

Dear Rat,

My forces will arrive in Tauhan soon, and I have instructed them to aid your forces if they encounter them. We will see if we can gain the territories I suggest and, if so, we will help you hold them and discuss the transfer of your islands next month.

Your grievance is a mighty one, though I must confess this is the first I have heard of it. This act was not done by my orders: if it had been, it would not have failed.

Did the assailant escape, or do you have a corpse? Neither the captain of my fleets nor the leader of my traders have heard of any of my people challenging yours to duels, nor have any traders or sailors been reported missing. My advisor has suggested that this might be the work of the perfidious Quorum, whose shape-changing abilities seem to dispel upon death. We have no evidence of this however, and I want you to know I take this event seriously. If you wish to investigate further, I will put my people and resources at your disposal.

We in Keitan have little to hide and put no stock in dissembling. If I had ordered this insult to your people, I would own it, and probably have written descriptive poetry. However, if one of my traders took insult and attempted to strike at your people *outside* of a battle or duel, he has dishonoured his tribe and shamed his blood. If you find this individual, you may do with him as you wish, provided you remove the blood from his body - he is no longer worthy of it.

I am, however, deeply saddened by your other words. Soup is not a sauce. It is clearly a dish eaten in and of itself, rather than one added to another dish to enhance it (a sauce). To clear up this misunderstanding, I will be sending a dozen of our chefs to cook you or a minion a masterful meal of stews, sauces and soups - in particular our famous Octopus soup, with live octopus. It has an amazing squelch that dead octopus can't compare to.

May the stars mislead my enemies,

*Mansa Sino'otollo*