11 Giles, nos. 6777; 226; Javanese *langsap*, Malay *langsap*, *Lansium domesticum*.

12 *Pi-p'a* (Giles, nos. 9049; 8544), *Eriobotrya japonica*.

13 The equivalent of 3 *chang* was 30 feet 7 inches.

14 *Lao-yeh* (Giles, nos. 6792; 12,997), Malay *sireh*, *Piper betle*.

15 Hindustani and Malay *chunam*; see Yule and Burnell, under 'Chunam', p. 218 b.

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areca-nut in their mouths; then they wash both hands clean and sit round in a circle; they have a dish well-filled with rice which they moisten with butter and gravy; [and] in eating they use the hand to take up [the food] and place it in the mouth. If they are thirsty, then they drink water. When they receive passing guests, they entertain them, not with tea, but only with areca-nut.

The country contains three classes of persons. One class consists of the Muslim people;¹ they are all people from every foreign kingdom in the West who have migrated to this country as merchants; [and] in all matters of dressing and feeding everyone is clean and proper.

One class consists of T'ang people;² they are all men from Kuang tung [province] and from Chang [chou] and Ch'uan [chou] and other such places, who fled away and now live in this country; the food of these people, too, is choice and clean; [and] many of them follow the Muslim religion, doing penance and fasting.

One class consists of the people of the land; they have very ugly and strange faces, tousled [Page 12] heads, and bare feet; they are devoted to devil-worship, this country being among the 'devil-countries' spoken of in Buddhist books; the food which these people eat is very dirty and bad-things like snakes, ants, and all kinds of insects and worms, which are slightly cooked by being toasted in the fire and then eaten.³ The dogs which they keep in their houses eat from the same utensils as the people, and sleep with them at night; [and] they feel not the least repugnance [about this].

The legend is told that a king of the devils, with black face, red body and red hair, had intercourse with a water-monster in this very country, and begat more than a hundred children; they always consumed blood for food and many people were eaten by them; suddenly one day a thunderclap split the rock, and inside sat a man; the people admired him and marvelled at him, so they chose him to be their king; then he took command of the expert fighting-men; the water-monster and the rest of the mob were driven away

I Hui-hui (Giles, no. 5163). 'The Semitic *khwei* = brother, constantly used by Mohammedans and consequently adopted by the Chinese as a name for them.' Without political power in the time of Ma Huan (1433), the Muslims had acquired control of certain Javanese harbours before 1500, and the Muslim coastal potentates destroyed the Hindu-Javanese kingdom of Majapahit between 1513 and 1528 (Schrieke, pt. II, p. 231; Majumdar, *Suvarnavipa*, pt. I, pp. 401,402,405).

² That is, Chinese; a reference to the T'ang dynasty (618-907).

³ Majumdar considered that this description was applicable only to wild primitive tribes 'still beyond the pale of Hindu culture and civilization'. Apparently Ma Huan had no knowledge of the traditional Indonesian *society* with its elaborate system of social and political distinctions between ruler, aristocracy, and local communities; on this society see Majumdar, *Suvarnavipa*, pt. II, pp. 40-60; H. W. Sundstrom, *Indonesia* (Tokyo, 1957), pp. 27-48.

and ceased to be harmful; [and] after that the people once more grew and multiplied in peace.¹ This is the reason why right down to the present day the people have loved savagery and ferocity.

They have a 'meeting of bamboo spears' regularly every year, but the tenth month is taken to be the beginning of spring.² The king³ of the country makes his wife sit in a 'pagoda-carriage' which travels in front, while he himself sits in a carriage⁴ which travels behind. This 'pagoda-carriage' is more than a *chang*⁵ in height; on [all] four sides there is a window, and underneath there is a rotating axle; [and] it goes along with horses pulling in front.

At the place of the meeting, the contestants are drawn up in a line on either side; each man grasps a bamboo spear; these bamboo spears are solid and have no iron blade; but they are cut to a point, and are very hard and sharp. Each of the male combatants brings his wife or slave-girl there, and each wife, grasping in her hand a short wooden stave three *ch'ih*⁶ long, stands between the lines. Following the sound of the drum which beats fast or slow as a signal, two men, grasping their spears, advance and make thrusts [at each other]; they engage three times; [then] the wives of the two men, both grasping their wooden staves, push them back, saying '*Na-[Page 13] la, na-la*';⁷ upon which the men separate. If [a man] dies from a stab, the king makes the victor give one gold coin to the dead man's family; [and] the dead man's wife goes off following the victor. So do they make a sport of victory and defeat in combat.⁹

¹ Rockhill thought that the story referred to the conquest of Java by Aji Saka (A.D. 78, from which dates the Javanese era) and his fights with the rakshas (demon-worshippers); see Rockhill, Part II, p. 237, n. 1; Majumdar, *Suvarnavdipa*, pt. I, pp. 94-7.

² Ma Huan expresses himself badly; what he means is that the jousting took place at the beginning of spring, which, however, occurred in the tenth moon and not in the first moon (about 5 February) as in China.

³ Ma Huan must have written this part of his book before the death of King Vikramavardhana in 1428, since the latter was succeeded by his daughter, Queen Suhita (1429-46).

⁴ Ma Huan implies, and Kung Chen expressly states, that this was also a 'pagoda-carriage'.

⁵ The equivalent of *chang* was 10 feet 2 inches.

⁶ About 3 feet 1 inch.

⁷ According to Groeneveldt (p. 176), *na-la* probably represented the Javanese word *larak*, 'to draw, pull, draw back', so the exclamation would mean 'pull them back'. Groeneveldt noted that in his day (c. 1887) the game, called *Senenan*, still existed in eastern Java, though in a somewhat modified and mitigated form; and see Schrieke, pt. I, p. 279, n. II.

⁸ Presumably this was a foreign coin, since the Chinese writers, our principal authorities, do not mention a gold coin in Java, nor has any gold coin been found there; see Hirth and Rockhill, p. 81, and Majumdar, *Suvarnavdipa*, pt. II, pp. 36-7.

⁹ Kung Chen uses the identical words.

The Country of Chao-wa

As to their marriage-rites: the man first goes to the woman's family house, and the marriage is consummated; three days later the man escorts his bride [home]; whereupon the man's family beat brass drums and brass gongs, blow on coconut-shell pipes, strike drums made of bamboo tubes, and let off fire-crackers, while in front and behind they are surrounded by men with short knives and round shields. The woman has dishevelled hair, uncovered limbs, and bare feet. Around her she fastens a kerchief with silk embroidery; at her neck she puts on an ornament of gold beads strung together; [and] on her wrists she wears a bracelet ornamented with gold, silver, and other precious things. Relations, friends, and neighbours decorate a boat with such things as areca-nuts, betel-leaves, and sewn strings of grasses and flowers, and form a party to escort the bridal pair in accordance with their rite of congratulating [the newly-wed] on the happy [event]. When they reach the groom's house, they strike gongs, beat drums, drink wine, and play music. After a few days they disperse.

As to their usual funeral-rites: if they have a father or mother who is about to die, the sons and daughters first ask the fathers or mothers whether after death they will be devoured by dogs, or consumed by fire, or cast away in the waters; their fathers or mothers direct them in accordance with their real wishes; then, after the death, the sons and daughters comply with the decision contained in the dying commands. If they wish to be devoured by dogs, then they carry the corpse to the sea-side, or place it on waste land, where a dozen dogs come along; if the flesh of the corpse is devoured completely, without anything being left, it is regarded as good; [but] if it is not completely devoured, then the sons and daughters weep bitterly and cry with grief; [and] they take the bones which remain, cast them in the waters, and go away.

Moreover, when rich men and chiefs and persons of high standing [Page 14] are about to die, the most intimate serving-girls and concubines under their care first take an oath to their lords, saying 'In death we go with you'; after the death, on the day of the funeral, they build a high wooden framework,¹ under which they pile a heap of firewood; [and] they set fire to this and burn the coffin. The two or three serving-girls and concubines who originally took the oath wait till the moment when the blaze is at its height; then, wearing grasses and flowers all over their heads, their bodies clad in kerchiefs with designs of the five colours, they mount the framework and dance about, wailing, for a considerable time; [then] they cast themselves down into the flames, and are consumed in the fire with the corpse of

¹ *Ch'ui* (Giles, no. **2807**), which now means 'cudgel'; the word must have changed its meaning. Feng does not mention the reading of K, namely, *chia* (Giles, no. 1157), 'frame'.

their lord, in accordance with their rite of sacrificing the living with the dead.¹

Wealthy foreigners are very numerous. In trading transactions the copper coins of successive dynasties in the Central Country are in current use.²

For writing records they, too, have letters; [and these] are the same as the So-li³ letters. They have no paper or pen; [and] they use *chiao-chang*⁴ leaves, on which they scratch the letters with a sharp knife. They also have rules of grammar.⁵ The speech of the country is very pretty and soft.

As to their system of weights: each chin is twenty *liang*; each *liang* is sixteen *ch'ien*; [and] each *ch'ien* is four *ku-pang*. Each *ku-pang* equals two *fen* one *li* eight *hao* seven *ssu* five *hu* on our official steelyard, [so] each *ch'ien* equals eight *fen* seven *li* five *hao* on our official steelyard, each *liang* equals one *liang* four *ch'ien* on our official steelyard, [and] each *chin* equals twenty-eight *liang* on our official steelyard.⁶

As to their system of measures: they cut off a bamboo to make a *sheng*; this is one *ku-la*; [and] it equals one *sheng* eight *ko* [in terms of] the official *sheng* of the Central Country.⁷ As to each foreign *tou*: one *tou* is one *nai-li*;

1 Suttee, or the immolation of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands, was a Hindu custom, and the king and upper classes were then Hindus; see Majumdar, *Suvarnavipra*, pt. II, p. 43. Ma Huan, however, tells us nothing about their religion.

2 Wang Ta-yuan (1350) says that the Javanese coined a so-called 'silver coin' made of silver, tin, lead, and copper (Rockhill, Part II, p. 237); but neither Ma Huan, nor Kung Chen, nor Fei Hsin mentions this. Chinese traders, many of them small-scale pedlars, might also use silver (J. C. Van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society* (The Hague-Bandung, 1955), pp. 133, 136). Trading by weight of bullion was the general system in the Far East (Boxer, p. 128, n. 3).

3 A form of 'Chola', the name of the people of Coromandel. The Javanese script was derived from a Southern Indian original; but in the middle of the eighth century, side by side with the 'Pallava' alphabet, there began to be developed a Javanese type of writing (L. C. Damais, 'Les écritures d'origine indienne en Indonésie et dans le Sud-Est Asiatique Continental', *Bulletin de la Société des Études Indochinoises*, vol. XXX (1955), p. 372).

4 Malay *kajang*, a general name for different palm-leaves; Ma Huan here means the leaves of the *Borassus flabelliformis*, called *lontar* in Java (Groeneveldt, p. 166, n.).

5 Ma Huan gives no idea of the very great range and intrinsic value of Indo-Javanese literature (Majumdar, *Suvarnavipra*, pt. II, p. 61).

6 The Chinese steelyard is a balance with a short arm to take the thing weighed and a long graduated arm along which a weight is moved until it balances the thing weighed. *Ku-pang* (Giles, nos. 6209; 8648) is Javanese *kobang* (Groeneveldt, p. 177). To summarize: 4 Javanese *ku-pang* equalled 1 Javanese *ch'ien*, 16 Javanese *ch'ien* equalled 1 Javanese *liang*, 20 Javanese *liang* equalled 1 Javanese *chin*, 1 Javanese *chin* equalled 28 Chinese *liang* (2 pounds 4.8 ounces avoirdupois or 1044.4 grammes).

7 *Ku-la* (Giles, nos. 6209; 6653) is Javanese *kulak* (Groeneveldt, p. 178). Ma Huan's Chinese equivalents show, and Kung Chen expressly states, that there were 8 *kulak* in 1 *naili* (see next note).

The Country of Chao-wa

[and] it equals one *tou* four *sheng* four *ko* [in terms of] the official *tou* of the Central Country.'

On the fifteenth or sixteenth [Page 15] night of every moon, on a night when the moon is full, clear and bright, more than twenty, or sometimes more than thirty, foreign women gather together to form a troupe; one woman acts as leader, [and], each placing an arm on the shoulder of another, they make an unbroken line and saunter in the moonlight; their leader sings a line of a foreign song, and the whole troupe sing a response in unison; [and] when they reach the house-porch of a relative or a person of wealth and standing, they are given presents of copper coins and other such things; this is called 'a musical moonlight walk', and that is all.²

They have a class of men who make drawings on paper of such things as men, birds, beasts, eagles, or insects; [these drawings] resemble scroll-pictures; for the supports of the picture they use two wooden sticks, three *ch'ih* in height, which are level with the paper at one end only; sitting cross-legged on the ground, the man takes the picture and sets it up on the ground; each time he unrolls and exposes a section of the picture he thrusts it forward towards his audience, and, speaking with a loud voice in the foreign language, he explains the derivation of this section; [and] the crowd sits round and listens to him, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying, exactly as if the narrator were reciting one of our popular romances.³

The people of the country are very fond of the blue patterned porcelain-ware of the Central Country, also of such things as musk,⁴ gold-flecked hemp-silks, and beads. They buy these things in exchange for copper coins.

The king of the country constantly sends chiefs, who load foreign products into a ship, and present them as tribute to the Central Country.

¹ The character here rendered *nai* is not in Giles' Dictionary or in the *Tz'u-hai*; presumably it should be pronounced as Giles, no. **8122**; *li* is Giles, no. 6942. The Javanese word *naili* (*nailih*, *nelly*), Malay *naleh*, is now obsolete (Groeneveldt, p. **178**, n.).
⁸ Javanese *kulak* equalled 1 Javanese *naili*, 1 Javanese *naili* equalled 1.44 Chinese *tou* (3.4 gallons or 17.46 litres).

² This custom appears to have become obsolete; at any rate, it is not mentioned by J. Kunst, *Music in Java* (The Hague, 1949), when he describes Javanese singing. A somewhat similar entertainment was witnessed by Pietro della Valle at Ikkeri in India during **1623-4** (E. Grey, *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India* (London, **1892**), vol. II, p. 261).

³ *P'ing hua* (Giles, nos. **9310**; **5017**), the ancient type of Chinese romance recited by story-tellers to the crowd (Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. **370**). Ma Huan gives a good account of the Wayang Beber, in which the actors are represented by pictures; see Majumdar, *Suvarnavipa*, pt. II, p. 55; for the Javanese a wayang performance is in the highest degree educational and edifying.

⁴ An odoriferous substance obtained from the glands of certain animals; see Wheatley,

THE COUNTRY OF THE HEAVENLY SQUARE'

[MECCA]

[Page 69] This country is the country of Mo-ch'ieh.² Setting sail from the country of Ku-li,³ you proceed towards the south-west-the point *shen* on the compass;⁴ the ship travels for three moons,⁵ and then reaches the jetty of this country. The foreign name for it is Chih-ta;⁶ [and] there is a great chief who controls it. From Chih-ta you go west,⁷ and after travelling for one days you reach the city where the king⁹ resides; it is named the capital-city of Mo-ch'ieh.²

They profess the Muslim religion. A holy man¹⁰ first expounded and spread

1 *T'ien fang* (Giles, nos. **11, 208; 3435**); Mecca (Makka); the Chinese name refers to the Ka'ba or 'cube house' (Hirth and Rockhill, p. **125**, n.). Mecca, the holy city of Islam, visited by pilgrims from all over the world, lies about 55 miles east of the port of Jidda (Judda), **21° 29' N**, **39° 11' E**. The region as a whole was called 'Mecca' (Bellorini and Hoade, p. 86, n. 1, relating the visit of L. di N. Frescobaldi in 1384); it extended some 300 miles north to Medina (24° 35' N) and Yenbo (24° 05' N), and an equal distance south to Djizan (**16° 54' N**). The sharif of Mecca, being at this time a vassal of the Egyptian sultan, was not a figure of any political significance, but he maintained a theocratic control over the Hejaz (Sir H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (eds.), *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leyden-London, **1953**), p. 374; Serjeant, p. 5). The country had no economic importance, but the religious pilgrimage was made the occasion for extensive commercial exchanges (Bellorini and Hoade, p. **144**, n. 1; N. M. Penzer (ed.), *The Itinerary of Ludovico di Varthema of Bologna* (London, 1928), p. **19**). For Mecca see Hsiang Ta, *Kung Chen*, pp. 44-6; Fei Hsin, ch. 2, pp. 25-7 (Rockhill, Part II, pp. **619-21**); Huang Sheng-tseng, ch. 3, f. **13**; *Ming shih*, p. **7941**, row **2**; G. de Gaury, *Rulers of Mecca* (London, **1951**), pp. 27, 28, 52, **100, 103, 104**; Gibb and Kramers, p. 374; Gibb, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (M), vol. 1, pp. **1053, 1054**; Serjeant, p. 5.

2 Giles, nos. 8021; **1558**; a transliteration of the original name 'Makka'.

3 Calicut.

4 Ma Huan is not quite accurate; the character *shen* (Giles, no. 9816) denotes 240°, and south-west (**225°**) is denoted by the character *k'un* (Giles, no. 6540); moreover, the direction from Calicut to Ras Asir (Capo Guardafui) is west, not south-west.

5 The distance is about **2,500** sea-miles; thus, the average distance covered in a day would be about 26 sea-miles.

6 Giles, nos. 1883; **10, 473**; Jidda; K alone provides the correct reading for the first character; C and S have yang. Jidda was not only the port of Mecca, but the terminus of the Indian fleet; and it became a commercial mart of the first importance.

7 This statement is wrong; you travel east from Jidda to Mecca.

8 The journey normally took **2** days; nowadays, on excellent roads provided from oil-revenues, it can be done in **2** hours.

9 When the Chinese mission went from Calicut to Mecca in **1432**, the sharif of Mecca was Barakat bin Hasan, who ruled from 1425 to **1453** (Serjeant, p. 5). Each year the sharif received his diploma of appointment and robe of honour from Egypt.

10 The Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was born at Mecca about A.D. **570**; after preaching there from about 612 to 622, he fled to Medina (Madina); **15** July 622, the date of the Flight (or Hijra), is the epoch of the Muslim Hijri (Hegira) era (Smith, p. 39; Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, p. 167, n. 50).

the doctrine of his reaching in this country, and right down to the present day the people of the country all observe the regulations of the doctrine in their actions, not daring to commit the slightest transgression.

The people of this country are stalwart and fine-looking, and their limbs and faces are of a very dark purple colour.¹

The menfolk bind up their heads; they wear long garments; [and] on their feet they put leather shoes. The women all wear a covering over their heads, and you cannot see their faces.

They speak the A-la-pi language.² The law of the country prohibits wine-drinking. The customs of the people are pacific and admirable. There are no poverty-stricken families. They all observe the precepts of their religion, and law-breakers are few. It is in truth a most happy country.

As to the marriage- and funeral-rites: they all conduct themselves in accordance with the regulations of their religion.

If you travel on from here for a journey of more than half a day, you reach the Heavenly Hall mosque,³ the foreign name for this Hall is K'ai-a-pai.⁴

All round it on the outside is a wall; this wall has four hundred and sixty-six openings; on both sides of the openings are pillars all made of white jade-stone; of these pillars there are altogether four hundred and sixty-seven -along the front ninety-nine, along the back one hundred and one, along the left-hand side one hundred and thirty-two, [and] along the right-hand side one hundred and thirty-five.⁵

The [Page 10] Hall is built with layers of five-coloured stones; in shape it is square and flat-topped. Inside, there are pillars formed of five great beams of sinking incense wood, and a shelf⁶ made of yellow gold. Throughout the interior of the Hall, the walls are all formed of clay mixed with rose-water and ambergris, exhaling a perpetual fragrance.⁷ Over [the Hall] is a

¹ Giles, nos. 12,329; **10, 761**; a very colloquial expression.

² Arabic.

³ The statement is incorrect; the great mosque stands in the heart of Mecca; for a plan of the city see Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, facing p. 190.

⁴ Giles, nos. 5797; 1; 8856. Surrounded by massive walls, the sanctified area is a vast, unroofed rectangle; in the centre of this area stands the House of God, the Ka'ba, 'cube', a small square towering granite building (The Sayed Idries Shah, *Destination Mecca* (London, 1957), Pp. 77,79, and photographs facing pp. 84,92). The Ka'ba was improved, restored, or rebuilt from time to time.

⁵ For an account of the mosque in Ibn Battuta's time (1326) see Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 191-3 (with plan).

⁶ *Ko* (Giles, no. 6037). Kung Chen writes *ch'eng lou*, 'a receptacle for drippings', that is, drippings from the candles. The editor is indebted to Professor Homer H. Dubs for this explanation. Duyvendak translated *ko* as 'screens', and Pelliot, though disagreeing, hesitated to suggest an alternative (Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. 441).

⁷ Ma Huan's description differs in several respects from the account of the Ka'ba given by Ibn Battuta, as to which see Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 193-6, Ibn Battuta

The Country of The Heavenly Spare

covering of black hemp-silk.¹ They keep two black lions to guard the door.²

Every year on the tenth day of the twelfth moon all the foreign Muslims --in extreme cases making a long journey of one or two years--come to worship inside the Hall.³ Everyone cuts off a piece of the hemp-silk covering as a memento before he goes away. When it has been completely cut away, the king covers over [the Hall] again with another covering woven in advance; this happens again and again, year after year, without intermission."

On the left of the Hall is the burial-place of Ssu-ma-i,⁵ a holy man; his tomb is all made with green *sa-pu-ni6* gem-stones; the length is one *chang two ch'ih*,⁷ the height three *ch'ih*,⁸ and the breadth *five ch'ih*;⁹ the wall which surrounds the tomb is built with layers of purple topaz,¹⁰ [and] is more than *five ch'ih* high.⁹

makes no mention of perfume, but we are told that at a ceremonial cleaning in 1398 the walls were rubbed with civet, musk, and ambergris, and the higher part of the building was drenched with civet (de Gaury, p. 54).

1 The mantle (*kiswa*, garment), with which the exterior of the Ka'ba was draped; for this mantle see Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 203, 247; the right to provide this covering was a privilege of the Egyptians, consecrated by immemorial custom (Idries Shah, p. 85; Gibb, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (n), vol. 1, fasc. 17 (1959), p. 1054).

2 This, the only known reference to lions, is quite incomprehensible. Professor C. F. Beckingham comments that either live or sculptured lions in such a place are unthinkable.

3 The circuit of the Ka'ba on the tenth day of the twelfth month (Dhu'l-Hijja) technically completed the pilgrimage, but certain rites had to be performed before that day; for the mediaeval and the modern rites compare Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 242-7 and Idries Shah, pp. 81-5.

4 Compare Ibn Jubair's statement that the Bedouins of the highlands tore the outside mantle to shreds if they could reach it (Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, p. 237, n. 188); nowadays the mantle is cut up and pieces are distributed to fortunate pilgrims (Idries Shah, p. 85).

5 Giles, nos. 10, 250; 7576; 5455; Isma'il (Ishmael); according to Ibn Bartuta the tomb of Isma'il was situated in a small site called the *Hijr*, 'enclosure', on the north side of the Ka'ba, enclosed by a low semi-circular wall (Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 194, 199). Huang Sheng-tseng (ch. III, f. 11) refers to Isma'il as an 'ancient Buddha', and Pelliot ('Voyages', p. 442) commented that the expression shows the wholly relative value of the terms used by a Chinese man of letters when speaking of a foreign religion.

⁶Giles, nos. 9523; 9456; 8197; *sabuni*, 'soap-green', the Persian name of a pale and inferior kind of emerald (Bretschneider, vol. 1, p. 174, n. 502). Ibn Battuta says that the wall was of green marble (Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, p. 196).

⁷ That is, 12 feet 2 inches.

⁸ That is, 36.7 inches.

⁹ That is, 61.2 inches.

¹⁰ The texts are very corrupt; see Pelliot, 'Voyages', pp. 442-4. Feng and Pelliot preferred S which has 'purple yellow-jade'. Yellow-jade is the topaz or chrysolite. Ibn Battuta says that the wall was made of 'exquisite marble', but mentions no colour (Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, p. 199).

Inside the wall [of the mosque], at the four corners, are built four towers; at every service of worship they ascend these towers, call to the company, and chant the ceremonial. On both sides, left and right, are the halls where all the patriarchs have preached the doctrine,² these, too, are built with layers of stone, and are decorated most beautifully.

As to the climate of this place: during [all] the four seasons it is always hot, like summer, and there is no rain, lightning, frost, or snow. At night the dew is very heavy; plants and trees all depend on the dew-water for nourishment; [and] if at night you put out an empty bowl to receive it until day-break, the dew-water will be three *fen*³ [deep] in the bowl.

As to the products of the land: rice and grain are scarce; [Page 71] [and] they all cultivate such things as unhusked rice, wheat, black⁴ millet, gourds, and vegetables.⁵ They also have water-melons and sweet melons; [and] in some cases it takes two men to carry each single fruit. Then again they have a kind of tree with twisted flowers, like the large mulberry-tree of the Central Country; it is one or two *chang*⁶ in height; the flowers blossom twice a year; [and] it lives to a great age without withering. For fruits,⁷ they have turnips, Persian dates,⁸ pomegranates, apples,⁹ large pears, and peaches, some of which weigh four or five *chin*.¹⁰

Their camels, horses, donkeys, mules, oxen, goats, cats, dogs, fowls, geese, ducks, and pigeons are also abundant. Some of the fowls and ducks weigh over ten *chin*.¹¹

The land produces rose-water, *an-pa-erh*¹² incense, *ch'i-lin*,¹³ lions, the 'camel-fowl',¹⁴ the antelope, the 'fly-o'er-the-grass',¹⁵ all kinds of precious stones, pearls, corals, amber, and other such things.

1 Ibn Jubair described seven, and Ibn Battuta five, minarets (Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, p. 203, n. 66).

2 Duyvendak (*Ma Huan*, p. 72, n. 3) thought that Ma Huan had probably confused the elevation called the Place of Abraham with the four elevations, one on each side of the Ka'ba, where the prayer-leader (*imam*) of each of the four recognized law schools (Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki, and Shafi'i) recited the prayers to his congregation.

3 That is, 0.3 inch.

4 K has 'beans' for 'black'.

5 Mecca relied on supplies from Egypt and Yemen, and experienced difficulty when supplies were cut off (de Gamy, p. 61).

6 The equivalent of 1 *chang* was 10 feet 2 inches.

7 C has 'vegetables', which Feng changes.

8 Literally, 'ten-thousand-year jujubes'.

9 Duyvendak omitted to translate *hua*, 'flowers'; on the strength of the list given by Huang Sheng-tseng (ch. m, f. 13) Feng adds the character *hung*, 'red', reading *hua hung*, the colloquial name for the apple.

10 The equivalent of 4 *chin* was 5.2 pounds avoirdupois.

11 The equivalent of 10 *chin* was 13.1 pounds avoirdupois.

12 Ambergris.

13 Giraffe.

14 Ostrich.

15 Lynx.

The king uses gold to cast a coin named a *t'ang-chia*,¹ which is in current use; each has a diameter of seven *fen*,² and weighs one *ch'ien*³ on our official steelyard; compared with the gold of the Central Country it is twenty per cent purer.⁴

If you go west again and travel for one day, you reach a city named Mo-ti-na;⁵ the tomb of their holy man Ma-ha-ma⁶ is situated exactly in the city; [and] right down to the present day a bright light rises day and night from the top of the grave and penetrates into the clouds. Behind the grave is a well, a spring of pure and sweet water, named A-pi San-San;⁷ men who go to foreign parts take this water and store it at the sides of their ships; if they meet with a typhoon at sea, they take this water and scatter it; [and] the wind and waves are lulled.

In the fifth year of the Hsuan-[Page 72]te [period]⁸ an order was respectfully received from our imperial court that the principal envoy the grand eunuch Cheng Ho and others should go to all the foreign countries to read out the imperial commands and to bestow rewards.

When a division of the fleet reached the country of Ku-li,⁹ the grand eunuch Hung¹⁰ saw that this country was sending men to travel there;

1 *Tanka*.

2 That is, 0.8 inch.

3 That is, 3.73 grammes or 57.56 grains or 0.11991 ounce troy. If the gold was pure, the gold content would now be worth 29s. 11d. Nowadays the only gold coin in use is the English sovereign.

4 Hence, if the Meccan gold was pure, Chinese gold of the time was 83.3 per cent pure.

5 Giles, nos. 7997; 10,902; 8106; Medina (al-Madina). The statement of direction and distance is wrong; in truth, Medina lies some 300 miles north of Mecca, and the journey by caravan takes about 10 days.

6 Giles, nos. 7376; 3754; 7591; the Prophet Muhammad. His burial chamber, now generally called the Hujra or 'Chamber', is situated in the south-eastern corner of the mosque of Medina (Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 165, n. 44, 166). Ma Huan avoids the error made by several mediaeval travellers who state that the Prophet's tomb was at Mecca.

7 Giles, nos. 1; 8922; 9556; 95 76; the mediaeval pronunciation of the third and fourth characters was *ts'an*. The expression is a transliteration of the Persian phrase Ab-i Zamzam, 'Water of Zamzam'. The statement that the well was at Medina is incorrect; it lay close to the Ka'ba at Mecca; see Gibb, *The Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 192, 199-200. The use of Persian words, coupled with the inaccuracies of this description, led Duyvendak to conclude (a) that Ma Huan did not personally visit Mecca or Medina, and (6) that he knew the Persian rather than the Arabic language (Duyvendak, *Ma Huan*, p. 73). Nowadays the water from the well is raised by electric pumps (Idries Shah, p. 86).

¹1430. Ma Huan refers to Cheng Ho's seventh and *last* expedition (1431-3).

9 This implies that the fleet had previously been divided; S, however, states that the division was made at Calicut.

10 Kung Chen calls him Hung Pao. Presumably this was the assistant-envoy Hung Pao who participated in the erection of the commemorative stones at Liu chia Chiang and Ch'ang lo n 14 March 1431 and 5 December 1431, respectively (Duyvendak, 'Dates', pp. 343, 355).

whereupon he selected an interpreter and others, seven men in all, and sent them with a load of musk, porcelain articles, and other such things; [and] they joined a ship of this country and went there.¹ It took them one year to go and return.²

They bought all kinds of unusual commodities, and rare valuables, *ch'i-lin*, lions, 'camel-fowls', and other such things; in addition they painted an accurate representation of the 'Heavenly Hall';³ [and] they returned to the capital.⁴

The king of the country of Mo-ch'ieh also sent envoys⁵ who brought some local articles, accompanied the seven men-the interpreter [and others] -who had originally gone there, and presented the articles to the court.

The 'facing day' of the autumn moon in [the cyclic year] *hsin-wei* of the Ching-t'ai [period]⁶.

Written by Ma Huan, the mountain-woodcutter of Kuei chi.

1 Ma Huan uses ambiguous language; the editor follows Pelliot in interpreting it to mean that Hung Pao's emissaries joined Calicut men in a Calicut ship (Pelliot, 'Voyages', pp. 303-4); it might almost equally well mean that they joined Meccan men in a Meccan ship (Duyvendak, Ma Huan, p. 74) or joined Chinese men in a Chinese ship. Pelliot ('Voyages', p. 304) thought that Ma Huan was one of the seven emissaries and visited Mecca.

2 Ma Huan is again ambiguous; he means, the editor is advised, that the emissaries arrived back in China a year after they left Calicut; compare Pelliot, 'Voyages', pp. 303-4; 'Notes', p. 298.

3 The Ka'ba.

4 Peking.

5 A note in Huang Sheng-tseng (ch. III, f. 13) says that the king sent a minister named Sha Wan (Giles, nos. 9624; 12,489) and others. Duyvendak (*Ma Huan*, p. 74, n. 3) noted that this envoy, as in many other cases, will have been an ordinary merchant, assuming an official guise.

6 The 'facing day' was the fifteenth day of the moon, because on that day the moon faces the sun. The 'autumn moon' was probably the second moon of autumn; in which case the date will be 9 September 1451 (Pelliot, 'Voyages', p. 257, n. 1).

