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Author(s): C. Pfoundes

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NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF EASTERN AD-  
VENTURE, EXPLORATION, AND DISCOVERY,  
AND FOREIGN INTERCOURSE WITH JAPAN.

*Read on Thursday, January 20th, 1881.*

By C. PFOUNDÉS, Esq., F.R.G.S., &c. (long resident in Japan, and a member  
of the Society).

ABSTRACT.

IN the paper I had the honour of reading before this society on a previous occasion, I alluded to the early explorers and adventurers, whose efforts were directed towards "Japan," no doubt incited by the accounts of Marco Polo, and other early voyagers and travellers. Numerous efforts were made by private individuals, as well as by the heads of great nations, to open up fresh routes. I am strongly of opinion that justice is not done to the intelligence and energy of these early explorers, whom it has been but too general a fashion to call buccaneers. Few written accounts have come down to us of the earlier explorers and adventurers. Few men of those times had the literary talent, even if they had the will, to have their adventures put down in writing ; but there are other and more cogent reasons why so little has been handed down to us.

We are as yet barely on the threshold of knowledge of the vast literature of Oriental peoples, ancient and modern, and I have no doubt that such treasures of material await the explorer into the archives of the Vatican and other literary collections, monastic or otherwise, far and wide, that will throw considerable light upon the early voyages and travels.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, national rivalry attained such a fierce mastery, that the astute Pontiff drew an arbitrary line in mid-ocean ; and using his great

moral power, divided the two great rivals. To the eastward the Portuguese were free to go, to the westward the Spaniards might likewise voyage and conquer, with a sword in one hand and a crucifix in the other, their very souls steeped in unholy desires, in ambition, and in insatiable greed. Can we wonder, therefore, that no effort was spared by either to become the sole possessor of all information, and of any documents that, proving prior discovery, would invalidate their pre-emptive rights. It would be too much to expect that such documents would be permitted to come down to us. A case in point is the mysterious disappearance of the papers and maps, &c., of Cabot, immediately after his death, although entrusted to one Will Worthington.

Yet, surely, much must have escaped the fanatical monk, and Mussulman, or the hireling of the Spanish or other court ; and it is with a desire to set on foot inquiry, that I have enlarged on this point. The late Pontiff Pio Nino and Cardinal Antonelli promised me, through Monseigneur Nardi, that search should be made—this was in 1870—but as may be imagined nothing was done, and events in Rome subsequently, precluded my hoping that any steps would be taken to throwing any light upon these matters.

Although the earliest voyages can scarcely be said to have been altogether prompted by a desire to find a sea route to the East, to overcome the physical obstacle of the Isthmus of Suez ; yet there seems to be little doubt, that at that time it was quite as, if not more, important a matter, than it is at present, where a navigable north-about route is ostensibly the object in view in Arctic Exploration.

Whether the South of Africa was, or was not, circumnavigated, nearly twenty-five centuries ago, the fact remains, that in times more remote than the first efforts to civilize the West of Europe, various routes were from time to time used ; and for reasons I need not detain you by enumerating, they were abandoned, and other routes tried. Geographical knowledge there certainly was, but it was a most jealously guarded secret. The fourth estate and the penny press had no existence,

a copy of the Bible twenty centuries later, and not so many centuries either before our own day, cost more than the building, at the time, of two arches of London Bridge, so that literature was a luxury only for the richest. It may be interesting to note that up to the time of the end of the Kingdom of Israel and the almost coëval foundation of the Roman Empire, Japanese history begins, and even at that early date geographical and other scientific knowledge, though certainly confined to a very few, yet still existed; and we must not deem the ancients ignorant or barbarous, it is rather we who are ignorant as to the exact state of their scientific knowledge, as well as their intellectual life and culture.

The Easterns appear to have been ever far better informed about the West than our ancestors, or we ourselves are about the East and its people. Even before the Buddhist propagandists travelled afar in all directions, surmounting difficulties that it is only enthusiasts can essay to overcome, there were not a few voyagers and travellers, for we frequently meet confirmation of ancient accounts, records that were doubtless known to a few, so that many comparatively modern so-called discoveries can doubtless be traced to intelligent efforts to follow up a clue. Tracing step by step the progress of exploration, so far as we are in possession of details, we find that at a very early date, the spherical form of the earth being known, a passage to India to the westward was looked upon, by a few, it is true, as a possibility, and the voyages of the Carthaginian Brothers, and other daring adventurers, were not only prompted by this motive, but the results tended to confirm the theories put forth. The resumption of the Red Sea route, after the abandonment of the dangerous coasting voyage, and the monsoons having been understood and taken due advantage of, in the fourth century before our era, gave a new impetus to Eastern trade, to the neglect for a time of Western exploration. In the far East the people were active meanwhile. In 194 B.C., the westward route was again taken up in Alexandria, and the rich spoils that arrived in Rome only tended to create a greater desire

for a safer and more expeditious route to the fabulously rich and luxurious East. China was extending, by conquest, her already wide territory : even Corea fell a victim for a time ; and maritime commercial intercourse was of a very extensive character even at that early period.

While Britain was being colonized, and Iceland first visited, Japan had made progress in shipbuilding, and war-like expeditions were not unfrequent ; even raids and descents on the coasts of distant countries were of yearly occurrence.

The existence of seas beyond the Aurea Chersonesis, and to the southward of Africa, were more than merely suspected, by the Westerns, to exist ; in fact, maps were drawn, showing these places upon them, at an earlier date than is generally credited now-a-days.

In the third century, the Christian religion had reached the far East, and as a consequence, more detailed accounts reached Europe, of these wonder-lands. In the fifth century, the desire for geographical knowledge was very general ; we read of royal personages, Pontiffs, and other potentates, not only fostering the science, but actually becoming translators and compilers. Arthur of England was one of these ; then there is the traveller Hoey Shan, one of many such, about whose Fu-san so much discussion has arisen recently. By the bye, Fu-san or Fu-so is an old name for Japan.\*

Not long before the appearance of Mahomet, detailed accounts about China had reached Europe. Buddhism had lost ground, and a dark age, intellectually speaking, an impenetrable cloud of bigotry and ignorance, fell over all countries. The Saracen wars, and other causes, tended to make a long blank in the history of exploration, and it appears to have been the Moors, who once more became the mediums of a revival of learning, science, and art.

\* I gave this title to a budget of notes printed in the *Japan Mail* in 1873-75, and Professor Douglas confirmed my opinion, that Fu-san is Japan. He informed me that the Chinese written character for the Fu-san of Hoey Shan, and that used by the Japanese, and by myself in my notes for Fu-so, are one and the same.

Ships from India traded in China seas, and even far-off Japan was visited by ships from distant climes. Indian priests reached those shores, and knowledge of the isles of the Far East was thus communicated to Western Asia, and even as far as Western Europe and to Africa.

From the ninth to the thirteenth century, Mussulman influences were dominant in the Eastern Archipelago, to the total extinction of all other. Ancient monuments were ruthlessly destroyed, and history, aye, even legends and folk-lore, seemed to have been eradicated, or given a purely Mahomedan form.

The East being closed to the Westerns, their energy was once more directed westward ; voyages to Iceland and to Greenland became more frequent, and there can be little doubt that even the great continent North of America was reached earlier than nine centuries ago, else who were the builders of the Round Tower in Newport, Rhode Island ?

Even if the Welshman, that Meredith ap Reece (the Cambrian bard of the fifteenth century), sang about, was not a fact, yet no doubt can exist that there must be some foundation for the numerous stories of very early voyages across the North Atlantic.

We now reach the dawn of a truly wonderful age of adventurous exploration.

Pope Innocent, following up the policy of his recent predecessors, boldly sent forth numerous brave and highly-cultured men, to once more extend the sway of the Church, in those far-off lands which had been, many centuries before, the scene of the labours of St. Thomas. The great Khan welcomed the visitors, nor was he the only great potentate of Asia, and Africa, who gladly received these messengers of peace, as they truly were in those days, before the time of the Spanish and Portuguese marauders.

Although the travels of the Polos are of this period, they were not the only great voyagers ; it is because Marc during the monotony of imprisonment dictated his "Marvels," that we hear most of this family ; not that I would in any way

detract from his great abilities, and wonderful opportunities, on the contrary, I look upon his book as a remarkable finger-post in history. Both before and after Polo's death in 1323, attention was once more prominently directed towards the far, far East. His meagre account of Japan merely stimulated curiosity; he called it *Zipangu* (from the *ʒi pun kwo* of the Chinese, which mean *ʒi-Sun*;—*pun*, root or source; *kwo*, country), or the Land of the Rising Sun.

Whilst the majority of those who heard his accounts did not give them credence, yet some there were who did more than merely credit them. Other details were gathered and compared. Yet strange to say, nearly two centuries passed by before the age of adventure can really be said to have reached its zenith. The history of this age is so well told by Mr. Major that I need but refer you to his works, and also to those of Colonel Yule, for a digest of most of the authentic material that has come down to us.

From the early part of the fourteenth century, the maritime nations of Western Europe essayed to extend their knowledge. The English were by no means prominent; they were struggling for the mastery of the narrow seas. The Spaniards were foremost, closely followed, often outdone, by the Portuguese; even the French were not idle. Tales of southern seas, old maps, showing the Dragon's Tail and Cape of Storms, were secretly produced, adventurers strove to organize expeditions, and obtain not only royal patronage, but also the means of providing vessels and outfits. The monk Nicholas of Oxford voyaged from Lynn to the far, far North; vague stories of the Antilles and the seven cities of the far West were current, as well as that of the horseman on the Azores, with outstretched arm pointing westward.

The chief cities of the various maritime states were visited in turn by enthusiasts and adventurers, trying to push wild schemes. Some were well informed, yet none the better credited by their hearers. Can it be wondered, when it became known that one court in particular gave welcome to all such as who had something to tell, that Prince Henry

would become the centre, around which all rallied, as Mr. Major has so ably narrated.

Not only Columbus, but also his relatives and companions, had travelled and toiled to gather every procurable scrap of knowledge, and we cannot doubt that much was known, that was not then or since acknowledged, for would not this completely destroy not only the glory, but also the national claim to first discovery ?

Sad to say, these early voyagers were invariably guilty of outrage upon the peoples they met, sowing broadcast the seed of the harvest of hatred and opposition that has since had to be contended with, even to our own day.

The invention of printing did not tend to make general geographical knowledge, it was too recent, and there was no public opinion to act as a salutary check on misdeeds. However, we find that within two generations a great continent and a far-spread ocean were explored, the existence of which between the seas to the westward of Europe and the far Eastern Cathay was not even suspected.

The rivalry between Spaniard and Portuguese, so long precluded from colliding to the injury of the Church, found fresh cause and opportunity when these two great rivals met on the eastern seas. The line arbitrarily drawn 100 leagues west of the Azores was moved still further west ; but already the terms East Indies for the Portuguese, and West Indies for the Spanish conquests, had taken root, for did they not think at first that the land they discovered to the westward was but the eastern extremity of the Indies and Cathay ? In 1513, in the month of September, Bilbao and Pizarro saw the great South Sea from the high land of the Isthmus of Darien, but in 1520, Magellan had rounded the Horn, and crossed the great Pacific ocean.

Meantime the Portuguese had rounded the Cape, carrying fire, sword, pillage, and outrage with them ; the Venetians meantime fighting the Arabs. In 1496, a Portuguese, who died was buried in the ruins of an ancient Christian church in Pegu ; and not many years passed before some of the most

enterprising found their way to Canton. In 1516 Rafael Perestrello reached the city and returned, the next year piloting an expedition back to the same place.

In 1517 George Marascenas fell in with some Lew Chew trading vessels, and thus, step by step, approached the long-desired land. Two or three short years only passed, when these plunderers and evil-doers earned the enmity of the natives, and massacre and expulsion were the results. Evil reports spread fast. The early arrival of numerous priests did not always control these turbulent spirits, or tend to counteract the ill-will they gained for all foreigners and Christians.

Japan was at the period much disturbed, by internal dissension ; the Ashikaga Shogunate was in a very unsatisfactory condition, tottering on the verge of misrule—and little attention was paid to the Europeans at first.

The reports of the evil doings of the new-comers in China reached Japan at a time when even the Chinese were unwelcome visitors. The continual embroilments of the Portuguese with the Chinese precluded much fresh enterprise towards Japan, and the hands of the settlers in India and China were more than full, with wars and complications amongst the native chieftains, and with their own immediate trading, or plundering, adventures.

Pinto claimed that when he landed in 1541 he was the first, and he is generally taken at his own word even now, but there were ships visiting Japan years before, and Portuguese reached Japan and Lew Chew even earlier.

Native annals recount the arrival in 1530 at an island off the south coast of Japan of a "Black Ship," so called to distinguish it from native vessels of those seas, which were not painted, and a present of firearms appears to have been given to Otomo Sorin, the Japanese head man of the island.

The arrival of Xavier, the pupil of Loyola, gave a great impetus to the propagation of Christianity in India, and the far East ; but this brilliant success, was, alas, but meteor-like ; internal dissension, religious and political strife, and

individual misconduct and ambition, caused a powerful reaction that finally resulted in the country being forcibly and securely closed to foreign intercourse, for more than two centuries. Up to our own times this policy of exclusiveness was rigidly preserved, and well maintained, as many still living can testify.

We thus see that after centuries of search, when the great end was attained, it faded into insignificance, in consequence of the vastness and wealth of the regions opened up in the search for the long-sought Cathay ; the "distance that had lent enchantment to the view" having been overcome, the nearer view was less promising, and when the illusion was dispelled the greedy and turbulent adventurers sought fresh and more profitable fields, leaving trouble, hatred, and the seeds of endless complication behind for future generations to combat with.

In the study of the history of those far-off lands, and of the adventures of the early voyagers, our public men and diplomatists might read valuable lessons ; but here at home the apathy about far-off peoples is so great, that it is most difficult to arouse the slightest attention, even when vast national interests are at stake, aye, even the national prestige and honour.

Those who seek a future career in these far-off countries, would do well to inform themselves as to these matters, for the time has come when we no longer hold the monopoly of foreign conquest, and of foreign trade. We find able and active competitors in all foreign countries, in our own colonies and possessions even. We must learn that the world was not made for the English solely ; and throwing off the mantle of our insular egotism and narrow prejudice, acknowledge that victory is for those who fight best ; and that none but the brave deserve the fair, none but the honest, industrious, and thrifty will reap reward in these far-off lands ; that there is no royal road to wealth there any more than in old England.

## APPENDIX.

List of a few of the Authors that have been examined, and of the works wherein the inquirer may find some further particulars.

“A Compleat Historie of Spanish America” (old and rare).

Adams, A., Collection.

Ainsworth, “Round the World.”

Albuquerque’s “Life,” &c.

Astley’s Collection.

Ballantyne’s “Adventures.”

Bechlanger’s “Formosa.”

Beniowsky (Count), “Travels.”

Buckley, “Discoveries.”

Burney’s “Chronology.”

Carre (Leon), “Ancient China.”

Campbell’s “Lives of the Admirals.”

Cooley’s “History of Maritime Discovery.”

“Cyrus, Travels of.”

D’Almeida’s “Java.”

Dalrymple’s Collection.

Day’s “Cochin China.”

De Quincey’s “China.”

Dickson’s “Japan.”

Diego de Ceuta’s “Mexico.”

Dryden’s “Xavier.”

Eden (Robert), 1555. Early Collection.

Earl’s “Eastern Seas.”

Frampton’s “Polo” (1579).

Frobisher’s “Collection of Voyages.”

Galvano’s Works.

Gurney’s Works.

Grimstore, “History of West Indies.”

Hakluyt Collection.

Hall’s “Voyages.”

Harris’s “Collection of Voyages.”

Heerin’s “History of Trade.”

Help’s “Pizzaro and Columbus.”

Kæmpfer’s Works.

- Laurent's "Ancient Geography."  
 Leake's "Disputed Questions," &c.  
 Lediart's "Naval History."  
 Leland's "Fu-sang."  
 Lindsay's "History of British Shipping."  
 Ljungsted's (Baron) "History of Portuguese Settlements in  
 China" (Boston, 1836).  
 Major's (R. H.) "Life of Dom Henry," &c.  
 Mayer's "Treaty Ports."  
 Monson's "Naval Tracts."  
 Ousley, Sir Wm.  
 Perry, Commodore, "Expedition to Japan."  
 Purchas Collection.  
 Pinkerton Collection.  
 Prime's "Travels."  
 Raffles' (Sir Stamford), "Java."  
 Raleigh's (Sir Walter) "History of the World."  
 Rennell's "Geographical System of Herodotus."  
 Robinson's "Western Discoveries."  
 „ Wheaton's "History of Norsemen."  
 Ross's "History of Corea."  
 "Recueil des Voyages."  
 "Romance of Travel."  
 Rundall's Collection.  
 Schertzer's "Austrian Expedition, Novara," &c.  
 Smith's (Dr. Geo.) "Hist. Cassi.: Commerce of Western  
 Europe," &c.  
 Swinhoe's "Formosa."  
 Tavernier's Works.  
 Torrens's "Asia."  
 Tytler's "Progress of Discovery."  
 Webbe's "Travailes" (1590).  
 Williams' "Discoveries."  
 Wolff's Works.  
 Yule's (Colonel) "Cathay and the Way Thither."  
 „ „ "Marc Polo's History."  
 &c., &c., &c.