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Empire in Asia

A New Global History

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Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth to the East India Company, 1600

Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth, to the Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies,

Dated the 31st December, in the 43rd year of Her Reign. Anno Domini, 1600.

ELIZABETH, by the Grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. To all our Officers, Ministers, and Subjects, and to all other People, as well within this our Realm of England as elsewhere, under our Obedience and Jurisdiction, or otherwise, unto whom these our Letters Patents shall be

seen, showed, or read, greeting. Whereas our most dear and loving Cousin, George, Earl of Cumberland, and our well-beloved Subjects,

Sir John Hart, of London, Knight, Sir John Spencer, of London, Knight, Sir Edward Michelborne, Knight, William Cavendish, Esq. : Paul Banning, Robert Lee, Leonard Hollyday, John Watts, John Moore, Edward Holmeden, Robert Hampson, Thomas Smith, and Thomas Campbell, Citizens and Aldermen of London ; Edward Barker, Esq. ; Thomas Marsh, Esq.; Samuel Backhouse, Esq. ; James Lancaster, Richard Staper, Thomas Cordell, William Garway, Oliver Stile, William Quarts, Bartholomew Barnes, William Offely, Robert Chamberlain, John Harvey, Richard Wiseman, William Stone, Francis Cherry, Thomas Allabaster, Richard Barrett, John Swinnarton the Younger, Thomas Garway, William Romney, James Bean, John Eldred, Andrew Banning, Edward Leaving, Thomas Juxon, Nicholas Leat, John Woollestenholm, Nicholas Pierd, William Chamber, Rowland Blackhouse, Humphrey Smith, Robert Sandye, Henry Robinson, Richard Pointell, John Heylord, William Harrison, Humphrey Stile, Humphrey Robinson, Nicholas Ferror, Thomas Farrington, John Comb, Robert Offely, Roger How, John Hewitt. James Turner, Morrice Abbott, Robert Carrell, Robert Brooke, Richard Cham berlaine, George Chamberlaine, Leonard White, John Cornelius, Ralph Busby, William Jennings, Giles Parslow, Robert Bell, Thomas White Nicholas Ling William Palmer, Ellis, Cripps, George Bowles, Nicholas Cripps, John Merrick, Humphrey Handford, Thomas Simmons, Robert Cocks, William Walstall, John Humphrey, Thomas Bostock, BartholomewHolland, Richard Cock, William Walton. William Freeman, Thomas Southake, John Frier, Francis Dent, Richard Ball, Richard Pears, Roger Henning, Robert Cobe, Robert Robinson, Francis Evington, Francis Taylor, Thomas Westrowe, John Middleton, Robert Gore, Ralph Gore, William Cater, George Cater, John Busbridge, Thomas Hauton, William Bond, Merchant Taylor of London, William Cotton, John Stockley, Roger Arfield, Ausgustine Skinner, Richard Wiche, Robert Towertson, Richard Tailby, Robert Middleton; Robert Bateman, Richard Costam, Robert Walldoe, Richard Wragge, John Wragge, William Dale, Lawrence Walldoe Henry Bridgman, Samuel Armitage, Edward Harrison, Edmund Nicholson, Clement Moseley, John Newman, Humphrey Wallcot, Thomas Richardson, Thomas Bothby, John Cowchman, Reginald Green, Richard Burrell, Robert Mildmay, William Hind, George Chandler, Edward Lutterford, William Burrell, Stephen Harvey. Thomas Henshaw, William Ferris, William Addarlye, William Hewit, William Fisher, Joseph Talbanck, Nicholas Manley, Nichloas Salter, William Willaston, William Angell, Nicholas Barnsley, John Hawkins, Roger Dye, Richard Clarke, Thomas Hewit, George Whitmore, Henry Polstead, William Grenwell, Robert Johnson, Bartholomew Haggett, Humphrey Bass, Robert Buck, Ambrose Wheeler, William Hale, Richard Hall, jun., John Hodgson, Alphonsus Fowl, Edmud Spencer, Robert Dewsey, Riceard Piott, William Bonham, Edward Barkliam, George Coles, Ralph Haymor, James Cullymer, Samuel Hare, George Utley, Gregory Allen, Henry Archer, Jeffery Kuby, John Cason, Richard Beale, Thomas Shipton, John Fletcher, Thomas Talbot, Robert Pennington, Humphrey Milward, Richard Hearne, Ralph Allyn, John Brooke, Anthony Gibson, Robert Kayes, Hugh Crompton, Richard Washer, George Holman, Morrice, Luelling, Richard Parsons, Francis Barker, William Turner, John Greenwood, Richard Dean, Richard Ironside, George Smythe, James Dunkin, Edward Walter, Andrew Chamberlain, Robert Stratford, Anthony Startford, William Millett, Simon Laurence, Thomas Liddall, Stephen Hodson, Richard Wright, William Starkey, William Smith, John Ellecot, Robert Bailey, and Roger Cotton,

have of our certain knowledge been Petitioners unto us, for our Royal Assent and Licence to be granted unto them, that they, at their own Adventures, Costs, and Charges, as well for the Honour of this our Realm of England, as for the Increase of our Navigation, and Advancement of Trade of Merchandize, within our said Realms and the Dominions of the same, might adventure and set forth one or more Voyages, with convenient Number of Ships and Pinnaces, by way of Traffic and Merchandize to the East-Indies, in the Countries and Parts of Asia and Africa, and to as many of the Islands, Ports and Cities, Towns and Places, thereabouts, as where Trade and Traffic may by all likelihood be discovered, established or had ; divers of which Countries, and many of the Islands, Cities and Ports thereof, have long since been discovered by others of our Subjects, albeit not frequented in Trade of Merchandize. Know ye therefore, that we, greatly tendering the Honour of our Nation, the Wealth of our People. and the Encouragement of them, and others of our loving Subjects in their good Enterprizes, for the Increase of our Navigation, and the Advancement of lawful Traffick to the Benefit of our Common Wealth, have of our special Grace, certain Knowledge, and mere Motion, given and granted and by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, do give and grant unto our said loving Subjects, before in these Presents expressly named, that they and every of them from henceforth be, and shall be one Body Corporate and

Politick, in Deed and in Name, by the Name of The Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and them by the Name of The Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, one Body Corporate and Politick, in Deed and in Name, really and fully for us our Heirs and Successors, we do order, make, ordain, constitute, establish and declare, by these Presents, and that by the same Name of Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, they shall have Succession, and that they and their Successors, by the Name of The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East-Indies,

be and shall be, at all Times hereafter, persons able and capable in Law, and a Body Corporate and Politick, and capable in Law to have, purchase, receive, possess, enjoy and retain lands. Rents, Privileges, Liberties, Jurisdictions, Franchises and Hereditaments of whatsoever Kind, Nature, and Quality so ever they be, to them and their Successors. And also to give, grant, demise, alien, assign and dispose Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments, and to do and execute all and singular other Things, by the same Name that to them shall or may appertain to do. And that they and their Successors, by the Name of The Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, may plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered, defend and be defended, in whatsoever Courts and Places, and before whatsoever Judges and Justices, and other Persons and Officers, in all and singular Actions, Pleas, Suits, Quarrels, Causes and Demands whatsoever, of whatsoever Kind, Nature or Sort, in such Manner and Form, as any other, our liege People of this our Realm of England, being Persons able and capable in Law, may or can have, purchase, receive, possess, enjoy, retain, give, grant, demise, alien, assign, dispose, plead and be impleaded, answer and be answered, defend and be defended, release and be released, do permit and execute.

And that the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, may have a common Seal, to serve for all the Causes and Business of them and their Successors. And that it shall and may be lawful to The Said Governor and Company, and their Successors, the same Seal, from Time to Time, at their Will and Pleasure, to break, change, and to make new or alter, as to them shall seem expedient. And further, we will, and by these presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, we do ordain, that there shall be from henceforth one of the same Company to be elected and appointed, in such Form, as hereafter in these Presents is expressed, which shall be called The Governor of the said Company, and that there shall be from henceforth TwentyFour of the said. Company, to be elected and appointed in such Form, as hereafter in these presents is expressed, which shall be called The Committees of the said Company, who, together with the Governor of the said Company for the Time being, shall have the direction of the Voyages, of or for the said Company, and the Provision of the Shipping and Merchandizes thereto belonging, and also the sale of all Merchandizes returned in the Voyages, of or for the said Company, and the managing and handling of all other Things belonging to the said company

and for the better Execution of this our Will and Grant in this Behalf We have assigned, nominated, constituted and made, and by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, we do assign, nominate, constitute and make, the said Thomas Smith, Alderman of London, to be the First and present Governor of the said Company, to continue in the said Office, from the Date of these presents, until another of the said Company shall in due Manner be chosen and sworn unto the said Office, according to the Ordinances and Provisions hereafter in these Presents expressed and declared, if the said Thomas Smith shall so long live ; and also we have assigned, nominated and appointed, and by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, we do assign, nominate, constitute and make, the said Paul Banning, Leonard Hollyday, John Moore, Edward Holmeden, Richard Staper, Thomas Cordell, William Garway, Oliver Style, James Lancaster, Richard Wiseman, Francis Cherry, Thomas Allabaster, William Romney, Roger How, William Chambers, Robert Sandye, John Eldred, Richard Wiche, John Hylord, John Middleton, John Comb, William Harrison, Nicholas Ling and Robert Bell, to be the Twenty-Four First and Present Committees of the said Company, to continue in the said office of Committees of the said company from the Date of these Presents, for One whole year next following.

And further we will and grant, by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, that it shall and may be lawful to and for The said Governor and Company, for the Time being, or the more part of them, present at any publick Assembly, commonly called the Court, holden for the said Company, the Governor of the said Company

being always one, from Time to Time, to elect, nominate and appoint one of the said Company, to be Deputy to the said Governor, which Deputy shall take a Corporal Oath, before the Governor and Five or more of the Committees of the said Company for the Time being, well, faithfully and truly to execute his said Office of Deputy to the Governor of the said Company, and after his oath, so taken, shall and may from Time to Time, in the Absence of the said Governor, exercise and execute the Office of Governor of the said company, in such Sort as the said Governor ought to do : And further we will and grant, by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, unto the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, that they or the greater Part of them, whereof the Governor for the Time being or his Deputy to be one, from Time to Time, and at all Times hereafter shall and may have Authority and Power, yearly and every year, on the First Day of July, or at any Time within Six Days after that Day, to assemble and meet together, in some convenient Place, to be appointed from Time to Time by the Governor, or in his Absence by the Deputy of the said Governor for the Time being, and that they being so assembled, it shall and may be lawful to and for the said Governor, or Deputy of the said Governor, and the said Company for the Time being or the greater Part of them, which then shall happen to be present, whereof the Governor of the said Company or his Deputy for the Time being, to be one, to elect and nominate one of the said Company, which shall be Governor of the said Company for one whole Year, from thence next following, which Person, being so elected and nominated to be Governor of the said Company, as is aforesaid before he be admitted to the Execution of the said Office, shall take a Corporal Oath before the last Governor, being his Predecessor or his Deputy, and any Six or more of the Committees of the said Company for the Time being, that he shall, from Time to Time, well and truly execute the Office of Governor of the said Company, in all things concerning the same; and that immediately after the said Oath so taken, he shall and may execute and use the said office of Governor of the said Company, for one whole Year, from thence next following : And in like Sort we will and grant, that as .well every one above-named to be of the said Company fellowship as all others hereafter to be admitted, or free of the said Company, shall take a Corporal Oath before the Governor of the said Company, or his Deputy for the Time being, to such Effect, as by the said Governor and Company, or the more Part of them, in any publick Court to be held from the said Company, shall be in reasonable Manner set down and devised, before they shall be allowed, or admitted to trade or traffick, as a Freeman of the said Company. And further we will and grant, by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and successors, unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, that the said Governor, or the Deputy of the said Governor, and the Company and their Successors, for the Time being, or the greater Part of them, whereof the Governor, or the Deputy of the Governor, from Time to Time, to be one, shall and may, from Time to Time, and at all Times hereafter, have Authority and Power, yearly and every Year, on the first Day of July, or at any time within Six Diys after that Day, to assemble and meet together, in some convenient place, to be from Time to Time appointed, by the said Governor of the said Company, or in his Absence, by his Deputy : And that they being so assembled, it shall and may be lawful, to and for the said Governor or his Deputy, and the Company for the Time being, or the greater Part of them, which then shall happen to be present, whereof the Governor of the said Company, or his Deputy for the Time being, to be one, to elect and nominate Twenty-four of the said Company, which shall be Committee of the said Company, for Ones whole Year, from thence next ensuing which Person being or so elected and nominated to be Committees of the said Company, as aforesaid, before they be admitted to the Execution of their said Offices, shall take a Corporal Oath, before the Governor or his Deputy, and any Six or more of the said Committees of the said Company, being their last Predecessors for the Time being, that they and every of them shall well and faithfully perform their said Office of Committees, in all things concerning the same, and that immediately after the said Oath so taken, they shall and may execute and use their said Offices of Committees of the said Company, for One whole Year, from thence next following; and more over our Will and Pleasure is, and by these Presents, for us our Heirs and Successors, we do grant unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and to their Successors, that when and as often as shall happen, the Governor of the said Company for the Time being, at any Time within One Year, after that he shall be nominated, elected and sworn to the office of Governor of the said Company, as is aforesaid, to die or to be removed from the said Office, which Governor, not demeaning himself well in his said Office, we will to be removeable at the Pleasure of the said Company, or the greater Part of them, which shall be present, at any of their publick Assemblies, commonly called their General Court, holden for the said Company, that then and so often it shall and may be lawful, to and for the Residue of the said Company for the Time being, or the greater Part of them, within convenient Time after the Death or removing of any such Governor, to assemble themselves in such convenient Place as they shall think fit, for the Election of the Governor of the said Company : and that

the said Company, or the greater Part of them, being then and there present, shall and may, then and there, before their Departure from the said Place, elect and nominate one other of the said Company, to be Governor of the same Company, in the Place or Stead of him that so died or was so removed, which Person, being so elected, and nominated to the Office of Governor of the said Company, shall have and exercise the said Office for and during the Residue of the said Year, taking first a Corporal Oath as is aforesaid, for the due Execution thereof ; and this to be done from Time to Time, so often as the Case shall so require. And also our Will and Pleasure is, and by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, we do grant unto The said Governor and Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and to their Successors, that when and as often as it shall happen, any of the Committees of the said Company for the Time being, at any Time within One Year, next after that they or any of them shall be nominated, elected, and sworn to the Office of Committees of the said Company, as is aforesaid, to die or be removed from the said Office, which Committees, not demeaning themselves well in their said Office, we will to be removable, at the Pleasure of The said Governor and Company or the greater Part of them, whereof the Governor of the said Company, for the Time being, or his Deputy for the Time being, to be one that then and so often, it shall and may be lawful, to and for The said Governor and Company for the Time being, or the greater Part of them, whereof the Governor for the Time being or his Deputy, to be one, within convenient Time, after the Death or removing of any of the said Committees, to assemble themselves in such convenient Place, as is or shall be usual and accustomed for the Election of The Governor of the said Company, or where else The Governor of the said Company for the Time being, or his Deputy, shall appoint ; and The said Governor and Company, or the greater Part of them, whereof the Governor for the Time being, his Deputy, to be one, being then and there present, shall and may then and there, before their Departure from the said Place elect and nominate one or more of the said Company, to be Committees of the same Company, in the Places and Steads[^] Place or Stead, of him or them . that so died, or were or was so removed, which Person or Persons, so elected and nominated to the Office or Offices of Committee, or Committees, of the said Company, shall have and exercise the said Office and Offices, during the Residue of the said Year, taking first a Corporal Oath as is aforesaid, for the due Execution thereof, and this to be done from Time to Time, so often as the Case shall require. And further we do, by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, will and grant unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, that they, and all that are or shall be of The said Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and every of them, and all the Sons of them, at their several Ages of One and Twenty Years or upwards : And further, all such the Apprentices, Factors or Servants of them, and of every of them, which hereafter shall be employed by The said Governor and Company, in the said Trade of Merchandize, of or to the East-Indies, beyond the Seas, or any other the Places aforesaid, in any part of the said East-Indies, or other the Places aforesaid, shall and may, by the Space of Fifteen Years, from the Feast of the Birth of our Lord God last past, before the Date hereof, freely traffick and use the Trade of Merchandize, by Seas, in and by such Ways and Passages already found out and discovered, or which hereafter shall be found out and discovered, as they shall esteem and take to be fittest, into and from the said East-Indies, in the Countries and Parts of Asia and Africa, and into and from all the Islands, Ports, Havens ; Cities, Creeks, Towns and Places of Asia and Africa, and America, or any of them, beyond the Cape of Bona Esperanza to the Straights of Magellan, where any Trade or Traffick of Merchandize may be used or had, and to and from every of them, in such Order, Manner, Form, Liberty and Condition, to all Intents and Purposes, as shall be, from Time to Time, at any publick Assembly or Court, held by or for The said Governor and Company, by or between them of the said Fellowship or Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, or the more Part of them, for the Time being, present at such Assembly or Court, the Governor, or his Deputy, being always present at such Court or Assembly, limited and agreed, and not otherwise, without any Molestation, Impeachment, or Disturbance, any Statute, Usage, Diversity of Religion or Faith or any other Cause or Matter whatsoever, to the contrary notwithstanding : So always the same Trade be not undertaken nor addressed to any Country, Island, Port, Haven, City, Creek, Town or Place, already in the lawful and actual Possession of any such Christian Prince or State, as at this present is, or at any Time hereafter shall be in League or Amity with us, our Heirs or Successors, and who doth not or will not accept of such Trade, but doth overtly declared and publish the same to be utterly against his or their Good Will and Liking.

And further our Will and Pleasure is, and by these Presents, for us our Heirs and Successors, we do grant unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and to their Successors, that it shall and may be lawful, to and for The said Governor and Company, and their Successors, from Time to Time to assemble themselves for or about any the Matters, Causes, Affairs or Businesses of the said Trade, in

any Place or Places, for the same convenient, during the said Term of Fifteen Years, within our Dominions or elsewhere, and there to hold Court for the said Company, and the Affairs thereof; and that also it shall and may be lawful, to and for them, or the more Part of them, being so assembled, and that shall then and there be present, in any such Place or Places, whereof the Governor or his Deputy for the Time being, to be one, to make, ordain, and constitute such, and so many reasonable Laws, Constitutions, Orders and Ordinances, as to them, or the greater Part of them, being then and there present, shall seem necessary and convenient, for the good Government of the same Company, and of all Factors, Masters, Mariners and other Officers, employed or to be employed in any of their Voyages, and for the better Advancement and Continuance of the said Trade and Traffick, and the same Laws, Constitutions, Orders and Ordinances, so made, to put in use and execute accordingly, and at their Pleasure to revoke or alter the same, or any of them as Octavian shall require; and that The said Governor and Company, so often as they shall make, ordain or establish any such Laws, Constitutions, Orders or Ordinances, in Form aforesaid, shall and may lawfully impose, ordain, limit and provide such Pains, Punishments and Penalties, by Imprisonment of Body, or by Fines and Amerciaments, or by all or any of them upon and against all Offenders, contrary to such Laws, Constitutions, Orders and Ordinances, or any of them as to The said Governor and Company for the Time being, or the greater Part of them, then and there being present, the said Governor, or his Deputy, being always one, shall seem necessary, requisite and convenient, for the Observation of the same Laws, Constitutions, Orders and Ordinances; and the same Fine and Amerciaments shall and may levy, take and have, to the Use of The said Governor and Company, and their Successors, without the Impediment of us, our Heirs or Successors, or of any the Officers or Ministers of us, our Heirs or Successors, and without any Account thereof, to us, our Heirs or Successors, to be rendered or made ; all and singular which Laws, Constitutions, Orders and Ordinances, so as aforesaid to be made, we will to be duly observed and kept, under the Pain and Penalties therein to be contained ; so always as the said Laws, Orders, Constitutions, Ordinances, Imprisonments, Fines and Amerciaments be reasonable, and not contrary or repugnant to the Laws, Statutes, or Customs of this our Realm.

And for as much as The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, have not yet experienced of the Kinds of Commodities and Merchandizes, which are or will be vendible, or to be uttered in the said Parts of the East-Indies, and therefore shall be driven to carry to those Parts, in their Voyages outward, divers and sundry Commodities, which are likely to be returned again to this our Realm: We therefore of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, for the better encouraging of The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the said East-Indies, and for the Advancement of the said Trade, do grant unto The said Governor and Company, and to their Successors, that they and their Successors, during the Four First Voyages, which they shall make, or set forth, for or towards the said East-Indies, shall and may transport, and carry out of our Realm of England, and the Ports, Creeks and Havens thereof, all such and so much Goods and Merchandizes, being Goods and Merchandizes lawfully passable and transportable out of this Realm, and not prohibited to be transported by any Law or Statute of this Realm, as shall be by them, their Factors Assigns, shipped in any Ship or Ships, Vessel or Vessels, to be employed in any of the said Four First Voyages, free of Custom, Subsidy or Poundage, or any other Duties or Payments, to us or our Successors, due or belonging, for the shipping or transporting of the same, or any of them; and yet nevertheless our Will and Pleasure is and we do, by these Presents, straitly charge and command, that all and every such Goods and Merchandizes, so to be transported out of this realm, from Time to Time, during the said Four First Voyages, as is aforesaid, shall, from Time to Time, be duly entered by the Customer, Controller or other Officer of such Port, Creek or Place, where the same Goods and Merchandizes shall happen to be shipped and laden, before such Time as the same shall be shipped, or laden, to be transported as is aforesaid :

And also of our further especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, we do, for us, our Heirs and Successors, grant to and with the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their successors, that when and as often, at any Time, during the said Time and space of Fifteen years, as any custom. Poundage, Subsidy, or other duties, shall be due and payable unto us, our Heirs, or Successors, for any goods, Wares, or Merchandizes whatsoever, to be returned out or from any the Islands, Ports, Havens, Cities, Towns or places aforesaid, unto our Port of London, or any of the Havens, Creeks, Members or Places to the same Port belonging, that the customers and all other Officers for the Time being, of us, our Heirs or Successors, for or concerning Receipts of Customs, Poundage, Subsidies or other Duties, unto whom it shall appertain, shall upon the Request of the Governor and Company of the said Merchants of London, Trading into

the East-Indies, or any their Agents, Factors or Assigns, give unto the said Governor and Company, their Agents, Factors or Assigns, Six Months' time, for payment of the one Half, and after those Six months ended, other Six Months' Time, for the payment of the other Half, of their said customs, Poundage, or other subsidy or duties, receiving good and sufficient bonds, with Surety, to the Use of us, our Heirs and Successors, for the true payment of the same accordingly ; and upon receipt of the said Bonds, with surety, from Time to Time, to give unto The said Governor and company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, for the Time being their Agents, Factors or Assigns, their cocket or other warrant, to take out and receive on land the same Goods, Wares, or Merchandizes, by virtue thereof, without any Disturbance ; and that also as often as at any time, during the said time of years, any Goods, Wares or Merchandizes of the said Governor and company, for the Time being, laden from our Port of London, or any the Creeks, Members or places to the same Port belonging, to be transported to or towards any the islands Ports, Havens, Cities, Towns or places aforesaid, shall happen to miscarry or be lost, before their safe Arrival or Discharge in the Ports, for and to which the same shall be sent, that then and so often so much custom Poundage, Subsidies, or other Duties, as they answered to us, for the same, before their going forth of our said Ports, Havens or Creeks, shall, after due Proof made, before the Treasurer of England, for the Time being, of the said Loss, and the just Quantity thereof, be, by Virtue hereof, allowed to The said Governor and Company, their Agents or Factors, by Warrant of the said Treasurer, to the said Customers or Officers, in the next Goods, Wares or Merchandizes, that The said Governor and company, or their Successors, shall or may ship, for or towards those Parts, according to the true Rates of the customs. Poundage or Subsidies, before paid for the Goods, Wares or Merchandizes, so lost or miscarrying, or any Part thereof.

And for that, The said Governor and company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, are like to bring to this our Realm, a much greater Quantity of foreign commodities, from the Parts of the said East-Indies, than can be spent for the necessary Use of the same our Realm, which of Necessity must be transported into other countries, and there vended, we, for us, our Heirs and Successors, of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, do grant to and with The said Governor and company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, that at all Times, from Time to Time, during the Space of Thirteen Months, next after the Discharge of any the same foreign Commodities, so to be brought in, the Subsidies, Poundage, customs, and other Duties for the same, being first paid or compounded for as aforesaid, it shall be lawful for The said Governor and Company, and their Successors, or any other the natural Subjects of this our Realm, which may or shall buy the same of them, to transport the same in English Bottoms, freely out of this Realm as well ungarbled as garbled, without Payment of any further custom, Poundage, or any further Subsidy, to us, our Heirs or Successors for the same ; whereof the Subsidy, Poundage, customs or other Duties, shall be so formerly paid or compounded for as aforesaid, and so proved ; and the said customer or other Officer or Officers, to whom it shall in that Behalf appertain, for the Time being, by Virtue hereof, shall, upon due and sufficient Proof thereof, made in the Custom-house of or belonging to the same Port of London, give them sufficient Cocket or Certificate for the safe passing out thereof accordingly: And to the End no Deceit be used herein, to us, our Heirs or Successors, Certificate shall be brought from the collector of the custom Subsidy, Poundage or other Duties, inwards, of us, our Heirs or Successors, to the Collector of the Custom, Subsidy, Poundage or other Duties, outward, of us, our Heirs and Successors, that the said Goods, Wares, and Merchandizes, have, within the Time limited, answered their due custom, Subsidy, Poundage or other duties, for the same inwards: And moreover, we of our further especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, have granted, and by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, do grant unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, that it shall and may be lawful for them, their Factors or Assigns, in their First Voyage or Fleet, which is now in preparing for their First Adventure to the said East-Indies, to transport out of this our Realm of England, all such foreign Coin of Silver, either Spanish or other foreign Silver, as they have procured, prepared and gotten, or shall procure, prepare or get, as likewise all such other Coin of Silver, as they have procured, or shall procure, to be coined in our Mint, within our Tower of London, out of such Plate or Bullion, as is or shall be provided, by The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, their Factors or Assigns before the going forth of the same Fleet in this their First Voyage, so as the whole Quantity of Coin, or Monies to be transported, in this their said First Voyage, do not exceed the Value or Sum of £30,000 Sterling, and so as the Sum of £6,000, at the least, parcel of the said Sum of £30,000, be first coined in our Mint, within our Tower of London, before the same shall be transported as aforesaid, any Law, Statute, Restraint or prohibition, in that behalf notwithstanding : And

in like Manner, of our like especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, we have granted, and by these Presents, do for us, our Heirs and Successors, grant unto the said, Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, that it shall and may be lawful, to and for The said Governor and Company, and their Successors, after the said First Voyage, set forth yearly, for and during the Residue of the said Term of Fifteen Years, to ship and transport out of this our Realm of England, or Dominions of the same, in any their other Voyages, to or towards any the Parts, aforesaid, in Form afore-mentioned, all such foreign Coin of Silver, Spanish or other foreign Silver, or Bullion of Silver, as they shall, during the said Term, bring or cause to be brought into this Realm of England, from the Parts beyond the Seas, either in the same Kind, Sort, Stamp or Fashion, which it shall have when they bring it in, or any other Form, Stamp or Fashion, to be coined within our Mint, within our Tower of London, at their Pleasure ; so as the whole Quantity of Coin or Monies, by them to be transported, in any their said Voyages, during the Residue of the said Terms, do not exceed the Value or Sum of £30,000 in any One Voyage ; and so as the Sum of £6,000 at the least. Parcel of the said Sum or Value of £30,000, so to be transported as aforesaid, be first coined, within our said Tower of London, before the same shall be transported in any of the said Voyages, any law, Statute, Restraint or Prohibition, in that Behalf in anywise notwithstanding : And further we of our ample and abundant Grace, mere Motion and certain knowledge, have granted, and by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, do grant unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, that they and their Successors, and their Factors, Servants and Assigns, in the Trade of Merchandise, for them and on their Behalf, and not otherwise, shall, for the said Term of Fifteen Years, have, use, and enjoy, the whole entire and only Trade and Traffick, and the whole entire and only Liberty, Use and Privilege of trading and Trafficking, and using Feat and Trade of Merchandize to and from the said East-Indies, and to and from all the Islands, Ports, Havens, Cities, Towns and Places aforesaid, in such Manner and Form as is above mentioned : and that they The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies and every particular and several Person, that now is or that hereafter shall be of that Company, or Incorporation, shall have full and free Authority, Liberty, Faculty, License and Power, in Form aforesaid, to trade and traffick to and from the said East-Indies, and all and every the Parts thereof, in Form aforesaid, according to the Orders, Ordinances and Agreements hereafter to be made and agreed upon, by The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, or the more Part of them, present at any Court or Publick Assembly, of or for the said Company, the Governor of the said Company, or his Deputy for the Time being, being always present, at such Court or Assembly, and not otherwise : And for that the Ships, sailing into the said East-Indies, must take their due and proper Times, to proceed in their Voyages, which otherwise, as we well perceive, cannot be performed in the Rest of the Year following: Therefore we of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, for us, our Heirs and Successors, do grant, to and with The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, that, in any Time of Restraint, Six good Ships and Six good Pinnaces, well furnished with Ordnance, and other Munition for their Defence, and Five Hundred Mariners, English Men, to guide and sail in the same Six Ships and Six Pinnaces, at all Times, during the said Term of Fifteen Years, shall quietly be permitted and suffered to depart, and go in the said Voyages, according to the purport of these presents, without any Stay or Contradiction, by us, our Heirs or Successors, or by the Lord High Admiral, or any other Officer or Subject of us, our Heirs or Successors, for the Time being, in any wise, any Restraint, Law, Statute, Usage or Matter whatsoever, to the contrary notwithstanding. Provided nevertheless, that if we shall, at any Time within the said Term of Fifteen Years, have just Cause to arm our Navy in Warlike Manner, in Defence of our Realm, or for Offence of our Enemies, or that it shall be found needful to join to the Navy of us, our Heirs or Successors, the Ships of our Subjects, to be also armed for the Wars, to such a Number as cannot be supplied, if the said Six Ships and Six Pinnaces should be permitted to depart, as above is mentioned, then upon Knowledge given, by us, our Heirs or Successors, or by our Admiral to The said Governor and Company, about the 20th Day of the Month of July, or Three Months before The said Governor and Company shall begin to make ready the same Six Ships and Six Pinnaces, that we may not spare the said Six Ships and Six Pinnaces, and the Mariners requisite for them, to be out of our Realm during the Time that our Navy shall be upon the Seas, that then the said Governor and Company shall forbear to send Six such Ships and Six Pinnaces, for their Trade and Merchandize, until that we shall revoke or withdraw our said Navy from the said Service :

and we of our further Royal Favour, and of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, have granted, and by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, do grant to The said Governor and Company of

Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and to their Successors that the said East-Indies, nor the Islands, Havens, Ports, Cities, Towns or Places thereof nor any part thereof shall not be visited, frequented or haunted by any of the Subjects of us, our Heirs or Successors, during the same Term of Fifteen Years, contrary to the true Meaning of these Presents : And by Virtue of our Prerogative Royal, which we will not in that behalf have argued, or brought in Question we straitly charge, command and prohibit, for us, our Heirs and Successors, all the Subjects of us, our Heirs and Successors, of what Degree or Quality soever they be, that none of them, directly or indirectly do visit, haunt, frequent or trade, traffick or adventure, by way of merchandise into or from any of the said East-Indies, or into or from any the Islands, Ports, Havens, Cities, Towns or Places aforesaid, other than the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and such particular Persons as now be, or hereafter shall be of that Company, their Agents, Factors and Assigns during the said Term of Fifteen Years, unless it be by and with such License and Agreement of the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, in writing first had and obtained, under their Common Seal to be granted, upon Pain that every such Person or Persons that shall trade or traffick into or from any of the said East-Indies, other than the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors, shall incur our Indignation, and the Forfeiture and Loss of the Goods, Merchandizes, and other Things whatever, which so shall be brought into this Realm of England, or any the Dominions of the same, contrary to our said Prohibition, or the Purport or true Meaning of these Presents, as also the Ship and Ships with the Furniture thereof, wherein such Goods, Merchandizes, or Things shall be brought; the One Half of all the said Forfeitures to be to us, our Heirs and Successors, and the other Half of all and every the said Forfeitures, we do, by these Presents, of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, clearly and wholly for us, our Heirs and Successors, give, and grant unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies : And further all and every the said Offenders, for their said Contempt, to suffer Imprisonment during our Pleasure, and such other Punishment, as to us, our Heirs or Successors, for so high a Contempt, shall seem meet and convenient, and not to be in anywise delivered, until they and every of them shall become bound unto the said Governor for the Time being in the sum of £1,000 at the least, at no Time then after, during this Present Grant, to sail or traffick into any of the said East-Indies, contrary to our express Commandment in that Behalf herein set down and published: And further, for the better Encouragement of Merchants, Strangers or others, to bring in Commodities into our Realm, we for us, our Heirs and Successors, do grant unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, that they and their Successors, may, from Time to Time, for any Consideration or Benefit, to be taken to their own Use, grant or give License, to any the Person or Persons to sail, trade or Traffic into or from any the said East-Indies, so as such License be granted or given, before such Goods. Wares and Merchandizes be laid on Land, and so as such License be made by the said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, for the Time being, under their Common Seal : And further of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, we have condescended and granted, and by these Presents, for us, our Heirs and Successors, we do condescend and grant unto The said Governor and Company of merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors that we, our Heirs and Successors, during the said Term of fifteen Years, will not grant Liberty, License or Power to any Person or Persons whatsoever, contrary to the Tenor of these our Letters Patents, to sail, pass, trade or traffick, to the said East-Indies, or into or from the Islands, Ports, Havens, Cities, Towns or Places aforesaid, or any of them, contrary to the true Meaning of these Presents, without the Consent of The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, or the most Part of them : And our Will and Pleasure is, and hereby we do also ordain, that it shall and may be lawful, to and for The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, or the more Part of them, whereof the Governor for the Time being, or his Deputy, to be one, to admit into and to be of the said Company, all such Apprentices, to any of The said Fellowship or Company, and all such Servants and Factors, of and for the said Company, and all such other, as to them, or the most Part of them, present at any Court, held for the said Company, the Governor, or his Deputy, being one, shall be thought fit and agreeable, with the Orders and Ordinances to be made for the Government of the said Company. Provided always, that if any of the Persons, before named and appointed, by these Presents, to be free of The said Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, shall not before the going forth of the Fleet, appointed for this First Voyage, from the port of London, bring in and deliver to the Treasurer or Treasurers appointed, or which, within the Space of Twenty Days next after the Date hereof, shall be appointed, by the said Governor and Company, or the more Part of them, to receive the Contributions and Adventures, set down by the several Adventurers, in this last and present Voyage, now in hand, to be set forth, such Sums of

Money as have been, by any of the said Persons, by these presents, nominated to be of the said Company, expressed, set down and written in a Book for that Purpose, and left in the Hands of the said Thomas Smith, Governor of the said Company, or of the said Paul Banning, Alderman of London, and subscribed with the Names of the same Adventurers, under their Hands, and agreed upon to be adventured in the said First Voyage, that then, it shall be lawful for The said Governor and Company, or the more Part of them, whereof the said Governor or his Deputy, to be one, at any their General Court, or General Assembly, to remove, disfranchise and displace him or them at their Wills and Pleasures. And the said Governor and Company, of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, for them and their Successors, do, by these Presents, covenant, promise and grant, to and with us, our Heirs and Successors, that they The said Governor and Company, and their Successors, in all and every such Voyages, as they at any Time or Times hereafter, during the said Term, shall make out of this Realm, by Virtue of this our Grant and Letters Patents, the First Voyage only excepted, shall and will, upon every Return which shall be made back again into this Realm, or any of our Dominions, or within Six Months next after every such Return, bring into this our Realm of England, from the said East-Indies, or from some other Parts, beyond the Seas, out of our Dominions as great or greater Value in Bullion of Gold or Silver, or other foreign Coin of Gold or Silver, respectively, for every Voyage, the First Voyage only excepted, as shall be by Force of these Presents transported and carried out of this Realm, by them or any of them, in any Kind of Silver above said whatsoever, in any of the said Voyages ; and that all such Silver, as by Virtue of this our Grant and Letters Patents, shall be shipped or laden by The said Governor and Company, or their Successors, to be transported out of this Realm, in any of the said Voyages, shall from Time to Time, at the setting forth of every such particular Voyage, be shipped and laden at the Ports or Havens of London, Dartmouth, or Plymouth, or at some of the same Ports or Havens, and at no other Port or Haven whatsoever, within this our Realm, or the Dominions thereof ; and that all and every such Silver, as from Time to Time shall be shipped and laden in the said Ports of London, Dartmouth, or Plymouth, or any of them, to be by Force of these Presents transported out of this Realm, as is aforesaid shall from Time to Time be duly entered by the Customer, Controller, Collector or other Officer to whom it shall appertain, of every such Port or Haven, where the same shall happen to be shipped or laden, in the Custom-Book belonging to the said Port or Haven, before such Time as the same shall be shipped or laden, to be transported as is aforesaid, without any Custom or Subsidy, to be paid for the same ; and that in like Manner, all and all Manner of Gold and Silver whatsoever which shall be brought into this Realm, or any of our Dominions, by The said Governor and Company, or any of them, according to the true Meaning of these Presents, shall likewise be, from Time to Time, duly entered by the Customer, Controller, or other Officer of every such Port, Creek or Place, where the same Gold or Silver shall happen to be unshipped, or brought to Land, before such Time as the same Gold or Silver or any Part thereof, shall be unshipped or brought to Land, as is aforesaid. Provided always, nevertheless, and our Will and Pleasure is, that these our Letters Patents, or any Thing therein contained, shall not in any Sort extend to give or grant any License, Power or Authority unto The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, or to any of them to undertake or address any Trade unto any Country, Port, Island, Haven, City, Creek, Town or Place, being already in the lawful and actual Possession of any such Christian Prince or State, as at this present is, or at any Time hereafter shall be in League or Amity, with us, our Heirs or Successors, and which doth not, or will not accept of such Trade, but doth overtly declare and publish the same, to be utterly against his or their Good-Will and Liking, any Thing before in these presents contained, to the contrary thereof notwithstanding. Provided also, that if it shall, hereafter appear to us, our Heirs or Successors, that this Grant or the Continuance thereof, in the Whole or in any Part thereof, shall not be profitable to us, our Heirs and Successors, or to this our Realm, that then, and from thenceforth, upon and after Two Years Warning, to be given to the said Company, by us, our Heirs or Successors, under our or their Privy Seal, or Sign Manual, this present Grant shall cease, be void and determined, to all Intents, Constructions and Purposes : And further of our especial Grace, certain Knowledge and mere Motion, we have condescended and granted, and by these Presents for us our Heirs and Successors, do condescend and grant to The said Governor and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, and their Successors that if at the End of the said Term of Fifteen Years, it shall seem meet and Convenient unto The said Governor and Company, or any the Parties aforesaid, that this present Grant shall be continued, and if that also it shall appear unto us, our Heirs and Successors, that the Continuance thereof shall not be prejudicial or hurtful to this our Realm, but that we shall find the further Continuance thereof profitable for us, our Heirs and Successors, and for our Realm, with such Conditions as are herein mentioned, or with some Alteration or Qualification thereof, that then we, our Heirs or Successors, at the Instance and humble Petition of The said Governor and Company, or any of them, to be made unto us, our Heirs and Successors, will grant and make unto

The said Governor and Company, or any of them, so suing for the same ; and such other Person and Persons, our Subjects, as they shall nominate and appoint, or shall be by us, our Heirs or Successors, newly nominated, not exceeding in Number Twenty-Four, new Letters Patents, under the Great Seal of England, in due Form of Law, with the like Covenants, Grants, Clauses and Articles, as in these Presents are contained, or with Addition of other necessary Articles, or changing of these into some other Pa4ts, for and during the full Term of Fifteen Years, then next following ; willing hereby and straitly charging and commanding all and singular our Admirals, Vice-Admirals Justices, Mayors, Sheriffs, Escheators, Constables, Bailiffs, and all and singular other our Officers, Ministers, Liege Men and Subjects whatsoever, to be aiding, favouring helping and assisting unto The said Governor and Company, and to their Successors, and to their Deputies, Officers, Factors, Servants Assigns and Ministers and every of them, in executing and enjoying the Premises, as well on Land as on Sea, from Time to Time, when you or any of you shall thereunto be required, any Statue, Act, Ordinance, Proviso, Proclamation or Restraint, heretofore had, made, set forth, ordained, or provided, or any other Matter, Cause or Thing whatsoever, to the contrary in any way notwithstanding ; although express Mention of the true yearly Value or Certainty of the Premises, or of any of them, or of any other Gifts or Grants, by us, or any of our Progenitors, to the said Governor and. Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East-Indies, or to any of them, before this Time made, in these Presents is not made, or any Statute, Act, Ordinance, Provision Proclamation or Restraint, to the contrary heretofore had made, ordained or provided, or any other Thing, Cause or Matter whatsoever, in any wise notwithstanding. In Witness whereof, we have caused these our Letters to be made Patents: Witness Ourself, at Westminster, the Thirty-first Day of December, in the Three and Fortieth Year of our Reign.

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Empire in Asia

A New Global History

Japanese Gov't Document

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Sakoku (Closed Country) Edict, 1636

1. No Japanese ships may leave for foreign countries.
2. No Japanese may go abroad secretly. If anybody tries to do this, he will be killed, and the ship and owner/s will be placed under arrest whilst higher authority is informed.
3. Any Japanese now living abroad who tries to return to Japan will be put to death.
4. If any Kirishitan believer is discovered, you two (Nagasaki bugyo) will make a full investigation.

5. Any informer/ revealing the whereabouts of a bateren will be paid 200 or 300 pieces of silver. If any other categories of Kirishitans are discovered, the informer/s will be paid at your discretion as hitherto.
6. On the arrival of foreign ships, arrangements will be made to have them guarded by ships provided by the Omura clan whilst report is being made to Yedo, as hitherto.
7. Any foreigners who help the bateren or other criminal foreigners will be imprisoned at Omjra as hitherto.
8. Strict search will be made for bateren on all incoming ships.
9. No offspring of southern Barbarians will be allowed to remain. Anyone violating this order will be killed, and all relatives punished according to the gravity of the offence.
10. If any Japanese have adopted the offspring of southern Barbarians they deserve to die. Nevertheless, such adopted children and their foster-parents will be handed over to the Southern Barbarians for deportation.
11. If any deportees should try to return or to communicate with Japan by letter or otherwise, they will of course be killed if they are caught, whilst their relatives will be severely dealt with, according to the gravity of the offence.
12. Samurai are not allowed to have direct commercial dealings with either foreign or Chinese shipping at Nagasaki.
13. Nobody other than those of the five places (Yedo, Kyoto, Osaka, Sakai and Nagasaki) is allowed to participate in the allocation of ito-wappu.
14. Purchases can only be made after the ito-wappu is fixed. However, as the Chinese chips are small, you will not be too rigorous with them. Only twenty days are allowed for the sale.
15. The twentieth day of the ninth month is the deadline for the return of foreign ships, but latecomers will be allowed fifty days grace from the date of their arrival Chinese ships will be allowed to leave a little after the departure of the (Portuguese) galliots.
16. Unsold goods cannot be left in charge of Japanese for storage or safekeeping.
17. Representatives of the five (shogunal) cities should arrive at Nagasaki not later than the fifth day of the long month. Late arrivals will not be allowed to participate in the silk allocation and purchase.
18. Ships arriving at Hirado will not be allowed to transact business until after the nineteenth day of the fifth month of the thirteenth year of Kwanei (June 22, 1636)

Addressed to Sakakibara Hia-no-kami and Baba Saburozayemon, the joint bugyo of Nagasaki, and signed by Hotta Kaga-no-kami, Abe Bungo-no-kami, Sakai Sanuki-no-kami and Do Oi-no-suké, the four great councillors of Go-roju.

C.R. Boxer. *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549-1650*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951. pp. 439-440.

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Zheng He

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Annotation

In December 1431 an impressive fleet of over a hundred seagoing ships anchored in the harbor of Changle, Fujian, awaiting the northern wind that enabled the first leg of an expedition through Southeast Asia into the Indian Ocean. The principal imperial envoys, Zheng He and Wang Jinghong, took this opportunity to erect a stele in commemoration of six similar voyages during the Yongle reign (1402-1424).

The Yongle emperor took the throne from his nephew, the Jianwen emperor (r. 1398-1402), in a civil war that had long lasting effects on the relationship between the new emperor and the literate elite that staffed the bureaucratic system. The Yongle emperor relied on personal relations with castrated palace servants to

circumvent bureaucracy, and in the process he allowed them to become a powerful faction at court. It is telling that the Changle stele was signed by Grand Directors and Regional Military Commissioners, in other words, eunuchs and military men, but not civil officials. According to Dreyer 70 eunuchs were in charge of the fleet that carried 302 military officers and 26,803 soldiers. 180 of the 190 civil officials were medical doctors, which leaves only 10 civil officials. (Dreyer. 2007: 127-8) The maritime expeditions to the Indian Ocean illustrated the personal influence of the Chinese emperor, which goes a long way to explain why six expeditions occurred during the Yongle reign, and one last expedition took place during the Xuande reign (1425-35).

The stele states that the emperor delighted in tribute envoys from foreign lands and so he commanded Zheng He and others to “go to their countries and confer presents on them, so as to transform them by displaying our power while treating distant peoples with kindness.” (Dreyer. 2007: 195) Imperial envoys travelled with foreign ambassadors on detached squadrons to numerous larger and smaller courts in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral. In general they received a warm welcome, not in the least because tribute exchange profited foreign parties. On occasion the fleet met with hostility, or was drawn into local conflict by one or both parties. In the case of Chen Zuyi, a Palembang-based pirate from Guangdong, the detached squadrons reassembled before Chinese troops attacked and captured Chen. The Chinese envoys relied on a display of power, but when push came to shove they used military force to remove those who preyed on economic and diplomatic traffic along the maritime Silk Road.

The maritime expeditions grew out of an expansive policy during the Yongle reign. The emperor sent his eunuchs to known destinations to inform the people of the world that he ascended the throne. As eunuchs traveled they encountered people from more distant regions, usually maritime merchants. They brought them back to China and presented them to the emperor as ambassadors. The emperor received their tribute and then ordered the eunuchs to accompany them back to their home countries. The eunuchs thus expanded the known world for Ming China. The Ming emperor made the universal claim to rule all under heaven and his eunuchs left steles at home and abroad to reinforce this worldview. Eunuch led missions reached as far north as Sakhalin Island opposite the Amur River mouth where a stele was erected to celebrate the official title that the Ming emperor bestowed on a local chieftain. Other eunuchs traveled into central Asia as far as Samarkand and Herat. Numerous maritime voyages carried eunuchs to countries in south and southeast Asia, though the seven large scale expeditions into the Indian Ocean tend to overshadow the shorter voyages.

The Changle stele and a near identical stele at Liujiagang, where the fleet left the Yangzi River to enter the East China Sea, recorded the maritime expeditions in greater detail than most official sources, e.g. *Ming Veritable Records, Ming History*, perhaps because the civil officials responsible for official record keeping frowned upon the expensive voyages of their bitter rivals, the eunuchs. Furthermore, the inscriptions were commissioned by Zheng He and thus present the viewpoint of someone closely involved in the organization of the maritime expeditions. The inscriptions are therefore essential to a balanced understanding of the maritime expeditions. The two steles were erected near temples of Tianfei, a goddess associated with sailors, fishermen, and maritime merchants. The inscriptions praised her benevolence and at the same time they conveyed to temple visitors the extensive reach of Ming imperial power. A third stele at Galle, Sri Lanka, served a similar purpose. In Tamil, Persian, and Chinese it recorded the gifts that Zheng He bestowed on local temples in the name of the Yongle emperor. The steles are physical expressions of imperial power that remind the people at home and abroad of the extensive reach of the Ming emperor, even when the pious inscriptions give most of the credit to Tianfei and other deities.

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Changle Stele (Zheng He, 1431)

This inscription was carved on a stele erected at a temple to the goddess the Celestial Spouse at Changle in Fujian province in 1431.

Record of the miraculous answer (to prayer) of the goddess the Celestial Spouse.

The Imperial Ming Dynasty unifying seas and continents, surpassing the three dynasties even goes beyond the Han and Tang dynasties. The countries beyond the horizon and from the ends of the earth have all become subjects and to the most western of the western or the most northern of the northern countries, however far they may be, the distance and the routes may be calculated. Thus the barbarians from beyond the seas, though their countries are truly distant, "with double translation" have come to audience bearing precious objects and presents.

The Emperor, approving of their loyalty and sincerity, has ordered us (Zheng) He and others at the head of several tens of thousands of officers and flag-troops to ascend more than one hundred large ships to go and confer presents on them in order to make manifest the transforming power of the (imperial) virtue and to treat distant people with kindness. From the third year of Yongle (1405) till now we have seven times received the commission of ambassadors to countries of the western ocean. The barbarian countries which we have visited are: by way of Zhancheng (Champa), Zhaowa (Java), Sanfoqi (Palembang) and Xianlo (Siam) crossing straight over to Xilanshan (Ceylon) in South India, Guli (Calicut), and Kezhi (Cochin), we have gone to the western regions Hulumosi (Hormuz), Adan (Aden), Mugudushu (Mogadishu), altogether more than thirty countries large and small. We have traversed more than one hundred thousand li of immense water spaces and have beheld in the ocean huge waves like mountains rising sky-high, and we have set eyes on barbarian regions far away hidden in a blue transparency of light vapours, while our sails loftily unfurled like clouds day and night continued their course (rapid like that) of a star, traversing those savage waves as if we were treading a public thoroughfare. Truly this was due to the majesty and the good fortune of the Court and moreover we owe it to the protecting virtue of the divine Celestial Spouse.

The power of the goddess having indeed been manifested in previous times has been abundantly revealed in the present generation. In the midst of the rushing waters it happened that, when there was a hurricane, suddenly there was a divine lantern shining in the mast, and as soon as this miraculous light appeared the danger was appeased, so that even in the danger of capsizing one felt reassured that there was no cause for fear. When we arrived in the distant countries we captured alive those of the native kings who were not respectful and exterminated those barbarian robbers who were engaged in piracy, so that consequently the sea route was cleansed and pacified and the natives put their trust in it. All this is due to the favours of the goddess.

It is not easy to enumerate completely all the cases where the goddess has answered (prayers). Previously in a memorial to the Court we have requested that her virtue be registered in the Court of Sacrificial Worship and a temple be built at Nanking on the bank of the dragon river where regular sacrifices should be transmitted for ever. We have respectfully received an Imperial commemorative composition exalting the miraculous favours, which is the highest recompense and praise indeed. However, the miraculous power of the goddess resides wherever one goes. As for the temporary palace on the southern mountain at Changle, I have, at the head of the fleet, frequently resided there awaiting the (favorable) wind to set sail for the ocean.

We, Zheng He and others, on the one hand have received the high favour of a gracious commission of our Sacred Lord, and on the other hand carry to the distant barbarians the benefits of respect and good faith (on their part). Commanding the multitudes on the fleet and (being responsible for) a quantity of money and valuables in the face of the violence of the winds and the nights our one fear is not to be able to succeed; how should we then

dare not to serve our dynasty with exertion of all our loyalty and the gods with the utmost sincerity? How would it be possible not to realize what is the source of the tranquillity of the fleet and the troops and the salvation on the voyage both going and returning? Therefore we have made manifest the virtue of the goddess on stone and have moreover recorded the years and months of the voyages to the barbarian countries and the return in order to leave (the memory) for ever.

I. In the third year of Yongle (1405) commanding the fleet we went to Guli (Calicut) and other countries. At that time the pirate Chen Zuyi had gathered his followers in the country of Sanfoqi (Palembang), where he plundered the native merchants. When he also advanced to resist our fleet, supernatural soldiers secretly came to the rescue so that after one beating of the drum he was annihilated. In the fifth year (1407) we returned.

II. In the fifth year of Yongle (1407) commanding the fleet we went to Zhaowa (Java), Guli (Calicut), Kezhi (Cochin) and Xianle (Siam). The kings of these countries all sent as tribute precious objects, precious birds and rare animals. In the seventh year (1409) we returned.

III. In the seventh year of Yongle (1409) commanding the fleet we went to the countries (visited) before and took our route by the country of Xilanshan (Ceylon). Its king Yaliekunaier (Alagakkonara) was guilty of a gross lack of respect and plotted against the fleet. Owing to the manifest answer to prayer of the goddess (the plot) was discovered and thereupon that king was captured alive. In the ninth year (1411) on our return the king was presented (to the throne) (as a prisoner); subsequently he received the Imperial favour of returning to his own country.

IV. In the eleventh year of Yongle (1413) commanding the fleet we went to Hulumosi (Ormuz) and other countries. In the country of Sumendala (Samudra) there was a false king Sukanla (Sekandar) who was marauding and invading his country. Its king Cainu-liabiding (Zaynu-'l-Abidin) had sent an envoy to the Palace Gates in order to lodge a complaint. We went thither with the official troops under our command and exterminated some and arrested (other rebels), and owing to the silent aid of the goddess we captured the false king alive. In the thirteenth year (1415) on our return he was presented (to the Emperor as a prisoner). In that year the king of the country of Manlajia (Malacca) came in person with his wife and son to present tribute.

V. In the fifteenth year of Yongle (1417) commanding the fleet we visited the western regions. The country of Hulumosi (Ormuz) presented lions, leopards with gold spots and large western horses. The country of Adan (Aden) presented qilin of which the native name is culafa (giraffe), as well as the long-horned animal maha (oryx). The country of Mugudushu (Mogadishu) presented huafu lu ("striped" zebras) as well as lions. The country of Bulawa (Brava) presented camels which run one thousand li as well as camel-birds (ostriches). The countries of Zhaowa (Java) and Guli (Calicut) presented the animal miligao. They all vied in presenting the marvellous objects preserved in the mountains or hidden in the seas and the beautiful treasures buried in the sand or deposited on the shores. Some sent a maternal uncle of the king, others a paternal uncle or a younger brother of the king in order to present a letter of homage written on gold leaf as well as tribute.

VI. In the nineteenth year of Yongle (1421) commanding the fleet we conducted the ambassadors from Hulumosi (Ormuz) and the other countries who had been in attendance at the capital for a long time back to their countries. The kings of all these countries prepared even more tribute than previously.

VII. In the sixth year of Xuande (1431) once more commanding the fleet we have left for the barbarian countries in order to read to them (an Imperial edict) and to confer presents.

We have anchored in this port awaiting a north wind to take the sea, and recalling how previously we have on several occasions received the benefits of the protection of the divine intelligence we have thus recorded an inscription in stone.

Sources: Teobaldo Filesì. David Morison trans. *China and Africa in the Middle Ages*. (London: Frank Cass, 1972), 57-61.

Annotated by Sander M. Molenaar

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Letter from Selim to Ismail, 1514

“It is from Solomon: ‘In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Do not exalt yourselves above me, but come to me in all submission.’” (Qur’an 27: 30-31)
 God’s blessings upon the best of his creatures, Muhammad, his family, and his companions all.

And now We have revealed this Scripture truly blessed. Observe it and keep from evil, so that you may find mercy. (Qur’an 6: 156)

This missive, which is stamped with the seal of victory and which—like inspiration descending from the heavens — is witness to the verse “We do not punish a nation until We have sent forth a messenger to forewarn them.” (Qur’an 17: 15) has been graciously issued by our most glorious majesty — we who are the Caliph of God Most High in this world, far and wide; the proof of the verse “that which profits men remains on the earth” (Qur’an 13: 17) the Solomon of Splendor, the Alexander of eminence; haloed in victory, Faridun triumphant; slayer of the wicked and the infidel, guardian of the noble and the pious; the warrior in the Path, the defender of the Faith; the champion, the conqueror; the lion, son and grandson of the lion; standard-bearer of justice and righteousness, Sultan Selim Shah son of Sultan Bâyezid, son of Sultan Mehmet Khan — and is addressed to the ruler of the kingdom of the Persians, the possessor of the land of tyranny and perversion, the captain of the vicious, the chief of the malicious, the usurping Darius of the time, the malevolent Zahhak of the age, the peer of Cain, Prince Isma’il.

As the Pen of Destiny has drawn up the rescript “You bestow sovereignty on whom You will” (Qur’an 3: 26) in our sublime name and has signed it with the verse “The blessings God bestows on men none can withhold” (Qur’an 35: 2), it is manifest in the Court of Glory and the Presence of Deity that we, the instrument of Divine Will, shall hold in force upon the earth both the commandments and prohibitions of Divine Law as well as the provisions of royal proclamations. “Such is the grace of God: He bestows it on whom He will.” (Qur’an 57: 21).

It has been heard repeatedly that you have subjected the upright community of Muhammad (Prayers and salutations upon its founder!) to your devious will, that you have undermined the firm foundation of the Faith, that you have unfurled the banner of oppression in the cause of aggression, that you no longer uphold the commandments and prohibitions of the Divine Law, that you have incited your abominable Shi’i faction to unsanctified sexual union and to the shedding of innocent blood, that — like they “Who listen to falsehood and practice what is unlawful” (Qur’an 5: 42) — you have given ear to idle deceitful words and have partaken of that which is forbidden:

He has laid waste to mosques, as it is said,
Constructing idol temples in their stead,

that you have rent the noble fabric of Islam with the hand of tyranny, and that you have called the Glorious Qur’an the myths of the Ancients. The rumor of these abominations has caused your name to become like that of Harith deceived by Satan.

Indeed, as both the legal rulings of distinguished religious scholars who base their opinion on reason and tradition alike and the consensus of the Sunni community agree that the ancient obligation of extirpation, extermination, and expulsion of evil innovation must be the aim of our exalted aspiration, for “Religious zeal is a victory for the Faith of God the Beneficent:” then, in accordance with the words of the Prophet (Peace upon him!) “Whosoever introduces evil innovation into our order must be expelled” and “Whosoever does anything against our order must be expelled,” action has become necessary and exigent. Thus, when the Divine Decree of Eternal Destiny commended the eradication of the infamously wicked infidels into our capable hands, we set out for their lands like ineluctable fate itself to enforce the order “Do not leave a single unbeliever on the earth.” Qur’an 71: 26) If God Almighty wills, the lightning of our conquering sword shall uproot the untamed bramble grown to great heights in the path of the refulgent Divine Law and shall cast them down upon the dust of abjectness to be trampled under the hooves of our legions, for “They abase the mightiest of its inhabitants and these will do the same” (Qur’an 27: 34); the thunder of our avenging mace shall dash out the muddled brains of the enemies of the Faith as rations for the lionhearted ghazis. “The wrongdoers will realize what a reversal they shall have.” (Qur’an 26: 227)

When I draw my keen-edged weapon from its sheath,
Then shall I raise up doomsday on the earth;
Then shall I roast the hearts of lion-hearted men,
And toast the morning with a goblet of their blood.
My crow-fledged shaft will fix the eagle in his flight;
And my bare blade will shake the orb of day.

Ask of the sun about the dazzle of my rein;
 Inquire of Mars about the brilliance of my arms.
 Although you wear a Sufi crown , I bear a trenchant sword,
 And he who holds the sword will soon possess the crown.
 O Mighty Fortune, pray grant this my single wish:
 Please let me take both crown and power from the foe.

But “Religion is Counsel.” Therefore, should you turn the face of submission toward our angelic threshold — the refuge of the noble, the qibla of felicity, and the Ka’ba of certainty — and lift the hand of oppression from the heads of your subjects bowed by oppression and sedition, take up a course of repentance and become like one blameless, return to the sublime straight path of the Sunna of Muhammad (Prayers and salutations upon him and God’s satisfaction upon his immaculate family and his rightly-guided companions all!) — for “My companions are like the stars: whomever you choose to follow, you will be guided aright.” — and consider your lands and their people a part of the well-protected Ottoman state, then shall you be granted our royal favor and our imperial condescension.

He whose face touches the dust of my threshold in submission
 Will be enveloped in the shadow of my favor and my justice.

How great the happiness of him who complies with this!

On the other hand, if your evil and seditious habits have become ingrained in your nature, then that which has become essential can never again be accidental.

Of what avail are sermons to the black-hearted?

Then, with the support and assistance of God, I will crown the head of every gallows tree with the head of a crown-wearing Sufi and clear that faction from the face of the earth—“God’s followers are sure to triumph” (Qur’an 5: 56); I will break the oppressors’ grip with the power of the miraculous white hand of Moses, for “The Hand of God is above their hands.” (Qur’an 48: 10) Let them remove the cotton of negligence from the ears of their intelligence and, with their shrouds on their shoulders, prepare themselves for “That which you are threatened with is sure to come.” Qur’an 6: 134) The triumphant troops “As firm as a mighty edifice” (Qur’an 61: 4) crying out like fate evoked “When their hour is come, not for one moment shall they hold it back, nor can they go before it” (Qur’an 7: 34) and maneuvering in accordance with “Put them to death wherever you find them” (Qur’an 4: 89), will wreak ruin upon you and drive you from that land. “Such being the will of God before and after, and on that day the believers will rejoice in God’s help.” (Qur’an 30: 4) “Thus were the evil-doers annihilated. Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe.” (Qur’an 6: 45)

Response from Ismail to Selim, 1514

May his godly majesty, the refuge of Islam, the might of the kingdom, he upon whom God looks with favor, the champion of the sultanate and of the state, the hero of the faith and of the earth, Sultan Selim Shah (God grant him immortal state and eternal happiness!) accept this affectionate greeting and this friendly letter, considering it a token of our good will.

Now to begin: Your honored letters have arrived one after another, for “No sooner has a thing doubled than it has tripled.” Their contents, although indicative of hostility, are stated with boldness and vigor. The latter gives us much enjoyment and pleasure, but we are ignorant of the reason for the former. In the time of your late blessed father (May God enlighten his proof!) when our royal troops passed through the lands of Rum to chastise the impudence of ‘Ala’ al-Dawla Dhu’l-Qadr, concord and friendship was shown on both sides. Moreover, when your majesty was governor at Trebizond there existed perfect mutual understanding. Thus, now, the cause of your resentment and displeasure yet remains unknown. If political necessity has compelled you on this course, then may your problems be soon resolved.

Dispute may fire words to such a heat
That ancient houses be consumed in flames.

The intention of our inaction in this regard is twofold:

(1) Most of the inhabitants of the land of Rum are followers of our forefathers (May God the All-Forgiving King have mercy upon them!).

(2) We have always loved the ghazi-titled Ottoman house and we do not wish the outbreak of sedition and turmoil once again as in the time of Timur.

Why should we then take umbrage at these provocations? We shall not.

The mutual hostility of kings is verily an ancient rite.
Should one embrace the bride of worldly rule too close,
His lips will kiss those of the radiant sword.

Nevertheless, there is no cause for improper words: indeed, those vain, heretical imputations are the mere fabrications of the opium-clouded minds of certain secretaries and scribes. We therefore think that our delayed reply was not completely without cause for we have now dispatched our honored personal companion and servant Shah Quli Aqa (May he be sustained!) with a golden casket stamped with the royal seal and filled with a special concoction for their use should they deem it necessary. May he soon arrive, so that with assistance from Above, the mysteries concealed behind the veil of fate might be disclosed. Keeping in view that regrets are of no avail in the end, one should always exercise free judgment and not be bound solely by the words of others.

At this writing we were engaged upon the hunt near Isfahan. We now prepare provisions and our troops for the coming campaign and in all friendship we say, "Do what you will."

Bitter experience has taught that in this world of trial
He who falls upon the house of 'Ali always falls.

Kindly give our ambassador leave to travel unmolested for "No soul shall bear another's burden." (Qur'an 6: 164; 53: 38) When war becomes inevitable, hesitation and delay must be set aside, and one must think on that which is to come. Farewell.

Woods, John E. (trans.) *Asnad va namaha-yi tarikhi va ijtima'i-yi dawrayi safaviya* edited by Z. Sabitiyan Tehran: Ibn Sina, 1964, pp. 112- 117.

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