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Sino-Sulu Trade in the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

JAMES F. WARREN

Sulu appears in Chinese sources as early as the Yuan dynasty (1268-1368) and a lengthy account of a tributary mission in 1417 from Sulu to the celestial court is recorded in the *Ming Annals*. Little appears then to have been written about the Sulu chain of islands for several hundred years until the beginning of the eighteenth century, which witnessed an earnest renewal of diplomatic activity and trade between China and the Sultanate. The *Ching Annals* refer to five separate tribute-bearing missions dispatched by the Sultans of Sulu in the years between 1727 and 1763. The envoys of these missions, which were spaced approximately a decade apart, spent several years in China before returning to Sulu on one of the great junks voyaging to the "tributary lands" bordering the South China Sea with renewed friendship and wealth in gifts.¹ The large number of references to Sulu in the Ch'ing Annals reflect the desire of the Sultans to extend their personal authority and wealth, and to strengthen the State's influence in a politically fragmented region through Chinese recognition and commerce.

Chinese trading junks annually sailed before the northern monsoon from Amoy and more northerly ports to almost every commercial port in Southeast Asia. One to two hundred large

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

- AGI - Archivo General de Indias, Seville
- AUST - Archives of the University of Santo Tomas, Manila
- BIA - Bureau of Insular Affairs Records, U.S. National Archives, Washington
- CO - Colonial Office Records, Public Records Office, London
- IOL - Indian Office Library and Records Center, London
- MN - Museo Naval, Madrid
- PNA - Philippine National Archives, Manila
- PRO - Public Records Office, London

1. These missions were sent to China in the years 1726, 1733, 1754, and 1763 (Majul, *The Muslims in the Philippines* [Quezon City: University of the Philippine Press, 1973], pp. 348-53). As a matter of policy China had traditionally preferred to foster and

vessels and approximately a thousand smaller craft visited Siam, Cambodia, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Celebes, the Philippine archipelago, and Sulu each year. The mat sail was a familiar sight on coasts where the European canvas was never unfurled.²

From Amoy the *Tung-Yang* junk route skirted the Formosan coast and extended down the length of the Philippines from the Batanes islands to the Sulu archipelago and beyond as far as Makassar. Junks destined for Sulu could include Manila and Panay on their courses.³ As Chinese coasters from Amoy and Pactow threaded their way down through the various islands of the archipelago to the Sultanate, they were known to have stopped to barter some of their wares in the central and southern Visayas. Lacquered ware, ceramic, earthenware, and other articles from the Celestial Kingdom were exchanged for such culinary delicacies as *bêche-de-mer*, shark's fin, and bird's nest. Rice, for which there was always a ready demand in the Sulu market was also taken on in the islands.

Reliable figures for the number of junks which visited Sulu from China's maritime provinces are virtually nonexistent for the first half of the eighteenth century. The scant evidence available reveals that although the scale of the trade increased gradually in the years between 1760 and 1840 there was an actual decline in the participation of smaller ships. In 1761, three to four junks were annually employed between Amoy and Sulu.⁴ Over a half century later the number of China bottoms which visited the small archipelago was seldom less than one but rarely exceeded four —

support strong Malay kingdoms strategically situated at the regional interfaces of insular Southeast Asia to keep vital maritime routes open, encourage local productivity, and sustain trade prosperity. But in the eighteenth century trade and imperial policy had become largely independent. By then tribute missions to China were regular only in those periods when other avenues of trade were closed by imperial fiat. The significance of China's tributary system in Southeast Asia's regional history over nearly a millenium is discussed at length in O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 37, 49–76.

2. "Historical sketch of the circumstances which led to the settlement of Penang and of the trade to the Eastward previous to and since that period," in Mr. Graham to Mr. Dundas, 29 May 1795, IOL, H/Misc/437/6, 149.

3. Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life: 1850–1898* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 88.

4. Alexander Dalrymple "A Memoir on the Sooloogannon Dominion and Commerce," 26 February 1761, PRO, Egremont Papers, 30/47/20/1; Dalrymple informed the Governor of Fort St. George that the junks had loaded 12,000 piculs worth of goods for the China market in 1761 (Alexander Dalrymple to George Pigot, the Governor and Council of Fort St. George, 22 March 1762, IOL, H/Misc/771/2, 28).

each from 3,000 to 7,000 *piculs* (200–465 tons) burden.⁵ By 1830 the conduct of this commerce was limited to two well-laden Amoy junks of the largest type (up to 800 tons).⁶

CONDUCT OF TRADE

Vessels from Chinese waters could arrive in Jolo as early as the first week in March but never later than the middle of April. Junks originating from the same port often voyaged a considerable distance in tandem to minimize the hazards of shipwreck and the risk of piratical attack. Their trading timetable, rigidly determined by the monsoon wind regime, made it imperative for them to leave for the Asian mainland no later than the beginning of August. For the straggler the risks of being lost at sea increased at that time and further delays meant contending with strong headwinds and heavy seas strewn with rocks and shoals along the ill-defined Palawan coast. The alternative to physical disaster in the treacherous South China Sea was a financial one; "some have been known to have wintered in the Spanish ports and ultimately [been] compelled to sell their junks and cargoes."⁷ The impending arrival of these huge vessels stimulated a flurry of economic activity both in Jolo's sizeable Chinese community and among resident Taosug aristocrats. Upon its arrival, an *ad valorem* duty was not levied upon the junk's cargo. Instead a single impost was negotiated by the Sultan and prestigious *datus* in consultation with the vessel's commander and supercargo. Arbitrary in character, this customs duty could be influenced by the trade interests of particular *datus*, prevailing market conditions, and later, the political chicanery of rival European competitors – Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

The Sultan collected anything up to 10 percent on imported Chinese goods.⁸ In 1814, the two junks at Jolo paid 4,500 and 5,000 Mexican dollars on their cargoes worth respectively 50,000 and 100,000 dollars.⁹ While at Jolo, visiting merchants were habit-

5. J. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo in The Archipelago of Felicia," in J. H. Moor, ed., *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent Countries* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1967), p. 46.

6. John Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1820), 3: 184.

7. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo," p. 46.

8. GCG [Gobernador y Capitán General], a Señor Secretario de Estado y del Despacho Universal de Hacienda y Indias, 4 June 1806, AGI, Filipinas 510, 58.

9. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo," p. 46.

ually obliged to offer trade goods on credit to the Sultan and datus. Those datus who actually repaid their Chinese benefactors tended to do so in unjustifiably priced goods. The amount of goods that could be feasibly extended on credit was dependent on the size, content, and value of the cargo, and the number of datus who had an interest in it. Hunt calculated that from 300 to 500 dollars worth of credit was offered, or approximately 0.5 to 1 percent total value of the vessel's cargo. His figures, however, appear to be a conservative estimate when contrasted with the isolated accounts of other reliable observers. Dalrymple wrote that the Chinese visiting Sulu "by exactions and presents, tho there be no port charge of regular customs, pay above 50 percent."¹⁰

In 1834 a Chinese junk attempted to trade under the guns of the fortress at the neighboring Spanish settlement of Zamboanga instead of in Jolo's roadstead. The vessel's commander willingly offered to pay the Spanish authorities a port duty equivalent to 30 percent of the cargo's value, rather than have to cope with the possible extortions of the Sultan and various influential datus. When this request was denied, the commander chose to travel and trade along the Mindanao coast in preference to Jolo.¹¹

Nevertheless, the above case appears to have been a rare exception. Sulu's trade was lucrative and the Chinese generally preferred to purchase immunity to ward off arbitrary interference by the Taosug. An occurrence in 1761 reveals the vagaries of trade with a segmentary society. There were two Amoy junks in the port; but the oppression they suffered was a great discouragement to the traders: In one of the junks Sultan Bantilan (Muizzud-Din) had an interest, to promote which, on some frivolous pretence, he laid an embargo on the other junk, taking the rudder on shoar: Dato Bandahara and others, remonstrated on this conduct, which was . . . injurious to the community; for, if the strangers had not protection and justice, it could not be expected that they would frequent the port, and consequently everyone suffer, by having no vent for the produce of their estates: these representations being ineffectual, Dato Bandahara, Oranky Mallick and Panglima Milaham went on board the other junk, in which the Sultan had an interest, and brought the rudder also on shoar, informing the Sultan that when he discharged the one, they would release the other,

10. "Extracts to an Establishment on Balambangan," IOL, G/4/1, 355.

11. José Maria Halcon a GCG, "Memoria sobre Mindanao y demás puntos del Sur," 31 December 1837, AUST, sección Folletos, tomo 117.

but not till then: the Sultan was compelled to do the Chinese justice.¹² The acceptance of almost any pecuniary imposition was a worthwhile precaution against such harassments to trade in Jolo.

Before actual trading could begin, the Chinese officers had to distribute those goods contracted during the previous season, rent space on shore for a market, and arrange for a datu to supply a new mast for the return trip. A portion of the freight brought for Jolo's resident Chinese was then distributed to them on credit — tea, drugs, dried fruit, fireworks, and wearing apparel — to be paid for in natural produce collected toward the return cargo at fixed rates. The vessel's remaining wares were retailed daily for the produce of *prahus* from neighboring islands and small craft arriving from the east Bornean coast.¹³

TRADE WARES

Junk cargoes consisted principally of Chinese earthenware (thousands of cups, saucers, dishes, bowls, and plates), tiles, silk and satin garments, bolts of white and black cotton cloth, muslin and chintz piece goods, brassware, wrought iron, arms and munitions, rice, sugar, oil, and lard. Raw silk was brought in considerable quantities only on the Amoy junks. Coarse textiles and earthenware comprised the most valuable part of the freight. The cargoes of bigger vessels, which represented the speculative interests of a large number of people, were worth from 50,000 to upward of 100,000 pesos and favorably compared with those of Chinese vessels visiting Manila.¹⁴

Return cargoes embraced an incredible variety of marine and forest products as well as craft goods of the Sultanate and neighboring realms. The principal items were pearls, mother of pearl, tortoise shell, seaweed, and precious shells from the Sulu archipelago, edible nests, beeswax, and camphor from Borneo's east coast, and pepper, clove bark, betel nut, and lumber from Basilan and Mindanao.

12. Alexander Dalrymple, "Essays towards an Account of Sooloo," *Oriental Repository*, 2 vols. (London: 1808), 1: 567.

13. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo," p. 46.

14. Dalrymple, "Essays," pp. 563-67; Thomas Forrest, *Voyage to New Guinea* (London; G. Scott, 1779), p. 325; Tomas de Comyn, *State of the Philippines in 1810*, trans. William Walton (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1969); p. 124; Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo," p. 46; William Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, 2 vols. (London: Black, Parry and Company, 1813), 2: 425. In 1795, the cargoes of the six junks that visited Manila from Amoy and Nanking ranged from 110,425 pesos (Amoy) to 218 pesos (Nanking). In April of 1803 the *Josun* from Amoy imported 145,891 pesos

While the Sino-Sulu trade entailed risks, the profits to be made on such long voyages by Chinese traders were exceptional. As Thomas Forrest commented, "the Chinese must gain handsomely by their trade hither; else they would not put up with the rough usage they sometimes receive from . . . the Datoos."¹⁵ The margin of profit on trade goods from China ranged between 25 and 100 percent. Primary textiles — *kowsong*, *kompow*, and *kangan* — were sold in Sulu at up to 30 percent profit while silk pieces and manufactures were retailed at prices 60 percent above cost. Manufactured wares, particularly hardware, were costly, although the seemingly high price of natural produce in Sulu enabled the Taosug to purchase such articles readily. Small cast-iron bars, frying pans, cooking vessels, household utensils, and brassware realized a gain of 90 to 100 percent. Underglaze blue on white and grey crockery, the bulk of the cargo, sold at double their cost in China and yielded the highest returns, due to sheer volume.

The advantages to be earned on the return cargo were generally even greater. Although small in bulk, high quality products such as bird's nest and beeswax realized a profit of 90 to 100 percent when sold. Mother of pearl, used in the manufacture of beads, furniture, and fans, was marketed in China for nearly three times the original price in Sulu.¹⁶ Homeward bound junks carried cargoes estimated at between 60,000 and 80,000 Spanish dollars.¹⁷ The net profit derived on this freight when unloaded at China's southern ports could be double the original investment. Hunt claimed (with some exaggeration) that if only one out of three junks managed a safe return nothing was lost.¹⁸

worth of goods at Manila. Estado de las embarcaciones que entraron y salieron de Filipinas con efectos de comercio desde 1 de Junio de 1795 hasta fines de Mayo de 1802 a igual de 1803, GCG a Señor Miguel Cayetano Soler, 20 February 1804, AGI, Ultramar 658.

15. Forrest, *Voyage to New Guinea*, p. 324. Forrest provided a list of the articles that comprised the cargo of a junk, with their relative cost in China and their retail value at Sulu, which graphically illustrates the point. He also included a concise but important list of articles that constituted the typical return cargo with their approximate value in Sulu and selling price in China (p. 325). Sensitive to local politics and the market situation, the value of these articles was liable to fluctuate and Forrest's figures must be considered as merely relative estimates of the real value and volume of the commerce in China trade goods and natural products of Sulu between 1770–1840. Forrest's invoice does readily reflect, however, the high profit margin of the trade current towards the end of the eighteenth century, its volume in China goods per vessel, and the variety of imports (see appendix).

16. Milburn, *Oriental Commerce*, 2:513.

17. Mr. Graham to Mr. Dundas, 29 May 1795, IOL, H/Misc/437/6, 149.

18. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo," p. 46.

In 1814 an English naval officer was informed by Jolo's *Kapitan China* that the annual value of the trade between China and Sulu averaged 150,000 Spanish dollars.¹⁹ The total volume of trade in produce had doubled since 1760, and reached its peak in the early decades of the nineteenth century — at least 12,000 to upward of 25,000 piculs per annum. This contention is supported by Spoehr's recent archaeological investigations on Jolo island which have provided another perspective on the historical contours of Chinese trade links with the Sulu Sultanate. The disproportionately large number of fragments of Chinese trade ceramic produced in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries confirm the accelerated tempo of Sino-Sulu trade at this time.²⁰

In the face of brisk European competition in the 1830s all but the very large Amoy junks were eliminated from the lucrative trade with the Sulu Sultanate. They alone could anticipate a good market, due as much to the quality of their cargoes, selected with the tastes of their clientele in mind, as to their size. After 1840 fewer and fewer Amoy junks visited Sulu, as a consequence of the active enterprise of European and Chinese traders resident in Manila and the increased Spanish presence in the Sulu Sea.²¹ Much of the Sino-Sulu trade was oriented toward the Spanish metropole as the principal port for the staging of trade between China and the Taosug polity.

GROWTH OF THE MANILA-JOLO TRADE

The information available on trade from Manila to the Sulu Sultanate between 1786 and 1848 reveals the invaluable nature of Spanish source material for reconstructing indigenous trade patterns.²² When compiled and ordered as a time series these docu-

19. D. MacDonald, *A Narrative of the early life and services of Captain D. MacDonald, R. N.*, 3rd ed. (Weymouth, 1843), p. 200.

20. Alexander Spoehr, *Zamboanga and Sulu*, Department of Anthropology Ethnology Monograph No. 1 (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg, 1973), p. 214.

21. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 88.

22. The work of Pierre and Huguette Chaunu, *Seville et l'Atlantique, 1504-1650, Ports-Routes-Trafics* (Paris: Colin, 1955), has demonstrated the significance of Spanish archival sources for the study of European expansion, the development of world trade, and Spanish economic history. In a more recent book, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Iberiques: XVI^e, XVII^e, XVIII^e siècles* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960), Pierre Chaunu applied the same mode of analysis to document the trade from the Philippines to Mexico between 1586 and 1790. Part of the importance of Chaunu's work rests in the fact that it affirms the potential of Spanish documents for the reconstruction of trade patterns in the non-Western world, but particularly the Philippines, in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eight-

ments (particularly the *estados* and *almojarifazgo*) suggest the overall level of commercial activity, shifts in market preferences, and the economic interdependence of Manila and Jolo in the period.²³ The data reveals both the growth in trade between the two centers and the growing importance of Sulu as a commercial center in the larger context.

In the earliest years of the new trade, Manila was visited annually by a Taosug *vinta*, but before 1787 no Spanish or Chinese coasting vessels regularly went to Jolo.²⁴ By 1792 several Chinese coasters were trading to the Sultanate and two years later two well-armed Spanish vessels visited it.²⁵ As the trade increased from the Manila end, fewer Taosug sailed to the colonial capital and the *datus'* direct participation in the trade receded after 1795. The *Juat* and the *Chan* which brought cargoes of Canton produce to Manila in 1818 were the last recorded Taosug-sponsored sailing craft to have made the journey from Jolo.²⁶ Sulu prahus and schooners, however, would continue to make occasional voyages to Manila from the distant Bornean dependencies of Bulungan and Berau until as late as 1830.²⁷ An average of four to five Spanish vessels were already engaged in trade to Jolo at the end of the first decade.

eenth centuries. The use of the manuscript material in the archives of Spain (principally Seville) and the Philippines is a prerequisite to any effort at examining the contours of the trade of China, Japan, and several Southeast Asian realms with Manila. See Appendix 5, "The Manila-Jolo Trade, 1786-1830" in James Warren, "Trade, Raid, Slave: The Socio-Economic Patterns of the Sulu Zone, 1770-1898" (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1975), pp. 424-38.

23. For an important article which discusses quantification in history from the standpoint of Spanish sources, see Juan J. Linz, "Five Centuries of Spanish History: Quantification and Comparison," in Val R. Lorwin and Jacob M. Price, eds., *The Dimensions of the Past: Materials, Problems and Opportunities for Quantitative Work in History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 177-261.

24. Numero 339, Ciriaco Gonzalez Carvajal a Señor Marqués de Sonoro, 9 June 1788, AGI, Filipinas 176.

25. Numero 305, Estado que manifiesta los efectos de India conducidos al puerto de Manila en 1792 con expresión de Buques, Procedencias. Clazes de efectos, cantidades, valores y duros que adeudaron, GCG a Señor Miguel Cayetano Soler, 11 June 1806, AGI, Ultramar 659; see also Estado que manifiesta las embarcaciones que salieron de esta bahia para Reynos extrangeras en todo el año de 1792, hasta fin de Abril de 93, y los frutos que extrageron producto de estas Islas para los puertos de sus destinos segun los manifestaciones hechos en esta Real Aduana de Manila, AGI, Filipinas 502; Numero 73, Incluye el estado de los frutos que el año proximo salieron de aquel puerto, GCG a Señor Don Diego Gardoqui, 22 July 1794, AGI, Filipinas 977.

26. Estado de las embarcaciones que entraron y salieron de Filipinas con efectos de comercio desde primero de Junio de 1795 hasta fines de mayo de 1796, AGI, Filipinas 977.

27. Numero 127, Estado que manifiesta los Buques Extrangeros que vinieron a Manila desde 2 de Enero hasta 13 de Noviembre, 1830, AGI, Filipinas 818.

During the period from 1796 to 1803, Spain was at war with England and Manila was closed to British traffic. There was a decline in the number of Spanish craft trading to the south, but the Spaniards did not entirely relinquish their share of the commerce. They were content instead to sponsor Manila Chinese in trade to Jolo rather than risk losing their vessels to an English naval squadron or the privateers which harried Spanish shipping throughout the Philippine archipelago. After 1798, Chinese participation grew in the Manila-Jolo trade. Cargoes of sugar and indigo were brought to Jolo that year by three Chinese coasters, *Guing Fin*, *Gua Jap* and *Sing Yap Di*, and the junk, *Sin Sin Tay*.²⁸ Spanish enterprise continued this indirect method after the war ended in 1803.

In the twenty years after 1807 the number of Spanish vessels involved in the trade doubled. Spanish efforts to encourage commerce with Sulu grew as successive colonial administrations struggled to make the Philippines economically self-sufficient. Native sailing craft were replaced by brigantines and frigates as Spanish vessels in increasing numbers returned to Sulu. This condition was reflected in the steady growth of commerce between Manila and Jolo prior to 1840. There was a notable increase in the tempo of the traffic after 1820. A Spanish frigate, five brigantines, and two smaller sailing craft visited Jolo in 1823.²⁹ Three years later seven Spanish brigantines as well as five Portuguese merchant ships traded in Sulu.³⁰ On an average, six to eight Spanish sailing ships visited the Sulu archipelago each year. The estado for 1835 listed the arrival in Manila of the English barque *Elizabeth* and six Spanish brigantines.³¹ Statistical material on ships' voyages is scarce for the ensuing decade but as late as 1848, Robert Mac Micking, an English merchant, observed that "occasionally as many as eight small [Spanish] vessels are seen there [Jolo] at a time."³²

28. Estado de las embarcaciones que entraron en Manila desde Junio de 1798 hasta Mayo de 1799 y sus valores, AGI, Filipinas 978.

29. Numero 52, Estado que manifiesta todos los Buques Nacionales que vinieron a Manila desde primero de Enero hasta Diciembre de 1823, AGI, Ultramar 624.

30. Numero 122, Estado que manifiesta los Buques Nacionales que vinieron a Manila desde 19 de Febrero hasta 11 de Septiembre, 1826, AGI, Filipinas 811.

31. Documento 15, Estado que manifiesta todos los Buques entrantes y salientes, Españoles y extrangeros desde primero de Enero hasta 30 de Noviembre, 1835, con expresión de sus clases, toneladas, nombre, procedencias, destinos y naciones a que pertenecen, MN, Colección Enrile VII, 55.

32. Robert Mac Micking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines during 1848, 1849, and 1850* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1967), p. 149; for a general discussion

Manila-based brigs and schooners began their voyages between December and April and often visited the provinces of Antique and Iloilo on their way to Sulu.³³ The island of Panay, situated on the main route for ships bound to Jolo and the Moluccas, was where the Manila traders ordinarily completed their Sulu cargoes. Sugar, rice, tobacco, coconut oil, locally woven fabrics, and other hand-crafted items, were purchased there at a saving.³⁴ At Iloilo on 17 February 1836, the following entry was recorded in the log of the Spanish brig *Leonidas* destined for Sulu, "completed our cargo here with sugar, [and] rice it being cheaper than at Manila."³⁵

The practice of avoiding the export duties at Manila by trading locally was long-standing, despite severe penalties imposed by Spanish law for stopping at any other place in the Philippine archipelago. Chinese captains continued to export staples profitably from the central Visayas to Jolo, and by 1828 there were indications that the government openly acknowledged this clandestine practice. In the *estado* for 1828 the destination of the *Nuestra Señora de la Merced* is listed as Iloilo and Jolo, and in 1829 Negros and Jolo appear as the destination of the brigantine *San Juan Nepomuceno*. The following year the government attempted to regulate and encourage the trade by rescinding the restrictive legislation and establishing a customs house at Zamboanga. But the Manila traders evaded Zamboanga as well whenever possible.

They arrived at Jolo by June or July, which was the height of the trading season, when the prahus from the outer islands and the Bornean coast brought in their produce. Travelling alone or in small expeditions, the vessels returned to Manila between September and

of the Manila-Jolo trade by contemporaries of Mac Micking see Rafael Díaz Arenas, *Memoria sobre el comercio y la navegación de las Islas Filipinas* (Cádiz: Imprenta de Domingo Feros, 1838), pp. 7–14; Jean Bassilan de Mallat, *Les Philippines: histoire, géographie, mœurs, agriculture, industrie et commerce des colonies espagnoles dans l'Océanie*, 2 vols. (Paris: A. Bertrand, 1846), 2: 321–26; P. J. Lannoy, *Iles Philippines. De leur situation ancienne et actuelle* (Brussels: Delevigne et Callewaert, 1849), pp. 107–08.

33. It has been generally assumed that vessels left for Jolo in March and April. The tables show that while many ships did leave Manila at that time, others had departed several months earlier or as late as June. See Mac Micking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines*, p. 148; Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 89; José María Halcon a GCG, "Memoria sobre Mindanao," 31 December 1837, AUST, sección Folletos, tomo 117, 50–52.

34. Mac Micking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines*, p. 151.

35. 656/1835A, Log of Brig *Leonidas* (8 February 1836 to 23 September 1836), Peabody Museum, entry for 17 February 1836.

November and new voyages were not undertaken until the following year.³⁶

MERCHANTS AND PEDDLERS

It was the Chinese merchants of Manila who carried out most of the voyages to Sulu. In 1838, the Governor Captain General remarked, "... up to the present time, [almost] no Spanish merchant has himself had direct dealings with the inhabitants of Sulu; the Chinese alone being engaged in this trade."³⁷ Spanish commercial houses chartered brigs and schooners to Chinese. Some prosperous Chinese also hired out sailing craft for the seasonal trade. The ships were leased for between 600 and 700 pesos a month and the voyage from Manila to Jolo and back generally occupied six to eight months. In addition to investing heavily in the cargo, the Spanish shipowner provided the Chinese with a loan of between 10,000 and 20,000 pesos at interest rates of 20 to 30 percent.³⁸

The Spanish or Manila Chinese shipowner, the Chinese captain and supercargo, and a number of merchants all had an interest in a vessel's cargo. The "peddlers" of Van Leur also added their wares. The commercial statistics on the *almojarifazgo*, the import/export tax, provide details by voyage on the kind and quantity of trade.³⁹

In March of 1811 the brigantine *San Luis* exported a small cargo of rice and rusk to Sulu. In addition to its declared cargo, four private traders freighted a total of over 8000 pesos worth of merchandise to Jolo. Lu Cong Fuang shipped twelve boxes of trade stores valued at 1022 pesos, including over 650 pieces of assorted Bengal textiles and coarse red and blue cotton cloth of varying lengths. Besides the cloth the Chinese trader also brought some flour, biscuits, and Canton noodles. A Manila merchant, Jose María Fernandez, took four boxes of fine Indian fabrics and

36. Diaz Arenas, *Memoria*, pp. 12, 14; Mac Micking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines*, p. 153.

37. "Camba's Report on Commerce with Sulu," in Najeeb M. Saleeby, *The History of Sulu* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1963), p. 219.

38. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 89.

39. This information was not provided in the *estado*, which listed the overall value and volume of the export cargo declared by the captain, but did not necessarily include the value of trade goods accompanying independent traders who travelled as *passengers* to the Sultanate. The total export values cited in the *almojarifazgo*, in which the cargoes are broken down by trader, are therefore much more inclusive than those provided in the *estados*.

fifty yards of blue cotton cloth worth 1651 pesos. Pedro Cruz de los Santos freighted 2876 pesos worth of cloth in four boxes and fourteen large bundles. Con Suy exported five boxes of cloth and six bundles of Indian fabric, as well as seventy piculs of sugar and twelve jars of biscuits.⁴⁰

Manila Chinese traders sometimes sent trade goods to Jolo on several vessels during the same year. In January of 1812, the trader Juan Ausero sent 638 pesos worth of cloth, shoes, quill pens, and fans on the junk *Guing Fin Le* and freighted several hundred pieces of textiles, 34 piculs of sugar, and three jars of duck's eggs on the pontin, *San Josef*, a few months later. The shipment of the *San Josef*, which belonged to the charterer, Jose San Tiang, the captain Thomas Acong, and six others, reveals the disparity in the value and volume of goods carried by the various parties. The Chinese shipowner freighted over 8500 pesos worth of trade goods for the venture. Even the captain's investment, 3345 pesos, was more than the combined value of the goods of all the remaining traders. The value of their merchandise was as follows: the Chinese, Juan Ausero, 996 pesos; the Chinese, Tin Guan, 458 pesos; the Chinese, Joo, 223 pesos; the Chinese, Quim Fe, 282 pesos; and Pedro and Francisco Navarro, 226 pesos.⁴¹

The captain was not held liable if the ship and cargo were lost, but had to pay for the routine expenses of the trip, negotiate the payment of the Sultan's tariff, and cope with the exorbitant demands of the datus. When a trader returned from a successful voyage the shipowner received his share of the profits and his loan with interest. From the standpoint of profit and personal security the practice was widely adopted by Spanish shipowners and merchants as traffic from Manila to the Sultanate accelerated in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Small expeditions of Spanish vessels generally arrived in Jolo

40. Numero 3, Testimonio de los Duros de Subvencion - año 1811, AGI, Filipinas 979, 58-68. The traders also brought personal effects and a stock of provisions for the journey and their stay in Sulu. Pedro Cruz de los Santos took a box of clothes and a bed. Con Suy carried eight boxes of clothes, a box of Chinese notebooks, eight jars of rusk, quantities of fried meat, Chinese noodles, soy bean cakes, chocolate, and sugar as well as crockery for the crew.

41. Quaderno numero 3, Testimonio de la Cuenta de los Reales Duros de Subvencion, pertenecientes al año de 1812, AGI, Filipinas 979, 25. Over 237 separate entries in small and large boxes, barrels, chests, and bundles are listed as the captain's and traders' cargo on the *San Josef*. It was principally textiles and some foodstuffs.

several weeks to a few months in advance of the Amoy junks. Upon arrival, the Manila Chinese captain had to pay the Sultan's trade tariff. A certain amount of scheming sometimes accompanied the settlement of the trade impost. Philippine traders often curried favor with the Sultan and encouraged the imposition of inordinate charges on the cargoes of their competitors;⁴² successful intrigue seriously damaged the commercial prospects of rival entrepreneurs.⁴³ The arbitrary character of the impost and the intense rivalry that surrounded their mercantile activities at Jolo exacerbated the antipathy that existed among the Manila Chinese in Sulu's trade.

Once the Sultan's fee had been paid, the captain acquired a market place on shore from the *ruma bichara* in return for a nominal amount of trade goods. The trader was then free to unload the freight, tally his imports, and begin to trade. Since Manila ships returned annually to the Sultanate, a portion of either the shipowner's or captain's trade stores were disposed of on consignment to Chinese agents resident in Jolo. Those small traders who had no contacts peddled their cloth bundles and wares at Jolo and in outlying areas.

The difficult market conditions at Jolo tested the reputation of the Manila Chinese as traders with skill, perseverance, and patience. Once an exchange had been agreed upon and the price of the articles established, it was customary for Chinese merchants to deliver their trade goods to Taosug datus. As the trade grew and the competition increased for Sulu's leading articles of export, the practice of delivering large quantities of merchandise before the articles to be taken in exchange were received, became indispensable. Some datus complied with their obligations and paid for all goods bartered to them by Philippine traders, but the majority rarely paid the total amount owed. Their outstanding debts were carried over to the following year but were seldom recoverable.⁴⁴

42. In 1837 it was conservatively estimated that the Sultan received 50,000 pesos annually in harbor and market fees from the Manila traders. See José María Halcon a GCG, "Memoria sobre Mindanao," 31 December 1837, AUST, seccion Folletos, tomo 117.43.

43. Diario de Navegación del Capitán de Fragata de la Real Armada D. José María Halcon en su navegacion de Manila a Joló con la galeota de Su Majestad "La Olosea" y una división de Faluas. Comprende desde 10 Junio de 1836 y abraza noticias peculiares a comisión extraordinaria que en calidad de plenipotenciario desempeñó cerca del Sultan de Jolo, MN, Ms. 211.

44. Díaz Arenas, *Memoria*, 12; Mac Micking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines*, pp. 149-50.

A case in point was the experience of José María Dujol, the commander and supercargo of the brigantine *Lingayen*. In 1836, several of Jolo's leading datus owed debts to him. Dujol had delivered a cargo to Datu Molok the previous year without having demanded a written contract. In an apparent effort to gain a trade advantage over other Manila merchants, he had given the datu a number of silver pesos and six ounces of gold in Spanish currency.⁴⁵ Datu Molok did not fulfill his contract. In 1836, the amounts owed by Molok and other datus to Dujol were as follows: Datu Molok, 5174 *chapas*, 222 piculs, 43 *cates* [*kati*] of pearl shell and 136 silver pesos; Datu John, 43 piculs, 28 *cates* of pearl shell; and Datu Bulok, 17 piculs of pearl shell, 17,000 *chapas*, and 2 silver pesos.⁴⁶ The following year the *Lingayen* was delayed at Jolo until late September as her Chinese passengers had not sold all their wares, the captain was still waiting for the promised arrival of a sherif from Sandakan with a large amount of trade produce, and because Datu Emir Bahar and Datu Molok still owed outstanding debts to the vessel's Chinese traders.⁴⁷ When the net results of a trading venture to Sulu were good, the expenses incurred in harbor and market fees, gifts and unfulfilled contracts were written off as inevitable costs. The Manila-Sulu commerce was lucrative and net returns of fifteen- and twentyfold on a merchant's investment were common.⁴⁸ This seems especially to have been so prior to 1820, even when trade goods were given as gifts to powerful datus and/or sold without payment being received.

Between 1820 and 1830, the Taosug took full advantage of the increased commercial competition at Sulu to force the level of the Manila merchants' profit down. Depending on the prevailing market conditions in Sulu, datus either demanded and received

45. *Diario de Navegación del Capitán*, MN, Ms. 211, pp. 87–88.

46. In 1836, Dujol, who was unable to redress his loss, attempted to undermine Datu Molok's authority through trade and intrigue with his principal rival Datu Bulok.

A *chapa* was a small Chinese brass coin with a hole in the center (also called pitlis or laxa), used as a form of currency in Jolo for small market exchanges. It fluctuated in value. In 1814, 450–500 *chapas* were worth one Spanish *duro* (Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo," p. 46).

47. Número 8, *El commandante de la división de Zamboanga D. Manuel en oficio de 5 de Octubre participa varias noticias ocurridas sobre Joló*, in Andres G. Camba a GCG, 9 November 1837, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu 1816–1898.

48. The import-export statistics declared by the merchants were registered and converted to values on the basis of prices current in Manila. The quality of these official figures is marred by the fact that they do not always account for changes in the price level. For the purposes of analysis they must be considered as estimates of the real value.

more trade goods for less Sulu produce at inflated prices, or insisted that Manila traders reduce their prices before bartering. The net gains were far more variable in this period and a merchant sometimes did not realize a profit until he ultimately shipped his investment in Sulu goods to Macao or Canton.

THE FOCUS OF EXCHANGE: FOOD STAPLES AND EXOTIC PRODUCE

The assistance of an experienced Chinese was indispensable in compiling the cargo invoice for a Manila vessel.⁴⁹ There was a wide variety of goods appropriate for the Taosug market and a thorough knowledge of current prices and demand in Sulu was a skill which few Spaniards possessed. Covering many pages, a suitable list included cotton textiles and opium from India; crockery, crystal, iron, and hardware from Europe; rice, cheap sugar, rusk, salt, and a myriad of small handicraft items from the Philippines; and nankeens, chapas, coarse earthenware, and silk goods from China.

Basically, it was a bulk trade in staples. Rice, sugar, rusk, salt, and indigo were all retailed on a large scale. Of the articles directly exported from Manila and the central Visayas to Jolo, rice and sugar were the most important. Mac Micking noted that "rice is generally taken from its being always in demand by the Sooloomen."⁵⁰ The constant flow of this staple from a region of rice surplus, the Philippines, to an area of chronic rice shortage, Sulu, is disclosed in the data on Spanish export cargoes between 1786 and 1830. Information is provided on the export cargoes of 68 out of the 134 vessels that went to Sulu. The *estados* list 52 of these vessels as departing from Manila with cargoes of rice and/or sugar prior to 1830. The remaining sixteen vessels could have completed their cargoes with these staple commodities at Panay or Negros. The statistics also depict a steady growth in the average volume of rice and sugar annually carried on Spanish vessels. These staple goods were among the fastest growing section of the Philippines export trade to Sulu. Total cargoes were sometimes worth between 20,000 and 30,000 pesos.⁵¹

49. Díaz Arenas, *Memoria*, p. 10; Mac Micking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines*, p. 151.

50. *Ibid.*

51. These figures show the inaccuracy of Montero y Vidal's statement that the most important cargoes sent from Manila to Sulu never exceeded 2500 pesos. (José Montero y

The Manila traders received *tripang* [tre pang], shark's fin, pearl shell, wax, bird's nest, Chinese porcelain, Bengal textiles, and European manufactures from the Taosug in exchange for their rice, sugar, and cloth. Tripang (also known as *bêche-de-mer* or sea slug) was one of Sulu's most valuable exports in trade with Manila. It was taken in large quantities by visiting traders for use in Chinese cuisine. Over 33 varieties of tripang were distinguished and each type required grading as first, second, or third quality.⁵² Selecting among various kinds and preparing the tripang for shipment required Chinese proficiency. Hunt observed: "A Chinese sorter and a few China and Bugis coolies are positively necessary to choose and pack the tripang and produce; for it is death to any settler or native to give information on this head."⁵³

The prime importance of tripang in the Manila-Sulu trade is shown by the variety and volume shipped in Spanish coastal vessels between 1786 and 1830. For the period before 1805 we lack specific information on articles imported at Manila from Sulu. Often the label "Canton goods" (natural produce of Sulu) was recorded on the *estado* rather than detailed statistical data from the vessel's import manifest. Still, it is not unreasonable to assume that tripang was freighted on the majority of the prahus and ships trading at Jolo before 1800. Details are provided on imported Sulu cargoes for 67 voyages between 1805 and 1830. Tripang was included in 48 of these cargoes. It was not unusual for vessels to freight as many as fifteen different types of sea cucumber in varying amounts up to fifty tons. The Spanish pontin, *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* and the brigantine *San José* alone imported a total of one hundred tons of tripang to Manila in 1821.⁵⁴

Wax collected in the hills and valleys of southwestern Mindanao and northeastern Borneo was exported in large amounts at Jolo and is listed in the Manila import manifests of 52 out of 67 vessels. Used in the manufacture of candles in the Philippines, this was one of the few primary products of Sulu that was not re-exported from Manila to China. Cacao was another

Vidal, *Historia general de Filipinas desde el descubrimiento de dichas Islas hasta nuestros días*, 3 vols. [Madrid: 1887-1895], 2: 557). See also Warren, "The Sulu Zone," pp. 424-38.

52. Diaz Arenas, *Memoria*, p. 13.

53. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo," p. 48.

54. Número 9, Estado de los Nacionales que vinieron a Manila desde el primero de Enero hasta fines de Diciembre 1821, AGI, Filipinas 806.

export used for local manufacture and consumption within the Philippines. The cacao of Jolo was preferred in Manila to the South American variety and Spanish vessels exported from 100 to 200 piculs of cacao annually from the Sulu archipelago.⁵⁵

The most valuable article was bird's nest, procured primarily from limestone caves on the east coast of Borneo. The tiny swallow nests were of two sorts. White nests were worth their weight in silver and a *kati* (22 ounces) was sold for between twenty and twenty-five pesos or more. Sandakan nests and other off-color varieties were of lesser value. Black bird's nests were inferior and commanded about one-tenth the price of white nests. In 1837, they were valued at between 200 and 250 pesos per picul.⁵⁶ Bird's nest was sent exclusively to China, where it was esteemed both as a delicacy and as a medicinal broth. Bird's nest was included in 49 out of 67 import cargoes between 1805 and 1830 and was shipped by vessels in amounts varying from less than fifteen *kati* to upward of 100 piculs.⁵⁷

Much of Sulu's natural produce was re-exported from Manila to Macao or Canton. The Manila-Sulu trade was a vital link in a broader pattern of Spanish-Philippine trade with China. In the late eighteenth century, none but Portuguese and Spanish vessels were permitted, by Chinese regulation, to trade at Macao. This exclusive privilege encouraged Manila to develop commerce with the Sulu archipelago on a large scale.

The Sulu Sultanate's important role in the trade economy of the Philippines is shown by the following figures. In 1836, the Manila Chinese traders estimated the real value of their trade with Jolo to be worth 300,000 pesos per annum.⁵⁸ An additional 150,000 pesos must be added to these figures as the estimated annual value of the Sino-Sulu traffic which was channelled through Manila in the

55. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulo," p. 47.

56. Diaz Arenas, *Memoria*, p. 13.

57. Warren, "The Sulu Zone," pp. 424-38. For example, in 1808 the junk *Jap Son* exported 123 piculs of bird's nest. A decade later, a Taosug sailing craft commanded by Jua, exported 5 piculs of white bird's nest and 80 piculs of black bird's nest. See Número 61, Estado que manifiesta los champanes de China que vinieron al puerto de Manila en los meses de Julio y Agosto de 1808 y Marzo del 1809, AGI, Filipinas 506; and Estado de los Buques Extrangeros que vinieron a este puerto de Manila con efectos de comercio desde el primero de 1818 hasta fin de Diciembre del año, in Número 77, 13 August 1819, AGI, Filipinas 511.

58. José María Halcon a GCG, "Memoria sobre Mindanao," 31 December 1837, AUST, sección Folletos, tomo 117, 43.

years between 1840 and 1848.⁵⁹ By then Manila's trade with Sulu was worth nearly half a million pesos.

Manila's trade with Jolo continued to expand until 1830. Sulu's role in the export economy of the Philippines was relatively less significant in the next twenty years with the advent of the rice trade to China. The rice economy of the Philippine archipelago boomed after 1830. This sector of the Philippine's export trade was rapidly developed and rice became the colony's principal export to China.⁶⁰ Rice proved an adequate item of exchange with the mainland and the flow of trade from Manila to Sulu did not increase much beyond the level of 1830. The number of Manila trading ships visiting the Sultanate and the volume of produce exported on them remained fairly constant between 1830 and 1848. The fact that Spanish investments in the trade did not decline attests to Sulu's continued importance to Manila as the basic source of certain staple commodities for export to China.⁶¹

TRADE AND TRANSFORMATION IN THE SULU SULTANATE, 1856-1898

Despite their earlier disadvantage as resident traders, the Chinese of the Sulu Sultanate exercised profound influence on events between 1870 and 1886. The Taosug loss of the redistributive trade of the Sulu Zone to the Chinese was not a gradual process; rather it was the sudden and unexpected consequence of a combination of factors — the Spanish cruising system and immigration of Chinese from the Straits Settlements. The Sultanate's effective autonomy after 1870 came to depend on the loyalty and trade of its Chinese inhabitants.

There is little evidence of a sizeable Chinese population in Jolo before the middle of the eighteenth century. The growth of Sulu's Chinese community can be traced to the evolution of the Sultanate

59. MacDonald, *A Narrative*, p. 200.

60. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, pp. 83-84. As a direct consequence of the rice trade the Spanish merchant fleet experienced unprecedented growth. In 1856, 44 Spanish vessels were employed in trade with the Asian mainland: 2 frigates 6 barques, 5 brigantines for Amoy; 7 barques, 5 brigantines, 3 schooners, 1 brigantine schooner for Hong Kong; 1 barque, 2 brigantines for Shanghai, 2 barques, 4 brigantines for Macao; 1 barque, 1 brigantine for Whampoo; 1 barque, 3 brigantines for Chanchue. *Cuadro general del comercio exterior de Filipinas*, p. 145.

61. MN, Colección Enrile VII, Documento 15, 55; Mac Micking, *Recollections of Manila and the Philippines*, p. 149.

as a regional entrepôt in the years following 1770. Many of these early Chinese settlers migrated to Jolo on the great Amoy junks.⁶² Although there are no available statistics, it can be roughly calculated that between 1770 and 1800 some 18,000 Chinese visited Jolo on the trading junks from South China.⁶³ The majority of them, crew members, passengers, and merchants, returned to China on the next monsoon, but many came over to stay, mostly poor.⁶⁴ These Chinese were similar to their countrymen migrating to other parts of Southeast Asia in that nearly all were men and most were prepared to stay only long enough to make their fortune.⁶⁵

In 1803, the Portuguese captain Juan Carvallo reported that there were 1200 Chinese established in Jolo town.⁶⁶ This figure did not include those Chinese in other Taosug communities on Jolo or nearby islands. Hunt estimated the size of their community, administered by three *Kapitan China*, to be about 1000 in 1814.⁶⁷ The significance of over four decades of migration can only be fully realized when compared with similar figures on the Chinese for the whole of the Philippine archipelago; Comyn estimated that there were 7000 in 1810.⁶⁸ The number of Chinese living in Jolo was still far greater than in any of the Spanish cities in the Philippines with the exception of Manila. Sulu attracted them despite the fact that until the 1860s the local Chinese did not dominate the Sultanate's economy and their numbers never exceeded 12 percent of the population of Jolo town.

When Wilkes visited Jolo in 1842 the town was built along the

62. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulu," pp. 47-50.

63. I have arrived at this figure by cautiously assuming that during a period of 30 years on average two junks annually visited Sulu. These vessels with their reinforced iron hulls, up to four fixed masts, watertight bulkheads and cabins for more than 50 passengers, carried some 300 or more people per voyage. The figure in fact was probably higher because Chinese from Canton and Macao also travelled to Sulu on Spanish and Portuguese vessels during these years. J. C. Van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society* (The Hague: Van Hoeve, 1967), pp. 86-87; See also Appendix 5 in Warren, "The Sulu Zone," pp. 424-39.

64. Several European observers in the first part of the nineteenth century would comment on the relative poverty of the Chinese of Jolo. See Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulu," pp. 44-50; Jules Sébastien César Dumont D'Urville, *Voyage au Pôle sud et dans l'Océanie sur les corvettes l'Astrolabe et la Zélée pendant les années 1837, 1838, 1839, 1840*, 25 vols. (Paris: Gide et J. Baudry, 1841-1854), 7: 184.

65. Hunt, "Some particulars relating to Sulu," pp. 49-50.

66. "Oficios del Gobernador con las diligencias practicadas sobre el establecimiento de los Ingleses en la Ysla de Balambangan 1804-1805," PNA, Mindanao/Sulu 1774-1887, 55.

67. J. Hunt to Thomas Raffles, 1 September 1814, IOL, G/21/26, 213.

68. Comyn, *State of the Philippines*, p. 3.

shore and on three pile bridges extending out into the bay. The Chinese quarter, which was joined to the Taosug community by a bridge and stretched further out into the roadstead — within cannon shot of visiting traders — consisted of some 300 bamboo and nipa dwellings.⁶⁹ The intentional location of this foreign ward by the Taosug, at a great distance from the shore, underlined the atmosphere of insecurity and fear in which the Chinese lived at Jolo. In the event of attack their homes were in the front line of fire while the Taosug settlement at the edge of the bay could be quickly abandoned for an escape to the hills.

The wide variety of occupations in which the Chinese were engaged at Jolo in the first half of the nineteenth century further reflected their inferior status and poverty. They principally worked as craftsmen, skilled and unskilled laborers, and domestic servants for wealthy Taosug and Chinese.⁷⁰ Although some Chinese had small shops or operated from trading prahus, they failed to gain a foothold and develop substantial trading enterprises for their countrymen within the Sulu archipelago. The marketing of imported articles within the local exchange network was conducted by Taosug *datus*, their clients, and slaves. When Chinese did play an active role in the redistributive trade of the Sulu Sultanate it was only as clients and middlemen in the dealings of the pre-eminent *datus* of Jolo with other communities. Often, these Chinese had intermarried with Taosug commoners or slaves and accepted Islam to improve their status.

In this period it was not at all unusual for powerful Taosug to provide Chinese with the wherewithal to trade — the prahu, crew (often slaves), and sometimes a large percentage of the trade goods. Speculative in nature, these temporary business alliances were not always successful for the Chinese, who sometimes were obliged to flee Jolo. Zamboanga's small Chinese community, composed largely of impoverished fugitives from Sulu, attests to the high rate of failure of such partnerships.⁷¹ It was only in the

69. Wilkes, "Jolo and the Sulus," pp. 147, 155–56; D'Urville, *Voyage au Pole Sud*, 7: 310.

70. GCG, Secretario de Estado y del Despacho Universal de Marina y Indias, 18 July 1772, AGI, Filipinas 492; MacDonald, *A Narrative*, p. 200. In this period the Chinese in Jolo filled in Taosug society what Wertheim has called an "occupational gap." See W. F. Wertheim, *East-West Parallels: Sociological Approaches to Modern Asia* (The Hague: Van Hoeve, 1964), pp. 43–74.

71. In 1833, the Governor of Zamboanga wrote that the Chinese of Zamboanga were not from the provinces of the Philippine islands but poor fugitives from Jolo.

second half of the nineteenth century that the local Chinese were to become indispensable to the trade economy of the Sultanate.

The movement of Chinese traders from the town of Jolo, where they had been mainly confined for more than a half a century, to more remote villages began in the 1840s. William Wyndham, an English trader resident in Jolo, informed a member of Sir James Brooke's party in 1849 that he found the Chinese:

very troublesome competitors; as, spreading themselves all over the neighboring islands, they offered apparently higher prices for produce than he could possibly do, so he obtained from the Sultan an order for their recall to the capital.⁷²

The destruction of Jolo two years later by the Spanish hastened the process of internal migration as the *datus* were helpless to prevent Chinese from fleeing to the security of rural villages whose inhabitants, often uncertain allies of the Sultan, encouraged them to stay. By 1856, the pockets of Chinese establishing themselves and developing small shops in villages like Parang, Maimbung, Ka Dong Dong, and Bual were part of the scattered pattern of Chinese settlement that was taking hold in the Sulu archipelago.⁷³

Those Chinese who went to the hinterland of the archipelago were the predecessors of a new wave of immigrants from Singapore who came to Jolo as a consequence of the re-orientation of Sulu's trade patterns. Singapore assumed a more important role in the Sultanate's economy as political relations grew worse between Manila and Jolo after 1845. The newcomers were seasoned traders when they arrived in Jolo. Mostly from Fukien province, they came to Singapore and learned the Malay language, gained experience in the marine jungle produce trade and in dealing with Southeast Asian peoples, and adjusted to a tropical climate. In short, Singapore was a training ground where the Chinese experimented and perfected their talents as traders before emigrating to

Among those Chinese that chose to remain at the *presidio* there was a high degree of cultural adaptation to Zamboanga's population as they intermarried with local women and some became Christians. By 1859 there were some three hundred Chinese settled in Zamboanga whose shops occupied one entire street of the town. Numero 5, El Gobernador Militar y Politico del Zamboanga, a GCG, 23 July 1833, PNA, Unclassified Mindanao/Sulu bundle; John Bowring, *The Philippine Islands* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1859), pp. 345-46.

72. Spenser St. John, *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, 2 vols. (London: Smith Elder and Co., 1862), 2: 187.

73. A. J. F. Jansen, "Aanteekeningen omtrent Sollok en de Solloksche Zeeroovers," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde, uitgegeven door het (Koninklijk) Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, 7 (1858): 217.

places like Sulu. While the Taosug encouraged their immigration they were to find it far more difficult to curb the independent trade activities of the Straits Chinese than of their less experienced brethren who had come to Jolo in the past.

It was estimated that there were several hundred Straits Chinese in Jolo in 1863; the number rose to more than a thousand by 1871.⁷⁴ How many had gone to the countryside by then is not known. As the Straits Chinese worked their way into the established pattern of Sulu's trade, they built warehouses at Jolo and conveyed marine jungle products by prahu from other parts of the archipelago to Jolo to trade with foreign ships that called there.⁷⁵ Gradually, more and more European trade goods began to reach the Taosug peasant through Chinese traders. As a larger percentage of the local trade came into their hands even the Taosug in Jolo were obliged to traffic directly with them, especially after the Spanish blockade of 1871 increased Sulu's dependence on Singapore's trade. By 1875 Sultan Jamal ul Zam was anxious to have an English merchant establish himself at Jolo to break the Chinese monopoly.⁷⁶

Despite the blockade, the Straits Chinese were able to establish a wide range of contacts that linked Singapore and Jolo with Zamboanga, the interior of Cotabato, and the outer islands of the Sulu archipelago. Prior to 1870 Chinese traders had visited Singapore and Labuan annually and on occasion chartered schooners for trading ventures between Singapore and Sulu.⁷⁷ Once the Spanish began the calculated destruction of Sulu shipping, Chinese merchants freighted their goods from Singapore on European-owned vessels through family and business associates, while continuing to operate their prahus between certain parts of the archipelago. In this manner they came to occupy the pivotal position in the trade of the Sulu zone. This was most apparent in the case of Zamboanga.

Since Zamboanga's commerce was most adversely affected by a strict blockade of Jolo island, the Spanish had to allow a "smuggling" trade from Zamboanga to Jolo. Chinese trading boats

74. Extract from the journal of the British barque *Osprey*, in Colonel Cavanagh to Secretary to the Government of India, 28 January 1863, CO, 71/1; see also Bulwer to the Earl of Granville, 29 December 1871, CO, 144/35.

75. Bulwer to the Earl of Granville, 29 December 1871, CO, 144/35.

76. Consul General Low to the Earl of Derby, 8 May 1875, CO, 144/44.

77. Statement of Chinese trader Ko Pic to Hugh Low, 3 December 1872, in the Earl of Derby to Lord Odo Russell, 12 February 1876, CO, 144/46.

running the blockade from Zamboanga landed their goods on the west coast of Basilan where they were transshipped into Chinese prahus from Jolo.⁷⁸ The trade was entirely in Chinese hands. When they went directly to Zamboanga, they reported themselves to the Spanish authorities as being from Basilan.⁷⁹ From 1870 to 1875, the Spanish cruisers were obliged to allow this breach of the blockade. When the Spanish conquest of Jolo put an end to the trade in 1876, it was too late for the Taosug to prevent the Chinese from gaining control of Zamboanga's market.

The Spanish were far more concerned about Chinese trade with the still unconquered areas of Mindanao, especially in the *sa-raya* (upper valley) of the Cotabato basin. Spain had reduced the Sultanate of Cotabato to vassalage by 1860 but in the *sa-raya*, Datu Uto of Buayan was to enlarge his political base among the upriver settlements and consolidate his power through the purchase of arms from Sulu in exchange for slaves.⁸⁰

The Chinese traders of Sulu were to play an important part in Uto's rise to power. The English colony of Labuan continued to peddle arms after the Spanish conquest of Jolo, but the pattern of the trade changed.⁸¹ For years Labuan had concentrated on the Jolo market and the largest percentage of its arms exports went to Sulu. After 1876 Labuan still found its principal customers in the Taosug and Chinese of Maimbung (the de facto capital of the Sultanate) but now the Enfield and Spencer rifles, assorted pistols, and gunpowder found their way to the Magindanao of Buayan to support their resistance against Spanish rule.⁸² Major arms importers until a few years earlier, the Taosug and Chinese

78. Statement of Wyndham in Commander Buckle's report on the State of the Sulu Archipelago, Confidential Print, 2604, CO, 144/45.

79. Consul General Low to the Earl of Derby, 15 July 1875, in Bulwer to the Earl of Carnarvon, 16 July 1875, CO, 144/44.

80. The career of this remarkable Magindanao overlord is carefully traced in Reynaldo C. Ilet's fine study of Cotabato in the period from 1860-88. See chapter 10 of *Magindanao, 1860-1888: The Career of Datu Uto of Buayan*, Southeast Asia Program Data Paper no. 82 (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1971).

81. See the following letters of Carlos Cuarterón detailing the sale of arms and ammunition to Taosug and Chinese and foreign ship movements. Carlos Cuarterón, Prefecto Apostólico a GCG, 27 March 1877, 25 September 1877, 7 July 1877; PNA, Isla de Borneo (1); Numero 129, el Gobernador Político y Militar de Jolo a GCG, 4 December 1881, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Ultramar 5331.

82. Arturo Garin y Sociats, "Memoria sobre el Archipiélago de Joló," *Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid*, 10(1881): 206; José Montero y Vidal, *Historia de la piratería malayo-mahometana en Mindanao, Joló y Borneo*, Madrid: Imprenta de M. Tello, 1888), p. 77.

were now re-exporting them as Uto prepared to meet the challenge of the Spanish who had been pressing inland.

In the 1880s it was estimated that there were about a thousand Chinese living on Mindanao.⁸³ Some resided in garrison towns — Zamboanga, Cotabato, and Misamis. Others were scattered about the coast and in the interior in villages yet self-governing. It was in communities like Lalabuan and Glan and at places of rendezvous in Sarangani Bay that the Maimbung Chinese arranged their sales of new and slightly used weapons at a handsome profit.⁸⁴ Through these same channels came opium, crockery, cotton textiles, and Borneo ivory.⁸⁵ In return the gun-runners received Mindanao goods — wax and gutta percha — and slaves funnelled to the coast from upland regions.

As a direct consequence of the Spanish cruising system and the blockade, the Maimbung Chinese had become the principal purveyors of weapons and other goods in the Sulu archipelago by the early 1880s. They established traditional commerce at new, alternative market centers in the region and developed the transshipping trade of the outer islands. On the south coast of Mindanao, on Palawan, and in the Tawi-Tawi chain, the local export business was controlled almost exclusively by Chinese traders who sent the raw products of these areas to the settlements of Elopura and Labuan in North Borneo and to Singapore on small steamers and trading prahus.

This process was brought into sharp focus on Mindanao where Maimbung was vying with Manila for the commerce of the Buayan

83. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 92.

84. Iletto, *Magindanao, 1860-1888*, p. 31. In 1903 the Chinese of Glan were still acting as principal agents for the distribution of arms and opium. Diary of Leonard Wood, 26 October 1903, Library of Congress Washington, D.C., Leonard Wood papers, container 3. Garin ("Memoria sobre el Archipiélago de Joló," p. 106) lists the standard price charged by the Chinese for their exported arms:

"Percussion"-type rifles: 3, 4, and 6 duros apiece

"Piston"-type rifles:

Carbines — 20 duros apiece

Smiths — 32 duros apiece

Spencers — 60 duros apiece

Each 100 rounds of ammunition — 4 duros apiece

A picul (128 lbs) of gunpowder — 24 duros apiece

Lantaka shot (acc. to weight) — 26 duros apiece

85. Ivory, brought from the region of the Kinabatangan where elephants were found, was prized by the Bagobo, a hill group who conducted a brisk trade with Muslim and Chinese located on the coast. It was used by them for the manufacture of ear plugs (Fay Cooper-Cole, *The Wild Tribes of Davao District, Mindanao* [Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1913], p. 60).

hinterland.⁸⁶ There the opposing lines of trade were most clearly drawn between the Chinese from Maimbung who traded with Labuan, Elopura, and Singapore and the Chinese from Spanish-occupied Jolo who tended to rely on Zamboanga and Manila. Maimbung, on the south coast of Jolo island, had become one of most important centers of resistance to the extension of Spanish rule on Mindanao. Within the supportive framework created by the Sultan of Sulu, arms brought by foreign steamers were readily purchased there by the Magindanao or delivered to their agents by Maimbung Chinese.⁸⁷

The Spanish realized that if Magindanao resistance in the sa-*raya* was to be dampened, Maimbung had to be destroyed. But the Sulu Sultanate's commercial relations with Singapore, Labuan, and southern Mindanao remained unaffected until April of 1887 when Colonel Juan Arolas, the military governor of Jolo, bent on establishing political control over all the island, marched on Maimbung. By forcing his troops to advance overland in the rainy season, an unprecedented feat, Arolas surprised Maimbung; he destroyed the new seat of the Sultanate once and for all and seized a large quantity of munitions.⁸⁸ The Chinese, who had lived in their own *kampung ayer*, were given twenty-four hours to collect their wares and board a waiting Spanish warship for the journey to Jolo, before their shops were razed.

An immediate consequence of the Spanish success was the almost total collapse of Labuan's trade economy. The munitions traffic had been Labuan's fastest-growing business since 1856 and the island's governors stubbornly refused to place an embargo on the colony's arms trade within the region until 1886 — just before the Spanish ended the resistance of Datu Uto and destroyed Maimbung. Labuan by the 1890s had become a tropical backwater, a poor island settlement.⁸⁹

86. "Comision reservada Borneo y Joló," Biblioteca de Palacio, Madrid, p. 75; Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, pp. 92–93.

87. Naturally European goods were far cheaper in Maimbung than Jolo and the Sultan purchased them directly from Singapore with the steamer *Far East* in which he had a controlling share (two-thirds). The remaining share in the vessel was owned by the brother of his Chinese mestiza concubine. Ibid. pp. 76, 77, 88.

88. Crocker to Sir Rutherford Alcock, 30 April 1887, CO, 874/243; in the PNA there is enormous documentation of Arolas' administration as well as that of his predecessor.

89. Although Labuan was to continue to export arms in small amounts well into the 1890s, the Governor of Labuan felt justified in writing an "epitaph" for the colony: "She has albeit with a struggle, played well her part as a pioneer, and introduced directly and indirectly civilization and British commerce along so many hundreds of miles of Bornean

Now in control, the Spanish government was alarmed at the extent to which the Straits Chinese had become directly involved in the commerce of the region. They found it difficult, if not impossible, to restrict the Chinese to military centers on Mindanao and Sulu in the years following the destruction of Maimbung, and to prevent them from spreading over the countryside to retail arms, metals (iron, copper, tin) saltpeter, and gunpowder. Nor did the flow of Chinese immigrants from Singapore cease. Their obvious concern to know the precise nature and extent of Chinese economic predominance, as well as to collect tribute, led the Manila authorities to take a yearly census of Jolo's Chinese residents during the 1890s. The *Padrones de Chinos*, which classified Chinese residents into six categories by occupation for purposes of tribute payment, demonstrate the importance of chain migration in the movement of the Straits Chinese to Sulu and Mindanao at the end of the nineteenth century. They also provide information on the migrant's place of origin in China, age, sex, and religion. The Spanish hoped to use registration to force the Chinese to live in predetermined areas and prevent merchants from leaving Jolo for the interior or for Mindanao to trade and possibly settle without having first obtained a special permit.⁹⁰

In July of 1887, several years before the first census, a study was made of 326 Chinese in Jolo.⁹¹ It should be made clear that the survey concentrated only on the Chinese in Jolo and did not include those living in nearby villages who had commercial dealings with the Spanish. Of those arriving between 1878 and 1887, 322 Chinese had migrated to Sulu from Singapore, of whom 292 had come in 1886 and 1887 alone.⁹² All but eleven migrants listed

coast." Leys to the Colonial Office, 12 October 1886, CO, 144/61. For references to the arms trade at Labuan in the 1890s, see Beaufort to Martin, 11 September 1891, CO, 874/251; Número 48, Consulado de España en Singapore a Señor General Gobernador Político y Militar de Joló, 24 October 1896, PNA, unclassified Mindanao/Sulu bundle. See also Treacher to Leys, 29 November 1881, CO, 874/228; Treacher to Dent, 2 December 1881, CO, 874/228; Treacher to Sir Rutherford Alcock, 8 August 1885, CO, 874/239; Treacher to Sir Rutherford Alcock, 19 February 1886, CO, 874/240.

90. Irregular censuses were taken of the Chinese from the 1830s onward but were confined to the greater Manila area. It was only in the 1890s that annual censuses were begun for the Chinese in the provinces. Edgar Wickberg, "Spanish Records in the Philippine National Archives," *Archiviana*, 1 (1968): 18.

91. PNA, Chinos, Cotabato, Davao, Jolo, Misamis 1878-1898.

92. *Ibid.* The remaining four Chinese came to Jolo from Zamboanga, 1881, Manila, 1882; Patikul, 1887, and Maimbung, 1887. The exact breakdown of the year and the number of Chinese that settled in Jolo from Singapore is as follows: 1865-1; 1877-3; 1879-4; 1881-2; 1882-9; 1884-4; 1885-7; 1886-225; 1887-67.

their place of origin as Amoy and all but six were unmarried.

The survey, which classified the migrants into four categories according to a decree of 1839 – foreign and wholesale traders, shopkeepers and retailers of dry goods, artisans and apprentices, and unskilled laborers – revealed the extent to which the recent immigrants had thoroughly ensconced themselves at every level of Jolo's economy. In the first category there were listed five foreign traders and forty-eight wholesale dealers. Fifty-eight Chinese considered themselves to be retail traders, but this did not include book peddlers (10) and others who hawked their wares on the street corners of Jolo and in neighboring areas. Among the total of artisans there were represented a wide range of indispensable skills. The Spanish must have welcomed their useful contributions as silver-smiths (2), carpenters (3), cobblers (9), clerks (2), barbers (2); a baker, a charcoal maker, and a singer were also listed. The remainder, some 139 migrants, fell into the category of unskilled laborers.⁹³

The Spanish in Jolo and Mindanao faced a hopeless task as the rate of internal and external migration increased in the 1890s. New restrictive legislation regarding residence and travel did not prove to be much of a barrier to the Chinese immigrants. They blatantly ignored it and left district centers for remote areas without residence certificates. In 1892, the Manila government authorized local authorities to undertake a house to house search of Jolo in an effort to apprehend unregistered Chinese.⁹⁴ Similar steps were taken in Mindanao where in 1890, and again in 1894, legislation was enacted to prohibit "all persons wearing Chinese dress, whether they be mestizos or not," from trading to the interior in metal products.⁹⁵

93. Ibid. The *Padrón de Chinos* for Jolo in 1892 listed 442 Chinese, of whom 437 declared their place of origin as Amoy – the other five were from Hong Kong. All of them were single and only nine were not Confucian. Fifty Chinese fell into the first occupational category. Among the 58 artisans in category 2 there were notaries (2), tailors (2), gardeners (12), and cooks (16). There were 287 migrants in the last group, of which a large proportion were assistants (139) and day laborers (81), along with a few servants (5). The *Padrón* for Jolo in 1893 listed 435 Chinese in Jolo. (PNA, *Padrón de Chinos* – Jolo – 1892, 1893, 1894.)

94. The investigation was to be carried out during the daytime by an official and two Chinese from the community in question so as not to arouse undue suspicion. *Intendencia General de Hacienda de Filipinas a Señor Gobernador Político y Militar de Joló*, 11 February 1892, PNA, unclassified Mindanao/Sulu bundle.

95. For the full text of these decrees see the official letter prohibiting Chinese from trading in the interior, 9 July 1890, BIA, 3671–2; Numero 45, Gobierno Político y

Although Jolo was a free port under the Spanish and boasted a garrison, naval station, prison, and a large public market, Spaniards did not care to be commercial pioneers and settle there. The greater part of the trade of Jolo centered around the "Chinese Pier" and was handled by the firm of Hernández and Company, and the commercial houses of Chuan Lee and Bau Guan.⁹⁶ The Chinese were the only ones who really benefited from Jolo's free port status which guaranteed them the support and security to develop local trade throughout the zone. Most of their import and export traffic was with Singapore, and it was estimated to be worth half a million dollars a year.⁹⁷

The trade suffered a serious reverse in 1892 when three steamers that plied between Singapore and Jolo were lost in a series of storms. Their principals in Singapore, upon whom the Chinese in Jolo relied for capital and credit, lost so heavily as a result of this calamity that they refused to meet further orders from Sulu unless these were paid for in cash.⁹⁸ This sudden mishap brought many Chinese in Jolo to the verge of ruin. Along with the fear of increased taxation it was responsible for many Chinese leaving Jolo after 1892 for Maimbung and other parts of the archipelago.⁹⁹ But, above all, trade — old and new — had begun to flow along different lines and at different rates when ports in Mindanao such as Zamboanga, Cotabato, and Davao were tied together by steamship lines and regular communication with other islands to the north was established. As Jolo lost its significance as a regional entrepôt, the Chinese began to migrate to economically more attractive places.

The trend was to continue. Shortly before the American invasion of the Philippines, the Chinese had come to control the trade

Militar de la Isla de Mindanao a GCG, 19 March 1891, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu 1862-1898; Garín, "Memoria sobre el Archipiélago de Joló," p. 173.

96. Saleeby, *History of Sulu*, p. 26.

97. *British North Borneo Herald and Official Gazette*, 1 September 1892, p. 282.

98. *Ibid.*

99. This fear was not unwarranted: The small number of Chinese in Zamboanga by 1892 was a result of many having left rather than pay taxes on their shops as the military authorities began to keep a closer watch on their economic activities. Señor Administrador de Hacienda Pública de Zamboanga a Señor Gobernador Político y Militar de Joló, 4 December 1876, PNA, unclassified Mindanao/Sulu bundle; GCG a Señor Brigadier Gobernador Político y Militar de Joló, 10 December 1889, PNA, unclassified Mindanao/Sulu bundle; Majul, "Chinese Relationships with the Sultanate of Sulu," in *The Chinese in the Philippines, 1570-1770*, ed., Alfonso Felix (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1966), p. 157.

between northeast Borneo, the Sulu archipelago and Mindanao, and were spread over the entire zone.¹⁰⁰ By the end of the Spanish period Saleeby observed the radical transfer of economic power that had taken place:

[The] Chinese have complete control of the trade of the Sulu archipelago. They are found everywhere and command all avenues of commerce. The Sulus [Taosug] have abandoned commerce as a trade and apparently have no inclination to resume it on a large scale. This is due to the decline of their power and the present abeyance of their national life.¹⁰¹

100. After 1892 there were Chinese traders settled on almost all the well-populated islands of the Sulu archipelago. On Siassi in particular there was a great deal of trade in shark's fin, tripang, and pearl shell. This compact little town consisted principally of Chinese stores and warehouses built over the water. The number of Chinese on Siassi began to increase in 1884 and by 1892 numbered 108 adult males. Ranging in age from 15 to 58, they included 58 shopkeepers and retailers of dry goods (by 1895 there were only 20), porters, cooks, bakers, barbers, carpenters, servants, and a gardener. The 1895 census listed 119 Chinese in Siassi town of whom only two either could or would supply information on the vessel that had brought them to the Sulu archipelago and the month and year of their arrival. In the Tawi-Tawi group on Sibuto, Ubian, Tandu Bas, and at Bongao on Sanga-Sanga island, Chinese had settled and were trading with Elopura and other parts of the archipelago. Spanish gunboats attempted in vain to seize Chinese "smugglers" and their prahus that traded from these islands to Elopura and Maimbung throughout the 1890s. For references to the Chinese in Siassi, see PNA, Padrón de Chinos Joló 1892; PNA, Chinos, Cotabato, Davao, Joló, Misamis, 1872-98; Gobierno Político y Militar de Siassi a Señor Gobernador Político y Militar de Joló, 28 December 1887, PNA, unclassified Mindanao/Sulu bundle; *Diary of Leonard Wood*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Leonard Wood papers, container 3.

101. Saleeby, *History of Sulu*, p. 21.

Appendix. China Trade Goods and Natural Products of Sulu Comprising an Amoy Junk's Cargo

	<i>Cost in China in Dollars</i>	<i>Sell at Sooloo for</i>
2,000 <i>Galangs</i> (salvers of brass) seven to a picul	40	70
100 Piculs iron, in small pieces, line Bengal iron	4	8
Sugar candy, a quantity, per picul	7	10
50 Raw Silk ditto	400	600
3,000 Pieces black kowsongs (a kind of nankeen), per piece	0¾	1
5,000 Pieces <i>kompow</i> (white strong linen)	0¾	1
500 <i>Kangans</i> (25 in a bundle, called <i>gandang</i>) per <i>gandang</i>	7	10
200 Quallis (an iron thin pan) three foot diameter each	1	2
500 Nests of <i>quallis</i> , three in a nest	1	2
One million of pieces China ware, consisting of small tereness and basins in nests, big and small, plates and basins with red edges for Mindanao, &c. &c. per hundred	1	2
200 Pieces of flowered silks	6	10
Besides tea, cutlery, and other hardware, brass wire, gongs, beads of all colors, like swan shot — fire works, &c. &c.		

	<i>Cost at Sooloo</i>	<i>Selling price in China</i>
The returns are in the following articles:		
Black swallow's nests per picul	15	30
White Ditto	10	20
Wax	15	25
Teepye or pearl-oyster shells	1½	5
Bird's nests per catty	6	9
Tortoise shell, price uncertain		

Also agar-agar, a seaweed used as gum or glue and many other articles, such as *carooang* oil, clove bark, black wood, rattans, sago, various barks for dying — cassia, pepper, native camphore, sandalwood, curious shells for grottos — pearls, which require great judgement to deal in, also seed pearls.