

Mahomedans who have come for purposes of trade from the kingdom of Cascar and other western regions. There are many of these who have entangled themselves with wives and children, so that they are almost regarded as natives, and will never go back. They are much in the position of the Portuguese who are settled at AMACAO in the province of Canton, but with this difference, that the Portuguese live under their own laws and have magistrates of their own, whereas these Mahomedans are under the government of the Chinese. Indeed they are shut up every night within the walls of their own quarter of the city, and in other matters are treated just like the natives, and are subject in every thing to the Chinese magistrates. The law is that one who has sojourned there for nine years shall not be allowed to return to his country.

To this city are wont to come those western merchants, who, under old arrangements between seven or eight kingdoms in that quarter and the Empire of China, have leave of admission every sixth year for two-and-seventy persons, who under pretence of being ambassadors go and offer tribute to the Emperor. This tribute consists of that translucent marble of which we spoke before, of small diamonds, ultramarine, and other such matters; and the so-called ambassadors go to the capital and return from it at the public expense. The tribute is merely nominal, for no one pays more for the marble than the Emperor does, considering it to be beneath his dignity to accept gifts from foreigners without return. And indeed their entertainment from the Emperor is on so handsome a scale, that, taking an average of the whole, there can be no doubt that every man pockets a piece of gold daily over and above all his necessary expenses.¹ This is the reason why this embassy is such an

¹ Martini and Alvarez Semedo speak in similar terms of the embassies, or pretended embassies, that came periodically to Peking from Central Asia. The latter says that their present to the Emperor always consisted of 1,000 *arrobas*, or 1,333 Italian pounds, of jade, 300 being of the very