THE TRAVELS OF
MENDES PINTO

Fernão Mendes Pinto

Edited and Translated by
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Title page of the first edition (Lisbon, 1644).
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CHICAGO AND LONDON
In command of these three ships was a certain João Fernandes de Abreu, a native of the island of Madeira, and son of the lord high steward of King John’s household, who was on board the square-rigger with forty soldiers; and the captains of the two frigates were Lourenço de Gois and his cousin, Vasco Sarmiento, both natives of the city of Braganza, all of them fearless men, experienced in naval warfare.

The following day our ships reached the Kelantan River and there they sighted the three junks they had heard about, riding at anchor. They fell upon them with great courage, and even though the men on board did all they could to defend themselves, in the end it was to no avail, for in less than an hour they were completely overcome, with a death toll of seventy-four on their side and only three on ours, though we had many wounded.

And since I think it is not necessary to mention in particular what one side or the other did, I will limit myself to the important details. With the defeated and captured junks in tow, our ships sailed out of the river, for by this time the alarm had spread through the entire countryside. Navigating under a fair wind, they arrived in Patani at vesper time on the following day and anchored in the port with a great deal of merry-making and a noisy salvo of artillery, much to the annoyance of the local Moors. And even though they were on good terms with us and passed for our friends, they still tried in every way possible, by bribing the local officials and the king’s favorites, to make him punish us and expel us from the country for what we had done. But the king refused, insisting that under no circumstances would he do anything to mar the peaceful relations that his ancestors had always maintained with Malacca. Instead, he offered to act as mediator between us and the injured parties, and he solved the problem by asking us not to take any more from the three nucadoes—the owners of the junks—that was taken in Pahang from the captain of Malacca, and to return the vessels to them freely, which João Fernandes de Abreu and the other Portuguese consented to, only to please the king, for it was obviously his wish. The king beamed happily and thanked us profusely for the good will they had shown.

And that is how Pero de Faria and Tomé Lobo recovered the fifty thousand cruzados they had lost; and from then on the Portuguese continued to reside in that country, honored and respected by all and deeply feared by the Moors. As for the three junks that were captured, there was a report, attributed to those on board at the time, that they had been carrying 200,000 tais in silver alone—which comes to 300,000 cruzados in our money—to say nothing of all the other cargo that filled the holds to bursting.

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Disaster in the Harbor of Lugar

I had been here in Patani for twenty-six days and had just finished expediting a small cargo of goods from China in preparation for my return, when a fleet arrived from Malacca. Her captain was a certain Antonio de Faria e Sousa who had been sent there by Pero de Faria to discuss some business with the king as well as to renew the peace treaty he had long maintained with Malacca, and to thank him for the good treatment the Portuguese were getting from him in his kingdom, plus a few other things of that sort designed to build up friendly relations that were of vital importance to our trade, which, frankly speaking, was our chief concern at the time. However, our real intentions were masked by a letter, delivered under the guise of an embassy, along with a costly gift, presented in the name of His Majesty the king and purchased at the expense of his treasury, as is the custom with all the captains in those parts of Asia.

This Antonio de Faria arrived with a cargo of Indian calicoes that were worth about ten or twelve thousand cruzados, which he had borrowed in Malacca; but since there was so little demand for them locally, not a single offer came his way. In desperate straits, with hardly any prospects in view, he decided to lay up for the winter and try his best, some way or other, to dispose of them. Some long-time residents in the area advised him to send the goods to Lugar, a rich, heavily trafficked seaport in Siam, a hundred leagues to the north, that was always crowded with junks from the island of Java and from the ports of Langi, Tanimanura, Japara, Demak, Panaraca, Sidayu, Pasuruan, Solar, and Borneo, because they usually paid well there, in gold and precious stones, for that kind of merchandise.

Acting promptly on this advice, which he found to his liking, Antonio de Faria made arrangements to send a local vessel up there because the king he had come on was not suitable for that purpose, and as his agent he chose Cristóvão Borralho, who was a good businessman. He was joined by a group of sixteen other men, both merchants and soldiers, who had goods to sell, all of whom went along expecting to turn over a profit of at least six or seven hundred percent, not only on what they were taking with them, but on what they would be returning with as well. And poor me, I happen to be one of them.

Departing from here on a Saturday morning, we navigated all the way along the coast under fair winds, and on the following Thursday morning, we arrived at the bar of Lugar. We dropped anchor at the mouth of the river and remained there for the rest of the day, making detailed inquiries that were important, not only for the sale of the merchandise, but for our own personal safety as well. And the news we heard was good, for we found out that the market was so favorable that we could easily expect to make a profit of almost 600 percent. As for the rest, ample security was provided for all, along with free port privileges and customs exemptions that were to remain in effect for the entire month of September, as decreed by the king of Siam for the period of the royal samboina. But in order to appreciate what this is all about, some explanation is called for.

There is a great king who rules over the entire coastal region and interior of Malaysia. Of all his titles, the one by which he is best known is Pahang Saleem, emperor of all the Sarnas, which is a province comprising thirteen separate kingdoms, otherwise known as Siam. Subject to him are fourteen lesser kings who are required to pay him tribute every year. According to ancient custom, they were forced to make an annual journey to the city of Ayuthia, capital of the Sarnas empire and kingdom of Siam, in order to deliver the required tribute personally and perform the samboina, a ceremony that consists of kissing the sword at his side. Since this city is fifty leagues inland and is accessible only by a rapidly flowing river, it was not unusual for these petty kings to be left stranded for the entire winter, entailing vast expenditures for them. As a result, the fourteen kings got together and petitioned the pahang, king of
Siam, to relieve them of such an onerous burden and to find a less costly method of paying the tribute. He responded with a decree to the effect that a viceroy, called *pojha* in their language, should represent him in the city of *Lugar*, and that every three years the fourteen kings should pay homage to him in person, as they had done formerly to the emperor himself, and deliver to him in one lump sum the total tribute assessed for the three-year period. Moreover, during the month in which they came to pay homage, they were to be granted customary exemptions on all their goods, the same privilege being extended to all other merchants entering or leaving the harbor, whether native or foreign.

And since the duty-free regulations were in effect at the time we arrived, as I said before, the city was so crowded with merchants from everywhere that it was said that well over fifteen hundred richly laden vessels had entered the harbor with an enormous variety of cargo from many different places. That was the news we heard when we anchored in the mouth of the river, and we were all so happy and excited about it that we decided to enter the river as soon as the sea breeze shifted.

But it was our misfortune, sinners that we were, that what we had been looking forward to with such great anticipation, never came to pass, for shortly before ten o'clock, quite as we were sitting down to dinner, with the hawser at short stay and everything made ready for us to sail when we had finished eating, we saw a huge junk coming out of the river with only her foresail and mizzen set. As she came alongside, she dropped anchor a little to windward of us, but once they had anchored, it did not take them long to notice that we were Portuguese, that there were very few of us, and that our ship was very small. They slackened their lines, letting the junk drift till it lay on our starboard, and as soon as it was even with our bow, they threw out a pair of grappling hooks attached to two very long iron chains, dragging us alongside; and since their ship was much larger than ours, we lay aboard, held fast beneath the curve of their prow, right below the hawse.

Then, about seventy or eighty Moors, including some Turks, came bursting out of the deckhouse where they had been hiding, screaming wildly and hurling stones, javelins, lances, and spears in such profusion that it looked like rain from heaven; and in less time than it takes to recite the Credo, twelve out of the sixteen Portuguese on board were dead, as well as thirty-six of the slaves and sailors. Four of us escaped by plunging into the sea, where one drowned immediately, but the three remaining survivors managed to reach the shore and take cover in the jungle, all battered and bruised, and sinking in mud up to our waists.

The Moors on the junk quickly boarded our ship and finished off six or seven of the boys they found lying wounded on deck, sparing none. Working rapidly, they transferred all the cargo they could find to their junk, then smashed a huge hole in the side of our ship, sending it to the bottom; next, they cut the grappling irons they had secured us with, clapped on all sail and quickly sped away out of fear of being discovered.

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Lady of the Swamp

Finding ourselves wounded and destitute, the three of us who survived the disaster suddenly broke down and cried; and we began hitting ourselves like madmen, for we nearly went out of our minds at the thought of what we had witnessed less than half an hour before. We carried on that way for the rest of the day, and having noticed that the terrain all around us was swampy and teeming with lizards and snakes, we decided that we had better stay there for the night also, which we spent almost shoulder deep in the slime.

At daybreak the next morning we followed the river until we came to a small tributary which we were afraid to cross, not only because it was too deep but also because it was swarming with lizards. And so another night went by in agony, which continued unabated for five more days without our being able to make any progress either backwards or forwards, for no matter which way we turned we encountered nothing but swamp and tall grass. It was about this time that one of our companions died, a rich, honorable man by the name of Bastião Henriques, who had lost right thousand cruzados on the *lanchara*. And the two remaining companions, Cristóvão Borralho and I, broke down and cried over his half-buried body, too exhausted to speak, yet fully determined to spend what we thought were our last few hours of life right there, without moving from the edge of the river.

The following day, the seventh since our misfortune, just before sundown we saw a barge laden with salt, coming up the river by car. As it came alongside, we asked the rowers on the bow to please take us on board. They stopped and stared for a moment, amazed by the sight of us there on our knees with upraised arms, as though we were praying. Without a word they made as if to move off, throwing us into a panic. We both started shouting, and with the tears streaming down our cheeks we pleaded with them again not to leave us there to die. Upon hearing our cries, a woman came out from under the awning. She was somewhat advanced in years and appeared to be as kindly and noble a person as indeed she later turned out to be. She was moved to pity by our plight; the moment she saw us there displaying our wounds. Acting in compassion, she reached for a pole and brought the barge nearer to shore, cracking it three or four times over the backs of the sailors for refusing to help; after which, six of them jumped ashore and carried us aboard on their shoulders. Appalled by our condition and the extent of our wounds, with our shirts and trousers all matted and bloodied, this noble woman saw to it that we were promptly washed with many buckets of water, and that each of us received one of her sarongs to cover ourselves with in the meantime; and then she made us sit down beside her while she sent for food, which she herself placed in front of us.

"Come now, eat, eat up, you poor strangers," she urged us, "and do not despair at finding yourselves in such a sad state. Look at me. Here I am, a woman, barely fifty years of age, and less than six years ago I found myself suddenly taken captive, robbed of a personal fortune worth over 100,000 cruzados, and stricken by the death of three sons; and I saw my husband, who was dearer to me than life itself, and my whole
family—father and sons, two brothers, and son-in-law—all torn to pieces in front of my eyes by the terrors of the elephants of the king of Siam. Though sick at heart and weary of life, I endured all these misfortunes and many others almost as bad when, in the same manner, I saw three virgin daughters, my mother and father, and thirty-two members of my family—nephews, nieces, and cousins—thrown alive into flaming ovens, uttering screams to pierce the very gates of heaven, calling on God to avenge them in that hour of unbearable pain and torment. But I had committed too many sins for their cries to be heard in the court of His infinite mercy, and the Lord of Lords turned a deaf ear to what I thought were their just pleas; but the truth is that whatever God ordains is the best for us and we must accept it."

We responded to this by telling her that it was because we too had sinned that God had permitted this calamity to befall us.

"In the face of adversity," she said, mending her tears with ours, "when we feel the hand of the Lord, it is always best to acknowledge the reason for it and to confess to the truth of it with our own mouths; but you must believe it sincerely, deep down in your heart, with a pure and steadfast faith; for therein often lies the reward for our suffering."

And after speaking in this manner for a while, she asked us how our misfortune had come about and what had occurred to bring us to such a sorry pass. We told her everything that had happened but that we did not know who had done it to us or why. Hearing this, some of the men in her crew volunteered the information that the huge junk we were talking about belonged to a Gujarati Moor by the name of Kloja Hassim, who had sailed out of the river that morning, bound for Hainan with a cargo of brazilwood.5

"Well, strike me dead, if that isn't so!" this dignified woman exclaimed, bearing her breast in amazement, "because that same Moor has been heard boasting in public to all who would listen that he had slain quite a number of those men from Malacca on several different occasions, and that he had vowed to his Mohammed that he would yet kill as many more."

Arousted by such unheard-of news we asked her to tell us more about this man and why he went around telling everyone that he hated us so. As for the reason why, she said that as she knew he had had once heard him say that a great captain of ours by the name of Heitor da Silva had killed his father and two of his brothers on a was he had captured in the Straits of Mecca, that was bound from Jida to Dabai. And for the rest of the journey she continued talking about that Moor, going into great detail about the deep hatred he had for us and the terrible things he said about us.

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Antonio de Faria Swears Vengeance

Departing from where she had found us, this honorable woman proceeded up the river under sail and oars for about two leagues, stopping overnight at a little village, and early the next morning she departed for the city of Logar, five leagues further, arriving close to midday. After landing, she went straight to her house where she took us and kept us for twenty-three days, nursing us back to health and providing for all our needs with the utmost generosity.

This woman was a member of a distinguished family, as we learned later, and the widow of the shahbandar of Pernopol who, in 1538, in the city of Bancha, had been slain by the pate's of Laaspour, king of Qawojia, on the island of Java; and at the time she rescued us in the manner described, she was returning from a junk she owned that was anchored outside the bar, laden with salt; and since it was too heavy a vessel to cross the sandbank, she had been unloading it little by little onto the river barge.

And at the end of the twenty-three days I referred to, when, with God's help, we had recovered completely and were well enough to travel, she recommended us to a kinsman of hers, a merchant bound for Patani, about eighty-five leagues from there, whom we engaged to take the oar-propelled caladera that he himself was traveling on, and seven days later we reached Patani, after navigating along a wide, freshwater river called Samelinta. And since Antonio de Faria was searching the horizon, watching and waiting for us or for some word of his merchandise, as soon as he saw us and heard what had happened he was so upset that it was more than half an hour before he could speak.

By this time our lodgings could not hold all the Portuguese who came crowding in, most of whom had invested their money on the ill-fated lanchon that had been carrying a cargo worth more than sixty thousand cruzados in her hold, the bulk of it in the form of minted silver to be traded for gold. And when some well-meaning people there tried to console him for the loss of the twelve thousand cruzados he had borrowed in Malacca, Antonio de Faria, who had been left destitute, replied quite candidly that he did not dare to face his creditors in Malacca for fear that they would force him to honor the notes he had signed, which he was in no position to do at the time, and that it made more sense to him to go after those who had stolen his money than to be in default with the ones who had lent it to him. And right then and there, in front of everyone, he swore on the holy Gospels, and said that, apart from the oath he was taking, he was also promising God that he would immediately go in search of the thief who had stolen his property and make him pay dearly one way or another, by fair means or foul, though he felt that fair play alone was too good for someone like that who had murdered sixteen of his Portuguese soldiers as well as thirty-six of the Christian slaves and sailors who were with him and that it would not be right to let him off so easily without some kind of punishment. For otherwise, with each passing day we would see another atrocity of the same sort, and then another, and so on, until a hundred had been committed.

All the bystanders praised him highly for the stand he had taken, and a lot of young men, and good soldiers too, offered him their services, and still others offered to lend him money to buy arms and whatever else he needed. He immediately accepted all the offers made by his friends and went about making preparations as fast as he could; and within eighteen days he had enlisted a company of fifty-five soldiers.

As for poor me, I was forced to join him too, because I had not a farthing to my name, nor anyone who would so much as give me or lend me one; besides, I owed more than five hundred cruzados to some friends in Malacca, which together with five hundred of my own had been carried off—for my sins—by that dog, in one fell swoop, with the rest of the stolen booty mentioned above; and out of it all, the only
thing I was able to save was my skin, and even that was in not too good a shape after having received three spear wounds and the blow of a stone to the head, which had left me hovering between life and death three or four times; and even here in Patani I still had to have a bone removed before I recovered completely. As for my companion Cristóvão Borralho, he was in far worse condition than I from an equal number of wounds he had received in return for the twenty-five hundred cruzados that were stolen from him along with the rest.

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In Search of Khoja Hassim

As soon as he had completed his preparations, Antonio de Faria departed from Patani on a Saturday, May 9, in the year 1540, setting his course north-northwest for the kingdom of Champa, with the intention of exploring the ports and inlets along the coast and, while he was at it, looking around for some decent plunder to make up for a few of the shortages that still existed on board; for he had been in such a hurry to leave Patani that he was not well outfitted enough to get by without replenishing a lot of stores, mainly in the way of provisions, munitions, and gunpowder.

Keeping to our course for seven days, we came in sight of an island called Pulo Condore at eight and one-third degrees north latitude that lay almost northwest by southeast with the bar of Cambodia; and after rounding it completely we discovered a good anchorage called Bralapido on the eastern side, a little over six leagues from the mainland. And there we found a Ryukyu Island junk that was bound for Siam with an ambassador on board from the nautaquinum of Linsdon, prince of the island of Tosa, which lies at latitude thirty-six degrees, who immediately got under way when he saw us. Antonio de Faria sent his Chinese pilot to deliver a very courteous message to him, with an offer of friendship, to which they replied that the time would come when they would communicate with us in the friendship and spirit of the true faith of the God of infinite mercy who died so that all men might live forever in the dwelling place of the good people, as they believed it meant to be past the middle of the middle of time. And with this reply came a gift of a rich, ornamental sword, its scabbard and hilt all made of gold, in addition to twenty-six pearls in a jewel box, also made of gold, fashioned in the shape of a little saltcellar. Antonio de Faria sorely regretted his inability to reciprocate properly, for by the time the Chinese pilot returned with this message, they had been swallowed up in the distance more than a league away.

We went ashore on this island and stayed there for three days, taking on fresh water and fishing for endless quantities of sea bream and croakers that swam abundantly in the area, and afterwards, we headed for the coast of the mainland in search of a river called Pulo Cambin which divides the domain of Cambodia from the kingdom of Champa at latitude nine degrees, arriving on a Sunday, the last day of May. The pilot moved on to anchor three leagues up the river, opposite a large town called Catimparu, where, after some friendly arrangements had been made, we stayed for twelve days, peacefully going about the business of outfitting ourselves with abundant supplies of everything necessary.

And since Antonio de Faria was by nature a very curious fellow, he made every effort to find our from the local residents what sort of people lived in the interior of that country and where the headwaters of that large river were located. He was told that the river had its source in a lake called Pinatensor, 260 leagues east of the sea in the kingdom of Quitivito, and that the lake was ringed by huge mountains at the foot of which, all around the shore, were nestled thirty-eight towns, only thirteen of them large and the others quite small, but that there was a gold mine in only one of the larger towns called Xincalu, which was so big that, according to the people who lived there, it produced one and a half balars of gold daily, which in our money comes to twenty-two million in gold per year. This mine was owned by four men who were so greedy that they were constantly fighting among themselves, with each one trying to gain exclusive control of the mine; and one of these men by the name of Raja Hian had jars buried neck deep in the courtyard of his house, containing six hundred balars of gold dust, of the same quality as that which comes from Menangkabau on the island of Sumatra; and that if three hundred men of our nation with a hundred muskets were to attack, there was no doubt whatsoever that they would easily gain control of it; and that also, in another one of those towns called Bungairum, there was a quarry from which they extracted huge quantities of rough diamonds, from old rock, that were worth much more than the ones found in Lawd and Tinjampana, on the island of Java.

And in reply to a lot of other questions about certain things he was particularly interested in, Antonio de Faria was told many other things about the wealth and fertility of the country further inland up the river that were extremely tempting and, from the way it sounded, just as easy and inexpensive to conquer.

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Pirates off the Coast of Champa

After we departed from the Pulo Cambin River we navigated along the coast of the kingdom of Champa until we came to a bay called Salesjauca, seventeen leagues to the north, which we entered, but since we did not see anything there we could lay our hands on, we just sailed around it until shortly before sunset and left, without having done any more than observe and count the number of settlements located along the shore. There were six altogether, five of them hardly more than villages, though the sixth one looked like a good-sized town of over a thousand hearths, surrounded by a huge forest with many freshwater streams that descended from the mountains towering above it on the south like a protective wall; but we made no attempt to climb them for fear of alarming the countryside.
The following morning we reached a river called Tobeguy, where Antonio de Faria dropped anchor outside the mouth because the pilot was afraid to enter since, as he pointed out, he had never been there before and did not know how deep it was. And while we were there, still arguing about whether or not to enter the river, we sighted a large sailing vessel coming in from the high seas and heading straight for the port. Exited at the prospect of welcoming her with everything necessary, in a manner befitting our calling and lofty intentions, we waited for moving from the spot.

As she came alongside, we hoisted our merchant flag in what they call the chanchelina salute, making all the appropriate signs and signals of friendship, in keeping with local custom. However, instead of acknowledging our salute in like manner, as was only proper, the people on board the nane—who had apparently recognized us as Portuguese for whom they had no great love—answered by showing us, from the top of the deckhouse, the naked behind of a kaffir, which was hardly a courteous reply. On top of that, they set up a terrible racket, banging drums, tooting horns, clanging bells, shouting, and jeering in what was a general demonstration of scorn and contempt, obviously intended for us.

Deeply offended by such a response, Antonio de Faria ordered a broadside fired from a culverin, to teach them better manners. They answered with five cannonballs, three of them discharged from a falcon, and two from a heavy camel, placing him and everyone else in quite an embarrassing position. A meeting was called to decide what to do next, and it was agreed that we should remain anchored where we were for the time being instead of rushing headlong into something we were not sure of, and that in the morning we would try to learn more about those people and how well armed they were; and depending on what we found out about them, we would decide what to do next—which sounded like excellent advice to Antonio de Faria as well as all the others. After taking all the necessary precautions and posting a careful lookout, we stayed right where we were, to wait until morning.

At two hours past midnight we noticed three black objects floating on the water close to the horizon. We immediately called the captain, who happened to be on the quarterdeck at the time, sleeping on top of a hen coop, and we pointed it out to him. He looked, made up his mind in a flash, and began shouting three or four times—"To arms! To arms!" And he did not have to wait long to see his order obeyed. At the time, we were still in doubt about what those objects could be, but gradually, as we watched, we were able to distinguish three rowboats coming towards us. The men all armed themselves quickly, and the captain posted them at the most critical stations. Since it was obvious from the stealthiness of the oars that these were our enemies of the previous day—for there was certainly nothing to fear from the local people—he addressed the soldiers this way:

"Men! My brothers!" he began. "What we are up against is nothing but a thief who is out to attack us because he thinks that there cannot be more than six or seven of us here, which is how we usually sail on these loredas.1 Now, in the name of Christ, if we are to accomplish something worthwhile, at no risk to ourselves, I want you all to lie low and keep out of sight, so that they can't see anyone on board from out there, and then we will find out what they are up to or what they want with us. Also, see to it that the powder pots are kept on the ready, because I think that with them and a few well-placed sword thrusts we can resolve the whole matter. But keep your wicks covered and don't let them see any fire on board, and that way they will think that everyone is asleep."

His instructions were carried out to the letter with extreme caution and perfect teamwork all around.

When they were within slightly more than a crossbow-shot distance from our loreda, the three boats rowed all around us, examining the ship from stem to stern; and after they had looked us over carefully, they met again, apparently to consult with each other, and parted after more or less a quarter of an hour, heading in opposite directions, with the two smaller boats moving to our stern while the sampan, the larger one, which was carrying the main body of their forces, made straight for our starboard. Then altogether, from different directions, the enemy quickly climbed aboard, and in less time than it takes to recite the Credo, there were more than forty of them climbing all over the loreda.

With a cry of "Santiago!" and "Amen!" Antonio de Faria dashed out of the deckhouse where he had been hiding with about forty of his men, rushing at them so forcefully and fearlessly that in no time at all nearly all of them lay dead. They followed up with many powder pans, which were quickly tossed at the occupants of the three boats below, finishing them off and spilling them into the sea. Carried away with enthusiasm, some of our soldiers jumped down into the boats, capturing all three of them; and as a result, thanks be to God, everything fell safely into our hands.

We managed to pull out of the water five of the enemy who had jumped overboard but were still alive and kicking, one of them the kaffir who had shown us his behind. We also came up with a Turk, two Achinese, and the captain of the junk himself, a man by the name of Simialau, who was a notorious pirate and a declared enemy of the Portuguese. Antonio de Faria immediately had them put to the torture to make them tell who they were, where they came from, or what they wanted of us. We could not get any reasonable answers out of the Achinese or the Turk, so he turned them over to the kaffir, who was already tied up by that time, but just as we were about to hoist him on the rack, he began crying and begging us that we should not hurt him, that he was as Christian as anyone of us, and that he would tell us anything we wanted to know without benefit of torture.

Antonio de Faria then ordered him released and sat him down beside him. He offered him a piece of biscuit and even a swig of wine; and in a gentle tone of voice he asked him, since he claimed to be a Christian, to tell him the whole truth.

"If I'm not telling your lordship the truth," he exclaimed, "then don't take me for what I said I was! My name, sir, is Bastião. I used to be Gaspar de Melo's slave until two years ago when that dog you have tied up over there killed him, in Ning-po, along with the twenty-six other Portuguese he had on board his nane.""Enough! Stop right there!" Antonio de Faria cried out in amazement. "I don't want to hear any more! You mean to say that that one over there is the dog of a Simialau who killed your master?"

"Yes, sir!" he replied. "And he was trying to do the same to your lordship. He couldn't wait to embark because he did not think he would find more than six or seven of you here. And he said he intended to take you all alive and have your brains squeezed out with a crossbra, like he did to my master. But it is God's will that he should pay for his sins."

Antonio de Faria listened closely to everything the kaffir boy had to say, and
when he repeatedly assured him that that dog had brought all his soldiers with him, leaving only forty Chinese sailors behind on the junk, he decided that it was too good an opportunity to miss.

After disposing of Similau and his cohorts, by having their brains squeezed out with a crossbar—which is what he had done to Gaspar de Melo and the other Portugueuse in Ning-po—Antonio de Faria set out immediately in the longboat and the manchus,1 the boats the enemies had arrived in, taking thirty soldiers along; and in less than an hour, with the wind and the tide in his favor, he reached the spot where the junk was anchored, just a league up the river from us.

In a sneak attack, without making the slightest sound, he promptly took command of the afterdeck. From there, with the aid of only four powder pots tossed on to the main deck where the crew was asleep, he sent them all jumping into the water, where ten or twelve of them drowned; and since the rest were yelling for help, Antonio de Faria had them fished out because he needed them to man the junk, which happened to be an extremely large and majestic vessel.

And that is how it happened, exactly the way I described it, that the good Lord, in the supreme wisdom of his divine justice, ordained that this dog’s arrogance should be the instrument of the punishment he deserved for his evil deeds, by leading him directly into the hands of the Portugueuse, who made him pay for what he had done to them.

By the time it was over it was almost morning. When an inventory of the plunder was made, thirty-six thousand taels in Japanese silver were found; and in our money, calculated at the rate of six testons2 per tael, that comes to fifty-four thousand cruzados, to say nothing of a large assortment of other fine-quality merchandise which we did not have time to appraise, for by then the alarm had spread and fire rafts3 were being prepared, making it necessary for Antonio de Faria to clasp on all sail and get under way as fast as he could.

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Exploring Champa

It was a Wednesday morning, on the eve of Corpus Christi,1 in the year 1540, when Antonio de Faria sailed out of the Tonkandy River. And he made his way along the coast of the kingdom of Champa to avoid the risk of being blown off course by the violent easterly winds that prevail in that latitudes most of the year, especially during the conjunctions of the new and full moon. And the following Friday he reached the river that the natives call Tamaoru, though the Portugueuse know it as the Varela.2 And he thought it would be a good idea to enter the river, as some of the men advised him to do, to pick up some information about a few things he wanted to know and, at the same time, see if there was any news about the Khaja Hassim he was looking for, since that river was the usual stopping place on the China run for all the junks from Siam and the entire coast of Malaya; and sometimes, they would even trade their merchandise very profitably there for gold, calabac wood, and ivory, which are in plentiful supply throughout the whole kingdom.

As we anchored inside the bar opposite a little village by the name of Tainguit, a fleet of refreshment prows came rowing out to meet us, but when they realized that we were a new race of people that had never been seen there before, they became quite frightened and began talking excitedly among themselves in this vein: “How strange that they should come here! This must be a visitation from God. Let us hope that the good Lord did not send us that notorious race of bearded men who enrich themselves by spaying out the land, acting like merchants, but returning later to attack and plunder like thieves. Let us head for the jungle before they set fire to our houses and fields with the sparks from those firebrands dangling from their mouths, turning into white ash as they puff on them. That is what usually happens when those people set foot on foreign soil.”

“God forbid!” still others exclaimed. “But since, for our sins, they are already on our doorstep, don’t let them know that we fear them as enemies, otherwise they will show their true colors sooner. Let us speak softly and ask them in a friendly manner what they are doing here, and once we have learned the truth from them we will write to the Hoy3 Pajuar who is now in Congo.”

Pretending not to understand a word of what they were saying, though there were many interpreters on board, Antonio de Faria welcomed them pleasantly and put them in a receptive mood by paying what they asked for their refreshments without permitting any haggling over prices. And when they asked him where he was from, or what he was doing there, he told them that he had come from the kingdom of Siam where he lived, in the foreign quarter of Tanasserim, and that he was a merchant on his way to the Ryukyu Islands, where he intended to sell his cargo, and that the only reason he had entered their river was to look for a friend of his, a merchant by the name of Khaja Hassim who was headed in the same direction, and that he just wanted to find out if his friend had passed this way before him, and if not, then he would be on his way because he was afraid of losing the monsoon, apart from the fact that he could see that this was no place for him to sell his merchandise.

“You are quite right in that respect,” they replied, “because there is nothing to be had in this town but fishnets and fishing prows, which rarely provide us with a living. But if you continue on your way up the river you will reach the city of Pluakoatim, which is where the king resides; and there, we can assure you, in less than five days you will be able to sell ten times as much as your junk can hold, no matter how expensive the merchandise is, because you will come across some very important merchants who come there to trade in elephant, ox, and camel caravans, from all over the land of the Laoians, Pajuar, and Guerus,3 where the people are very wealthy.

Seeing his chance, now that he had set them at ease, Antonio de Faria began interrogating them in great detail, and a few of them, who seemed to be better informed than the rest, answered his questions in a way that suited him perfectly.

“The river you are anchored in now,” they said, “is called the Tamaoru, though there were some in ancient days who called it the Tamaoru, meaning ‘land of plenty,’ which was a very appropriate name for it, from what the old folks still have to say about it. This river, the way you see it here, in the same depth and width, extends as far as Monendar, which is a mountain range about eighty leagues from here; but from there on the river widens and becomes more shallow, and in some parts, it
spreads out into low-lying marshes where there are an enormous number of birds covering the entire area; and owing to the presence of so many birds, the whole kingdom of the Chinatulius, which took eight days to cross, was abandoned by the population forty-two years ago. Once you pass the bird swamps, you enter an entirely different region that is much more forbidding, with large mountain ranges, inhabited by many other animals far worse than the birds, such as elephants, yak, lions, boar, buffalo, and other wild herds of cattle roaming around in such huge numbers, that it is impossible for a man to grow anything there to feed himself, and there is nothing that can be done about it. And in the middle of this country or kingdom, which is what it was formerly, is a big lake the natives call Camaheo, though others call it the Chiang Mai. That lake empties into this river and three other rivers besides, that provide water for a great part of the land. The writers who have described it state that the lake measures sixty jaus in circumference, with three leagues to a jau, and that all around it there are many mines of silver, copper, tin, and lead, which are in constant production and yield huge quantities of these metals which are then carried by merchants in elephant and yak caravans to the kingdoms of the Surrous, or Siam, Poulon, Senado, Tjungo, Promo, Calaminhain, and other provinces in the interior beyond this coast, that take two to three months to cross and are divided into seigniories and kingdoms, some inhabited by white people, some by light-brown people, and still others by men of a darker complexion; and they return laden with a lot of gold, diamonds, and rubies, which they receive in exchange for their goods.

When asked if these people possess any sort of arms, they said no, just charred wooden spears and krises with blades two handspans long. They also said that it would take from two to two and a half months to get there by voyaging along that river, and that the reason it took so long was because the waters descended with tremendous force during the greater part of the year, but that the return voyage took only eight to ten days.

And apart from these questions, Antonio de Faria plied them with many more, and from their answers he learned many other interesting things about that country that are worthy of the attention of some high-minded individual capable of acting on them, for then perhaps we would derive far greater benefits from them, at less cost in blood and all that goes with it, than we do from all of India on which to this day we have expended so much of our energy and resources.

42 Night Raid off Hainan Island

The following Wednesday we left the Varela River, otherwise known as the Timaporas, and from there the pilot thought it best to head for Pulo Champiálo, which is an uninhabited island at the entrance to the Gulf of Cochinchina at latitude fourteen degrees and a third to the north. On our arrival, we anchored in a sheltered cove, and after three days there, which we spent getting things ready and putting the ordnance in condition for what we had in mind, we departed for the island of Hainan, where Antonio de Faria thought he might find the Khoja Hassim he was looking for.

After sighting the Puló Capó hill, which is the first landmark at the tip of the island, he came in close enough to shore to be able to survey the rivers and harbors and see what their entrances were like, which is all he wanted to do that day. And at nightfall, with the approval of all the soldiers, before making any other move, he ordered them to transfer to the better of the two ships, since the Lawo in which he had set out from Patani was taking on too much water; and this was done without any further ado.

And after reaching a river we had seen towards the east at sundown, he issued orders to drop anchor about a league out to sea, because the big junk he was on drew a lot of water and he was afraid of the many shoals we had seen all day long. And he ordered Cristóvão Borralho and his fourteen soldiers to take the Lawo up the river to find out what those fires were that we saw up ahead, and he departed without a moment's delay.

When he had gone more than a league upstream, he came upon a fleet of forty huge, imposing junks, each of which had two to three crow's nests aloft; and fearing that they might be part of the mandarin's armada, about which we had heard some vague reports, he anchored a little to shoreward of them; and towards midnight, when the tide was beginning to come in, he weighed anchor very quietly and moved on further up the river to where he had seen the fires, most of which had been extinguished by this time, though two or three still appeared at intervals, guiding him along the way. As he continued up the river this way, he ran into an enormous number of ships both large and small, which some of the men estimated roughly at over two thousand sails. He made his way among them, cutting the water silently with the oar, until he came to the city, which turned out to be a good-sized town of over thirty thousand inhabitants, surrounded by a brick wall with towers and ramparts built into them, just like ours, with a barbican, and two moats running all around. Here, a party of five out of the fourteen soldiers on the Lawo went ashore, taking with them two Chinese sailors whose women had been left behind on the junk as hostages. They looked the whole town over from the outside and spent almost three hours there with out their presence being detected, then they reembarked and departed under sail and our without making the slightest sound or commotion, out of fear that, if they were to cause any disturbance there, none of them would escape alive. As they were coming out of the river, they saw what appeared to them to be a junk from the opposite coast that had anchored at the bar a short time before.

When they got back to Antonio de Faria they informed him about everything they had seen, from the huge fleet up the river to the junk they had found at the bar, which, as they repeated several times, probably belonged to that dog of the Khoja Hassim they were looking for. This news filled him with such excitement that he could not wait to get started, and without a moment's delay he weighed anchor and set sail, telling us all the while that he had a premonition about it, and that he was so sure that he had found him that he was willing to stake his life on it, and that if he turned out to be right, he could say without any hesitation that it would be worth it to lay down his life for a chance to avenge himself on someone who had done him so much harm; and he swore, by the word of a decent man, that he was not saying so because of his twelve thousand crusades, which he had forgotten all about, but because of the fourteen Portuguese who had been killed by that dog.
As he came within sight of the junk, he ordered the lardos around to the other side so that both of them could attack her simultaneously, while at the same time cautiously keeping them not to fire a single shot, so that the junk anchored up the river would not be attracted by the sound of the artillery and come running to see what was going on. No sooner did our ships reach the spot where the junk was anchored than she was firmly grappled and boarded by twenty soldiers who promptly took command of the vessel without encountering any resistance from her company, most of whom had jumped overboard. Once they had recovered from their surprise, some of the brave souls among the enemy tried to fight back; however, Antonio de Faria threw himself into the fray with twenty more soldiers, and rushing at them with a battle cry of Santiago, he cut down more than thirty of them. As for those who were still alive after jumping overboard, he had them picked up because he needed them to man the vessel.

And since he was interested in knowing who they were and where they were from, he ordered about four of them to put to the torture; but two of them obstinately preferred to die rather than tell us anything. Then they laid hold of a young boy, and just as they were about to do the same thing to him, an old man lying there, who was his father, protested loudly, crying out that they should listen to him first before they did the boy any harm. Antonio de Faria commanded the torturers to stop what they were doing and told him to go ahead and say whatever he wanted to, but that he had better speak the truth, for if he caught him in a lie, he could rest assured that both he and his son would be thrown alive into the sea, and that if he told the truth, he would release both of them and put them adrift along with all their goods, provided they swore under oath that it was theirs.

“Sir, I accept that promise,” the Moor replied, “and I will take your word for it, even though the occupation you are presently engaged in is not much in keeping with the Christian faith you profess at your baptism.”

Antonio de Faria was so taken back by these words that he did not know what to say. Instead, he had the man brought closer to him and interrogated him in a kind, gentle manner, without threatening him any further.

43

The Armenian’s Story

When the man reached his side Antonio de Faria could see that he was as white as the rest of us, and he asked him if he was a Turk or a Parsee. He answered no, but that he was a Christian and a native of Mount Sinai, where the body of the blessed Saint Catherine was buried. To this Antonio de Faria responded, since he was a Christian, as he said, why was he not traveling with Christians? To which he replied that he was a merchant, of good family, by the name of Thomas Mostangue, and that one day, in the year 1538, while he was on board one of his naves anchored in the port of Jidda, the viceroy of Cairo, Soleiman Pasha, had commanded his nave and seven others as supply ships for the sixty-galley fleet he arrived in, with orders from the Grand Turk to restore Sultan Bahadur to his throne in the kingdom of Cambay from which he had then been ousted by the Moghul, and at the same time, throw the Portuguese out of India. And when he got there, traveling on the same nave in order to make some repairs and collect the freight payments promised him, the Turks, on top of having lied to him about everything, as they usually do, laid hold of his wife and a small daughter traveling with him and dishonored them publicly before his eyes; and because one of his sons protested in tears against this outrage, they bound him hand and foot and threw him alive into the sea. He himself was put in chains and subjected to daily floggings; and they confiscated his cargo, which was worth more than six thousand cruzados, with the explanation that it was unlawful for anyone but just and saintly Mussulmen like them to enjoy the blessings of God. His wife and daughter having died in the meantime, one night, in desperation, he and that young son of his threw themselves into the sea, off the bar of Diu, from where they made their way overland to Surat. From there, he sailed to Malacca on a nave belonging to Garcia de Sá, the captain of Basses; and from Malacca, he was sent by Dom Estêvão da Gama on a voyage to China with Cristóvão Sarmenta, a former crown steward in the Moluccas, who was killed one night, while they were anchored off Singapore, by Quiño Toyijo, the owner of that junk, along with twenty-six other Portuguese; and due to the fact that he was an expert artilleryman, they had spared his life and taken him along as their chief gunner.

At this point, Antonio de Faria let out a yell, hitting his head in amazement. “Good God!” he exclaimed. “Good God! I can’t believe my ears!” And turning to the soldiers who were standing there, he told them the whole life story of Quiño Toyijo, affirming that he had on several occasions killed over a hundred Portuguese on ships that he had found lost at sea and undermanned, robbing them altogether of well over 100,000 cruzados; and that even though his real name was Quiño Toyijo, as the Armenian had said, ever since he had killed Cristóvão Sarmenta in the Moluccas he had been going under the alias of “Captain Sarmenta,” as a way of boasting about what he had done. Anxious to know where he was or where he could find him, he asked the Armenian, who said that he was hiding, badly wounded, in the rope locker of the forward section of the junk, along with six or seven others.

Antonio de Faria immediately jumped up and hurried over to that dog’s hiding place with the rest of the soldiers behind him. As he lifted the scuttle to see if what the Armenian had said was true, the dog and his six henchmen made their way out through another hatchway a little further down; and running amuck, they threw themselves against our soldiers, despite the fact that there were more than thirty of us, so that nothing of our forty slaves. And once again the fighting broke out with such fury, that before our men had a chance to finish them off—which took them a little longer than it would normally take to recibite the Creed three times—they had killed two Portuguese and seven slaves, and wounded more than twenty, including Captain Antonio de Faria himself, who emerged in very bad condition with two sword cuts to the head and one on the arm.

Once they had done with this havoc, they attended to all the wounded; and since it must have been close to ten o’clock by then, the order was given to set sail for fear of being discovered by the forty-junk armada up the river. After putting plenty of distance between us and the shore, we dropped anchor shortly before nightfall on the opposite coast of Cochinchina, where we began to take inventory of what this thief had been carrying on his junk. We found five hundred daluas of pepper, weighing fifty quintals per ton (not to mention rice, and eighty of
The Pearl Fishers of Quemoy

The following day Antonio de Faria departed from where he had been anchored and headed back to Hainan. He tacked along the coast all day and night in twenty-five to thirty fathoms until dawn, when he came out in the middle of a large bay where there were a number of barges engaged in fishing for seed pearls.

Unable to make up his mind about where to proceed from there, he spent the whole morning seeking advice and listening to many different opinions on the matter. Some thought it would be a good idea to seize the barges that were fishing there for seed pearl while others said no, that it would be better to trade with them, for that way we would be able to get rid of most of the cargo in exchange for the many pearls they had there. Finally, after the various points of view had been presented, the meeting ended with the decision to follow the safest and wisest course of action, and he ordered the flag of commerce hoisted aloft, in keeping with Chinese custom.

At the sign of the flag two junks—that are similar to the foist—came out from shore, laden with all sorts of refreshments. After the usual greetings, their occupants climbed aboard the junk that Antonio de Faria was on, but when they noticed that we were a different kind of people that had never been seen there before, they became quite frightened and asked us who we were and what we were doing there. The answer they got was that we were merchants, natives of the kingdom of Siam, and that we had come there to trade with them, if they were willing. An elderly man, who appeared to have more of an air of authority about him than the others answered yes, but that we were in the wrong place, and that we would have to proceed to another port further up called Gwamboy where the official trading station for foreigners was located; and that we would have to transact our business there in the same way as it was done in Canton, Chinhae, Lomau, Comboy, Sumbar, Ning-po, and the other coastal cities where foreign navigators were allowed to disembark; and that, speaking as chief administrative officer for the others, they advised Antonio de Faria to depart at once, because he was in a restricted area that had been set aside as a pearl fishery for the benefit of the treasury of the House of the Sea of Heaven; and that by order of the tutano of Comboy, who was the military governor over all of Cochinchina, the area had been placed off limits to all except the fishing barges assigned to work there; and that, in compliance with the law, any unauthorized vessel found there would immediately be set afire with the entire ship's company aboard; but since he was a foreigner who was unfamiliar with the local laws and customs, they were letting him know that he had better leave right away before the mandarin of the fleet returned, and that he was expected back in three or four days from a place called Budaquaram, about seven leagues from there, where he had gone to load provisions.

And when Antonio de Faria asked him what kind of ships the mandarin had in his fleet and what sort of complement they carried, he told him that he had forty big junks and twenty-five oar-propelled numées with a total of seven thousand men on board, or five thousand fighting marines and two thousand sailors. And when he was asked how long the mandarin remained in the area, he said that he stayed for the entire fishing season which lasted for six months, from early March to the end of August. And continuing with his questions, Antonio de Faria asked how much they paid in royalties for their fishing rights, and how much was the annual revenue collected in those six months. He answered that they paid by handing over two-thirds of the pearls weighing five carats or more, one-half of the lesser-quality pearls, and one-third of the seed pearls. As for the annual revenue, he could not say for certain because the catch varied from year to year, but he thought that on the average it yielded about 400,000 taels.

Hoping to get more detailed information out of them, Antonio de Faria went out of his way to be hospitable, and he gave the old man a few gifts—two cakes of wax, a sack of pepper, and an ivory tusk—which pleased him immensely and left them all in an expansive mood. Resuming his questions, he asked how big was this island of Hainan about which he had heard so many wonderful things.

"First tell us who you are," they replied, "and why you have come here, and then we will answer your questions. To tell the truth, we have never in all our lives seen as many well-mannered and elegantly dressed young men on board a merchant ship as those that you have here. One would think that Chinese silks are so cheap in your country that they are worth practically nothing; either that, or they have been obtained at prices far below their value, for judging by what we see going on here, as a simple pastime, your men take a bolt of damask on a throw of three dice with the sort of indifference one shows toward something that was acquired at little cost."

Antonio de Faria smiled a bit wryly at the inference that his men were gambling with stolen goods, but he explained it away by saying that such behavior was only to be expected from the sons of rich merchants who were too young to appreciate the value of things.

"Certainly," they replied, trying not to show that they had already surmised the truth, "it may well be as you say."

Antonio de Faria then made a sign to his men to put away the dice and hide the silks they were wagering with, so that those men would not realize that we were thieves, and they immediately obeyed. And since he was anxious to dispel the doubts of the Chinese, who still suspected that we were a bad lot, he ordered the hatches opened on the junk we had captured the night before from "Captain Sardinha," so that they could see that the hold was crammed full of pepper, which cleared the air a bit and made them somewhat less suspicious.
45
Gathering Information in Hainan

The merchant tried to satisfy Antonio de Faria's curiosity to some extent by answering his questions in the following manner:

"Now that I know who you are, sir," he began, "and that your questions come from a pure heart, I will tell you what I have learned from listening to former governors of this anciêncio alojado at various times. They say that this island was once a sovereign, independent nation, ruled by a very rich king who styled himself the Preclarus Gauma—a title higher and nobler than any used by the reigning kings of his day. When he died without leaving an heir, fighting broke out over a successor to the throne, which soon escalated into a full-scale civil war and led to so much bloodshed that, according to the chronicles dealing with the events of the period, a total of sixteen laçadas of men—a laçada being equal to 100,000—perished by the sword in only four and a half years. The decline in the population left the island in such a vulnerable position that it was easy for the Cochinian king to conquer it with only the seven thousand troops sent to him by the Tartar king from the city of Tapinak, the capital of his empire. Once Hainan was completely subdued, the Cochinian monarch returned to his kingdom, leaving one of his captains behind as governor of this island, a man by the name of Hocho Paguard who, for some very valid reasons of his own, rebelled against him and sought the protection of the king of China for an annual tribute of 400,000 taels—or 800,000 cruzados in foreign currency—which in turn obligated the Chinese king to defend him against his enemies whenever necessary. During the thirteen years that this pact was in effect, the Cochinian king was defeated on the battlefield five times. And when Hocho Paguard died without a son to succeed him, in gratitude for the protection he had received from his lifetime from the king of China, he named him in his last will and testament as his legitimate heir and successor to the throne; and ever since then, for two hundred and thirty-five years, this island of Hainan has been under the scepter of the great Chinese king. As for the rest of your questions regarding the treasures, revenues, and people of this island, I only know what I have heard from some of the ancients who once ruled this anciêncio alojado of Hainan in their official capacity as taxtei and chausu, and who claimed that the gross national income, including the silver mines and the duties collected at all the seaports, came to two and a half million taels."

Antonio de Faria and the other Portuguese there gasped in amazement at the enormity of the figure mentioned by the merchant.

"If you are all so impressed by that meager sum," he went on, "what would you do if you ever saw the city of Peking, where the Son of Heaven resides permanently with his court, whose treasury receives the combined revenue of the thirty-two kingdoms of the monarchy which they say, in gold and silver alone that he gets from its eighty-six mines, amounts to more than fifteen thousand piculs?"

After thanking him for having answered his questions so much to the point, Antonio de Faria asked him to recommend a place for him to sell his cargo where he would feel safe and find the best people to deal with, since he no longer had the means to take him to Ning-po.

"Let me give you a word of friendly advice," he replied. "Do not enter any of the ports on this island of Hainan, and do not trust any of the Chinese you find here, for I can assure you that none of them, regardless of what they say, will tell you the truth. You can trust me because I happen to be a wealthy man who has nothing to gain by lying to you. I would advise you to sail into this bay until you come to a large river called Tanaoqui, but make sure you sound the depths as you go because of the many dangerous shoals in the area. The anchorage is good in that river and you will be perfectly at ease and safe there; and in two days you will be able to sell all your cargo and even twice as much, if you had it to sell. However, I would not advise you to unload your goods ashore because the mere sight of wealth is capable of arousing greed in the breast of even a decent, law-abiding citizen, let alone an unruly person with no conscience who is inclined by nature to take what does not belong to him, rather than share what he has with the poor and needy, for the love of God."

And so saying, he and his party took their leave of the captain and the Portuguese with an effusive stream of polite and flowery words, with which, as a general rule, they are by no means frugal. And in return for the gift he had received, he gave Antonio de Faria a tortoise-shell jeweled box, about the size of a little saltcellar, filled to the brim with grains of seed pearl as well as twelve good-sized pearls, while at the same time asking him to excuse him for not trading with him there, for they were afraid they would be killed if they did, in conformity with the strict law of the land, and he urged him to leave right away, because if the mandarin of the fleet were to find him there on his return he would surely burn his ships.

Antonio de Faria had no desire to ignore this man's advice since he feared that what he had told him might well be true, and he immediately set sail, passing over to the southern side of the opposite coast where, within two days, under westerly winds, he reached the Tanaoqui River and anchored in front of a little village called Nyoir.

46
Encounter with a Chinese Pirate

We anchored for the night outside the mouth of the Tanaoqui River intending, first thing in the morning, to go up to the city five leagues from there to see if somehow or other we could sell the cargo, for we were so heavily laden that hardly a day went by without our scraping the reeds two or three times, and in some areas, where the ridges extended for four or five leagues, the sand was so close to the surface that we did not dare sail except in broad daylight, and even then, we were constantly...
hearing the lead. As a result, it was agreed not to undertake anything until we had gotten rid of the merchandise we were carrying, and naturally, Antonio de Faria had only one thing in mind—to get to a port where he could sell it.

The good Lord having shown us the way to a port where this could be done, we spent practically the entire night rigging and straining to enter the mouth of the river; but the currents were so strong that even with all sail unfurled we were driven back to leeward of the port. And while we were concentrating all our efforts on this, with the main deck so cluttered up with hatchways and cables that there was hardly enough room to turn around, two huge junks came out of the river. They were armed with movable fighting platforms from stem to stern, with silk awnings fluttering over the maintops, and the hulls protected all around with wooden shields painted in red and black, all of which combined gave them a very warlike appearance. And as they came, they chained themselves together to double the impact and bore down upon us so fast that we never even had a chance to prepare for them and were forced to scoop up the halyards and cables and throw them overboard in order to get at the guns, which was all that mattered at the time.

As the junks neared us, letting out screams and making a tremendous racket with drums and bells, we noticed that the first of the three broadsides they greeted us with came from a battery of twenty-six guns that included nine falcons and canons. This was a sure sign that we were dealing with people from the opposite coast of Malaya, and it came as a bit of a surprise to us. However, the moment he saw the two of them locked together, Antonio de Faria, like the shrewd man that he was, knew immediately what they were up to and headed out to sea, pretending to be freezing from them, not only to gain time, but also to make them think they were dealing with people other than our sort. But they too were old hands at the game, and since they had no intention of letting their prey escape, they disconnected the chains that bound them, the better to chase us. Catching up, they grappled us immediately and sent so many lances flying through the air that it looked as if nothing could withstand them.

Taking up a position under the quarterdeck castle with the twenty-five soldiers he had on his junk as well as ten or twelve slaves and sailors, Antonio de Faria played along with them, responding with arquebus fire for nearly half an hour until he had made them use up all their ammunition, which they had plenty of, judging by what lay strewn all over the deck.

Determined to see it through to the end, forty of their apparently bravest men boarded our junk, bent on gaining control of the bow, which forced our captain to come out to receive them. They rushed at each other enthusiastically, engaging in such heated combat that in little more time than it takes to recite the Credo three times, the good Lord saw fit to leave twenty-six out of the forty stretched out on the deck and to send the rest diving over the side.

Taking advantage of this favorable turn of events presented by the hand of God, twenty of our men jumped into the enemy ship where they met with hardly any resistance, since their best men had already been slain. And after they had cut down everyone they could find, killing them right and left, the crew finally surrendered, but their lives had to be spared because we did not have enough cannon to handle so many ships.

Once this was out of the way, Antonio de Faria sped as fast as he could to Cristóvão Borrachio’s ship, which had been harpooned by the other junk and was in a very precarious position because most of our men had been wounded; but with his aid—thanks be to God—the enemy jumped into the water, where most of them drowned, leaving both their junks in our hands.

Counting up our casualties, we found that this victory had cost us the lives of one Portuguese, five slaves, and nine sailors, to say nothing of the wounded; as for the toll in enemy ranks, there were eighty dead and almost as many taken captive.

After tending to our wounded and making them as comfortable as we could, Antonio de Faria issued orders to pick up the sailors who had jumped overboard, most of whom were floundering about shouting for help and yelling that they were drowning; and once they had been brought on board the big junk that Antonio de Faria was on he had them all put in chains. Interrogating them in an effort to find out who owned the junks, what their captain’s name was, and whether he was still alive, not a single one of them would respond properly, and while they were stubbornly allowing themselves to die, unmindful of the torture we applied, we heard Cristóvão Borrachio shouting from the other junk.

“My Lord! My Lord! Come quick!” he cried. “There’s more work to be done here than we thought!”

Antonio de Faria leapt aboard the junk with fifteen or sixteen soldiers and asked him what was wrong.

“I hear a lot of voices coming from the bow,” he replied. “There must be some more people hiding there.”

Hurling forward with all his oars at his heels, he ordered the horses thrown open and heard coming from below a loud cry of “Lord God, have mercy!” It was accompanied by such frightful moaning and wailing that it seemed unreal, as though a spell of enchantment had been cast over all. Thoroughly amazed by it, he and some of our men peered into the opening and saw a large number of people in chains, lying in the hold. And still unable to grasp the meaning of what he was seeing with his own eyes, the captain ordered someone down to take a closer look. At his bidding, two of the slaves jumped down and brought up a group of seventeen Christians—two Portuguese men, five children, and ten slaves, two of them female—who looked in such a way that it was a most pitiful sight to see. They were promptly relieved of their shackles—collars, handcuffs, and very heavy iron chains—and provided with all the necessities, for most of them were stark naked, with not a stitch of clothing to cover their bodies.

After this had been taken care of, one of the two Portuguese—since the other was half-dead—was questioned about the children, whom they belonged to, and how they happened to fall into the hands of that thief, and what was his name. He replied that the thief had two names, one Christian and the other pagan, and that his pagan name, by which he was known at the time, was Wacón Xicunúl, and that his Christian name was Francisco de Sá; and that five years before he had converted to Christianity in Malacca, during the capture of Garcia de Sá, who acted as godfather at his baptism and gave him that name and married him off to a young half-breed orphan, an extremely gentle woman and the daughter of a very honorable Portuguese, in order to make him feel more like a member of the community; and that in the year 1544, while on a voyage to China on a huge junk he owned, with his wife and twenty of the wealthiest and most honorable Portuguese of Malacca on board, he stopped at the island of Pulau Catão to take on fresh water, intending to proceed from there to the port of Chinhoe; but on the second day of his stopover, the entire crew, which had
been hired by him and, like him, were all Chinese, rose up one night while the Portuguese were asleep, killing them and their slaves with those little hatchets they carry, refusing to show mercy to anyone who called himself a Christian; and he tried to persuade his wife to become a pagan and to worship an idol that his tsuakû, the ship’s master, kept in a chest, and that once she had renounced the Christian faith he would marry her off to the tsuakû, who in turn was willing to give him one of his sisters, also a pagan Chinese, who was traveling with him; and because the wife refused to worship the idol or to consent to the rest of his plans, that dog dashed her brains out with a hatchet; and that after embarking from there he had proceeded to the port of Ning-po, where he traded that year; and since he was afraid to show himself in Patani on account of the Portuguese who lived there, he laid over for the winter in Siam; and the following year he returned to the port of Chinhon, where he seized a small junk inbound from Sunda with ten Portuguese on board, killing them all; and since by that time the news of the evils he had perpetrated against us had spread all over the country and he was afraid that he might run into some of our forces, he had gone to this Gulf of Cochinchina, where he had been living as both a merchant and a pirate, trading when he could and freebooting when he dared; and that it was now three years since he had turned this river into his private hunting grounds, mainly because he thought he would be safe from us here, knowing that we did not ordinarily trade in the gulf ports or the island of Hainan.

And when Antonio de Faria asked him if the children belonged to the Portuguese he had referred to, he said no, that they belonged to Nuno Porto, Gilão Dias, and Pero Borges, who also owned the slaves, and that he had killed them too, in Mompolacota, off the bar of the river of Siam, on a junk belonging to João de Oliveira, along with sixteen other Portuguese who were on board; and that he had spared both their lives only because he was a carpenter and the other a cabin boy, and that he had been taking them with him for nearly four years now, killing them slowly by starving and logging them; and that at the time he attacked us he had no idea that we were Portuguese, mistaking us for Chinese merchants like the ones he usually robbed whenever he could catch them unawares as he had expected to catch us.

And when he was asked if he would be able to identify the thief among the dead, he said yes. Antonio de Faria immediately stood up, took him by the arm, helping him over to the other junk which had rammed him, but after he had looked at all the corpses strewn about the deck, he said he was not there. Ordering the menacho made ready, Antonio de Faria went personally to look for him among the bodies floating in the water, where he found him, with a deep gash in the head and a sword wound right through his heart. After he had carried him on to the deck of the junk he asked the man again to identify him, and this time he did, without any hesitation. And Antonio de Faria believed it because he was wearing a thick gold chain around his neck, with a two-headed idol fashioned in the shape of a lizard, also made of gold, with an enamel coating on the tail and paws of green and black. And he had his body dragged over to the bow, where it was beheaded and cut to pieces.
waited for the laniteia to come alongside. As soon as they saw us standing there all together, responding to their gaiety in the same way, they headed straight towards us as merry as could be, mistaking us for the bridegroom’s party which was supposed to meet them there; and after we had exchanged salutes in the charachina way, as is the custom among these people, they bore off and dropped anchor near the shore.

Since we, for our part, had no way of knowing the reason for their unusual behavior, we all agreed with the captain that they were spies from the armada we had left behind, which would catch up with us before long; and we spent what little remained of the day and nearly two hours past nightfall, watching and waiting in suspense until finally the bride, who was on board one of the laniteias, distressed by the groom’s failure to send someone to pay his respects, as was only fitting, decided to make the first move and show him, apparently, how much she loved him, by sending an uncle of hers on one of the four laniteias to deliver a letter to him that went like this:

“If it were proper for me, a mere woman, to come and gaze upon thy countenance without sullying my reputation, believe me, I would fly, swift as the hungry falcon newly freed from its bonds, to kiss thy lingering feet. But now, my lord, since I have journeyed all the way from my father’s house to meet thee here, it is up to thee to leave thy vessel and come to mine, where I await thee, but a shadowy substance that cannot come into being without seeing thee; for thou shouldst fail to come now, in the dark of night, who can say if, in the light of day, thou wilt still find me amongst the living. My uncle, Lisopina, will reveal to thee the secrets locked deep in my heart, for not only am I beyond the power of speech, but I can no longer bear to be so mercilessly deprived of the pleasure of seeing thee. Therefore, I implore thee to come unto me or else give me leave to come unto thee. For the sake of the love I have always borne thee, do not deny me this favor, so that God in his justice may not chastise thee for such ingratitude and cur thee off from the estate that thou hast inherited from thy forebears at the very moment when I am on the threshold of womanhood, and about to take the marriage vows that will make thee my lord and master until death alone do us part—from which I pray God will spare thee for as many thousands of years to come as the number of times the sun and the moon have spun around the earth since the world began.”

When the laniteia that was carrying the bride’s uncle with this letter came alongside, Antonio de Faria ordered all the Portuguese to keep out of sight, allowing no one but the Chinese sailors to remain on deck, so as not to arouse their suspicions. Having reached the junk, just as sure of themselves as could be, three of the occupants of the laniteia climbed aboard and asked for the bridegroom, and in reply our men grabbed them and threw them down just as the hatch as they came, one by one. And since they were all, or nearly all of them, quite drunk, even the ones who were still on board the laniteia were not aware of what was happening except for the noise we were making; nor were they in any condition to react fast enough to get clear of the rope that was dropped on their masthead from the top of the poop castle, dragging them alongside in such a way as to make it impossible for them to ever disentangle themselves. And after we had tossed a few fire pots at them from above—which sent them all flying overboard—six or seven soldiers and an equal number of sailors jumped down and took possession of the laniteia, which they had to use later to pick up the poor hapless creatures who were flailing about in the water, yelling that they were drowning.

Once they had been rescued and placed under guard, Antonio de Faria went after the other three laniteias that were anchored about a little more than a quarter of a league away. The first one he reached was the one the bride was on, and he grappled it without encountering the slightest resistance since there were no soldiers on board, just the sailors at the oars, and about six or seven respectable-looking men, judging from the way they were dressed, relatives of the poor bride who had been escorting her, as well as two young boys, her brothers, who were both very fair and handsome; and the rest were elderly women musicians whose services are usually hired for such occasions, in keeping with Chinese custom.

Realizing that there was trouble afoot, the other two laniteias cut their lines and sped off under full sail and our as though the devil himself were after them; but even so, that did not prevent us from capturing one of them, and thus we obtained possession of three out of the four. This done, we returned to our ships.

Since it was almost midnight by then, all we did was transfer the booty to the junk and put the captives below deck, where they stayed until morning. And when he saw what a sad lot they were, mainly old women who were of no use to us, Antonio de Faria had them all put ashore, except for the bride and her two brothers, since they were fair and handsome young lads, as well as twenty seamen who were very busy for manning the junks which were still somewhat shorthanded.

Sometime later we learned that the bride was the daughter of the anchari of Celom—an official somewhat like our magistrate—and that she was betrothed to a young man who was a son of the ch’-fu, or captain, of Panduri, who, they say, had written her that he would meet her there in that place with three or four junks belonging to his father, who was a very wealthy man, and that is why they were deceived by us.

The following afternoon, when we had already departed from the place we called the “bride’s rendezvous,” the groom came looking for her in a fleet of five gaily bedecked ships, saluting us happily as he passed with a burst of music and other signs of rejoicing, without having the vaguest idea of his misfortune or the fact that we were carrying his bride off. And in that manner, covered with burning and many silk awnings, he turned the bend of the Tilaumara River where we had been the day before, and anchored there to wait for his bride, as he had written he would.

From here we proceeded on our course, and three days later, with God’s help, we reached the port of Mutipincha, which was where we were heading because Antonio de Faria had heard that he would be able to sell the cargo there.

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No Word of the Lord

Having reached this port we dropped anchor in the middle of a bay formed by a stretch of land jutting out towards a little island just south of the entrance to the bar, where we remained quietly, without saluting the port or making any noise, having decided, as soon as it was dark, to sound the river and gather the information we were looking for. At moonrise, which must have been shortly before eleven, Antonio de Faria sent out one of his laniteias with a well-armed party of twelve soldiers
under the command of Valentim Martins de Alpoin, a clever, capable fellow, who had already given a good account of himself on previous missions of this sort. As soon as he started out he began taking river soundings, and he kept on heaving the lead until he reached the city anchorage, where he captured two men he found sleeping on a barge laden with earthenware. Returning aboard without incident, he gave Antonio de Faria a complete report of his findings, from the large size of the town to the small number of ships in port. Based on this information, he thought it would be perfectly safe for him to enter the harbor, for even if something unforeseen occurred that would prevent him from trading there as he wished, no one would be able to stop him from leaving whenever he felt like, since the river was wide and clear all the way and free of the danger of reefs and shoals.

At a meeting called to decide what to do next, the majority agreed that the two Moors taken captive should not be interrogated under torture as originally planned, not only to avoid scandalizing them, but because there was no need for it. And at daybreak, when everyone had recited the Litany with deep devotion, accompanied by vows of fine, rich offerings for the adornment of the Church of Our Lady of the Mount in Malacca, Antonio de Faria took it upon himself to interrogate the two Moors. He began gently, calming their fears as he questioned them carefully about what he was especially interested in finding out. Both of them replied in one voice that, as far as entering the river was concerned, there was nothing to fear, because it was the safest in the entire gulf, and that much larger ships than his frequently entered and departed, for even in the shallower areas it was estimated fifteen to twenty fathoms deep; and as for conditions on shore, there was nothing to worry about because the local inhabitants were heartened by nature and did not possess arms, and as for the foreigners there, most of them were merchants who had arrived nine days before from the kingdom of Brunei in two caravans of five hundred each, laden with large quantities of silver, cagewood, silk, linen, dry goods, ivory, wax, lac, benzoin, camphor, and gold dust of the same quality found on the island of Hainan; and that they had all come to trade their goods for pepper, spices, and pearls from the island of Hainan. And when they were asked if there were any armadas along the coast they said no, because most of the military campaigns carried out by or against the preconius, emperor of the Chinese, were fought on land, and that when they did fight on the rivers, they used small oared craft, not ships as large as his, because there was not enough draft for them. And when asked if their preconius was in the area, they said that he was only a twelve-days’ journey from there, in the city of Quangnapari, where he resided most of the time with his household and court, governing his kingdom from there in peace and justice. And when asked how much treasure and revenue he had, they replied that the metals mined for the crown yielded a good fifteen thousand picus of silver, half of which, by divine law of the Lord of all Creation, belonged to the poor who cultivated the soil for the sustenance of their families; but that those rights had been voluntarily surrendered by the consent of all, in exchange for an agreement exempting them thereafter from the payment of tribute or any other form of oppressive taxation, an agreement which the former preconius, in national assemblies that were convoked, had sworn to uphold for as long as the sun shone light on earth.

When he felt that they were in the proper frame of mind, Antonio de Faria asked them about some other things of interest to him, such as their knowledge of what they saw with their own eyes by night in the heavens, and by day in the clarity of the sun, about which he had heard so much. To this they replied that the highest truth of all, which they adhered to and believed in above all others, was that there was an all-powerful, universal God who created and preserved all things; and that, if at times, our human understanding becomes clouded and confused by our selfish desires, it was not the fault of the Creator, in whom there could be no imperfection, but rather the fault of the sinner, who, for lack of forbearance, judged all things according to his own inclinations. And when asked if there was anything in their law that taught that God had once come down to earth in human shape and form, they said no, because they could not conceive of anything that could force him to such an extreme, for by the very perfection of his divine nature, he was free of our human miseries and very far indeed from coveting the treasures of this earth, since all things were reduced to naught in the presence of his divine splendor.

And in this way, by means of the above questions and a few others put to them by Antonio de Faria, we realized that, to this day, these people had never heard about our true faith, and that all they did was acknowledge with words what they saw with their eyes in the canopy of the sky and the beauty of the day, by continually raising their arms heavenward as they make their zambias, repeating these words: “By thy deeds, O Lord, we acknowledge thy grandeur!”

Following this, Antonio de Faria had them put ashore, sending them freely on their way with a few gifts which made them very happy.

About this time the sea breeze was beginning to blow and he sent sail in a festive mood, the masts covered with silk awnings, and the flag of commerce hoisted in the same style so that anyone seeing him that way would take him for a merchant and not for anything else. And an hour later he anchored in front of the city quays, saluting the port with very little noise of artillery. In response, ten or twelve canoes laden with refreshments came out from shore, and even though they were surprised by the sight of us and could tell from our features and clothes that we were neither Siamese, nor Javanese nor Malaysians, nor people of any other nation that they had seen before, they greeted us with these words: “May some morning upon us all bright and promising as the afternoon which has been graced by your presence here!”

Yet out of all the canoes there, only one ventured to come alongside and request permission to land. In reply they were told to feel free to do so, that there was nothing to fear since we were all brothers; but even so, only three of the dogout’s nine occupants boarded the junk. Antonio de Faria welcomed them graciously, and after seating them comfortably on a carpet, he told them that he was a merchant from the kingdom of Siam, and that on his way to the island of Hainan, where he had been planning to trade, someone had told him that prices and conditions here in this city were better than elsewhere, because the merchants and people in this area were more trustworthy than the Chinese living along the coasts of the gulf and the island of Hainan.

“You are absolutely right,” they replied, “and if you are a merchant, as you appear to be, then you may rest assured that you will be treated honorably here in every respect, and you can sleep soundly, for there is nothing to fear.”
Problems Unloading the Cargo

Out of fear that some message or word of what he had done to the thief in the Tamaquins River might arrive overland and that it might harm him in some way, Antonio de Faria refused to unload the cargo as the customs officials requested, and twice the whole business was completely undone as a result of the problems and difficulties that arose. And when he realized that soft words were not enough to bring them around to his way of thinking, he sent a merchant who was usually available as a go-between to deliver a message to them explaining that he appreciated the fact that they were within their rights in asking him to put the cargo ashore, as was customary, but he pointed out that he was not in a position to do so since they were now at the tail end of the monsoon and it was urgent that he leave right away in order to repair his big junk, which was taking on so much water that seventy seamen had to be kept busy at the three pumps night and day and he was in imminent danger of sinking to the bottom right there, cargo and all; and that as far as the king’s duties were concerned, he would be very happy to pay them; however, not at thirty percent as they demanded, but at ten, which was what they paid in other countries and which he would be willing to pay immediately; but instead of replying they arrested the man who brought them the message.

When the messenger failed to return, Antonio de Faria set sail with the ships gaily beseeched, acting as if it mattered little to him whether or not he sold the cargo. Seeing him leave the port—for which they blamed the obstinacy of the nastrada—and along with him the merchandise with which they had hoped to conclude their business, the foreigners who had come there by caravans together and demanded of the nastrada that he recall him, threatening otherwise to denounce him to the king for the injustice he was doing them by driving out of the port the merchandise that they had hoped to buy. Afraid of being punished and turned out of office, the nastrada and the other capitano of the customs house gave in to their demands, but on the condition that they pay five percent more—since we were only willing to pay ten—in order to cover the king’s half of the duties, which was perfectly agreeable to them.

Releasing the merchant who had been detained, they sent him to deliver a very courteous letter explaining the terms of the agreement that had been reached. Antonio de Faria replied that under no circumstances would he return to the port, for at the end of the monsoon he could not afford so many comings and goings, but that if they were willing to come and buy the entire cargo, all at the same time, bringing enough silver with them to pay for it on the spot, he would sell it to them; otherwise, he did not want anything more to do with them because he was deeply offended by the nastrada’s lack of respect in ignoring his messages; and that if this arrangement was satisfactory to them, they should let him know within the hour, for that was all the time he would give them, and if not, he would proceed on his way to Hainan, where he could sell his goods on far better terms than here.

Faced with this ultimatum, which they believed to be final, they accepted it, for they were afraid of losing this opportunity to wind up their affairs and go home; and they set out immediately, in five big barges laden with chests full of silver and a large supply of gunny sacks for loading the pepper. When they reached the junk that was flying the admiral’s flag, they received a warm welcome from Antonio de Faria, who listened as they repeated the story of what had happened in the city with the nastrada, complaining bitterly about his evil nature and some of the things he had done to them which they considered unfair; however, as long as they had managed to appease him with fifteen percent, of which they were willing to pay five, they asked him to pay the ten percent he had promised, otherwise, they would not be able to buy his merchandise. Antonio de Faria replied that he would gladly do so, but mainly out of consideration for them and not because it was to his liking, for which they thanked him, thus concluding the agreement in a peaceful manner, without much ado.

Rushing back frantically to unload the cargo, it took us only three days to weigh it and bag it and deliver it to the owners, whose accounts were duly verified and paid for in silver. The total transaction came to 150,000 reis, calculated, as I have said several times before, at the rate of six testons per one. But even though it was done in the shortest possible time, it was still not quick enough, for we had not quite finished when the news of what we had done to the thief in the Tamaquins River arrived and caused such an uproar ashore that no one would venture abroad any more, and as a result, Antonio de Faria was forced to set sail, and rather hastily at that.

Victory in the Madel River

As we were sailing away from this river port of Mutisipén, with the bow facing north, Antonio de Faria thought it would be better to turn back to the coast of Hainan in search of a river called Madel, with the intention, since the big junk was leaking badly, of running it aground on the tide, or exchanging it somehow or other, for a better and more watertight ship. And after twelve days of navigating against foul winds, he reached the hill of Pulo Hinton, on Coconut Island; but since he could not find any news there of the Kloja Hassim he was looking for, he changed course and headed back to the southern coast, where he captured a few good prizes, which, from our way of looking at it, were fairly come by; for it was never his intention to steal from anyone but the pirates who had murdered and robbed the many Christians frequenting the gulf and coast of Hainan, where these pirates operated freely under the protection of the port mandarins, who received handsome bribes for allowing them to sell on shore what they stole at sea. But since the Lord our God has a way of bringing forth great good from great evil, he saw fit, in the wisdom of his divine justice, that as a result of the robbery perpetrated against us by Kloja Hassim off the bar of Lugor, as described above, Antonio de Faria should decide, as he did that day in Pasini, to track him down and make him serve as an example to other thieves, who richly deserved the punishment they got from the Portuguese.

After a few days of navigating in the Gulf of Cochinchina under the most difficult conditions, we put into a port called Madel, and while we were there, on the feast
of the Nativity of Our Lady, the eighth of September, feeling quite apprehensive about the new moon—which in that latitude often brings with it a terrible storm the Chinese call “typhoon,” accompanied by rain and high winds too furious for any ship to withstand—when for the past three or four days the skies had been lowering and showing signs of what we had been dreading, and the junks had been hurrying into the nearest haven, it was the will of the Lord that, among the many ships entering this harbor, one of them should belong to a well-known pirate by the name of Himimilus, a Chinese heathen who had converted to Islam a short time before. And it seems that under the influence of the saintly Moslem faith to which he had recently converted, as was presumed, he had become such a fierce enemy of the Christians, that he would go about saying in public that God owed him the kingdom of heaven for the invaluable service he was performing for Him by ridding the earth little by little of that evil race of Portuguese who, owing to some substance absorbed with their mother’s milk, got as much pleasure out of offending God as do the demons inhabiting the House of Smoke; and with such words and others like them he would go around saying the most obscene, abominable things about us, such as had never before been imagined.

This pirate came sailing into the river on a huge, majestic junk, with the entire ship’s company busily engaged in reeking the sails, for by then the weather had closed in with gusts of wind and rain; and as he went past, he saluted us in the chauvinist way, to which we resented in like manner, as is the custom in those ports, without their having as yet recognized us as Portuguese, nor we them, for that matter, having taken them for just another one of the Chinese ships that had been coming into port every hour, seeking shelter from the storm. However, they had some prisoners on board, five Christian slaves, who did recognize us and who cried out the minute they saw us, shouting in unison three times over, “Lord God, have mercy!”

At the sound of this cry we all jumped up and ran to the side to see what it was all about, though at the time we were far from imagining what was to follow. Recognizing the boys as Christians, we shouted to the seamen to douse the sails, but they refused; and instead, they answered us contemptuously by letting out three loud jeers to the beat of a drum, while they pranced around, jabbing the air with their naked swords in a threatening manner, trying to frighten us.

After they had anchored about a quarter of a league beyond us, Antonio de Faria decided to investigate and sent a well-armed bateau after them with which there was a heavy shower of stones as it came alongside that its occupants were all in danger of being killed; and so they turned around and came back, with the sailors all cut and bruised and the lone Portuguese on board badly injured from the two enormous stones that were dropped on him.

At the sight of him all covered with blood Antonio de Faria asked him what it was all about.

“I have no idea, sir,” he replied, “but look at us, and the manner in which we are returning.”

And he showed him the wounds on his head while giving him a full description of the welcome they had received; and when he had finished, Antonio de Faria remained silent, brooding over it for quite a while.

“Come on, men!” he exclaimed finally, taking in everyone around him. “Get ready! And let there not be a single comrade on board who is unprepared to fight, for in the name of Christ, we are going to find out what this is all about! Something tells me it is the work of that dog of a Khoja Hassim, and maybe today we will have a chance to make him pay, and pay well, for our merchandise!”

And filled with the fervor of the moment, he immediately gave orders to cast off the lines and got under way as quickly as possible with all three of the junks and the lanteias. Arriving within musket-shot range of them, he sent over a salvo of thirty-six pieces of artillery, including twelve falcons and canons, in addition to a bronze sphere that fired cast-iron balls. This caught the enemy so completely by surprise that the only thing they could think of at the time was to cut their lines and let the junk drift shoreward. But it did not turn out the way they thought it would, or the way they would have liked it to, because Antonio de Faria understood what they were trying to do and he intercepted them before they could carry it out by ramming them with the combined force of the junks and lanteias under his command.

And then a beautiful battle broke out at this point, with swords being thrust at the ones who were near and spears and fire pots thrown at the ones who were far, while upwards of a hundred arquebusiers were firing continuously as the fighting raged on for nearly half an hour without either side gaining the upper hand, until at last, as God willed, the enemy, badly wounded and burned, threw themselves into the water, while our men, fully avenged, filled the air with shouts as they freely followed up on that great victory.

When he saw his enemies drowning in the swift and turbulent waters, Antonio de Faria had two bateas made ready and armed; and embarking with a party of soldiers as fast as he could, he managed to rescue some sixteen of them, unwilling to let them die along with the others because he was sorely in need of crewmen for the lanteias, since most of them had died in the previous fighting.

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The Corsair’s Confession

After achieving this victory in the manner described, the first thing we turned our attention to was the care of some of the men who had been wounded, since that was the most important order of business; and after that, having been reliably informed that one of the sixteen men he had rescued was the pirate, Antonio de Faria had him brought before him; and after seeing to it that the two wounds he had were attended to, he asked him where the Christian boys were, to which he obsequiously replied that he did not know. And when the question was put to him again, with threats, he said that first they should give him a little water because his throat was so dry that he could not speak. And when the water was brought to him he drank it so fast that he spilled most of it. Still not satisfied he asked for more, promising by his Moslem faith and the whole Koran to tell them anything they wanted to know as long as they would give him enough water to quench his thirst. Antonio de Faria had it brought immediately along with a jar of preserves, which he refused, but he drank an
enormous amount of water. And this time when he was asked where the Christian boys were, he said that they would find them in the forward hold.

Antonio de Faria immediately sent three soldiers to look for them, and when they opened the hatch to call them up, they saw them all lying there below with their heads cut off. Horrified by the sight they let out a frightful scream and started shouting, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Come here, your lordship, and you will see something most pitiful!"

Antonio de Faria and all the others who were with him jumped up at once and ran forward; and when he saw those boys lying there all dead, one on top of the other, he was so overcome by the sight that he was unable to hold back the tears, and with arms upraised and his gaze turned heavenward he cried out loud in a voice filled with grief, "O my Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed art thou for the pity and mercy thou showest in suffering such a grave offense!"

And when he had them brought up on deck not a single man present was able to control the tears or keep from going to other extremes upon seeing a woman and two children about six or seven years of age, both so beautiful and innocent, mercilessly beheaded, and the five boys who had called out to us, with their bodies slashed and their guns hanging out.

Taking his scat again, Antonio de Faria asked the pirate why he had done such a cruel thing to those innocent victims lying there; and he was like asking him whether they had betrayed him by revealing themselves to the Portuguese who were his worst enemies, and because they had called on their God to avail them; and as for the two little ones, the fact that they were children of the Portuguese, whom he had never liked, was reason enough for him. And he answered some other questions that were put to him in the same indifferent manner and with as much obstinacy as though he were the devil himself in the flesh.

And when asked if he was a Christian he said no, but that he had formerly been one in the days when Dom Paulo da Gama was captain of Malacca. And when Antonio de Faria asked him, since he had once been a Christian, what made him leave the faith of Christ, in which his salvation was certain, for that of Mohammed, in which his soul would most certainly be damned, he said that it was because after he had become a Christian he was always treated with deep contempt by the Portuguese, whereas previously, when he had been a heathen, they would all remove their hats when they spoke to him and address him politely as "Sire Captain;" but once he had become a Christian they showed him very little respect; and that he went to Bintang to become a Moslem, and that there, after he was converted, the king of Jantana, who was there at the time, always treated him in the most honorable manner, and the mandarins all addressed him as "brother." As a result, he had taken a vow and sworn to it on the Book of Flowers, that as long as he lived he would always be the greatest enemy of the Portuguese and all other people who professed the Christian faith, an oath for which he was highly praised by both the king and the cacis moulanas, who assured him that if he kept his word his soul would be eternally blessed.

When asked how long it had been since he rebelled against the Portuguese, what ships of theirs he had captured, how many of them he had slain, and how much merchandise he had stolen from them, he replied that seven years before, the first ship he had captured, in the river of Ning-po, was a junk belonging to Luis de Paiva, laden with four hundred barrels of pepper only, no other spices, on which he had killed eighteen Portuguese, apart from their slaves, who did not count because they did not really satisfy the oath he had taken; but that later on, by a fortunate combination of circumstances at sea, he had captured four more ships on which he had killed nearly three hundred people, though probably not more than seventy of them were Portuguese; and that he reckoned that altogether he must have captured about fifteen or sixteen hundred barrels of pepper and other assorted goods, more than half of which he had to give to the king of Pahang in exchange for allowing him to seek refuge in his country and for protecting him against the Portuguese by providing him with an armed force of a hundred men who sailed with him and obeyed him as though he were a king.

And when asked if those were the only Portuguese he had slain or had encouraged others to slay, he said no, but that two years before, while anchored in the Chaobatee River off the coast of China, a big junk with many Portuguese on board arrived, and her captain happened to be a very good friend of his by the name of Rui Lobo, who had been sent there on a trading voyage by Dom Estévão da Gama, then captain of Malacca; and that after he had finished trading, Rui Lobo had departed with his ship gaily beheaded because he was returning rich; however, five days after he had departed he ran into a heavy sea that split the junk open, and since he was unable to ride it out he was forced to return to the port from which he had departed; and as he was coming in under a high wind and full sails he stopped as to gain time, the junk suddenly sank to the bottom, though Rui Lobo and seventeen Portuguese as well as some slaves survived and managed to make their way to the island of Lomau on board their sampan without sail, water, or food; and trusting in their old friendship, Rui Lobo had begged him on bended knee, with tears in his eyes, to take him on board his junk which was then preparing to leave for Patani, promising in return, and swearing by his faith as a Christian, to pay him two thousand cruzados, an offer which he had agreed to; but after he had taken him aboard, the Moors advised him not to trust in the friendship of a Christian if he wanted to stay alive, warning him that as soon as they had regained their strength they would take over his junk and all its cargo, for that was the way they usually behaved, no matter where they were, and that since he was afraid that there might be some truth to what the Moors had said, he killed them all one night while they were asleep, though later on he had regretted it many times.

Antonio de Faria and the others around him were as deeply shocked by the enormity of that ugly deed as one would expect them to be; and since he no longer had any desire to interrogate him, he gave orders to have him killed and thrown overboard, along with the four others who were still alive.

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King of the Sea

After this pirate and the others had received their punishment, an inventory was taken of what the junk was carrying, and the value of the prize was estimated at nearly forty thousand taels in silk, bolts of satin and damask, silk yarn,
and musk, apart from a large quantity of fine porcelain and some other goods that had to be burned along with the junk for lack of a crew to sail her.

This honorable exploit had such an amazing impact on the Chinese that whenever they heard any mention of the Portuguese they trembled. Realizing that the same port organized a meeting they called a *tchiar*, at which they chose two of their most respected associates who were best qualified to represent them for what they had in mind, and they sent them as ambassadors to Antonio de Faria, as king of the sea, to ask him, on his word of honor, to protect them, so that they might leave port safely and proceed on their way before the end of the monsoon, in consideration of which they would immediately acknowledge themselves as his slaves and subjects and pay him, as their lord, a tribute of twenty thousand taels in silver, without any further ado.

Antonio de Faria received them gracefully and granted their request, and swore them that henceforth no thief would steal a single piece of their merchandise. And thousand taels. He returned in less than an hour with the silver as well as a number of expensive items as a personal gift from all the *necedes*.

And since Antonio de Faria wanted to favor one of his slaves, a boy by the name of Costa, he appointed him as the official scribe and put him in charge of the safe-conduct passes that were to be issued to the *necedes* at a fixed rate of five taels for the junks, and two for the *vemoteces* and barges. He did so well for himself that in just the thirteen days that it took to issue the passes, this boy earned—according to what was said by those who envied him—more than four thousand taels in silver alone, to say nothing of the many fine gifts they all gave him to get him to take care of them faster. And the safe-conduct passes read as follows:

This is to certify that *Necedes* So-and-so has been granted the right to navigate freely along the entire coast of China, with the assurance, backed by my word of honor, that he will not be molested by any of my men, on condition that he treat all Portuguese as brothers wherever they chance to meet." And at the bottom it was signed, "Antonio de Faria."

All of these passes were scrupulously honored, with the utmost integrity. And from that time forward, he was so deeply feared along that entire coast that even the *chins* of Hainan, the viceroy of the island himself, owing to what he had heard about service, and wrote him a letter informing him that he would be very pleased to have him enlist in the service of the Son of Heaven as admiral of the coastal area extending from Lamau to Ning-po, at an annual salary of ten thousand taels; and that if he lived up to their expectations, as they had every reason to believe he would, judging by his reputation, he could assure him that, at the end of three years, he would be promoted to the rank of one of the forty *chins* in the government, whose word was supreme in the administration of justice; and at the same time he pointed out to him that from there, a man like him, if he proved to be loyal, could eventually rise to become one of the twelve *tusens* in the government, whom the Son of Heaven, Crowned Lion on the Throne of the World, admitted to his chamber and board as intimate members of his household by reason of the high honors and positions of command conferred on them, at a salary of 100,000 taels.

Antonio de Faria thanked him very much for the offer and turned it down in the
Shipwreck off the Isle of Thieves

For seven and a half months Antuoia de Faria remained in that gulf, sailing back and forth, from river to river, up and down both coasts from north to south and around the island of Hainan, without being able to find any trace of Khoja Hassim in all that time. Sick and tired of all the hardship they had endured for so long, the soldiers all got together and demanded of him that everything that had been acquired in the meantime be divided up according to a signed statement he had given them, so that they could each take their share and return to India or wherever else they wanted to go.

There was quite a bit of ill feeling over this, and though tempers flared during the discussions, in the end they agreed to lay up for the winter in Siam, where all the cargo on the junk would be sold, converted to gold, and distributed accordingly. Once this agreement had been signed and sworn to by everyone, they went on to the Isle of Thieves, as it was called, and dropped anchor there because of its location at the outermost point of the gulf, intending to begin the return leg of the voyage from there with the first breezes of the monsoon.

After we had been waiting there for twelve days, with everyone anxious to put the agreement into effect, as Fortune would have it, with the conjunction of the new moon in the month of October, which was something we always dreaded, we were struck by a raging storm, accompanied by rain and winds of such tremendous force that it could not be attributed to natural causes. And since we were short of cables at the time, and the ones that we had were nearly all badly frayed and half rotten to begin with, as soon as the sea began to swell and the southeast wind swept over the coast, catching us in an exposed position, such a huge surge of mountainous waves arose that much as we tried in every possible way to save ourselves—by cutting away the masts, raising the deckhouses and upper works from stem to stern, jettisoning everything on deck, taking turns at the pumps, throwing cargo overboard, splicing hawser cables and clinching them onto anchors improvised out of the heavy artillery that had been removed from the gun carriages—all of our efforts were of no avail, and with the night so dark, the temperature so low, the seas so heavy, the winds so fierce, the waters so crossed, the waves so high, and the force of the storm so terrifying, there was nothing left for us to do but throw ourselves on the mercy of the Lord, upon whom we kept calling continuously, shouting at the top of our voices and shedding bitter tears.

But since, sinners that we were, we were unworthy of being shown this mercy, the good Lord, in the wisdom of his divine justice, ordained that at two hours past midnight we were struck by a wind of such tremendous force that all four of the ships were blown against the coast and dashed to pieces, killing 486 people, including twenty-eight Portuguese. Those of us who survived by the grace of God—twenty-two Portuguese and the rest seamen and slaves, making fifty-three altogether—sought shelter, bleeding and naked, in some shallow pools where we managed to get through the night. In the morning we made our way to the beach and discovered that it was completely strewn with corpses. It was such an unbearable pain that not a man among us could stand up under the shock of it and everyone collapsed, reeling in horror from it, filling the air with the most plaintive sounds of weeping and beating their breasts in anguish.

They carried on this way until close to vespers, when Antonio de Faria, who, thank God, was among the survivors, which made us feel somewhat better—repressing the grief that the rest of us could not hide, appeared before us dressed in a scarlet calaba and had stripped off one of the corpses lying there, and with dry eyes and a cheerful countenance, made a brief speech in which he touched every now and then on the false and fleeting nature of the material things of this world; and that was why he was asking them, in a brotherly fashion, to try as hard as they could to forget about such things, since dwelling on them would only cause them further grief; and that if we stopped to think about the circumstances and the wretched condition to which Fortune had reduced us, because of our sins, then we would appreciate what he was saying and would realize how important it was for us to heed his advice; for he trusted that the Lord our God, right there in that dense and uninhabited jungle, would send them the means to save themselves; and that one had to firmly believe that He would never permit any evil unless it were meant for some greater good; and that was why he, for one, believed with all his heart that, even though we had lost 600,000 cruzados there, we would soon get back 600,000 or more.

They heard him out as he delivered this brief talk, but there were many tears shed all around, and with heavy hearts they turned to the task of burying the dead that were strewn all over the beach. Two and a half days were devoted to it, and during that time we also salvaged some of the wet provisions we needed to keep alive, but though the supply was plentiful, it only lasted for five out of the fifteen days we spent there because it was soaked in salt water, and as a result was so spoiled that we got little good out of eating it.

At the end of these fifteen days, during which we endured unspeakable hardship, our Lord, who never abandons those who truly trust in Him, miraculously sent us the means, naked and bare as we were, to save ourselves, as I will explain.

Marooned

Those of us who survived the disastrous shipwreck I have described above wandered about the beach and through the woods, naked and barefooted, suffering from the extremes of cold and hunger to such a degree that many of our comrades, while talking to each other, suddenly dropped dead of exhaustion; and it was not so much from the lack of food as it was from the harm done us by the food we had eaten which was moldy and spoiled, to say nothing of the fact that it smelled so bad and tasted so bitter that you could not bear to put it in your mouth. But since the Lord our God by his very nature is infinitely good, there is no place on earth, however remote or forsaken, where the suffering of sinners can escape him and where he can...
not succor them with certain effects so far beyond our imagination that if we stop to think about the way they come to pass, it becomes perfectly clear that they are miracles wrought by his divine hands rather than the natural course of events, as we so often delude ourselves into thinking.

The reason I say this is because, one day, the very day on which the feast of the archangel Saint Michael is celebrated, when we had abandoned all hope of human aid and were weeping in despair—a weakness we attributed to our misery and lack of faith—a sea hawk chanced to fly by, appearing from behind a knoll that rose toward the southern part of the island; and as it flew overhead, wheeling and dipping its outspread wings in the air, a fresh mulet, about a handspan in length, fell from its claws and landed at the feet of Antonio de Faria. He stood there a little puzzled, not knowing what to make of it, until he realized what it was and then, after staring briefly at the fish, he got down on his knees, and with the tears streaming down his cheeks, he heaved a deep sigh and uttered this prayer.

"Lord Jesus Christ, eternal son of God, I humbly beseech thee, by the wounds of thy sacred Passion, do not condemn us for the lack of faith we have shown in a moment of weakness induced by our misery, for truly believe that thou wilt be as merciful to us, here and now, as thou wast to Daniel in the lion’s den, in days of old, when thou hadst him delivered by the prophet Habakkuk," and so shalt thou be any time, any place and at any sinner invokes thy aid with unwavering faith and hope in his heart. Therefore, I pray thee, my Lord and my God, not for my sake but for thine own, and through the intercession of thy holy angel whose feast day is observed this day by thy holy church, look upon how little we merit of thee, but rather how much merit thou didst earn for us thy suffering on the Cross. I ask this so that thou mayest be pleased to grant us the remedy for our suffering which can only come from thee; and lead us in the way to a Christian land where, persevering in thy holy service, we can live our lives as true believers!"

He picked up the mulet and roasted it on some embers and gave it to the sick who needed it most. And then, looking in the direction of the hill from which the hawk had come, we saw many of them soaring and descending in the air, which gave us to understand that those birds were feeding on some kind of game or fresh quarry. Since we were all anxious to do something for our sick comrades, and there were many among us who were ailing, we formed a procession and headed in that direction, hoping as best as we could and reciting a litany through our tears. When we reached the top of the hill we discovered a completely level valley with a wide variety of fruit trees growing there and a freshwater stream flowing right through the middle; but before we even reached it, the Lord placed a freshly killed deer in our path, its throat slashed, on which a tiger was just beginning to feed. He dropped his prey when he heard our shouts and went fleeing into the thickest part of the woods, leaving it behind for us just where it lay.

We took this for a good omen and descended to the riverbank, where we settled down for the night after feasting on a marvelous banquet we prepared not only with the deer, but also with the many mulets we picked up, thanks to the great number of hawks that came down to the river in droves, for quite often our screams would frighten them into dropping some of the many fish they caught.

We continued fishing this way at the riverbank from the Monday on which we arrived until the following Saturday when, early in the morning, we saw a sail heading for the island. Since we were not sure whether or not it would anchor there, we went down to the beach where we had been shipwrecked, and after watching it for nearly half an hour we saw that it was a small thing, and as a result we were forced to hide in the woods so they would not see us.

Once in port, this boat—which was a beautiful oared lanteria—was secured by the crew with two mooring lines fore and aft, to a high bank formed by the point of the cove, to enable them to let a gangplank down on shore. There were more or less about thirty people on board, and when they had all disembarked they immediately set to work on their chores, taking on water, collecting firewood, washing clothes, and cooking dinner, while some even amused themselves with wrestling and other sport, never dreaming that there might be anyone there who could interfere with them.

When he saw them all going about their business in such a carefree and disorderly manner, and that there was no one on board to stand in our way, Antonio de Faria gathered us all about him.

"Men, brothers," he said, "I do not have to tell you that we are in such a sad situation because we have sinned. You all know that well enough, though I am firmly convinced, and I confess it freely, that my sins alone are to blame for it. But since our Lord is infinitely merciful, I trust in him that he will not allow us to end our days here in such a miserable way. And even though I know that there is no need to tell you how important it is for us to try to capture this boat which the Lord has miraculously sent us, still, I just want to mention it so that all of us together, just as we are—with his holy name on our lips and in our hearts—may make a dash for it and get on board before they discover us. And once we have reached it, please keep in mind that the most important thing is to gain possession of the weapons we find there, since we will need them to defend ourselves and take control of this one thing which—after God—is our sole salvation. And as soon as I say the words, 'Jesus, name of Jesus!' three times, do exactly what you see me do!"

Everyone promised that they would without fail. And once we were all ready and set to go after the worthy goal we had set ourselves, Antonio de Faria gave us the signal he had chosen, and dashed off with the rest of us at his heels. Reaching the lanteria, we promptly gained control of it without encountering any opposition, and casting off the mooring lines, we moved out to sea for about the distance of a crossbow shot.

Hearing the noise, the unsuspecting Chinese quickly ran down to the beach, but when they saw their ship had been captured, they were so surprised that not one of them could determine what to do about it; and after an iron demi-culverin that we found on board had been fired at them, they all ran off to the woods where they remained, crying over their misfortune, just as we, up until then, had cried over ours.

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A Precocious Child

Once we were all safe aboard the lanteria and secure in the knowledge that there was nothing the Chinese could do about it, we sat down to a leisurely dinner

A PRECOCIOUS CHILD
that an old man had prepared for them, consisting of two large skillets full of duck and rice mixed with bits of salt pork, a meal that tasted quite good to us at the time, considering the appetites we all brought to it.

After we had finished eating and given thanks to God for His mercy, we inspected the lantia's cargo and found that she was carrying silks—floss, satin, damask—and three large demijouns of musk, all of which we estimated roughly at about four thousand ducats, not counting a good store of provisions, rice, sugar, Hamilton, and two coops of hens, which were prized above all as a remedy for the sick, many of whom had not fully recovered; and then one by one, since there was nothing to fear, we set about picking through the bolts of silk and helping ourselves to make up for all the things we had gone without.

Noticing a rather fair and handsome young lad of about twelve or thirteen who was also on board, Antonio de Faria asked him where the lantia had come from, why it had stopped there, to whom it belonged, and where it was going.

"It belonged to my poor unlucky father," the boy replied, "who was unfortunate enough to have us steal from him in less than an hour what it took him more than thirty years to earn. He was coming from a town called Quaimão, where he had bought and paid for in silver all the cargo you have there, and he was on his way to sell it to the Siamese junk in the port of Comboy; but since he was running low on water, his sad fate led him to stop here for it so that you could rob him of his cargo without the slightest fear of punishment from heaven above."

Antonio de Faria told him not to cry and caressed him as much as he could and promised to treat him like a son, assuring him that that was the way he felt about him and that he would always feel that way.

"Don't think because I am still a child," the boy replied, looking at him with a scornful smile, "that I am stupid enough to believe that the man who robbed me of my father could treat me like a son. And if you really mean it, then I beg you, for the love of your God, please, please, please, let me swim back to that lonely island where the man who gave me life remains behind, for he is my real father, and I would rather die there in the woods where I can just see him crying his heart out over me, than live here with such evil people as you!"

Some of the men standing there scolded the boy and told him not to talk that way, that it was not right.

"Do you know why I said that?" he replied. "Because I saw you, after you had filled your bellies, praising God with upraised arms and greasy lips, acting as if you think it is enough to mumble a few words to heaven instead of paying for what you have stolen. Well you ought to know that the almighty Lord does not command us to move our lips in prayer so much as he forbids us to take another man's property, and worst of all—to rob and kill—which are the two most dreadful sins, as you will find out after you die from the terrible punishment that his divine justice has in store for you!"

Impressed by the boy's words, Antonio de Faria asked him if he wanted to become a Christian.

"I have no idea what that is," the boy replied, turning to look at him, "so I cannot understand what you are asking of me. First tell me what it means, then I will know how to answer."

After Antonio de Faria had explained it to him, with well-chosen words, as only he could, the boy, instead of replying directly, looked up to heaven, raised his arms, and cried out, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, for thy patience, which suffers the presence of people on earth who speak so well of thee and observe so little of thy divine Law as these blind, wretched creatures who think that robbing and preaching can satisfy thee, as they do the tyrant princes that reign on earth!"

And refusing to answer any more questions, he went off to cry by himself in a corner, where he remained for three whole days without touching any of the food they brought him.

At a meeting that was called at the time to decide where to go from there or what course to follow, whether north or south, some radically different opinions were expressed; but it was finally agreed that we should go to Nings-ko, a port about two leagues to the north, because there along the coast it would probably be easier for us to get hold of a bigger ship, one that was better suited for our purpose, since the one we had was too small for such a long voyage, and we were afraid of the many storms that strike the coast of China during the period of the new moon, when so many ships are continually lost at sea.

With this in view, we set sail from the island just as the sun was beginning to set, leaving the dazed Chinese behind us on the beach. All that night we ran with the bow facing east-northeast, and at daybreak we sighted a little island called Guindó, where we captured a fishing vessel loaded with a heavy catch of fresh fish from which we took what we needed along with eight of the twelve men we found on board, for handing over the lantia, because our own men were still too weak and exhausted from our recent hardship to do it themselves.

And when we asked these eight fishermen what ports were located along that coast as far as Chincho, where we would be likely to find some nau inbound from Malacca, they said there was a very good river port called Xingnan, with excellent anchorage, about eighteen leagues away, where a lot of junkers were always to be found loading salt, alum, olive oil, mustard, and sesame, and that there we would be able to fit out our vessel and obtain abundant supplies of all that we needed, and that at the mouth of the river there was a small town called Xamoy, inhabited by fishermen and other poor people, but that three leagues further upstream was the city, where there were large quantities of silk, musk, porcelain, and other assorted merchandise which were carried for trading to many different places.

Armed with this information, we headed for that river, arriving the following afternoon and taking the precaution of anchoring about a league out to sea for fear that our men might bring us here some misfortune similar to the ones we had experienced in the past.

That same night we captured a fishing prow and interrogated the crew about the junk that were anchored up the river, how many of them there were, what kind of crew they were carrying, and other questions of the sort that suited our purpose. They answered that there probably were only about two hundred junkers still in the city because most of them had already departed for Hainan, Sambor, Laidi, and other parts of Cochinchina, but that we would be perfectly safe in the town of Xamoy, where they would sell us all the provisions we needed. After that we entered the river and anchored near the town.

It must have been sometime around midnight, which means that we had been there only half an hour when Antonio de Faria got to thinking that the lantia we were on was not a fit vessel on which to make the voyage to Nings-ko, which is where we were planning to lay up for the winter, and he decided, with the approval of the rest of the soldiers and comrades, to acquire a better ship for himself. And even
though we were in no condition at the time to undertake anything of the sort, still, we were forced by necessity to go beyond the limits of our strength.

At the time there happened to be a small junk in port, anchored in a spot all by itself with no other ships nearby, with very few men on board, and all of them deep in slumber. Seeing it as a perfect opportunity to carry out his plans, Antonio de Faria immediately ordered the cables slackened, letting our vessel drift to an even keel with theirs; and choosing a party of fifteen out of the twenty-seven soldiers he had there, as well as eight slaves, he climbed aboard the main deck of the junk, without anyone so much as suspecting his presence. He found six or seven Chinese sailors sleeping there and had them bound hand and foot, scaling their lips by threatening to slit their throats if they made any noise. Cutting both her anchor cables, he sailed out of the river as fast as he could and ran all the rest of the night with the bow pointing out to sea. At dawn he found himself near an island called Puto Quirim, nine leagues from where he had departed.

Three days later, with God's help and a fair wind filling the sails, we dropped anchor at an island called Luscinay, where we had to spend two weeks in order to give the sick a chance to recover completely. It was a perfect spot, not only because of the wholesome climate and good water, but also because we were able to obtain fresh food from fishermen in exchange for rice.

There the entire junk was searched and nothing was found in the hold but rice, which they had been selling in the port of Xamay, but the bulk of it was jettisoned in order to lighten the junk and make her better able to withstand the dangerous voyage ahead. After transferring the lenteiro's cargo to the junk, we careden her ashore to scrape her bottom because she would be needed for taking on water in the various ports we would be stopping at.

It took us two weeks, as I said before, to finish up at this island, and during that time the sick recovered completely, and we departed on our way to the kingdom of Ning-po, where we had heard that there were many Portuguese, inbound from Malacca, Sonda, Siam, and Patani, all of whom, in those days, used to go there for the winter.

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Partners in Piracy

After two days of navigating along the coast of Lanas with a fair wind and moderate sea, it was God's will that we should happen to meet up with a Patani junk returning from the Ryukus. It belonged to a Chinese pirate by the name of Quinan Panjio who was very friendly to the Portuguese and extremely fond of our manner of dress. In his company were thirty Portuguese, all of them handpicked soldiers who, besides the regular wages they got from this pirate, received many other benefits which bestowed on them every hour of the day, thereby making them all rich men.

Mistaking us for people of another sort, the moment he caught sight of us he set his junk on a collision course, and like an old hand at the pirate’s game, with all sails full he swung her around to windward of us, covering nearly three-quarters of our wake. Aiming at a point directly between both crews, he came bearing down on our stern, and when he got within a little more than a culverin-shot’s distance, he sent over a salvo of fifteen artillery pieces. which left us in a difficult position, since they were mainly falcons and rock throwers.

But Antonio de Faria spurred his men on like a brave and good Christian, stationing them at the most crucial points—such as the main deck, stern, stem, and—posting reserves wherever they might be needed most. And while he was going about all this, his mind made up to see it all the way through, taking his chances on whatever Fortune decreed, it was the will of the Lord that we should distinguish a large banner of the Cross flying on her poop, as well as a large number of people on top of the deckhouse who were wearing the red caps that were the usual headgear of our men in those days when fighting at sea. That was enough to convince us that they were Portuguese who most likely were coming from Ning-po and bound for Malacca, a common run during the season of the monsoon. Thereupon we also exhibited some signs that would enable them to recognize us, and as soon as they realized that we were Portuguese they let out a shout, and in deference to our signals, they lowered both foresails simultaneously and followed this up by sending out a well-armed batio with two Portuguese on board to find out who we were and whence we had come. The moment they recognized us and were convinced of the truth about us, they increased their speed, and after making their salvoes, to which we also responded, they climbed aboard.

Antonio de Faria welcomed them effusively, and since some of the men in our company were acquainted with them, they spent quite a bit of time with us, talking about many things that were of particular interest to us, in view of our plans. Antonio de Faria sent Cristóvão Borralho along with the two of them to pay a visit to Quinan Punjio and wrote him an extremely courteous letter with an offer of deep friendship, which made the pirate Punjio feel so pleased and flattered that he was bursting with pride. Bringing his junk in closer to ours, he gave orders to strike sail and embarked in the sampan that served as the ship's boat, and accompanied by a party of twenty Portuguese he came to pay a call on Antonio de Faria, bringing him an expensive gift of amber, pearls, gold, and silver plate that was worth well over two thousand cruzados; and Antonio de Faria gave him and the Portuguese in his company a joyous welcome and treated them all with the greatest courtesy and respect.

After everyone had been sitting around for a while conversing pleasantly as befitting the occasion, Antomo de Faria began to tell them the whole story of his shipwreck and all the other misfortunes he had encountered on his voyage, and about his decision to set a course for Ning-po to fit himself out with more men and rowing ships so that he could go back and run along the coast of Hainan again and through the Gulf of Cochinchina to the mines of Quoamjapari, where he had been told there were six large buildings full of silver, to say nothing of a much greater quantity being smelted at the water's edge and where, at no risk to themselves, they could all become very rich.

"As for me, Sir Captain," Punjio replied, "I am not as rich as some people think I am, though at one time I was, and I have also suffered disasters of Fortune similar to the one you have just described, which deprived me of the greater part of my wealth. That is why I am afraid to go back to Patani, where my wife and children reside, because I know for certain that the king will confiscate all my possessions on the pretext..."
that I left without his permission, and he is bound to make much ado about it so he can have an excuse to rob me as he had done to others several times for even less cause than he has against me. That is why I say to you, if it would please you, or if you would be willing to have me join up with you on the voyage you are planning to make, along with the hundred men I have on my junk, my fifteen artillery pieces and thirty muskets—to say nothing of another forty carried by the Portuguese who sail with me—I would be very happy to do so, provided I get a one-third share of the prizes. And to seal the bargain, if you please, sir, you would have to give me a signed statement and swear by your faith that you will strictly adhere to it."

Antonio de Faria gladly accepted his offer, and after he had thanked him profusely and embraced him repeatedly for it, he swore by some of the holy Gospels to do exactly as he had asked him to, without fail, and then he handed him a signed statement to that effect, which was witnessed by ten or twelve of the most respected men.

After this pact had been made, both of them departed for a river called Anay five leagues from there, where they outfitted themselves with everything they needed in exchange for a one-hundred-cruzo brife which they gave to the mandarin in command of the city.

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News of Khoja Hassim

Having left the Anay River fully equipped with everything necessary for the projected voyage, Antonio de Faria, acting on the advice of Qa'naa Pajjoo—who he always treated with the greatest respect so as to keep his friendship—decided to drop anchor in the port of Chinchou in order to obtain information from the Portuguese who came there from Sunda, Malacca, Timor, and Patani, about a few things that were necessary to know for what he had in mind, and to see if they had any news from Ning-po, where it was rumored that an armada of four hundred junks and 100,000 men had been sent by the king of China with orders to seize the Portuguese living there and burn their naus and settlements, for he no longer wanted them in his country owing to the fact that he had recently been informed that our people were not as trustworthy and peace-loving as he had been led to believe.

When we got to Chinchou we found five naus belonging to some Portuguese who had arrived there the month before from the places I have mentioned, and they gave us a hearty welcome, accompanied by a great deal of joy and merrymaking all around. After giving us a report of the local news, the cargo being traded, and the peaceful conditions existing in the port, they told us that as for what was happening in Ning-po, all they knew was what the Chinese had told them—that there were many Portuguese laid up there for the winter, and others recently arrived from Malacca, Sunda, Siam, and Patani, who were quietly going about their business; and that the huge armada we were so concerned about had not gone there at all but was believed to have gone instead to the Goto Islands, in aid of the suko of Pontir, whose throne, it was said, had been tyrannically usurped by a brother-in-law of his; and since this suko had recently become a subject of the king of China, at an annual tribute of 100,000 taels, the king had sent him that armada of four hundred junks, said to be carrying 100,000 men, to restore him to the kingdom or domain that had been taken from him. This information set our minds at rest, and in return we offered up many prayers of thanks to the Lord. Nine days later we departed from this port of Chinchou with thirty-five more soldiers who had transferred to our ship's company from the other five naus, attracted by a good offer Antonio de Faria had made them, and we proceeded on our way to the kingdom of Ning-po.

And after five days of navigating against foul winds, tacking from port to starboard without being able to make any headway, one night, during the first watch, we met up with a small fishing prow with eight badly wounded Portuguese on board. One of the men there was called Mem Taborda and another Antonio Henriques—and I make a point of mentioning the names of these two because they were rich, highly respected men who were well known in those parts—and both of them, as well as all the others with them, were in such a disastrous state that it was pitiful to see.

As soon as the prow came alongside his junk, Antonio de Faria had these eight Portuguese picked up immediately, and as they came on board, one by one, they threw themselves at his feet the moment they saw him; and he welcomed them with the utmost kindness and consideration and shed many tears over them, deeply touched by the way they looked, their bodies mangled, naked, barefooted, and bathed in their own blood.

Seeing them that way he asked them how they happened to meet with their misfortune, and they began by telling him, their voices choked with emotion, that seventeen days before, they had left Ning-po, bound for Malacca, intending to go on to India from there if the monsoon prevailed; but when they had sailed as far as the island of Sumbur, they were attacked by a Guzerati chief named Khoja Hassim, in a fleet of three junks and four jangsteus, with an armed force on these seven ships of five hundred men, including 100 Moors from Luzon, Borneo, Java, and Champa, all of them from parts east of Malaya; and that he finally overcame them after a battle that lasted from one to four o'clock in the afternoon and left eighty-two people dead, including eighteen Portuguese, to say nothing of an equal number taken captive and the cargo on the junk that they made off with, which belonged to them as well as some other investors and was worth well over 100,000 taels; and in addition, they related some other particulars that were so distressing, you could see pain and anguish welling up in the eyes of some of the men who were listening there.

Antonio de Faria remained silent for a long time, but his mind was working rapidly as he thought over the possibilities of what these men had just told him.

"Tell me, gentlemen," he said after a while, turning back to them, "if the fighting was as bad as you said it was, how did you, out of all the others there, manage to escape?"

"After holding them off for about an hour to an hour and a half with the bombard," they replied, "the three big junks managed to ram us five times with such shattering impact that they opened a big hole in our junk near the sternpost that sent the water rushing in so fast we nearly sank. That was the beginning of the end for us because, in order to get at the leak, we were forced to shift much of the cargo around; and while we were concentrating on that, the enemy pressed in all the harder, and we
were also forced to stop what we were doing and rush back up on deck to defend ourselves. In the meantime, while we were desperately trying to beat them off, with most of our men wounded and some already slain too, one of their junks caught fire, and since the flames were beginning to spread to the one right next to it, they were forced to release the grappling irons in order to get clear of each other; but much as they tried, they could not work fast enough to prevent one of them from burning clear down to the waterline, forcing everyone on board to jump into the sea, where most of them drowned. By this time our junk had drifted onto the stakes of the fishing traps located in the shallows this side of the river mouth, where the Siamese pagoda now stands; and the moment that dog of a Khao Hasim—who was the one who had grabbed us—saw us stuck on the piles that way, he made a sudden rush for us with a large company of Moors all armed with cutlasses and skirts of mail, and as they came aboard, swarming all over us, they promptly cut down fifty of our men, including eighteen Portuguese. As for those of us who are here, wounded and burned as your lordship sees us, we jumped into a nanghas we kept tied to the stern of our junk—since there was no other way out—and with God's help, just fifteen of us managed to escape on it, though two died only yesterday, and the thirteen who miraculously survived—eight Portuguese and five of our slaves—arrived here in the state your lordship now sees us in. Yet all the time we were fleeing in the nanghas, we had to keep close to the reefs, picking our way carefully between the stakes and the shore in order to stay out of their reach. And after the lambis had finished picking up their men who were still floundering about in the water, they headed for our junk, shouting and making a racket with their martial music, but once there, they got so carried away by their greed for plunder—the Lord be praised—that they lost interest in us; and by that time, since it was close to sundown, they went on up the river in a festive mood, bunting away at their instruments, jeering at us all the while as they loudly celebrated their triumph over us in all our misery."

"From what you say," Antonio de Faria observed, "they must still be there in that river, since they suffered as much damage as you described. And it seems to me that neither your junk nor the one that was entangled with the burning junk can be of much use to them; and you must have killed and wounded some of the men that were on the big one that grabbed yours."

Both of them assured him that they had killed and wounded quite a few. At which Antonio de Faria, removing his cap, knocked down and raised his arms and eyes heavenward.

"Lord Jesus Christ," he prayed, the tears flowing freely, "since thou, my God, art the true hope of all who believe in thee, I, the greatest sinner among all men, humbly entreat thee, in the name of these servants of thine, whose souls thou didst redeem with thy precious blood, give us strength and courage, and grant us the victory over this enemy, this cold-blooded killer of countless Portuguese, whom I am determined to seek out with thy help and favor, for the glory of thy holy name, as I have been trying to do all this time, and to see to it that he pays, at the hands of these thy servants and faithful soldiers, a debt long overdue!"

"After them!" everyone shouted in unison. "After them, in the name of Christ! Let's make that dog pay nine times over what he owes us and our poor friends here!"

Whipped to a frenzy, shouting and screaming all the while, they trimmed the sails a stern for the port of Lâlé, eight leagues further back where, once the council that was called approved of it, Antonio de Faria headed to make his preparations for

the forthcoming battle with this pirate for whom he had been searching so long, as mentioned previously, without having been able to find any trace of him until that moment, in any of the many ports through which he had passed.

§8

Preparations for the Attack

The following morning we dropped anchor in the port of Lâlé, where Quíñay Pánjúi, who had joined forces with Antonio de Faria—and who, as I said before, was Chinese and had many relatives there and was well known and liked by everyone in town—asked the local mandarin in command of the port to let us buy what we needed, to which he agreed, not only because he was afraid some harm might befall him, but also because of a thousand-cruzo bríbe that Antonio de Faria gave him, which helped to persuade him.

Disembarking, some of our men rushed about buying all the necessary supplies, items such as salt petter and sulphur for making gunpowder, lead, cannonballs, provi-

tions, cordage, oil, tar, wadding, wooden beams, planks, weapons, javelins, charred stakes, spars, shields, yards, rock fragments, tackle, halyards, and anchors. And they took on fresh water and signed on more seamen, for even though it was a small town of only about three to four hundred inhabitants, so many of these things were available there and in the neighboring villages that I say in all truth that I cannot find enough words that would do justice to it, for this land of China excels above all others in that it has a greater abundance of everything one could desire, more so than all other countries in the world. And since Antonio de Faria was by nature a very generous person and was spending money from the general fund, he paid for these things entirely at the whim of the seller, so it was little wonder that mountainous loads of everything were delivered to him. As a result, he departed from this port thirteen days later with two new huge, majestic junks purchased in exchange for the small ones he had, and two brand-new oar-propelled lambises, fresh from the drydock, and 160 sailors, counting deckhands as well as able scavengers.

Once all these necessities had been taken care of, the sails set, the anchors at short stay, and everything in readiness for departure, a general roll call of the fleet was made, and the final tally showed a full complement of five hundred, counting both soldiers and sailors. This count included ninety-five Portuguese, all young lads, ready and willing to fight for any good cause, while the rest consisted of our slave boys, sailors, and soldiers from the east coast of Malaya whom Quíñay Pánjúi kept on his payroll, who were also highly experienced in warfare at which, as corsairs, they had been engaged for the last five years. Also, an inventory showed that the fleet was equipped with 100 muskets; forty bronze pieces of artillery, counting twelve falcons, two camels, one sphere, five rock throwers firing stone shot, and the rest culverins; as well as two dogs! similar to the half-sphere; sixty quintals of powder—fifty-four for the bombardiers and six for the muskets, nor counting the powder that had already been issued to the arquebusiers—nine hundred fire pots, four hundred of them filled with
powder and the rest with unslaked lime such as the Chinese use; a large quantity of stone missiles, arrows, lances, and firebombs that a Levantine was paid to make for us; four thousand iron-tipped zaguanche, which are the first missiles used when a ship is grappled; and six boatloads of rock fragments, which are something the whole crew can fight with; twelve grappling hooks, attached to very long iron chains; and many other types of firearms that the Chinese devised for us out of greed for the huge sums of money they got for them.

This done, we departed from the town of Laiño gaily bedecked, the main tops dressed with silk awnings, and the junk and lorbos protected broadsides with a double row of wooden shields, with fighting platforms fore and aft, topped by other movable platforms that could be raised or lowered as the need arose. And as God willed, within three days we reached the fishing traps where Khoja Hassim had captured the Portuguese junk; and at nightfall, Antonio de Faria sent a reconnaissance party up the river where he had been told that he could find him.

His spies returned with a fishing prow they had captured, with six natives on board who said that the pirate was anchored two leagues from there, in a river called Tinluau, repairing the junk taken from the Portuguese, preparing to depart with her and two other junk for Siam, which is where he came from, and that he was expecting to sail within ten days. Armed with this information, Antonio de Faria decided, with the approval of some of the men who were summoned for that purpose, that it would still be better to see for ourselves because there was too much at stake to risk venturing into it blindly without first making some careful observations of our own, and that, depending on what was learned from firsthand observation, we would do whatever everyone thought best.

Removing the six fishermen from their prow, they replaced them with a crew of sailors from Quisyi Pangia's junk, since they were more reliable and trustworthy, choosing only two of the captives to go with them while the rest stayed behind as hostages, and with them they sent a soldier by the name of Vicente Morais, a brave fellow, and very clever too, dressed in Chinese clothes to avoid being recognized. After reaching the spot where the enemy was anchored, he pretended to be fishing as others were doing, while he watched and spied for as long as necessary; and once he was back on board he reported on what he had seen and declared that the enemy was practically in our hands, so much so, that there would be very little for us to do when we got there.

Thus informed, everyone gathered on board Quisyi Pangia's junk because Antonio de Faria wanted to give him the honor of holding the meeting there so as to spur him on and show him favor; and there the decision was made that at nightfall we would drop anchor at the mouth of the river, from where we would proceed in the predawn hours, with the name of Christ on our lips, to attack the enemy. When the meeting was over, having ended with complete agreement on all sides, Antonio de Faria issued orders for the formation and strategy that was to be followed when entering the river and attacking the enemy.

Dividing up the men, he placed thirty Portuguese on Quisyi Pangia's junk, allowing him to select the ones he wanted, since it was necessary to let him have his way all the time; and he assigned six men to each of the two lombus, twenty to Cristóvão Borralho's junk, and the rest, thirty-three all told, remained with him, to say nothing of the slaves and many other Christians, all of them very brave and loyal.

Thus, with everything arranged in the necessary order for what we hoped to accomplish with the help of our Lord, he set sail for the river of Tinluau, arriving shortly before the Ave Maria hour; and after a night spent in careful vigil, at three hours past midnight he got under sail and headed straight for the enemy's position, about a little over half a league up the river.

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A Glorious Victory

With the wind and tide in our favor—thanks be to the Lord—we sailed up the river, and in less than an hour we came within sight of our enemies, who up until that time had never even suspected our presence in the area. But after all, they were thieves, and since they were fearful of reprisals from the local inhabitants whom they victimized day after day, they kept a sharp lookout for trouble and were so well prepared to meet it that the moment they spied us they sprang into action, beginning with the sound of a bell that created such an uproar among them from ship to shore that it was impossible to be heard above the tumult going on.

Observing the situation, Antonio de Faria acted quickly.

"Let's go, men!" he shouted. "At them, at them, in the name of Christ! And be quick about it, before our lorbos come to their aid! Santiago!—and at'cm!"

He opened up at them with all our artillery which—the Lord be praised—hit the mark so well that their bravest men, who by this time were already on top of the poop deck, were promptly mowed down, most of them blown to bits, and with this we were off to a great start. After that, at a given signal, our arquebusiers—about two hundred of them—began firing all at the same time, and they were so effective at clearing the decks of the crowds that had been seen on both junks before, that none of the foe dared show himself again.

Next, our two junks sank the grappling hooks into the two enemy junks right where they lay, and the fighting broke out on all sides with such fury that, to tell the truth, I could not possibly describe in detail what went on at the time even though I was there, because it was still not daylight, and the battle raging between the enemy forces and ours was so fierce, and it was accompanied by the noise of drums, gongs, and bells, mixed on both sides with shouts and screams, to say nothing of the frequent bursts of fire from the artillery and the arquebuses, and the echoes rumbling through the hills and valleys, that it was enough to make the flesh quiver with fear.

The fighting continued this way for about a quarter of an hour until their lorbos and lumentas began arriving from shore with large numbers of reinforcements. As they were coming, a fellow by the name of Diogo Meireles on Quisyi Pangia's junk noticed that the latter's artillery officer kept missing the mark, mainly because he was so scared he did not know what he was doing; and just as he was about to fire a cannon, his hand all atremble, this Meireles grabbed hold of him and threw him aside so forcefully that he went flying down the hatch.

"Out of my way, you yokel!" he shouted after him as he went, "this isn't a job for the likes of you! Let a real man take over here!"

Adjusting the sights of the cannon carefully, in accordance with all the rules of

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gunning of which he had a fairly good command, he fired the piece which had been loaded with cannonball and stone shot, scoring a direct hit on the nearest loranha, apparently the flagship in command of four, ripping it apart on the starboard side from stern to stem and from the gunwale down to the waterline, causing it to sink so fast that there was no time for anybody on board to save himself. The rock munition carried over it, hitting the main deck of another loranha short distance astern, killing her captain and six or seven others near him. This put such a scare into the other two loranhas that in their haste to return to shore they became so entangled in each other's vangs that neither one of them could get free, and they remained there like sitting ducks without being able to move either backward or forward.

Seeing the chance they had been waiting for, the captains of our own two lornas, Gaspar de Oliveira and Vicente Morosa, proudly vying with each other, moved in to attack simultaneously with huge quantities of fire pots, setting them ablaze; and trapped as they were, they burned together right down to the waterline, forcing most of their men to throw themselves into the sea where our men finished them off with the javelins, unwilling to let a single one of them escape alive.

On these three lornhas alone, upwards of two hundred people died; and the fourth one carrying the dead captain did not escape either, because Quinny Panjao went after her in his sampan, which served as his boat's ship, and captured her when she had almost touched shore, though by then there was no one left on board, for the entire company had jumped into the water, where most of them perished also, against the rocks on the beach. Seeing all this, the enemies who were still on board the junks—and there must have been as many as 30 of them, all Moors from Luzon and Borneo, with a few Javanese to boot—began to show signs of weakening, as many of them were already jumping over the sides.

Meanwhile, seeing his ranks fall apart, that dog of a Khaja Hassim, who up until that time had still not shown himself, suddenly appeared on the scene, dressed in a laminated breastplate lined with crimson satin fringed in gold, that had formerly belonged to the Portuguese.

"La hahil hahil lah Muhammed roqol halah!" he shouted aloud three times for all to hear. "Oh, Muslims! Oh, righteous men who believe in the holy Law of Mohammed! How can you let yourselves be conquered by these cowardly Christian dogs who have no more spirit than a bunch of white hens and bearded women? Go after them, men! After them! For we have the sacred promise of the Book of Flowers wherein the Prophet Nabi gratified the dervishes of the House of Mecca with wondrous delights. He will do the same for you and me today if we bathe ourselves in the blood of these savage infidels!"

Spurred on by the devil himself, as soon as they heard these cursed words, they turned back and grouped themselves into a single body of amakul, and it was indeed amazing to see how courageously they threw themselves in the path of our swords.

Then, in like fashion, Antonio de Faria also exhorted his soldiers.

"Oh Christians! Brothers all!" he shouted. "If these people can take strength in the cursed devil of the faith to fight like that, then let us take strength in Christ our Lord who died on the Cross for us, and who will never forsake us, no matter how great our sins, for after all, unlike those dirty dogs, we are his people, and they are not!"

Filled with ardor and zeal for the faith, he rushed at Khaja Hassim, eager to get to him, and brought his double-grip sword down on his head with such force that he cut right through a mail helmet he was wearing and knocked him off his feet; then, doubling back with a reverse stroke, he severed both his legs, making it impossible for him to get up again. At the sight of this his men let out a blood-curdling scream and five or six of them made a wild dash for Antonio de Faria, pitting themselves against him with such great courage and daring that they managed to inflict two sword cuts on him that nearly laid him out despite the thirty Portuguese soldiers surrounding him. Seeing this, our men rushed in quickly, and our Lord illustrated them with so much strength that in little more time than it takes to recite two Credos, forty-eight of the enemy were lying dead on top of Khaja Hassim, and just fourteen of ours, of whom only five were Portuguese and the rest slave boys, who were all very loyal and devoted Christians.

By this time the ones still fighting had begun to weaken, and they started a disorderly retreat in the direction of the forecastles, intending to fortify themselves there. But twenty of the thirty soldiers on Quinny Panjao's junk quickly dashed in and cut them off before they could achieve their objective, pressing them so hard in hand-to-hand combat that before long they had them all jumping overboard so frantically that they were falling on top of each other.

Their spirits high, inspired by the name of Christ our Lord, upon whom they kept calling, secure in the knowledge that the victory was theirs and conscious of the great honor they had achieved, our men finished off the rest of them, with the exception of only five, who were taken alive. After being tied hand and foot, these five were thrown down the hatch to be interrogated later under torture; but they cut each other's throats with their teeth, out of fear of the death that awaited them.

Their bodies were drawn and quartered by our slave boys and also tossed into the sea to join the company of that dog of a Khaja Hassim, their captain and high chief of the king of Brantang, also known as the "shredder and drinker of Portuguese blood," as he styled himself at the beginning of all his correspondence; and as he publicly proclaimed to all the Moors, because of which, and because of the superstitions of their cursed faith, he was deeply revered by them.

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After the Battle

Regarding the events of this cruel, ruthless battle, which ended with the glorious victory I have just described, I must say that I have deliberately chosen to present them in a brief and concise manner, for if I were to dwell at length on every detail, not only about our men and how well they carried themselves, but also about our enemies and the courage they displayed in defending themselves, apart from the fact that I do not possess the ability required for such a task, it would entail far too much and my story would be even longer than it is. However, since my intention here is only to touch upon these events, on the run, so to speak, I always try to limit myself to as few words as possible in my approach to many things that perhaps other people with more imagination than I have would dwell on at greater length had they been there to witness them or write about them. And now to return