

## CHAPTER II.

# OF THE PERSECUTION THE NEW CHURCH OF COCHIN-CHINA ENDUR'D, AT ITS FIRST INSTITUTION: AND HOW I WAS SENT THITHER TO BE ASSISTING TO IT, BY MY SUPERIORS.

{Cause of the persecution.}

The persecution against the fathers took its beginning from an accident at first sight ridiculous, and of no moment, which afterwards gave them much cause to lament. That year there happened an universal barrenness throughout the whole kingdom, for want of the usual inundation in autumn; which, as was said in the first part, is so necessary for bringing up the rice, the chief support of life in that country. Hereupon their priests, whom they call *omsais*,<sup>1</sup> held a great council, to find out the case why their idols were so angry with all their kingdom, that seeing the people starve to death about the fields, yet they were not the least mov'd to compassion for so great a calamity. It was there unanimously agreed, that there was nothing new in the kingdom, so opposite to the worship of the idols, as the admitting of strangers freely to preach up a law there, that utterly contradicted the honour given to those idols; and that they being justly provok'd at it, reveng'd themselves by denying them their desired rain.

{The fathers banish'd.}

This being agreed on as a most undoubted truth, according to their ignorance, they presently went in a tumultuous manner to the king, and press that the preachers

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<sup>1</sup> In the original it is written *omsaij*, i.e. *ông sãi*, "temple warden." Usually, this term relates to laypersons who live in temples and carry out auxiliary functions but do not rigidly adhere to the tenets of Buddhism. The word used for "priests," as Borri called them, is a Sino-Vietnamese word *tãng* or *thầy tu* (bonzes), designating members of the Buddhist clergy, who devote their lives to observing the doctrine. Adriano di St. Thecla, an Italian missionary in eighteenth-century Tonkin, describes *ông sãi* as "mostly uneducated, [who] do not rigidly observe the rules of their sect, and are assigned to their temples by the elders of the villages." Adriano di St. Thecla, *Opusculum de Sectis apud Sinenses et Turkinenses: A Small Treatise on the Sects among the Chinese and Tonkinese: A Study of Religion in China and North Vietnam in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. and trans. Olga Dror (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asian Program Publications, 2002), pp. 206-7. However, sometimes the meaning of the compound *ông sãi* overlaps with that of *tãng* or *thầy tu*. I think this was especially the case for the Europeans, who mostly saw and had to deal with people working in village pagodas and extrapolated the appellation *ông sãi* to refer to higher representatives of the Buddhist hierarchy.

of the new law may be banish'd all the kingdom, that being the only means to appease the wrath of their gods. The wise king laugh'd at their project, knowing it to be a foolish notion of those priests, and made little account of it, having a great esteem for the fathers, and a kindness for the *Portugueses*. Yet this favor of the king avail'd them but little to oppose the fury of the ministers of Satan; for they so stirr'd up the people to press that the preachers of the gospel might be expell'd the kingdom, that the king, not able to resist without danger of a mutiny, sent for the fathers, and with much concern told them, He was sensible of the folly of the people, and ignorance of the priests; but that it was not prudent to withstand a multitude, so eagerly bent upon such an affair as that was, which was design'd for the removing so general a calamity; and therefore they must depart this kingdom as soon as possible. The fathers having heard these words with tears in their eyes, seeing themselves oblig'd to forsake those new and tender plants of Christianity, yet ever submitting to the will of God, went away to embark; but being got aboard, in obedience to the king's command, they could never get out of the harbour, because at that time a sort of contrary winds, which usually hold three or four months, had begun to blow, which by the *Portugueses* are call'd *Moncao*,<sup>2</sup> or general winds. The *Cochin-Chineses* observing it, would not allow them to return into the city, but oblig'd them to remain upon the shore depriv'd of all human comfort, and expos'd to the burning heat of the sun, which in those parts is very violent. It was a great satisfaction to them in the midst of their sufferings, to see the constancy of some of those new Christians, who never forsook their masters, following, accompanying, and relieving them the best they could, becoming voluntary companions in their sufferings. F. *Buzome* had here a new trial of his virtue; for the uneasiness of this uncomfortable life, in a few days, caus'd an imposthume<sup>3</sup> to break out in his breast, from which abundance of corruption ran, and was a mighty weakening to him.

{An hypocrite priest of the idols detected and punish'd.}

The infernal fiend, not satisfied to have brought the preachers of the gospel to this miserable condition, made yet farther efforts to discredit their doctrine, and catholick religion, making use to this purpose of one of those *omraitis*, who living a solitary life, was therefore in great reputation of sanctity. This man coming one day from his hermitage, publicly boasted, That by his prayers he would cause the idols immediately to send rain; and without more to do, went away follow'd by an innumerable multitude to the top of a mountain, where he began to call upon his devils, and striking the earth three times with his foot, the sky was presently clouded, and there fell a shower of rain; which tho' not sufficient to supply the want, yet was enough to give a reputation to that minister of hell, and to discredit our holy faith; every one saying, They had not yet seen the foreign priests obtain so much by their prayers of the great God, whose servants they profess'd themselves. This accident troubled the fathers more than the misery they liv'd in: but Providence

<sup>2</sup> *Monção* in Portuguese means monsoon. This word derives from the Arabic word *mausim*, "time or season." Monsoon is a wind blowing in opposite directions according to two main seasons: during spring and summer it blows from the southwest, and during fall-winter from the northeast. Not only do these winds determine the climate of the countries in their area, but they were responsible for establishing a scheduled maritime trade system, connecting Asian countries with each other and with other parts of the world.

<sup>3</sup> An abscess.

comforted them by the means of the lady *Joanna* abovementioned. She, as it were, with a prophetic spirit, bid them not be concern'd at any thing that had happened; for in a little time God would make the hypocrisy of the *omsaii*, and the vanity of his idols, known to all men, by destroying the reputation he had gain'd till then; all which was verified to a tittle soon after. For the fame of his sanctity being spread abroad upon account of the rain, and coming to the king's ear, he presently sent for him, and gave him an apartment in the palace. There he fell in love with one of the king's concubines, and found no difficulty to compass his design; but the matter being known, tho' in *Cochin-China* this be accounted a most heinous crime, and it be death to have to do with a woman the king had once touch'd; yet they could not proceed to execution against him, as being a person sacred among them, but according to the form appointed by their laws. The king therefore gave the sentence, That the *omsaii* should vanish; but that he should neither go east, west, north, nor south, nor through any part whatsoever of his kingdom. This decree being publish'd, was immediately executed in such a manner, that the *omsaii* vanish'd with great shame, and was never more seen in the kingdom, nor out of it.

[The church burnt.]

But the devil being enraged, vented his fury against God's servants, stirring up the people to fire the church in *Turon*, to the great grief of the fathers, who beheld all from the shore without hopes of redress.

[The author in *Cochin-China*.]

In the mean while the news of the fathers' misfortune was spread all about the neighbouring countries, and even as far as *Macao*, which was a great trouble to the fathers of that college, who pitying their brethren, resolv'd to send them some relief by a *Portuguese* vessel that was ready to sail to *Cochin-China*; and the fathers judg'd the business might succeed the better, if two fathers going in it, one had the name of a chaplain of the ship, to return in it; and that the *Cochin-Chinenses* might have no cause to complain, or be incens'd, he that remain'd was to go disguis'd: *F. Peter Marques*, a *Portuguese*, was appointed chaplain; and I had the good fortune to be his companion, obedience so ordering it: for tho' I had been destin'd for *China* by our father general, I freely and affectionately embraced the opportunity of dedicating myself to God in the mission of *Cochin-China*, and for the comfort of those afflicted fathers, seeing myself quite shut out of *China*, by reason of the persecution rais'd there. I set out from *Macao* in the habit of a slave, and soon arrived in *Cochin-China* upon my birth day, which was very near opening the way for me to a blessed life; but it pleas'd Providence to order matters otherwise, either because my sins made me unworthy of such a mercy, or for other causes only known to God: as the vessel was entering the harbour, upon which there were abundance of the country people, there happened, I know not how, a quarrel between two *Portugueses*, and one of them falling down for dead, the other leap'd into the sea to escape the wounded man's friends and companions, who would have kill'd him. He swam a-while, but being tir'd, drew towards the ship again, to save himself from sinking, and endeavouring to catch hold could not, because they were ready above with half-pikes, javelins, and swords, to wound him. I seeing him in that distress, endeavour'd to relieve him; and tho' I was in a servile habit, ran among them, and calling out to

one, and pulling another, took such pains that I appeas'd them. The *Cochin-Chinenses* who were aboard the ship, seeing the *Portugueses* pacified at the sight of a slave, began presently to suspect the matter; and knowing by experience, that the *Portugueses*, when in a passion, are not so easily quell'd, unless religious men interpose, said to one another, This man is certainly no slave, as his habit seems to suggest; and being no merchant, as the rest are, he is certainly one of their religious men, that endeavours, contrary to the king's command, to be conceal'd in our country, but we will discover him to the king himself, that he may be punish'd as he deserves. Immediately they flock'd about me, and tho' I did not understand their language, yet I plainly perceived they had all a jealousy of me; and notwithstanding all my endeavours not to discover myself, I could not prevent their sending advice to court. When I had satisfy'd myself as to this point, believing I was certainly a dead man, I resolv'd to die as what I was: accordingly I put on my habit of the society, a surplice over it, and a stole about my neck; and in that habit I began publicly to preach the faith of Christ by means of the interpreter; then erecting an altar on the shore, I said mass, and gave the communion to the *Portugueses* that were present, standing ready for whatsoever it should please God to appoint: But it pleas'd him not that I should then shed my blood for him. Whilst my cause was in hand, it rain'd so abundantly day and night, without ever ceasing, that every man apply'd himself to tilling of the ground, and sowing of rice; and perhaps reflecting that they had obtain'd that at my arrival, which they had so long wish'd for, looking upon it as a good omen; and concluding it was not the fault of the fathers that they had wanted rain, they repented them of all they had done against us, and never gave us any farther trouble, but suffer'd us to live freely throughout the kingdom.

{Charity of *Japanese* Christians.}

Matters being thus pacified, I resolved to go look out for F. *Buzome*, and his companion, since I was gone thither to that end; and whilst I was endeavouring to hear some news of him, the report of my arrival being spread about the city, that lady *Joanna* above-mentioned found me out. By her I understood that F. *Francis de Pina*, with the *Japanese* brother, had been privately conveyed by *Japanese* Christians to the city *Faijô*, all people certainly concluding that the fathers were then got out of the kingdom. Upon this information, F. *Peter Marques*, who knew the language of Japan very well, would have us go to *Faijô*, where we found F. *Francis de Pina*, who was there hid, but very well used by those good *Japanese* Christians, to whom he privately administered the sacraments. We received incredible joy in meeting; for besides the general charity of religion, we had been companions, and great friends, in the college of *Macao*; and the kindness of the *Japanese* was extraordinary, for they treated us during a fortnight very splendidly, with great demonstrations of affection and joy.

Here I also understood how, through God's special providence, F. *Buzome* was also safe in the kingdom, as if God had particularly defended him for the good of that mission, where whilst he was upon the strand amidst so many afflictions, and with that imposthume in his breast, the governor of *Pulucambi* came to *Turori*; who seeing that man so ill used, that he looked like a walking ghost, being moved to compassion asked who he was, and what misfortune had brought him to that miserable condition. He was told all that had happened; and that the want of rain being laid to his and his companion's charge, he had been banished by the king's order. The governor was not a little amazed, and laughed to think that this should be

attributed to a poor religious man, which could no way depend on him; therefore he ordered him to be taken from that open shore, and carry'd into one of his galleys, in which he carry'd him to his province, entertained him in his own house, had him looked after by the most skilful physicians in that city, and made his own children attend him during a whole year; for so long his sickness lasted: all men admiring that a heathen should behave himself so charitably towards a stranger utterly unknown to him, only out of mere natural compassion.

Thus we were four priests of the society in *Cochin-China*: F. *Buzome*, at *Pulucambi*, one hundred fifty miles from the port of *Turon*; F. *Peter Marques* remained at *Faijó*, as superior, and to serve the *Japoneses*; keeping F. *Francis de Pina* for his companion: and I returned to *Turon*, there to serve the *Portugueses*, to say mass, preach to them, and hear their confessions, and learning at the same time the language of *Cochin-China*, endeavour'd, with the assistance of the interpreters, to persuade some of those heathens to be baptized; and above all, to encourage and confirm those that were already baptized. Soon after my first coming, there happened a mean accident worthy to be known: I was called to make a dying infant a Christian; I did so, and it soon after gave up the ghost. I was concerned, not knowing where to bury it, which made me think of fixing a burying-place for all the Christians that should die for the future. To this purpose I ordered a mast of a ship that was cast by, to be taken, and a stately cross to be made of it; which done, I invited all the *Portugueses*, and sailors, to help to carry it to the appointed place, I attending with my surplice and stole. Whilst the hole was digging to erect the holy cross, a company of armed men came out from the neighbourhood, who with their muskets threatened to kill me; which I perceiving, caus'd the interpreter to endeavour to know of them, what it was they would be at? And was told, they would not have that cross erected there, because they feared the devils would infest their houses. I answer'd, It would be quite contrary: because the cross had such a virtue, that it put the devil to flight. With this they were so well pleased, that laying down their arms, they all ran to help: and thus the cross was set up to the general satisfaction of all parties, and the burial-place fixed. Soon after the governor of *Pulucambi* came thither, and brought F. *Buzome* with him; and we met all four fathers of the society, to our unspeakable joy at *Faijó*, together with two lay-brothers, one a *Portuguese*, and the other a *Japonesc*. After a charitable reception, we consulted together about the most proper means of promoting that mission. It was unanimously agreed, that F. *Peter Marques* should stay at *Faijó* with the *Japonesc* brother, because he was a good preacher; and the other three, with the *Portuguese* brother, should follow the governor of *Pulucambi*, who earnestly desired it; which was accordingly done, as shall be here related.

## CHAPTER III.

# THE GOVERNOR OF PULUCAMBI INTRODUCES THE FATHERS OF THE SOCIETY INTO HIS PROVINCE, BUILDING THEM A HOUSE AND CHURCH.

F. Francis Buzome, F. Francis de Pina, and I, set out from Fajfó for Pulucambi, with the governor of that province; who all the way treated us with inexpressible courtesy and kindness, always lodging us near himself, and behaving himself in such manner, that there being no human motives to incline him so to do, it plainly appeared to be the work of Providence.

{Great goodness of the governor of Pulucambi.}

He appointed a galley only to carry us and our interpreters, not suffering so much as our baggage to be put aboard it, but ordered another boat for it. In this easy manner we traveled twelve large days journey, putting into a port morning and evening, and all the ports being near great towns or cities of the province of *Quanghía* [*Quảng Ngãi*], in which province the governor had as much power as in his own at *Pulucambi*;<sup>1</sup> all people ran to pay their respects and acknowledgments, bringing him rich presents, the first of which always fell to our share, he himself so ordering it, every one admiring to see us so honoured; which gained us much esteem and reputation among those people, that being the design of the governor: and this was much forwarded by the great account he made of our intercession, when any criminal was to be punished: for we no sooner opened our mouths, but we obtained all we desired; by which means we not only gained the reputation of being great with the governor, but of having compassion and kindness for those people, who therefore loved and respected us. Besides, during the whole voyage, he treated us as if we had been some great lords, contriving sports and pastimes in all parts, causing the galleys sometimes to represent a sea-fight, sometimes to row for rewards. Nor did there a day pass but he came aboard our galley to visit us, seeming much pleased with our conversation, especially when we discoursed of religion and our holy faith. In this manner we came to the province of *Pulucambi*, thro' which we had still some days journey to make, before we arrived at the governor's palace, who for our greater diversion, would have us travel by land. To this purpose he ordered seven elephants to be provided; and the more to honour us, would have one for each, causing an hundred men, some on horseback, and some a foot, to attend us: and the

<sup>1</sup> The modern province of Binh Định.

journey being for recreation, we spent eight days in it, being royally entertained whosoever we came; but particularly in the house of a sister of his, we had a most splendid entertainment, not only for the variety and number of dishes, but much more for the rarity of the dressing, all things being dressed after the *European* manner, though neither the governor, nor any of the family, were to taste of them.

[His grandeur, and affection for the fathers.]

Being at length come to the governor's palace, all the entertainment and dainties of the journey concluded in such a reception as he used to make for kings and great princes, treating us for eight days together in most splendid manner, making us sit in his royal throne, and eating with us himself in publick, with his wife and children; to the great astonishment of all that city, where it was unanimously affirmed, such a reception had never been seen, unless it were for some royal person: and this was the cause of the report generally spread throughout the kingdom, that we were a king's sons, and were come thither about matter of great concern; which being known by the governor, he was mightily pleased; and before the chiefest men of the court he publicly said, *It is very true, that the fathers were the sons of a king, for they were angels, come thither, not for any want or necessity of their own, being provided with all things in their own countries, but only out of pure zeal to save their souls: And therefore he advised them, to give ear to the fathers, and observe the law they would preach to them, learn the doctrine they taught, and receive the faith they delivered: for (said he) I have often discoursed and conversed with these men, and plainly perceive by the doctrine they teach, that there is no true law but theirs, nor no way but that they shew, which leads to eternal salvation. But take heed what you do; for unless you learn that true doctrine, which I, your chief, bring to you by means of these fathers, your neglect and infidelity will be punished eternally in hell.* Thus spoke that lord, becoming a preacher of the gospel, though himself a heathen: all men being the more amazed and astonished at it, because of the great conceit they had of his wisdom.

[The fathers settled.]

After the first eight days, we gave him to understand, that we would rather go live in the city, the better to promote the preaching of the gospel, which we could not so well attend in the palace, because it was three miles from the city, in an open field, according to the custom of the country. The governor would not have parted with us, because of the great affection he had for us, but preferring the publick good before his own satisfaction, he immediately ordered there should be a very convenient house provided in the city *Nuocman*.<sup>2</sup> and moreover told us, we might see above a hundred houses that were about his palace, and take our choice of the convenientest of them, to make a church of it; and acquainting him with it, he would provide all that was necessary. We returned him thanks for so many favors bestowed on us during our journey, and those we still received. Having taking our leaves for the present, we mounted the elephants again, and with a great attendance went away to the city *Nuocman*, which extends itself five miles in length, and half a mile in breadth, where we were by the governor's order received with extraordinary

<sup>2</sup> A different spelling for the city mentioned in Chapter 4 of Part I as Nuocmon, referring to Nước Mặn, modern Qui Nhon.

honour. He not being able to endure to be so far from us, came the next day to visit us, to know whether the house he had given us was convenient; and told us, he knew that we being strangers, could not have money and other necessaries, but that he took upon him to provide every thing; and immediately ordered a good sum to be paid us monthly, and every day flesh, fish, and rice to be sent in for us, our interpreters, and all the servants of the house: and not so satisfied, he frequently sent us so many presents, that they alone were sufficient to furnish us plentifully with all things. The more to honour and credit us among all men, he one day gave publick audience in the court of our house, in the manner as we said above was practiced in *Cochin-China*. Here several criminals were tried, every one receiving sentence according to his crime; among the rest, two were condemned to be shot to death with arrows, and whilst they were bound, we undertook to beg their pardon; which was immediately granted, and he ordered them to be discharged, publicly protesting, he would not have done it at the request of any other, but to these holy men, who teach the true way for the salvation of souls, (said he) I can deny nothing; and I am myself impatient to be rid of those impediments that obstruct my being baptized, and receiving their holy faith; which is what you all ought to do, if you desire to oblige me.

[A rare way of building a church.]

Then turning to us, he again desired we would appoint the place for the church, that he might give orders for its speedy fitting up. We shew'd him a place that seem'd convenient enough, and he approving of it, went away to his palace. Before three days were over, news was brought us, that the church was coming: we went out with great joy, and no less curiosity, to see how a church should come, which tho' we knew was to be made of timber, as had been agreed, yet it could not chuse [choose] but be a great pile, according to the space it must fill, standing upon great pillars. On a sudden, in the field, we spied above a thousand men, all loaded with materials for this fabrick. Every pillar was carried by thirty lusty men; others carried the beams, others the planks, others the capitals, others the bases; some one thing, some another, and so all of them went in order to our house, filling all the court, which was very large, to our unspeakable joy and satisfaction. One only thing displeased us, that we had not provisions enough in the house, to give so great a multitude a small entertainment; for tho' they were paid by the governor, yet it looked like ill-breeding to send them away without some refreshment: but we were soon eased of this trouble; seeing every one sit down upon the piece he brought, being obliged to keep and deliver it, and take out of his wallet, his pot with flesh, fish, and rice, and lighting a fire, fall to cooking very quietly, without asking any thing. When they had eaten, the architect came, and taking out a line, view'd the ground, mark'd out the distances, and calling those that carried the pillars, fixed them in their places; this done, he called for the other parts, one after another, that every man might give an account of what he brought, and go his way: and thus all things proceeding very regularly, and every man labouring his best, all that great pile was set up in one day; yet either through over-much haste, or the negligence of the architect, it proved somewhat awry, and leaning to one side; which being made known to the governor, he presently commanded the architect, upon pain of cutting off his legs, to call all the workmen he had need of, and mend it. The architect obey'd, and taking the church to pieces with a like number of workmen, rebuilt it in

a very short time very compleately. And we blessed God, for that, at a time when Christians were so lukewarm, it had pleased him to stir up a heathen so zealously to build a church, in honour of his divine Majesty.

And to shew how affectionately the governor looked to our affairs, I will give one particular instance, and so end this chapter. In the months of *June, July,* and *August,* the south-west winds generally reign in *Cochin-China,* which causes such an extraordinary heat, that the houses are perfectly parch'd and dried up; and being all of wood, the least spark of fire, that through negligence, or other accident, falls upon them, immediately takes, as it would do in tinder; and therefore during those months there are generally great fires throughout the kingdom; for when it has taken hold of one house, the flame soon catches hold of those that lie the way the wind blows, and miserably consumes them. To deliver us from this danger, our house being in the middle of the city, and to make it farther appear what esteem the governor made of us, he put out an edict, commanding, that the tops of all the houses that lay south-west of us, should be taken off; and there were so many of them, that they extended at least two miles; which he did to the end, that if any of them took fire, it might be the easier to prevent its passing forward to ours: and this was readily performed by them all, by reason of the great respect they bore us.

## CHAPTER IV.

# OF THE GOVERNOR OF PULUCAMBI'S DEATH.

Our affairs advanced very prosperously in this city, and it was now the time, when the divine Providence was, according to its usual method, to give us a taste of sufferings, wherewith God frequently tries his servants; and so we ever see he gives such a mixture of prosperity and adversity, that they neither be depressed by the one, nor puffed up by the other: and as the primitive church was founded by the holy apostles upon these two pillars of prosperity and tribulation, even so it pleased the Almighty, that the new church of *Cochin-China* should be established by his apostolical ministers. The first beginnings of this mission were very successful, as has been seen in the first chapter of this second part; but very soon after ensued that terrible persecution for want of rain, which had like to have ruined all. Afterwards, with the favour of the governor of *Pulucambi*, the storms seemed to be blown off, and the budding vine seemed to promise abundance of fruit: but it pleased him that disposes of all things, that the governor of *Pulucambi's* death, like a violent north wind, almost destroyed all in the bud.

[The governor's death.]

This misfortune happened as follows, the governor went out one day a hunting on his elephant, very well pleased, and the sport drawing him on, he made no reflection that he rode all day over a scorching plain, where the heat pierced his head in such a manner, that at night he fell into a burning fever; upon notice whereof, we hastened to the palace to visit, or rather to baptize him, if we found him in imminent danger. He kept us with him two days, we still pressing him to be baptized, as he had often said he would; to which he always answered, he was ordering his affairs for that purpose, but came to no conclusion. The third day he lost his senses, God so permitting, for causes only known to himself; and perhaps that vain honour he ever passionately coveted, was the reward of the good turns he did us: in fine, he began to rave, and so continued three days, till overcome by the violence of the distemper, he died without baptism.

Any man may guess how much we were concerned at this accident, seeing ourselves forsaken in a strange country, and destitute of all human help; but it chiefly grieved us, that a person so well disposed, and through whose means we had conceived hopes, that the faith might spread throughout the whole kingdom, should die so in our hands without baptism.

[Heathen ceremonies at the governor's death.]

Abundance of their rites and superstitious ceremonies were performed at this governor's death, at which we were present till the last. It would be endless to relate

them all, and therefore I will set down two or three, by which the others used by those gentiles upon such occasions may be guessed at. First, whilst he lay in his agony, there was a multitude of armed men, who did not cease to cut and make thrusts in the air with the scymitars, cast darts, and fire muskets in the rooms of the palace; but particularly two, that stood on each side of the dying man, were continually striking the air about his mouth with their scymitars; and both these and the others being asked, Why they did so? told us, They frightened the devils, that they might not hurt the governor's soul, as it was departing his body. These superstitious ceremonies made us pity their ignorance, but not fear any harm to ourselves, as followed when the governor was dead: for we had much cause to fear being expelled that province of *Pulucambi*, and perhaps all the kingdom, with the loss of all we had acquired towards settling Christianity, and perhaps worse. It is the custom when any great person dies, for all the *omsais*, or priests of the country, to meet together, in order to find out, not the natural, but the superstitious cause of his death; and being agreed upon what it may be, immediately that thing to which it is attributed, is ordered to be burnt, whether it be a house, garment, man or beast. Accordingly all the *omsais* being assembled in a great hall, they began to argue this point: we, who were present, remembering the persecution for want of rain, there being at that time nothing extraordinary in the province, but the governor's kind reception to us, and his assigning a house, and building a church in the city, with such extraordinary tokens of affection for our holy law, did not at all question, but that these things being represented to them, they would lay the death of that lord to our charge, and consequently would order us all to be burnt alive, together with our house and church, and all our goods. Therefore we stood in a corner of the hall, recommending ourselves to God, and preparing ourselves for whatsoever his divine Majesty should suffer to be decreed against us; when one of the *omsais*, who was the eldest of them, and as it were their dean, standing up, said with a loud voice, that, in his opinion, the only cause of the governor's death, was the falling of a beam some days since in the new palace; and he was the more apt to believe it, because all the distemper was in his head, as appeared by his raving; an evident sign, as he said, of the stroke he had received in his head by the aforesaid beam: all which he meant metaphorically, and in a superstitious sense, and therefore it pleased the other *omsais*, who all unanimously agreed in the same sentiment: and so rising without more to do, they went and set fire to that palace, which was all reduced to ashes, whilst we gave thanks to God for having escaped so manifest a danger.

{Sorcery to discover the state of the soul departed.}

This done, some other *omsais* who profess necromancy, came to the governor's palace, to perform another superstitious ceremony, according to the custom of the country. The kindred of the party deceased looking upon it as a great blessing, that any body inspired by an evil spirit, should speak concerning the state of the soul departed; and to this purpose those wizard *omsais* were called, of whom they all earnestly beg that devilish favour, he that obtains it being much envied by the rest. These conjurers made their circles, and used several charms both in words and actions, that the devil might enter into some one of the governor's kindred, who were there in a suppliant posture, but all in vain. At last a sister of the governor's, for whom he had an extraordinary kindness, came in, and begging the same favour, immediately gave manifest signs that she was possessed: for being decrepit, by

reason of her great age, and not able to go alone, she began, to the astonishment of the spectators, to skip as nimbly as if she had been a young girl, and the stick she threw from her hung in the air, all the while the devil was in her body during which time, talking in a raving manner, and doing many disorderly actions, she uttered several extravagancies about the state and place her brother's soul was in; and concluding her mad discourse, the devil leaving her, she fell down as if she had been dead, remaining so spent for the space of eight days, that she could not stir for meer [mere] weakness; all the kindred and friends flocking to visit her, and congratulate her happiness, in that she had been chosen among all the relations for an action (as they thought it) so glorious and honourable for the dead man.

{Heathen canonization.}

At length they began to order the funeral of this lord; and as in the catholick church it is the custom to honour the memory of men renowned for sanctity of life, by a solemn canonization; so in *Cochin-China*, the devil always mimicking holy things, the more to delude the people, it is customary to honour the death of those who have been universally reputed just men, and upright in their actions, and adorned with moral virtues, with great solemnity and magnificence, canonizing them, if we may so call it, after their manner, by eternizing their memory, and giving them immortal veneration. For this reason the governor of *Putucambi*, who by all men, not only in his own province, but throughout all the kingdom, was, for his extraordinary natural parts, reputed a man of great wisdom, and incomparable prudence, his government being adorned with singular justice and integrity, together with an unusual inclination and affection for all needy persons, was judged not to require a doleful sad funeral pomp, as was due to others; but on the contrary, all demonstrations of joy and grandeur, which might declare him worthy of religious honours, and to be added to the number of their gods. This being decreed, they all endeavoured to lay aside their mourning and sorrow, and to express all pleasure and satisfaction; and to this purpose, all the governor's kindred, for the space of eight days, sumptuously treated all the people, during which time, they did nothing from morning till night, but eat and drink, sing, dance, and play upon musical and warlike instruments.

{The governor's funeral.}

After the eight days, the body was carried in a silver coffin gilt, under a canopy, to the city where he was born, called *Chifu*,<sup>1</sup> three days journey distant, attended by a multitude of all sorts of people, dancing and rejoicing, leaving the palace where he died utterly uninhabited, that it might run to ruin, and no sign of it remaining; so the memory of the governor's death might be lost in perpetual oblivion, he still remaining alive with perpetual praise and veneration in the hearts and mouths of all men. Being come to a spacious plain without *Chifu*, they all fell to work upon a palace, twice as magnificent and sumptuous as that the governor died in; and to make a great shew of the dead man's wealth, they built as many gallies as he used to keep, upon wheels, for them to run upon dry land. In the same manner they made wooden elephants and horses, and all other moveables used when the governor

<sup>1</sup> I could not identify the city. *Chifu* is transcribed *Kifu* in the original Italian.

went abroad when alive, without sparing any cost. In the midst of the palace they erected a stately temple, with a fine altar, on which they placed the coffin covered, and hid with such curious workmanship, that the hieroglyphicks, carving, and painting, greatly move those gentiles to respect. For three days continually they performed several sacrifices and ceremonies, by the ministry of five or six hundred *omsais*, all clad in white, who spent the time in singing and sacrificing, offering wine, oxer, and buffaloes, in great numbers; the publick entertainments continuing these three days, for above two thousand men of note, every one having his table to himself, according to custom, and each of them covered with above two hundred dishes. At the end of these three days they set fire to all that pile, burning the palace and temple, with all the perfumes and furniture, only saving the coffin with the body, which was afterwards buried, and privately removed to twelve several graves, that the people being always in doubt where it had been left, that uncertainty might increase the honor of the new idol, they adoring it in all those places where they thought the bones might be. Thus the solemnity ended for that time, till some months after, that is, in the seventh moon, according to their computation of time, it was repeated in the same manner as it had been performed at first; a few months after it was done a third time, and so from time to time for three years, all the revenues assigned the governor of that province by the king, being spent upon this solemnity for those three years; and therefore no other governor was appointed during that time, they being persuaded that the dead man's soul, which was placed among the gods, would continue in the government for those three years. However, his own son was appointed his deputy-governor, or lieutenant.

{The fathers questioned concerning the governor's soul.}

We three fathers of the society then in that province, were present at most of this solemnity; and tho' we did not attend at their superstitious ceremonies, yet to avoid being thought ungrateful and unmannerly, we were forced to accept of some invitations, in one of which we were forewarned we should be asked where the governor's soul was; assuring us, that if we said it was in hell, we should presently be cut to pieces. We were a little after publickly asked the question, and answered, That no man could be saved without baptism; but that through the mercy of God, and earnest desire to be baptized without sufficing, where better cannot be; if the governor, at last, had such a desire, as it was likely he had, because of the affection he bore our faith, as was said above, and that he would have asked it, but that the violence of his distemper hindered, therefore it might be believed he was saved, and not damned.

This answer, tho' new, and unexpected, in some measure satisfy'd them, in token whereof they offer'd us some whole buffaloes, some boiled, some roasted, which had been sacrificed to their new idol, the dead governor; but we refusing them, saying, "Our law forbid us to eat of that flesh so defiled by their sacrifice; instead of the dead sacrificed buffaloes, they ordered others alive to be given us; the governor's kindred afterwards sending us elephants, that we might return on them to *Pulucambi*, with as much honor as when the governor was living.

{The fathers in distress.}

These were the last favours we received in virtue of the governor of *Pulucambi*'s favour; and therefore returning home, we were left like fatherless children, forsaken

by all the world. Now no body minded us, the allowance of rice for our maintenance failed, and we having but twenty crowns, must in a few days have been reduced to great misery and want; and if any one fell sick, we durst not call any body to breath a vein,<sup>2</sup> because we had not wherewithal to pay for it; and tho' there were among them people very ready to supply the needy, especially with sustenance, as was said above, yet it was not convenient for us to ask any thing, lest we should lose all the advantage we made, as to the conversion of souls; because they would have said, we went not thither to preach the law of Jesus Christ, but to supply our wants under the protection of the governor. No body now came to our house that first shew of authority ceasing, and tho' we had learned the language of the country, yet they made no account of the words of three poor men, left in the midst of infinite idolaters, and despised our doctrines, as an invention of our own, carried thither to oppose their ancient sects and tenets.

Three years pass'd after this manner, and yet we were not so much troubled at our own wants, which God knows were very great, as to see every day less hopes of promoting the service of God among those pagans, having during those three years converted but very few, and that with unspeakable labour and toil. Things being in this posture, in some measure desperate, we being inclinable to believe the time was not yet come, when it would please God to enlighten the darkness of those people, either because our sins obstructed it, or for some other hidden judgments of God. But when our human frailty shewed itself most diffident of divine assistance, even then, the more to confound us, the God of mercy shewed the wonderful effects of his divine omnipotency, that the noble undertaking of converting souls might be wholly attributed to him, we then owning we had no power to proceed in it, and that we might know experimentally, that *neither he who waters, nor he who plants does any thing; but it is God that gives the increase*,<sup>3</sup> as will appear in the following chapter.

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<sup>2</sup> Meaning to let blood.

<sup>3</sup> In the original this passage is in Latin: "neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat; sed qui incrementum dat, Deus." This is from Vulgate, *Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, 3:7.

## CHAPTER V.

# HOW GOD MADE WAY FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE PROVINCE OF PULUCAMBI, BY MEANS OF THE NOBLEST PERSONS IN IT.

{The fathers disperse.}

We having nothing to maintain us at *Pulucambi*, and converting no body, dispersed ourselves into several parts: *F. Francis de Pina* went to live at *Faijó*, a *Japanese* city, as has been said, with a design to serve those Christians, whose pastor he had been before, and to live upon their alms. He being well skilled in the language of *Cochin-China*, and talking it naturally, never ceased there to preach our holy faith. *F. Francis Buzome* went away for *Turon*, carrying along with him the best interpreter we had, to endeavour to obtain some alms of the *Portugueses* there, that might at least maintain us two in *Pulucambi*, in our house at *Nuocman*, till some supply came from *Macao*.

{Conversion of a great lady.}

Thus I was left in *Pulucambi*, solitary and disconsolate, without any hopes of the conversion of those gentiles. When one day being at home, far from any such thought, I saw a number of elephants before our door, with many ladies, and a large retinue of gentlemen, after whom followed a great lady, and principal matron, most richly clad, and adorned with abundance of rich jewels, according to the country fashion. I was much surprised at the unusual spectacle, and majesty of the lady, and in suspense, not imagining what might be the design of the new visit. Going out at last to receive her, I understood she was wife to the ambassador the king of *Cochin-China* was sending to the king of *Cambogia*, which ambassador was a native of *Nuocman*, where we dwelt, and next the governor the chief man in that city, who was then at the court of *Sinuá*, treating with that king upon the subject of his embassy. After the usual ceremonies and compliments, according to the custom of the country, the lady being unwilling to lose time upon matters that were not to her purpose, *Let us come* (said she) *to the business I aim at; I have been fully informed, father, of your coming into this our country and province, and of the occasion of your coming; I see the holy and unblemish'd life you lead, I know you preach and teach the true God; and being satisfied that this is most agreeable to reason, am persuaded that there is no true law but yours, nor other God but yours, nor any way to life everlasting, but that you teach; and therefore my coming to your house, is for no other intent, but earnestly to beg of you, that bathing me in your holy water, you will add me to the number of Christians; this is the utmost of my wishes and desires.* In the first place I commended her good and holy

resolution, exhorting her to return thanks to God for so signal a mercy bestowed on her, in calling her to the knowledge of his holy law, there being nothing in this world to be valued equal to the soul's salvation. Next I made my excuse for not complying out of hand with her pious and reasonable request; because, altho' I had some knowledge of the *Cochin-Chinese* language, yet it was not enough to instruct her in the lofty mysteries of our Christian religion; and therefore I advised her excellency to wait for F. Buzome, who in a few days was to return from *Turon*, having with him an excellent interpreter, by whose means she would be instructed as she ought to be to her own satisfaction, and obtain the end of her holy desires. *The great fire* (replied she) *that inflames my heart, will not allow of such a long delay; and the more, for that my husband is hourly expected from court, with whom I am soon to embark for the kingdom of Cambogia, where the dangers of the sea being frequent, a storm may happen to rise, where dying, I may perish for ever.* She added, that it was enough if I discoursed of matters divine, as I did of other things; for she should understand all I said. These visible tokens of her resolution obliging me to it, I began the best I could to inform her in several matters and principles of our holy faith. Soon after it pleased God, F. Buzome returned, and seeing this good success, gave infinite thanks to God. The lady was much pleased with the arrival of the interpreter, whom she had so earnestly expected, with whose assistance, and her continual application, study, and attention to catechizing, which was done for two hours before and two hours after dinner, in a fortnight's time she became perfect in the Christian Doctrine. Above all, what made the greatest impression on her heart, was the knowledge of Jesus Christ, true God, made man, and humbled for the sake of man; and therefore in some measure to imitate our Saviour's great humility, she for the future came to our house, which was a good mile from hers, not only without the state and elephants she used before, but bare-footed, in dirt, and upon stones, obliging her gentlemen and ladies, by her example, to imitate her devotion.

{Twenty-six baptized.}

In our spiritual discourses, and exposition upon the catechism, when we came to make mention of hell, describe its torments, represent the greatness, eternity, and variety of torments there suffered, the horrible company of devils, the darkness of those internal dungeons, and uninhabitable dens; and lastly, the torture of fire: both she and her ladies were so terrified, that having by themselves, all night, considered upon what they had heard, they came again the next day to tell us, they would all be Christians, to avoid that everlasting misery; But we telling them it was impossible, they being servants, and consequently concubines to the ambassador, according to the custom of the country, as has been mentioned in the first treatise, the ambassador's lady answered, *That impediment does not concern me. It is so, said we, for your excellency is your husband's only wife, and has not to do with other men, and therefore may freely be baptized.* At these words, lifting up her hands to heaven, she gave such tokens of joy, as if she had been besides herself, tho' she had never been truly so much herself, as when she shewed such signs of joy, for that which ought to be the only cause of all our satisfaction. Her women on the other side, seeing themselves excluded the way of salvation, cried out aloud, they would forbear being the ambassador's concubines, since it obstructed their baptism, and was the way to damnation. The lady seconded their good purposes, taking upon her to deliver them from that sin, and get every one of them a husband. All lets and impediments being

removed by these promises of the lady, and firm purposes of the women, one day, which was the joyfulest I ever saw in my life, the ambassador's lady richly apparelled, and dressed with jewels, and nobly attended to our church by gentlemen, was baptized, with twenty-five of her women, and as chief of them called *Ursula*, to the glory of Jesus Christ, who by means of these few women, opened a way to the conversions made by our mission in *Cochin-China*.

{Zeal of the converts.}

After they were baptized, we went in procession to the palace of the ambassador's lady *Ursula*, where there was an oratory in which she used before to perform her superstitious devotions to an idol. When we came in, we first sprinkled the house with holy water, and then the lady, and her women, courageously laid hold of the idol, and throwing it violently against the ground, beat it to pieces, trampling on it; in whose place we set up a fine picture of our Saviour, which those new devout Christians falling down, devoutly worshipped, owning themselves his most humble and devout slaves. Then we put about their necks some *Agnus Dei's*, crosses, medals, and relics, which they valued above the gold chains, and strings of pearls they were adorned with. Having obtained this victory over the devil, after saying the litaney, and other prayers in the oratory, now blessed, *F. Buzome*, and I, returned home with that satisfaction and thanksgiving that every man may imagine. The ambassador's lady, and her women, came after this, every day duly to mass, catechize, and other spiritual exercises, with great tokens of fervour, and Christian piety.

{The lady's carriage to her husband.}

At this time the ambassador, husband to the lady *Ursula*, came from court, to depart in a short time upon his embassy to the king of *Cambogia*. It is the custom of that country, when the head of the family comes from afar off, for the wife, children, and rest of the family, to go out at least a mile upon the way to meet him. The lady *Ursula* failed to perform this ceremony being then retired in her oratory. The husband wondering at it, and suspecting she might be hindered by sickness, asked what was become of her; but understanding she was well, admired it the more, till coming to the gate of his palace, and missing the usual reception, he began to mistrust she was angry with him. At length he went up, and into the oratory, where he found his lady and her maids, with *Agnus Dei's*, and relics about their necks, beads in their hands, and other Christian signs, praying before the image of our Saviour. The ambassador was astonished at this sight, and his lady directing her discourse to him, bid him not admire that she had forbore the usual compliments to him, because she was raised to a higher pitch of honor than he was, both she and her women being children of the true God, and Saviour of the World, Jesus Christ, whose picture she shewed him, saying, he ought to adore him, if he would be equal to them in dignity. The ambassador moved by his lady's words, and the beauty of the picture, with tears in his eyes fell down and adored, then standing up, he turned to his wife and women saying, *How is it possible you should be Christians? Have you a mind to leave me? Do not you know that the law the fathers preach forbid polygamy? Therefore you must either find another dwelling-place, or I leave this to you, and seek out another house.* His lady answered, *Neither need you depart, nor we leave you, for there will*

*be a remedy for all things: Wisely concealing for the present, the prohibition of plurality of wives, to avoid that difficulty which would have bred a disturbance. The ambassador took heart at these words, and conceiving, as yet, that he need not be obliged to leave his women; thus piously imposed upon, he said, he would be a Christian too, and follow the good example set him by his wife and her women.*

{The ambassador instructed.}

The next morning betimes the ambassador came to our house, to tell us, that since we had made his wife a Christian, he had a mind to embrace the same religion, if we thought it practicable. Very practicable, said we, full of joy and satisfaction at so grateful a question. For in case he were resolved, we would in a short time instruct him sufficiently to be baptized. He was pleased, and because the affairs of his embassy took up the day, so that he had not leisure to be instructed; upon his request we agreed to go to his house at night, where we began to catechize him, continuing it for twenty nights, four or five hours at a time, informing him in the mysteries of our holy faith, from the creation of the world, till the redemption of man, the glory of heaven, and pains of hell. It was no small matter for so great a person, and so full of business, to lose his sleep to hear the word of God; and he gave himself to them with great application, asking many very ingenious questions, which shewed his great wit. In all our discourses, our whole aim was to imprint the truth of our holy law in the heart of this nobleman, and make it agreeable to reason, that being made sensible of the great importance of salvation, and the terror of the pains of hell, and being well inclined to, and convinced of the certainty of our religion, he might afterwards make less difficulty in the main point concerning polygamy, which was the only thing he stuck at, and which we till then had designedly forbore to speak of. Having gone so far towards the ambassador's conversion, we began to expound upon the commandments, where we informed him, that among Christians, it was unlawful to have many wives.

{Convinced about polygamy.}

This proposition was so unexpected, that like fire that has water thrown on it, the ambassador presently cooled, and taking leave of us, said, this was a matter of great consequence, and therefore required time to come to a resolution. This answer was so displeasing and grievous to us, that returning home we spent that night in prayer and mortification, praying to God with all the fervour we could, that he would be pleased to put a happy conclusion to the work he had so well begun. Next morning one of the most learned *omstais* on the city came to us from the ambassador, to examine the reasons for the prohibition of polygamy. Among other objections, this man made one, in his opinion, of the greatest force; which was, Why plurality of wives should be forbid, since generation and children were a work of perfection, and so agreeable to nature, chiefly when a man had a barren wife, as was the ambassador's case, and might not have another to get heirs upon. We wanted not answers according to our divinity, but perceiving they were not satisfactory to them because they were not used to our theological notions, we at last added a reason out of scripture, whereof the ambassador had before some knowledge from us, and it pleased God, this made an impression on his heart, and absolutely convinced him. This was putting of him in mind, that God being so just, and the law he had

prescribed so agreeable to natural reason, as he himself had owned, he ought without doubt to obey in this point, since God himself commanded it; and this so much the more, in regard that God creating man, intimated the same to him, when there was most occasion for propagating [the] human race, and yet he gave *Adam* but one wife, whereas he could as easily have given him many more, that man might multiply the faster. This reason, I say, fully satisfied the ambassador, yet finding it difficult to observe the precept, as being a thing he was much addicted to: *Is there no remedy, said he, or dispensation from the pope, or any other means, though never so difficult, to have this point remitted? We told him, it was in vain to seek any redress whatsoever in this case; and therefore, if he desired to be saved, he must dismiss the other women, and stick to his wife.* Then the ambassador lifting up his eyes and hands to heaven, as it were struggling with himself, and pressed on by truth, with a generous resolution said, *If then multiplicity of wives be inconsistent with my salvation, let them all go in the name of God; for it is pity to lose an eternity of glory, for a transitory delight.* Then turning to his concubines, who were present with his wife, he discharged them all: but perceiving they laughed at his discharge, as a thing that would never stand good; to shew he was in earnest, he ordered his wife to pay them all off immediately, and let not one of them stay in his palace that night. After which turning again to the fathers, *Behold, said he, I have readily performed all you commanded me.* Having obtained our desires, we went home to give thanks to Almighty God.

[His conversion.]

But the devil found out a way still to make opposition, making use of the lady *Ursula's* womanish temper; for she had not the heart to turn away those women she had bred up from their infancy in her house, and loved them as if they were her own children. Therefore some strife arising between the man and his wife, he pressing to have them gone, and she opposing, the ambassador dissatisfied came to us to justify himself, and desire to be baptized, since the impediment was removed, he being willing the women should depart his house. We were about going to work, perceiving he spoke rationally, and particularly because he resolved they should not continue in his house as his concubines, but as his lady's servants. But the good man making a stand as if he were thinking, at last said he had a scruple to propose: *Since, according to what you fathers have taught me, said he, God sees into the heart of man, and cannot be deceived, tho' I desire to forsake and send away the women, yet whilst they continue in the house, I plainly see, either my ancient habit, or frailty of nature will easily cause me to fall again into sin; therefore methinks I do not proceed with due severity in this affair.* We perceiving by the ambassador's discreet and Christian discourse, he foresaw the danger of being in the immediate occasion of sin, studied some proper means to remove so considerable an impediment; but nothing occurring for the present, he himself being very earnest upon the business, proposed a method, which we stuck to as the best of all others: *Fathers, said he, the fastest way I can think of is, that you as their directors powerfully persuade the Christian women that were my concubines, (for the heathens I will infallibly make my wife turn away) that in case through frailty I should be under any temptation they resist me resolutely; and forasmuch as I bear a great respect to, and stand in awe of our Saviour's picture placed in the oratory, if the women lie in that place, I will rather be torn to pieces than have any thing to do with them in the presence of that great Lord; and they being thus secured against me, till there be an opportunity of marrying them, it will be known abroad, that they are not kept in the house as my concubines,*

but only as servants to my only wife Ursula, and the people will be sensible I do not act contrary to the law of God. This method was so well approved of, that the day after it was put in execution, the ambassador was baptized in great state, attended by drums, fifes and other instruments, and he himself clad in rich apparel. With him were baptized twenty other gentlemen, his best friends, and he had the name of our holy patriarch Ignatius given him. After which, taking his wife Ursula by the hand, she renewed the old contract of matrimony as a sacrament of the church. The joy they all conceived at their baptism, and new marriage, was unspeakable.

It now remained that the ambassador should depart on his embassy for *Cambogia*; and he ordered, that the ship which was to carry him, should have a cross in its colours, and the picture of the glorious father S. Ignatius his protector, causing all the jacks and pennants to express the religion he professed. Embarking with all his gentlemen and Christian women, he had a prosperous voyage from *Nuocman* to *Cambogia*. When the squadron appeared, being well known to the people of *Cambogia* to be the ambassador's, they were all astonished, seeing Christian colours set up; and therefore, they imagined that the king of *Cochin-China*, instead of the ordinary ambassador, had sent some extraordinary *Portuguese* Christian; but their doubt was soon cleared, seeing the usual ambassador land with a cross and medals on his breast, among the gold chains and jewels. This sight on the one hand, moved the *Portuguese* and *Japanese* Christians, who reside there on account of trade, to give shouts of joy, and bless God for this new off-spring *Cochin-China* had produced; and on the other, the heathens could not believe that the ambassador, who before was observed to be excessively lascivious, should embrace the Christian religion, which forbids all immodesty. But the grace of the holy Ghost soon appeared to strengthen human frailty; for though the ambassador at his palace in *Cambogia*, had double the number of concubines, as generally used to attend his wife, he ordered them to be all dismissed; nor did he ever lift up his eyes to look at them; which made his fame spread abroad, as of a man of singular sanctity and virtue; and being reputed a man of great knowledge, his example moved many of the most learned persons of *Pulucambi* to be baptized.

## CHAPTER VI.

# HOW GOD OPEN'D ANOTHER WAY TO CHRISTIANITY, THROUGH THE MEANS OF THE LEARNED PEOPLE AMONG THE HEATHENS.

{Means for the conversion of the Cochîn-Chinese.}

God's infinite mercy, and his ardent desires for the salvation of mankind, finds out divers means suitable to the several conditions of persons, which are as it were so many ways to direct and lead them to that end for which they were created. Thus we see he himself in person called upon his people, and complying with the inclination of the persons, invited the wise men by means of the star; *Denis the Areopagite* the astronomer,<sup>1</sup> by the prodigy of the wonderful eclipse; *S. Augustine* by the knowledge of the true light and law, and the confusion and obscurity of former errors; and in fine, he calls the ignorant multitude, by the means of prodigies, wonders and miracles. So it fell out in the new church of *Cochîn-China*; for when his divine majesty had by himself convinced some of the principal persons, as has been shewn, next he call'd not only the learned and wise philosophers and mathematicians, by means of some eclipses, as shall be shewn in this chapter, but also the *omsais* or priests, who were hardened in the errors of their heathen sects, to the knowledge of the true religion, as the following chapter will make appear. And lastly, in the next to that we shall set down, how he opened the way of salvation to the people by means of several prodigies and miracles.

{Astrology in great esteem.}

Now to come to the manner of converting the wise and learned *Cochîn-Chinese*, reputed excellent mathematicians, by means of the eclipse. For the better understanding of what we are to say, it is requisite in the first place to be acquainted with a custom they have in this kingdom, relating to the science of astrology, but particularly of eclipses; for they make such a great account of it, that they have large halls where it is taught in their university; and there are special allowances assign'd the astrologers; as for instance, lands which pay them a tribute or stipend. The king has his peculiar astrologers, and so has the prince his son, who use all their art to set down eclipses exactly. But wanting the reformation of the calendar, and other

<sup>1</sup> Dionysius the Areopagite, who lived in the first century, was the Bishop of Athens. He was converted to Christianity through Paul's preaching. He studied astronomy in Egypt and is credited with some works on celestial subjects, which, however, were apparently written several centuries later. His teaching exerted a large influence on mystical philosophy.

matters, relating to the motion of the sun and moon which we have, they commit some mistakes in the calculation of the moons and eclipses, wherein they generally err two or three hours, and sometimes, tho' not so often, a whole day; tho' generally they are right as to the material part of the eclipse. Every time they hit right, the king rewards them with a certain quantity of land; and so when they mistake, that same quantity is taken from them.

{Superstitions concerning eclipses.}

The reason why they make such account of foretelling the eclipse, is because of the many superstitions at that time us'd towards the sun and moon, for which they prepare themselves in very solemn manner; for the king being told the day and hour a month before the eclipse happens, sends orders throughout all the provinces of the kingdom, for the learned and common sort to be in a readiness that day. When the time is come, all the lords in every province meet with their governors, commanders and gentry, and the people with their proper officers in every city and liberty. The greatest assembly is at court, where the principal men of the kingdom are, who all go out with colours and arms. First goes the king cloath'd in mourning, and after him all the court, who lifting up their eyes to the sun or moon, as the eclipse comes on them, make several obeisances and adorations, speaking some words of compassion for the pain those planets endure; for they look upon the eclipse to be no other, but that the dragon swallows up the sun or moon; and therefore, as we say, the moon is all or half eclips'd; so they say, *Da an nua, Da an het*;<sup>2</sup> that is, the dragon has eaten half, now he eats all.

{Their astrological terms and ours alike.}

Which way of expression, though it be nothing to the purpose, yet it shews that they assign the same ground for the eclipse originally that we do, which is cutting of the ecliptick, that is the sun's circle and the line of the course of the moon, in those two points which we call the dragon's head and tail, as astronomers well know: whence it follows, that the very same doctrine, and the same terms and names of the dragon, are common both to us and them, and so they give names like ours to the signs of the zodiac, such as *Aries, Taurus, Gemini, &c.* And thus in process of time the people have invented fabulous causes of the eclipse, instead of the true, saying that the sun and moon, when eclipsed are drown'd by the dragon; whereas, at that time they are really in the head or tail of the astronomical dragon.

Now to return to the compassion they have for those suffering planets; when the adoration is over, they begin first at the king's palace, and then throughout all the city to fire muskets and cannon, ring bells, sound trumpets, beat drums, and play upon other instruments, even to clattering of the kettles, and other utensils of the kitchen in all houses: and this is done, to the end the dragon may be frighted with the great noise, and not proceed to eat any more, but vomit up what he has already eaten of the sun or moon.

<sup>2</sup> *Đã ăn nửa, đã ăn hết.* Borri translates this phrase as "the dragon has eaten half, now he eats all;" while it should be translated "has eaten half, has eaten all," as the word "dragon" is absent in the Vietnamese phrase.

{Conversions by means of an eclipse.}

When we were inform'd of this custom, the first eclipse that happened was one of the moon, in the year 1620, on the 9th of *December*, at eleven at night. I was then in the city of *Nyoecman* in the province of *Pulucambi*, where there was a commander of the ward<sup>3</sup> we liv'd in, whose son was become a Christian; tho' the father, as proud of his own learning, despis'd not only our religion, but our knowledge; and we earnestly desir'd his conversion, hoping that if he received the catholic faith, his example would induce those of his ward or quarter to do the same. This man came once to visit us before the eclipse of the moon happened, and in discourse we happened to talk of it, he positively affirming there would be no such eclipse: and tho' we demonstrated it to him, according to our calculation, and shew'd him the figure of it in our books, yet he would never believe it; alledging among other arguments for his obstinacy, that if any such eclipse were like to be, the king would doubtless have sent him notice a month before, according to the custom of the kingdom, whereas there wanted but eight days of the time by us appointed; wherefore he having no such advice, it was a certain sign that there would be no such eclipse. He persisting obstinately in his opinion, would needs lay a wager of a *Cabaia*,<sup>4</sup> which is a silk gown. We agreed to it upon condition, that if we lost we were to give him such a garment; but if we won, instead of paying the gown, he was to come to us for eight days together, to hear the catechize and mysteries of our faith expounded. He replied, he would not only do so, but the very moment he saw the eclipse would become a Christian: for he said, if our doctrine was so certain and infallible in such hidden and heavenly things as eclipses are, and theirs so erroneous, there was no doubt but our religion and knowledge of the true God was no less assured and safe, and theirs false. The day of the eclipse being come, the aforesaid gentleman, with a great many scholars, came to our house at night, bringing them as witnesses of the event. But because the eclipse was to be at eleven at night, I went to say my office, turning up the hour glass in the meanwhile. An hour before the time these men came several times, calling upon me by way of derision to see the eclipse, thinking I had not withdrawn to say my office, but had hid myself for shame that there would be no eclipse. Yet they could not but admire at my assurance in answering them, that the hour was not yet come, till the glass was run out, which they gaz'd at, as if it had been some wonderful thing. Then going out, I shew'd them that the circle of the moon on that side the eclipse began, was not so perfect as it should be, and soon after all the moon being darkened, they perceiv'd the truth of my prediction. The commander and all of them being astonished, presently sent to give notice of it to all the ward, and spread the news of the eclipse throughout the city, that every man might go out to make the usual noise in favour of the moon; giving out everywhere, that there were no such men as the fathers, whose doctrine and books could not choose but be true, since they had so exactly foretold the eclipse, which their learned men had taken no notice of; and therefore in performance of his promise, the commander, with all his family, became Christians, as did many more of his ward, with some of the most learned men in the city, and other men of note.

<sup>3</sup> Borri uses the word *riore* — "neighborhood, quarter."

<sup>4</sup> *Cabaia* means a robe in Portuguese.

{The fathers foretell the eclipse truer than the Cochinchinese astrologers.}

Such another accident happened at the same time, though among people of greater quality, and in a more eminent place. Tho' the king's astrologers had not foreseen this eclipse, yet those belonging to the prince at *Cacciam*, being more studious and intelligent, foretold it, but with a gross mistake as to time: for it was not of an hour or two, as is usual, but of a whole day, giving out that the full moon, and consequently the eclipse would be a day sooner than it was. F. *Francis de Pina*, who was then at court, had given notice of it to a courtier, who was very great with the prince, being his *omgne*;<sup>5</sup> that is, in the nature of master of the ceremonies. The father told him, That since the eclipse was not to fall out as their astrologers said, but as F. *Christopher Borri* affirmed, the following night, he should give the prince his master notice of it. But the *omgne* not giving entire credit to the father, would not do that duty of his office at that time. The hour appointed by the astrologers being come, and the prince having notice of it, he went out with his whole court, according to custom, to see and help the moon, that as they said was to be eclips'd; but finding he was deceiv'd, and growing angry with his mathematicians for their mistake, he ordered they should forfeit the revenue of a town, according to the custom before-mentioned. Hence the *omgne* took occasion to acquaint the prince that the *European* father had, before this happened, told him the eclipse would be the night following. The prince was mightily pleased that the fathers should hit right, when his mathematicians had miscarried.

The *omgne* repaired immediately to the father to know the precise time of the eclipse; who having shewed him that it was to be exactly at eleven the following night, he still continued doubtful of the truth of the matter, and therefore would not wake the prince till he saw the beginning of the eclipse. Then he ran to rouse him, and he coming out with some of his courtiers, performed the usual ceremonies and adorations to the moon. Yet he would not make the matter publicly known, for fear of utterly discrediting their books and mathematicians, though all men conceived a great opinion of our doctrine, and particularly the *omgne*, who from that time forwards for a whole month came to hear the catechizing, diligently learning all that belongs to our holy faith. However, he was not baptized, wanting resolution to overcome the difficulty of the multiplicity of women, as the ambassador *Ignatius* had done before. He forbore not nevertheless publicly with much fervour to declare our doctrine and law were true, and all others false, and said he would certainly die a Christian, which mov'd many others to desire to be baptized.

{An eclipse of the sun mistaken.}

Having talked of the eclipse of the moon, we will conclude with another of the sun, which happened on the 22nd of *May* 1621, which the king's astrologers foretold, as to last two hours; but having conceived a great opinion of us as to this particular, for their own greater security, they came to ask our opinions concerning it. I told

<sup>5</sup> *Ông nghè*. Alexandre de Rhodes gives a definition for *ông nghè* as a literati who holds an office; Alexandre de Rhodes, *Từ Điển Annam-Lusitan-Latin* (Annamite-Portuguese-Latin Dictionary), ed. and trans. Thanh Lăng et al. (Hochiminh City: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1991), col. 524. It denotes the person who succeeded in the highest (court) examinations. It also means "Hue court ministry clerk"; Đặng Chân Liêu, et al., *Từ Điển Việt Anh* (Vietnamese-English Dictionary) (Hochiminh City: Nhà Xuất Bản Thành Phố Hồ Chí Minh, 1999), p. 716.

them it was true there would be an eclipse of the sun, the figure whereof I shew'd in our *ephemerides*; but I purposely forbore to let them know, that it would not be seen in *Cochín-China*, by reason of the moon's parallax to the sun. Now they know not what the parallax is, which is the cause they are often deceiv'd, not finding the just time by their books and calculations. This I did, that their error being observ'd, our knowledge might appear the more: I therefore demanded time to find out the precise time; saying, in general terms, it was requisite to measure heaven by the earth, to discover whether that eclipse would be visible in their country; and I delay'd the answer so long, till the time of making known the eclipse being come, the astrologers satisfied that our book agreed with their opinion, without farther reflection, concluded the eclipse was most certain, and advis'd the king to publish it after the usual manner. When the astrologers has spread their false prediction throughout the kingdom, I gave it out that the eclipse would not be seen at all in *Cochín-China*. This assertion of ours was carried to the prince, who being doubtful in the matter, sent his mathematicians to me to ask my opinion, and argue the point. This dispute had no other effect on them, but only to increase their doubt, and hold the prince in suspense, whether he ought to send his orders throughout the kingdom, as the king his father had done, or publish the contrary; for on the one hand it wrought upon him to see that both their books and ours granted the eclipse, wherefore he thought it would be a dishonour to him, in case he happened not to have sent the usual advice; and on the other side, he had a great opinion of us on account of the antecedent eclipse of the moon. Hereupon sending to consult me again, I answered that having calculated the eclipse very exactly, I found it could not possibly be visible in his kingdom; and therefore he need not take any care to send advice about the country, for I would be answerable for his and his astrologers reputation, against the king and his mathematicians. He at last rely'd upon my words, and took no care to give notice in his liberty of the eclipse, the whole court and king's astrologers admiring at it, and they inquiring into the cause of the prince's neglect, were answer'd, that he had better mathematicians in his court than the king his father: by which they understood that some of our fathers being there, he forsook the opinion of the natives for theirs. However the publication they had made being irrevocable, the usual preparations were made against the day of the eclipse, till the hours being come, they experimentally perceived their error. The day was clear and not a cloud to be seen, and though it was the month of *May*, when the sun is there in the zenith, and the time of the day about three in the afternoon, when the heat is violent, yet the king did not omit to go out with his courtiers, enduring all the burning sun for a long time; but finding himself imposed upon, and being much incensed, as well by reason of the great heat he endured, as at the ignorance of his mathematicians, who had put him to that trouble, without any reason, he reprimanded them severely. They alleg'd for their excuse, that there would be an eclipse infallibly, but that they had made a day's mistake as to the conjunction of the moon, and therefore it would be seen the next day at that same hour. The king submitted to his astrologers, and coming out the next day at the same hour, suffered the same inconvenience of heat, to the great shame of his astrologers, who escap'd not unpunish'd; for he not only took away their revenues, but order'd they should kneel a whole day in the court of the palace, bare-headed expos'd to the heat of the sun, and to the scorn of all the courtiers. To return to the prince who had got the better in this point, he writ to his father in a jesting manner, That tho' he was his son, he had out-done him as to the eclipse, and had more learned men at his court.

It is not to be imagin'd how much reputation this accident gain'd us among the learned, insomuch that even the king's and prince's mathematicians came to us, earnestly begging we would receive them for our scholars<sup>6</sup>; and upon this account the fame of the fathers was everywhere so great, that not only our knowledge in astronomy, but our religion was extoll'd above their own; they arguing from the heavenly bodies to things above the heavens, as I said before.

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<sup>6</sup> Here, "scholars" means "students."

## CHAPTER VII.

# HOW GOD OPEN'D ANOTHER WAY TO CHRISTIANITY, BY MEANS OF THE OMSAIS, OR HEATHEN PRIESTS.

{Conversion of a heathen priest.}

God in his infinite wisdom foreknowing of how great consequence it would be for the conversion of those heathens, that some of their priests or *omsais* should be converted, because of the great authority they have among all the people, it pleas'd his divine majesty to open even this way to his holy faith. An *omsai* whose name was *Lj*, liv'd near to our house, and had the charge of an idol temple, and being a neighbour had frequent opportunities of conversing with us, and of coming to some knowledge of our rules, actions, and course of life. This pleas'd him so well, that proceeding still farther, he would needs be inform'd as to the law of God, whereof we gave him a full account; and coming to discourse of the resurrection of our Lord, shewing him how he rose again, that he and all men might rise again the last day, he was so pleas'd at it, that being inspir'd by God, he ask'd to be baptis'd, which was accordingly granted to him and all his family upon Christmas night, which he spent on his knees in prayer with floods of tears, uttering these words, *Tui ciam biet* [*Tôi chẳng biết*]; that is, I knew not, as if he would have said, Forgive me my God, for till now I knew you not. Then continuing some time very still, as it were contemplating, he repeated the same words, making a sweet harmony to the new born infant. After baptism he took such an affection for us, that he resolv'd to come to us with all his family, that he might live under our rule; but being inform'd that could not be, because he was marry'd, he concluded to live nearer to our house, that he might regulate his actions by the sound of our bell, even to saying the long litany in his oratory; at the time, we used to say it every day, according to the custom of the society. And it is remarkable, that observing me at a certain hour us'd to say our beads walking, he would walk at the same time, to the amazement of his countrymen, who look upon walking as a strange and ridiculous action, because they never going a step but what is about business, or to some diversion, look'd upon our action of walking as idle, because we went to a place to no other end but to return; so that the people flock'd to see us walk, and admiring the strangeness of it said, *Omsai đi lay* [*Ông sai đi lay*]; that is, the father goes and comes, goes and comes.

{A notable moral heathen.}

Yet their gazing did not make *omsai Lj* leave his custom, which tended to nothing but to be like us in all points. He had but one wife, and had lived about thirty years, which was his age, so strictly up to the law of nature, that he had never, as he said, to that time, knowingly deviated in any matter of consequence from what

was just and upright; and his adoring of idols was because he thought it contrary to reason not to adore them. This shews how true that doctrine of divines is, to wit, that God never fails to have baptism administered, either by the hands of men, as this was, or the ministry of angels, to a heathen who lives a good moral life, according to the dictates of reason, and law of nature. This *omsaii Ly* wholly devoted himself to the service of God, and after providing for the maintenance of his family, all he and they could earn was bestow'd upon our church, taking special care of its neatness and decency, and of adorning the altars.

{Other converts.}

Nor was this all God requir'd of this his beloved servant; for he so inflamed his heart, that he applied himself to preach the faith of Christ publicly, making the mystery of the resurrection the usual subject of his discourse, whereby he attracted and converted abundance, not only of the common sort, but several *omsaiis*; for tho' he was none of the most learned, yet his fervour so well supplied that defect, that among those who came to desire baptism, there was one of the most learned and famous men in the kingdom, whose authority, he himself proving the falsity of the heathen sects, immediately increased the harvest of the church. This man therefore took upon him to oppose the other gentiles, easily confuting them, as being well acquainted with the grounds they went upon; herein very much easing our fathers, who not being so well acquainted with their sects, could not so well oppose them.

{Several sorts of *omsaiis*.}

And in truth there was need of such a help; for there is such variety of *omsaiis* in that country, that it looks as if the devil had endeavoured among those gentiles, to represent the beauty and variety of religious orders instituted by holy men in the catholic church, their several habits answering their several professions; for some are clad in white, others in black, others in blue, and other colours; some living in community, some like curates, chaplains, canons, and prebends; others profess poverty, living upon alms; others exercise the works of mercy, ministering to the sick, either natural physick, or magick charms, without receiving any reward; others undertaking some pious work, as building of bridges, or other such things for the publick good, or erecting of temples, and going about the kingdom, begging alms to this purpose, even as far as the kingdom of *Tonchin*; others teach the doctrine of their religion, who being very rich, have publick schools, as universal masters. There are also some *omsaiis* who profess the farriers trade, and compassionately cure elephants, oxen, and horses, without asking any reward, being satisfied with anything that is freely given them. Lastly, Others look to the monasteries of women, who live in community, and admit of no man among them but the *omsaii* who looks to them, and they are all his wives.

{Temples.}

There are vast temples with beautiful towers and steeples, nor is there any town, tho' never so little, without a temple to worship its idols, which are generally very large statues, with abundance of gold and silver shut up in their breasts or bellies, where no body dares to touch it, till extreme necessity obliges some thief to gut the

idol, without regard to so great a sacrilege as that is accounted among them; and what is very remarkable, they have chaplets and strings of beads about their necks, and make so many processions that they outdo the Christians in praying to their false gods. There are also among them some persons resembling abbots, bishops, and arch-bishops, and they use gilt staves, not unlike our crosiers, insomuch that if any man come newly into that country, he might easily be persuaded there had been Christians there in former times; so near has the devil endeavoured to imitate us. This will give us an opportunity of adding here a chapter of the sects in *Cochin-China*, to give some light how we may draw that people out of such darkness, and bring them into the light of the gospel.

## CHAPTER VIII.

# A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE SECTS IN COCHIN-CHINA.

The end of all sects is either the god they adore, or the glory and happiness they expect, some believing the immortality of the soul, others concluding that all ends when the body dies.

{The philosopher Xaca.}

Upon these two principles the eastern nations build all their sects; all which took their origin from a great metaphysician of the kingdom of *Siam*, whose name was *Xaca*, much ancients than *Aristotle*, and nothing inferior to him in capacity, and the knowledge of natural things.<sup>1</sup> The sharpness of this man's wit raising him to consider the nature and fabric of the world, reflecting on the beginning and end of all things, and particularly of human nature, the chief lady of this worldly palace; he once went up to the top of a mountain, and there attentively observing the moon, which rising in the darkness of the night, gently raised itself above the horizon to be hid again the next day in the same darkness, and the sun getting up in the morning to set again at night, he concluded that as well moral as physical and natural things were nothing, came of nothing, and ended in nothing. Therefore returning home, he writ several books and large volumes upon this subject, calling them, *Of nothing*; wherein he taught that the things of this world, by reason of the duration and measure of time, are nothing; for tho' they had a being, said he, yet they would be nothing, nothing at present, and nothing in the time to come, for the present being but a moment, was the same as nothing.

{His opinion, that all this world is nothing.}

His second argument he grounded on the composition of things; let us instance, said he, in a rope, the which not being naturally distinguished from its parts,

<sup>1</sup> Thich Ca in Vietnamese. The reference is to Buddha. The term Xaca is used in many other European accounts. For example, de Rhodes says that "the Japanese call [Buddhism] *Xaca*, the Chinese *Xechia*, and the Tonkinese *Thicca*, by corruption of his [Buddha's] name." Alexandre de Rhodes, *Histoire du royaume de Tunquin et des grands progres que la predication de l'evangile y a faits en la conversion des infidelles, depuis l'annee 1627 jusques a l'annee 1646*, trans. from Latin by R. P. Henry Albi (Lyon: Jean Baptiste Devenet, 1651), p. 64. The name derives from Sanskrit "Sakya"—"one of the Sakya clan." Two points might be of interest here: first, that Borri, unlike de Rhodes, does not employ a Vietnamese appellation but only its Japanese or Thai pronunciation; second, F. Borri's reference to Buddha's origins in Siam possibly demonstrates that his informants presented him with a history of Theravada Buddhism (or the "Doctrine of the Elders"), predominant in South Asia and Thailand (Siam), Burma, Laos, and Cambodia, unlike the Mahayana (the Greater Vehicle), which spread to China, Japan, Korea, and North Vietnam.

inasmuch as they give its being and composition, so it appears that the rope as a rope is nothing; for as a rope it is no distinct thing from the threads it is compos'd of, and the threads themselves are no distinct thing from the hemp they are made of, and the hemp has no other being but the elements, whereof its substance consists; so that resolving all things after this manner into the elements, and those to a sort of *materia prima*, and mere *potentia*, which is therefore actually nothing, he at last proved, that as well the heavenly things, as those under heaven, were truly nothing.

{So of all moral things.}

In the same manner did he argue as to moral things; that the natural happiness of man did not consist in a positive concurrence of all that is good, which he looked upon as impossible, but rather in being free from all that is evil, and therefore said, it was no other thing but to have no disease, pain, trouble, or the like; and for a man to have such power over his passions, as not to be sensible of affection or aversion, to honour or disgrace, want or plenty, riches or poverty, life or death, and that herein consisted true beatitude: Whence he inferred, that all these things being nothing, they took their origin as it were from a cause not efficient but material, from a principle which in truth was nothing, but an eternal, infinite, immense, immutable, almighty, and to conclude, a God that was nothing, and the origin of this nothing.

{The world how made.}

As a prelude or introduction to his sect, this philosopher gave some account of the making of the world under two metaphors. The one was, that the world came out of an egg, which stretched out so vastly, that the heavens were made of the shell; the air, fire, and water, of the white; and of the yolk, the earth and all earthly things.<sup>2</sup> The other metaphor he took from the body of a vast great man, whom they call *Banco*, whom he would call *Microcosm*, saying; that the mass of the world came from him, his skull extending to form the heavens, his two eyes making the sun and moon, his flesh the earth, his bones the mountains, his hair plants and trees, and his belly the sea; and thus applying all the limbs and parts of man's body, to the fabrick and ornament of the world, he added, that the other men spread about all the world, were made of this great man's lice.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Egg is the foundation of world's creation in many cultures, the first or one of the first things that appeared from the emptiness.

<sup>3</sup> Ban Cồ in Vietnamese or Pangu in Chinese is the mythical progenitor of the Chinese. He is described in *Sitji* (Historical records), by Sima Qian, who lived approximately 145-90 BCE; see Chavannes, trans. and annot., *Les mémoires historiques de Se-Ma Tsien* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967). The general format of the Chinese creation myths begins with an egg, the first thing in the universe was split into the heavens (*yang*) and the Earth (*yin*). After the breaking, Pangu had to hold up the heavens to keep them from crushing the earth. He lived ten thousand years, growing ten feet every day. He died after one day deciding to lie down to sleep. When he died, his body became the features of the earth and the animals. Then, Nunga (female), who is a human god with a human shape, except that she has a dragon tail instead of legs, appeared and admired the beauty of nature, but wanted more than simple animals. She made the people from the clay of the Yellow River. The world was broken by another god, Gong-gong, only to be fixed again by Nunga.

{Another doctrine of the same philosopher.}

Having establish'd this doctrine of nothing, he gather'd some scholars, by whose means he spread it throughout all the east. But the *Chineses* who knew that a sect which reduced all things to nothing, was hurtful to the government, would not hearken to it, nor allow there was no punishment for wicked men, or that the happiness of the good should be reduced only to the being free from sufferings in this world; and the authority of the *Chinese* being so great, others following their example, rejected his doctrine. *Xaca* dissatisfied that he was disappointed of followers, changed his mind, and retiring writ several other great books, teaching that there was a real origin of all things, a Lord of heaven, hell, immortality, and transmigration of souls from one body to another, better or worse, according to the merits or demerits of the person; tho' they do not forget to assign a sort of heaven and hell for the souls departed, expressing the whole metaphorically under the names of things corporeal, and of the joys and sufferings of this world.

{The sect that believes all to be nothing.}

This second doctrine being made publick, the *Chineses* received it, and above others the *bonzis*, who are generally the meanest and most inconsiderable people in *Japan*, who being zealous for their spiritual advantage admitted this doctrine, and preserved it in twelve several sorts of sects all differing from one another, tho' that which is most followed and esteemed, is the opinion and sect that believes all to be nothing, which they call *gensiu*.<sup>4</sup> These sometimes go abroad into a field to hear a sermon, that is a discourse of bliss made by a *bonzo*, who treats of no other subject, but to persuade his congregation, that human bliss is nothing, and that he is happy who values not whether he has children or no children, whether he is rich or poor, sick or well, and the like; and the *bonzo* preaches this doctrine with such strength of argument, and vehemency, that the audience being fully bent upon the contempt of all things, which in themselves they look upon as nothing, suffering themselves to be in a manner transported, they express their satisfaction and happiness in this manner, that is, often crying out with a loud voice, *xin, xin, xin*; that is, nothing, nothing, nothing,<sup>5</sup> accompanying their voices with certain bits of boards they clap between the fingers of one hand striking them together with the other (as boys play on their snappers) and with this noise they are quite beside themselves as if they were drunk, and then they say they have done an act of bliss. The *Japoneses* and others making so great account of this opinion of nothing, was the cause that when *Xaca* the author of it was come to his last, calling together his disciples, he protested to them upon the word of a dying man, that in the many years he had lived and study'd, he had found nothing so true, nor any opinion so well grounded, as was the sect of nothing; and tho' his second doctrine seemed to differ from it, yet they must look upon it as no contradiction or recantation, but rather a proof and confirmation of the first, tho' not in plain terms, yet by way of metaphors and parables, which might all be applied to the opinion of nothing as would plainly appear by his books.

<sup>4</sup> A transcription of Japanese *Zen shu*, Vietnamese *Thiền tông* (Zen, *Dhyana*), brought to Japan from China in the seventh century; it was strongly established there by the twelfth century.

<sup>5</sup> *Xin* is apparently a transcription of Japanese (*mu*) *shin*, Vietnamese *vô tâm*, "no thought" or "thoughtlessness," an important idea in Zen Buddhism.

{Errors of the Cochin-Chinese.}

But it is time to return to our *Cochin-Chinese*, who not receiving this most foolish and vain doctrine,<sup>6</sup> which denying the substantial form, reduces all things to nothing, they generally throughout all the kingdom hold the immortality of the soul, and consequently the eternal rewards for the just, and punishments for the wicked, yet mixing a thousand errors with these truths. The first of which is, that they do not distinguish between the immortal soul and the demons, calling both by one and the same name *Ma*,<sup>7</sup> and attributing to them both the same practice of doing mischief to the living. The second is, that they assign one of the rewards of the soul to be transmigration from one body to another, more worthy, nobler, and in greater dignity; as from one of the common sort to a king, or great lord. The third, that the souls of the dead stand in need of sustenance and corporal food, and therefore at certain times in the year according to their custom, the children make plentiful entertainments for their dead parents, men for their wives, and friends for their acquaintance departed, expecting a long time for the dead guest to come and sit down at table to eat.<sup>8</sup> We one day confuted these errors with arguments which the philosophers call *à priori*, and therefore told them, that the soul was a spirit, and had no mouth or other material part to eat, and therefore they were deceived to think they could feed. And then *à posteriori*, for in case they did eat, then the dishes would not be as full after they had done as they were before. They laughed at these arguments, saying, these fathers know nothing; and to solve both difficulties, answered, that meat consisted of two parts, one the substance, the other the accidents of quantity, quality, smell, taste, and the like. The immaterial souls of the dead, said they, taking only the substance of the meat, which being immaterial, was proper sustenance for the incorporeal spirit, left only the accidents in the dishes, as they appear to our corporal eyes, to which purpose the dead had no need of corporeal parts as we said. Any wise man may by this false answer discover the acuteness of

<sup>6</sup> Let us notice the change of Borri's tone: at the beginning of this chapter he called Buddha "a great metaphysician," whose "sharpness" of "wit" prompted him to consider how the world was ordered. Here Borri refers to his alleged doctrine(s) as "most foolish and vain doctrine."

<sup>7</sup> *Ma*, meaning ghosts or evil spirits.

<sup>8</sup> Borri is describing ancestral worship. It definitely was not a part of Buddhist doctrine but a practice followed by nearly everyone, which proved to be the most formidable obstacle for Christian missionaries, as the Vietnamese, as well as the Chinese, could not bring themselves to forsake the rituals connected to ancestral worship. At the beginning, missionaries, especially Jesuits, having understood the importance of the veneration of the ancestors for indigenous people and striving to establish good relations with them, overlooked this practice. However, in the eighteenth century missionaries from other orders raised their voices to call for the elimination of the "pagan practice," which provoked the infamous Rites Controversy. While the Jesuits argued that these rites had social rather than religious character, Pope Clement XI decreed in 1715 that "[w]hether at home, in the cemetery, or during the time of a funeral, a Chinese Catholic is not allowed to perform the ritual of ancestor worship. He is not allowed to do so even if he is in company with non-Christians. Such a ritual is heathen in nature regardless of the circumstances." Dun J. Li, ed., *China in Transition, 1517-1911* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969), pp. 22-24. Indigenous people, hostile to the attempts to compel them to eliminate ancestral rites, turned against the missionaries and persecutions ensued. See more on the subject in D. E. Mungello, ed., *The Chinese Rites Controversy: Its History and Meaning* (San Francisco, CA: Institute Monumenta Serica, 1994).

the *Cochin-Chinese* philosophers, though they absolutely err as to the reality of the argument.

They also err in respect to the souls themselves, adoring those of men who were looked upon as holy in this world, adding them to the number of their idols, whereof their temples are full, placing them orderly according to their several degrees, in rows along the sides of the temples, the least first, and so bigger and bigger, till the last are extraordinary large. But the high altar being the most honourable place in the temple, is purposely kept empty, behind which is a vacant dark space, to express, that he whom they adore as God, and on whom the pagods [idols/images] call, who like us were visible and corporeal men, is invisible, wherein they think the greatest honour consists. Such a multitude of idols, by them accounted gods, giving us occasion to endeavor to demonstrate to them, that there can be but one only God: They answered, they agreed to it, supposing those that were placed along the sides of the temples, were not they that had created heaven and earth, but holy men whom they honoured, as we do the holy apostles, martyrs, and confessors, with the same distinction of greater and lesser sanctity, as we assign among our saints. And therefore to corroborate their assertion they added, that the vacant dark place about the high altar, was the proper place of the Creator of heaven and earth, who being invisible, and quite remote from our senses, could not be represented by visible images of idols, but that under that vacuity and darkness, the due adoration was to be given him as to a thing incomprehensible, using the intercession of the idols, that they may obtain favours and blessings of him. And altho' according to what has been hitherto said, they seem to have an efficient and intellectual cause for God, yet upon mature examination of the matter and their books, we find that they certainly adore a predominant element.

## CHAPTER IX.

# HOW GOD OPENED ANOTHER WAY TO THE CONVERSION OF THE MEANER SORT BY MIRACULOUS MEANS.

{Frequent apparitions of devils.}

It remains that we shew how God acting conformably to the mean vulgar people of *Cochin-China*, who were used to see phantoms, visions, and apparitions, the devil often appearing to them, was pleased to shew some miracles, to the end that declining in their opinion of diabolical prodigies, they might own the only Lord and singular worker of true wonders. The devils appear so frequently among those heathens, that not to speak of the oracles they deliver by the mouth of idols, which are in great esteem among the wretched gentiles, they walk about the cities so familiarly in human shapes, that they are not at all feared but admitted into company; and this is carried so far, that there are abundance of *Incubi* and *Succubi*.<sup>1</sup>

{Incubi and succubi.}

And among great people those husbands account themselves happy, who know their wives have such familiars; for generally they have to do with none but married women, publicly boasting that they are worthy to mix with a nature so much above their own as is the devils. It happened in my time, that a woman of great quality, mother to two sons who were Christians, envy'd by her neighbours, not so much for her beauty, as for her dishonest familiarity with the devil, positively refusing to become a Christian, came to die in labour, and by the assistance of the devil brought forth two eggs: Now it being held as most certain among them, that the devil her *Incubus* was god of the rivers, they did not bury the body in a cave, building a chapel over it as is the usual custom, but carrying it in solemn procession to a river cast it into the deep, together with the two eggs, saying, let her go to the lord of the river, since she was worthy to have to do with him when living. Among the common sort this filthiness is not esteemed an honour, but they rather account it a grievous distemper when their women are thus molested by the devil, as we should their being possess'd [possessed]. These women therefore understanding that the religion of the fathers was altogether opposite to the devil, they imagined they might have

<sup>1</sup> Evil spirits or demons. *Incubus* is a male demon believed to have sexual intercourse with sleeping women. *Succubus* is a female demon believed to have sexual intercourse with sleeping men. In Vietnamese, *incubus* and *succubus* correspond to *con tinh*. See more on them in L. Cadrière, "Le culte des arbres," *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 7, 18 (1918): 34-39, and Bonifacy, in "Les Européens qui ont vu le vieux Hue: Cristoforo Borri," *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Huié* 18, 3-4 (July-December 1931): 392, n. 146.

some medicine against this distemper, calling holy things, as the water of baptism, *Agnus Dei's*, and the like, medicines, and therefore came to our house to beg such medicines; and by the grace of God all those that carried away with them any bit of *Agnus Dei*, were never more molested by the devil, yet with this difference, that those who were not Christians saw the *Incubus* come to the bed's side, but had not power to lay hold on, or touch their persons, whereas the Christians perceive that he could not come near the chamber-door, which occasioned several to be baptized.

{Other monstrous visions.}

Tho' these *Incubus* devils appearing in human shapes, do no harm to the body, yet sometimes there are others that appear in horrid and frightful shapes, and the *Cochin-Chinese*s, who have often seen, describe them after the same manner as we paint them, for example, with a cock's face, a long tail, a bat's wings, a hideous look, bloody flaming eyes; and when they appear in such shapes, they are much feared, being then generally hurtful to men, sometimes carrying them up to the tops of houses to cast them down headlong. We once heard a wonderful noise of people in our street, crying out very loud, *Maqui Maco*,<sup>2</sup> that is, the devil in a monstrous shape; whereupon some gentiles came running to desire us, that since we had weapons against those evil spirits, we would go relieve those distressed people who were infected by them. Having recommended ourselves to God, and arm'd ourselves with crosses, *Agnus Dei's*, and relics, we went two of us to the place where the devil was, and came so near, that we only wanted turning of a corner to be upon him, when he suddenly vanished, leaving three prints of feet upon the pavement, which I saw, and were above two spans long, with the marks of a cock's talons and spurs. Some attributed the devil's flying to the virtue of the holy cross and relics we carried with us.

{Good visions.}

These frightful apparitions God has made use of to attract many to his holy faith, yet not denying them good visions, as will appear by the following accidents, which happened before me in that kingdom. The first was, that as we were one day in our own house, we saw a procession of a vast multitude of people in a field making towards us, whither when they came, being asked what they would have, they answered, that a most beautiful lady came from their land through the air, on a throne of bright clouds, who bid them go to that city, where they should find the fathers, who would shew them the sure way to bliss, and the knowledge of the true

<sup>2</sup> *Ma qui* means "demons and ghosts." It is not clear what is the original of *maco*. Bonifacy suggests that here is implied *ma cô*, a devil with long skinny legs like feathers *cô*. A. Bonifacy, *Les débuts du Christianisme en Annam des origines au commencement du 18e siècle* (Hanoi: Imprimerie Tonkinoise, 192-?), p. 394, n. 150. However, the connection, between *cô* and long skinny legs, in my opinion, is not evident. I would suggest that *cô* in the text stands for *côt* from *côt câch* "stature, figure." Thus, *ma cô*t would mean "a devil-like appearance," which will also bring us closer to Borri's translation "monstrous shape." The absence of the final *t* in the word *cô* in the text can be accounted for by Borri's disregard of the *t* in final positions generally, as for example in the case *mocai* for *môt côi* "one thing." Another possibility is that it comes from the compound *Bà cô*, "childless lady," one of the evil spirits. Cadrière, "Le culte des arbres," pp. 31, 49. Or, this might simply indicate a female (*cô*) with an evil spirit (*ma*). In modern Vietnamese, *ma cô* means a pimp or a procurer/ess.

God of heaven. This made us give thanks to the blessed Virgin, whose this great benefit was owned to be, and having catechised and baptized the people sent them home well pleased.

The second was at another time, F. *Francis Buzome* and I returning homeward together, such a multitude of people came to another place, who having paid us very much respect, told F. *Francis Buzome*, they were come to him to teach them what he had promised them the night before when he was in their town. The father was astonished at their demand, having never been in the place they spoke of; but examining into the matter, I found that God of his infinite mercy had caused some angel in the father's shape, or in a dream had given those people some knowledge of our holy faith. The fame of these miracles being spread abroad, such numbers of people were converted, that the church given us by the governor was too little, and we were forced to build one larger; his wife, children, and kindred, with many other Christians contributing towards it.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> F. Buzome died in 1639, long after Borri left the kingdom and after Borri's account was published, after spending twenty-four years in Cochinchina. According to de Rhodes, F. Buzome went to Macao "to transact some business for the king of Cochinchina, [and the news about the persecutions of Christians affected him so deeply] that he fell ill of a sickness that carried him off after a few days." Alexandre de Rhodes, *Rhodes of Viet Nam*, p. 79.

## CHAPTER X.

# OF THE CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANS OF FAIFO, TURON AND CACCHIAM.

{What the fathers did at *Faijó*.}

F. *Francis de Pina* being gone to *Faijó*, a city of the *Japoneses*, as was said before, he there joined F. *Peter Marques*, and they did great service in that city. The last of them, who was master of the *Japanese* tongue, in a short time reformed some of those Christians who were become libertines, and kept women, and converted many pagans. The other who understood the language of *Cochin-China* made many Christians, and having convinced some *bonzos* and *onsais*, by that means drew over many more to the holy faith; so that between *Japoneses* and *Cochin-Chinese*, that church for number and religious observance might compare with many in *Europe*; such was their piety, zeal, frequenting of the sacraments, and other godly works.<sup>1</sup>

{At *Turon*.}

The church of *Turon*, which we said in the second chapter of this book, the heathens burnt down during the first persecution, was by God's permission rebuilt by means of the fathers of the society, who gained many Christians in that city.

{At *Cacchiam*.}

Abundance of people were likewise converted to our faith at *Cacchiam*; which good work was much forwarded by the *Omgne*, who on account of the father's foretelling the eclipse so certainly as was before observed, publicly affirmed, there was no other true religion but that the fathers taught. This was the state of affairs there, when I came away out of that country for *Europe*, which was in the year 1622.

Afterwards by the annual letters sent me by those fathers, my companions left here cultivating that vineyard, I understood that there were still about a thousand converted and baptized in a year, and that Christianity flourished more than ever it had done at *Cacchiam* particularly. But now of late they write, that the king had forbid any more becoming Christians, and threatened to expel the fathers out of the kingdom, and this because the *Portuguese* trade failed. Yet it pleased God this persecution went no farther, the king being satisfied, provided one of the fathers

<sup>1</sup> Fr. *Pina* passed away in 1625, after *Borri's* departure from *Cochinchina*. "The good Father was asked to go visit the Portuguese, who had arrived within sight of the port of Cham where their ship lay at anchor. On concluding his visit he got into a boat to return to his flock, but a storm arose with such violence it upset the craft. The Father, finding himself hampered by his cassoock, wasn't able to save himself by swimming like the others. He found burial in the waters and later in the tears of every last Christian in the whole country." *Alexandre de Rhodes, Rhodes of Viet Nam*, p. 52.

went away to *Macao*, to endeavour to persuade the *Portugueses* to continue the trade, as it seems was afterwards done; so that things are now quiet, and the fathers continue gaining new Christians as they did at first.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Apparently, Borri describes events that took place in 1625. As Alexandre de Rhodes relates: "Seeing the Portuguese hadn't come that year with their ships laden as usual, the king easily gave ear to the Christians' enemies." *Ibid.* But de Rhodes does not mention anyone sent to Macao to negotiate with the Portuguese; instead he reports that all the missionaries were ordered to be confined to Faifo, but they soon succeeded in lifting this restriction by petitioning the son of the Nguyễn lord. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

## CHAPTER XI.

# OF THE KINGDOM OF TUNCHIM.

When the superiors of *Macao* sent me into *Cochin-China*, they told me, they did not absolutely design I should continue in that mission, but only to learn the language, that I might afterwards discover the kingdom of *Tunchim*. For this reason during those five years I dwelt there, I almost made it my business to inquire into, and get certain information of the affairs of that kingdom, the language being the same, as formerly it was but one kingdom. I will therefore say as much of it as any way concerns *Cochin-China*, which has some dependance upon *Tunchim*, and this according to the accounts given me by natives of *Tunchim*, who came to the province of *Pulucambi*, where I resided most part of my time; the rest I will leave to the news we shall receive from our fathers, who are there still making further discoveries.

{A description of Tunchim.}

This kingdom, besides *Cochin-China* which belongs to it, contains four other provinces, all extending equally in length and breadth. In the very center of them is the royal city of *Tunchim*, from which all the kingdom takes name, there the court is kept, and the king resides, being encompassed on all sides by those four provinces, composing a square four times as big as *Cochin-China*. On the east side of this kingdom is the gulf of *Ainam*, into which falls a great and navigable river that runs down eighteen leagues from the city *Tunchim*, and *Japanese* ships call'd *Jonks* go up it. The river generally overflows twice a year, in *June* and *November*, drowning almost half the city, but it lasts not long. On the south are the frontiers of *Sinua*,<sup>1</sup> the court of *Cochin-China*, as has been observed already. On the north of it is *China*, without the defense of a wall, the trade and commerce between the *Chineses* and *Tunchineses* being so mutual and constant, that it will not allow of walls and gates shut, as they are against other foreigners. This is the reason that induces the fathers of our society to attempt the entrance into *China* that way, knowing they shall not on this side meet with all those impediments that strangers meet with throughout all the rest of the kingdom, and more especially about *Canton*. Lastly, on the west it borders on the kingdom of *Lai*, into which *F. Alexander Rhodes* of *Avignon* made his way through *Cochin-China*;<sup>2</sup> and this kingdom, I am of opinion, cannot but border upon that of

<sup>1</sup> See Borri, Part I, Chapter I, n. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Bonifacy argues that *A. de Rhodes* never visited Laos, but that the visit was carried out by one of the neophytes from *Cochinchina*, who assumed his name to visit Laos on his way to Tonkin; see "Les Européens qui ont vu le vieux Hue: Cristoforo Borri," p. 399, n. 154. And indeed I could not find a description of his own visit to Laos in de Rhodes's works. On the other hand, *Giuliano Baldinotti*, the first missionary to visit Tonkin (he arrived in 1626), summoned other missionaries from the south to explore this new domain, and *Baldinotti's* account, published in the same year, agrees with *Borri's*. According to *Baldinotti*, de Rhodes was on a mission there and reported the *Laotians* were "a people very much disposed towards

Tibet, newly discovered; which I am apt to believe, as well by reason of the extent and length of the land of *Tibet* and borders of *Lai*, because of the greatness and compass of these two kingdoms, it seems impossible that any other land should lie betwixt them,<sup>3</sup> as also much more on account of what the same fathers who were there relate of *Tibet*, who report that the farthest province of *Tibet* eastward borders upon, and trades with a people, who sell them raw silk and fine dishes, like those of *China*, and such like commodities, which we know *Turchim* abounds in, and sell them to the *Latis*.<sup>4</sup>

{The government.}

As to the government of this kingdom it is hereditary, and ruled as follows: The supreme regal dignity resides in one they call *Buna*,<sup>5</sup> but he of himself does nothing at all, all things being left to his favourite, whom they call *Chiuua*,<sup>6</sup> whose power is so absolute both in peace and war, that he is come by degrees to own no superior; the *Buna* remaining in his royal palace, quite cut off from all management of the publick affairs, satisfied with an exterior respect due to him as a sort of sacred person, and with the authority of making laws, and confirming all edicts. When the *Chiuua* dies, he always endeavours to have his son succeed him in the government; but for the most part it falls out that the tutors of those sons aspiring themselves to that dignity, endeavour to murder them, and by that means possess themselves of the dignity of *Chiuua*.<sup>7</sup>

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the acceptance of our law." See "La relation sur le Tonkin du P. Baldinotti," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 1, 3 (1903): 78.

<sup>3</sup> The Chinese province of Yunnan lies between Laos and Tibet.

<sup>4</sup> Launay suggests that the first European missionary in Tibet was a Portuguese Jesuit, d'Andrada (?-1634), who arrived there in 1624, thus after Borri's departure from Cochinchina. He was joined by several other missionaries in the late 1620s. Adrien Launay, *Histoire de la Mission du Tibet* (Lille-Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, date unknown), 1: 23-30.

<sup>5</sup> As it has been said above, in the original this word is written *Bua*, spelled *vua* in modern Vietnamese orthography.

<sup>6</sup> *Chúa*, meaning prince or governor, a title similar to that of *shogun* in Japan, denotes a de facto ruler of the country, while a king or an emperor held only an honorific title and was a mere figurehead, with real control wielded by the *chúa*. Both the Nguyễn in Cochinchina and the Trịnh in Tonkin were called *chúa*.

<sup>7</sup> It seems that Borri may have mistakenly put the word *Chiuua* (*chúa*: prince, governor) instead of *Bua* (*vua*: king) in this sentence. It was hereditary succession among the *chúas*, but it was different with the kings. Between the mid-sixteenth century and Borri's time in Tonkin, the succession of the royal line was indeed disrupted or changed by the Trịnh lords. A quick glance will suffice to show the influence the Trịnh exerted on royal succession: King Lê Anh Tông (r. 1556-73), after he attempted to curb the Trịnh's power, was forced to abdicate in favor of his son. His successor was not his eldest son, but rather his fifth son (known as King Lê Thế Tông), who was put on the throne at the tender age of seven and ruled until 1599. He was not succeeded by his eldest son either, but by the second son (known as King Lê Kính Tông), when the latter was only twelve years old. Growing up, this king demonstrated some independent aspirations; as a result, he was forced to commit suicide or was killed in 1619. In this case, his eldest son, future king Lê Thần Tông, ascended the throne at the age of twelve. Furthermore, the Lê kings were forced to marry women from the Trịnh clan, whose leaders thus became close relatives of the kings and of their descendants. Borri's comment "that the tutors of those sons aspiring themselves to that dignity, endeavour to murder them, and by that means possess themselves of the dignity of *Chiuua*" may consequently be seen as a mistake, or it could also mean that, by controlling the royal family, the Trịnh were able to

{Power.}

The *Chiuua*'s power is so great, that suitable to the bigness of the kingdom, he is able to bring into the field three or four times the number of men as the king of *Cochin-China*, whose army, as was said above, amounts to 80,000 men. Nor is it any difficult matter for the *Chiuua*, as often as he pleases to raise 300,000 armed men or more, because the prime lords of his kingdom, such as among us, dukes, marquesses, and earls, are oblig'd in time of war to furnish them at their own expence. The *Buna*'s strength is not above 40,000 men for his guard. Yet he is always own'd as superior to the *Chiuua* of *Tunchim* [Trịnh], by the king of *Cochin-China* [Nguyễn], and by that other *Chiuua* [Mãc], we observ'd in the first book to be fled into the province bordering upon *China*, tho' these are continually at war against one another; and the king of *Lais* bordering upon *Tunchim*, pays him a certain tribute.

{Succession.}

Therefore when we say this crown is hereditary, it is to be understood only in reference to the *Buna* whose children always succeed, the royal race being continued in his family.<sup>8</sup> This is as much as I thought fit briefly to say of the kingdom of *Tunchim*, from what I could learn of it till my return into *Europe*.

Since then I have been inform'd, that F. *Julian Baldinotte*, an *Italian* born at *Pistoria* in *Tuscany*, was sent into that kingdom to make some way for the gospel, and arrived from *Macao* at the city *Tunchim*, after a month's sail.<sup>9</sup> As for what the said father found in that country, what pass'd between the king and him, and the solemnity of his reception, and the first foundation he laid for Christianity, I refer the reader to the account given lately by that father himself; and we are still expecting fresh advices from the other fathers, as F. *Peter Marques* a *Portuguese*, and F. *Alexander Rhodes* of *Avignon*, who we said before had been in *Cochin-China* and are there still gaining Christians. We therefore hope both these kingdoms of *Tunchim* and *Cochin-China*, will soon be united to the flock of the church, acknowledging and giving the due obedience to the universal pastor and vicar of Christ our Lord on earth.

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maintain their possession of real power as *chúa*. We have seen in Chapter 7 of Part I that Borri refers to the *Trinh* as royal "tutors."

<sup>8</sup> The *Trinh* had tried to preserve the royal blood in the succession. For example, when King Lê *Trung Tông* (r.1548-56) died without male descendants, they looked for some descendant of the royal house until they found Lê *Duy Bang*, a descendant of Lê *Lợi*, the founder of the Lê dynasty. Lê *Duy Bang* became King Lê *Anh Tông* (r. 1556-73). See *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư* (Complete History of Great Viet) (Hanoi: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1993), bản kỷ 16:13a (3:129).

<sup>9</sup> Father *Giuliano Baldinotte* (Baldinotti in modern Italian orthography) (1591-1631) was the first Jesuit sent to Tonkin in 1626 from Macao with a Japanese, *Giulio Piani*, to find out about the situation there. "He was struck by the size and beauty of the kingdom and the natural goodness of the people no less than by their wonderful intelligence. It was then he regretted with all his heart not having learned the language so as to be able to implant the faith in ground that seemed so well prepared." *Alexandre de Rhodes, Rhodes of Viet Nam*, trans. Solange Hertz (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1966), p. 54. He spent in Tonkin half a year, from March to August, and subsequently wrote an account, republished in Italian and translated into French in *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 3 (1903): 71-8. He and his work were mentioned above in connection with A. de Rhodes's trip to Laos.

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## THE CONCLUSION.

It is not possible but that such as have least inclination to the discovery of the world, and are most affected to their own countries and homes, must be excited by this short account to desire to see not only the variety but the truth of such strange things, which tho' they be not supernatural, may yet be term'd miracles of nature. Such are those I have said, I saw in *Cochin-China*, a land as to its climate and seasons of the year habitable, by reason of the fruitfulness of its soil abounding in provisions, fruit, birds, and beasts, and the sea, in choice and delicious fish; and most healthy, because of the excellent temper of the air, inso much that those people do not yet know what the plague is. It is rich in gold, silver, silk, *Calambá*,<sup>1</sup> and other things of great value, fit for trade by reason of the ports and resort of all nations: peaceable, because of their loving, generous, and sweet disposition: and lastly secure, not only by the valour and bravery of the *Cochin-Chinese* accounted such by other countries, and their store of arms, and skill in managing them; but even by nature, which has shut it in on the one side by the sea, and on the other by the rocky *Alps*, and uncouth mountains of the *Kermois*.<sup>2</sup> This is that part of the earth call'd *Cochin-China*, which wants nothing to make it a part of heaven, but that God should send thither a great many of his angels; so *S. John Chryssostom*<sup>3</sup> calls apostolical men, and preachers of the gospel. How easily would the faith be spread abroad in this kingdom of *Cochin-China*, where there are not those difficulties which we fathers of the society dispers'd about the East, do meet with in other countries; for there is no need here of being disguis'd or conceal'd, these people admitting of all strangers in their kingdom, and being well pleas'd that every one should live in his own religion. Nor is it necessary before preaching to spend many years in studying their letters and hieroglyphicks, as the fathers in *China* do, for here it is enough to learn the language, which as has been said is so easie, that a man may preach in a year. The people are not shy, nor do they shun strangers, as is practic'd in other eastern nations, but make much of them, affect their persons, prize their commodities, and commend their doctrine.

They do not lie under that great impediment for the receiving the grace of the gospel, that is, the sin of sodomy, and others contrary to nature, which is frequent in all the other eastern countries, the very name whereof the *Cochin-Chinese* naturally abhor. In short, these people may very easily be taught the principal mysteries of our holy faith, they, as we have shewn, in a manner adoring but one only God, accounting the idols as inferior saints, allowing the immortality of the soul, eternal punishments for the wicked, and bliss for the just, using temples, sacrifices, processions; so that changing the objects, it would be easie to introduce the true worship. That there will be no difficulty in making out the mystery of the holy eucharist may appear by the distinction they make between the accidents and

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<sup>1</sup> Calambac.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1 of Part 1.

<sup>3</sup> 347-407, Archbishop of Constantinople.

substance of the meat they provide for the dead, as has been said above in this second book. All these things inflame the minds of the children of the society, who tho' recluse and shut up in the colleges and provinces of *Europe*, have an ardent desire to convert the world. And tho' many of them put it in practice with the assistance of the holy see apostolick, which with a fatherly care relieves the mission of *Japan*; as also by his catholick majesty king *Philip*, and his council of the *Indies*, who so frequently with incredible bounty, supply the *East* and *West Indies* with ministers of the gospel,<sup>4</sup> yet it is impossible that these two great pillars, which support other mighty weights, and bear almost all the world on their shoulders, can sufficiently supply all that daily occurs and is discover'd. I therefore trust in God, that his divine Providence will rouze up some generous soul, inflam'd with the zeal of God's honour, to send and maintain some evangelical ministers, who, satisfy'd with a religious and poor sustenance, may convey the food of the gospel not only throughout *Cochin-China*, but unto the great kingdom of *Tunchim*, founding a church and christian flock that may compare with the most renowned in the world.

## FINIS

<sup>4</sup> The Council of the Indies, founded in 1524 by Charles I (1500-58), was to manage colonial possessions, politically, economically, and spiritually, thus being responsible for sending missionaries to the colonies to propagate Christianity. Its activity continued to approximately 1834. The Spanish kings, who between 1580 and 1640 were also kings of Portugal, were called Catholic kings. Borri apparently refers here to Philip IV (1605-65).



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VOL. VI.

CONTAINING

- I. A DESCRIPTION of the Kingdom of *TONQUEEN*. By SAM. BARON, a Native thereof.
- II. TRAVELS through *EUROPE*. By Dr. JOHN GEMELLI CARERI. In several Letters to the Counselor AMATO DANIO, at *Naples*.
- III. A VOYAGE to *VIRGINIA*. By Col. Norwood.
- IV. CAPTAIN PHILLIPS'S Journal of his Voyage from *England* to Cape *Mousseradoe* in *Africa*; and thence along the Coast of Guiney to *Whidaw*, the Island of *St. Thomas*, and so forward to *Barbadoes*. In which is contained an exact Account of the Longitudes, Latitudes &c. As also a Cursory Account of the Country, People, Forts, Trade, &c.
- V. A VOYAGE into the North-West. Passage. Written by JOHN GATONBE.
- VI. A Relation of Three Years Sufferings of ROBERT EVERARD, upon the Coast of *Assada*, near *Madagascar*, in a Voyage to *India*; And of his wonderful Preservation and Deliverance.
- VII. A familiar DESCRIPTION of the MOSQUETO Kingdom in *America*, with a Relation of the strange Customs, Religion, Wars, &c. of those Heathenish People.
- VIII. A Discovery of Two Foreign Sects in the *East-Indies*; viz. The Sect of the BANIANs, the ancient Natives of *India*; and Sect of the PERSEES, the ancient Inhabitants of *Persia*. With the Religion and Manners of each Sect. By the Rev. Mr. HENRY LORD.
- IX. An Account of the wonderful Preservation of the Ship TERRA NOVA of *London*. By C. MAY.
- X. An Account of the King of MOCHA, and of his Country.
- XI. Some Reasons for the Unhealthfulness of the Island of BOMBAY.
- XII. A JOURNEY through Part of the *Low-Countries*, *Germany*, *Italy* and *France*. By PHILLIP SKIPPON, Esq; (afterwards Knighted) in Company with the celebrated MR. RAY, MR. LISTER, MR. WILLUGHBY, MR. HENRY MASSINGBERD, &c.

(I)

A

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

*Kingdom of Tonqueen,*

BY

*S. BARON, a Native thereof.*

TO  
SIR JOHN HOSKINS, KT.  
AND  
ROBERT HOOKE, ESQ.

Honoured Sirs,<sup>1</sup>

I send by this conveyance to Mr. *Charles Chamberlain*<sup>2</sup> the promised description of *Tonqueen*, wherein I think I have noted the most material passages of trade, government, and customs of the country, vice and virtue of the people, as least so far as will content and satisfy a moderate mind, and be sufficient for a new commissioner to conduct business by at his first entrance there. As to the imperfections and errors therein, you will be pleased to favour it with your exact survey and prudent correction, especially to remove or cancel what therein may be either against, or reflectingly spoken of Mons. *Tavernier*,<sup>3</sup> since the intention is to inform the reader of the truth, and not to carp and find fault with others; which when I did, was only for your particular perusal. The pictures are true and exact, tho' not according to art; the map, drawn and computed out of two others, is as near the truth as could be done in this place either by care or diligence. Of the whole the honourable president *Gyfford*<sup>4</sup> sends his judgment to you, whose liberality has chiefly supported my expences thereon; therefore I request you will be pleased to deliver to Mr. *Charles Chamberlain* the money the said description will yield, for the president's use. And if you should think convenient to dedicate it to the right honourable company, then to make honourable and particular mention of Mr. *John Page*, Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Hooke (1635-1703), was an English physicist who conducted experiments in many fields of inquiry and was active in the Royal Society in London; for a biography, see Lisa Jardine, *The Curious Life of Robert Hooke, The Man Who Measured London* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004). Sir John Hoskins was a friend of Robert Hooke who was active in the Royal Society and served for a time as its president.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Chamberlain was an acquaintance of Robert Hooke who was active in the English East India Company.

<sup>3</sup> On Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, see the Introduction.

<sup>4</sup> William Gyfford, an agent of the English East India Company, established the English factory in Tonkin in 1672 and remained there in charge of it for four years. He was an agent in Madras from 1681 to 1684 and was then Governor of Fort St. George and President of Madras from 1684 to 1687.

James Hobland, Mr. Charles Chamberlain, and Mr. William Moyer,<sup>5</sup> my benefactors. I am now on a voyage to China, where if I can pick up any curiosity, or discover any thing worthy your sight or information, you are sure to hear from me; in the mean while I recommend myself to the continuation of your favour, as,

Fort St. George at  
Madras-patam,  
February, 2d.  
1685-6.

Honoured Sirs,  
Your very humble devoted Servant,

Samuel Baron.

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<sup>5</sup> Moyer aside, I have found evidence that these men were in the employ of the English East India Company; see the Introduction.

TO THE HONOURABLE

William Gyfford, Esq;  
President of Coast Cormandell, Bengall,  
&c.

AND

Governor of Fort St. George

Honored Sir,

This is but a rough draught of what is in a more clear and lively manner impress'd in your honour's memory; I mean, the state and constitution of the kingdom of *Tonqueen*, since yourself was the first *English* man that, entering the country, open'd the trade, and settled there a factory for the honourable company; in effecting which your patience appear'd no less exemplary (having suffer'd strange rudeness and harsh usages from the natives, their usual welcome to new-comers) than your prudence and dexterity was eminent in that negotiation, wherein (I can say without incurring the imputation of flattery) your generosity respected the honour of your nation and common benefit much more than your particular interest, and with a liberal spirit bestow'd your wax and honey most freely on others, thinking, as that heroick *German* express'd himself to the emperor *Charles V. If my Labour is not for myself, 'tis for Posterity.*<sup>6</sup> Equal to this was your honour's deportment, affable, courteous, complaisant to the humours of those people, wherein your condescending temper was very conspicuous; which tho' it had been accustomed to live in other parts of *India* after another rate and splendor than the *Tonqueuese, Chinese* or *Japanese* willingly tolerate any stranger or foreigner to do in their country, did yet know readily how to please them, by your conformity and seasonable receding to their pride, whereby you presently so gain'd the good-will of courtiers and merchants (of which they are otherwise great niggards to new-comers, yet very loving to them that know their country and customs) as prov'd no small means to uphold afterwards the *English* name, your person, factory, and what else belong'd to your place, with honour, reputation and credit, notwithstanding the *Dutch* war,<sup>7</sup> want of shipping, supplies, and your incapacity to trade, which are moral distempers for a new-settled factory, all the time of your residence, until your departure thence, the space of well nigh six years, in which time you got much experience yourself, and gave so true and

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<sup>6</sup> I have not located the source of this quotation, but Baron appears to attribute it to Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521.

<sup>7</sup> England and Holland were at war 1672-74.

exact a character of the country, whereof there had been before but a confus'd idea amongst the *English*, as was very advantageous to commerce.<sup>8</sup>

These, and the respects of your superintendency over the right honourable company's affairs in the South Seas, the honour of your many years acquaintance, have induc'd me to direct this description to your honour, who, as the most capable to judge and discern the truth thereof, so I hope will have the charity to construe with your innate candor my intention therein. I am sensible of the inconsiderateness of my labour herein, tho', to the best of my might, I did it as well as the troubles I was in would permit me; and that only the subject is to be taken notice of, which is such as Sir *John Hoskins* and Mr. *Robert Hooke*,<sup>9</sup> my most honour'd friends, assured me, by reiterated letters out of *England*, would be taking and acceptable, whose approved judgment, which I shall always reverence, did alone encourage me to undertake this task, were it but to satisfy their curiosity and noble desires, ever constant in assiduous application to advance learning, and enrich the publick by new discoveries, which otherwise I would not have ventur'd on; but since they were the promoters thereof, I submit it to their censure, according to the following advertisement, but leave the whole disposal to yourself, as from,

Fort St. George at *Madrassapatam*, on the Coast of  
*Cormandel*, August 25,  
Anno 1685.

Honoured SIR,

Your very humble obedient Servant,

Samuel Baron.

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<sup>8</sup> On the difficulties of the English East India Company in Tonkin during the 1670s, when Gyfford was there, see Hoang Anh Tuan, "From Japan to Manila and Back to Europe: The English Abortive Trade with Tonkin in the 1670s," *Itinerario* XXIX,3 (2005): 73-92.

<sup>9</sup> Prominent figures in the London scientific community with whom Baron was acquainted; see the Introduction.

## *Advertisement.*

MY design at first was not to undertake an historical narration of *Tonqueen*, but only to note the errors in Monsieur *Tavernier's* description of that country, as it was desired of me by Sir *John Hoskins* and Mr. *Robert Hooke* out of *England*; but having made some small progress therein, I was quickly tired with finding faults and noting mistakes, also thinking I should thereby give but small satisfaction to the curiosity of those worthy gentlemen, whose highly active genius's penetrate the very essence of the most occult things, and finding it much more easy for me to compose a new description of *Tonqueen* (the country of my nativity, and where I have been conversant with persons of all qualities and degrees) than to correct the mistakes of others; these considerations, together with ambition to do the publick acceptable service, and especially to demonstrate in some measure my thankfulness and profound respects to my much-honour'd friends Sir *John Hoskins* and Mr. *Robert Hooke*, induced me to undertake and finish this work, such as it is. I can freely declare that there is nothing inserted herein, but what I thought, to the best of my knowledge, to be exactly true and real. In dubious matters I had my informations from the most knowing and credible amongst the natives. As for the order and method, I follow'd Mons. *Tavernier*. The stile and diction thereof, since they are my first essays, must needs be very defective; therefore I intreat my friends to correct and alter what therein they may find amiss, and to dedicate it to whom they please; and in so doing they will infinitely oblige

*Their most humble Servant,*

**Samuel Baron.**

Note, that the original Pictures, whereof those in this Book are but a Copy, were drawn on the Place by a Tonqueeneer of eminent Quality, and according to my Judgment are done as well as Things of that nature can be.

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## CHAPTER I.

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# THE DESCRIPTION OF TONQUEEN

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## TAVERNIERE'S ACCOUNT OF TONQUEEN ANIMADVERTED ON.<sup>1</sup>

The kingdom of *Tonqueen* has been discovered by the *Portuguese* above one hundred and twenty years since,<sup>2</sup> and the relations that *Padre Martin*<sup>3</sup> and *Alexander de Rodes*,<sup>4</sup> both Jesuites, give of it, is in general more true than this of *Taverniere*; for what contradictions we find in them, may be imputed to the alteration of things by mutation of time.

*Taverniere* talks of eleven or twelve voyages his brother made to *Tonqueen*, from *Acheen* [Acheh], *Batavia*,<sup>5</sup> and *Bantam*,<sup>6</sup> on the confidence of whose relation, together with what he inquired of the *bonzes*, or priests, that came while he was in *Bantam*, he has compiled his history,<sup>7</sup> as fabulous and full of gross absurdities as lines.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is a response to Tavernier's first chapter: "A Discourse in general concerning the City of Tunquin, and of the Manner how the Author came to have knowledge thereof." See Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," in *A Collection of Several Relations and Treatises Singular and Curious* (London: A. Godbid & J. Playford, for Moses Pitt at the Angel in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1680). For more on Tavernier, see the Introduction.

<sup>2</sup> On the Portuguese arrival along the Vietnamese coasts, see Pierre-Yves Manguin, *Les Portugais sur les côtes du Viêt-Nam et du Campa: Etude sur les routes maritimes et les relations commerciales, d'après les sources portugaises: XVI, XVII, XVIII siècles* (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> This refers to Gio. Filippo de Marini, *Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tunquin et de Lao*, trans. from Italian by L.P.L.C.C. (Paris: Gervais Clouzier, 1666).

<sup>4</sup> Alexandre de Rhodes, *Histoire du royaume de Tunquin et des grands progresz que la predication de l'evangile y a faits en la conversion des infidelles, depuis l'année 1627 jusques à l'année 1646*, trans. from Latin by R. P. Henry Albi (Lyon: Jean Baptiste Devenet, 1651).

<sup>5</sup> Modern Jakarta, headquarters of the Dutch East India Company in Asia.

<sup>6</sup> A major port and kingdom of that time on the western coast of Java. The Asian headquarters of the English East India Company was located there until 1682.

<sup>7</sup> Tavernier (p. 2) says his brother "... had made Eleven or Twelve Voyages from Batavia, Bantam, and Achem, to Tunquin. Other Observations I collected from the Tonquinesi themselves, with whom I have had several Discourses, during the time that I was at Batavia and Bantam, where they principally trade. And that which gave me more light was this, that those Merchants several times bring along with them some of their Bonzes or Priests, as also some of their Learned Men to teach their Children to Write and Read."



For first, the *Tonqueenese* have no *bonzes* or priests,<sup>8</sup> however they came to *Bantam* and *Batavia*; and then he saith, when the *Tonqueenese* make voyages, they take their wives and families with them; I suppose he means those voyages they make in the river of *Tonqueen*, from one village to another: but for foreign voyages they are altogether unacquainted with them, unless it be some few of the poorer sort that go to attend strangers, or are forced otherwise for a livelihood. He notes how the *Tonqueenese* were ravished with admiration, when he shewed them his Atlas, and some particular maps about the composure and structure of the whole world, and its several kingdoms and states,<sup>9</sup> which they heeded as much as a world in the moon. Neither can I hear of a *Taverniere* that has made eleven or twelve voyages to *Tonqueen* on his own account; only thus much I have heard, that there has been one *Taverniere*, a purser in the *Dutch* service, and once in *Tonqueen*.<sup>10</sup>

He commends his brother for a person of courage and cunning,<sup>11</sup> how justly I cannot tell; but this I am sure, he has used but little cordiality, and less sincerity, notwithstanding all his protestations, in his account of *Tonqueen*: He magnifies the great sums of money his brother carried always with him, when he went on that voyage; but it is too well known what a purser in the *Dutch* service can do, and what they are allowed to do; hindring so strictly the private trade.

He talks of a large present he gave the king and prince,<sup>12</sup> together with his favourable reception and familiar conversation with them; if this be true, I say the *Tonqueenese* are much degenerated, yet it cannot be denied, but that strangers at their first entrance into this country, had, in many respects, better usage than at present; but not so, as to permit themselves to play with a foreigner the good companion: at this time they keep their distance to all strangers, making but small account of them.

<sup>8</sup> In seeming to say that there are no *bonzes*, Baron appears to contradict what he says in Chapter 18: "... they have no priest ... to preach and propagate their doctrine; all they have, are their *Sayes*, or *Bonzes*, as M. Taverniere calls them (which, by mistake, he terms priests) which are a kind of friers or monks." "Sayes" is apparently a pluralized transcription of the Vietnamese word *sāi*, which today generally means temple warden or a layperson who administers temple affairs, but which in the seventeenth century meant a Buddhist monk or nun; see Alexandre de Rhodes, *Dictionarium Annamiticum, Lusitanum, et Latinum* (Rome, Sac. Congreg. 1651), col. 671. Baron objects to conflating *sāi* with priests, or *bonzes*. *Bonzes*, according to him, are "a kind of friers or monks," while he understands priests in a European Catholic sense as members of a global hierarchy. Here he reads Tavernier as saying that *bonzes* are the same as priests, and he objects by asserting that priests do not exist among the Tonkinese. While it appears that he is saying there are no *bonzes*, this is not what he intends.

<sup>9</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 2: "And as I was never without an Atlas and some other particular Maps, they [these *Bonzes* and other Learned Men] were ravish'd with admiration, when I shew'd them the Structure and Composure of the whole World, and the Situation of its several Kingdoms and Estates."

<sup>10</sup> Tavernier's brother ostensibly went to Tonkin before his death in 1648, at which time Baron's father would have been residing in Tonkin on behalf of the Dutch East India Company (see the Introduction), and when Baron himself was probably already a child or teenager, residing with his father.

<sup>11</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 2: "My Brother, who was a person both cunning and courageous ..."

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3: "... a very noble Sword, of which the Handle and Hilt were all over enchain'd with Rubies and Emraulds, with a Backsword Blade. To this he added a pair of Pistols, adorn'd and inlaid with Silver, a Persian Saddle and Bridle, embroider'd with Gold and Silver, a Bow and Quiver full of Arrows, and six Pictures ..."

To kiss the king's hand, is not the *Tonqueen* mode, much less permitted to strangers: and when he spoke the *Malayan* language so fluently, he might as well have spoken *French* to them, that understood not a word of either.<sup>13</sup> When he played amongst those lords, I wonder what game it was that he lost so many thousand crowns at, as he mentioned;<sup>14</sup> but it is most to be admired, that a calf and two jars of *Tonqueen* arrack, the usual largess and liberality of this king, (water distilled out of rice) should supply his great losses. He farther tells you, that by the great familiarity his brother had at court, and by the great discourses he had with a great many *Tonqueenese*, (who never stir out of country, however he met them at *Bantam* and *Bataavia*) he laid the foundation of his work, which is both faithful and exact: Furthermore he saith, no other consideration, than speaking of truth has invited him to undertake this relation;<sup>15</sup> all which being notorious contradictions and false tales, shame, indeed, the author the more.

Our author, as all other *Europeans*, terms and intitles the general or *Choua*, king; because he disposes of the kingdom at his pleasure, receiving all foreign ambassadors, except that of *China*. However, this is a mistake; for they have their king or *Boua*, though he signifies no more than a cypher, as will be noted in several places of this relation.<sup>16</sup>

He not only vaunts of his cuts, which he says were drawn on the place, and will contribute much to the divertisement of the reader, but also praises, for it's exactness, the map which he gives of the country;<sup>17</sup> than which nothing can be more false, for

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Tavernier, speaking of Tonkin (p. 2): "My Brother ... soon grew familiar with the Malaye, which is the Language of the Learned in those quarters of Asia, as Latin is among Us in Europe." Further (p. 3): "Thereupon having order to attend the Court, and coming to kiss the king's hands, the whole Assembly was surpris'd to hear a Stranger, born in a Country so far distant, speak the Malaye Language so fluently." Dampier, writing about his observations in Tonkin in 1688, is of Baron's opinion: "But for the Malayan Tongue, which Monsieur Tavernier's Brother in his History of Tonquin says is the Court Language, I never could hear by any Person that it is spoken there, tho' I have made particular Inquiry about it; neither can I be of his Opinion in that Matter." William Dampier, "Mr. Dampier's Voyages, Vol. II, Part I: His voyage from Achin in Sumatra, to Tunquin, and other Places in the East-Indies," in *A Collection of Voyages, in Four Volumes* (London: James and John Knapton, 1729), II:59.

<sup>14</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 3, where he is speaking of his brother at "the Court of Tunquin": "But that which fix'd him more in the good opinion and favour of the King and Lords of the Court, was his frolic and gentle behaviour in playing with them for several large Sums, insomuch that being one that ventur'd deep, he lost above 20000 Crowns in one Voyage. However the King, who was a generous Prince, would not suffer him to be a loser, but gave him those considerable Presents that supplied his losses."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4: "Thus you see the Grounds and Foundations of this Relation, which is both fanciful and exact, and by which that noble Country, of which the Descriptions hitherto have been so obscure and uncertain, shall be truly discover'd and set forth, such as it is; declaring withal, that no other Consideration or Interest, then that of speaking truth, has incited me to undertake this Description."

<sup>16</sup> The distinction here is between the *vua*, vernacular Vietnamese for "king," which referred to the Lê emperor, who was a powerless prisoner of his palace, and the *chia*, "lord," which referred to the leader of the Trinh family, who was the actual ruler, commonly understood as "the king," by European visitors of that time. For example, see Chapter 15 of Gio. Filippo de Martini, *Relation nouvelle et curieuse des royaumes de Tunquin et de Lao*, pp. 301-327, wherein the funeral rites of the deceased *chia* Trinh Tráng in 1657 are narrated as the funeral of "the king."

<sup>17</sup> A reference to Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 4: "And I date engage, that the Map of the Country, and the Cuts which were drawn upon the place, will no less contribute to the divertissement of the Reader, then to the Explanation of the

compare it with our sea draughts, 'twill plainly appear what it is: But as fabulous stories and fictions, inventions at pleasure, are pleasuring only to the ignorant, so 'tis most certain, the ingenious reader will blame him for promising so much and using so little probity in his history.

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Matter which they contain." By "cuts" is meant engravings for illustrations; "drawn upon the place" means that they were drawn in Tonkin, at the places they depict.

## CHAPTER II.

# OF THE SITUATION AND EXTENT OF TONQUEEN.<sup>1</sup>

We have no more reason to admire why our predecessors had no earlier knowledge of this kingdom than they had of that of *China*, because its discovery was something posterior to that; for the *Portuguese* had no sooner discovered the last, but they sent out ships to visit this also.

It is true, this kingdom was a province of *China* formerly, and pays tribute still to that emperor: But that was not the reason why we had no sooner knowledge thereof,<sup>2</sup> considering these people have been governed by their native princes for above these four hundred years without interruption, which was long before the *Portuguese* came to make their discoveries in *India*. The true reason seems to be, that the people did never stir abroad, nor do yet, for commerce or other association; and they somewhat affect in this the *Chinese* vanity, thinking all other people to be barbarous, imitating their government, learning, characters, &c. yet hate their persons.

I do not know why *Taverniere* saith most people should believe this country to be in a very hot climate, considering it is situated under the tropick, and some part of it more to the northward; nevertheless he affirms it to be very temperate, by reason of the great number of rivers (and altogether free from those sand-hills and barren mountains that cause such heat in *Commaroon*,<sup>3</sup> and other places in the gulf of *Persia*) that water it; together with the rain that falls in its season,<sup>4</sup> whereas the truth thereof is, that the rains, indeed, generally fall in the months of *May*, *June*, *July* and *August*, and sometimes sooner, which moistens the ground, but cause no fresh breezes at all; on the contrary, the said two months of *July* and *August*, make the weather here unsufferably hot. Doubtless the country would be plentiful in fruits, were there not so many inhabitants, who living by rice chiefly, find therefore the greater necessity to cultivate what ground they have with that grain, not neglecting the least spot.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin." Here Baron is referring to Tavernier, Chapter 2: "Of the Situation and Extent of the Kingdom of Tunquin." This chapter of Baron's is largely a running commentary upon Tavernier.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5: "We shall have the less reason to admire wherefore our predecessors had so little knowledge of this Kingdom, when we consider that having formerly been a considerable part of China, the Inhabitants in the same manner as the Chinese did, kept themselves close within their own bounds, never minding to have any Commerce with other People, whom they contemn'd and lookt upon as Barbarians come from the other part of the World."

<sup>3</sup> This name remains unidentified.

<sup>4</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 5: "Most people believe this Country to lye in a very hot Climate; nevertheless it is now known to be very temperate, by reason of the great number of Rivers that water it; which together with the Rains that fall in their Seasons, cause a brisk freshness of the Air."

To the north-east of this kingdom lies the province of *Canton*; to the west it is bounded by the kingdoms of *Laos* and the *Bowes*,<sup>5</sup> to the north it borders on two other provinces of *China*, *Yunnan* [Yunnan] and *Quanci* [Guangxi], or *Ai*;<sup>6</sup> to the south and south-east on *Cochin-china*. The climate is temperate and wholesome, from *September* till *March*, sometimes very cold in *January* and *February*; though frost and snow are never seen here; for the months of *April*, *May* and *June* are not so healthful, both because of the rains and the fogginess of the air, and the sun's coming to the zenith; but *June*, *July* and *August* are excessive hot months. The winds here are divided between the north and south for six months and six months; the country is delightful from *May* till *August*, the trees being then in their verdure, and the fields all covered with paddy, very pleasant to the beholders.

The great winds that are called amongst our seamen the hurricanes, and known here by the name of *Touffoons*,<sup>7</sup> reign on this and the adjacent coasts, and the seas thereof are very terrible; but the time of their coming is very uncertain, sometimes once in five or six years, and sometimes in eight or nine; and though the wind is not known in other oriental seas by that name, and with that excessive violence, yet that which is called the *Elephant* in the bay of *Bengal* and the coast of *Comandel*,<sup>8</sup> is not much inferior to this; and the sad effects thereof are but too often experienced by the seamen. I cannot find an astronomer in all *Tonqueen*, to ask from whence those winds should proceed, so I cannot affirm that they are caused by the exhalations of the mines of *Japan*.<sup>9</sup>

As for the extent of the country, which he makes equal to that of *France*, it is a gross mistake; for this kingdom is reckon'd by men experienced, to be not much bigger than *Portugal*; but may be thought to contain four times the number of inhabitants. *Taverniere* makes its limits to be unknown, forgetting that he had so lately described the borders and extent thereof.<sup>10</sup>

As for islands belonging to this kingdom, there are several in the bay of *Tonqueen*, the chief whereof is called by the natives *Tvon Bene*,<sup>11</sup> and by the *Dutch*, *Rovers island*. It is situated in the latitude of 19 degrees 15 minutes north; is long one and a half, and broad half a league at most, the better part high land, and distant from the main one league, between which the main sea, ships may pass, as the *Dutch*

<sup>5</sup> This term, or variants of it (Bauos on Baron's map), appears in some early European accounts in reference to the mountains west of modern northern Vietnam. In Chapter XI, Baron says that part of Bowes was "maintain'd as conquer'd lands [by the Tonkinese], that people being of a different language and manner." This is plausibly a reference to the Tai rulers of the Sipsong Panna in the region of the modern border of Laos and China between the Mekong and Black (Sông Đà) Rivers.

<sup>6</sup> Ai or Ai-Lao was an ancient Sino-Vietnamese name for upland polities in the regions that are now along the borders of China, Laos, and Vietnam.

<sup>7</sup> Typhoon, in Vietnamese *đại phông*, "big wind."

<sup>8</sup> The Coromandel coast on the Bay of Bengal is in southeast India.

<sup>9</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 6: "The Astrologers of those parts believe that these terrible Tempests proceed from the Exhalations that rise out of the Mines of Japan."

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*: "In this fair extent of land, almost equal to that of France, are several Provinces, whose limits are not well known . . . ."

<sup>11</sup> This term is perhaps Vietnamese *Tuần Bến*, meaning "patrol station/harbor"; French colonial maps identified it as "Island of Biên Sơn" (Biên Mountain), and on modern maps it is identified as Nghi Sơn, at the border between Nghệ An and Thanh Hóa provinces.

did formerly; but the navigator must observe to keep the island side aboard, within a musket shot; where you will find six, seven, and seven and a half fathoms, ouzy ground. On the same side of the island, which is its west part, are two small bays, the northermost has a small pearl bank, but not rich, yet none dare to fish here without the king's special grant. In both the bays there is sweet water, which we found to be exceeding good, and esteemed the best we tasted there. At the south-west point of this island, is a ridge of rocks, extending from the said point 100 paces into the sea, and may be discovered at half ebb, by the breach thereon; for the rest, a clear coast.

Towards the north-west, is a fair bay, three fathom and a half and four fathom water, clay ground; here resort many fishing boats, besides what appertain to this village, whose inhabitants I compute between three or four hundred persons, most fishermen.

In this island is the watch-house general, which is a place of the greatest profit in the kingdom of *Tonqueen*: for all trading boats, either to the province of *Tingrony* [Thanh Hóa] or *Guian* [Nghê An], or from thence to the north, must stop here and pay custom, *viz.* for a large boat about half the value of a dollar and half, with some presents for the waiters, the rest proportionable; so that the customs of this place cannot yield less than a million of dollars *per annum*.

As for the ground, it is stony and mountainous, therefore not proper to manure; cattle we saw but few (tho' inhabitants told us of many antelopes that sheltered amongst the rocks and shrubs of the mountains) so that rice and other provisions for sustenance, are brought hither from the adjacent shore. Some good regulations would make this place plentiful, and with small expence this port might be a good one.

For cities and towns, excepting that of *Ca-cho*,<sup>12</sup> there are not above two or three in the whole kingdom of any note. As for *Aldas* or villages, questionless the number is great, and more than I can exactly affirm, or any man else that hath not made it his business to inquire after them; neither is it an easy manner to find the truth thereof: the city of *Ca-cho* is the metropolis of *Tonqueen*, lieth in the latitude 21 degrees north, about 40 leagues from the sea, and may, for its capaciousness, be compared with many cities in *Asia*, and superior to most for populousness, especially on the first and fifteenth of their new moon; being their market days, or grand *Bazaar*; when the people from the adjacent villages flock thither with their trade, in such numbers, as is almost incredible; several of the streets, tho' broad and spacious, are then so crowded that one finds enough to do if he can sometimes advance through the multitude a hundred paces in half an hour. Every different commodity sold in this city is appointed to a particular street, and these streets again allotted to one, two, or more villages, the inhabitants whereof are only privileged to keep shops in them, much in the nature of the several companies or corporations in *European* cities. The courts of the king, general, princes, &c. *Grandesa*,<sup>13</sup> and high courts of justice are kept here, of which I can only say, they stand on large tracts of ground; the principal structure makes but a mean appearance, being built of wood, the rest of their houses of bamboos and clay, not well compacted; few of brick except the factories of strangers, which out-vie the rest. Stupendous, indeed, are the triple walls of the old

<sup>12</sup> Kê Chợ ("marketplace"), modern Hanoi.

<sup>13</sup> From Italian *grandezza* or Spanish *grandeza*, meaning "grand, magnificent," here used to indicate palatial architecture.



city and palace; for by the ruins they appear to have been strong fabbricks with noble large gates, paved with a kind of marble; the palace to have been about six or seven miles in circumference; its gates, courts, apartments, &c. testify amply its former pomp and glory. In this city is likewise quartered a formidable militia, to be ready on all occasions; and here also standeth the king's arsenal or magazine for war, seated on the bank of the river, near a sandy island, on which the *Thecadaw*<sup>14</sup> is kept, as hereafter will be mentioned. The river is called by the natives *Songkoy*,<sup>15</sup> or the head river: it rises in *China*, and after it has rolled many hundred leagues, it passes here and disgorgeth itself in the bay of *Aynam*,<sup>16</sup> by eight or nine mouths, most of them navigable for vessels of small draught. This river is exceeding commodious for the city, since all sorts of merchandise are brought hither as to the epitome of the kingdom, by an infinite number of boats trading up and down the country; yet they have their houses in their respective *Aldæas*, and do not live altogether in their boats as *Taverniere* reports, but when they are voyaging.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter XV, where this is spelled *Theckydaw*.

<sup>15</sup> Sông Cái, "the main river," (now called Sông Hồng, "Red River").

<sup>16</sup> *Hái-nam*, Vietnamese for the island of Hainan; the mid-seventeenth century Jesuit map of Vietnam identifies the Gulf of Tonkin as the Gulf of Hainam, Baron's "bay of Aynam."

<sup>17</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 6: ". . . many of the People choose rather to [live] upon the Water than upon the Land; so that you shall see the greatest part of their Rivers covered with Boates, which serve them instead of Houses; and which are very neat, though they also keep their Cattel in them."

### CHAPTER III.

## OF THE NATURE AND PRODUCTIONS<sup>1</sup> OF THE KINGDOM OF TONQUEEN.

This country is for the most part low and flat, not unlike the united provinces, especially for its moats and banks. The hills make the frontiers towards the north, west and south: it is watered by one special river, which disgorgeth itself into the sea, by many branches, most of them navigable for ships of mean burthen. These rivers swarm with boats and large barks, which make it very commodious for traders: indeed in this country grows neither corn nor wine, which is not occasioned by the want of rains, for both of them require rather dry than wet ground; but by reason the inhabitants do not much care for them, as being ignorant of their goodness, and therefore do not plant them. Rice, indeed, is the chief sustenance of these people; and the country produces sufficient quantities thereof; and if this grain would have grown only by the rains of the months of *June* and *July*,<sup>2</sup> we should not have experienced the sad effects of a most dreadful and calamitous famine, that swept away so many millions of souls, in these two preceding years.

From the rice they distil a liquor called arrack, but much inferior to aquavitæ. Their ploughs, and the manner of using them, are much after the *Chinese* fashion, described in the history of *China*: the paddy they tread out with their feet, wherein their practice has made them very expert.

The fruits are equally good in their kinds with those of other oriental countries, but their oranges, far exceed all that I have tasted: what *Taverniere* calls a palm-tree, is, indeed, a cocoa-nut,<sup>3</sup> the pulp within is white, and tastes something like an almond; this fruit is so plentiful in *Siam*, that they lade ships with the oil that is made of the said pulp, to supply their neighbours, which is used to burn in lamps.

The liquor thereof is very cold, and pleasant enough, but reckoned bad for the nerves: questionless it is the most useful tree that is found in *India*, serving for meat, drink, cloathing, firing, building, &c.

The *Guava* is a fruit much like his description; but he is mightily out in the effects thereof, for whether green or ripe, it is always binding, but not usually eaten green.<sup>4</sup>

The *Papay* [papaya] is a fruit indeed resembling a melon, and somewhat of the taste, not unpleasant.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter III: "Of the Quality of the Kingdom of Tunquin."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7: "... in all the country there grows neither corn nor wine, by reason of the want of rain, which never falls but in the Months of June and July."

<sup>3</sup> Coconut; *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: "[Guava] if they be eaten before they are ripe they bind the belly, whereas if they be eaten when they are come to full maturity they work a contrary effect."

The *Arreak* [Arecal], called by the *Malays*, *Penang*, grows straight upright, bearing no branch, but at the top, like a crown; the fruit of which is in bigness like a large pigeon's egg, which most *Indians* use to eat with the leaf called Beetle [betel] by the *Portuguese*, and *Sera* by the *Malays*: it is good to sweeten the breath, fasten the teeth, and revive the spirits: in chewing, the juice thereof turns red; it is so much in use, that they think they do not make their friends welcome without presenting them with a dish of it. The *Tonqueenese*, *Siamese*, *Malays* and *Javas*, had rather lose a third of their diet than be without it. They have a fig called by them *Hungs*,<sup>5</sup> in taste something like a carrot, but much more pleasant; not at all like our *European* figs.

The other sort, called *Bonana*, or plantans, which he calls *Adam's* figs, some are in length above a span, some less.<sup>6</sup>

The high-ways are here and there beset with trees and many sheds, where they sell tea and beetle, &c. very commodious for travellers: and for those exceeding great trees, that shade so many thousands of men, called the *Banian-tree*, I cannot contradict him;<sup>7</sup> but what I have seen at *Swallow Marreene*, at *Surrat*,<sup>8</sup> far exceed any of these in bigness.

In this country we have the fruit *Lechea* [lychee], call'd *Bejay*<sup>9</sup> by the natives, in great plenty; which indeed no where else comes to maturity but in latitude from 20 to 30 degrees north: It grows on high trees, the leaves resemble somewhat the laurel; the fruits in clusters on the branches, shew like so many hearts, of the bigness of a small hen egg; when ripe of a crimson colour; the shell thin and rough, yet easy to be pulled off; the kernel is full of a white juice. This fruit is of an excellent taste, and most pleasant to the sight, but it doth not last above forty days in season: the time of its maturity is *April*, about when the General will cause his *chiaop* [chop] or seal to be fixed on most trees of the best *Lechea*<sup>10</sup> in the country, belong to whom they will, which obliges the owner not only not to meddle with his own, but also to watch narrowly that others do not touch them, which would be to his peril, since it is ingrossed by the court, who allow him nothing for his fruit or pains.

The fruit called *Jean*<sup>11</sup> or *Lungung*<sup>12</sup> (that is, *Dragons-eggs*) by the *Chinese*, is very plentiful here: the tree much as the former, the kernel white, but exceeding luscious; the fruit round; and less than a small plumb, the skin not rough, of a pale olive colour, and near to a wither'd leaf. This fruit, though it pleases many of the *Tonqueenese*, yet it is reckon'd hot and unwholesome. The season is *May*, and lasts 'till *July*.

<sup>5</sup> Hông: see Ch. Crevoist and Ch. Lemarié, *Catalogue des produits de l'Indochine, Tome Ier: Produits alimentaires et plantes fourragères* (Hanoi: Gouvernement Général de l'Indochine, 1917), pp. 257-160.

<sup>6</sup> Banana. See Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 8. A span, about nine inches, was measured from the end of the thumb to the end of the little finger on a hand with thumb and fingers spread.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*: "... there are some of these Trees so big that two or three thousand men may stand under them . . ."

<sup>8</sup> Surat is a city in southeastern Gujarat state, west-central India, where the English established their first Indian factory in 1612. Swallow Marreene is unidentified.

<sup>9</sup> Apparently a transcription of Vietnamese *vũ*.

<sup>10</sup> Spelled *Lechen* at the beginning of this paragraph.

<sup>11</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>12</sup> Longyan, commonly Anglicized as Longan, *long nhân* in Vietnamese.

The *Na*,<sup>13</sup> or as the Portuguese call it, *Annona*,<sup>14</sup> *Pompeimoor*,<sup>15</sup> and two or three sorts of plums, with other kind of *Indian* fruits (except *Durrions* [durian], which will grow only in hot countries; that is, from *Siam* towards the South, as *Malaya* [Malaya], *Mallacam* [Malacca], *Java*, &c.) are to be found here; but what exceeds all I have tasted in other parts of that kind, is the *Jaca*<sup>16</sup> or *Myte*<sup>17</sup> in *Tonqueen*. This is the largest fruit, I think, in the world, and because of its bigness provident nature has placed its growth on the stock or body of the tree, not on the branches, lest it should not be sufficient to bear the burthen: The skin when green, is very hard; but ripe, of a yellow colour, and easy to be cut with a knife. There are several sorts of them, but that which eats dryest, without sticking either to the fingers or lips, is the best and pleasantest. The greatest part are of a slimy substance, and, as it were, a yellow pap covers the nuts, which lie in little holes. Some of the poorer people will boil or roast the nuts, and eat them, which have a kind of taste like our chestnuts, but are reckon'd hurtful to the lungs.

*Taverniere* tells a long story of the rare mice<sup>18</sup> that are in this country, of many sorts, yet I never was at a feast of any, and therefore am no competent judge of their daintiness; I know the *Portuguese* eat them physically in several distempers.

The next thing to be taken notice of, is a particular kind of birds-nests, which indeed are in great esteem amongst all *Indians*, and kept at a great price, being taken as great restoratives, and by some counted stimulators to venery; but *Taverniere* saith, they are not to be found but in the four islands of *Cochin-china* A.B.C.D.<sup>19</sup> which I am sure is a great mistake, neither do I know those islands, or of any birds-nests to be found in *Cochin-china*: The birds which makes these nests are less than swallows. As to the form and figure of these birds-nests, they are much as he describes them, and the greatest quantities of them come from *Jehor* [Johore], *Reho* [Riau], *Pattany* [Patani], and other *Malayan* countries; but that they are, when boiled, of that exceeding fragrance and odoriferousness, as he pretends, is a fiction.<sup>20</sup> These nests are laid to soak in warm water two hours, then pulled out in strings, the smaller the better, and so stewed with hens, pigeons, or any other flesh, with a little water: In stewing they dissolve almost to jelly without either taste or smell.

<sup>13</sup> Vietnamese *na* is usually translated as custard-apple.

<sup>14</sup> The scientific name is *Anona squamosa*; see Crevost and Lemarie, *Catalogue des Produits de l'Indochine*, p. 193.

<sup>15</sup> Probably the French Pamplemousse, Vietnamese *birô*, similar to a grapefruit.

<sup>16</sup> From Malayalam *cakka*, called jak, jack, or jack-fruit in English.

<sup>17</sup> Vietnamese *mít*.

<sup>18</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," pp. 8-9, describes bats (rare mice) "as big as a good Pullet, insomuch as their wings are above a foot and a half long" who roost hanging upside down in trees: "They are accounted a great dainty among the Portugals, who leave their Pullets to eat them." Tavernier says he ate them in the company of Portuguese and they tasted like chicken (pullets).

<sup>19</sup> This is a reference to Tavernier's map.

<sup>20</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 9: " ... All the Spices of the East put together do not give that effectual relish and savour as these nests do, to the meats and dishes wherein they are used. ... You would believe in eating those Meats which are seasoned therewith, that those Nests were composed of all the Spices in the Orient." Also pages 41-42: " ... they have those Birds-nests ... which give the Meat a tast of almost all sorts of Spices."

And as M. Taverniere is very erroneous in his map, so I do not know nor have I heard of those islands, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, that afford, as he says, such infinite numbers of tortoises. The goodness of the said tortoises is sufficiently known to our *English* seamen, in their homeward bound voyages; but that the *Tonqueenese* or *Cochin-chinese* do not believe that they have entertain'd their friends at banquet as they ought, 'till the tortoise is brought in, is altogether fabulous; for when we were at the island *Twon Bene*, or according to the *Dutch*, *Rovers Island*,<sup>21</sup> a tortoise of about twenty pounds weight was brought to the custom house, where I lodged, to be sold, and the *Tonqueenese* not caring to buy it, I had it for a small matter: Moreover, coming from *Siam* I touch'd at *Pulo Uby*,<sup>22</sup> where my mariners took five or six very large tortoises, and brought them on board, but the *Tonqueenese* seamen that were with me (who were compell'd to take up that employ, because of great famine that ravaged their country) would not touch them; neither do I know, as he asserts, that any of those tortoises are wont to be pickled by either of these two nations, or that there is any commerce carry'd on therewith amongst them; therefore I wonder how Monsieur *Taverniere* could dream of a war between them, merely on account of catching them.<sup>23</sup>

*Tonqueen* affords no great store of *Ananas* or *Pine-apples*.<sup>24</sup> The Citrons he mentions are not altogether so large as those of *Europe*,<sup>25</sup> which look green before they are ripe, and being mature look yellow.

They make good store of silks in the kingdom of *Tonqueen*, of which both rich and poor make themselves garments, since they can purchase them as cheap almost as outlandish callicoes.

As for sweet-smelling flowers, tho' I do not profess myself a florist, yet I know above two sorts in *Tonqueen*; but what he calls the *Bague*<sup>26</sup> I cannot smell out: For, first, there is a beautiful rose, of a white colour mix'd with purple; and another of almost the same kind, red and yellow; it grows on a bush without prickles or thorns, but has no scent.

The flower that is nothing else but a bud, resembles a caper, but much lesser, smells as fragrant and odoriferous as any flower I know, and will retain the scent above a fortnight, tho' off the tree; the ladies of the court use it amongst their wearing apparel.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter II.

<sup>22</sup> Island off the southern tip of the Camau Peninsula, called Poulo Obi on many colonial maps, today in Vietnamese called Hòn Khoai.

<sup>23</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," pp. 9-10: "The Tunquineses and Cochinchineses do not believe they have entertained their friends at a banquet as they ought to do, till the Tortoises are brought in. Those two Nations pickle up great quantities of them, and send them abroad, which is a vast trade among them; and indeed the chiefest occasion of the Wars between them is, because the Cochinchineses do all they can to hinder the Tunquineses to fish for them, alledging that those seas and islands belong to them."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10: "Tunquin also affords great store of Anana's ..."

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*: "... Orange trees, of which there are of two sorts: the one that bears a fruit no bigger than an Abricot; the other bigger than those of Portugal."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*: "As for sweet smelling Flow'rs, the Tunquineses have but one sort, which they call the Flow'r of Bague. It grows like a large Nosegay, and the Branches of the Shrub that bear it, spread themselves crawlingly upon the ground."

The *Indian* lily [lily] grows here as in several other parts of *India*; the shape somewhat resembles the *European* lily, but is a great deal less; it grows on a pretty tree, is of white colour, and yields a good scent, tho' a little faintish.

Here is a small flower, snow white, in scent like jessamine [jasmine], but more vigorous; it grows on a low tree, or rather shrub: in *Persia* there are such great quantities of it, that they load whole ships with the water distilled from it. These flowers being of no great esteem among the natives, I shall pass them by.

Here are plenty of sugar-canes, but they have no great skill to refine the sugar they make from them; however, they do it after their manner, and use it, but not after meals, as *Taverniere* saith, for concoction.<sup>27</sup>

Tigers and harts here are, but not many; apes in great plenty; of cows, hogs, hens, ducks, geese, &c. there is no want; their horses are small, but very mettlesome and lively, and were it not that they are so seldom rid, and kept too tender, they might be of good use, and fit for service.

Their elephants are all trained up for war, and are not of that prodigious bigness he would make one believe, for I have seen larger in *Siam*; neither are they nimbler than other elephants that are taught to lie down for the rider to mount.<sup>28</sup>

They have many cats,<sup>29</sup> but no great mousers, which defect is pretty well supplied by their dogs, which are fit for little else.

Birds here are not many, but wild fowl in abundance.

Near the sea-side and in the city they have a great many musketoes [mosquitos], but in the country they are not so much troubled with them: Those that will be free of them must either smoke their room, or lie in close curtains, made of thin silks for that purpose. The cold northern wind drives them away, and frees the country of those tormentors for a while.

What he saith of the white emmets is true.<sup>30</sup> This vermin is very mischievous; in *Siam* hardly any house is free from them, so that merchants are forced to make hearses, and to rub the feet thereof with oil of earth, (which scent they cannot endure) in order to secure their merchandize.

The way of pickling hen or duck eggs, as *Taverniere* describes, is true, but these eggs serve only for sauces, and not to be eaten otherwise.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*: "As they have great store of sugar, so they eat very much, while it is yet in the cane, not having the true art to refine it: and that which they do grosly refine, they make into little loaves weighing about half a pound. They eat very much, making use of it always after Meals to help digestion."

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11: "These elephants are of a prodigious bigness, neither are there any so tall nor so nimble in any part of Asia; for they will bow themselves, and stoop so low, that you may get on their backs without help."

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*: "They have no cats ..."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*: "... the infinite numbers of white Emmets, which though they are but little, have teeth so sharp, that they will eat down a wooden post in a short time."

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12, has a paragraph on pickling eggs.

## CHAPTER IV.

# OF THE RICHES, TRADE, AND MONEY OF THE KINGDOM OF TONQUEEN.<sup>1</sup>

The chief riches, and indeed the only staple commodity, is silk, raw and wrought; of the raw the *Portuguese* and *Castilians*, in former days; the *Hollanders* lately; and at present the *Chinese*, export good quantities to *Japan*, &c. Of their wrought silks, the *English* and *Dutch* expend the most.

This kingdom has no lignum aloes<sup>2</sup> at all, but what is imported by foreign traders.

Musk we have here brought from *Bowes* and *China* annually, sometimes the quantity of five or six *Pecullis*,<sup>3</sup> sometimes less; neither have they any gold but what comes from *China*. Their silver is brought in by *English*, *Dutch*, and *Chinese* trading to *Japan*. They have iron and lead mines, which afford them just enough of those minerals to serve their occasions.

Their domestick trade consists in rice, salt fish, and other sustenance; little raw and wrought silk for their own wear. They likewise drive a commerce with *Bowes* and *Ai*, though with no great profit, by reason of high expenses and large presents to the *Eunuchs*, who command the avenues; nor do the *Chinese* that pass those ways fare better, being often exacted upon, and sometimes stripp'd of all they have, by the ravenous *Mandareens*. And since it is one of the policies of the court not to make the subjects rich, lest they should be proud and ambitious, and aspire to greater matters, the king connives at those disorders, and oppresses them with heavy taxes and impositions; and should he know that any persons were to exceed the ordinary mean of a private subject, they would incur the danger of losing all, on some pretence or other; which is a great discouragement to the industrious and necessitates them to bury their wealth, having no means to improve it.

As for foreign traders, a new-comer suffers, besides hard usage in his buying and selling, a thousand inconveniencies; and no certain rates on merchandizes imported or exported being imposed, the insatiable *Mandareens* cause the ships to be rummaged, and take what commodities may likely yield a price at their own rates, using the king's name to cloak their griping and villainous extortions; and for all this there is no remedy but patience.

Yet strangers that are experienced here are less subject to those irregularities and oppressions, escaping their clutches, tho' not without some trouble and cost; in a

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter IV: "Of the Riches, Trade, and Money of the Kingdom of Tunquin."

<sup>2</sup> Aromatic wood; Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 13, says that after silk it is the "chief riches of the country" and devotes a paragraph to it.

<sup>3</sup> Picul, from Malay *pikul*, meaning the weight an average man can lift.

word, the *Tonqueen* trade is at present the most fastidious<sup>4</sup> in all *India*, wherefore I wonder our author should say, it is a great pleasure to deal with them; for if you bargain for any thing, and are likely to lose thereby, you are sure to bear the loss: Nothing almost is sold but upon trust for three or four months time, and yet then you run the hazard to lose what is so sold, or at least to undergo a thousand troubles for the recovery of the debt, and at last are likely to suffer, either in bad coin or unmerchable goods. This defect and disorder in trade, proceeds more from their indigency and poverty than from any thing else; for there is not a *Tonqueneese* merchant that has ever had the courage and ability to buy the value of two thousand dollars at once, and to pay it upon the nail. But after all, the *Tonqueneese* are not altogether so fradulent, and of that deceitful disposition as the *Chinese*; it may be, by reason they are inferior to them in craft or cunning.<sup>5</sup>

There is this further difference between these two nations; a *Tonqueneese* will beg incessantly, and torment your purse sufficiently, if you have business with him; whereas a *Chinese* is cruel and bloody, maliciously killing a man, or flinging him into the sea for small matters.

Another occasion of hindrance and stop to trade is, that they permit the greater part of what silver comes into the country (commonly a million dollars *per annum*) to be carried to *Bowes* and *China*, to be exchanged for copper cash, which rises and falls according as the *Choua* [*chúa*] finds it agree with his interest; besides, this cash will be defac'd in a few years, and consequently not current, which grand inconvenience causes considerable losses to merchants, and signal prejudice to the publick. Thus goes the silver out of the country, and no provision is made against it, which is very bad policy.

And tho' the *Choua* values foreign trade so little, yet he receives from it, embarrass'd as it is, considerable annual incomes into his coffers; as taxes, head-money, impositions, customs, &c. But tho' these amount to vast sums, yet very little remains in the treasury, by reason of the great army he maintains, together with several other unnecessary expenses. In fine, 'tis pity so many conveniencies and opportunities to make the kingdom rich, and its trade flourishing, should be neglected; for if we consider how this kingdom borders on two of the richest provinces in *China*, it will appear, that with small difficulty most commodities of that vast empire might be drawn hither, and great store of *Indian* and *European* commodities, especially woolen manufactures, might be vended there; nay, would they permit strangers the freedom of this inland trade, 'twould be vastly advantageous to the kingdom; but the *Choua* (jealous that *Europeans* should discover too much of his frontiers, by which certainly he can receive no injury) has, and will probably in all time to come, impede this important affair.

They have no coin but copper cash, which comes from *China*, as aforesaid. Gold and silver they cash into bars about fourteen dollars weight, and they are current amongst them.

<sup>4</sup> The seventeenth-century sense of the word: irksome and disagreeable.

<sup>5</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 13: "It is so much the more pleasure and profit to trade with the People of Tunquin, by how much the more faithful and frank they are in their dealing than the Chinese, who will deceive you if they can; so that it is a hard thing to be too cunning for them, as I have often found by experience."

## CHAPTER V.

# OF THE STRENGTH OF THE KINGDOM OF TONQUEEN.<sup>1</sup>

The kingdom of *Tonqueen* might be reckon'd very formidable, were the strength wholly to consist in the number of men, for the standing force cannot be less than one hundred and forty thousand, all well trained up, and fit to handle their arms, after their mode; and they can raise twice that number on occasion. But since courage in the men is to be likewise attended to, we cannot esteem them very formidable, being of dejected spirits and base dispositions, and their leaders being for the most part capadoes [eunuchs], and want their manhood.

The general may muster up about eight or ten thousand horse, and between three and four hundred elephants; his sea force consists in two hundred and twenty galleys, great and small, more fit for the river than the sea, and rather for sport and exercise than war.<sup>2</sup> They have but one gun in the prow, which will carry a four pound shot; they have no masts, and are forc'd to do all by strength of oars; the men that row stand all exposed to great or small shot, and other engines of war. They have about five hundred other boats, called *Twinjaes*,<sup>3</sup> which are good and swift to sail, but too weak for war, being only sew'd together with rattans; however, they serve well enough for transportation of provisions and soldiers.

In one of these boats I was forc'd to go to *Siam*, the last year, with three other gentlemen in company with me, we being left by a *Chinese* (in whose junk we had taken passage) on an isle on the westmost part of the bay of *Tonqueen*, where we were forced to this shift; yet, thanks be to God, we got our passage in twenty-three days, to the admiration of all who knew of it.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter V: "Of the Strength of the Kingdom of Tunquin by Sea and Land."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15, gives a description Tavernier attributes to his brother of the Tonkinese army " ... in the year 1649, when the King was preparing to make War against the King of Cochinchina ... " This year 1649 is an error for 1648, for the Tonkinese expedition against Cochinchina occurred in 1648 and Tavernier's brother died in Java in late 1648. The description: "The Army that was then prepared to march upon this Expedition was composed of 8000 Horse, 94 thousand Foot, and 722 Elephants; 130 for the War, and the rest to carry the Tents and Baggage of the King and the Nobility; and 318 Gallies and Barks, very long and narrow, with Oars and Sails; and this was that which my Brother saw."

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps this is Baron's transcription of *thuyèn giã*, per the suggestion of Baron's French translator (*Revue Indochinoise* XXII,8 [August 1914]: 200), or, as seems more plausible and idiomatic to me, *thuyèn chái*, "fishing boat"; *thuyèn* means "boat" while the modifiers *giã* and *chái* each refer to a fishing net.

They are likewise provided with guns and cannons of all sorts, and also calibres, some of them of their own fabrick, but the greatest part bought of the *Portuguese*, *Dutch*, and *English*, and stored with other ammunition suitable to their occasions.

But to return to the condition of the soldiery of *Tonqueen*; It is a very toilsome and laborious situation, and of little advantage; once a soldier and always a soldier,<sup>4</sup> and hardly one in a thousand riseth to preferment, unless he be very dextrous in handling his weapons, or so fortunate as to obtain the friendship of some great *Mandareen*, to present him to the king: Money may likewise effect somewhat, but to think of advancement by mere valour, is a very fruitless expectation, since they rarely find occasion to meet an enemy in open field, and so have no opportunity to improve themselves, or display their prowess; not but that some few have, from mean beginnings, mounted to high preferment and great dignity, by some bold achievement; but this being extraordinary, is not to be generally reckon'd upon.

Their wars consist in much noise and great trains; so they go to *Cochin-china*, look on the walls, rivers, &c. and if any disease or sickness happens amongst their army, so as to carry off some few of their men, and they come within hearing of the shouts of the enemy, they begin to cry out, A cruel and bloody war, and turn head, running, *re infecta*, as fast as they can home. This is the game they have play'd against *Cochin-china* more than three times, and will do so, in all probability, as long as they are commanded by those emasculated captains called *Capons*.

They have had amongst themselves civil wars, wherein they contended for superiority, and he that has been the cunningest has prevailed always against him that has been valiant. But in former days, when they fought against the *Chinese*, they have shew'd themselves bold and courageous, but it was necessity that forced them to it. The general will sometimes take delight in seeing his soldiers exercise, either in his arsenal, or with his gallies on the river, and sometimes when he finds a soldier to exceed his companions, it may be, he gratifies him with the value of a dollar in cash.

The soldiers have very small pay, not above three dollars in a year, besides rice, except those of the life-guard, who have twice as much; they are free of all taxes, and are dispersed among the *Mandareens*, which *Mandareens* have certain *Aldens* assign'd them, which pay an income to them for the maintenance of the soldiers.

Castles, forts, strong-holds, citadels, &c. they have none, nor do they understand the art of fortification, and make but small account of our skill therein; though they have so little reason to depend, like the *Lacedemonians*, on the bravery of their soldiers.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 15: "The condition of the soldiery is very toilsome and laborious, and of little advantage in the Kingdom of Tunquin. For they are all their life time so ti'd and engag'd to the service of the wars ..."

<sup>5</sup> The reference here is to the ancient Spartans, famed for their formidable infantry.

## CHAPTER VI.

# OF THE MANNERS OF THE PEOPLE OF TONQUEEN.<sup>1</sup>

The people of *Tonqueen* are rather of a working and turbulent spirit, (tho' towards) than naturally mild and peaceable,<sup>2</sup> since quiet and concord can hardly be maintain'd amongst them, without a heavy hand and severity; for they have often conspired and broke out in open rebellion. True it is, that superstition (to which the meaner sort are miserably addicted) did further the evil very much, and drove them headlong into the precipice, no less than ambition; but persons of great note, or *Mandareens* of quality, are very seldom found to be embark'd in those dangerous attempts, and rarely aim to make themselves heads of publick factions, which, questionless, proceeds from the little credit they give to those fictions and fopperies of their blind fortunetellers, who delude and mislead the ignorant and superstitious vulgar, and from this their consciousness, that their folly and perfidiousness will hardly fail to meet with deserved destruction.

They are not given much to cholera, yet are addicted to the far worse passions of envy and malice, even to an extreme degree. In former times they had in great esteem the manufactures of strange countries, but now that passion is almost worn out, and only a few *Japan* gold and silver pieces, and *European* broad cloth remain at present in request with them. They are not curious to visit other countries, believing they can see none so good as their own, and give no credit to those who have been abroad, when they can relate what they have seen.

They are of happy memory and quick apprehension, and might prove of eminent abilities by good and due instructions: Learning they love, not so much for its own sake, but because it conducts them to publick employs and dignities. Their tone in reading is much like to singing. Their language is full of monosyllables, and sometimes twelve or thirteen several things are meant by one word, and have no other distinction, but in their tone, either to pronounce it with a full mouth, heavy accent, pressing or retaining voice, &c. and therefore it is difficult for strangers to attain any perfection therein.

I do not find any difference between the court language and the vulgar, except in matter of ceremony and cases of law, where the *China* characters are used as the *Greek* and *Latin* sentences amongst our learned.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter VI: "Of the Manners and Customs of the People of the Kingdom of Tunquin."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16: "The people of Tunquin are naturally mild and peaceful, submitting easily to reason, and condemning the transports of cholera."

Both sexes are well proportioned,<sup>3</sup> rather of small stature and weak constitutions, occasioned, perhaps by their imtemperate eating and immoderate sleeping.

They are generally of brown complexion, like the *Chinese* and *Japanese*, but the better sort, and women of quality, are almost as fair as the *Portuguese* and *Spaniards*.

Their noses and faces are not so flat as the *Chinenses*, their hair black, and if long, 'tis reckon'd an ornament; both men and women, without distinction, wear it down as long as it will grow;<sup>4</sup> but soldiers, when they are in their exercises, and handicrafts-men about their trades, put it up under their caps, or tie it in a great roll on the top of their heads. Both boys and girls, when they are past sixteen or seventeen years of age, black their teeth as the *Japanese* do, and let their nails grow as the *Chinese*, the longest being accounted the finest, which has place amongst persons of quality and those of wealth only.

Their habit is long robes, very little differing from those of *China*, and not at all resembling the *Japan* garb, or the picture in *Taverniere's* description, where he makes them wear girdles, a mode these people are strangers to.<sup>5</sup>

They are forbidden by an old tradition the wear of hose or shooes, except the literadoes (*Literati*) and those that have taken the degree of *Tuncy*<sup>6</sup> (or *Doctor*); however, at present the custom is not observed so strictly as formerly.

The condition of the vulgar sort is miserable enough, since they are imposed on by heavy taxes, and undergo sore labour; for the males at eighteen, and in some countries and provinces twenty years of age, are liable to pay the value of three, four, five, six, and seven dollars *per annum*, according to the goodness and fertility of the soil of their *Aldea*, or village; and this money is gathered in two several terms, as *April* and *October*, being the harvest of the rice. From this tax are exempted the royal blood, the king's immediate servants, all publick ministers and officers of the kingdom, together with the Literadoes, or learned men, from a *Singdo*,<sup>7</sup> upwards, (for the latter are obliged to pay half tax), all soldiers and military persons, with a few others that have obtained this freedom, either *gratis*, or bought it for money, which exemption is granted only for life, and is purchas'd of the *Choua*, or General; yet those that desire the continuation of the said privilege, may have their patent renew'd for a moderate sum of money, by the succeeding prince, who seldom denies to grant them their redemption on such an account; but merchants, though they live in the city, are rated in the *Aldens* or villages of their ancestors and parents, and are liable besides to the *Vecquan*,<sup>8</sup> or lord's service, of the city, at their own expenses, and are obliged to work and drudge themselves, or hire another in their room, to perform what the governor orders, whether it be to mend the broken walls, repair the banks and ways of the city, dragging timber for the king's palaces, and other publick buildings, &c.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17: "The Tunquineses, as well as Men as Women, are for the most part well proportion'd..."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: "Their Hair is very black, which they usually wear as long as it will grow, being very careful in combing it."

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: "Their Habit is grave and modest, being a long Robe that reaches down to their heels, much like that of the Japonneses, without any distinction of sex."

<sup>6</sup> Vietnamese *tiến sĩ*, the highest academic degree awarded in the examination system.

<sup>7</sup> Vietnamese *sinh đồ*, the lowest-level degree awarded in the examination system.

<sup>8</sup> Vietnamese *việc quan* (corvée).

The handicrafts-men, of what profession soever, are bound to this *Vecquan* six moons in the year, and receive nothing, nor dare they demand any thing for their labour in all that time; it depends on their Masters, the *Mandareens*, direction and bounty, to allow them the charges for their very victuals; the other half year they are allow'd to make use of for themselves and family, and it must be suppos'd to be hard enough with them, especially if they are burthen'd with many children.

As for the poor *Aideans*, who inhabit barren soils, and therefore are unable to pay their taxes in rice or money, they are employ'd to cut grass for the general's elephants and horses, and though their stations and villages be often very remote from the place where they fetch the grass, they are obliged to bring it by turns the whole year, on their own expenses, to the city.

By what is said, it appears, with what politick maxims this prince keeps his subjects poor and needy; and in truth, it seems to be necessary enough, for if their proud turbulent spirits were not kept in the bounds of their duty and allegiance with a strong rein, they would often forget themselves; however, every one enjoys what he gets by his own industry, and may leave his estate to his heirs and successors; always provided that the rumour of his wealth sounds not so loud as to charm the general's ear.

The eldest son's portion is much larger than the rest of the children of the deceased; the daughters have some small matter allow'd them, yet can claim but little by law, if there be an heir male.

And as the *Tonqueneses* are ambitious of many dependents and opulent kindred, so they have a custom among them to adopt one another (both sexes indifferently) to be their children, and of their family; and those so adopted are obliged to the same duty as their own children, *viz.*

At festival times to sombey<sup>9</sup> and present them; to be ready on every occasion in their service; to bring them the first-fruits of the season, and the new rice at harvest; to contribute to the sacrifice made to some of the family, as the mother, brother, wife, &c. or near relations, of the *Patroon* [patron], that are dead, or shall die. To these and several other expenses they are obliged, several times in the year, at their own cost: And as this is the obligation of the adopted, so the *Patroon* takes care to advance or promote them, according as occasion and their power will permit, defending and protecting them as their own children, and when the *Patroon* dies, they have a legacy almost equal to the youngest children; and they mourn for the *Patroon* as for their own father and mother, though they both be alive.

The manner of adopting is thus: He that intends to be adopted, sends to acquaint the person of whom he requests that favour, with his intention, who, if content therewith, returns a satisfactory answer; upon which the suppliant comes and presents himself before him, with a hog and two jars of arrack, which the *Patroon* receives of the party, who having made four sombeys, and given satisfactory answers to some questions, he is adopted.

Strangers who reside here, or use the trade, have often taken this course, to free themselves from those vexations and extortions, which they usually meet with from some insolent courtiers. I myself was adopted by a prince, who then was presumptive, and now heir apparent to the general,<sup>10</sup> and had his *Chop*, or *Chop*, which is his seal. I always gave him presents at my arrival from a voyage, which

<sup>9</sup> To bow in greeting.

<sup>10</sup> The "general" is Trinh Cãn; the "heir apparent" is mentioned again in Chapter XII.

chiefly consisted in foreign curiosities. This prince, tho' he be of a generous, noble mind, and had an extraordinary kindness for me, yet I was not the better for him in my troubles; for on the decease of his grandfather,<sup>11</sup> it pleased God to visit him, in the height of his prosperity with madness, which was the overthrow of my business, by incapacitating him to protect me in my greatest trouble and necessity; but lately I understand he is recover'd again.<sup>12</sup>

The *Aldéans* or Villagers, for the most part, are simple people, and subject to be misled by their over-much credulity and superstition. The character that is given of some other nations is applicable enough to them; that is, they are extraordinary good, or extreme bad.

'Tis a great mistake, that the people of *Tonqueen* live out of pleasure, or choice, in their boats upon the rivers,<sup>13</sup> when mere necessity and indigence drives them to that course of life; for to run from port to port, and from one village to another, with wife and children, to look out for a livelihood, in a small boat, cannot be very pleasant, although they do not know here what a crocodile means.

The largest of the *Tonqueen* rivers has, as I said before, its source in *China*, and the great rains there, in the months of *March*, *April*, and *May*, cause the waters to descend here with that incredible rapidity (this country being, without comparison, lower than *China*) as threatens banks and dams with destruction; sometimes the waters will rise so fast, and swell to that degree, as to over-top most barricadoes, all human industry notwithstanding, drowning thereby whole provinces, which causes lamentable disorders and great losses, both of men and beasts.

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<sup>11</sup> Trinh Tạc died in 1682.

<sup>12</sup> Temporary "insanity" was not an unusual method for Vietnamese princes to employ in order to avoid difficult or unwanted situations.

<sup>13</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 18: ". . . the Tunquineses take great delight to live upon the Rivers . . ."

## CHAPTER VII.

# OF THE MARRIAGES OF THE TONQUEENESE.<sup>1</sup>

The *Tonqueense* cannot marry without the consent of their father and mother, or of the nearest kindred.<sup>2</sup> When a young man comes to the age of sixteen, eighteen, or twenty, his father and mother being resolved to get him a wife, make their application to the parents of the party they design for him, carrying with them an hundred dressed beetles,<sup>3</sup> in a decent box, one jar of arrack, or strong liquor, and a live hog; under favour of such a present only, this is to be proposed. The friends of the maid seeing the visitants thus prepar'd, and knowing by the custom of the country whereto it tends, give fitting answers to the question in hand, according to their inclinations; for if they are unwilling it should be a match, they find their subtrefuges and excuses, by pretending their daughter's youth and inability to take upon her the burthen of a household, and that, however, they will consider of the matter further hereafter, and the like compliments, wherewith they and their presents are sent back again.

But in the case they are content to bestow their daughter on the young man, the presents are readily accepted of, with expressions of their approbation of the business; and then immediately, without any other formality, they consult and agree about the most auspicious time (in which they are guided by their blind superstition) for the solemnization of the wedding: In the mean time the parents of the bridegroom send often presents of victuals to the bride, and visit her now and then yet the young people are not permitted so much as to speak to each other.

At the prefix'd time the wedding is kept, with a feast agreeable to the condition and abilities of the parents of the young couple, which doth not last above a day. The ceremony of the marriage is barely this: In the afternoon of the day that precedes the wedding, the bridegroom comes to the bride, and brings with him, according to his quality, either gold, silver, or a quantity of cash (the more the greater honour), and victuals prepared, all which he leaves there, and retires to his own home. The next morning being the wedding day, the bride is dress'd in her finest robes, with bracelets of gold, pendants, &c. her parents, acquaintance, and servants are ready to conduct and wait on her to the bridegroom's, whither she goes about ten o'clock in the forenoon, with all this train attending her, whilst all her moveables, household-

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter VII: "Of the Marriages of the Tunquineses and their severity toward adulteresses."

<sup>2</sup> Compare with *ibid.*, p. 18: "The Tunquineses cannot marry without the consent of the father and mother, or if they be dead, without the allowance of their nearest kindred."

<sup>3</sup> "Dressed beetles" means packets of areca nut and betel leaf smeared with a lime paste, ready to be chewed.

stuff, and whatever else her father and mother gave for her portion, together with what she had of the bridegroom, is carried in great state; and for a more glorious shew, it passes a long field before her and the whole company, all which enter the bridegroom's house, who receives her and them with kindness and courtesy, after their mode, and presents them with victuals prepared for the purpose, whilst musick and other expressions of joy, are not neglected: And this is the whole solemnity of the wedding, without any further formality of either magistrate or priest, as our author talks.<sup>4</sup>

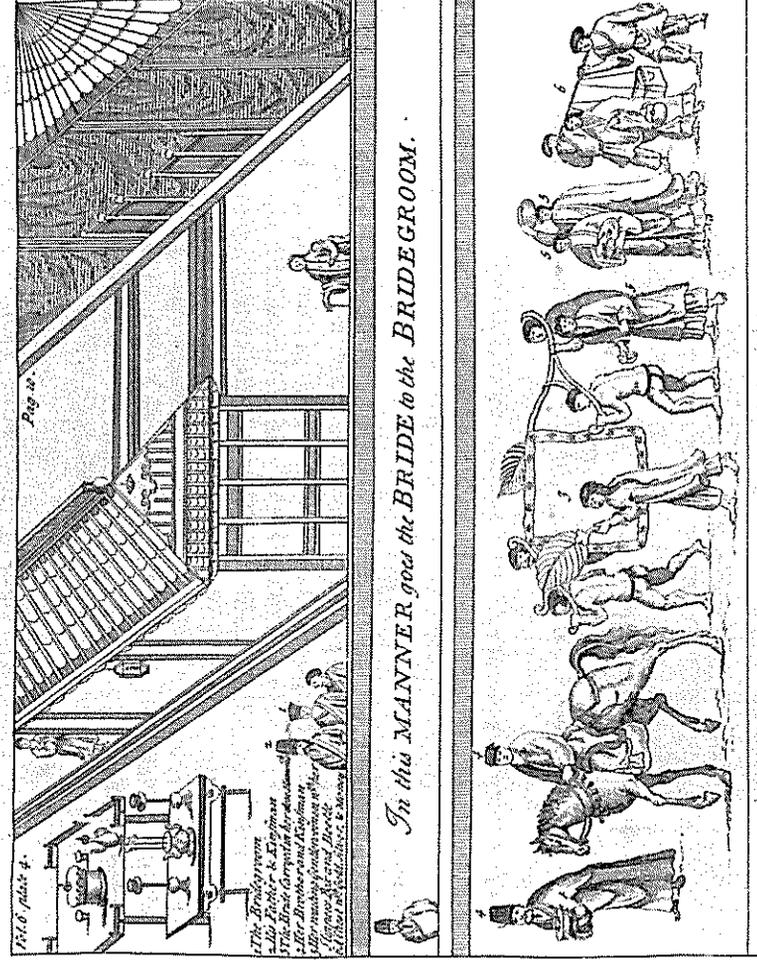


Plate 4: "In this Manner goes the Bride to the Bridegroom." 1. The Bridegroom. 2. His Father and Kinsman. 3. The Bride Carried in her Hammock. 4. Her Brother and Kinsman. 5. Her Waiting Gentlewomen with her Slippers Box and Beetle. 6. A Chest with Gold, Silver, and Money.

Polygamy is here tolerated; however, that woman whose parents are of the greatest quality, is chief amongst them, and has the title of wife.

Rapes, and the like, are not known, much less practiced in this country. The law of the land permits the man to divorce his wife, but the woman has not the same privilege, and can hardly obtain a separation, against the good-liking of the husband,

<sup>4</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 18: "They must also have the permission of the Judge or Governour of the place where the Marriage is to be made ..."

unless she be of a family that is able to compel him to it; by mere authority. When the husband designs to repudiate his wife, he gives her a note, declaring under his hand and seal, that he has no more pretensions to her person, and that she is free to dispose of herself, as she finds occasion, which liberty capacitates her to marry another; neither would any person dare to pretend to her, without being certain of the said note, for fear of the former husband, who in that case can claim her again, and thereby embroil such a one in the labyrinths of the law, and recover a good sum of money from him.

The woman so repudiated, when she departs from her husband, may take along with her the same quantity of gold, silver, cash, &c. as he brought to her house, at the time of his espousing her. The children born during the time of their mutual cohabitation, the husband keeps; but their *Mandarens* seldom, and only on urgent occasions, or for capital offences, will deal thus severely with their wives; yet their concubines are thus served, on every light occasion, when the humour takes them to make an exchange, or that they are satiated with their persons. Among the meaner sort, when a man and his wife disagree, and mutually desire a separation, they are divorced in the presence of some small judge and publick officers, by mutual discharges in writing; but the village husband, that cannot read nor write, breaks a copper cash, this country money, or a stick in the presence of his wife, as a testimony of her resolution to dismiss her; the one half he keeps himself, and the other he gives to her, which she carries to the heads and elders of the *Aldæa*, or village, requesting them to bear witness, her husband hath discharged her of her duty, to be any longer his wife, and that he has nothing more to pretend to her, for ever; so she may either keep or throw away the piece of cash, or stick, and marry again as soon as she pleases.

As for adultery, if a man of quality surprises his wife in the fact, he may freely, if he pleases, kill her and her paramour, with his own hands; otherwise the woman is sent to be trampled to death by an elephant; the adulterer is delivered to the justice, who proceeds with him to execution without any further delay: But with the meaner sort of people it is not so; they must go to law, where the offenders will have severe punishment inflicted on them, if they are proved guilty of the crime.

The story that Monsieur *Taverniere* relates to have happened whilst his brother was in *Tonqueen* is not at all agreeable to the customs of this people, or congruous with their dispositions; wherefore, in all probability, 'tis only a fiction.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21. Tavernier attributes a story to his brother about the case of a "prince" consorting with a "princess" who was a woman of a deceased "king"; this prince was reportedly punished with several years of imprisonment and then banishment to the frontiers as a common soldier, while the "princess" was executed by starvation and exposure to the sun.

## CHAPTER VIII.

# OF THE VISITS AND PASTIMES OF THE TONQUEENESE.<sup>1</sup>

Their visits are generally made in the afternoon.<sup>2</sup> It is uncivil to come to any great man's house before dinner, unless necessitated by urgent business, or expressly invited, because they then have the least time to spare; for in the morning very early they go to court, to attend the general; which attendance takes them up 'till eight o'clock: when they come home, they employ themselves a while in ordering their domestick concerns, among their servants (if more important state-affairs will permit it); the little space that remains between that and dinner is reserved for their retirement and repose.

The princes, or great *Mandareens*, ride either on elephants, or carried in *hangmack* [hammock], and followed by most of their servants, soldiers, dependants, &c. that are not otherwise occupied in such a season, which is more or less numerous, according to the degree of the person's dignity; those of lesser rank ride on horseback, and are followed by as many as they are able to maintain, without limitation, which usually is not above ten persons, but to be sure all that can, must go, for they are very ambitious of many attendants.

If he that gives the visit is of greater quality than the person visited, he<sup>3</sup> dares not to offer him anything of meat or drink, no, not so much as a beetle, unless he calls for it: Their water and beetle is always carried with them by their servants.

In discoursing with them, especially if the person be of authority, care must be had not to move any mournful subject, either directly or indirectly; but things that are pleasant, in commendation of them, are best approved. But that which is most intolerable in those lords is, that they permit the men of their train (a rude brutish gang) to enter with them into the most private apartments of other people's houses, especially when they come to visit *Europeans*, where they behave themselves very apishly, and commit many absurdities and impertinencies in their talk and jestings; and moreover, often steal whatever they can lay hold on: In all which their stupify'd masters rather take delight, than check them for their sauciness and misdemeanours. But if they are invited by their inferiors or equals, then they entertain them as they find occasion, either with tea or meat, &c. not omitting beetle, which is always the first and last part of the regale. The boxes wherein the beetle is presented, are generally plain lacquered, either black, red, or some grave colour; yet the gentry, and the princes and princesses of the royal blood, have them of massy gold, silver,

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter VIII: "Of the Visits, Feasts, and Pastimes of the Tunquineses."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21: "Generally they make their visits about noon."

<sup>3</sup> The person visited.

tortoiseshell, or inlaid with mother of pearl; the painted and gaudy ones are only used at their sacrifices in their *Pagodas*. But such rich boxes as *M. Taverniere* avers to have seen, to the value of four or five hundred thousand livres,<sup>4</sup> at the *Great Mogul's* court, were certainly no *Tonqueen* ones; for diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other jewels do not grow in this country, neither are they in request among the natives, nor could they have been brought there by any *Tonqueen* ambassador, since the king sends none thither, nor is there the least commerce between the two nations.<sup>5</sup>

They seldom visit sick persons, and they hardly care to admit any but their kindred and relations to put them in mind of death, how desperate soever their state may be, and the least admonition to settle their affairs and concerns, would be a heinous crime and unpardonable offence; so that those that die make no will, which defect often creates vexatious law-suits among the kindred, if the deceased leaves no children behind him, even to the ruin of their own estates, and the loss of what they contend for.

In the halls of great men's houses are several alcoves, where they sit cross-legg'd upon mats, according to their degree, the higher the more honorable; and these seats are all cover'd with mats, answerable in fineness to their stations; except in time of mourning, when they are oblig'd to use coarse ones. As for carpets, they have none, neither can they afford them; wherefore I wonder at our author's saying, that the mats are as dear as fine carpet, which at the cheapest, costs from thirty to fifty rupees, and upwards, in *Persia* and *Surat*; whereas the best and finest mat may be bought here for the value of three or four shillings at the most; neither do I believe that any *European*, besides himself, has ever seen a *Tonqueen* mat nine ells<sup>6</sup> square, and as soft as velvet. However, this is like the rest of his fables.<sup>7</sup> As for cushions, these people use none, either to sit or lie on; but they have a kind of bolster made of reeds or mats, to sleep or lean on.

As for their victuals they are curious enough therein,<sup>8</sup> though their diet doth not generally please strangers. The common sort must then be content with green trade,<sup>9</sup> rice, and salt fish, or the like; the great lords may, if they please, feed themselves with the best in the land.

I can make no comparison for neatness, between the *Europeans* and them, in their houses, wherein they have but little or no furniture more than usual in the meanest cots, sometimes tables and benches, seldom chairs. They use neither table-cloths nor napkins, nor do they want them, since they do not touch their meat with their

<sup>4</sup> An old French unit of value.

<sup>5</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," pp. 21-22, about betel boxes, writes: "... I have seen some at the Apartments of some of the Princes that came to the Court of the Great Mogul, which were worth above 4 or 500000 Livres: One shall be cover'd with Diamonds, another with Rubies and Pearls, another with Emraulds and Pearls, or else with other Jewels."

<sup>6</sup> An ell is an old English unit of length equal to 45 inches.

<sup>7</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 22: "Being at Bantam I bought one of these mats of a Tunquinese, which was admired for its fineness. It was nine ells square, and as even and as soft as velvet. With these mats they cover the beds or couches, upon which the Mandarins, or Princes, and the Nobility which accompany them, seat themselves around the chamber, every one having one cushion under him, and another at his back."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid: "As for their diet the Tunquineses are not very curious."

<sup>9</sup> Green herbs and vegetables.

fingers, but use two sticks, as the *Chinese* and *Japanese* do. All their victuals is served in little plates and dishes, not made of wood, and then varnish'd or lacquer'd over, as Mr. *Taverniere* affirms,<sup>10</sup> but of *China* and *Japan* wares, which are in esteem here. Persons of quality or condition use a kind of formality and decency at their feasts; but as for the rest, as soon as they are at the *bandes*,<sup>11</sup> which are small laquer'd tables, they do not so much as mind any discourses; and this not out of good manners or reverence to the aged and grave persons,<sup>12</sup> but a greedy desire to fill their guts, they being generally great eaters and true epicures; also they may be afraid to lose their share by prating, whilst others make all the silent haste they can, to empty the platters and dishes. I have often seen the followers and attendants of the *Mandareens* at the like sport, and used to admire their eating both for quantity and greediness, in which I believe no nation under the cope of heaven can match them.

As for drinking, though the clowns and meaner sort seldom fall under the excess and debauchery of strong drink, yet amongst the courtiers and soldiers drunkenness is no vice. A fellow that can drink smartly, is a brave blade. It is no custom of theirs to wash their hands when they go to table, only they rinse their mouths, because of the beetle; yet after meals, they often wash both; and having cleaned their teeth with a piece of bamboo, prepared for the purpose, they eat beetle. At a friend's house the entertained may freely, if he please, call for more boiled rice, or anything else, if he is not satisfied, which the host takes very kindly. They do not ask one another, how they do, but compliment them with a Where have you been thus long? and, What have you done all this while? And if they know or perceive by their countenance, that they have been sick or indisposed, then they ask, How many cups of rice they eat at a meal? (for they make three in a day, besides a collation in the afternoon, amongst the rich and wealthy) and, Whether he eats with appetite or no?

Of all the pastimes of the *Tonqueuese*, they affect most their balls, ballads, and singing, which are, for the most part, acted in the night, and last 'till morning, and are what Monsieur *Taverniere* calls comedies: A very improper name,<sup>13</sup> and resembling them in no respect, much less are they set out with beautiful decorations and machines, as he says, very pleasing to behold; and they are skillful to represent sea and river water, and marine combats thereon,<sup>14</sup> as they are able to describe the fight in 1588, between the *English* and the *Spaniards*;<sup>15</sup> neither have they in the city

<sup>10</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 22: "Whatever is set before them to eat, is served in little plates, not so big as our trenchers, being made of wood lackered with all sorts of flowers."

<sup>11</sup> Vietnamese *bàn* means "table"; it is unclear what term is being transcribed by *bandes(es)*.

<sup>12</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 23: "When there are several sitting at the table, either at their ordinary meals, or upon some festival, they account it a great piece of manners to be silent; or if they have a desire to discourse, they always allow the eldest the honour of beginning, bearing a great respect to them that are aged."

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*: "Among all the Pastimes of the Tunquineses there are none wherein they take so much delight as in Comedies ..."

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*: "... they are set out with beautiful decorations and machines, very pleasing to behold. They are excellently well skilled in representing the Sea and Rivers, and a shew of seafigths, and combats between galleys and barks ..."

<sup>15</sup> Baron is ridiculing Tavernier's description of theatrical sea battles by saying it is as plausible to imagine as it would be to expect that Vietnamese would be able to reenact the famous battle of the English with the Spanish Armada in the English Channel which took place a century before.

any theatres to act upon, but every *Mandareen's* hall, and the yards of other houses must serve turn: Yet in their *Aldées* they have singing houses, erected at the expense of three, four or more *Aldées* or villages, and in this they celebrate their festival times, singing and banqueting, after their mode. The actors of one house are sometimes three, four, or five persons; their fees are no more than a thousand cash, to the value of a dollar for a whole night's labour: But the liberal spectators give them presents, as often as they perform any thing dexterously. They are usually habited in country taffeties [taffeta], palongs,<sup>16</sup> satins, and the like. They have but few songs, and not above five different tunes, and those composed most in praise of their kings and generals, interspers'd with amorous interjections and poetical elegance. The women only dance, and she that dances must sing too, and will be, between whites, interrupted by a man that plays the part of a jester, who is generally the wittiest mimic they can find, and such a one as is able to make the company laugh at his inventions and postures. Their musical instruments are drums, copper basons,<sup>17</sup> hautboys [oboes], guitars, with two or three sorts of violins &c. Besides this, they have another kind of dancing, with a bason filled or piled up with small lamps lighted, which a woman sets on her head, and then dances, turning, winding, and bowing her body in several shapes and figures, with great celerity, without spilling a drop of oil in the lamps, to the admiration of the spectators; this act will last about half an hour.

Dancing on ropes their women are also expert at, and some will perform it very gracefully.

Cock-fighting is a mighty game amongst them, so that it is become a princely sport, and much in fashion with courtiers. They lose much that lay<sup>18</sup> against the general, for right or wrong he must and will win, whereby he impoverishes his grandees, so they will not be able to undertake any thing.

They delight much in fishing, and have the conveniency of many rivers, and infinite ponds.

As for hunting, there is scarce a wood or forest proper for this exercise, in all the country, neither are they expert in that sport.

But their grand pastime is their new year's feast, which commonly happens about the 25th of *January*, and is kept by some thirty days; for then, besides dancing and the recreations aforesaid, all their other sorts of games, as playing at football, swinging on an engine erected of bamboos at most corners of the streets, tricks of bodily activity, and a kind of hocus-pocus, are brought on the stage, to increase merriment; neither are they behind-hand to prepare their feasts and banquets plentiful and large, striving to outdo each other therein, for the space of three or four days, according to their ability; and as this is indeed the time to gormandize and debauch to excess, so he is accounted the most miserable wretch that doth not provide to welcome his friends and acquaintance, tho' by so doing he is certain to beg the rest of that year for his livelihood.

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps pailon, meaning embroidered with decorative designs.

<sup>17</sup> Cymbals; bason is an old English variant of "basin."

<sup>18</sup> i.e., to lay bets.

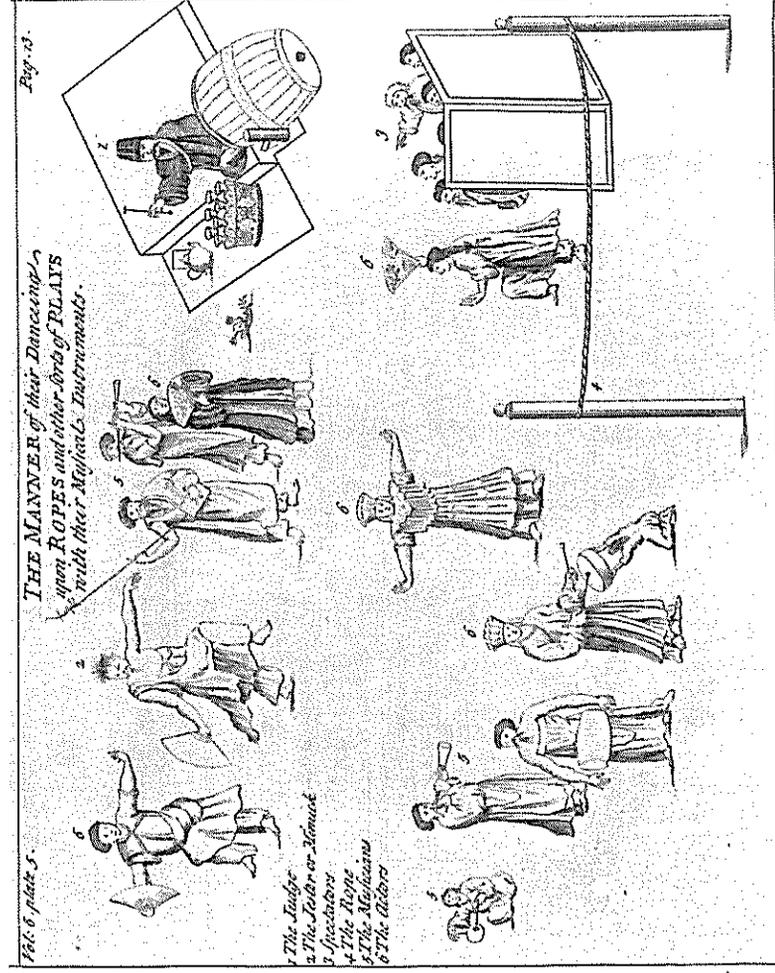


Plate 5: "The Manner of their Dancing on Ropes and other sorts of Plays with their Musical Instruments." 1. The Judge. 2. The Jester or Mimick. 3. Spectators. 4. The Rope. 5. The Musicians. 6. The Actors.

The first day of the year the ordinary sort do not stir abroad (unless they are dependants of some lords), but keep themselves close shut up in their houses, admitting none but their nearest relations and domesticks; to others they would deny, on that day, a draught of water, or a coal for fire, and be very angry too at any one's making such a request, superstitiously believing its consequence would be to subject them to infallible malediction, and that if they should give you any thing that day, it would be their bad destiny to give continually, and beggar themselves thereby at last. Their reason for not stirring abroad proceeds from the same cause, which is, fear to encounter with some ominous thing or other, that might presage evil to them, that day, which would make them unfortunate all the year; for they observe superstitiously many frivolous niceties as good and bad luck: But the second day of the new year, they go to visit each other, and acquit themselves of their duty and obligations to their superiors, to sombay them; as likewise do their soldiers and servants to them. But the *Mandareens* go the first day to the king and general, of which they are as careful observers as the others are sharp and precise exactors of this attendance.

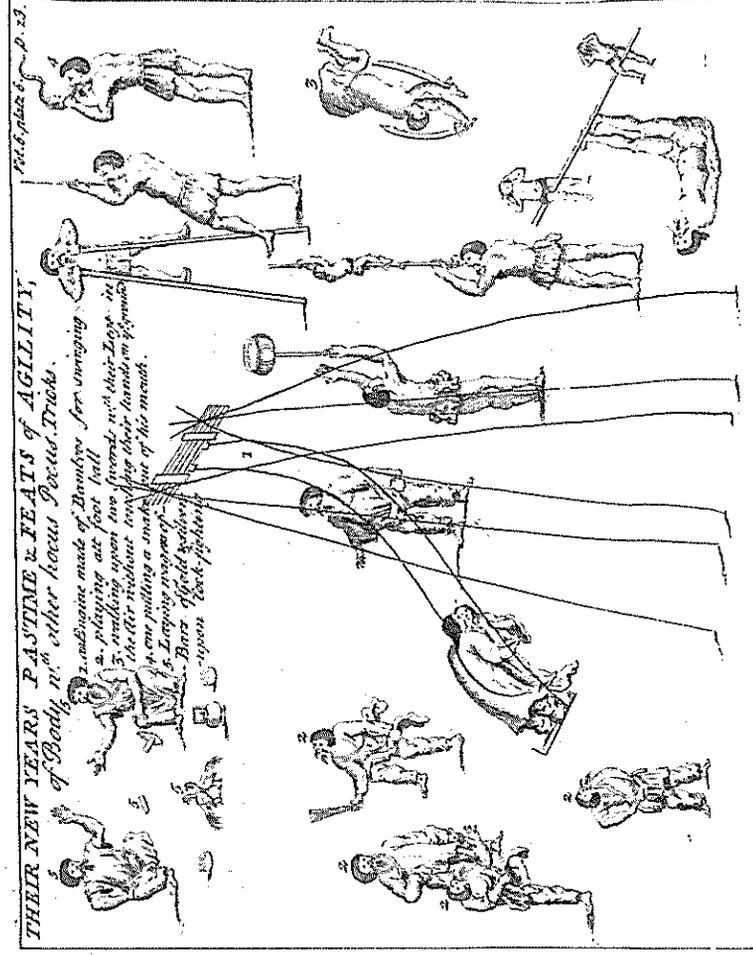


Plate 6: "Their New Years Pastime and Feats of Agility of Body with other Hocus Pocus

- Tricks." 1. An Engine made of Bamboos for Swinging. 2. Playing at Foot Ball.  
3. Walking upon Two Swords with their Legs in the Air without Touching their Hands on the Ground. 4. One Pulling a Snake out of his Mouth.  
5. Laying Wagers of Bars of Gold and Silver upon Cock-fighting

Some reckon their new year from the 25th of their last moon, but very improperly; their ground for it is, because the *Sup Umn*,<sup>19</sup> implying as much as *the great seal reversed*, is then put into a box, with the face downward, for a whole month's time, and in that interval, the law is, as it were, laid asleep, and no acts whatsoever pass under the said seal; all courts of judicature are shut up; debtors cannot be seized on; small crimes, as petty larceny, fighting, beating one another, &c. escape with impunity; only treason and murder the governors of the city and province take account of, and keep the malefactors prisoners 'till the grand seal comes to be active again, to bring them to their trial, &c. But their new year more properly begins at the first of their new moon, which falls out usually about our 25th of *January* as aforesaid, and lasts, according to the *China* custom, one whole month.

By what is related it appears how excessively our author has hyperboliz'd on these passages, especially where he commends the *Tonqueenese* for laborious and

<sup>19</sup> Vietnamese *sup ãn*, "to tumble the seal."

industrious people, prudently employing their time to the most advantage,<sup>20</sup> which in some degree may be granted in the women, but the men are so lazy and idle generally, that were they not by mere necessity compell'd to work, I verily believe they would be glad to spend their time only in eating and sleeping; for many will surfeit themselves by over-gorging their stomachs, feeding as if they were born only to eat, and not to eat for the support of life chiefly.

It is also a mistake to say, the *Tonqueenese* deem it a disgrace to have their heads uncover'd,<sup>21</sup> for when an inferior comes to a *Mandareen*, either upon business or some errand from a *Mandareen*, he has always his black gown and cap on, and the *Mandareen* receives him bare; but if the messenger comes with an order from the king, either verbal or in writing, then they dare not hear the message, or peruse the note, without putting on their gown and cap. Of this more will be said when I come to speak of the court of *Tonqueen*.

As to criminals, they are shaved as soon as they are commended to die, because they may be known and apprehended if they should chance to out-run their keepers, which is a different thing from being uncover'd, which M. *Taverniere* talks of. So likewise to nail malefactors on crosses,<sup>22</sup> or to dismember them, by four small galleys that row several ways,<sup>23</sup> are torments unheard-of in this country.

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<sup>20</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 24: "... being better husbands of their time than we, not sparing any part of it from business."

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22: "The Tunquineses take it for a great dishonour to have their Heads bare, which is only for Criminals ..."

<sup>22</sup> As described in *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> As described in *ibid.*, p. 21.

## CHAPTER IX.

# OF THE LEARNED MEN OF TONQUEEN.<sup>1</sup>

The *Tonqueenese* have a great inclination for learning, because it is the only step to acquire dignity and preferments, which encourageth them to a studious and diligent application to learning; which is often attended with good or ill success, as in other countries, according to their several talents, and as they are indued with vivacity, spirit, and more-especially as they are furnish'd with a good or bad memory; which is the chief requisite for mastering that sort of learning which is in repute in this country, which consists mostly of hieroglyphick characters, whereof they have as many as words or things, requires a very retentive memory. Hence it is, that some scholars are fit to take degrees upon them after twelve or fifteen years study, others in twenty-five or thirty, many not in their life-time.

They may, as soon as they think themselves able or capable, adventure their trial, without either obligation to continue longer a scholar, or limitation of years: Nor have they any publick schools, but every one chuses such a preceptor for his children as he fancies, at his own cost.

Their learning consists not in the knowledge of languages, as among us in *Europe*, much less are they acquainted with our philosophy: but they have one *Confucius*, a *Chinese*, (or, as the people call him, *Congtiu*;<sup>2</sup>) the founder of their arts and sciences, which are the same with those of the *Chinese*. This man composed but one book,<sup>3</sup> but he compiled four others<sup>4</sup> from the works of the ancient *Chinese* philosophers, containing morals and political precepts, with their rites and sacrifices, &c. Moreover, his disciples have out of his works extracted diverse rules, sentences, and similies, fit for the state in general, and every person in particular; all which is collected into one tome, divided into four parts, and entitled *The four Books*,<sup>5</sup> which, with the five before-mention'd make nine books, and are the ancientest they have, and of that reputation, that they will admit no contradiction whatsoever against them; and these are the sole foundation of the learning, not only of the *Chinese* and this nation, but also of the *Japanese*, some small differences excepted.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter IX: "Of the learned men in the Kingdom of Tunquin."

<sup>2</sup> Vietnamese *Khổng Tử*.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to the *Lun Yu* (Analects).

<sup>4</sup> Baron apparently counts the *Lun Yu* as one of the "Five Classics," supposedly compiled by Confucius, which in fact do not include the *Lun Yu*.

<sup>5</sup> The "Four Books" traditionally include *Lun Yu*, *Mengzi* (Mencius), and two excerpts from *Liji* (Record of rituals), which is one of the "Five Books."

The said books comprehend likewise the greatest part of their hieroglyphical characters, the multitude of which none can easily affirm, yet they commonly reckon ninety or an hundred thousand; because their learned have a way of compounding and connecting them, to shrink that number; and as it is not necessary for the vulgar sort to know many, so very few do, and twelve or fourteen thousand is sufficient for usual writing.

They are wholly ignorant of natural philosophy, and not more skill'd in mathematics and astronomy; their poesy I do not understand, and their musick I do not find delightful or harmonious; and I cannot but wonder by what faculty Monsieur *Taverniere* has discover'd them to be the most excellent of all the oriental people in that art.<sup>6</sup>

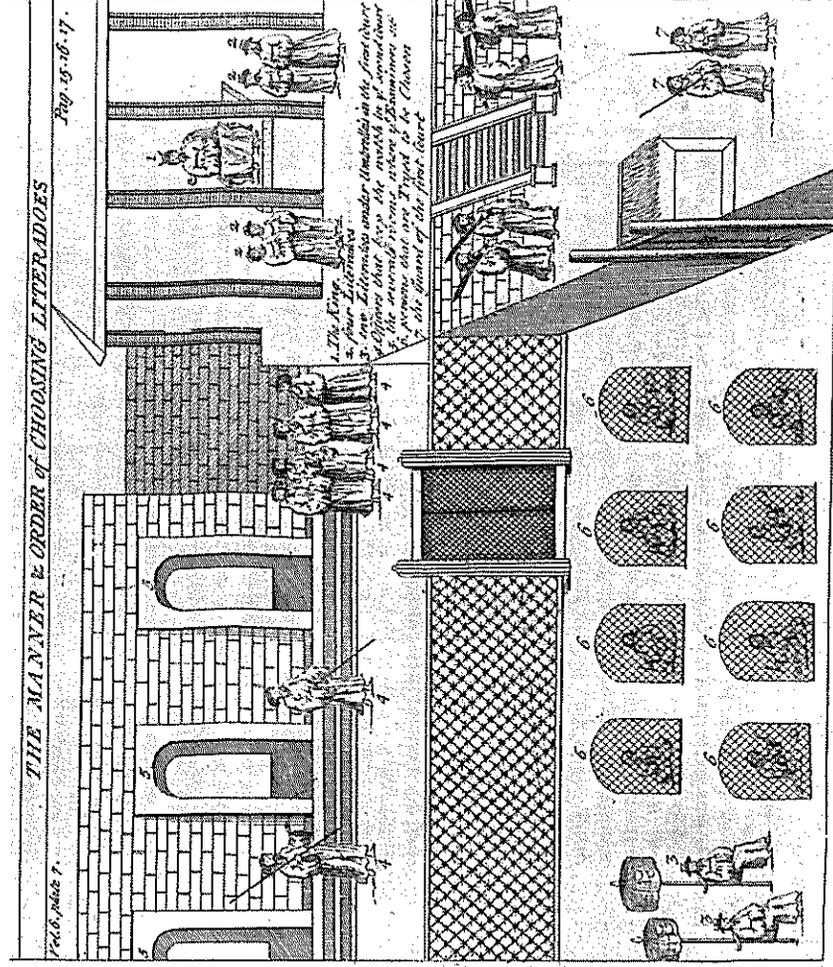


Plate 7: "The Manner and Order of Choosing Literadoes." 1. The King. 2. Four Literadoes. 3. Two Literadoes under Umbrellas in the First Court. 4. Officers that Keep the Watch in the Second Court. 5. The Several Rooms where the Examiners Sit.

6. Persons that are Tried to be Chosen. 7. The Guard of the First Court.

<sup>6</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 25: "... the musicians and actors of Tunquin are accounted the best in the whole Eastern part of the World."

Having thus confusedly mention'd a word or two, in general, of their learning, I return to the scholars: They must, in the acquisition of employ and dignity, (I do not say nobility for the custom is here, that all the honours die with the person, and descend not to his posterity) pass through three degrees; the first of a *Singdo* [*Sinh đở*], something like the *Batchelors*, in *Europe*; the second a *Hung-cong* [*Hương công*], resembling our *Licentiates*; the third degree is a *Tuncy* [*Tiến sĩ*], equal to the degree of *Doctor* with us.

Out of these doctors they choose the ablest, and elect him *Trangivien* [*Trang nguyễn*], which is as much as to say, a president, or professor of learning.

And indeed, the election of these literadoes is manag'd with the most commendable policy and justice, that I know of, among them; for whereas in all other things they are sway'd by corruption, partiality, or private passions; in the distribution of these degrees they respect singularly the deserts of persons, since no man can obtain any of them, unless he is found worthy thereof, by a strict and most exact examination.

The order and method observed in the promotion of *Singdos*, or batchelors, is thus: Once in three years it is customary for the king and general to nominate two or three *Tuncies*, with some *Wene Quan* [*Văn quan*], or justice of the peace, who has the degree of *Hung-cong*, to be examiners of the design'd academy in that province where the election is to be made (for in this they proceed from one province to another, by turns) whither they repair immediately on receiving their commission. Great care is taken, that none speak with those to be examined on the way, or receive any bribes of them. Being arrived, they take up their lodgings in houses built of bamboos and straw; inclosed with a wall of the same materials, leaving a spacious empty place in the midst thereof for a theatre. The *Tuncies* are presently separated from the *Wene Quan* and the rest in distinct apartments, and are not to speak one with the other, during their function, strict guards being kept at the several doors, and all comers in or out are searched for papers, writings, &c. If any is found to have transgressed herein, he is rigorously punished, and loses his dignity.

In the morning of the day prescrib'd, for the commencing of the said examination, all the students resort to this place, where they find an officer, who exhibits to them five short sentences, written in capital letters, whereof every one, as many as there are, may take copies; which being done, they are all searched for papers or other writings, and then plac'd on the bare ground of the yard aforementioned, at good and equal distance, and many watches are set, that none comes to speak with them.

Thus they sit to write their themes, which they must finish before evening, neither must the said answer contain more than twenty-four sides of paper. And as every one brings in his, he fastens to it, on a particular sheet, his name, the names of his parents and village, which the *Tuncies* tear off, and mark the answer and paper of names with the same number, which are put up severally, according to their province and aïdeas.

All the papers being thus served, the *Tuncies* send them to the *Wene Quan*, (the names of their authors being kept in the custody of another officer) to be examined, who throws out all the bad, and sends the good ones to the *Tuncies* again. They, upon a strict review, put out a great many more, so that sometimes of four or five thousand pretenders, only one thousand are approved the first time; the second,

perhaps no more than five hundred; and on the last proof only three hundred are to be graduated batchelors. Such as have behaved themselves well in the first trial, their names come out in publick within eight or ten days after, to be prepared for the second examination; and those whose names are thus thrown out, need not stay, for they cannot be admitted that sessions any more. In the same manner they continue in the second and third trial, only their task at the second trial is but of three sentences, and the answer twelve sides; the last of two sentences, and its reply eight sides, but more difficult than the former. Whosoever passes these trials is declared batchelor, and has his name register'd among those of the same rank, in the book of state, and from that time they pay but half the taxes which they were rated at before, and likewise enjoy some other petty immunities.

Now follows their manner of electing the *Hung-congs*, or licentiates. These are selected out of the batchelors, more or less, as the king pleases to order; they are examin'd by the same officers, and created alternately in the place aforesaid, where the batchelors were. If they can overcome but one proof more, which is the fourth, including the three preceding of the *Singdoes*, or batchelors, they become licentiates. The formality used in this proceeding is in a manner the same with the former, only they and their examiners are still more severely watched, and they are not permitted to see or speak with any of the competitors; they are separated, and distant enough from each other, when they write their meditations, &c. And all those *Hung-congs* of former creation, must leave, at that time, the province where the school is held, by repairing to the capital city, and abide there 'till the end of the act; many spies are set over them, and they are numbered every day. The like care is recommended to the governors of the other provinces about the said *Hung-congs*, during the solemnity, to prevent frauds and deceits in that behalf.

The examiners propound three sentences out of the book of their prince of philosophers, *Confucius*, and four more out of the volume of his disciples; the arguments of so many orations, which the candidate is to answer with so many themes in writing, which is to be in an elegant and sententious style, and adorned with the best of their rhetoric; the more concise the better.

The examiners then reject the worst, and present the best, who are to proceed to the *Tuncies*, or chief-examiners, and they chuse those that are to be admitted graduates, and expose their names with much ceremony. The privileges and immunities of the licentiates are far greater than the batchelors; besides, they have the honour to be presented to the king, who gives to each of them a thousand small pieces of coin, about the value of a dollar in money, and a piece of black callicoe for a gown, worth about three dollars more.

The last or third degree, called *Tuncy*, answerable to our doctors, is conferred every fourth year, at the capital city or court of the kingdom, in a particular palace with marble gates, formerly the best in the country, but now, through age, much decay'd. The choicest and learnedst of the *Hung-congs*, or licentiates, are only admitted to this trial; of many competitors few are successful. Their examiners are the king himself, the princes, and most eminent doctors of the realm, with other principal magistrates. This trial is in most circumstances like the two former, except in the questions propounded, which are both of greater number, and more intricate, grave, and specious, being commonly the most difficult part of their ethicks, politicks, and civil law, and something of poesy and rhetoric, all which they are to expound and resolve in writing, at four several times, in the space of twenty days, and he that doth it, is admitted doctor. This is no easy task, considering what a

burthen it is to the memory, to retain all the characters of the four last of the nine books of *Confucius*, which necessarily they must have, word for word, by heart, to acquit themselves well therein.

They write their themes and meditations on the exhibited sentences, in a close cage made of bamboos for that purpose, and covered with callicoe, wherein they sit from the morning to night, being search'd, that they have nothing about them, but pen, ink, and clean paper; and to watch them the narrower, two doctors, or *Tuincies*, sit at a good distance from them, under umbrello's. Thus they are served at four different times, before they are made *Tuincies* or doctors. The king and general honour this solemnity with their presence the two first days, as the most important, and leave the compleating thereof to the ministers. Those thus graduated are congratulated by their friends, applauded by the spectators, and honour'd by their brother doctors, with many complimentary expressions; the king presents each of them with a bar of silver, of the value of fourteen dollars, and a piece of silk, besides the revenue of some aldeas or villages for their maintenance, which is more or less, according to favour or desert, and they are feasted at the publick expense of their aldeas for some time. Out of these the principal magistrates of the kingdom are chosen, and they are sent Embassadors to *China*, and are permitted to wear *Chinese* boots and caps, with their proper vest.

The rejected licentiates may, if they please, continue their study, and try fortune again; if not, they are capable of some magistracy in the country, as justice of peace, head of an aldea, &c.

The batchelors have the same privilege; and those that are unwilling to make any further progress in learning, may find likewise employment, if they have money, among the governors of provinces, in the courts of justice, or as clerks, stewards, secretaries, or sollicitors to the *Mandareens*; and in all this an eloquent tongue is not so requisite as a good pen.

Such fire-works as Monsieur *Taverniere* mentions these people to be exquisite in the making of, I have met none all the time I frequented this country, nor any other sorts, unless it be squibs, or the like. And as for those machines, or change of scenes in every act of their comedy, they may be long enough sought after, but will never be found here, where-ever he saw them.<sup>7</sup>

In astrology, geometry, and other mathematical sciences, they are but little skilled,<sup>8</sup> but they understand arithmetick reasonably well; their ethicks are confusedly deliver'd, not digested into formal method, as is their logick.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26: "Nor indeed is there any pastime more frequent then that of the theatre in this country; for there is never any solemn festival among them, which is not accompanied and set forth with artificial fireworks, in making whereof these people are exquisite; after which they have their comedies, with machines, and change of scenes in every act."

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25: "... the Mathematicks, and particularly Astronomy, to which all the Orientals have a great inclination, as being great observers of the stars ..."; and p. 26: "They that will learn the Mathematicks, must make their own Instruments themselves, and spend five years in this study."

## CHAPTER X.

# OF THE PHYSICIANS AND DISEASES OF THE TONQUEENESE.<sup>1</sup>

Every one that pleases may be a physician in *Tonqueen*, and indeed every one almost is his own doctor, whereby this noble science is become the publick practice of the very dregs of the nation, to the disgrace of the publick in tolerating it.

Their principal study in this science consists only of an examination of some *Chinese* books, that direct them how to boil and compound their roots, herbs, and simples, with some obscure notions of their several qualities, nature, and virtue, but generally so confused, that they know little or nothing, until they add thereto their own experience. They understand hardly any thing of anatomy, or the nature of composition of mens bodies, with the divisions of the several parts thereof, which might lead them to form a judgment of the diseases incident to the human system; but attribute all to the blood, as the principal cause of all the disorders that befall the body, and therefore consider no further the constitution or temper in the application of their remedies; and with them it is enough to succeed well in three or four cures, though by mere chance (for they are hardly ever able to give a reason for what they do) to get the reputation of an excellent *Medicus*, which oftentimes, as it increases their practice, so gives them a greater power to kill their fellow-creatures. Their patients are generally very impatient under the hands of their doctors, who if he doth not afford them present ease and speedy cure, they send for other help, and so often go from bad to worse, 'till they are either well or kill'd, for want of patience on one side, and judgment on the other.

These people generally on visiting a patient, feel the pulse in two places, and that upon the wrist, as the *Europeans*; but they must be the *Chinese* physicians, whom Monsieur *Taverniere* extolls for their skill in the pulse;<sup>2</sup> and I own that some of that nation excell in it, but the far greater number are mere pretenders to this art, and affect to amuse the patient by ostentatious conjectures, and concealed and confused notions, to inspire a belief of their skill, in discovering thereby the cause of diseases, and so gull the credulous patients of their money, and oftentimes their health to boot.

These people have no apothecary among them, every one that profeseth the art of the physick prepares the dose himself, which consists, as I mention'd, in the composition of herbs and roots, boiled in water.

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Turquin," Chapter X: "Of their Physicians, and the Diseases of the Tunquineses."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29, describes at length methods of feeling the pulse in different parts of the body.

The pestilence, gravel,<sup>3</sup> and the gout are hardly known in these countries: Fevers, agues, dysenteries, the jaundice, small pox, &c. reign here most; to all which they administer the said drugs for remedies, sometimes with desired success, wherein more is to be ascribed to the patient's own care, sparing diet and abstinence, (in which they are most singular, occasion'd perhaps by their more common fear of death) than the skill and judgment of the physician.

The grandees drink the herb tea, of *China* and *Japan*, but 'tis not much admired; they use most their native tea, called by them *Chia Bang*,<sup>4</sup> the leaf of a certain tree, and *Chiaway*,<sup>5</sup> the buds and flowers of another certain tree, which after they are dry'd and roasted, they boil and drink the liquor hot; the last is of a good pleasant taste. Besides these two sorts, they have many other sorts of liquor, made of beans, roots, &c.

I need not here describe the quality and virtue of the *China* and *Japan* tea, since they are so well known in *England*, and most other parts of *Europe*; only I will note how grossly *M. Taverniere* was mistaken, to prefer the *Japan* tea before that of *China*,<sup>6</sup> when in the choice of them there is above thirty *per cent* difference.

Phlebotomy, or blood-letting, is rarely practiced amongst this people, and when they do it, 'tis not after our way, in the arm, and with a lancet, but on the forehead, and with the bone of a fish tied to a small stick, in form like the horsefleams in *England*, which instrument is applied to the vein of the forehead; then they give thereon a fillip with a finger, and the blood gushes out. Their grand remedy is fire, in most distempers, which is used as they see cause, not regarding therein either the time of day or night precisely: The matter wherewith they burn is the leaf of a tree, well dry'd, and then beaten in a mortar until it grows almost like to our beaten hemp, and this they take and fix on every place to be burnt (for they do it in many places at the same time) so much as will lie on a farthing,<sup>7</sup> striking each parcel with ink of *China* at the bottom, that it may stick to the skin, then they fire it with a match of paper: Many account this a sovereign remedy, how true I cannot affirm: however, I am certain, that it puts the patient to great torment, and that our use of letting blood is but a flea-bite, in comparison of it.

But most common and frequently amongst them cupping is used, because cheap and easier. Their way here is much after the same manner as ours in *Europe*, only that they have calabashes instead of glasses.

Of anatomy they understand nothing, as I said before, and of surgery little, admiring much our *Europeans* art in that behalf. To broken bones they apply certain herbs, which, they say, will heal them in the space of twenty-four days, and cement them as strong as ever. They have another remedy, which is, to take the raw bones of hens, and beat them to powder, making thereof a paste, which applied to the part affected, is esteemed by them a sovereign medicine.

Their little children are much subject to dangerous obstructions, which deprive them of the benefit of nature, both by stool and urine, causing their bellies to swell

<sup>3</sup> Kidney and bladder stones.

<sup>4</sup> *Chêl trâ bang*.

<sup>5</sup> *Chêl trâ hoa/shuê*.

<sup>6</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 29. "They mightily admire the Herb tea, which comes from China and Japan; which latter country produces the best."

<sup>7</sup> A very small coin.

so, that often their lives are endangered thereby. Their remedy for this is, cockroaches and onions roasted and beaten together; this they apply to the navel of the child, which is often attended with good success.

These people affirm, that crabs are turned into stones by the power of the sun, and use them as physick, but not in fevers and dysenteries: Moreover, they take up by the sea-side a kind of cockles, which being beaten to powder, they drink in the cholick [colic].

## CHAPTER XI.

# OF THE ORIGINAL GOVERNMENT, LAW, AND POLICY OF THE TONQUEENESE, WITH SOME CONSIDERATIONS THEREON.<sup>1</sup>

It is without all dispute that the *Tonqueenese* ever were a nation of themselves different from the *Chinese*, who call them *Manso*,<sup>2</sup> or *Barbarians*, and their country *Gannam*,<sup>3</sup> because situated far to the south, in reference to them, and the inhabitants bearing a great affinity with other *Indians*, in eating penang, coloring their teeth, going barefoot, and that their right great toe standeth athwart from their foot, as is to be seen yet by some of the *Tonqueen* cast. But how this country was govern'd before it was made a province of *China*, is hard to know, since they had in those days no characters; by consequence no history of that time can be extant among them: what was afterward compiled thereof may be suspected as fictions, invented at pleasure, and indeed, they are most of them so unaccountable, that they ought rather to be look'd upon as dreams and chimera's than historical narrations; neither is there much appearance of verity in those relations of theirs, which make this people so valiant, that they were not only able to contend with, but vanquish also the formidable armies of the prodigious empire of *China*, and maintain their liberty in spite thereof for many ages: but 'tis most likely that they have set the best face in their narrations, upon their actions, that they might not hand themselves down to posterity and to strangers in the base light, which it seems to me, their cowardice and ill conduct have deserved.

They pretend they have had the use of the *Chinese* characters amongst them before the reign of *Ding*,<sup>4</sup> one of their first kings, according to their best historians, which, by computation, cannot be less than two thousand years; if so, I infer, they were once before either conquer'd, or voluntary subjects to that empire, because the *China* laws, rites, customs, characters, &c. could have been neither of that antiquity, or so entirely and all at once introduced among them, as it was by their own testimony; besides, this agrees with the *China* chronicles, that mention, about the same time their empire was in great glory, calling it a triumphant one, whose limits

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter XI: "Of the Original Government and Policy of the Kingdom of Tunquin."

<sup>2</sup> Possibly *man rø*.

<sup>3</sup> Baron's transcription of *An Nam*.

<sup>4</sup> Đinh Bộ Lĩnh (reigned c. 968-979), Đinh Tiên Hoàng (Đinh the First Emperor). The mention of "two thousand years" later in this sentence accords neither with real chronology nor with Baron's own calculations.

extended as far as *Siam*; therefore there is no reason to believe this neighboring kingdom could have remained unmolested, since it lies as a bar just in the way to hinder and obstruct their progress, but rather, that it was immediately incorporated with their empire.

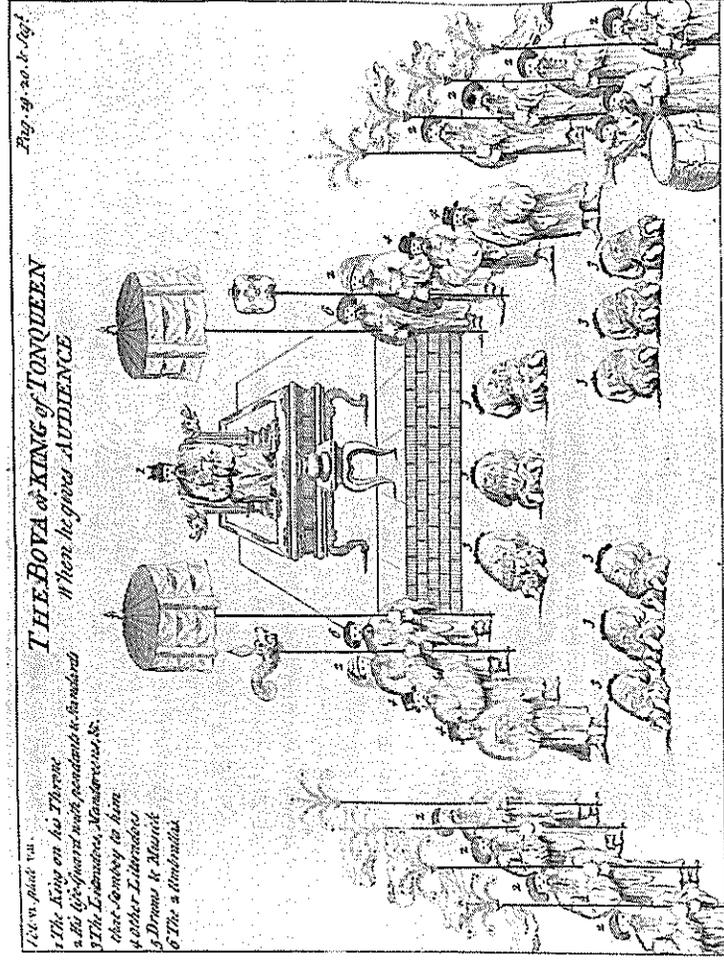


Plate 8: "The Boua or King of Tonqueen when He Gives Audience." 1. The King on his Throne. 2. His Life-guard with Pendants and Standards. 3. The Literadoes, Mandareens, etc. that come to him. 4. Other Literadoes. 5. Drums and Musick. 6. The 2 Umbrellas.

Yet, it may be, the *Chinese* did not keep the country the first time long under subjection, but left them on the invasion of the *Tartars*,<sup>5</sup> or on some other motives, so that after their departure *Ding* was king: Now, whether they made him so, or whether he usurped the regality, by the assistance of great numbers of vagabonds, and other scum of the nation, is differently deliver'd. They say, that king *Ding* had enjoy'd the scepter but a small time before the great ones murmured against him; the malcontents finding the common people disobedient, whose affections, whether he had lost by cruel and harsh usage, or that they disdain'd to be any longer subject to their country-man, as it commonly falls out with people accustomed to servitude, to be incapable of using well their new-recover'd liberty, (with other occult motives and malignant influences that caused the effects of those distractions,) they fell into open rebellion, and took arms against *Ding*, whom they murdered, whereon ensued

<sup>5</sup> It is unclear whether Baron has in mind the Mongols of the thirteenth century or some earlier invasion from the plains north of China; later he uses the term "Tartars" to refer to the Manchu Qing.

bloody civil wars for many years, 'till being weary, they chose, by general consent, a puissant prince of theirs, called *Leedayhang*,<sup>6</sup> for their king.

In his reign, they say, the *Chinese* invaded the country, not mentioning for what reason: Probably they were *Chinese* rebels, that fled thence, and that this people fought many battles against them with good success. Yet, in the height of this war *Leedayhang* dying, whether in battle or otherwise is uncertain, left to his successor *Libatvie*,<sup>7</sup> a polittick and valiant prince, the prosecution thereof, which he carry'd on with no less valour than prosperity; for having encounter'd and routed the *Chinese* in six or seven battles, he restored peace and tranquillity to the whole kingdom, and built that large and magnificent palace of marble, which is now, through age, so decay'd, that nothing but the gates and some of the walls of that sumptuous structure remain.

They say, that after this king, his posterity possessed the crown to the fourth or sixth generation, successively, and ruled in great prosperity; but the last left the succession to a daughter, having no heir male, which princess coming to the crown, married a powerful lord of the family of *Tran*,<sup>8</sup> who ruled with her jointly but a few months; for another of their grandees, called *Hoe*,<sup>9</sup> rebelled against them, and having vanquish'd them in battle, put them to death, and ascended the throne himself.<sup>10</sup>

He govern'd not long, for the people conspired against him; for what cause I cannot find: it may be suspected, that he used bad means for the maintaining of his unjust possession; and having call'd the *Chinese* to their assistance, they kill'd the usurper, and withal lost their own freedom, for the *Chinese* shew'd themselves true auxiliaries, in seizing the whole kingdom for a reward of their labour and victory.

A *Chinese* viceroy or general was then ordered over this people, to govern them as formerly, which continued for the space of sixteen years,<sup>11</sup> when they began to be weary of the *Chinese* oppressions and insolence, and withal, commemorating their former condition, they resolved to endeavour to free themselves from the *Chinese* yoke, and accordingly took arms under the leading of a valiant captain, by name *Lee*,<sup>12</sup> and fought with the *Chinese*, and routed them in several battles, killing many of them, with their viceroy or general *Luetang*;<sup>13</sup> which disaster, with the charges of the war abroad and civil commotions at home, and the small profit this country yielded, were perhaps the motives why the *China* emperor *Humveto*<sup>14</sup> thought convenient to

<sup>6</sup> Lê Đại Hành (r. 980-1005).

<sup>7</sup> Probably Lý Bát Đế (The Eight Rulers of Lý, a reference to the eight kings of the Lý dynasty, 1009-1225), here used in reference to the first king of the Lý dynasty, Lý Công Uẩn (Lý Thái Tổ, r. 1009-1028).

<sup>8</sup> Trần dynasty (1226-1400).

<sup>9</sup> Reference to Hồ Quý Ly, who came to power in the late fourteenth century and founded his own short-lived dynasty in 1400; in 1407 he was captured by the Ming Chinese when they gained control of the country.

<sup>10</sup> Baron's historical narrative from Đinh Bộ Lĩnh to Hồ Quý Ly contains many curiosities, among which is the shortening of the Trần dynasty to "but a few months."

<sup>11</sup> The Ming occupation, from the initial invasion until final evacuation, was from 1407 to 1427.

<sup>12</sup> Lê Lợi.

<sup>13</sup> Liu Sheng, killed in the Battle of Chi Lăng, 1427.

<sup>14</sup> Appears to refer to the Hongwu Emperor (r. 1368-98); the Ming occupation of Vietnam was the policy of the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402-24), a policy that was abandoned by his successors.

quit it again, which is now about four hundred and fifty years ago.<sup>15</sup> Having therefore imposed on them certain conditions, and taken security for their faithful performance, (*viz.* to come every three years, once to the imperial city, *Pekin*, with several presents, which they call tribute, and to do homage to the emperor, in acknowledgment that they hold this their kingdom and liberty of his mere grace and bounty) he withdrew his troops from *Tonqueen*; and these conditions are punctually observed to this very day.

Among the presents, they are to carry images of gold and silver, made in the posture of criminals, denoting that they are such to the *China* empire, for the murder of *Luetang*, the 'foresaid general, and that they are to remain evermore supplicants to that court for the said offence. The kings of *Tonqueen* have likewise their *chaop*, or seal, from the *China* emperor as a mark of their dependency. And tho' this formality be a mere piece of *Chinese* vanity, they make no little ado about it. This year (1683) came here an ambassador from the imperial court of *Pekin*, to bring a title for the *Boua*, that had been inaugurated above eight or nine years before;<sup>16</sup> he was received with all the pomp and magnificence that the general could devise, or was capable to put in practice, and that not out of love, but mere ostentation, to shew the *Tartars*<sup>17</sup> his grandeur and puissance. They had presented to their view a great number of soldiers, richly cloathed in *English* and *Dutch* manufactures; most of their elephants and cavalry in their best furniture, gilded galleys, &c. But for all this, the ambassador did not deign to visit his highness; as indeed no ambassadors of that empire ever do, making of him no other account than as of a plebeian usurper, obscure in comparison of their emperors.

But to return: The *Chinese* having thus forsaken the country, *Lee* was proclaimed king, who reigned several years, and his family enjoy'd the scepter afterwards uninterrupted, for the space of above two hundred years,<sup>18</sup> and then *Mack*<sup>19</sup> usurped the crown. This man was of a low and vile original, born about *Batshaw*,<sup>20</sup> a fisher village, at the river's mouth where the *European* ships enter it; he was a wrestler by profession, and so dextrous therein, that he raised himself to the degree of a *Mandareen*, or lord: But his ambition, that aspired higher, could not be satisfied with any other condition but the sovereignty itself, and accordingly he conspired against the king, and effected his design, rather by crafty practices and stratagemms than force.

<sup>15</sup> In fact about 250 years.

<sup>16</sup> The emperor Lê Hi Tông (r. 1676-1705).

<sup>17</sup> The Manchus of the Qing dynasty.

<sup>18</sup> The dynasty established by Lê Lợi in 1428 lasted about a hundred years, to the 1520s.

<sup>19</sup> Mạc Đăng Dung, b. 1483, r. 1527-1541.

<sup>20</sup> According to *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư*, *Bản Kỷ Tục Biên* XV:69b (Hanoi: Nhà Xuất Bản Khoa Học Xã Hội, 1993), III:109, Mạc Đăng Dung was born in the coastal region south of the modern city of Hải Phòng, at Cổ Trai village in Nghi Dương district, names that appear on French colonial maps west of Đồ Sơn at the mouth of Vãn Úc River, four to five miles north of the mouth of Thái Bình River, which was a major entry point for seventeenth-century ocean-going ships. *Batshaw* is unidentified, but I suspect *shaw* is Vietnamese *xã*, "village" (for such is how Baron transcribes this word later in this chapter), in which case *Bat* would transcribe the name of the village. An early fifteenth-century Chinese itinerary identifies a major water route into northern Vietnam as follows: "Entering from Đồ Sơn one arrives at the Cổ Trai route and then arrives at Nghi Dương district ... " Bửu Cầm et al., *Hồng Đức Bản Đồ* (Saigon: Bộ Quốc-Gia Giáo-Dục, 1962), p. 64.

Having thus usurped the crown, he fortified *Batslaw* and other places, because of his many enemies, especially one *Howing*,<sup>21</sup> a mighty and powerful prince, in the province of *Tingwa* [Thanh Hóa], of whom he most stood in fear, since he was in open defiance of the usurper. This *Howing* married his daughter to *Hoatrin*,<sup>22</sup> a man of singular strength and valour, who had been formerly a notorious robber, and made him general of his forces, and when he died, left him the guardianship and tuition of his only son, at that time about fourteen or fifteen years of age. *Hoatrin* having gotten the forces of his deceased father-in-law at his devotion, made open war against *Mack*, and after many petty encounters, with various success, at last overcame him. The usurper finding himself reduced to a nonplus, was necessitated to fly for his security to *Cabang* [Cao Bằng], a kingdom on the frontier of *China*, and subject to this king, formerly inhabited by a kind of wild people: But *Hoatrin* came immediately after the victory to *Cachio*,<sup>23</sup> the metropolis, and having first demolished the fortifications of *Mack*, he made proclamation, if there was any heir male of the house of *Lee*, he might freely discover himself, promising to place him on the throne of his ancestors, and protested he had taken arms for that end; and accordingly, when a youth of the house of *Lee* was brought to him, he expressed much joy, placed him on the throne with abundance of readiness, and owned him his sovereign, ordering every one to pay obedience to *Lee*, lawful king of *Tonqueen*, &c. and for himself he reserved the title of *Choua*, or general of all the forces. This was to the infinite discontentment of his pupil, the young *Howing*,<sup>24</sup> who did not dream that his brother-in-law would have converted all the effects of his father's forces and army, with the prosperous success thereof, to his particular use, greatness, and advancement, by excluding the orphan; but he was deceived in his account, for *Hoatrin* having previously made the requisite provision for the settlement of the government, he sent a peremptory letter to his brother-in-law, requiring his obedience to this prince of the house of *Lee*, or by default, to declare him a rebel, and open enemy to the state; This occasioned a civil war, and a rent in the kingdom of *Tonqueen*; for young *Howing*, altho' he was not against *Lee*, yet could he not endure to think that *Ting*'s<sup>25</sup> should make himself general, esteeming that place more justly to belong to him. But finding he was too weak to resist the power of *Tring*, and to remain so near as *Tingwa* is to the city of *Cachio*, he thought it the safest way to retire to *Cochin-china*, where he was joyfully received by those governors and soldiers, who immediately elected him *Choua*, or general to *Lee*, their rightful *Boua* [*vua*], or king, proclaiming *Tring* a traitor and rebel; so that ever since, now above two hundred and twenty years,<sup>26</sup> this kingdom has remain'd divided, under two lieutenant-generals, with royal authority; both own *Lee* as king and ruler, according to their ancient laws, customs, and rights, but are mortal enemies, and wage continual war against each other.

<sup>21</sup> Nguyễn Hoàng Kim (d. 1545).

<sup>22</sup> Trịnh Kiểm (d. 1570).

<sup>23</sup> The colloquial name for Hanoi, in Chapter II it is spelled with a hyphen: Ca-cho.

<sup>24</sup> Nguyễn Hoàng (1525-1613).

<sup>25</sup> Here Baron's transcription shifts from *Hoatrin* to *Tring*, perhaps in some way an indication of Trịnh Tùng (d. 1623), who became leader of the Trịnh after the death of his father, Trịnh Kiểm, in 1570.

<sup>26</sup> Here Baron expands less than a century into 220 years; perhaps the era of Trịnh-Nguyễn warfare, which began in the 1620s, seemed to have been that long.

I return now to *Tring*, and see why, as victor, he did not ascend the throne, and take upon him the name and title of a king. Certainly, it was not for want of ambition, or altogether out of modesty and sense of justice that he did not accept of any higher title, than that of general; but it was in consideration of two very specious reasons; for should he assume the crown and royal title to himself, he would be regarded as usurper, and expose himself to the general hate and envy of the natives, and more-specifically to the persecution of *Hoawing*, who would be able, under the most just and plausible pretexts, to work his ruin and extirpation: The other motive was his apprehension, that the *Chinese* emperor should be against him, as knowing he was a stranger to the royal race of the kings of *Tonqueen*, whereby *Tring* would involve himself in a torrent of troubles, and be, probably, the cause of his own perdition; therefore he thought it was the securest way to set up a prince of the house of *Lee*, with only the bare name of king, and reserve the royal power for himself; and indeed, all that belongs to the sovereign resides in the *Choua*, for he may make war or peace as he thinks fit, he makes and abrogates laws, pardons and condemns criminals, he creates and deposes magistrates and military officers, he imposes taxes and orders fines according to his pleasure, all strangers make their application to him, except the ambassadors of *China*; and, in a word, his authority is not only royal, but absolute and unlimited, wherefore the *Europeans* call him The king and the true king is called, for distinction sake, The emperor; whilst the *Boua* or king, is shut up in his palace, attended by none but spies of the *Choua*, neither is he permitted to stir abroad more than once a year, and that on the great solemnity of their annual sacrifices, &c. As for the rest, he serves only to cry *amen* to all that the general doth, and to confirm, for formality sake, with his *Chaop*, all the acts and decrees of the other; to contest with him the least matter would not be safe for him; and though the people respect the *Boua*, yet they fear the *Choua* much more, who is most flatter'd because of his power.

The general's place is like the king's, hereditary, the eldest son succeeds the father; yet often the ambition of the brothers has occasioned commotions and civil broils, aiming to supplant each other, therefore it is a common saying amongst them, that the death of a thousand *Boua*'s doth not endanger the country in the least; but when the *Choua* dies, every one's mind is possessed with great tremors and heavy consternation, expecting fearful changes in state and government.

This kingdom is properly divided into six provinces, not reckoning the country of *Cubang*,<sup>27</sup> and a small part of *Bowes*,<sup>28</sup> which are maintain'd as conquer'd lands, that people being of a different language and manner from the *Tonqueuese*; and five of the six provinces are govern'd by their particular governors, which at present are all eunuchs, with ample power; but he that rules in *Giang*,<sup>29</sup> the frontiers of *Cochinchina*, the sixth province, is a kind of viceroy, or lieutenant-general, and the militia under him are not less in number than forty thousand soldiers. His authority is in a manner absolute, from whom there is no appeal, except in cases of high-treason, to the supream court of the kingdom. This viceroy is usually a person of great favour,

<sup>27</sup> Cao Bãng, transcribed as *Cabang* above.

<sup>28</sup> On *Bowes*, see above in Chapter II.

<sup>29</sup> The southernmost province of Tonkin was Nghệ An, just to the south of which was the Gianh River, which served as the border with Cochinchina. I suppose Baron's "Giang" is a transcription of the river's name, used by extension to indicate the adjacent border province. Today, the southern part of what then was Nghệ An is Hà Tĩnh province.

and much confided in by the general, who, to oblige him the more, marries either his daughter or sister to him; for it would be of ill consequence to the whole kingdom, especially for the general, if this man should revolt to *Cochin-china*.

In former times they had eunuchs to govern this province too; but since the trick the *Cochin-chinese* put on one of them, they have not placed there any more as governors in chief. The jest was thus: The *Cochin-chinese*, who hate these kind of creatures, and never employ any of them in business of importance, especially in the militia, knowing the capon-vice-roy of that province was appointed generalissimo for the expedition in hand against them, they sent him, in contempt, a breast-piece of silk, such as is worn by their women, for a present, desiring him to make use of it; giving thereby to understand, that such a dress and ornament better became him, than either to command soldiers or to govern provinces, &c. as approaching so near the female sex.

The governors of provinces have for their seconds a literado *Mandareen*, or lawyer, to assist them in the civil government and administration of their laws, who sit with the governors in public courts of justice; besides this, each province has its several inferior courts of judicature, and one among the rest that is independent of the governor's authority, the judges whereof have their characters immediately of the sovereign court of the *Quan fo Lew*<sup>30</sup> at *Cacho*.

In small controversies of property of grounds, houses, debts, or the like, they proceed thus: A man that has an action against another gives his complaint into *Ongshaw*,<sup>31</sup> or the head of his aldea, who takes some cognizance of the matter, and brings it before the *Wean Quan*,<sup>32</sup> head of twenty, thirty, or forty aldeas, or villages, where the plaintiff and defendant are heard, and then sentence is given: But if one of the parties be not content to stand to this award, he appeals to the *Foe Quan*,<sup>33</sup> head of eighty, an hundred, or an hundred and fifty aldeas, where the matter is examin'd, with the sentence of the *Wean Quan*, who, as he finds cause, passes his sentence: And in case this does not satisfy them, the suit is brought before the provincial governor, where it receives its final determination, without further appealing, provided the matter be of no great importance, as I said before; but if the debt be considerable, or the pretensions ample, &c. they may appeal from the governor to *Inga Hean*, a court, as is noted above,<sup>34</sup> which the provincial governors have no jurisdiction over. In this tribunal a *Tuncy* of the class of the first literadoes always presides, and from thence

<sup>30</sup> What Baron transcribes in this chapter as *Quan fo Lew* he transcribes in the next chapter as *Quan-fo-lieu*, calling it the "supreme court." This is *Quan Phi Lieu*; see Philippe Langlet, "La Tradition Vietnamienne: un état national au sein de la civilisation Chinoise," *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises* XLV, 2 & 3 Trimestres (1970): 23, 305; also Dang Phuong Nghi, "Les Institutions Publiques du Viet-Nam au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* LXIV (1969): 70.

<sup>31</sup> Probably *ông xã*, "Mister Village," a plausible colloquial term for a village head.

<sup>32</sup> *Huyện quan*, "District Official."

<sup>33</sup> *Phủ quan*, "Prefecture Official."

<sup>34</sup> This is Baron's first and only mention of the *Inga Hean*, so his reference to noting it previously is a mystery. Perhaps *Inga Hean* is *Hình Khoa Hiến*; what is being referred to here is apparently the *Thanh Hình Hiến Sát Sĩ Ty*, commonly shortened to *Hiên Ty*, an office related to the censorate that took appeals from the regular provincial administration. In Baron's terminology, there may be some conflation of this with the *Hình Khoa*, which was an office that exercised control over the regular judicial administration of the central government at the capital. See Langlet, "La Tradition Vietnamienne," p. 34, and Dang Phuong Nghi, "Les Institutions Publiques du Viet-Nam au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," p. 81.

the suit may be removed to the several courts of the city, if they are firmly resolved, by prosecuting the law, to ruin each other; and altho' the judges cannot hinder the parties appealing from one court to another, yet if two different courts give the like sentence on one and the same cause, then the courts from which the appeal is made, has the privilege to inflict some corporal punishment on the appellants, or fine them, as is ordained by law.

Criminal cases, as theft, or the like matters, belong wholly to the governors of the province, who punish immediately small offences; but such as deserve death, their sentences are sent to the general, to have his consent for the execution thereof.

The quarrels of the great ones come generally to the city of *Cacho*; but the names of all the courts, and the precise methods of process, I cannot exactly affirm. However, I think they begin with the courts called *Quan Key Dow*,<sup>35</sup> then an appeal lies to *Quan Gay Chue*,<sup>36</sup> and in case of great moment, petition being made to the general, he remits the cause at last for a revise to *Quan fo Lew*, who hold their assize in the general's palace. The persons who compose this college are most of them old literadoes, reputed wise, and such as have been presidents of the chief courts of judicature, and known, or at least supposed to be of great integrity and honesty, and exalted to be principal ministers and counsellors of state, on whose care and prudence reposes the whole weight of the civil government and laws of the kingdom.

Quarrels indifferent about ground, houses, &c. in and about the city, belong to the court called *Quan fu Douan*,<sup>37</sup> where all such differences are decided; but the party may appeal to *Quan gnue Sew*,<sup>38</sup> and thus successively to *Quan fo Lew*, by way of petition.

Rebellion and conspiracy against the general, &c. falls under the cognizance of the court of *Quan fo Lew*, and the governor of the city puts their sentences or decrees in execution, who are as much as presidents of life and death of the city and its jurisdiction: But more immediately appertain to them all causes of murder, theft, and other like crimes, both to judge and punish the offender without further appeal.

They are the rebels that come before the general with a whisp of straw in their mouths, after they have made their peace, and obtain'd pardon, to shew, that by their disorderly life, they have made themselves equal to the brute beasts; but not those guilty of murder, as *Taverniere* is pleas'd to assert.<sup>39</sup>

The *China* laws are in use amongst them, which indeed may be considered as their civil and written law; but the temporal edicts, statutes, and constitutions of their princes and chiefest doctors, intermix'd with their old customs, are of greatest force, and in a manner the whole directory of the government, and the rule of the peoples obedience; all which are committed to writing, and digested into several

<sup>35</sup> Unidentified; perhaps *Quan Kế Đô*, "Official to examine the capital."

<sup>36</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>37</sup> *Quan Phú Doãn*, the main civil authority and court of justice in the capital city; see Langlet, "La Tradition Vietnamienne," p. 36 and Dang Phuong Nghi, "Les Institutions Publiques du Viet-Nam au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," pp. 44, 81, 97.

<sup>38</sup> *Quan Ngự Sứ*, officials of the censorate.

<sup>39</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 37: "As for Murder, they are very exact in punishing that crime. For they carry the Person apprehended before the Judge; and then he must hold to his Mouth a little wisp of Grass, to shew, that by his disorderly life he had made himself a Beast."

books that make at present their body of law: and to give this people their due, they shew much more good nature and honesty than the *Chinese*, or *Aristotle* himself in that respect, where both their laws tolerate, nay, command the exposing of all maimed, deformed, and female children, which are maxims that these people abhor as unnatural and brutish.

With no less disdain they reject that law of their neighbours which encourageth the most execrable and abominable vice not fit to be nam'd:<sup>40</sup> Questionless their primitive legislators were wise and good-intentioned politicians; but how commendable soever those institutions were, yet the misery of human imperfections, degeneracy by length of time, multiplicity of lawyers, together with the daily increase of other petty officers, has brought justice now to that corruption, that for money most crimes will be absolved, since there are few of their judges but what are subject to bribes.

Justice thus betray'd and perverted even by its officers, has brought the country into much disorders, and the people under great oppressions, so as to be involv'd in a thousand miseries; and woe be to a stranger that falls into the labyrinths of their laws, especially into the clutches of their capon *Mandareens* to be judges of his particular affairs; for to them it commonly happens in the like cases that matters are referred, and he must look for nothing less than the ruin of his purse, and be glad if he escapes without being bereav'd of his senses too; whereof I could alledge many examples of my own knowledge, to my woeful experience, were it to the purpose.

Having thus amply spoken of their Laws and their manner of proceeding therein, it remains now to consider the other state column as it stands at present, their Policy, in which is very remarkable, their great veneration for the family of their lawful kings, whose title, tho' an empty one, is used in all their writings. The *Choua's* are exceedingly to be commended for their religiously observing their promises to maintain both the royal stock, and the laws and constitutions of the land, and to innovate nothing therein, tho' repugnant to the interest of their usurped power.

To this is owing chiefly that we see the heir of the crown permitted to live after he is stripped of his rights and royal authority; a thing, I believe, that has no where an example, and is not to be found in the histories of any other nation, and may sound like a strange paradox in the ears of the politicians of other countries. Nor is it altogether the fear of *China* that ties the general's hands so as not to be able to instigate him against the king, nor ignorance of the power of those temptations which generally the lustre of a diadem inspires in the minds even of such as have no reason to pretend to it; nor are they strangers to the practices of other oriental monarchs, who retain their possessions by what means soever they acquire them, tho' it be by the subversion and violation of all laws human and divine.

But in truth, we may say, these generals were moderate, and that of those qualities proper to tyrants, as ambition, covetousness and cruelty, this last was never found predominant in them; whereof their brothers, who are often intrusted with important employs, as governors of provinces, the conduct of armies, &c. are both convincing proofs and manifest arguments. They are, in short, too generous to follow the maxim of killing them for their own imaginary security.

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<sup>40</sup> Unclear what Baron refers to here.

One prince indeed, I knew, who was poison'd by order of his brother the general; but the necessity (if one may so say) was so urgent, that there was no other way in that exigency, to preserve his own life, as will be noted in the next chapter.<sup>41</sup>

Their method of promoting scholars to their several degrees, which I have already mention'd, is both regular and just, and a great encouragement to learning, and the well-deserving therein.

The often removing their *Mandareens* from their government, is good prudence to prevent plots and conspiracies; but as there is no government but what has its defect as well as its perfection, so this is not wanting in both qualities; and it is certainly a great weakness in their politicks, as it is a needless charge to the publick, to maintain such a great army idle, as they do in time of peace, and must needs be a mighty burthen to the commonalty, who feel the weight most.

The general is likewise short, in not making timely provision for the great numbers of his people, since their daily increase will make them too numerous and incapable of living together; therefore it would be a good expedient to find some outlet for those superfluous humours, for fear they might in time cause some violent convulsion in the state, which perhaps might irretrievably overturn it. The last famine, in particular, swept away two-thirds of the inhabitants, who, if they had been employ'd against the *Cochin-chinese*, or some other hostile Countries, they might have destroy'd it with their very hands and teeth.

The over-great confidence the general reposes in the capons, as it is a mean thing, so it is contrary to good policy to tolerate so much evil as they occasion in the state, for the small and unjust benefits which he receives by their means.

The custom of selling most offices indifferently to such as will pay most for them, not regarding condition or capacity of persons, is certainly a foul merchandize, and a baseness unbecoming the publick, especially as to the offices of judicature; for if they buy their places dear, 'tis likely they will make the most advantage thereof, at the expence of right and justice.

Their militia, as it is also much more numerous than is required in a defensive war (which is a conduct, that for several years they have thought it their interest to observe) or befitting peaceable times, so it may prove of dangerous consequence, if they should be troublesome. Some years ago these soldiers mutinied;<sup>42</sup> and had they then found one to head them, it would have gone very hard with the general, who perhaps might have experienc'd from them some such insolences and devastations as several *Roman* emperors met with from their pretorians, and the *Turks* from their janizaries. He doth well to shift them from their place to place, and change often their commanders, and to keep them in continual labour or action. But the worst of all is, that the captains of his militia are eunuchs, who, generally, are cowardly fellows; and, it is thought, their baseness has been the grand cause of the many overthrows this nation has received of the *Cochin-chinese*, and will be (as long as they are thus employ'd) always a hindrance in the conquest of that spot of ground, which in comparison of them, contains but a handful of men.

They trust more to their infantry, than to their cavalry or elephants, by reason the country is low, swampy, and full of rivers and brooks, which renders them of small service.

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<sup>41</sup> Reference to an event in 1674 narrated in Chapter XII.

<sup>42</sup> Baron refers to an event in 1674 that he narrates in the next chapter.

Their soldiers are good marksmen, and in that, I believe, inferior to few; and surpassing most nations in dexterity of handling and quickness of firing their muskets.

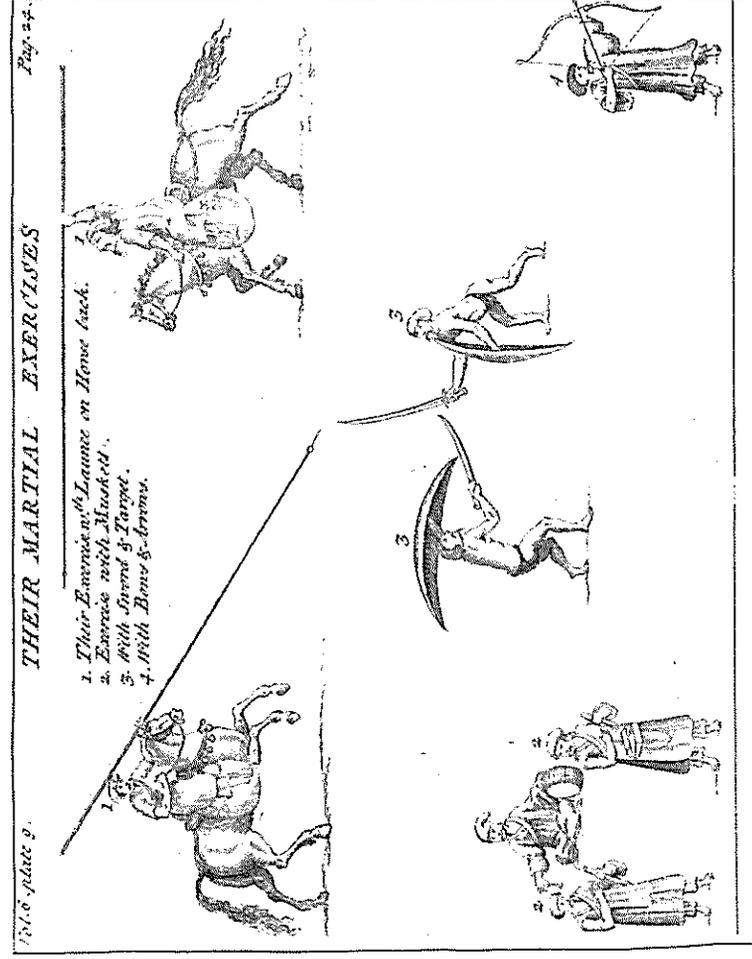


Plate 9: "Their Martial Exercises." 1. Their Exercise with Launce on Horseback.  
 2. Exercise with Muskets. 3. With Sword and Target. 4. With Bows and Arrows.

Firelocks are not in use amongst them,<sup>43</sup> but the bow is mightily in fashion in which they are expert to admiration.

In fine, they soon learn their exercise of arms, and are good proficient therein. But to mount the great horse, is no more with them, than the getting astride on a common beast; which this country produces for the most part small, yet very lively.

Their elephants are trained up for war, and imboldened against some sort of fireworks and the noise of guns, as far as the nature of the creature is capable of: as for artificial fire-works, they are rather ignorant than skilful therein.

Their finances, or invention to bring in money to the general's coffers, over and above his usual revenue, are, by the sale of most offices in the kingdom; by the fines imposed on *Mandareens*, and transgressors; the tenths of all contrabands;

<sup>43</sup> By "firelock" Baron apparently means "flintlock," the ignition device for muskets developed in the sixteenth century. The muskets mentioned in the previous paragraph were likely ignited by "matchlocks" or "wheel locks," earlier devices for igniting the powder.

considerable shares out of the estates of deceased *Mandareens*; but he is heir-general of the eunuchs or capons, and has in a manner all they leave; add to this, his accidental revenue, which comes in by strangers, merchants, &c. (which is more or less according as ships and vessels come to trade in this port); the poll or head-money; excises on provisions, and impositions on inland merchants commodities, &c. so that the general's revenues must needs amount to a very considerable sum. But since this money, for the most part, is taken from one to feed the other, the publick wealth is nothing better'd thereby, but rather the worse; forasmuch as it is the sweat and blood of the industrious, which the lazy and idle often spend most prodigally and profusely; also for that the oppressive taxes do not surcease thereby: which (together with their proceedings in matters of commerce, which they hold in scorn, as much as they despise the traders, neglecting the great convenience they have thereby to render their country rich and flourishing, which is the study of all well-govern'd nations throughout the world) renders them, in the main, but a mean and miserable people.

I have noted this more particularly in the chapter treating about the trade, &c. of the kingdom; so referring thereto, I shall proceed next to give some account of the general and his grandees and court.

## CHAPTER XII.

# OF THE GENERAL OF TONQUEEN, HIS FAMILY, OFFICERS, AND COURT.<sup>1</sup>

By what hath been said in the foregoing chapter, it may easily be understood how far the authority of the *Boua* of *Tonqueen* extends, and that the general has really the helm in hand; let us then consider him as the spirit and life of this state. His power is, like that of most *Eastern* kings, monarchical in excess, yet not so tyrannical as many of them, since they ever had their laws and old customs in great veneration, and compoited their actions agreeable thereto.

The present general is the fourth of the house of *Tring*,<sup>2</sup> in a direct line, that has, as one may say, sway'd the scepter over this people; his family was establish'd in the government as soon as *Mack* the usurper was suppressed,<sup>3</sup> and then laid the foundation of their present greatness. He is aged fifty-three years, and is a sharp subtle politician, but of an infirm constitution. He succeeded his father in the year 1682, with whom he reigned jointly several years.<sup>4</sup> He had three sons, and as many daughters, by sundry concubines; but his eldest and youngest sons dying, the second, just on his grandfather's decease, fell mad or distracted, but is now recovered,<sup>5</sup> and has the title of *Chu-ta*,<sup>6</sup> that is, young general (the usual title of the eldest surviving son) who keeps his court separate, and almost as magnificent as his father, has his *Mandareens*, servants, and offices of the same denomination, only that in precedence they give place to those of the father; but as soon as the prince succeeds the general, then his servants take place of the others, very few excepted, who often for their wisdom and experience keep their former stations.

If the general marries (which seldom happens but in their latter years, when there are but little hopes of issue by the person), this lady, as wife, is chief of all his women, and has the name and title of Mother of the Land, because of her extraction, which is always royal; but concubines he takes early, and sometimes before eighteen, the number not limited, sometimes three hundred, often five hundred, and more, if he pleases, for it is an honour to excel therein: and in the choice of them, their beauty is not so much regarded as their art and skill in singing and dancing, and playing on

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter XII: "Of the Court of the Kings of Tunquin," is relatively short (pp. 38-41) and concentrates on discussion of the Lê emperors (*Boual/Vua*).

<sup>2</sup> Trịnh Căn (d. 1709)

<sup>3</sup> Trịnh Căn's great-grandfather Trịnh Tùng expelled the Mạc from Hanoi in 1592.

<sup>4</sup> Trịnh Căn's father Trịnh Tạc gave him the titles of authority in 1674 as a result of the mutiny described later in this chapter.

<sup>5</sup> This prince is mentioned in Chapter VI as having "adopted" Baron.

<sup>6</sup> Probably *chủ tá*, "assistant master/ruler," apparently a colloquial sobriquet, for it does not to my knowledge appear in historical texts of this time.

a musical instrument, and to have the wit to divert the general with diversity of pleasing sports. Of these, she that proves mother of the first son, is honoured as soon as her son is declared heir apparent, with the name and title of True and Legitimate Wife, and tho' not quite so much respected, yet far better beloved than the former;<sup>7</sup> the rest of the concubines, that have children by him, are called *Ducha* [Đức bà], or excellent women; his male-children, the eldest excepted, are saluted with the appellation, *Duc-ong* [Đức ông], i.e. excellent person, or man; the daughters are called *Batua* [Bà chúa], which is as much as to say princess with us; the like titles have his brothers and sisters, but not their children, nor his grand-children, except those descending from his eldest son.

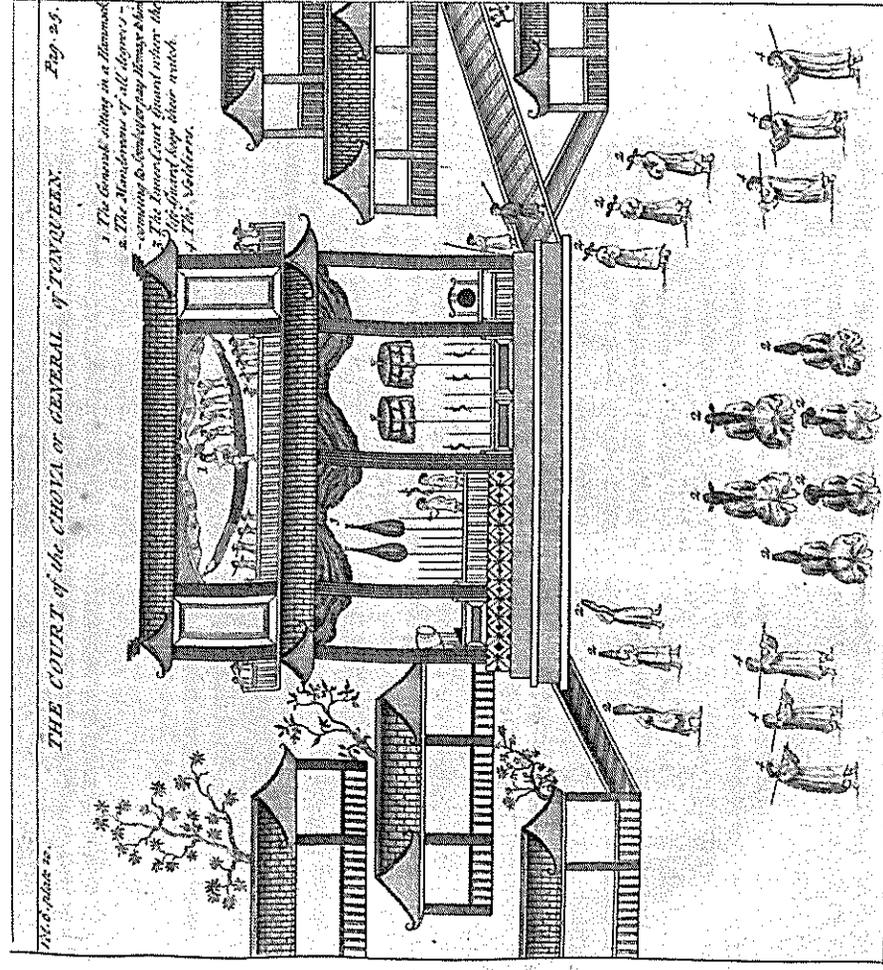


Plate 10: "The Court of the Choua or General of Tonqueen." 1. The General Sitting in a Hammock. 2. The Mandareens of all Degrees Coming to Sombey or Pay Homage to Him. 3. The Inner Court Guard where the Life-guard Keep their Watch. 4. The Soldiers.

<sup>7</sup> The "former" being a reference to "Mother of the Land."

For his own children, unquestionless, he provides well, but his sisters and brothers must be content with such revenues as he is pleas'd to allow them out of the publick, which decreases in their family as it declines and grows remote from his blood, so that those of the fourth or fifth descent can expect no such provision.

The present general has many brothers and sisters, but he is not over kind to them, which I take to proceed from his suspicious temper and weakly constitution. Most of his predecessors were otherwise inclined; they admitted their brothers to publick affairs, and conferred on them the titles and power of generals, field-marshals, and provincial governors, with the trust of numbers of soldiers, always employing them in honourable charges, and such as became the general's brothers.

As I said before, I never could hear of more than one example amongst them, of killing a brother in cool blood, and is, that of the late deceased general against prince *Chechening*,<sup>8</sup> which, all circumstances considered, can hardly be termed cruelty. The history runs thus.

This *Chechening* was second brother to the deceased general, a prince imbued with many heroick virtues; his liberality, generosity, and courteous disposition, made him popular and so beloved among the soldiers, that they would call him their father. A prudent captain he was, and no less eminent in valour, for having given the *Cochin-chinese* several overthrows, he was so extremely redoubted, that they called him the Lightning of *Tonqueen*. His fame thus daily increasing both abroad and at home, it at length drove him on the rocks and precipices of his brother's envy and jealousy, which the good prince perceiving, endeavoured to remove; humbly telling him he would do nothing but what he should order; and that the good success he had in arms, proceeded wholly from his wise and prudent direction, protesting, and solemnly swearing, he never did, nor would undertake any thing that might in the least be prejudicial to him; and, that if the soldiers or rabble should dare to offer him his place, he would not only refuse and abhor it, but punish also most severely the movers of such propositions.

This declaration gave, for the present, some seeming content and satisfaction to the general, but few years after, whether the ground was the envy and jealousy aforesaid, or that he had done somewhat that could be misconstrued or suspected, or was falsely accused, or whatsoever else the matter was, for it is indifferently reported, the general sent for him and part of his army from the frontiers of *Cochin-china*. In obedience to this command, he came to court, where, by order of the general, he was immediately clap'd in irons, and confin'd to a certain close prison near the palace.

In this condition he continued several years, by which it seems his faults were not capital, or at least nothing could be proved against him to take away his life; but in the interim, as fate would have it, about the year 1672,<sup>9</sup> the soldiers that were in

<sup>8</sup> This appears to be a transcription of *Tiết ché Ning*. The prince being referred to here was a younger brother of Trịnh Tạc who, because of his popularity among the soldiers, was imprisoned in 1657 upon the death of their father. His end came in 1674 as Baron narrates. His name was Trịnh Toàn; his title was Duke of Ning; *Tiết ché*, "to be in control of," was an expression often used to designate official assignments or those who received such assignments. Here Baron seems to combine this expression with the title of this prince.

<sup>9</sup> Vietnamese annals date these events in 1674. Baron's knowledge of these events, if not from firsthand, apparently came from William Gyfford or others who accompanied Gyfford to Tonkin in 1672 and resided there with him during the next four years. Baron's mention of 1672 probably comes from that being the year when Gyfford arrived in Tonkin to establish a presence there for the English East India Company. For more on this, see the Introduction.

the city of *Chacho*, a great number, no less than forty thousand meeting all at once, and filling every corner thereof with fear and tumultuous noises, and driving out thereby its vulgar to their several aldeas, came with sad exclamations to the palace gate, yet had so much reverence as not to enter; they brought no arms but their hands and tongues, rudely bawling forth their random thoughts against the general in opprobrious language, reproaching his ungratefulness towards them, and prodigality to his women, whom he permitted to squander and waste the treasure of the land, while they were ready to perish in want and misery, as if he purposely design'd their destruction and confusion by the most uneasy and insupportable methods of famine and nakedness; magnifying their own deserts in his service, threatening to take some severe course, if he did not enlarge their pay, and distribute some money among them, committing the mean while a thousand insolent enormities, hovering round the palace, and encamping at the several avenues thereof, as if they intended to besiege the general therein; and in effect, none could go out or in without their commission.<sup>10</sup>

In this extremity and streight, the general consulted with the *Quan fo Lew*, and other privy-counsellors, what to do. One of them, a great literado, was of the opinion, 'twas best to grant the soldiers their desires; which being moderate, they might easily be appeased, alledging, that to quell the country people, when rebellious, 'twas customary to use the soldiers, but to quiet the mutinous soldiers, money was the only expedient; but another literado, by name *Ong Trangdame*,<sup>11</sup> of great fame for his wisdom, and in high respect for his dignity, of a violent resolute nature, opposed the first opinion, saying, it was imprudent, and of pernicious consequence to indulge a company of mutinous fellows too far; adding, that it was much the better remedy to seize some of the ring-leaders, and put them to death, which would amaze and astonish the rest so, as to make them shift for their safety and security. The general, inclin'd most to this last advice, for love of his money, yet was doubtful in his resolution. The soldiers having their spies in the palace (as he had among them) had presently notice of what passed, which so incensed them against *Trangdame*, that watching the time of his coming forth the palace to go home, they immediately seized him, and treated him in the most cruel and barbarous manner an enraged multitude could invent; for having inhumanely bruised and beaten him with their fists, knees, elbows, knobs of their fans, &c. they trampled the breath out of his body with their feet, and then, dead as he was, they drew him ignominiously thro' the street to the sandy island near the arsenal, where they tore and cut his body into small pieces. This audacious cruelty, together with other notorious affronts put on several *Mandarens* at the same time, plunged the general and his courtiers in divers deep perplexities, and filled them with mortal fears, insomuch, that most began to creep in holes and corners to avoid the rage of this terrible tempest, leaving their master in a manner desolate.

The discreetest among the soldiers finding that they had passed the *Rubicon*, thought there was no retiring, and therefore advised their companions to provide themselves with a head who might guide and order their irregular and tumultuous

<sup>10</sup> For the context of these events see K. W. Taylor, "Literati Revival in Seventeenth-Century Vietnam," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 18,1 (March 1987): 18-21.

<sup>11</sup> Nguyễn Quốc Trinh (1625-1674). *Ong Trang* of *Ong Trangdame* is Vietnamese *Ong Trang*, "Mister Great Man"; *dame* is uncertain, but is apparently a transcription of the name by which he was popularly known, as many prominent literati were known popularly by the expression *Trang* (Great Man), followed by a personalized sobriquet.

proceedings, proposing prince *Chechening* as fit for the purpose; to which they unanimously consented, and would have fetch'd him out of prison that instant, and proclaimed him general, but that the night, which was already come on, hinder'd the enterprize, and caus'd them to defer it to next morning; but the general having item of their intentions, prepared with his own hands a dose for prince *Chechening*, and sent it him in the dead of the night, by a trusty eunuch, with order that he should drink all the potion. The capon, as soon as he came to the prince, after he had made four somebys, deliver'd his errand, and the general's present, which the prince presently guess'd to be what it was; but what he said is not well known, only, that he made four somebys toward the general's palace, and then took off the draught, and in few hours after dy'd. This was the end of prince *Chechening*, whose virtue was his greatest crime, the soldiers unseasonable love causing his untimely death. The next morning he<sup>12</sup> ordered a great quantity of silver and copper cash to be given to the mutineers, quenching thereby in an instant the fire of this popular insurrection; but several of them perish'd afterwards, few knew how.

It is time now to return from our digression, to take a view of the lords of the blood, *Mandareens*, &c. either civil magistrates or military officers, who at the time of their abode in the city, go every morning early to court to wait on the *Choua* and prince. The *Boua* is complimented on the first and fifteenth of every moon, by them, in their violet or blue garb, with caps of their own callicoe manufactures, in which they are obliged to cloath their retinue. The *Choua* receives them in great state, sitting at a great distance uncovered, for the more pomp (unless on some solemnity) his numerous life-guard in arms in the palace-yard, surrounded by many capon servants, who carry his order and commissions to the *Mandareens*, and bring their answers, or, according to their method of speaking, supplications, which they deliver to him on their knees. In fine, at this time, most state-matters are here handled and dispatch'd; the acts and resolutions of the *Quan-fo-lieu*,<sup>13</sup> or supream court (whose Sessions is in this palace) is presented to him, to have his approbation thereon. The prince likewise has his solicitors near the general (for he himself comes hardly once in a moon to court) who gives him notice of all that passes, that he may regulate his proceedings accordingly. No business and gifts answerable to the import of affairs, except it be greased with presents and gifts answerable to the import of affairs.

It is a goodly sight to see such a crowd of lords, and how every thing is carry'd here with that decency and decorum, that strikes an awe in every beholder, and would have really much majesty in it, if they would dispense with, or abrogate that slavish custom of going barefoot. The general indulges his *Mandareens* much, treating them with respect and tenderness as to their lives, which are seldom in danger, but for treason; for other offences they are fined or disgraced, by being turned out of employ, or banish'd the court.

When any *Mandareen* interceeds for their friends or kindred that have offended, they come covered before the general, then putting off their caps, they sombye four times, a way of reverence, or rather adoration, which consists in falling first on their knees, then touching the ground with their bodies, after the *Chinese* mode, they request his highness to pardon the crime, and impute the fault to the intercessor, who is ready by the sign of standing bare, which on such-like occasions, intimates

<sup>12</sup> Trinh Tạc.

<sup>13</sup> Previously spelled *Quan-fo-lieu*.

the condition of a criminal, to undergo such punishment as the prince shall please to inflict on him.

About eight o'clock the general withdraws from the audience place, and the lords, &c. retire from court, all but the captain of the guard, with some that have offices at court who are capons, of which a great number begin young, are menial servants, who, with the domestick maids, are only permitted to enter his privy apartments and seraglio of women and concubines.

Of these capons, a pest of mankind, the parasites, sycophants, and perverters of these princes, there are no less than four or five hundred belonging to the court, who are usually so proud, imperious and unreasonable, as makes them not less hateful and abhorred, than feared by the whole nation; however, the prince confides most in them, both for domestick and state matters; for, after they have served seven or eight years in the inner court, they are raised gradually to publick administrations and dignities, so as to be graced with the most honourable titles of provincial governors, and military prefects, while several of the more deserving, both of the military officers, and the classes of the literadoes are neglected, and suffer for want: But it is certain, the general respects his own present profit (whatsoever the consequence may be) in the advancing them; for when they die, the riches they have accumulated by foul practices, rapine and extortion, fall, in a manner, all to the general, as next heir; and tho' their parents are living, yet in regard they contributed nothing to their well-being in the world but to geld them, to which they were prompted by great indigence, and hopes of court preferment, therefore they can pretend to no more than a few houses and small spots of ground; which also they cannot enjoy but with the good-liking and pleasure of the general.

However, not to detract from truth, some of these capons have been of extraordinary merit, and among them more especially these three by name, *Ong-ja-Tu-Lea*, *Ong-ja-Ta-Foe-Bay*, and *Ong-ja-How-Foe-Tack*; <sup>14</sup> these were indeed the delight of *Tonqueen*; but they were such as lost their genitals by chance, having them bit off either by a hog or dog. These sort of capons are, by the superstitious *Tonqueense*, believed to be destined to great preferments and eminence.

The last of these is yet living, and at present governour of *Hein*, <sup>15</sup> and the largest province in the country, admiral of all the sea forces, and principal minister for the affairs of strangers; a prudent captain, a wise governour, and an uncorrupted judge, which renders him admirable to these heathens, and a shame to many christians, who, tho' they are blest with the light of the gospel, rarely arrive at that height of excellence, as to know how to be great, good and poor at once.

Remarkable is what they relate of *Ong-ja-Tu-Lea*, famous for his sharp brain, and prodigious parts, and no less for his sudden rise, as strange and tragical fall; whose history take as follows.

In the minority of the house of *Tring* (that is to say, before it was firmly establish'd in the government) the then reigning general having great necessity for some able statesman (on whom he might disburden some part of his weighty affairs) and being afflicted with continual perplexities on this head, he chanced to dream that he should meet a man the next morning, whom he could trust and employ; and,

<sup>14</sup> *Ong-ja* is almost certainly *ông già*, "mister old" or "venerable sir," a respectful form of address. The other syllables are apparently transcriptions of personal names.

<sup>15</sup> Apparently refers to *Phố Hiến*, the trading center located on the Red River between Hanoi and the sea where foreign merchants were allowed to reside.

as it happened, the first man that came to the court in the morning, was this *Tu-Lee*, who agreeing exactly with the imaginary picture of his dream, both in proportion, stature and physiognomy, the general conferred with him; and, after some discourse, found him of great ability, and exactly acquainted with their *arcana imperii*; whereupon he raised him immediately, and, in a little while, augmented his authority so greatly, that there was hardly any difference between the master and the servant, but, if any, *Tu-Lee* was more respected, courted and feared than the general himself. Whether this was the cause of his displeasure against him, or that this mushroom (raised in a night) forgetting his obligation, prompted by his overmuch prosperity, did conspire really to destroy his master, and to assume the place himself (as the common bruit was) or that this was merely a pretence to colour the general's jealousy of his over-grown greatness, I will not determine; but, to be brief, he was, by the general's order, torn in pieces by four horses, his body and dismembered limbs cut in pieces, and then burnt, and the ashes thrown into the river.

Every year about the latter end of our *January*, which falls out about their last moon, all the mandareens, officers and military men are sworn to be faithful to the king and general, and that they shall not conceal treasonable machinations against their persons, on forfeiture of their lives. The mandareens take the like oath of their wives, servants and domesticks. He that reveals high treason, has at most but thirty dollars, and a small employ for a reward, which is far short of our author's multiplication.<sup>16</sup>

They have annual musters for the levy of soldiers through the whole kingdom; in which choice they greatly respect the tallness of persons: Those of extraordinary height are allotted to be the general's life-guard, the others are disposed of according to occasions. All those that have any degree in learning and handicrafts men are exempt from this muster. How they proceed with deserters I cannot affirm; but am certain, the *Tonqueuse* know not what hanging means: their way is to behead them; only those of the royal blood are strangled. I must need say, they are neither cruel nor exquisite in these inventions.

As for strangers, they employ none; thinking none so wise as themselves: however, when I came from *Siam*, I was examined about the affairs of that kingdom and *Cochin-china*, and concerning my voyage in the *Tonqueen Sing Ja*,<sup>17</sup> and whether those boats might be able to transport soldiers through the high seas; to which I answered as I thought fit. Then I was questioned how, if the general should give me the command of two or three hundred soldiers to be employed against *Cochin-china*? to which I replied, I was, by profession, a merchant, consequently ignorant of martial affairs, and therefore incapable of serving his highness in that respect. Which excuse and refusal, tho it served for that time, yet it operated against me when I was accused by the *Chinese*.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 39: "They that discover any Treason never fail of any reward; only with this distinction, in reference to the quality of the Persons that reveal it. For as for the Mandarins and Gentlemen, the King rewards them according to his own pleasure: But as for the meaner sort, whether Men or Women, they are ennobl'd, and gratified with a reward of 50 Pains of Gold, and 500 Bars of Silver, which in all amounts to 53000 Livres."

<sup>17</sup> Apparently another rendering of the earlier transcription *Twinjire, thuyên chiâi*, "fishing boat," in which, according to Chapter V, he traveled to Siam.

<sup>18</sup> What is being alluded to here is unknown, but it may have been related to Baron's "troubles" obscurely referred to in Chapter 6.

With the nobility of this country, as I have hinted elsewhere, and acquainted you, that nobility only descends to the posterity of the king and general, and that only to the third degree; but the rest, as they obtained it by arms, learning, or money, so it is but *durante vita*. By the first means few are raised, by the second some, but the third is the true loadstone which attracts most favour.

The general's court stands in *Ca-cho*, almost in the midst of the city; it is very spacious, and walled about; within and without built full of low small houses for the convenience of the soldiers: Within they are two stories high, most open for air. The gates are large and stately, all of iron-wood, as indeed the greatest part of the palace is. His own and womens apartments are stately and costly edifices, set forth with carved, gilded, and lacquer work. In the first plain of the court are the stables for his biggest elephants and best horses; on the hinder part are many parks, groves, walks, arbours, fish-ponds, and whatsoever else the country can afford for his pleasure or recreation, since he seldom stirs out.

## CHAPTER XIII.

# THAT THERE IS NO SUCH MANNER OF CORONATION AND INTHRONIZATION OF THEIR KINGS, AS IS RELATED BY M. TAVERNIERE.<sup>1</sup>

As our author is most erroneous throughout his book, so this his thirteenth chapter is, in a manner, one intire error; for, how diligent soever I was to enquire of their learned men, and other persons of quality, I could not find, that they used the solemnity of inthroning or coronation of their kings with such pomp and magnificence, or any thing like it, as he relates; nay, scarce that they observe any ceremony at all.

They told me, that such external gallantries, and all ostentations were contrary to their customs and practice; for when their king or general dies, all publick shews whatsoever that express mirth, or demonstrate any magnificence, or have any sign of glory, so much as the wearing gold, silver, or gaudy cloaths, are not only forbidden throughout the whole kingdom, but reckoned very scandalous to be used. Neither must a courtier, during the time of his mourning for his prince, appear in rich furniture himself, or in his horse, elephants, palankeens, hammocks, &c. but the worst, coarsest, and meanest habiliments they can invent, are accounted the properest, especially for the highest dignified, and nearest of blood, with many other nice observations, whereof more amply in due place.

All the ceremony they use on these occasions, consists only to sombey, and present the prince so succeeding, who entertains the complimenters of note with meat, yet not with the usual court-splendor or merriment, by reason of his mourning for his predecessor. But was it usual with them to advance their king (who at present has no interest in the state) with so much grandeur and state to the throne, questionless they would have some degrees of honour likewise for the general when he assumes his dignity, since his power and authority, tho' intruded, controls all, and that on all occasions he is most respected and observed.

In 1682, when I arrived here from *Siam*, the old general was newly deceased: his heir made no noise at all when he succeeded; nay, he carried himself so private therein, that none abroad heard of court matters, or perceived the least alteration of government whatsoever; neither would he receive the usual honours from his own *Mandareens*, or admit strangers to audience, either to condole his sorrow, or to congratulate his advancement; only their presents were received. Thus, without any

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter XIII: "Of the ceremonies observed when the Kings of Tunquin are advanced to the Throne."

other formality, the general took possession of his office; and undoubtedly he would never condescend the king should exceed him in that kind, not only because he is to bear all such charges and expences, but also for fear the other should increase too much in reputation thereby.

Our author then is to be admired for relating things both unknown, and contrary to the customs of this people; confidently affirming, his brother was an eye-witness of that ingenious invented romance, on this occasion: For what are they else than fables, to say, that, in this solemnity, all the artillery of the court walls were fired? when there is not so much as a great gun upon the walls, nor ever was, by relation; that all the soldiers were drawn thither from the frontiers; which is to open the gates of the kingdom to the *Cochin-chinese*, who are always upon the watch for such an opportunity, to incorporate with their dominion, the two adjoining provinces, which were once ruled by the predecessors of their *Choua*: That they swear fidelity to the king, and that they will defend him and the country against the *Chinese* their inveterate enemies; when, as we have recounted, they are tributary to the *China* empire, now in possession of the *Tartars*, whom they endeavour by all means imaginable not to offend, for fear of losing their country and freedom: That the king's liberality extends that day to one million of *Panes* of gold; which, in silver, amounts at least to one hundred and fifty millions of crowns; a sum, I am sure, the whole kingdom can hardly muster up both in gold and silver, tho' he aims to perswade the world, that the king of *Tonqueen* possesses the riches of *Croesus*: That the king makes presents of money to officers of unknown names, and offices never heard of in the country: That he bestows so many *Panes* of gold and silver on the constable, meaning thereby the general, from whom he receives all he has: That the sacrifices should be so large, as to contain that prodigious number of beasts, whereby necessarily the plow must stand still, and the people be content to fast the whole year, as to flesh.

After this *Epicurean* banquet, together with what he mentions of the bonzes, fireworks, birds nests, colts flesh &c. impertinent contradictions and absurdities, not worthy [of] regard; I must confess he notes some things and passages here proper to *Siam*, and agreeable to the manners and constitutions of that people, so that he is only mistaken in the application. What is to be said of the king's going out, I will note in the next chapter.

The ladies of quality, when they go abroad, are carried according to their several degrees, either in close sedans, or hammocks upon the shoulders of men. Neither doth this nation keep their women so strict from the sight of others, as the *Moors* and *Chinese* do.

The celebration of their nativity they observe very punctually, from the prince to the meanest, each to his ability and power, with feasting, musick, and other pastimes, fire-works excepted; in which they are very deficient, as I hinted before. They are also presented, on the said occasions, by their kindred, friends and dependents, who attend them to honour the solemnity.

As to the king's liberality, who sent his son and successor a donative of a thousand *Panes* of gold, intrinsic value, an hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and five hundred bars of silver, above seven thousand dollars, at once, it is altogether impossible; because the yearly revenue allowed him, comes to no more than eight thousand dollars. He errs likewise in his multiplication, making those *Panes* of gold and bars of silver to be only an hundred and twenty thousand livres.

As to the king's successor, he himself is often ignorant which of his sons is to succeed him, if he has more than one; and, if but one, it is not certain that he shall be

king after him, since it lies in the general's breast, to name such an one as he likes best, provided he be of the royal stock; tho' he seldom puts by the next heir, unless it be for great reasons, and urgent political motives, &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE CEREMONY OF THE KING'S  
BLESSING THE COUNTRY,<sup>1</sup>  
VULGARLY AMONGST THEM, CALLED  
BOUA-DEE-YAW,<sup>2</sup> OR, ACCORDING TO  
THEIR CHARACTERS, CAN-JA<sup>3</sup>

The king seldom or never goes out to take his pleasure, but once a year he shews himself in publick (not reckoning when he is carried by the general on particular occasions) on the solemnization of their grand ceremony, at the beginning of their new year, on a particular chosen day; for they believe some to be good, others better, some indifferent, others bad; whereof they are so superstitiously observant, as to undertake nothing of importance, without consulting first most seriously, both their *China* almanacks, and blind country diviners.

The king, general and prince, with most of the *Mandareens* of the court, on this solemn occasion, go, before break of day, severally to a place at the south end of the city, purposely built for this occasion, with three gates different from their other pagodas; neither are there any images in the house. Here they stay without in sundry apartments till day-light; the king, in the mean time, is to wash his body, and put on new cloaths, never worn before.

About eight of the clock a piece of ordnance is fired; on which signal the general, prince and *Mandareens* repair to the king to do homage, tho' it extends, as to the general and prince, no further than a bare point of formality. This compliment passes in silence, yet with much state and gravity on both sides: Then immediately the second signal of a gun is heard; whereupon the king is accompanied to the gates of the said house, which are all shut, whereat he knocks, and is, by the door-keepers, asked who he is. He answers, The king, and they let him in; but none may enter with him, that being contrary to their superstition. Thus he does three several times, till he comes into the house, where he falls to his devotion with prayers and supplications, having kept a strict fast to the gods, after their mode; which done he seats himself in a gilt chair placed in the yard of the said house; and, having paused a little, a plow, with a buffalo tied to it in the same manner as they use them for tilling the ground, is presented him, who holding it by the place usually taken hold of when they work it,

<sup>1</sup> In this and the next chapter, Baron diverges from Tavernier's chapter scheme to discuss two ceremonies that interest him. He returns to Tavernier's plan in his last three chapters, although spending two chapters on the topic of funerals rather than only one, as Tavernier does.

<sup>2</sup> *Vua đí Giau*, "The king goes to make sacrifice to heaven and earth" (a vernacular expression).

<sup>3</sup> *Cân gia*, "Heaven's family" (a classical expression).

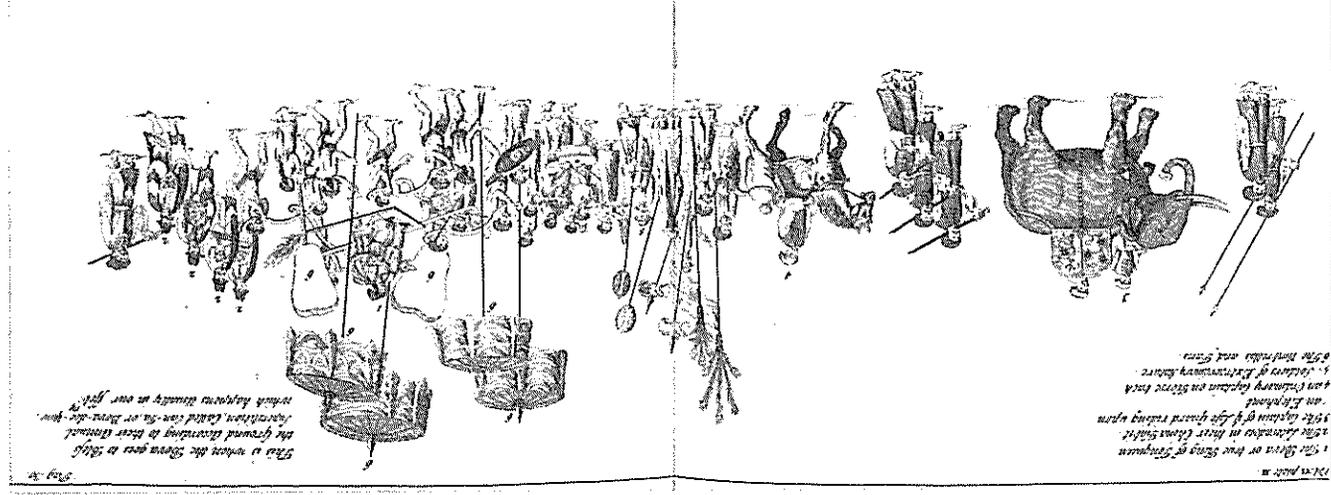


Plate 11. "This is When the Boua Goes to Bless the Ground according to their Annual Superstition called Can-Ja or Boua-dee-yaw, which Happens usually in our February. 1. The Boua or True King of Tonqueen. 2. The Literadoes in their China Habit. 3. The Captain of the Life-guard Riding upon an Elephant. 4. An Ordinary Captain on Horse back. 5. Soldiers of Extraordinary Stature. 6. The Umbrellas and Fans.

he blesses the country, and teaches the people by this emblem, that none should be ashamed to be a husbandman, and that the diligent, industrious and provident, especially in the culture of the ground, may certainly expect the enjoyment of their labour and pains.

I am informed by some, that, at the same time, the ceremony of the cups is used; others again contradict that, and affirm it to be on the day of installing the new king.

Be it when it will, the manner is thus: on a *bandedia*,<sup>4</sup> or lacquer'd table, stand several cups with prepared victuals in them; and among the rest there is one with boiled white rice, another with yellow rice, one with water, and one with herbs or greens: All these cups are neatly covered with fine paper, and with starch fasten'd thereon, so that one cannot be known from another. One of these the king takes at adventure, which is immediately opened; and if he lights on the yellow rice, there is great rejoicing, because it portends (as they believe) plenty in the land; if on the white rice, a good harvest; if water, an indifferent year; but the herbs or greens is extreme bad, denoting great mortality, famine and desolation; and so the rest of the cups, every one hath its particular signification and augury, according to what their idolatry and superstition dictates.

With this ends this grand ceremony; and the third gun being fired, the king mounts his open chair, covered with many umbrelloes, and is carried on the shoulders of eight soldiers, as it were in procession, thro' several streets, to his palace, accompanied by many literadoes in their *China* vests, all on foot. He is likewise attended by a handsome guard of the general's soldiers, some elephants and horses under the noise of drums, timbrels, scalmay,<sup>5</sup> copper basons [cymbals] and hautboys, &c. standards and colours flying.

As he passes along he demonstrates his liberality to the poor spectators and aldea people, by throwing cash or copper coin amongst them. A while after the king, the general follows, riding on a stately elephant, waited on by many princes of his own and royal family, with most of the military officers and civil magistrates of the kingdom, richly attired, and guarded by a detachment of three or four thousand horse, and about an hundred, or an hundred and fifty elephants with sumptuous furniture, and an infantry of no less than ten thousand men, all fine and gallantly cloathed, with coats and caps made of *European* manufactures, so that he far exceeds the king in pomp and magnificence. He comes a great part of the same way the king did, till he arrives at the street that leads directly to his palace, where turning, he leaves the other on his march. The prince brings up the rear of this cavalcade; he has half the train of his father, comes the same way, but takes the nearest cut to his own palace.

<sup>4</sup> Mentioned in Chapter 8 as *bandedes* in the plural.

<sup>5</sup> A straight-bodied woodwind musical instrument; *scalmay* is from Middle English *schalme*, variously spelled *schalmei* or *schalmei*, which in modern English is rendered as *shawm* or *shawn*.

## OF THE THECKYDAW,<sup>1</sup> OR PURGING THE COUNTRY FROM ALL MALEVOLENT SPIRITS.

The *Theckydaw* is observed commonly once every year, especially if there be a great mortality amongst the men, elephants, or horses of the general's stables, or the cattle of the country. The cause of which they attribute to the malicious spirits of such men as have been put to death for treason, rebellion, and conspiring the death of the king, general or princes, and that in revenge of the punishment they have suffer'd, they are bent to destroy every thing, and commit horrible violence. To prevent which, their superstition has suggested to them the institution of this *Theckydaw*, as a proper mean to drive the devil away, and purge the country of evil spirits. For the performance of which the general consults and elects a fit day, which commonly happens about the twenty-fifth of our *February*. Just on the *Chaop's* re-assuming new life and vigour. When the needful orders are given for preparation, and that every thing is got in readiness, then the general, with most of the princes and other qualified persons of the land, repairs to the arsenal about eight o'clock in the morning of the day appointed; he either rides on an elephant or horse, or else in a palankeen upon wheels, which is push'd forward by lusty fellows kept for that purpose, and shadowed by many umbrelloes. The guard that follows him is very numerous, not less than sixteen or eighteen thousand men, besides elephants and horses, all set forth to the best advantage. The streets thro' which he passes, are adorn'd with standards, pendants, and armed soldiers, to hinder the people from opening either doors or windows, for fear of sinister designs and machinations, tho' strangers are sometimes permitted to see this stately procession, if they will request it.

Being arrived at the arsenal, the *Mandareens* go to their several posts (which have been kept for them by their soldiers) on the sandy island near the said arsenal, which is heaped up and increased yearly by the descending waters from *China*, whose rapid and violent courses do not only eat away much of the land in some places, and cast it up again in others, but spoil the river too: Here, I say, they build many slight houses with bamboos, and raise infinite tents to shelter them from the injuries of rain and

<sup>1</sup> *Tê kij dao*; see Adriano di St. Thecla, *Opusculum de Sectis apud Sineses et Tonkinenses: A Small Treatise on the Sects among the Chinese and Tonkinese: A Study of Religion in China and North Vietnam in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. and trans. Olga Dror (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 2002), pp. 129-131. H. Deselle, Baron's French translator, relying on a comment by Father Cadière about popular religious practices in the twentieth century, surmises that the term here is *tê khí dau*, "sacrifice to bad air." See S. Baron, "Description du royaume de Tonquin," trans. H. Deselle, *Revue Indochinoise* XXIII, No. 3-4 (March-April 1915): 296. However, Adriano di St. Thecla (page 32 of the Latin manuscript) clearly writes it as *tê kij dao* (sacrifice of the leader's banner).

sun, and place their soldiers, foot, horse, and elephants, as it were in battle array, with flying colours, standards and pendants, their ordnance placed on advantage, the boats of war along the bank, in good postures, and every thing else in the method of an exact formidable army, noble and glorious to behold; and is indeed a shew that would, above all others, sufficiently express the power of the kingdom, were but their courage proportionable to their conveniences, and their leaders, men instead of captains; for the number of infantry present on that occasion, cannot be less than eighty thousand soldiers well disciplined, expert either for sword, pike, musket, aigenats,<sup>2</sup> &c. and the cavalry about five thousand, with rich furniture, armed with bows, arrows, swords and guns; then there are about two hundred and fifty elephants trained up for war, many of them fearless of fire and the noise of guns, having on their backs a box or chair richly gilded and lacquer'd, and two men in them, with a kind of carabines and lances; and there are no less than three hundred pieces of artillery ranged in proper order: nor do the lords, *Mandareens*, commanders, &c. in their best garb of fine scarlet, with gold buckles on the breast, in manner as we wear our loops, and a cap of the said cloth on their heads, make the least part of this glorious shew. The soldiers of the general's life-guard are stout lusty fellows, some of prodigious heighth, with caps and coats of the same fashion and fabrick as those of the *Mandareens*, the gold loops excepted, and the cloth not altogether so fine. The general's ten horses and six elephants of state far outshine the rest in splendor, their furniture being massy gold and scarlet, with an infinite number of standards, flags, pendants, hautboys, drums, copper basons, and all other sorts of warlike musick and gallantry ranged promiscuously; and the whole being attended with a vast concourse of people, makes the island very glorious and pleasant for that time.

Every thing being thus ready, three blows on a large drum are heard, keeping good time between every stroak, which sounds almost like the discharge of a small piece of ordnance: on this signal the general comes from the arsenal to the place (where the soldiers stand in order) and enters the house prepared for him. In a while after, three other stroaks are given on a great copper bason or gong, in the same manner as on the drum for distance of time; the general beginneth then to offer meat-offerings to the criminal devils and malevolent spirits (for it is usual and customary likewise amongst them, to feast the condemned before their execution) inviting them to eat and drink, when presently he accuses them in a strange language, by characters and figures, &c. of many offences and crimes committed by them, as to their having disquieted the land, killed his elephants and horses, &c. for all which they justly deserve to be chastised, and banished the country. Whereupon three great guns are fired, as the last signal; upon which all the artillery and muskets are discharg'd, that by their most terrible noise, the devils may be driven away; and they are so blind, as to believe for certain, that they really and effectually put them to flight.

At noon every one may feast himself at his own cost; but the soldiers are fed with the offered meat.

In the evening the general retires to his palace in the same state with which he went forth, much glorying that he has vanquished his enemies on so easy terms.

<sup>2</sup> Unidentified; Baron's French translator, H. Deseille, conveniently ignores this word. See S. Baron, "Description du royaume de Tonquin," trans. H. Deseille, *Revue Indochinoise* XXIII, No. 3-4 (March-April 1915): 297.

The *Boua* or king never appeareth in this solemnity; perhaps the general suspects that the soldiers, if they should be dissatisfy'd with him, might take the opportunity to revolt, and confer on the king the real and essential power which at present resides in him, and therefore finds it unsafe that the king should be then present: but on journeys in the country be they but for two or three days (if he makes any), and when he goes to war, he never omits to carry the king along with him, not only to cloke all his designs with the royal name, but also to prevent any plots which in his absence the king might give into to his utter ruin, or by condescension, permit others to seize his royal person, whereby they would authorize their pretentions, and gain so much reputation as might subvert and confound both the general's greatness and government.

They imagine our way of firing great guns to compliment friends, or the saluting therewith each other's health, very strange and barbarous, because contrary to their customs, since they entertain only their enemies, and the malicious devils with such a noise, as is related.

## CHAPTER XVI.

# OF THE FUNERALS IN GENERAL.<sup>1</sup>

The *Touqueuese*, as they have a great horror at death, so the conceit they have thereof, is not less superstitious; for they believe that only the spirits of young children are transmigrated into the bodies of other infants who are yet in the mother's womb; but all others come to be devils, or at least spirits that can do either good or harm; and that they would wander up and down as poor vagabonds ready to perish for want and indigence, if they were not assisted by their living kindred, or if they did not steal and commit violence to subsist; so that death, in their estimation, is the ultimate and greatest misery that can befall human nature. They note, with incredible care and exactness, the time, hour, and day, (all which are distinguish'd by several particular names, as apes, dogs, cats, mice, &c.) wherein a party dies; which if it happen at the like time in which his father, mother, or near relations were born, it is reckon'd very ominous, and bad for his heirs and successors, who therefore permit not the corpse to be interr'd till their conjurers and diviners advise them of a good and auspicious time, for which they wait sometimes two or three years, sometimes less, as their critical rites and blind doctors shall direct them. The body is coffin'd the mean while, and kept in a particular place, and must stand no other ways than on four stakes erected for that purpose.

This nicety is only observed among the rich, but others who do not die in this scruple, are bury'd within ten or fifteen days; but the longer the corpse is kept, the more expensive it is, not only to the wife and children (who present him daily three times with victuals, and keep always lamps and candles burning in the room, besides the offering of incense, perfumes, and a quantity of gold and silver paper, some made in the shape of gold and silver bars, others in the likeness of horses, elephants, tygers, &c.) but the rest of the kindred and relations are also obliged to contribute their several shares to the funeral feast, but most liberally at this time; besides, it is very toilsome and a great deal of trouble both to the children and all that are of kin, to resort so often to the corpse to salute and adore it, by prostrating themselves four times on the ground, and lamenting him three times a day, at the hours of repast, with endless other ceremonies, too tedious here to relate.

All that have means are very careful to provide their own coffin, when they are well advanced in years, in which they are extraordinary choice, both as to the thickness and goodness of the wood, as well as the workmanship, and regard no expences to have it to their fancies.

They observe this distinction in the sexes. If a male die, he is clothed with seven of his best coats; if a female, with nine. In the mouth of those of quality are put small

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter XIV: "Of the Funeral Pomp of the Kings of Tunquin, and of the manner of burying their dead." Baron spends two chapters, this one and the next, on the topic of funerals.

pieces of gold and silver, with some seed pearl. This they fancy will not only render him honourable in the other world, but prevent also want and indigence; yet the poorer sort use the scrapings of their fingers and toes, believing that the mouth of the deceased being filled with this filth, he cannot plague and torment his living relations. Likewise some will place on the coffin a cup of rice, which is shifted every meal, and at last bury'd with the corpse.

They use no nails to fasten the lid to its coffin, but cement it with lacker [lacquer], so tight, as is really admirable, esteeming it a great injury to nail up the body of the deceased.

When the sons accompany the corpse, they are clad, for that day, in very coarse robes, made of the refuse of silk, and caps of the same stuff, which are ty'd with cords on their heads; they have staves in their hands to lean on, for fear grief should cause them to faint.

The wives and daughters of fashion have a curtain, very large, held over their heads, that they may not be seen; yet they are easily heard by their moans and lamentations, which are made *viva voce*, and very loud. As the corpse is carry'd through the streets, the eldest son will lie down now and then on the ground, for the corpse to pass over him (which, in their opinion, is the greatest mark of filial duty); then rising again, he pushes the coffin back with both his hands, as 'twere to stop it from going further on, which is continued till they come to the grave.

Painted and gilded images, in the shapes of men and beasts, all of paper-work, follow the hearse in great numbers, with some fryers,<sup>2</sup> with the noise of drums, timbrels, hautboys, copper basons, &c. much in the nature of a popish procession; which paper finery is to be burnt immediately after the Interment.

More or less sumptuous is the funeral, according to the condition or quality of the person; for those of account are not only carried by many men, but have also double coffins, one in another, and over it a canopy of state, richly set forth, attended by soldiers, and honoured with the presence of great *Mandareens*.

Their manner is to cut their hair to the shoulders, and to wear ash-coloured cloaths, and a particular sort of straw hats, for the space of three years, for either father or mother, yet the eldest son must add thereunto three months more; for other relations less.

Their way of reckoning is very strange, for if one should die, or a child be born, in *January*, be it the last day of the moon, *February* following being the first moon of their new year, they count him to have been dead two years, or the child to be two years old, when, in effect, it is no more than one day.

During the time of their mourning, they seldom use their wonted lodgings; they lie on straw mats on the bare ground; their diet is not only mean and sparing, but the very bandesia<sup>3</sup> and cups the victuals are served in, are coarse, and of the worst sort. They forbear wine, and go to no feasts or banquets; they must lend no ear to musick, nor eye to dancing, nor contract matrimony; for on the complaint of their kindred on this head, the law will disinherit them. They have a great care not to appear in publick anywise fine, but rather austere abstain from all merriment and finery whatsoever: but as the three years grow near an end, they gradually decline too in the severity of this discipline.

<sup>2</sup> That is, "friars," i.e., Buddhist monks.

<sup>3</sup> "Table"; see above chapters 8 and 14.

Their sepulchres are in the several *Alders* of their parents nativity, and unhappy is he deem'd whose body or bones are not brought home, as they term it; but how to chuse the best place to inter the dead, is the grand mystery, and held to be of that consequence that they verily believe, that infallibly thereon depends the happiness or misery of their successors; wherefore they usually consult many years with *Tay-de-lee*,<sup>4</sup> before they come to a conclusion in that affair.

During these times of mourning, they feast the dead four times a year, in the months of *May, June, July, and September*, spending in each of them two, three, or four days; but the sacrifice which is made at the expiration of the three years is the greatest and most magnificent of all, tho' they are in the rest prodigal enough, and will spend not only their whole substance therein, but run themselves in debt too, and yet are for so doing both highly respected and commended of friends and acquaintance. After this they keep their anniversary offering on the day of the party's decease, which is punctually observed from generation to generation, to perpetuity. I have, in jesting, told some of them, I should not like to die a *Tonqueneese*, were it only because the custom of the country, whilst living, allowed me three meals a day, but when dead they would feed me but once a year; a severity more than sufficient to starve the dead, had they need of food.

It cannot fail of being entertaining to our readers, to add to our author in this place,<sup>5</sup> what the learned father *Calmet*<sup>6</sup> has collected, in relation to the practice of setting food upon the tombs of the dead; and of repasts made at their funerals: whereby it will be perceived, that this custom is not confin'd to *Tonqueen*, or even to *China*; but that it had obtained almost universally in the darker ages of the world. What he says, will be found under the head of *REPAS*, and is so curious, that we shall give the translation of it entire.

*REPAST*, or food, says he, that was set upon the tombs of the dead. *Cæna mortui*. *Baruch* mentions it in these words. *Rugiant autem clamantes contra deos suos, sicut in cæna mortui*. {*Baruch* vi. 31} The pagans howl in the presence of their gods, as in the repast which is made for the dead. He speaks of certain solemnities, wherein the idolaters us'd to make great lamentations: for example, in the feasts of *Adonis*. As to the repasts for the dead, they are distinguish'd into two kinds: One was made in the house of the defunct, at the return of the mourners from the grave. To this were invited the kindred and friends of the deceased; where they did not fail to express their grief by cries and lamentations. The other kind was made upon the tomb itself of the dead person, where they provided a repast for the wandering souls, and believed that the goddess *Trivia*, who presides over the streets and

<sup>4</sup> *Thầy đũa lỳ*, i.e., geomancer.

<sup>5</sup> The rest of this chapter was added by Baron's eighteenth-century publisher, who considered the topic of particular interest to his readers.

<sup>6</sup> Dom Augustin Calmet (1672-1757); the excerpt that follows is from his *Dictionnaire historique, critique, chronologique, géographique et littéral de la Bible*, first published in Paris in 1720, with a new revised edition in 1730. An English translation by Samuel D'Oyly and John Colson was published in the same year as Baron's account with the title *An Historical, Critical, Geographical, Chronological, and Etymological Dictionary of the Holy Bible* (London: J. J. & P. Knapton, 1732).

highways, repair'd thither in the night-time. But in truth they were beggars and poor people, who came thither in the darkness of the night, and carry'd away what was left upon the tomb.

*Est honor & tumulis animas placare paternas,  
Parvaque in extructas munera ferre pyras.* {Ovid. Fast.}

Sometimes, however, the relations made a small repast upon the tomb of the deceased. *Ad sepulchrum antiquo more silicernium confecimus, id est,* [Greek letters are printed here] *quo pransi discedentes dicimus alius alii Vale.* [Nonnius Marcell. ex Varrone.]

The custom of setting food upon the sepulchres of the dead, was common among the *Hebrews*. *Tobit* thus advises his son: *Pour out thy bread on the burial of the just, but give nothing to the wicked.* [Tob. iv. 17.] That is to say, not to partake in the repast with the relations, who performed the same ceremony. And *Jesus* the son of *Sirach* affirms, that *delicates poured upon a mouth shut up, are as messes of meat set upon a grave.* [Ecclus. xxx. 18.] What is thus set upon a tomb, is utterly lost as to the dead person; he can have no benefit from it. And elsewhere; *A gift hath grace in the sight of every man living, and for the dead detain it not.* [Ecclus. vii. 33.]

This custom was almost universal. We find it among the *Greeks*, the *Romans*, and almost all the people of the east. It still obtains in *Syria*, in *Babylonia*, and in *China*. *St. Austin* observes, that in his time, in *Africa*, they laid victuals upon the tombs of the martyrs, and in church-yards. [Aug. Ep. 22. 29. nov. edit.] The thing at first was done very innocently, but afterwards it degenerated into an abuse; and the greatest saints, and most zealous bishops, as *St. Austin* and *St. Ambrose*, had much difficulty to suppress it. [Aug. Confess. 1. 6. c. 2.] *St. Monica* being at *Milan*, had a mind, according to custom, to offer bread and wine to the memory of the martyrs; but the porter would not open the door to her, because *St. Ambrose* had forbid him; she therefore submitted with an humble obedience.

The repast that was made in the house of the deceased among the *Jews*, was also of two kinds. One was during the time that the mourning continu'd, and these repasts were look'd upon as unclean, because those that partook of them were unclean, as having assisted at the obsequies of the dead person. *Hosea* says: *Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted.* [Hos. ix. 4.] And in the form that the *Israelites* made use of when they offer'd their first-fruits, they address'd themselves thus to the Lord; *O Lord, I have not neglected thy ordinances; I have not used these things while I was in mourning; I have made no use of them at the funerals of the dead. God would not permit Ezekiel to mourn for his wife. Cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men.* [Eze. xxiv. 17.] And *Jeremiah*; *Neither shall men give them the cup of consolation, to drink for their father, or for their mother.* [Jer. xvi. 7.]

The other repasts made in the time of mourning, are those which were given after the funeral. *Josephus* relates, that *Archelaus* treated the whole people in a magnificent manner, after he had completed the seven days mourning for the king his father. [Joseph. de bello, 1. 2. c. 1.] He there adds, that it was the custom of his nation to make great feasts for the relations,

which could not be done without an injury to many families, which were not in a condition to support such large expences. Saint *Pauline* commends *Pammachius*, for having made a great feast for the poor, in the basilicon of St. *Peter*, on the day of the funeral of his wife *Paulina*. {*Paulin. illustrat. p. 29, 30.*}

## CHAPTER XVII.

# OF THE FUNERAL POMP OF THE CHOUA OR GENERAL OF TONQUEEN.<sup>1</sup>

The funeral obsequies of the choua, or general of *Tonqueen*, are performed with the same pomp and magnificence as were usually observed at the burial of their former kings, and in many respects exceed that of their present kings. As soon then as the general dies, his successors and courtiers endeavour, with all imaginable art, to conceal his death, for the space of three or four days; for should it presently be known abroad, it would unavoidably put the country, especially the chief city of *Cacho*, in great terror and consternation, because it has constantly happened at the decease of every one of them (this last excepted); that the state was disturbed with broils, contentions and civil wars, amongst the surviving sons and brethren, who strive for superiority; wherefore it is no marvel, if in this case the people are affected with their contention.

The first thing they do to their dead general is, to wash his body, and to put him on seven of his best coats, and to present him with victuals, with which he is served in the best manner possible. Then his successor, and all the princes and princesses of the blood come to lament his departure, prostrating themselves five times before him, weeping aloud, asking him Why he would leave them, and what he wanted, &c. After them the *Mandareens*, most in favour, are permitted to perform their duty, but their ceremony of condolence is to be returned them again, by the prince successor and eldest son, tho' they dare not to receive it. Except those persons, none are permitted to have a sight of the defunct; nay, those related afar off cannot have this honour. After which ceremony they put into his mouth small pieces of gold, silver, and seed pearl. The corpse is laid in a stately coffin, lacker'd over very thick, and of excellent wood; at the bottom of which they strew powder of rice and carvances [cataway], to prevent any noisome smell, over which they spread fine quilts and carpets. The corpse thus served, is placed in another room, where lamps and candles are continually kept burning; thither all his children, wives, and nearest kindred, repair three times a day, when the deceased is presented with victuals, viz. in the morning between five and six o'clock, twelve at noon, and five in the evening, and they pay their adoration to him. This continues all the time he is above ground.

There is no such thing as embalming the body to lie in state sixty-five days, and liberty for the people to come and see him, as our author pretends; neither do the bonzes and poor partake of the victuals set before him; nor does the provincial governor receive any order from court how long the country is to mourn, since their

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based upon events related to the death of Trinh Tạc in 1682-83, when, as indicated in Chapter 13, Baron was in Tonkin.

custom directs them therein sufficiently, without such particular provisions.<sup>2</sup> The whole country is oblig'd to mourn, as well for the general as king, the space of twenty-four days; the prince successor three years and three months, his other children and wives three years; the other near relations one year; and those further off, some five and others but three months; but all the great mandareens three years, equal with the children.

I cannot imagine in what part of the palace those towers, he speaks of, stood, or what became of those bells that never left tolling, from the general's expiring to the bringing of the corpse into the galley,<sup>3</sup> since they were silent at the last funeral pomp of the general in 1683.

When the needful preparations are ready, then the galleys appointed to transport and accompany the body, wait near the arsenal, which is not distant two days journey, as he says,<sup>4</sup> from the palace, but only something less than half an hour, whither the corpse is conducted in the following manner.

Several companies of soldiers, all in black, with their arms, being led by their respective captains, or mandareens, bring up the van of this funeral pomp, marching on gravely and silently; then follow two fellows of gigantick stature, carrying a kind of partisans,<sup>5</sup> with targets in their hands, and a mask or vizard [visor] on their face, to scare the devil, and open the way for the hearse to pass; next come the musicians with their drums, hautboys, copper basons, &c. playing their mournful tunes, which really are very doleful. Next is carried the funeral elogium and titles, which are more illustrious than what he had in his life time; and he is stiled, The incomparable greatness, most precious, and noble father of his country, of most splendid fame, and the like; all which is embroider'd in golden characters, on a piece of fine scarlet, or crimson damask, which is fix'd on a frame of two or three fathom high, and almost one fathom wide, and erected on a pedestal, and carried on the shoulders of twenty or thirty soldiers of the life-guard.

After this their idol, or pagoda, takes place, carried in a small gilded house, but with great reverence; then the two pennants, follow'd by the mausoleum or state cabbins, richly gilded, and curiously carved, wherein is the general's corpse. The said mausoleum doth not stand in a chariot, nor is it drawn by eight stags, trained to that

<sup>2</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 46: "When the King of Tunquin dies, he is presently Embalm'd and laid in a Bed of State, where for sixty five days the People have liberty to come and see him. All that time he is serv'd as he was when he was alive; and when the Meat is taken from before the Body, one half is given to the Bonzes, and the other half to the Poor. So soon as the King has breath'd his last gasp, the Constable gives notice thereof to the Governours of Provinces, and orders them how long they should Mourn."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*: "Three Bells which hang in one of the Towers of the Palace never leave tolling from the King's expiring till the Corps be put into the Galley."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: "From the Palace to the place where the Galleys wait for the body, it is about two days Journey ..."

<sup>5</sup> A partisan was a weapon of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with a long shaft and a blade resembling both a spear and a halberd.

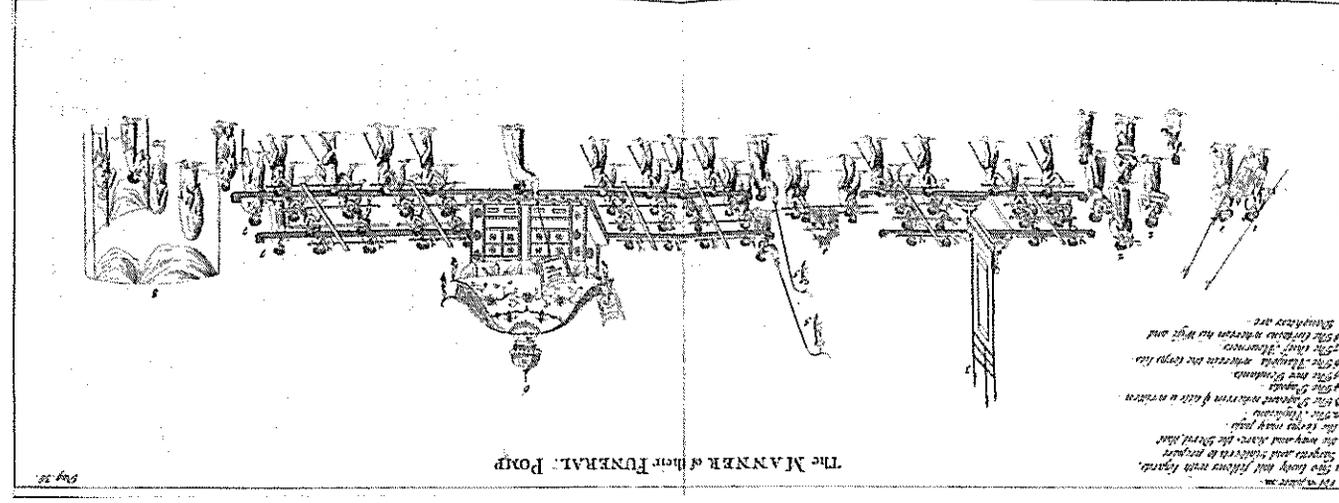


Plate 12: "The Manner of their Funeral Pomp." 1. Two Lusty Tail Fellows with Vizards, Targetts, and Halberts to Prepare the Way and Scare the Devil that the Corps May Pass. 2. The Musicians. 3. The Pageant wherein the Title is Written. 4. The Pagoda. 5. The Two Pendants. 6. The Mausola wherein the Corps Lies. 7. The Chief Mourners. 8. The Curtain wherein his Wife and Daughters Are.

service, and led by so many captains of the life-guard, as related by our author<sup>6</sup> (for it is a rare thing to see either deer or stag in this country); but it is carried on the shoulders of a hundred, or a hundred and fifty soldiers, in good order and great silence, with many fans and umbrelloes round about it, as well to shade it, as for state.

Just behind the hearse comes the eldest son and successor, with his brothers, all clad with coats made of refuse silk, not unlike our sackcloth, of a brown colour, tied with cords to their bodies; their caps are of the same, and fastened in like manner; they all have sticks in their hands, and only the eldest has straw shoes. These are immediately follow'd by the deceased's wives, concubines, and daughters, under a curtain, or pavillion, of white callicoe, very coarse, their garb of the same stuff, howling and lamenting. Behind these come the servants of the inner court, both damsels and young capadoes; as the front, so the rear and flanks are guarded by armed soldiers, under their several commanders, so that in this funeral pomp neither elephants, horses, nor chariots, appear, as he relates, unless those of paper and painted wood, whereof great quantities accompany the interment, to be burnt at the grave.

Being arrived at the gallies, in one of them, which is all black, lacker'd plain, and without any ornament of carv'd and gilded work, the corpse is placed; the rest of the gallies that attend the solemnity are but ordinary, fifty or sixty in number: Thus they set forth from *Cacho* for *Tingeva* [Thanh Hóal], the aldea and birth-place of his ancestors, a journey of five or six days at least, as they make it; for the galley the corpse is in, is towed leisurely, by five or six others, and must use neither oars, nor make the least noise by drums or musick, for fear of disturbing the dead. The other gallies are also to keep as much silence as may be. By the way they stop at certain places, in each province, appropriated by the said governors to sacrifice; for which service they prepare large provisions of cows, buffaloes, hogs, &c. The new general, however, very often stays at home, and seldom permits any of his brothers to go, for fear of plots and innovation, but his sisters are commanded to attend the funeral. The ordering of the whole solemnity is intrusted to the care and conduct of some great favourite.

When they arrive at the intended aldea, there is more than a little to do with their obsequies and ceremonies, according to their rites: the particular place where he is buried few know precisely, and those are sworn to secrecy; and this not for fear of losing the treasure that is interred with him, as *M. Taverniere* fancies,<sup>7</sup> (for there is none but what is put into their mouths, as I mention'd before) but out of

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., item 5 of the key for the illustration entitled, "The Order observ'd in the March of the Funeral Pomp at the Interment of the Kings of Tunquin," that follows page 40: "The Chariot which bears the Mausolee, wherein is the King's Corps, is dragged by Eight Stags trained to this Service. Each of these Stags is led by a Captain of the Life Guard." The illustration indeed shows eight stags, which may have been an exuberance of the artist, for in the text (p. 47). Tavernier says: "... eight Horses, every one of them led by a Captain of the Guard, who draw the Hearse."

<sup>7</sup> See *ibid.*, the explanation for the illustration entitled, "A Continuation of the Order observed at the Funeral Pomp of the King of Tunquin setting out from the City of Bodlego," preceding page 41: "... for six onely of the chief Eunuchs of the Court are to know where the King hath been buried. An Oath is tendered to them never to reveal the place. And this is done perhaps on some Religious Motive, and likewise through Fear, that the Treasures which are buried by him should be digged up. These Riches are ordinarily some Massy Bars of Gold and Silver, as likewise some Pieces of Cloth of Gold and Silver, and such kinds of other rich Furnitures."

superstitious motives, as well as state-jealousy; for, as they believe, they shall be happy and great if they meet with a good favourable sepulchre for their relations; so the general is always fearful that the place where his predecessor rests being known to their enemies, it would depend on their malicious power to ruin his family, only by taking out his ancestor's bones, and interring those of their own family in their place. Indeed we have many examples in this country of such fools, as thought to make way for their exaltation, by thus transplacing the bones of the dead men; but as many as have attempted it have suffer'd for their foolish presumption.

As to those lords and ladies that, according to him, will needs be buried alive with the king or general,<sup>8</sup> it is a thing so contrary to their customs, as well as repugnant to their natures, that I verily believe, if they thought we had such an opinion of them, they would treat us as brutes and savages. Nor do I know of any city and its far castle, in the whole kingdom of *Tonqueene*, that is called *Bodligo*; but indeed those banks of the river, opposite to the city of *Cacho*, are call'd *Bode*;<sup>9</sup> but, however, there is neither king's house, palace, or castle, on or near the same.<sup>10</sup>

But it remains to speak something of their third annual sacrifices and feast, for the defunct general, which happens about three months before the mourning expires. The celebration whereof extends not only to his family, but all the mandareens that hold any office must appear at this grand solemnity, to pay their offering, in token of their gratitude to their deceased benefactor and common father.

The manner is thus: Just before the arsenal, on the sandy island, there are built of bamboos and slight timber, many large and spacious houses, after the manner of their palaces, with wide yards and open courts, wrought most curiously with basket work, &c. The apartments thereof, especially that where the altar stands, are richly hang'd with gold and silver cloth; the posts and stands are either covered with the same, or with fine scarlet or other European manufactures; the roof is canopy'd with silk damask, and the floor is covered with mats and carpets. The altar itself is most curiously carved, lacker'd, and splendidly daub'd with gold, to profusion of cost, labour, and diligence. And as this is the general and his families share, so the mandareens of quality, according to their abilities, strive to out-do each other in their funeral piles, as I may call them, which are placed round about the former work, in good order, and at an equal distance and height, and of a like fashion, either four, six, or eight feet square, about fifteen or twenty feet diameter, resembling much our large lanterns, open on all sides, with shutters within the banisters and rails, very neatly set forth with rich, painted, carved, and lacker'd work; and hangings of costly silks and good pieces of broad cloth; the structure itself of slight timber and boards: The great mandareens each build two of these; the others one apiece; so that this barren place is covered in less than the space of fifteen days, with all this finery, which makes it resemble another city, or an Antiochian-like camp.<sup>11</sup> in which interim the whole country flocks thither to see this goodly and pompous erection; and many

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*: "Many lords and Ladies of the Court will needs be buried Alive with him, for to serve him in the places where he is to go."

<sup>9</sup> *Bò Dè*, the ferry landing just across the river from Hanoi.

<sup>10</sup> Baron is commenting upon the illustration in Tavernier before page 41, entitled "A Continuation of the Order observed at the Funeral Pomp for the Interment of the Kings of Tunquin setting out from the City of Bodligo," which shows European-style castles and palaces.

<sup>11</sup> The allusion here is unclear, whether to the city of Antioch or to the Seleucid kings of Syria named Antiochus.

strange beasts, as tygers, bears, baboons, monkeys, and what other wild creatures they can get, are brought thither from far places; for which they have been sometimes diligently seeking, perhaps days and years. From all which the people (who gather together in such prodigious crowds, as give a great idea of the populousness of the country) take occasion to admire the general's grandeur and love to his deceased father. But for about three days before the time prefix'd for this sacrifice, no spectators are so much as to approach this place, because then they are busy'd in setting the image of the defunct before the altar, richly habited with many coats; and to serve it with victuals; and to present him with amber, pearl, and coral necklaces, gold and silver tankards, cups, basons, tables, and in short, with all the finery and toys that he delighted in, and made use of in his life-time; and at the same instant they erect, in a court-yard, where this altar stands, a machine; in the making whereof they had before employ'd five or six months, under the direction and oversight of three or four great mandareens, resembling somewhat the mausoleum, which M. Taverniere describes;<sup>12</sup> which they call *Anja Tangh*.<sup>13</sup> It is about three or four stories, or forty feet high, and about thirty feet long, and twenty broad, made of thin boards and slight timber, to be light and portable; and the different parts of it are so contriv'd as to take off and on; the undermost part stands on four wheels, whereon the rest are placed, one by one, by means and help of such instruments and engines as our carpenters use to mount their heavy timber. The pageant, or fabrick itself, is mighty neat, handsome, and glorious, adorn'd with carved, gilded, painted, and lacker'd work, as rich and costly as possible can be made of that kind, with many pretty little inventions of galleries, balconies, windows, doors, porches, &c. to adorn it the more. On this magnificent throne is placed another image of the dead general, in rich cloaths, which is afterwards burnt with the rest.

Matters being brought to this order, the general and his family repair thither early in the morning of the last three fore-mentioned days, the ways being lin'd with soldiers, and he attended by his life-guard, follow'd by *Mandareens* and grandees, where most of the day is spent in tears, mourning and lamentations, sombeys, sacrifices and offerings for his father; but, in the evening, the offered viands and other victims are divided amongst the assistants and soldiers.

Of the wild and savage creatures, some are drowned, to send their ghosts to the deceased prince, to be at his devotion in the other world, and others are given away. About ten o'clock, an infinite number of images of all sorts of fowls, horses, and elephants in paper-work, &c. are burnt in the open court, just before the machine or mausoleum, where likewise the general, with his relations and *Mandareens*, sombeys to the image of his predecessor therein; their magicians, *Thay*,<sup>14</sup> *Phou*,<sup>15</sup> *Thooe*,<sup>16</sup> all the while singing, reading, jumping, and playing so many antick tricks, and making

<sup>12</sup> This is a reference to the illustration in entitled, "The Order observ'd in the March of the Funeral Pomp at the Interment of the Kings of Tunquin," in Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," following page 40, which shows a two-storey tower-like conveyance containing the royal corpse, identified as "the Mausolee."

<sup>13</sup> *Tangh* is probably Vietnamese *tang*, "mourning, death, burial ceremony." *Anja* is unclear.

<sup>14</sup> *Thây*, "teacher/master."

<sup>15</sup> *Phu*, "father/venerable."

<sup>16</sup> Baron's French translator, H. Deseille, thinks this should be read as *thây* and that it means "magician." See S. Baron, "Description du royaume de Tonquin," trans. H. Deseille, *Revue Indochinoise* XXIII, No. 5-6 (May-June 1915): 448.

such terrible postures, as would scare some, and perswade others, they were either really demoniacal, or at least possessed with madness. About three hours after midnight fire is set to all this finery, the general, &c. retiring, taking along with him the pearls, amber, gold and silver that was on the altar (which are reserved for the service of the defunct, in a peculiar place of his palace). The *Mandareens* also send to their houses again whatsoever gold, silver, &c. they brought thither, leaving the rest to be consumed by the flames; and its ashes the wind scatters where it pleases, so that but very little, if any, comes where it was designed.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

# OF THE SECTS, IDOLS, WORSHIP, SUPERSTITION, AND PAGODAS OR TEMPLES OF THE TONQUEENESE.<sup>1</sup>

Tho' there are many sects amongst this people, yet only two are chiefly followed. The first is that of Congfutu, as the *Chinese* call him, (the *Tonqueenese*, *Ong-Congtu*,<sup>2</sup> and the *Europeans*, *Confucius*) the ancientest of the *Chinese* philosophers. This man they esteemed holy; and, for wisdom, he is reputed not only amongst them and the *Chinese*, but the *Japanese* too, the *Solomon* of all mortals: Without some proficiency in whose learning, none can attain any degree in their civil government, or be anyways allow'd to know matters of importance; tho' the truth thereof, and very quintessence of his doctrine, is nothing else but what we call moral philosophy, and consists in the following position,

"That every one ought to know and perfect himself, and then, by his good and virtuous example, bring others to the same degree of goodness, so as they jointly may attain the supreme good; that it is therefore necessary to apply themselves to the study of philosophy, without which none can have a proper insight or inspection of things, and be able to know what is to be followed or avoided, nor rectify their desires according to reason,"<sup>3</sup>

with other the like precepts, wherein consists the *Chinese* doctrine and wisdom.

But his disciples, building on his principles, have extracted therefrom many rules and precepts, which soon after became the main subject of their superstition and religion. They acknowledged one supreme deity, and that all terrestrial things are directed, governed and preserved by him: that the world was eternal, without either beginning or creator. They reject the worship of images; they venerate and pay a kind of adoration to spirits. They expect reward for good deeds, and punishment for evil. They believe, in a manner, the immortality of the soul, and pray for the deceased. Some of them also believe, that the souls of the just live after separation from the body; and that the souls of the wicked perish as soon as they leave the body. They teach, that the air is full of malignant spirits, which is their dwelling place; and that those spirits are continually at variance with the living. They particularly recommend to their pupils, to honour their deceased friends and

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," Chapter XV: "Of the Religion and Superstition of the Tunquineses."

<sup>2</sup> Ông Không Tử, "Mr. Confucius."

<sup>3</sup> I am unable to identify this quotation.

parents; and do much concern themselves in performing certain ceremonies thereunto belonging, as I have mentioned already; and hold several other things very rational, and, in my opinion, in many things nothing at all inferior to either the ancient *Greeks* or *Romans*. Neither must we think, that the wiser and better sort amongst them are so shallow-brained, as to believe the dead stand in need of victuals, and that therefore they are so served, as I have mentioned in its due place; no, they know better, and tell us, they do it for no other reason, than to demonstrate their love and respect to the deceased parents; and withal to teach their own children and friends thereby, how to honour them when they shall be no more.

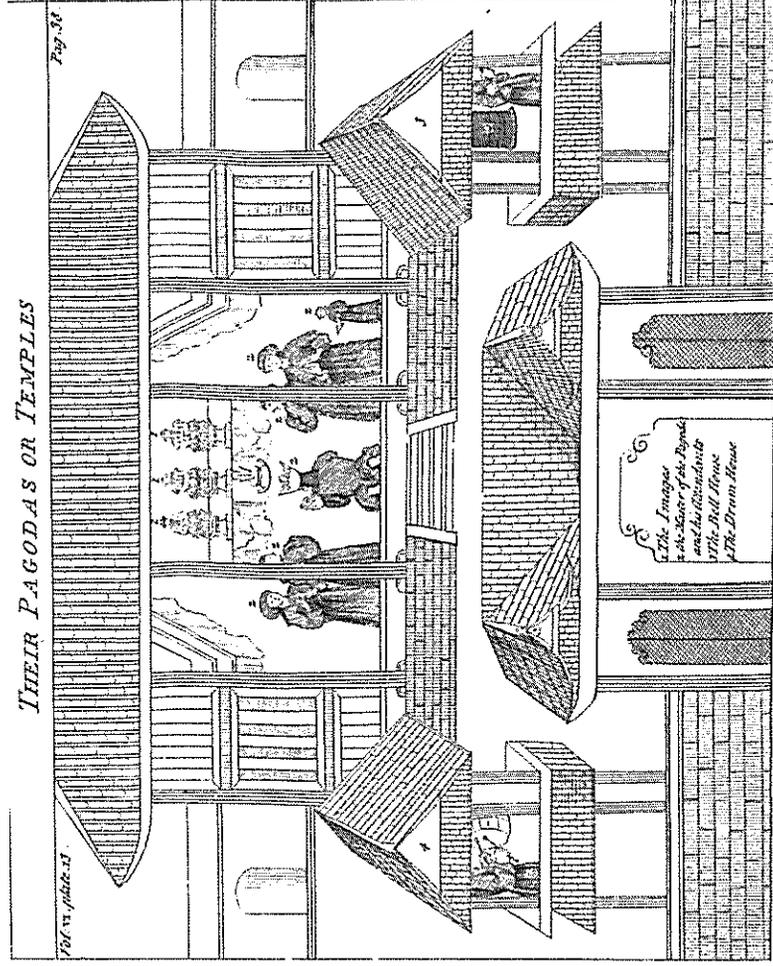


Plate 13: "Their Pagodas or Temples." 1. The Images. 2. The Master of the Pagoda and his Attendants. 3. The Bell House. 4. The Drum House.

However, the vulgar sort, and those that carry their judgment in their eyes, credit that as well as many other impertinent impossibilities of their superstition. In fine, tho' this sect hath no pagodas erected, nor particular place appointed to worship the king of heaven in, or priests to preach and propagate the said doctrine, nor a due form commanded or observed, but it is left to every one's discretion to do as he pleases in these respects, so as he gives thereby no scandal, yet it has their kings, princes, grandees, and the learned men of the kingdom for its followers.

In former days, the king of the land might only sacrifice to the king of heaven; but, since the general has usurped the royal power, he has assumed this sovereign

prerogative, and performs the said ceremony in his palace himself, in case of public calamity, as want of rain, famine, great mortality, &c. befalling the kingdom, which no other may do, on peril of their lives.

The second sect is called *Boot*,<sup>4</sup> which signifies the worship of idols or images, and is generally followed by the ignorant, vulgar and simple sort of people, and more especially the women and capadoes, the most constant adherents thereunto. Their tenets are, to worship images devoutly, to believe transmigration. They offer to the devil, that he may not hurt them. They believe a certain deity coming from three united gods.<sup>5</sup> They impose a cloister and retired life, and think their works can be meritorious, and that the wicked suffer torments together; with many foolish superstitious niceties, too idle to repeat: however, they have no priest, any more than the former sect, to preach and propagate their doctrine; all they have, are their Sayes, or Bonzes, as M. *Taverniere* calls them (which, by mistake, he terms priests) which are a kind of friers or monks.<sup>6</sup> They have some nuns also, whose dwellings are about, and sometimes in their pagodas, who most commonly are invited to celebrate their funerals with their drums, trumpets, and other musick: they subsist for the most part by alms, and the charity of the people. In brief, this is that sect that has spread its fopperies and impertinences very far; and, in effect, with its schism and imposture, has overspread, in part or whole, most of the eastern countries, as this of *Tonqueen*, *China*, *Japan*, *Correa* [Korea], *Formosa*, *Cambodia*, *Siam*, the *Gentues*<sup>7</sup> of coast *Commandel*<sup>8</sup> and *Bergal*, *Ceylon*, *Indosthan*,<sup>9</sup> &c. From one of these two last places it was first brought into *China*, on the following occasion.

One of the *Chinese* emperors coming to the knowledge of a famous law that was taught in the west, which was very efficacious for instructing and conducting mankind to wisdom and virtue, and that the doctors and expounders thereof were persons extremely celebrated for their exemplary lives, and stupendous and miraculous actions, &c. he therefore dispatched several sages to find out this law, and bring it to *China*. These ambassadors, after they had travelled, or rather erred, to and fro the space of almost three years, arrived either in *Indosthan* or *Mallabar*,<sup>10</sup> where finding this sects of *Boots* very rife, and of mighty veneration, and being deceived by the devil, and weary of travelling any further, they thought they had found what they sought for; and so, without more ado, they got seventy-two books of those false tales, of the natives, with some able interpreters, and returned to *China*, where the emperor received them most kindly and joyfully; and ordered directly, that the said sect should be publicly taught throughout all his dominions. In which miserable blindness they have ever since continued.

<sup>4</sup> *But*, Vernacular Vietnamese for Buddha/Buddhism.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly a reference to the Buddhas of "past," "present," and "future."

<sup>6</sup> See note 16 in Chapter 1. Baron's French translator, H. Deselle, proposes to read "Sayes" as *thây*, "teacher," a form of address often used for Buddhist monks (S. Baron, "Description du royaume de Tonquin," trans. H. Deselle, *Revue Indochinoise* XXIII, No. 5-6 [May-June 1915]: 451), but since later in this chapter we see that Baron transcribes *thây* as "thay," here he must be referring to *sâi*, on which see Chapter One, note 8.

<sup>7</sup> Gentes, i.e., clans/lineage groups.

<sup>8</sup> Coromandel, the southeastern coast of India.

<sup>9</sup> Hindustan, the basin of the five Punjab rivers and the upper Gangetic Plain in northern India.

<sup>10</sup> Malabar, the southwest coast of India.

I cannot help making an observation in this place, for the honour of the Christian religion; and that is, that, in all appearance, this new law which the *Chinese* emperor at that time had heard of, could be no other than the first promulgation of the gospel in and about *Judea*; and its being then preached to *Jews* as well as gentiles, by the holy apostles, which was attended with so many miracles, that it was no wonder the fame thereof should extend to the remotest regions, and reach the ears of the *Chinese* emperor: and this is still the more probable, because, by the nearest calculation that can be made, the time which the emperor of *China* is recorded to have heard of the publication of this new doctrine, agrees punctually with that of the appearance of our Saviour, and the preaching of the apostles. And had the sages sent by that emperor, proceeded as they ought, not only the great empire of *China*, but all the vast territories adjacent, that now lie immers'd in paganism, and the dregs of superstition, might have been converted, and brought to the glorious light of Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

Some other sects, as that of *Lanzo*,<sup>12</sup> are but slenderly followed, as is said before, tho' their magicians and necromancers, as *Thay-Boo*,<sup>13</sup> *Thay-Boo-Twe*,<sup>14</sup> *Thay-de-Lie*,<sup>15</sup> are the proselytes and followers thereof, and in great esteem with the princes, and respected by the vulgar, so that they are consulted by both in their most weighty occasions; and they receive their opinions and false predictions as very oracles, believing they speak by divine inspiration, and have the fore-knowledge of future events: wherefore it is not probable, that they were of this sort that were sent to the frontiers for soldiers, as M. *Taverniere* has it.<sup>16</sup>

I know indeed, that the general rummages<sup>17</sup> sometimes a certain sort of vagabonds that haunt every corner of the kingdom, pretending to be conjurers and fortune-tellers, cheating and misleading thereby the simple and ignorant people, and infecting them with notions contrary to the belief of the sects publicly tolerated. But as the *Tonqueenese* are really very credulous, and ready to embrace almost every new opinion they meet withal, so are they not less tenacious in retaining any notions which they are in possession of, and observe carefully times and seasons, as good and bad; in which they will not undertake any voyages or journey, nor build houses, cultivate grounds, nor bargain for any thing considerable; nor even will they attempt, on ominous days, to cure their sick, bury their dead, nor in a manner,

<sup>11</sup> This refers to an event attributed to the reign of Emperor Han Mingdi (CE 58-75) used to account for the introduction of Buddhism into China. The idea that the emperor had in fact heard about Christianity, but that his envoys returned with reports of Buddhism instead, was common among Europeans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Adriano di St. Thecla, *Opusculum de Sectis apud Sinenses et Tonkinenses: A Small Treatise on the Sects among the Chinese and Tonkinese*, ed. and trans. Olga Dror, pp. 186-189.

<sup>12</sup> Apparently a garbled transcription of Laozi, Vietnamese Lão Tử.

<sup>13</sup> *Thầy Bói*, "prognosticator."

<sup>14</sup> *Thầy Bói Tụy*, "sorcerer."

<sup>15</sup> *Thầy Địa Lý*, "geomancer."

<sup>16</sup> Tavernier, "A New and Singular Relation of the Kingdom of Tunquin," p. 50, introduces Laozi as "one of the greatest Magicians in the East" who "taught much of [Buddhist] Doctrine" and advocated building hospitals where "several of the Nobility" and "a great number of the Bonzes" went "to look after the Sick." He then writes: "While my brother was there, the Choua [*Choua*], a great Enemy to these Vagabonds, sent for a great number of Bonzes and Says, or idle Fellows, and picking out the strongest and best proportion'd, sent them away to the Frontiers for Souldiers."

<sup>17</sup> The sense of "to rummage" here is "to search out" with the intent to eradicate.

transact any thing without the advice of their soothsayers and blind wizards, who are principally divided into three classes, that is, those who are followers of *Thay-Boo*, or *Thay-Boo-Twe*, or *Thay-de-Lie*, and have not the least sense of their being most grossly cheated and deluded by the fallacious pretensions of those impudent fellows, who live wholly by selling their directions to them, at excessive rates, as the most desirable and current merchandize. And, since these pretended conjurers are so much observed and venerated by the deluded people, I will descend to the particular functions of every one of them, and speak first of *Thay-Boo*, and his class.

These pretend to declare all such future events as concern marriages, building of houses, and, in general, pretend to foretell the success of any business or consequence. All that come to him, or those of his class, are kindly used for their money, and receive, for answers, what is suppos'd will satisfy them best, but always so ambiguous, as will bear a double and doubtful interpretation. The magicians of this tribe are generally blind, either born so, or come to be so by some accident or other. Before they pronounce their sentence on the proposed question, they take three pieces of copper coin, inscribed with characters, which they throw on the ground several times, and feel what side of it falls uppermost; then prating and mumbling some strange kind of words to themselves, they deliver the result of the conjuration.

Secondly, *Thay-Boo-Twe*, to whom they resort in all distempers. This class of pretended magicians have their books, by which they pretend to find out the cause and result of all sickness; and never miss to tell the sick party, that his distemper proceeds from the devil, or some water gods; and pretend to cure it by the noise of drums, basons and trumpets. The conjurer of this tribe is habited very antickly, and sings very loud, and makes hideous noises, pronouncing many execrations and blasphemous words, sounding continually a small bell, which he holds in his hand, jumping and skipping as if the devil were really in him; and all this while there is store of victuals prepared for an offering to the devil, but it is eaten by himself: and he will continue this sport sometimes for several days, till the patient be either dead or recovered, and then he can give an answer with some certainty.

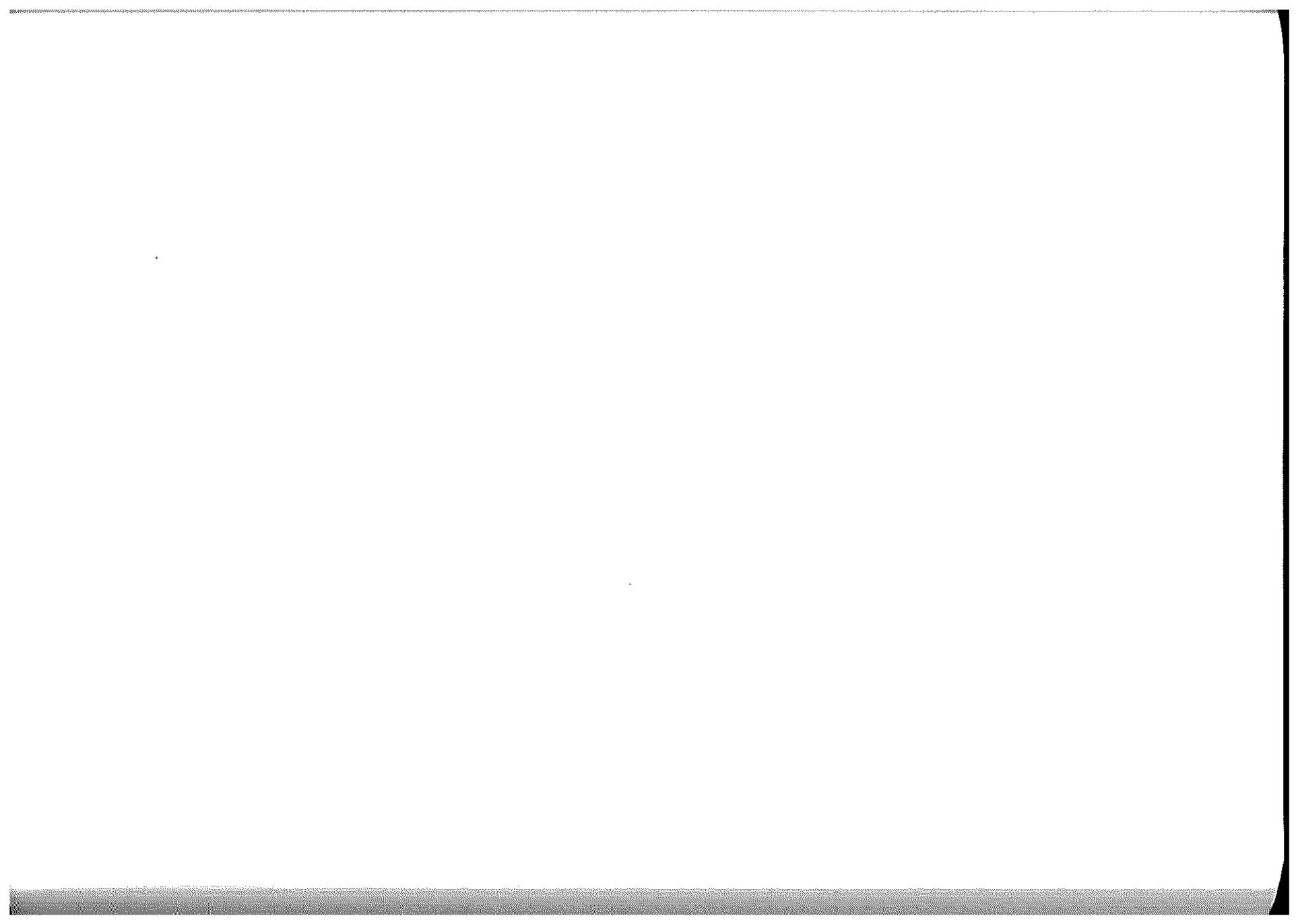
It belongs to them to dispossess such as are possess'd by the devil, which is the ultimate of their conjuration, and is commonly effected after this manner. They curse, and most impiously invoke I do not know what demon; and they paint the pictures of devils, with horrible faces, on yellow paper, which is fixed to the wall of the house; then they fall to bauling so terribly, and scream so loud, dancing and skipping, as is most ridiculous, sometimes fearful to see and hear. They also bless and consecrate new houses; and if they be suspected to be haunted, they drive the devil out of them by their conjuration, and the firing of muskets.

*Thay-de-Lie's* business is, to be consulted, which are the fittest places for burial of the dead; so that the living relations and kindred may, by this means, be happy and fortunate; and the like follies.

I will speak nothing of *Ba-Cote*,<sup>18</sup> because they are only the pretended witches amongst the baser sort.

As for temples and pagodas, since the *Toriquenes* are not very devout, there are neither so many, nor those so sumptuous, as I have seen in some of the neighbouring countries; and the preceding plate [plate 13: "Their Pagodas or Temples"] will give you a sufficient idea of them.

<sup>18</sup> *Bà Cói*, "female medium."



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