

Editor's Note:

Like the other travel accounts of this issue, Ralph Fitch is among the most cited English sources for information on sixteenth century Burma. His experiences at Pegu were generally limited to a roughly six or seven week period in late 1586 and early 1587. Another aspect of the account the reader will notice is that Fitch has, in several places, repeated nearly verbatim several sections of Cesar Federici's account, of which he must at some point have had in his possession.

Various editions of Ralph Fitch's account are available and they vary in the completeness of the account. The one followed here was published by Samuel Purchas in his *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes* under the title of "The Voyage of Master Ralph Fitch Merchant of London to Ormus, and so to Goa in the East India, to Cambaia, Ganges, Bengala; to Bacola, and Chonderi, to Pegu, to Jamahay in the Kingdome of Siam, and backe to Pegu, and from thence to Malacca, Zeilan, Cochin, and all the Coast of the East India: begun in the yeere of our Lord 1583 and ended 1591."

Only those sections of the account relevant to Pegu and Southeast Asia have been included. In several places, the proper name of places have been clarified within brackets. Macao, for example, refers to Makaw, the river portage where goods for Pegu were dropped off by merchants for land or small boat carriage to the city of Pegu. Other editorial changes have been limited to additional paragraph breaks and the addition of section headers.

M. W. C.

AN ACCOUNT OF PEGU IN 1586-1587

Ralph Fitch

In the yeere of our Lord 1583. I Ralph Fitch of London Merchant, being desirous to see the Countries of the East Indie, in the companie of Master John Newberie Merchant, (which had beene at Ormus once before) of William Leedes Jeweller, and James Storie Painter, being chiefly set forth by the right Worshipfull Sir Edward Osborne Knight, and Master Richard Staper Citizens and Merchants of London, did ship my selfe in a Ship of London called the Tygre, wherein wee went for Tripolis in Syria: and from thence wee tooke the way for Alepo [and beyond]...

Tippera and Bengala in 1585

From Satagam I travelled by the Countrie of the King of Tippara or Porto Grande, with whom the Mogores or Mogen have almost continuall warres. The Mogen which be of the Kingdome of Recon [Arakan] and Rame, be stronger then the King of Tippara, so that Chatigan or Porto Grande is oftentimes under the King of Recon....

From Chatigan in Bengala, I came to Bacola...From Bacola I went to Serrepore which standeth upon the River Ganges, the King is called Chondery...Sinnerngan is a Towne sixe leagues from Serrepore...Many of the people are very rich....They goe with little cloth before them, and all the rest of their body naked. Great store of Cotton cloth goeth from hence, and much Rice, wherewith they serve all India, Ceilon, Pegu, Malacca, Sumatra, and many other places.

Journey to Pegu in Late 1586

I went from Serrepore the eight and twentieth of November, 1586 for Pegu in a small Ship or Foist of one Albert Caravallos, and so passing downe Ganges, and passing by the Hand of Sundiva, Porto Grande, or the Countrie of Tippera, the Kingdome of Recon and Mogen, leaving them on our left side with a faire winde at North-west: our course was South and by East, which brought us to the Barre of Negrais to Pegu: if any contrary winde had come, wee had throwne many of our things over-boord: for we were so pestered with people and goods, that there were scant place to lie in. From Bengala to Pegu is ninety leagues. We entred the Barre of Negrais, which is a brave Barre, and hath foure fathomes water where it hath least. Three dayes after we came to Cosmin, which is a very pretie Towne, and standeth very pleasantly, very well furnished with all things. The people be very tall and well disposed; the women white, round faced, with little eyes: the houses are high built, set upon great high posts, and they goe up to them with long Ladders for feare of the Tigres which be very many. The Countrie is very fruitfull of all things. Here are very great Figs, Oranges, Coccoes, and other fruits. The Land is very high that we fall withall; but after we be entred the Barre, it is very lowe and full of Rivers, for they goe all to and fro in Boats, which they call Paroes, and keep their houses with wife and children in them.

Dala and Syriam

From the Barre of Nigrais to the Citie of Pegu is ten dayes journey by the Rivers. We went from Cosmin [Bassein] to Pegu in Faroes or Boats, and passing up the Rivers wee came to Medon, which is a pretie Towne, where there be a wonderfull number of Faroes, for they keepe their Houses and Markets in them all upon the water. They rowe to and fro, and have all their merchandises in their Boats with a great Sombrero or Shadow over their heads to keepe the Sunne from them, which is as broad as a great Cart wheele made of the leaves of the Coco trees and Figge trees, and is very light. From Medon we went to Dela, which is a very faire Towne, and hath a faire Port into the Sea, from whence goe many ships to Malacca, Mecca, and many other places. Here are eighteene or twenty very great and long houses, where they tame and keepe many Elephants of the Kings: for there about in the Wildernesse they catch the wilde Elephants. It is a very fruitfull Countrie. From Dela wee went to Cirion [Syriam], which is a good Towne, and hath a faire Port into the Sea, whither come many ships from Mecca, Malacca, and Sumatra, and from divers other places. And there the ships stay and discharge, and send up their goods in Faroes to Pegu.

From Cirion we went to Macao [the river portage of Makaw], which is a pretie Town, where we left our Boats and in the morning taking Delingeges, which are a kinde of Coaches made of cords and cloth quilted, and carried upon a stang between three or foure men.

The Old Town of Pegu

We came to Pegu the same day. Pegu is a Citie very great, strong, and very faire, with walls of stone, and great ditches round about it. There are two Townes, the old Towne and the new. In the old Towne are all the Merchants strangers, and very many Merchants of the Countrie. All the goods are sold in the old Towne which is very great, and hath many suburbs round about it, and all the houses are made of Canes which they call Bambos, and be covered with straw. In your House you have a Ware-house, which they call Godon, which is made of bricke, to put your goods in, for oftentimes they take fire and burne in an houre foure or five hundred houses: so that if the Godon were not, you should bee in danger to have all burned, if any winde should rise, at a trice.

The New Town of Pegu

In the new Towne is the King, and all his Nobilitie and Gentry. It is a Citie very great and populous, and is made square and with very faire Walls, and a great Ditch round about it full of water with many Crocodiles in it: it hath twenty Gates, and they be made of stone, for every square five Gates. There are also many Turrets for Centinels to watch, made of wood, and gilded with Gold very faire. The Streets are the fairest that ever I saw, as straight as a line from one Gate to the other, and so broad, that ten or twelve men may ride afront thorow them. On both sides of them at every mans doore is set a Palmer tree, which is the Nut-tree which make a very faire shew and a very commodious shadow, so that a man may walke in the shade all day. The houses be made of wood, and covered with tiles.

The Kings house is in the middle of the Citie, and is walled and ditched round about: and the buildings within are made of wood very sumptuously gilded, and great workmanship is upon the fore-front, which is likewise very costly gilded. And the house wherein his Pagode or Idoll standeth is covered with tiles of silver, and all the walls are gilded with gold.

The Royal Elephants

Within the first Gate of the Kings house is a great large roome, on both sides whereof are houses made for the Kings Elephants, which bee marvellous great and faire, and are brought up to warres and in service of the King. And among the rest hee hath foure white Elephants, which are very strange and rare: for there is none other King which hath them but hee; if any other King hath one, hee will send unto him for it. When any of these white Elephants are brought unto the King, all the Merchants in the Citie are commanded to see them, and to give him a present of halfe a Ducat, which doth come to a great summe: for that there are many Merchants in the Citie. After that you have given your present you may come and see them at your pleasure, although they stand in the Kings house.

This King in his Title is called the King of the white Elephants. If any other King have one, and will not send it him, hee will make warre with him for it: for hee had rather lose a great part of his Kingdome, then not to conquer him. They doe very great service unto these white Elephants; every one of them standeth in an house gilded with gold, and they doe feed in vessels of silver and gilt. One of them when hee doth goe to the River to bee washed, as every day they doe, goeth under a Canopie of cloth of gold or of silke carried over him by sixe or eight men, and eight or ten men goe before him playing on Drummes, Shawmes, or other Instruments: and when hee is washed and commeth out of the River, there is a Gentleman which doth wash his feet in a silver Basin: which is his office given him

by the King. There is no such account made of any blacke Elefant, bee he never so great. And surely there bee wonderfull faire and great, and some bee nine cubits in height. And they doe report that the King hath above five thousand Elephants of warre, besides many other which be not taught to fight.

This King hath a very large place wherein hee taketh the wilde Elephants. It standeth about a mile from Pegu, builded with a faire Court within, and is in a great Grove or Wood: and there be many Hunts-men, which goe into the Wildernesse with shee Elephants: for without the shee they are not to be taken. And they be taught for that purpose: and every Hunter hath five or sixe of them: and they say that they anoint the shee Elephants with a certaine ointment, which when the wilde Elephant doth smell, he will not leave her. When they have brought the wilde Elephant neere unto the place, they send word unto the Towne, and many Horsemen and footmen come out and cause the shee Elephant to enter into a straight way which doth goe to the Palace, and the shee and hee doe runne in : for it is like a Wood: and when they be in, the gate doth shut. Afterward they get out the female: and when the male seeth that he is left alone, he weepeth and crieth, and runneth against the walls, which be made of so strong trees, that some of them doe breake their teeth with running against them. Then they pricke him with sharpe canes, and cause him to goe into a strait house, and there they put a rope about his middle & about his feet, and let him stand there three or foure dayes without eating or drinking: and then they bring a female to him, with meate and drinke, and within few dayes he becommeth tame.

The chiefe force of the King is in these Elephants. And when they goe into the warres they set a frame of wood upon their backes, bound with great cords, wherein sit foure or sixe men, which fight with Gunnes, Bowes and Arrowes, Darts and other weapons. And they say that their skinnes are so thicke that a pellet of an Harquebusse will scarce pierce them, except it bee in some tender place. Their weapons be very bad. They have Gunnes, but shoot very badly in them, Darts and Swords short without points.

The King and the Nobles

The King keepeth a very great State: when hee sitteth abroad, as hee doth every day twice, all his Noblemen which they call Shemines, sit on each side, a good distance off, and a great guard without them. The Court yard is very great. If any man will speake with the King, hee is to kneele downe, to heave up his hands to his head, and to put his head to the ground three times, when hee entreth, in the middle way, and when hee commeth neere to the King: and then hee sitteth downe and talketh with the King: if the King like well of him, hee sitteth neere him within three or foure paces: if hee thinke not well of him, hee sitteth further off.

When hee goeth to warre, hee goeth very strong. At my being there hee went to Ochia in the Countrey of Siam with three hundred thousand men, and five thousand Elephants. Thirty thousand men were his Guard. These people doe eat Roots, Herbes, Leaves, Dogs, Cats, Rats, Serpents, and Snakes; they refuse almost nothing. When the King rideth abroad, he rideth with a great Guard, and many Noblemen, oftentimes upon an Elephant with a fine Castle upon him very fairely gilded with gold; and sometimes upon a great frame like an Hors-liter, which hath a little house upon it covered over head, but open on the sides, which is all gilded with gold, and set with many Rubies and Saphires, whereof hee hath infinite store in his Countrey, and is carried upon sixteene or eighteene mens shoulders. This Coach in their Language is called Serrion. Very great feasting and triumphing is many times before the King both of men and women. This King hath little force by Sea, because he hath but very few ships.

Hee hath houses full of Gold and Silver, and bringeth in often, but spendeth very little, and hath the Mines of Rubies and Saphires, and Spinelles. Neere unto the Palace of the King, there is a Treasure wonderfull rich; the which because it is so neere, hee doth not account of it: and it standeth open for all men to see in a great walled Court with two Gates, which bee alwayes open.

There are foure Houses gilded very richly, and covered with Lead: in every one of them are Pagodes or Images of huge stature and great value. In the first is the Picture of a King in Gold with a Crowne of gold on his head, full of great Rubies and Saphires, and about him there stand foure Children of Gold.

In the second house is the picture of a Man in Silver wonderfull great, as high as an house; his Foot is as long as a man, and hee is made sitting, with a Crowne on his head very rich with Stones.

In the third house is the picture of a Man greater then the other made of Brasse, with a rich Crowne on his head.

In the fourth and last house doth stand another made of Brasse, greater then the other, with a Crowne also on his head very rich with Stones. In another Court not farre from this, stand foure other Pagodes or Idols, marvellous great of Copper, made in the same place where they doe stand; for they bee so great, that they be not to be removed: they stand in foure Houses gilded very faire, and are themselves gilded all over save their heads, and they shew like a blacke Morian. Their expences in gilding of their Images are wonderfull. The King hath one Wife and above three hundred Concubines, by which they say he hath fourescore or fourescore & ten Children. He sitteth in Judgement almost every day. They use no speech, but give up their supplications written in the Leaves of a Tree with the point of an Iron bigger then a Bodkin. These Leaves are an elle long, and about two inches broad; they are also double. Hee which giveth in his supplication, doth stand in a place a little distance off with a present. If his matter bee liked of, the King

accepteth of his present, and granteth his request: if his sute be not liked of, hee returneth with his present; for the King will not take it.

Commodities Suitable for Pegu

In India there are few commodities which serve for Pegu, except Opium of Cambaia, painted Cloth of Saint Thome, or of Masulipatan, and white cloth of Bengala, which is spent there in great quantitie. They bring thither also much Cotton, Yarne red coloured with a Root which they call Saja, which will never lose his colour: it is very well sold here, and very much of it commeth yeerely to Pegu. By your money you lose much. The ships which come from Bengala, Saint Thome, and Masulipatan, come to the barre of Nigrais and to Cosmin. To Martavan a port of the Sea in the Kingdome of Pegu, come many ships from Malacca laden with Sandall, Porcelanes, and other wares of China, and with Camphora of Borneo, and Pepper from Achen in Sumatra. To Cirion a Port of Pegu come ships from Mecca with Woollen cloth, Scarlets, Velvets, Opium, and such like.

There are in Pegu eight Brokers, whom they call Tareghe, which are bound to sell your goods at the price which they bee worth, and you give them for their labour two in the hundred: and they be bound to make your debt good, because you sell your Merchandizes upon their word. If the Broker pay you not at his day, you may take him home, and keepe him in your house: which is a great shame for him. And if hee pay you not presently, you may take his Wife and Children and his Slaves, and bind them at your doore, and set them in the Sunne; for that is the Law of the Countrey. Their current money in these parts is a kind of brasse which they call Gansa, wherewith you may buy Gold, Silver, Rubies, Muske, and all other things. The Gold and Silver is Merchandise, and is worth sometimes more, and sometimes lesse, as other wares bee. This brasen money doth goe by a weight which they call a Biza; and commonly this Biza after our account is worth about haife a Crowne or somewhat lesse. The Merchandize which bee in Pegu, are Gold, Silver, Rubies, Saphires, Spinells, Musk, Benjamin or Frankincense, long Pepper, Tinne, Lead, Copper, Lacca whereof they make hard Waxe, Rice, & Wine made of Rice, and some Sugar.

Pagodas and Monks

The Elephants doe eate the Sugar Canes, or else they would make very much. And they consume many Canes likewise in making of their Varellaes or Idoll Temples, which are in great number both great and small. They bee made round like a Sugar loafe, some are as high as a Church, very broad beneath, some a quarter of a mile

in compasse: within they be all earth done about with stone. They consume in these Varellaes great quantitie of Gold; for that they bee all gilded aloft: and many of them from the top to the bottome: and every ten or twelve yeeres they must be new gilded, because the raine consumeth off the Gold: for they stand open abroad. If they did not consume their gold in these vanities, it would bee very plentifull and good cheape in Pegu. About two dayes journey from Pegu, there is a Varelle or Pagode, which is the Pilgrimage of the Pegues: it is called Dogonne, and is of a wonderfull bignesse, and all gilded from the foot to the top. And there is an house by it, wherein the Tallipoies which are their Priests doe Preach. This house is five and fiftie paces in length, and hath three pawnes or walkes in it, and fortie great Pillars gilded, which stand betweene the walkes; and it is open on all sides with a number of small pillars, which bee likewise gilded: it is gilded with Gold, within and without. There are houses very faire round about for the Pilgrimes to lie in: and many goodly Houses for the Tallipoies, to Preach in, which are full of Images both of men and women, which are all gilded over with Gold. It is the fairest place, as I suppose, that is in the world: it standeth very high, and there are foure wayes to it, which all along are set with Trees of fruits, in such wise that a man may goe in the shade above two miles in length. And when their Feast day is, a man can hardly passe by water or by land for the great presse of people; for they come from all places of the Kingdome of Pegu thither at their Feast.

In Pegu they have many Tallipoies or Priests, which Preach against all abuses. Many men resort unto them. When they enter into their Kiack, that is to say, their holy place or Temple, at the doore there is a great Jarre of water with a Cocke or ladle in it, and there they wash their feet; and then they enter in, and lift up their hands to their heads, first to their Preacher, and then to the Sunne, and so sit downe.

The Tallipoies goe very strangely apparelled, with one Camboline or thinne cloth next to their bodie of a browne colour, another of yellow, doubled many times upon their shoulder: and those two bee girded to them with a broad Girdle: and they have a Skinne of leather hanging on a string about their neckes, whereupon they sit, bare headed and bare footed; for none of them weareth Shooes; with their right armes bare, and a great broad Sombrero or shadow in their hands to defend them in the Summer from the Sunne, and in the Winter from the Raine, When the Tallipoies or Priests take their Orders, first they goe to Schoole untill they bee twentie yeeres old or more, and then they come before a Tallipoie, appointed for that purpose, whom they call Rowli: hee is of the chiefest and most learned, and hee opposeth them, and afterward examineth them many times, whether they will leave their Friends, and the companie of all Women, and take upon them the habite of a Tallipoie. If any be content, then he rideth upon an Horse about the streets very richly apparelled, with Drums and Pipes, to shew that he leaveth the riches of the world to bee a Tallipoie. In few dayes after, he is carried

upon a thing like an Horslitter, which they call a Serion, upon ten or twelve mens shoulders in the apparell of a Tallipoie, with Pipes and Drums, and many Tallipoies with him, and all his friends, and so they goe with him to his House, which standeth without the Towne, and there they leave him.

Every one of them hath his House, which is very little, set upon sixe or eight Posts, and they goe up to them with a Ladder of twelve or fourteene staves. Their Houses bee for the most part by the high wayes side, and among the Trees, and in the Woods. And they goe with a great Pot made of wood or fine earth, and covered, tyed with a broad girdle upon their shoulder, which commeth under their arme, wherewith they goe to begge their victuals which they eate, which is Rice, Fish, and Herbes. They demand nothing, but come to the doore, and the people presently doe give them, some one thing, and some another: and they put all together in their Pot: for they say they must eate of their Almes, and therewith content themselves. They keepe their Feasts by the Moone: and when it is new Moone they keepe their greatest feast: and then the people send Rice and other things to that Kiack or Church of which they bee; and there all the Tallipoies doe meete which bee of that Church, and eate the victuals which are sent them. When the Tallipoies doe Preach, many of the people carrie them gifts into the pulpit where they sit and preach. And there is one which sitteth by them to take that which the people bring. It is divided among them. They have none other Ceremonies nor service that I could see, but onely Preaching.

Chiangmai

I went from Pegu to Jamahey, which is in the Countrey of the Langeiannes, whom wee call Jangomes; it is five and twentie dayes journey Northeast from Pegu. In which journey I passed many fruitfull and pleasant Countries. The Countrey is very low, and hath many faire Rivers. The Houses are very bad, made of Canes, and covered with Straw. Here are many wilde Buffes, and Elephants. Jamahey is a very faire and great Towne, with faire houses of stone, well peopled, the streetes are very large, the men very well set and strong, with a cloth about them, bare headed and bare footed: for in all these Countries they weare no Shooes. The Women bee much fairer then those of Pegu. Heere in all these Countries they have no Wheat. They make some cakes of Rice. Hither to Jamahey come many Merchants out of China, and bring great store of Muske, Gold, Silver, and many other things of China worke. Heere is great store of Victuals: they have such plentie, that they will not milke the Buffles, as they doe in all other places. Heere is great store of Copper and Benjamin.

In these Countries when the people bee sicke they make a vowe to offer meat unto the Divell, if they escape: and when they bee recovered they make a

Banquet with many Pipes and Drums and other Instruments, and dauncing all the night, and their friends come and bring gifts, Cocos, Figges, Arrecaes, and other Fruits, and with great dauncing and rejoycing they offer to the Divell, and say, they give the Divell to eate, and drive him out. When they bee dauncing and playing they will cry and hallow very loud; and in this sort they say they drive him away. And when they be sicke a Tallipoie or two every night doth sit by them and sing, to please the Divell that hee should not hurt them.

And if any die hee is carried upon a great frame made like a Tower, with a covering all gilded with gold made of Canes, carried with fourteene or sixteene men, with Drums and Pipes and other instruments playing before him to a place out of the Towne and there is burned. He is accompanied with all his Friends and Neighbours, all men: and they give to the Tallipoies or Priests many Mats and Cloth: and then they returne to the house and there make a Feast for two dayes: and then the Wife with all the neighbours Wives and her friends, goe to the place where he was burned, and there they sit a certaine time and cry, and gather the peeces of bones which bee left unburned and burie them, and then returne to their houses and make an end of all mourning. And the men and women which bee neere of kin doe shave their heads, which they do not use except it be for the death of a friend: for they much esteeme of their haire.

Capelan

Caplan is the place where they finde the Rubies, Saphires, and the Spinelles: it standeth sixe dayes journey from Ava in the Kingdome of Pegu. There are many great high Hills out of which they digge them. None may goe to the Pits but onely those which digge them.

Body Adornment

In Pegu, and in all the Countries of Ava, Langeiannes, Siam, and the Bramas, the men weare bunches or little round balls in their privie members: some of them weare two and some three [penis inserts]. They cut the skinne and so put them in, one into one side and another into the other side; which they doe when they bee five and twentie or thirtie yeeres old, and at their pleasure they take one or more of them out as they thinke good. When they be married the Husband is for every Child which his Wife hath, to put in one untill hee come to three, and then no more: for they say the women doe desire them. They were invented because they should not abuse the Male sexe. For in times past all those Countries were so given

to that Villanie, that they were very scarce of people. It was also ordayned, that the Women should not have past three cubites of Cloth in their nether clothes, which they bind about them; which are so strait, that when they goe in the streets, they shew one side of the legge bare above the knee. The bunches aforesaid bee of divers sorts: the least be as bigge as a little Walnut, and very round: the greatest are as bigge as a little Hens egge: some are of Brasse, and some of Silver: but those of silver bee for the King and his Noblemen. These are gilded and made with great cunning, and ring like a little bell. There are some made of Lead, which they call Selwy, because they ring but little: and these be of lesser price for the poorer sort. The King sometimes taketh his out, and giveth them to his Noblemen as a great gift: and because hee hath used them, they esteeme them greatly. They will put one in and heale up the place in seven or eight dayes.

The Bramas which bee of the Kings Countrey (for the King is a Brama) have their legges or bellies, or some part of their body, as they thinke good themselves, made blacke with certaine things which they have: they use to pricke the skinne, and to put on it a kind of Anile or Blacking, which doth continue alwayes. And this is counted an Honour among them: but none may have it but the Bramas which are of the Kings kindred.

These people weare no Beards: they pull out the haire on their faces with little pinsons made for that purpose. Some of them will let sixteene or twentie haire grow together, some in one place of his face and some in another, and pulleth out all the rest: for he carrieth his pinsons alwayes with him to pull the haire out as soone as they appeare. If they see a man with a beard they wonder at him. They have their teeth blacked both men and women, for they say a Dog hath his teeth white, therefore they will blacke theirs.

Justice

The Pegues if they have a sute in the law which is so doubtfull that they cannot well determine it, put two long Canes into the water where it is very deepe: and both the parties goe into the water by the poles, and there sit men to Judge, and they both doe dive under the water, and he which remaineth longest under the water doth winne the sute.

Departure from Pegu, January 1587

The tenth of Januarie I went from Pegu to Malacca, passing by many of the Ports of Pegu, as Martavan, the Hand of Tavi, from whence commeth great store of Tinne which serveth all India, the Hands of Tanaseri, Jun-salaon, and many others;

and so came to Malacca the eight of Februarie, where the Portugals have a Castle which standeth neere the Sea. And the Countrey fast without the Towne belongeth to the Malayos, which is a kind of proud people. They goe naked with a cloth about their middle, and a little roll of cloth about their heads. Hither come many ships from China, and from the Malucos, Banda, Timor, and from many other Ilands of the Javas, which bring great store of Spices and Drugs, and Diamants and other Jewels. The voyages into many of these Ilands belong unto the Captaine of Malacca: so that none may goe thither without his licence: which yeeld him great summes of money every yeere. The Portugals heere have oftentimes warres with the King of Achem, which standeth in the Hand of Sumatra: from whence commeth great store of Pepper and other Spices every yeere to Pegu and Mecca, within the Red Sea, and other places...

All the Chineans, Japonians, and Cauchin Chineans doe write downwards, and they doe write with a fine Pensill made of Dogs or Cats haire.

Laban is an Island among the Javas from whence come the Diamants of the New water. And they find them in the Rivers: for the King will not suffer them to digge the Rocke. Jamba is an Island among the Javas also from whence come Diamants. And the King hath a masse-of earth which is Gold; it groweth in the middle of a River: and when the King doth lacke Gold, they cut part of the earth and melt it, whereof commeth Gold. This masse of earth doth appeare but once in a yeere; which is when the water is low: and this is in the moneth of Aprill.

Bima is an other Hand among the Javas, where the Women travell and labour as our men doe in England, and the Men keepe house and goe where they will.

Brief Return to Pegu and Departure from Southeast Asia

The nine and twentieth of March 1588. I returned from Malacca to Martavan, and so to Pegu, where I remained the second time untill the seventeenth of September, and then I went to Cosmin, and there tooke shipping: and passing many dangers by reason of contrarie winds, it pleased God that wee arrived in Bengala, in November following: where I stayed for want of passage untill the third of Februarie 1589. and then I shipped my selfe for Cochin...

Commodities of the East

Heere I thought good, before I make an end of this my Booke, to declare some things which India and the Countrey farther Eastward doe bring forth.

The Pepper groweth in many parts of India, especially about Cochin: and much of it doeth grow in the Fields among the bushes without any labour: and when it is

ripe they goe and gather it. The Shrub is like unto our Ivie-tree: and if it did not runne about some Tree or Pole, it would fall downe and rot. When they first gather it, it is greene; and then they lay it in the Sunne, and it becometh blacke.

The Ginger groweth like unto our Garlike, and the root is the Ginger: it is to bee found in many parts of India.

The Cloves doe come from the lies of the Moluccoes, which bee divers Ilands: their Tree is like to our Bay-tree.

The Nutmegs and Maces grow together, and come from the lies of Banda: the tree is like to our Walnut-tree, but somewhat lesser.

The white Sandoll is wood very sweet and in great request among the Indians; for they grind it with a little water, and annoint their bodies therewith: it commeth from the Ile of Timor.

Camphora is a precious thing among the Indians, and is sold dearer then Gold. I thinke none of it commeth for Christendome. That which is compounded commeth from China: but that which groweth in Canes and is the best, commeth from the great Ile of Borneo.

Lignum Aloes commeth from Cauchinchina.

The Benjamin commeth out of the Countries of Siam and Jangomes.

The Long Pepper groweth in Bengala, in Pegu, and in the Ilands of the Javas.

The Muske commeth out of Tartarie, and is made after this order, by report of the Merchants which bring it to Pegu to sell; In Tartarie there is a litle beast like unto a yong Roe, which they take in snares, and beat him to death with the blood: after that they cut out the bones, and beat the flesh with the blood very small, and fill the skin with it: and hereof commeth the Muske.

Of the Amber they hold divers opinions; but most men say it commeth out of the Sea, and that they finde it upon the shores side.

The Rubies, Saphires, and Spinelles, are found in Pegu.

The Diamants are found in divers places, as in Bisnagar, in Agra, in Delli, and in the Hands of the Javas.

The best Pearles come from the Hand of Baharim in the Persian Sea, the worser from the Piscaria, neere the Ile of Ceylon, and from Aynam a great Iland on the Southernmost Coast of China.

Spodium and many other kindes of Drugges come from Cambaia.

Return to London

I came with a prosperous voyage to London where by Gods assistance I safely arrived the nine and twentieth of Aprill 1591 having beene eight yeares out of my native Countrey.