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**A Voyage To New Guinea, And The Moluccas, From
Balambangan: Including An Account of Magindano,
Sooloo, and other Islands; And Illustrated With Thirty
Copperplates, Performed In The Tartar Galley, ...**

Forrest, Thomas

London, 1779

Chapter XIV. Of the Osland Sooloo - Claims of the Spaniards to any
Sovereignty over that Island refuted - Climate - Fruits - Government -
Articles from China carried thither, and Returns - ...

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CHAPTER XIV.

Of the Island Sooloo—Claims of the Spaniards to any Sovereignty over that Island refuted—Climate—Fruits—Government—Articles from China carried thither, and Returns—Dissipation of the Datoos—Pearl Fishing Harbours—Cruelty to Slaves—Fray between the Sooloos and the English-Buggesses—General Character of the Sooloos—Many Instances of their Treachery.

1776.
January.

THE Sooloos say, their island * was formerly a part of the ancient Borneo empire, founded by the Chinese; but the Mindanoers, as has been hinted, assert, the Sooloos were once tributary to them. Be that as it may, this island had been at war with the Spaniards, before the year 1646; and on the 14th of April, of the said year, peace was made between them, by the mediation of the King of Mindano; upon

* The island Sooloo lies south west from Mindano, and is governed by a king of its own. It is far from being large; but, its situation between Mindano and Borneo makes it the mart of all the Moorish kingdoms. I do not find, that the Portuguese ever pretended to settle, much less to conquer these islands; but they visited them frequently, for the sake of trade; and in those days, there was greater commerce in these parts, than can well be imagined. For, while the trade was open to Japan, there came from thence two or three ships laden with silver, amber, silks, chests, cabinets, and other curiosities, made of sweet scented woods; with vast quantities of silks, quilts, and earthen ware, from China. For these the merchants of Golconda exchanged their diamonds, those of Ceylon their rubies, topazes, and sapphires; from Java and Sumatra came pepper, and spices from the Moluccas.

DALRYMPLE'S PROOFS.

HARRIS'S HISTORY OF THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE, p. 685.

which

which the Spaniards withdrew from Sooloo, still reserving to themselves the sovereignty of the islands Tappool, Seaffee, Balanguifan, and Pangaterran. The Sooloos agreed also to give in sign of brotherhood, yearly, three vessels laden with rice. This is related in Combes's account of Magindano. The reason of this sudden peace was fear of the Dutch assisting Sooloo; and the Spaniards dreaded, that to be driven off the island, might hurt the reputation of their arms.*

1776.
January.

The treaty of Munster was made two years after this peace, in 1648, by which the navigation of the Spaniards is restrained; for the treaty says, "It is further agreed, that the Spaniards shall maintain their navigation in the manner it at present is, without being able to extend it farther in the East Indies." This is particularly set forth by Mr. Dalrymple; also, that the Sooloos made lately with the Spaniards treaties of alliance, offensive and defensive, as the Spanish governor declared in a letter wrote to the English governor of Manila. Mr. Dalrymple first made the English acquainted with the Sooloos, and procured from them, for the India Company, a grant of country, that surely cannot be claimed by any European power—the north part of Borneo, and some islands north of it; of which more hereafter.

The island of Sooloo is situated in the latitude of 6° N. and longitude 119° E. from Greenwich. It is thirty miles long, twelve broad; and may contain sixty thousand inhabitants.

This island, lying about midway between the islands of Borneo and Magindano, is well cultivated; affording a fine prospect from the sea,

* Pedro Murille Velarde's Account of the Philippines.



1776.
January

on every side, far superior to that of Malay countries in general. Those that I have seen come nearest to it, in appearance, are, that part of the coast of Sumatra, between Atcheen Head and Pedir, the north coast of Java, the south coast of the island Bally, the country about Malacca, part of the north coast of Borneo, the islands of Salibabo and Kabruang.

Sooloo being an island not very large, and the hills on it not being very high, nor consequently the clouds stopt by them, it has no certain rainy season, as have the large Malay islands. There is not such difference in the wetness of the seasons or monsoons, as on continents or very large islands; but the S. W. monsoon brings most rain. Much falls at the change of the monsoons; especially the autumnal. The capital town is called Bowan, situated by the sea coast, on the N. W. part of the island, and containing about six thousand inhabitants. Many of them are Illanon, or Oran Illano, with whom we are acquainted, and who live in a quarter by themselves.

A hill near the town, is pretty high, and at night generally capd with a cloud. Other hills, of inferior height, are sometimes also covered in the evening. These clouds feed the rivulets which run from the hills. The land wind here is faint and reaches not far.

The island being rather small for its number of inhabitants, they study agriculture more than do those of the adjacent islands, already mentioned, where land may be deemed of no value. The Sooloos plant rice; but the crop cannot be depended on, as they are not sure of rain. They therefore cultivate many roots, the Spanish, or sweet potatoe,

potatoe, the clody, or St. Hillano yam, the China yam, both red and white; sending to Mindano for what rice they consume.

1776.
January.

They have great variety of fine tropical fruits; their oranges are full as good as those of China. They have also a variety of the fruit called Jack, or Nanka, Durians, a kind of large custard apple named Madang, Mangoes, Manguftines, Rambuftines, and a fruit they call Bolona, like a large plumb, or Mangoe, white inside. In great abundance do they enjoy a very innocent and delicious fruit, by Malays called Lancey. The trees in the woods are loaded with this fruit, which is large, and ripens well: this it does not on the island of Sumatra, where, perhaps, it finds too much moisture. The Sooloos having great connexion with China, and many Chinese being settled amongst them, they have learned the art of ingrafting and improving their fruits, while the fruits at Magindano have remained indifferent.

The Sooloos have a very good breed of horses, which they train to trot fast, seldom suffering them to gallop. When I was there in 1773, I saw often Datoos and their ladies ride in this manner, as mentioned in the journal. At Sooloo are none of those beautiful birds called Lories; but there is abundance of diminutive Cocatores, and small green parrots. There is no spice tree, but the cinnamon.

Here are wild elephants, the offspring, doubtless, of those sent in former days from the continent of India, as presents to the kings of Sooloo. Those animals avoid meeting with horned cattle; though they are not shy of horses. Sooloo has spotted deer, abundance of goats and black cattle; but the people seldom milk their cows. They



1776.
January.

have no sheep, except a very few from Samboangan. The wild hogs are numerous, and do much mischief, by breaking down fences. After harvest, the Sooloos hunt the elephants and wild hogs, endeavouring to destroy them.

This island enjoys a perpetual summer. Up the country, it is always cool, especially under the shade of the teak trees, which are numerous, as on Java. This tree, so well known in India for constructing the best ships, has a broad leaf, which, bruised between the fingers, stains the hand red. The industrious Chinese gather those leaves, and the leaves of the fruit tree called Madang, to line the baskets of cane or bamboo, in which they pack up the swallo they export in great quantities, from this place. They are attentive to dry it in the sun, as it is apt to give with the least moisture. The Chinese must gain handsomely by their trade hither; else they would not put up with the rough usage they sometimes receive from the sturdy barons, the Datoos.

List



List of the Articles that generally compose the Cargo of a Chinese Junk, of which Two come annually from Amoy to Sooloo, and pass to the eastward of Paragoa. 1776.
January.

	Cost in China. in Dollars.	Sell for at Sooloo.
2000 Galangs (salvers of brafs) seven to a pecul,	40	70
100 Peculs iron, in small pieces, like Bengal iron	4	8
Sugar candy, a quantity, per pecul	7	10
50 Raw silk ditto	400	600
3000 Pieces black kowfongs, a kind of nankeen, per piece	0½	1
5000 Pieces kompow, white strong linen	0½	1
500 Kangans, 25 in a bundle, called gandangs, per gandang	7	10
200 Quallis, an iron thin pan, three foot diameter each	1	2
500 Nests of quallis, three in a nest	1	2
One million of pieces China ware, consisting of small ter- renes and basons in nests, big and small, plates and ba- sons with red edges for Mindano, &c. &c. per hundred	1	2
200 Pieces of flowered silks	6	10

Besides tea, cutlery, and other hard ware, brafs wire, gongs, beads of all colours, like swan shot—fire works, &c. &c.

The Returns are in the following Articles.

	Cost at Sooloo.	Selling price in China.
Black swallo per pecul	15	30
White ditto	10	20
Wax	15	25
Teepye or pearl oyster shells	1½	5
Birds nests per catty	6	9
Tortoisshell, price uncertain		

Also agal agal, a sea weed used as gum or glue, and many other articles, such as Carooang oil, clove bark, black wood, ratans, sago, various barks for dying,—Cassia, pepper, native camphire, sandal wood, curious shells for gröttoes—pearls, which require great judgment to deal in, also seed pearl from the Molucca islands, and spices.

The



1776.
January.

The Sultanship in Sooloo is hereditary, but the government mixt. About fifteen Datoos, who may be called the nobility, make the greater part of the legislature. Their title is hereditary to the eldest son, and they sit in council with the Sultan. The Sultan has two votes in this assembly, and each Dattoo has one. The heir apparent (who, when I was there, was Dattoo Alamoodine) if he side with the Sultan, has two votes; but, if against him, only one. There are two representatives of the people, called Manteries, like the military tribunes of the Romans.

The common people of Sooloo, called Tellimanhood, enjoy much real freedom, owing to the above representation; but the Tellimanhood, or vassals of the adjacent islands named Tappool, Seafsee, Tawee-tawee and others, being the estates of particular Dattoos, are often used in a tyrannical manner by their chiefs. I have been told that their haughty lords visiting their estates, will sometimes with impunity demand and carry off young women, whom they happen to fancy, to swell the number of their Sandles (Concubines) at Sooloo. Variously do those islands groan under the tyranny of their masters.

When I was here, one Jaffier had just returned from the island Tappool, where he had been settling petty insurrections. Blood was certainly drawn from the men, and I saw some prows arrive thence, with married women, unmarried women and children, all condemned to slavery. That day the talk was in town, "Dattoo Jaffier is returned from conquering his enemies." No farther enquiry was made: for those Dattoos in their oppressions support one another.

There



There is a law both at Magindano and Sooloo, that no Chinese can be made a slave, but, at either place, for a sum advanced by a Dattoo, or great man, to a Chinese, and such advances are often forced upon them, they every twelve months are obliged to pay a very high interest, perhaps twenty-five or thirty per cent.; the lender often refusing to receive back the principal at the end of the year, unless indeed the Chinese make appear that he is going to return to his own country; in which case it is never refused. This has already been hinted.

1776.
January.

On this island, the nobles are extremely dissolute. Those who have more than one wife, which is not very common, keep each in a separate house; but their dissoluteness consists in their numerous concubines and intrigues: for here women have as much liberty in going abroad as in Europe.

Malay women bathe daily in rivers or in ponds. On Sooloo and Magindano, the middle and lower ranks are less decent on those occasions, than the Malays farther west; they go into the water almost naked; whereas, the Malay women of Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, and their adjacencies, wrap their bodies in a sort of wide bottomless sack, containing about two yards of broad cotton cloth, with the ends sewed together, like what in Bengal is a lungy. This shrowds them from head to heel. The Sooloos have an annual custom of bathing in the sea, men and women together, but decently covered: which is also a Badjoo custom, as we shall see.

At Sooloo, and the many islands around, which form a great Archipelago, the pearl fishery has been famous many ages.



1776.
January.

ges.* This is the source of their wealth, and sets them more at ease than any Malays I ever knew, though their island does not generally produce so much rice as they consume. They trade therefore to Magindano with Chinese articles for that grain, and make great profit, as no China junks have for a long time gone thither.

The pearl fishery, minutely described by Mr. Dalrymple, proves also to the Sooloos, the cause of their consequence amongst their neighbours, as being a nursery for seamen, ready to man a fleet of prows upon an emergency. The present Sultan Israel, to whom his father Amiralmoomine had given up the reins of government, in 1773, hinted to me they have gold in their hills; but that, for the above reason, they discourage the searching after it. They have often had sea fights with the Borneans, and always beaten them. Their way of fighting is seldom in the open sea, but by surprise in harbours. The prows of the Sooloos are very neatly built, from six to forty tons burden, sail well; and are all fitted with the tripod mast. They have also prows much smaller, down to sampans; but their sampans are seldom of one tree, large timber not abounding on Sooloo, as on the more considerable adjacent islands. The Sooloo colours are the gates of Mecca, red, on a white ground.

Their drudges, for the Teepye or pearl oyster, are generally made of bamboo, very slight, and sunk with a stone. The large pearls are the property of the Datoos, on whose estates they are found; for those paramounds claim the property of the banks, as well as of the

* In the sea between Mindano and Sooloo is a pearl fishery, inferior to none in the Indies, either in point of colour or size. HARRIS'S VOY. p. 685.

dry

dry land. There are rich Teepye banks on the north and east side of Tawee-Tawee. The Chinese merchants, very secret on those occasions, contrive often to purchase from the fishermen, pearls of great value; so defrauding the Datoos, of what these pretend their property. Here are also many Badjoo fishermen, who by their long residence, are become vassals of the Datoos; but, as they were originally from another country, and speak, beside the Sooloo, a language of their own, their superiors are more tender of oppressing them, than their immediate vassals on the islands.

1776.
January.

The Sooloos have a particular way of fishing with hook and line. They put into the boat a number of stones, about a pound weight each; then wind their line with the baited hook round one of the stones, and throw it overboard into deep water. The stone descends, and when the fisherman judges it has quitted the hook, he pulls this up to the surface, with or without a fish. On the same principle do they fish amongst the Molucca islands, by fixing the hook to the leaf of a coco nut tree, tied to a stone, as has been related in the account of New Guinea. They also bruise a certain plant called tublee, which they then put either into the sea or fresh water; its juice stupifies the fish, which then floats dead atop: this is practised in all Malay countries. The Sooloo tongue has a good deal of the Bisayan or Philippine mixed with it; also a little of the Magindano dialect, and some Malay words. The character is, with some variation, the Arabic.

The better sort speak Malay, and those who trade abroad, generally understand it. While the English were there in 1773, we conversed in Malay.

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The



1776.
January.

The arts are in greater forwardness here than at Magindano: the prows are built much neater. In the common market, is also a copper currency, a convenience much wanted at Magindano; where, as has been said, the market currency is rice.

The Sooloos have in their families many Bifayan, some Spanish slaves, whom they purchase from the Illanon and Magindano cruisers. Sometimes they purchase whole cargoes, which they carry to Passir, on Borneo; where, if the females are handsome, they are bought up for the Batavia market. The masters sometimes use their slaves cruelly, assuming the power of life and death over them. Many are put to death for trifling offences, and their bodies left above ground. An attempt of elopement is here seldom pardoned, or indeed at Magindano. Yet, the distance being so small from either Scoloo or Selangan, to the Spanish settlement, I have wondered how any stay, as they are not closely confined.

The Bifayan slaves play often on the violin, and the Sooloos are fond of European music. I have seen the Sultan Israel, who was educated at Manilla, and his niece Potely Diamelen, dance a tolerable minuet. I have also seen the Datoos go down a country dance; but, as they wore heavy slippers, they did it clumsily.

The Sooloos are not only neat in their cloaths, but dress gaily. The men go generally in white waistcoats, buttoned down to the wrist; with white breeches, sometimes strait, sometimes wide. The ladies wear likewise a fine white waistcoat, fitted close; which shows the shape; and their petticoat, which is worn over drawers, that reach the
knee,

knee, comes but a little way below it. Both sexes are fond of gaming.

1776.
January.

There are some good harbours amongst the islands, that form the Sooloo archipelago; particularly behind Bewa-bewa, west, and near to Tawee-tawee, about the islands Tappool, and Seaffee, also, between Booboan, and Tapeantana, * south of Basilan, in the strait that divides it from Sooloo. Several are also behind the islands, that almost join the main island. However, before the town of Bewan, is no proper harbour; but the road is good in the S. W. monsoon, as it is on the N. W. part of the island. In the N. E. monsoon, the wind at N. E. does not blow into it; but, it is open to the N. W. from which quarter, blows sometimes a gale at the shifting of the monsoons, as in Atcheen road; which this road of Sooloo, in that respect, very much resembles.

The high priest, or Calipha at Sooloo, in 1773, was a Turk; he had travelled a good deal in Europe, and was a very intelligent man. I presented him with a map of the world, which pleased him mightily. He talked much to the Sooloos, his scholars, for he kept a reading school, of the strength of Gibraltar. When he spoke of Constantinople, he called it Roma.

The Buggeffes are a high spirited people. We had at Sooloo many of them in our pay, whom we had enlisted at Passir. One day, a Sooloo having stole something from a Buggeffs, I saw the Buggeffs in full pursuit of him through the town, with a blunderbuss in his hand; had he come up with the thief, the consequences might have been fatal.

* Plate XVII.

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Some



1776.
January.

Some time after, when I had left Sooloo, I was told there had been a fray between the Sooloos, and our Buggeffes; and that the latter, though much inferior in number, being only forty, had drawn out with their blunderbuffes against the whole town.

A Buggeff had been gaming with a Sooloo; the latter losing, said he would pay him next day. The Buggeff accordingly meeting him in the passar or market, asked for his due, which the Sooloo refusing, the Buggeff snatched from him a handkerchief, and ran off. Immediately several Sooloos, with drawn cresses, pursued the Buggeffs, who fled for protection to the Buggeffs guard. A sentinel seeing his brother closely pursued by armed men, fired amongst them, with his blunderbuffs. Very luckily nobody was killed, but the General Almilbadar's nephew was hurt in the face, near the eye. Upon this a mob rose: the Buggeffes turned out into the street, and presented their loaded arms; but, by the happy interposition of Sultan Israel, and Poteley Diamelen, the affair went no farther. Mr. Herbert, Mr. Alcock, and others, who were present, prevailed on the Buggeffes not to fire.

Had one blunderbuff gone off amongst the croud, there would have been much bloodshed, (for these arms are generally loaded with a number of pistol balls) as the Sooloos stood opposite near them, with uplifted lances. Next day a handsome pecuniary satisfaction was made by Mr. Herbert, to the General's nephew, who was slightly hurt, and the Buggeffes were immediately embarked for Balambangan. Much about this time, two Dutch ambassadors arrived at Sooloo in a large ketch from Ternate: one of the gentlemen was Mynheer Shall. They told

told Mr. Herbert, not yet gone to Balambangan, that the Sooloos had invited them.

1776.
January.

Notwithstanding the Buggeffes are allowed in bravery to surpass the Sooloos, the latter have, on several occasions, behaved very well against the Spaniards. A body of Spaniards once attacking some Sooloos, who did not much exceed them in number, the Sooloos knelt, and with their targets before them, received the fire of the enemy, then rushing with their lances, defeated them. The Sooloos are not much accustomed to the use of fire arms, but depend upon lance, sword, and dagger.

The state of Sooloo is small, as has been said, containing scarce above 60,000 inhabitants; yet are these very powerful, and have under them, not only most of the islands that compose that archipelago, but great part of Borneo, some of which they have granted to the English. They have the character of being treacherous, and of endeavouring always to supply by fraud, what they cannot effect by force.

It has been related in the history of Magindano, that the Sooloos killed their king Kuddy, when they pretended to mean him assistance. According to Fakymolano's account, the same piece of treachery was transacted at Borneo.

Long had a deadly hate subsisted, and still subsists, between Sooloo and Borneo, the Borneans alledging the Sooloos had encroached on their territories.

About



1776.
January.

About fifty years ago, a Bornean Pangaran was at war with the Eang de Patuan (such is stiled the sovereign) of the place. He had fortified himself on an island called Pulo Chirming, at the mouth of the river Borneo, and called on the Sooloos to assist him. They came, but worsted by the Borneans, they fell upon the Pangaran and defeated him. They then plundered the island, and sailed home.

Not above twenty years after, the Sultan of Sooloo, Amiralmoomine, went to Samboangan on a visit. He bought goods from Don Zacharias the governor, giving the Don his own price, made presents to the officers of the garrison, and lost his money to them, as if accidentally, by gaming with dice. Still resolved to ingratiate himself with the governor, the Sultan wanted to make him a present of forty male slaves, whom he had drest in rich liveries on the occasion. Many of them were natives of Papua, or New Guinea. Zacharias refused the presents, suspecting the Sultan of some design. The Sultan then asked leave to go to Manilla. He went thither, and said to the archbishop, "I will turn Christian, let the Spaniards take Sooloo, send the stubborn Datoos to Samboangan; make me king there, I then will oblige every one to embrace your religion."

The Spaniards listened to him, and he returned to Samboangan with an armada. Thence they went to Sooloo; and Bantillan, first cousin to Amiralmoomine, was proclaimed Sultan.

The Spaniards chanced to be beaten, and the old Sultan Amiralmoomine returned with them to Samboangan. Here he desired to send for his wife and children; which permission was readily granted. With

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the family came many of the Sooloos. On their landing, the governor found out by his spies, that they had many concealed arms in their prows; which lay in the road opposite the fort. He ordered the prows instantly to be gone, made the Sultan and his family prisoners, and sent them to Manilla; whence the Sultan was released by the English arms in the late war.

1776.
January.

The Spaniards were certainly in possession of the town of Bowan, before the year 1646; I have there seen ruins of some of their masonry.

Only seven years have elapsed since the Sultan of Koran, where live the people of Tedong on the N. E. coast of Borneo, was at war with the Sultan of Booroo, on the same coast. One of them applied to the Sooloos for assistance. The Datoos Alamoodine, and Noquela went; and, watching their opportunity, attacked both the Sultans, plundered them, and carried them with their wives, children, and many of their head men to Sooloo. They were some time after sent back, on condition that they should become tributary, and in a manner subject to Sooloo; which they are at this day. From this country the Sooloos get most of the sago, and many articles, which they sell to the Chinese; swallo, cowries, tortoisshell, and the rest. They endeavour to preclude the Tedongers from trading with any but themselves; for the Sooloos well understand the benefits that arise from restricting the trade of their conquests or colonies: and the Datoos are all traders. Even the Sultan is a merchant.

The four instances already given, might suffice to ascertain the character of the Sooloos, which may however be properly crowned, by

their

1776.
January.

their conduct to the English settlement at Balambangan in February 1775.

When John Herbert, Esq; went thither early in the preceding year, he found great want of buildings, to accommodate the Company's servants, civil and military; those gentlemen who had just been saved from the shipwreck of the Royal captain on the shoals of Paragoa, as well as the crew of that ship. About this time one Teting, a Sooloo Dattoo, and first cousin to Sultan Israël, came with many of his vassals to Balambangan, offered his service as a builder, was employed by Mr. Herbert, and, in the whole of his behaviour, gave satisfaction. The Dattoo, falling sick, went home to Sooloo for the recovery of his health. This blessing soon obtained, he returned to the prosecution of his task at Balambangan.

He now brought from the Sultan and Council letters recommending him as a trust-worthy person, to erect whatever warehouses or buildings might be wanted. With him came two other Dattoos, Mulloc and Noquela. But Dattoo Teting took care to show only part of his numerous followers, concealing the rest in the island of Banguey, and even in some recesses of Balambangan; which, being covered with wood, as those islands generally are, there was no great fear of discovery.

Surmises, however, had some days begun to spread reports of a plot, while Teting proceeded with such address, that the chief and council, who were not without their suspicions, apprehended no danger very nigh.

During

During the night, strict watch was kept all over the settlement. At dawn, the gun, as usual, announced the morning; and for a few moments, tranquillity reigned. A house at some small distance suddenly fired, proved the signal to the Sooloos. They rushed into the fort, killed the sentries, and turned the guns against the Buggefs guard. The few settlers, lately rendered fewer by death, were fain to make their escape in what vessels they could find.

1776.
January.

As the true cinnamon is said to grow both on Sooloo and Mindano,* the following account of that which grows on Ceylon, will not be unpleasing here.

* Cinnamon they have as good as any in Ceylon; but nobody having any property in the trees, they tear and destroy the bark at all seasons, which is the reason the world is so little acquainted with the cinnamon of Mindano.

HARRIS'S VOYAGE, Vol. I. p. 685.

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