

Editor's Note:

The account of Henri de Feynes de Monsart was translated anonymously into English and published in London in 1615, for Thomas Dawson by William Arondell under the title of *An Exact and Curious Survey of all the East Indies, even to Canton, the chiefe Cittie of China: All duly performed by land, by Monsieur de Monsart, the like whereof was never hetherto, brought to an end.* The original edition is available in at least four copies in the British Library.

M. W. C.

ACCOUNT OF THE KINGDOME OF PEGUE (1608)

Henri de Feynes de Monsart

From Canton I returned to Macao, and tooke, my way though the kingdome of Pegu, which is much transformed from what it was heretofore by reason of a certaine king, who forbad his people the exercise of husbandry and Tillage, or any other thing necessary for the use of man; And having gathered together all the victualls of the country, caused it strongly to be immured, where he kept his residence, suffering the most part of his subjects to perish, through famine or sickness, so that at this instant the whole countrey, remaines waste and desolate. Where is times past, there was wont to be found many rare commodities: namely, most faire rubies, and is now all togeather frequented with savage beastes; yea in so great quantity that they have almost driven out the inhabitants. Yet for such as remaine there to this day, they bee Gentiles and of a swartie hue.

Thence I made it 18 dayes journeyes, to the Realme of Cambodge, which is very spacious, but voyd of any rarieties of note, onely that the King is able to bring 400000 men to the field, and makes warre upon the King of Sian.

Thence I came to Sian, the King whereof is able to bring 600000 men to the field. These two Kings have neyther Horses, nor any fiery Instruments: but make use onely of bowes, and a certaine kind of pike, made of knottiewood like Canes, called Bambue, which is exceedingly strong, though pliant and supple for use.

Both these Kings are Gentiles, but yet differ enough in manners; for the King of Sian worshippeth a white Elephant; And that of Cambodge doth as the most of the above-mentioned. I saw nothing remarkable in both these kingdoms, (having but coasted them) but onely much Benzoin in Sian, which is an aramaticall

gumme, distilling out of a certaine tree, when they have first cut an incision into it, whereof they make a great trade: as being the onely place where it is found. I spent three moneths in traversing these two Kingdomes.

Thence I embarqued myselfe in one of the Portugall ships, which usually trafficke thither for Benzoin, and arrived at Conchin, a most fertile Kingdome, as likewise all the others be in those Climes, Pegu onely accidentally excepted.