

The duties on importation are not fixed, but are changed and altered from time to time by the Ruma Bechara. The following was stated to me as the necessary payments before trade could be carried on.

A large ship, with Chinese on board, pays	\$2,000
“ without “ “	1,800
Small ships,	1,500
Large brig,	1,000
Small brig,	500
Schooners,	from 150 to 400

This supposes them all to have full cargoes. That a difference should be made in a vessel with or without Chinamen, seems singular; but this, I was told, arose from the circumstance that English vessels take them on board, in order to detect and prevent the impositions of the Sooloos.

Vessels intending to trade at Soung should arrive before the Chinese junks, and remain as long as they stay, or even a few days later. In trading with the natives, all operations ought to be carried on for cash, or if by barter, no delivery should be made until the articles to be taken in exchange are received. In short, it is necessary to deal with them as though they were undoubted rogues, and this pleases them much more than to appear unsuspecting. Vessels that trade engage a bazaar, which they hire of the Ruma Bechara, and it is advisable to secure the good-will of the leading datus in that council by presents, and paying them more for their goods than others.

There are various other precautions necessary in dealing with this people; for they will, if possible, so act as to give rise to disputes, in which case an appeal is made to their fellows, who are sure to decide against the strangers. Those who have been engaged in this trade, advise that the prices of the goods should be fixed upon before the Sultan, and the scales of the Datu of Soung employed; for although these are quite faulty, the error is compensated by the articles received being weighed in the same. This also secures the Datu's good-will, by the fee (some fifty dollars) which he receives for the use of them. Thus it will be perceived that those who desire to trade with Sooloo, must make up their minds to encounter many impositions, and to be continually watchful of their own interests.

Every possible precaution ought to be taken; and it will be found, the treatment will depend upon, or be according to the force or resolution that is displayed. In justice to this people it must be stated, there have been times when traders received every kindness and attention at the island of Sooloo, and I heard it even said, that many vessels had gone there to refit; but during the last thirty or forty years, the reigning