

Appendix I.

A Visit to Sumatra by a 14th Century Muslim Traveler

From Abu 'Abdullah Ibn Battuta, *Rihlat Ibn Battuta: tuhfat al-nazar fi ghara'ib al-amsar wa aja'ib al-asfar*. (Beirut/Aleppo: Dar al-Sharq al-'Arabi, n.d.), pp. 478-483.
Translation by R. Michael Feener.

After twenty-five days we reached the island of al-Jawa (Sumatra)... that is the island from which the Jawi incense takes its name. We saw the island from the distance of half a day's sail away. Its trees are many, including: coconuts, palms, cloves, Indian aloes, the *shaki* and *barki*, papaya, *jamun* fruit, sweet oranges, and camphor. The people of this island buy and sell with pieces of tin and uncast, unrefined Chinese gold. Most of the best spices on the island are to be found in the country of the unbelievers, there are fewer from the country of the Muslims. When we reached the harbor, the people came out to us in little boats and with them they brought coconuts, bananas, papayas and fish. It is their custom to present these to the merchants, and then each merchant gives whatever recompense he is able to. The Assistant Harbor Master also came out, inspected the merchants who were with us, and permitted us to land. We landed at the port, a large settlement on the beach in which are houses called *sarha*. It is about four miles from the city. Then Buhruz, the Assistant Harbor Master, wrote to the Sultan informing him of my arrival. The Sultan then ordered Amir Daulasa to come along with the noble Qadi (Muslim judge) Amir Sayyid ai-Shirazi, Taj ai-Din al-Isfahani, and other scholars of law to meet me. They came out bringing one of the Sultan's horses along with some others. I rode together with my companions and we entered the Sultan's capitol, the city of Samudra, which is a large, beautiful city with wooden walls and towers.

The Sultan of al-Jawa, al-Malik al-Zahir, is one of the noblest and most generous of kings and belongs to the Shafi'i school of law. He is a patron of Muslim legal scholars who come to his sessions to read and study. He often struggles against and raids the unbelievers. He is humble and walks on foot to the Friday prayer. The people of his country also belong to the Shafi'i school of law. They are eager to fight infidels and enthusiastically accompany the Sultan on his campaigns. They overwhelm the unbelievers living near them, and the unbelievers must pay a tax in settlement. When we approached the Sultan's house, we found near it spears fixed in the ground on either side of the road. This is a sign for people to dismount, and that no one should ride any further. We dismounted and entered into court where we found the Sultan's Deputy, whose name is 'Umdat al-Mulk. He rose from his place and greeted us. The form of greeting in this country is shaking hands. We sat down with him and he wrote a message to the Sultan telling of our arrival. Then he sealed it and gave it to one of the young servants, who brought back the Sultan's response written on the reverse side of the same paper. Then the servant brought out a *buqsha*, which is a kind of bag. The Deputy took the bag, took me by the hand, and brought me to a little apartment they call a *fardkhaneh* (a word like a form of *zardkhaneh* except that the first letter is an *f*). This is his place of rest during the daytime, for it is the custom here that the Sultan's Deputy arrives at court just after the dawn prayer and does not leave until after the last prayers of the evening are said. The

same applies to the viziers and other higher officials. He took from the bag three sarongs: one made of pure silk, one silk and cotton, and one silk and linen. He also took out three garments which they call *al-tahtaniyat* (underwear), a kind of sarong, three other pieces of what they call *al-wustiniyat* ('middle-wear'), three robes, one of them white, and three head coverings. I put on a sarong, changing out of my trousers as is their custom, and then put on one of each of the other kinds of clothing from the bag. My companions then betook of the clothes that remained.

Then they brought food to us, most of which was rice, then some kind of frothy drink, and then betel-nut, which is used to signal that it is time to leave. We accepted it, and then rose from our seats along with the Sultan's Deputy. We left the court and rode out together with him until we were brought to a garden encircled by a wooden wall. In the middle of it was a house made of wood and furnished with cotton velvet carpets they call *mukhmalat*, some of which were dyed and others not.

In the house there were rattan couches on which were silk coverings, light coverlets and cushions called *al-bualisht*. We seated ourselves in the house together with the Sultan's Deputy. Then Amir Daulasa arrived bringing with him two male and two female servants. He said to me, "The Sultan says to you that these are gifts given in accordance with our means, and not those of Sultan Muhammad (of Delhi)." The Sultan's Deputy then left and Amir Daulasa remained with me. We had known each other since he had come to Delhi as a messenger to the Sultan. I said to him, "When will we be able to meet the Sultan?" He said, "It is our custom that a visitor does not greet the Sultan for three days after his arrival, so that by that time the fatigue of his journey has left him and his wits have returned to him." We stayed there for three days, and they brought us food three times each day, as well as fruit and treats in the mornings and evenings. On the fourth day, which was a Friday, Amir Daulasa came to me and said, "You will meet the Sultan in the royal compartment of the mosque after prayers. I went to the mosque and prayed the Friday prayer with the mosque's caretaker named Qayran. Then I went in to meet the Sultan, and there I found Qadi Amir Sayyid and the scholars on his right and left. The Sultan gave me his hand, I greeted him, and he seated me on his left. He asked me about Sultan Muhammad and my travels, and I answered him. He then resumed the lesson on Muslim jurisprudence according to the Shafi'i school of law. This continued until the mid-afternoon prayer. After praying the Sultan went inside to a place where he removed the clothes he was wearing, which were the robes of a jurist that he wears when he walks on foot to the mosque each Friday. He then put on his royal robes, which are made of silk and cotton.

When he left the mosque he found elephants and horses at the door. It is their tradition that when the Sultan rides an elephant, those who accompany him ride horses, and when he rides on a horse, they ride elephants. The men of learning are on his right. That day he rode an elephant, so we rode horses and went with him to court. We dismounted at the customary location. The Sultan rode in. There the viziers, the amirs, the secretaries, the officers of state and the leaders of the military were arranged in rows. The four viziers and the secretaries were in the first row. They greeted the Sultan and then returned to their places. Each group followed in doing this: the nobles and the legal scholars, then his associates, then judges and the poets, then the military leaders, and then the servants. The

Sultan remained on his elephant across from the audience pavilion. Raised above his head was an ornamented parasol. To his right side were fifty outfitted elephants, and there was an equal number of them on his left. There were a hundred *nauba* horses on his right and as many on the left. His special attendants stood before him. Then male entertainers came out and sang before him, followed by horses dressed in silk coverings with gold anklets and embroidered silk accouterments that performed a dance in front of the Sultan. I was pleased with their performance and had seen something similar performed before the king of India. When it approached sunset the Sultan went into his house and the people returned home.