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CHAPTER NINE
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THE OPEN COAST
OF THE CHINESE EMPIRE 1646-1650

The interlude of Nanking and Chê-chiang merchants

The advance of the Manchu invasion from Nanking into Chê-chiang province damaged the An-hai silk trade, because the land routes which the An-hai merchants took to collect the silk from Nanking and Chê-chiang were transformed into battlefields. One man's meat is another man's poison and these developments allowed the Chê-chiang merchants to free themselves from the An-hai merchants' monopoly in the Sino-Japanese trade. After the summer of 1645, there was an interruption in the maritime trade between Fu-chien and Chê-chiang. The junks departing from Fu-chou, Chang-chou and An-hai with their destination Nanking were forced to redirect their course to Nagasaki.¹ This sudden disruption jeopardized the sources of income which Iquan had tapped into to pay his soldiers' wages. Iquan had succeeded in legalizing the Sino-Japanese trade and had begun to dispatch his silk-carrying junks in ever greater numbers from Fu-chou and Nanking in an attempt to circumvent the potential threat presented by the Dutch fleet. The war which raged in Chê-chiang also posed a threat to Iquan's investments in Nanking. As the Manchus steadily pushed the frontier southwards, the land routes which were essential to transporting silk between Fu-chien and Nanking via Chê-chiang were blocked off. In the spring of 1646, word of this situation also reached the ears of the Governor of Taiwan, François Caron:

'This is of great concern. Rumours have reached us that the war in China will prove an obstacle to the junks from Chang-chou, An-hai, Ch'üan-chou, and Fu-chou visiting Japan. It will hinder the supply of goods

¹ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 209. 16 Aug. 1645. Most of these junks were loaded with sugar.

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offered on the market in Nagasaki, and the price might rise somewhat higher. However, on mature consideration this might not happen because if the silk exports from An-hai are reduced on the one side, on the other the silk exports from the Nanking areas might well increase in abundance.

Therefore, I believe that Your Honour [the Governor-General] will understand that, if the An-hai shipping is interrupted, the Nanking merchants will profit from it. This is something which has never happened before and is unheard of.

*I am therefore confident that silk in and around An-hai will become more expensive, because it cannot be transported over there.*²

This rumour proved true. Ten months later, Caron wrote another report to explain the situation.

'The supply of silk and the silk piece-goods which were transported to Japan by Iquan or in his name during last southern monsoon did not flow [as in the past]. The silk was not obtained as it was previously through ordinary trading channels, but has been scraped together from all the merchant houses and towns under Iquan's command. He has also given express orders to draw money from the countryside instead of hoarding silk as a guarantee for paying the wages of the soldiers. Furthermore, some quantities of silk from the northern provinces have been transported to the south on condition that certain duties be paid on the [provincial] boundary or at the frontier gates which were being guarded by Iquan's brother in the name of the Emperor and at his command. As a consequence of the plundering carried out by Iquan's brother, these quantities of silk fell into Iquan's hands and have all been sent to Japan. Therefore, I would like to testify that not only the Company but also Iquan himself and every merchant in the coastal provinces have been excluded from the silk trade.

² VOC 1161, Misive van Pieter Antonissen Overwater naer Batavia aen Cornelis van der Lijn, 31 Jan. 1646, fo. 682^v.

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The truth is as clear as day, not one single length of silk is to be obtained in the southern provinces of Chinese Empire owing to the war. Therefore Iquan has sent just as little silk to Japan as we have. Time will be our best teacher about what will happen next . The dirty trick that Iquan's brother has fraudulently played on those merchants has stirred up such fear and resentment among the merchants under the Manchus [in Chê-chiang], no one dares to do business there again. The traffic is also stringently obstructed by their enemy [the Manchus]' ³

The actions stated in Caron's report corroborate what is recounted in the Chinese records. In February 1646 at Iquan's request the Lung-wu Emperor sent a delegate to press the Kuang-tung provincial government for financial aid. Iquan also urged that all the officials should donate money to the imperial treasury according to their rank.⁴ After Iquan was appointed to the Ministry of Revenue and the Ministry of Works in April 1646, he dispatched tax officials to examine the land-tax registration in every district in Fu-chien province, hoping to squeeze yet one more penny from the Emperor's subjects.⁵

On 5 April 1646, the Lung-wu Emperor ordered Iquan's brother, Cheng Hung-k'uei, to aid the resistance in Chê-chiang. He was commanded to lead his troops to Chê-chiang taking the route by the northern boundary of Fu-chien province and drive the Manchus out. As soon as his troops arrived on the border, he announced that there was no money to pay the soldiers'

³ VOC 1160, Rapport van 't gepasseerde op t eijlant Formosa 't sedert 27 Februarij 1646 tot 13 November daeraen volgende door den gouverneur François Caron, Taiwan, 13 Nov. 1646, fo. 76^r-77^r.

⁴ Ni Tsai-t'ien, *Hsü ming-shih chi-shih pên-mo*[Continued Compilation of the Chronicles of the Ming History by Events], TW no 133, 141.

⁵ Anonymous, *Ssu-wên ta-chi*[Simplified Chronicle of the Reign of the Ch'ung-chên Emperor], TW no.111, 84.

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wages and that he would therefore not venture beyond the border-gate.⁶ In fact, instead of assisting the Chê-chiang forces, Cheng Hung-k'uei dispatched soldiers to collect land tax from those counties across the border under the jurisdiction of the Chê-chiang government.⁷

In May 1646, Iquan lost no time in presenting the Lung-wu Emperor with a budgetary plan, declaring he would need 1,560,000 taels per year to pay for all the weaponry, wages and provisions for his troops if they were to repel the Manchus.⁸ All this points to the fact that, because the Chê-chiang merchants had wrestled the silk-for-silver trade between China and Japan from Iquan's hands, he and his brothers were now reluctant to lend their commercial competitors any assistance. In the year 1646, thirty-four junks departed for Japan from the coast of Fu-chien, but all the raw silks they were able to carry from Fu-chou (eked out with a little from Ch'üan-chou) amounted to a mere 201 piculs, only about 17 per cent of the total Chinese raw silk imports to Japan that year.⁹ The only conclusion which can be drawn is that about 83 per cent of the raw silk that year must have been exported by merchants from Chê-chiang.¹⁰ When this compelling truth

⁶ Anonymous, *Lung-wu chi-lüeh* [Simplified Chronicle of the Reign of the Lung-wu Emperor], TWH, I no 1, 137.

⁷ Sung Yüen-wên, *Tsun-jang lüeh* [Succinct Account of Royal Attempts to Halt the Invasion of the Manchus], TWH, I no 9, 180. 'They did not dispatch any troops to the area of the Ch'ien-t'ang River, but only collected food provisions from the Chin-hua, Chü-chou and Wên-chou areas.'

⁸ Anonymous, *Ssu-wên ta-chi*, 95; Ni, *Hsü ming-shih chi-shih pên-mo*, 144.

⁹ This calculation is based on the records in the *Dagregister Deshima*. According to Nagazumi, in the year 1646, approximately 117,475 catties of Chinese raw silk were still being exported by the Chinese junks. Moreover, information from Taiwan shows that Chinese merchants sold about 1,200 piculs (equal to 120,000 catties) in Japan. Cf. Nagazumi Yoko, Liu Hsü-fêng (trans.), 'You Hê-lan shih-liao k'an shih-ch'i shih-chi tê t'ai-wan mao-i, 37-57 at 42 Table 1; 46. Table 3.

¹⁰ The Japanese government forbade the traders under the Manchu (Ch'ing) administration to trade in Japan in 1645 and 1646. See below.

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dawned, it decided Iquan to enter into negotiations with the Manchus rather than financing a war which was not going to contribute anything to his own pocket. The archival records of the Manchu Court, show that Iquan contacted the Manchu officials as early as April 1646.¹¹ This was approximately the time he must have realized how the subterfuges of the Chê-chiang merchants were damaging his silk trade with Japan. Between May and July, Iquan did all he could to stimulate the ardour of the tax-collecting system so as to squeeze tax revenues up as high as he could, just as is mentioned in Caron's report. Despite his manouevres, the Chê-chiang competitors proved to be an unmovable obstacle because they were nominally allied with the Fu-chien government. The resistance in Chê-chiang held out steadily while the the nominal leader, Lu prince, was kept detained at Shao-hsing and they continued to defend their camps along the southern bank of the Ch'ien-t'ang River. Unfortunately, during the summer of 1646, a drought lowered the water level and it was easy for the Manchu cavalry to cross the river on 18 July 1646,¹² after which the Chê-chiang resistance soon collapsed. Now that both Nanking and Chê-chiang provinces were in Manchu hands, Iquan had no choice but to negotiate with Manchus sooner or later if he was to obtain the raw silks he needed for his trade with Japan. In August, he withdrew all his troops from the border of Fu-chien.¹³ The Manchus crossed the border in the first half of October 1646, the Emperor Lung-wu was opened to be hunted and die in chasing soon afterwards.¹⁴

¹¹ Huang Hsi-yün, 'Huang his-yün wei chao-fu chêng-chih-lung ch'ing-hsing shih-pên[Report Written by Huang his-yün Recounting Cheng chih-lung's Submission] Sept.1646', in CKTI(ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'u chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I no 6, 1.

¹² Wang Kuang-fu, 'Hang-hsieh i-wên [A Forgotten History since Our Departure from Hsieh-Mên]', in Ch'ên-hu i-shih (comp.), *Ching-t'ò i-shih*[Forgotten Histories of Ching-t'ò], (1911), 1.

¹³ Anonymous, *Lung-wu chi-lüeh*, 147.

¹⁴ How Iquan withdrew all his soldiers who were garrisoned in cites is told by: Hsü

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In the meantime, Iquan had put all his military provisions in order, had stowed his capital on board the junks anchored in Fu-chou Harbour and sailed to An-hai with all his fleet on 22 October 1646.¹⁵ Although Iquan had no direct communication with the Manchu commander, General-in-Chief of the Southern Expedition the To-lo Prince Polo in Fu-chou, he had earlier promised the Manchu court that he would withdraw all his soldiers if he was confronted by Manchu troops. This is how Iquan signalled his true intentions while apparently still operating as a Ming resistance leader. On 10 November 1646, a junk from Fu-chou visited Nagasaki and reported Iquan's plans and his failure to conclude a peace agreement when he first met the Manchus in Fu-chou.

*'It brought the news that Iquan had sent three or four envoys from Fu-chou to the Manchus... to make a deal with them.... [By proposing that] if he [Iquan] subjected himself to the Manchu's rule and shaved himself in their fashion, then he should be created a great mandarin, ruling over the three provinces, Kuang-tung, Fu-chou, and Ch'üan-chou. They [Manchus] would not listen to this and without giving any forewarning, marched straight for Fu-chou.'*¹⁶

When the Manchu troops began their final approach on An-hai after they had occupied Ch'üan-chou, Iquan hesitated about whether he should abandon An-hai before he had officially subjected himself to the Manchu

Hsiao-wang, 'Ch'ing-chün ju-min yü chêng-chih-lung Chiang-ch'ing shih-k'ao [A Study of How the Ch'ing Forces Entered Fu-chien and How Cheng Chih-lung's Submission to Them Took Place]', *Fujian Tribune: the humanity and social science monthly*, 7 (2007), 70-77.

¹⁵ Anonymous, *Lung-wu chi-lüeh*, 155.

¹⁶ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 245. 10 Nov. 1646. Some Chinese records actually announce that the Manchu grandees had proposed appointing Iquan Viceroy over three provinces; Yang-ying, *Ts'ung-chêng shih-lu* [Veritable records of Coxinga], TW no. 32, 42; Chiang Jih-shêng, *T'ai-wan wai-chi*, 86.

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Emperor. Some days earlier, on 16 October 1646, Iquan's youngest brother, Cheng Chih-pao, withdrew to An-hai from Ch'üan-chou with his soldiers.¹⁷ After he had done this, the Manchu troops engaged the Cheng troops near the bridge which connected the southern region of Ch'üan-chou to An-hai Castle. Skirmishes occurred for almost one month until the Manchu commander gave the order to cease fire.¹⁸ According to François Caron's report, the An-hai troops under Iquan's command finally retreated on board his ships when the Manchus headed for An-hai Castle:

*'Iquan fled away from An-hai (which was his headquarters) to an island. Possessing about 600 junks in total, he had burned all the other junks and vessels anchored nearby, or wherever he could reach, in order to secure himself from any harm from those who might want to sail on these vessels. It was not confirmed [whether it is true] that the Manchus held a huge and honuorable reception (because he [Iquan] had submitted to them). However, it was obvious that, in order to humiliate and insult Iquan, the Manchus allowed their troops to rape the women and girls of An-hai. They the commenced a slow withdrawal to Fu-chou with these hostages.'*¹⁹

Iquan must have revealed his true intentions to his fellow military officers, including his brothers, cousins and eldest son. He issued the order to retreat from his own private castle in An-hai. Iquan's proposal to submit to the Manchu Court shocked his followers. Because he had been a great supporter of Ming Emperor Lung-wu, most of them did not trust that

¹⁷ Li T'ien-kên, *Chüeh Huo-lu*[Consuming as Fire : An Account of the Southern Ming Court], TW no. 177, 869.

¹⁸ Hua T'ing-hsien, 'Min-you yüeh-chi [Monthly Accounts during My Residence in Fu-chien]', in Ch'ên-hu i-shih (comp.), *Ching-t'o i-shih*, 50.

¹⁹ VOC 1160, Rapport van 't gepasseerde op 't eijlant Formosa 't sedert 27 Februarij 1646 tot 13 November daeraen volgende door den gouverneur François Caron [Report about What Happened in Formosa from 27 Feb. to 13 Nov. 1646 by Governor François Caron], Taiwan, 13 Nov. 1646, fo. 78^r.

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Manchus would accede to Iquan's request that he retain all his current privileges. Only after Iquan set sail with all his capital in his final withdrawal from An-hai did the Manchu General-in-Chief, Fucho Polo, send Iquan a message conveyed by a member of the gentry of Ch'üan-chou who happened to be a close friend of his. Polo confirmed that the Manchu Court was willing to negotiate with Iquan and promised that he could retain his current status and that he should send his troops to conquer Kuang-tung province in the name of the Manchu Emperor.²⁰ On 21 December, Iquan arrived in Fu-chou to initiate the formal negotiations.²¹ Meanwhile, the Manchu General-in-Chief had also launched an investigation to discover who were the most representative members of the gentry living in the vicinity of Fu-chou and sent messages to summon them to his headquarters. On 14 January 1647, this group of Fu-chienese grandees was taken hostage and dispatched to Peking by order of the Manchu Emperor. Iquan was among their number.²²

Iquan was suddenly borne away from Fu-chien by the Manchu General-in-Chief, Polo, before any substantial agreement had been concluded. Nor had any arrangement been made by the Manchu commander to put the regulations on the overseas trade in any sort of order. In short, the An-hai merchants still had no legal means to prevent the Nanking or Chê-chiang merchants from cutting into in the Sino-Japan silk trade.

Yet, there was a solution. Although the Manchu Court had not yet

²⁰ Anonymous, 'Appendix: Lung-wu i-shih [Forgotten Events during the Reign of the Lung-wu Emperor]', in TWYH (ed.), *Shêng-an pên-chi* [Biography of the Lungwu Emperor], TW no. 183, 205; Li, *Chüeh Huo-lu*, 885; Lin Shih-tui, *Hê-ch'a ts'ung-t'an* [Fragmentary Memorandum], TW no. 154, 156; Chi Liu-chi, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh* [Rough Historical Description of the Late Ming in the South], TW no. 148, 328.

²¹ Anonymous, *Lung-wu chi-lüeh*, 159; Li, *Chüeh Huo-lu*, 885; Chi, *Ming-chi nan-lüeh*, 328; Anonymous, 'Appendix: Lung-wu i-shih', 218.

²² Anonymous, *Lung-wu chi-lüeh*, 164.

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decided on what its maritime trade policy would be, the Shogunal government in Japan made no bones about despising any Chinese merchants who had shaved their heads in the Manchu fashion after submitting to the invaders. On 17 June 1646, a richly laden Nanking junk which had carried 65,500 taels' worth of cargo to Nagasaki was denied permission to trade because its crew had shaved their hair in the Manchu style.²³ Later they were allowed to sell their goods on condition that they would never return.²⁴ It seems feasible to assume that, if the An-hai merchants from the Cheng clan maintained their status as Chinese loyal to the Ming instead of submitting to Manchu, they might have been able to achieve the position of being the only Chinese who were allowed to continue to trade in Japan.

In 1647, when the coastal areas in Chê-chiang and Fu-chien were all opened up, many merchants from the two provinces fitted out junks for the Japan trade. On 13 May 1647, a junk from Nanking with a 'shaven' crew visited Nagasaki carrying 45-46,000 taels' worth of cargo, but owing to Japanese contempt for them was forbidden to sell anything. However, after her *nachoda* had spread the news that by now all of China would have been conquered by the Manchus and that Iquan had been captured and taken to Peking,²⁵ the Shogunal government underwent a change of heart and allowed this *nachoda* to sell his cargo in July.²⁶ This change of policy was officially acknowledged that same year, henceforth junks from Ch'ing China would be welcome.²⁷ Even before the Shogunal government had adjusted its position, Iquan had also dispatched several junks to Japan. One of his naval commanders, Ts'ui Chih, returned to Fu-chou in April 1647 and took up a position at Hai-k'ou (nowadays Fu-ch'ing city.)²⁸ He fitted out four junks to

²³ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 231. 17 June 1646.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 236. 10 Sept. 1646.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 284. 13-4 May 1647.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 287. 1 July 1647.

²⁷ *Generale Missiven*, II 1639-1655, 324. 31 Dec. 1647.

²⁸ His-t'ing ling-hsüeh, *Nan-t'ien-hên*[Traces of Southern Courts], TW no. 76, 414.

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trade with Japan in the name of the Lu Prince, who had been the nominal leader of the Ming resistance in Chê-chiang. These junks arrived in Nagasaki on 15 and 18 May 1647. They even brought an envoy:

*'The envoy who has came on this junk is not taken seriously, although he seems to be the Governor of Fu-chou's younger brother and he behaves with enough pomposity. He has brought several women and a carriage in their fashion, three donkeys, and three buffaloes. When the governor's interpreter went on board, he seated himself in an armchair on the poop of the junk and had two men hold a canopy above him. He had the anachoda, or the skipper of the junk, speak with the interpreter, implying that he considered the interpreter too much beneath himself to open his mouth to him. Three times a day they fire their muskets and play their instruments. The flag is hoisted in the morning and lowered in the evening.'*²⁹

Compared with the richly laden junk from Nanking, those from

'In April 1647, he occupied Hai-k'ou and dispatched his adopted son with the King of An-ch'ang to require Japanese military aid.' ; Nan-sha san-yü-shih, *Nan-ming yeh-shih*[Unconventional Historical Accounts of the Southern Ming], TW no. 85, 256; Shao T'ing-ts'ai, *Tung-nan chi-shih*[Records of Activities in the Southeastern Regions], TW no. 96, 126; Ni, *Hsü ming-shih chi-shih pên-mo*, 113; Hsü Tzu, *Hsiao-t'ien chi-ch'uan*[Chronicles of Smaller Courts], TW no. 138, 955; Chang Lin-pai, 'Fu-hai chi [Journal of the Flooding upon the Sea]', in TWYH (ed.), *T'ai-wan kuan-hsi wên-hsien chi-ling*[Compilation of Fragmentary Historical Materials relating to Taiwan], TW no. 309, 11.

²⁹ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 284. 18 May 1647. This description also agrees with the Chinese sources. Ch'a Chi-tso, *Tsui-wei-lu hsüan-chi*[Selections from A Certain Historical Book Forbidden by Imperial Court], TW no. 136, 269. 'The Lu Prince stationed on Choushan dispatched the Prince of An-ch'ang to Japan with a donkey and an ox-cart.' Li, *Chüeh Huo-lu*, 913. Therefore the 'governor Fu-chou's younger brother' referred to in the Dutch records was actually the ambassador, the Prince of An-ch'ang, who was also a member of the royal family which explains why he is recorded as a 'brother'.

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Fu-chou carried only a few goods. Apparently Iquan's monopoly on the Sino-Japan raw silk trade had slipped out of his hands after his failed negotiations with the Manchus. On 7 and 9 July, two more junks dispatched with an ambassador representing the Lu Prince arrived in Nagasaki, they were crewed by Ming loyalists who were still putting up a resistance on Chou-shan Island.³⁰ They carried no silks but did bring some pepper, medicines and black sugar, for there was little else they could offer.³¹

The Navy Commander (*Shui-shih Tsung-ping*) , Ts'ui Chih, was expelled from Fu-chou by the Manchu troops on 8 May 1647.³² However, in the following August Iquan's nephew, Cheng Ts'ai, who had been appointed Admiral by the Lu Prince led his ships in an attack on Fu-chou and, while the city was still under siege in the following three months, his troops occupied the surrounding towns and the northern border region of Fu-chien province.³³ In his efforts to curb the export of silk from Nanking, Cheng T'sai now asked, just as Iquan had done earlier, the Liu-ch'iu Kingdom to send a tribute mission and he also sought to conclude an agreement about the crown trade with the Shogunal government in Japan.³⁴ Cheng Ts'ai's troops managed to keep control of most of the areas along the northern border of Fu-chien for

³⁰ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 288. 7 July 1647.

³¹ *Ibidem*. 9 July 1647.

³² Chang Ts'un-jên, 'Wei t'ang-pao kuan-ping shui-lu lien-chan ta-huo ch'üan-chieh Shih [Report about the Great Victory Won at Sea and on the Land] 21 July 1647', in TWSL(ed.), *Ming-ch'ing t'ai-wan tang-an hui-pien*, II 1645-1653, 98.

³³ His-t'ing, *Nan-t'ien-hên*, 39; Nan-sha, *Nan-ming yeh-shih*, 257; Shao , *Tung-nan chi-shih*, 133; TWYH(ed.), *Ch'ing-shih-tsu shih-lu hsüan-chi*[Selection of the Veritable Records of the Shünshih Emperor], TW no. 158, 44; Sung, *Tsun-jang lüeh*, 190. Cheng Ts'ai was not a sibling of Cheng Chih-lung, but only bore the same family name 'Cheng'. Since they were close to each other, they usually pretended to be from one family.

³⁴ Yang, 'Nan-ming shih-tai yü liu-ch'iu chih kuan-hsi yen-chiu', 328-333.

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about one year.³⁵ In the year 1648, the Chinese (no matter where from) exported 19,415 catties of raw silk in total to Japan, which amounted to only 10 per cent of the Chinese raw silk exports in 1643.³⁶ Hence, although Cheng Ts'ai had undisputedly gained control of the coastal regions, the collection of raw silk for the Japan trade from the inland regions of China was still obstructed by war. The Manchu troops eventually re-occupied most of the towns in northern Fu-chien in 1649.³⁷

Once again, the trade between Nanking and Japan was forbidden by the Ch'ing Court and, when one of the Chinese junks returned from Japan on 18 March 1649, its crew was arrested by the Manchu coastal defence troops.³⁸ Hence, through intervention from Peking, in 1649 the serious competition between the Fu-chien and Chê-chiang merchants was brought to an end and the Fu-chien merchants temporarily regained their monopoly by the simple expedient their home region had still not been conquered by the Manchus.³⁹

Hunting silver and rice for the newly established Coxinga force

Iquan's failure to reach an agreement with the Manchu Court was a disaster for all his followers but the An-hai merchants continued to pursue their trade

³⁵ TWYH(ed.), *Ch'ing-shih-tsu shih-lu hsüan-chi*, 48. 23 Sept. 1648.

³⁶ Nagazumi Yoko, Liu Hsü-fêng (trans.), 'You Hê-lan shih-liao k'an shih-ch'i shih-chi tê t'ai-wan mao-i [The Taiwan Trade in the Seventeenth Century Based on the Dutch Sources]', in T'ang His-yung (ed.), 2 vols, *Chung-kuo hai-yang fa-chan-shih lun-wên chi(VII)* [Proceeding of Studies in Chinese Maritime History (VII)], vol.1, 37-57 at 44.

³⁷ His-t'ing, *Nan-t'ien-hên*, 40. 12 Aug. 1649.

³⁸ T'u Kuo-pao, 'Wei-pao-ming p'an-huo yang-ch'uan yang-ch'i shêng-chien-shih [A Letter Reporting the Capture of Trading-Junks and Suggesting How They Should Be Dealt With] 10 Jan. 1650', in TWSL(ed.), *Ming-ch'ing t'ai-wan tang-an hui-pien*, II 1645-1653, 221.

³⁹ Nagazumi, 'You Hê-lan shih-liao k'an shih-ch'i shih-chi tê t'ai-wan mao-i', 44.

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from Quemoy and Amoy. Even though they were no longer able to collect sufficient quantities of raw silk and silk products to satisfy the Japanese market, they refused to give in and continued to run the gold for pepper trade with Taiwan. Between April and August 1647, the An-hai merchants delivered some 700,000 guilders' worth of gold in all to Taiwan, which the Dutch paid for in silver, spices, and rice.⁴⁰

Table 9-1: The estimated silver exports from Taiwan to China during 1647-48 (f.)

Year-Month	Silver stores at the beginning of spring	Reserved silver for deerskins and sugar*	Imported silver from Batavia	Silver imported from Japan	Silver spent in the China trade*	The Chinese gold export from Taiwan
1647-4	594,000 ⁴¹	48,000 ^{42*}	0	326,920* ⁴³	568,120	883,898 ⁴⁴

⁴⁰ VOC 1164, Resolutie genomen [door Pieter Antonissen Overtwater] in 't Casteels Zeelandia, Taiwan, 8 Aug. 1647, fo.532^r.

⁴¹ Generale Missive, 14 Apr. 1647, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 245.

⁴² This is because from July to November the Factory in Taiwan maintained a constant debt of about 20,000 rials. I have assumed it was cash reserved for purchasing deerskins and sugar. VOC 1164 Resolutie genomen [door Pieter Antonissen Overtwater] in 't Casteels Zeelandia, 19 July 1647, fos. 530^v-531^r; 8 Aug. 1647, fo. 532^r; 9 Nov. 1647, fo. 553^v.

⁴³ Generale Missive, 31 Dec. 1647, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 249. Adding together the 52 chests from the *Jonker*, the 55 chests from the *Berckhout*, the 35 chests from the *Hillegaersbergh*, the sum is 142 chests. Meanwhile, 1 rial equals 52 stuivers; 1 tael 57 stuivers, hence every tael equals 1.1 rial, and each rial equals 2.6 guilders. 142 chests=142000 taels, which equals 406,120 guilders. Among them were some chests of silver, worth 30,000 taels, which equals 79,200 guilders, were dispatched to Siam, therefore only 326,920 guilders remained in Taiwan.

⁴⁴ VOC 1222, Missive van Frederick Coyett naer Batavia aen Joan Maetsuijcker, Taiwan, 30 Mar. 1657, fo. 15^v.

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1647-11						
1647-11	304,800 ⁴⁵	31,200 ⁴⁶	668,418 ⁴⁷	396,000 ⁴⁸	728,418	1,605,661 ⁴⁹
1648-12						
1648-12	770,000 ⁵⁰	-	-	-	-	-

To cut a long story short, while the silk-for-silver trade with Japan ground to a halt through a lack of supplies, the An-hai merchants continued to obtain silver from VOC factory in Taiwan by shipping out gold. In the summer of 1647, 65 per cent of this export gold was paid for in silver; in 1648 it was some 45 per cent. Apparently silver was the most highly prized commodity among the An-hai merchants.

While all this was going on, a new force emerged under the command of Iquan's son Coxinga (or Cheng Ch'eng-kung).⁵¹ Coxinga did not follow in

⁴⁵ Generale Missive, 31 Dec. 1647, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 250. 127,000 rials equals to 304,800 guilders.

⁴⁶ VOC 671, Resolutie van gouverneur-general Cornelis van der Lijn ende raden, Batavia, 11 Apr. 1648, not foliated. After the ship the *Berchout* departed from Taiwan on 25 Feb. 1648, only 12,000 rials which was equal to 31,200 guilders (1 rial = 2.6 guilders) were left.

⁴⁷ Generale Missive, 18 Jan. 1649, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 253. 155,270 rials in silver coinage was equal to 372,648 guilders and 131,571 taels were equal to 315,770 guilders. Added together these give the sum of 688,418 guilders. But this batch silver coins were debased for bullion because they can no longer be circulated as currency and thus lost 20,000 guilders in value. After deducted of this amount, the silver aid to Taiwan was: 668,418 guilders.

⁴⁸ Generale Missive, 26 Jan. 1649, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 259. 150,000 taels of silver equals 396,000 guilders.

⁴⁹ VOC 1222, Missive van Frederick Coyett naer Batavia aen Joan Maetsuijcker, Taiwan, 30 Mar. 1657, fo. 15^v.

⁵⁰ Generale Missive, 26 Jan. 1649, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 259. The 900,000 guilders excluded the 130,000 guilders in gold.

⁵¹ 'Coxinga' can be translated literally 'Lord of the Imperial Surname'. Cf. Boxer,

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the footsteps of his cousin Cheng Ts'ai who had chosen to focus on the Chê-chiang competitors. As a former member of the Lung-wu Emperor's guard,⁵² he was not a member of the army establishment like Cheng Ts'ai, but he could at least claim to be the possessor of An-hai Castle and of the private wealth left behind by Iquan when he was taken to Peking. According to the memoirs of one of his contemporaries, Juan Min-hsi, he employed these resources to organize a private army:

*'Coxinga planned to fight, but he commanded neither soldiers nor vessels. Therefore he went to Nan-ao and recruited troops. 300 people later followed him and he trained them on [the island of] Ku-lang-yu near Amoy. He ordered Huang K'ai in An-hai to raise money for the army supplies.'*⁵³

This picture is confirmed by the Dutch sources:

*'...I was told that Iquan's son and his younger brother have rendezvoused in the Pescadores with at least 700 junks and a host of men. They have been able to take with them many of the most prominent merchants and a substantial hoard of money and goods.'*⁵⁴

It is plausible to assume that the silver which was flowing in from Taiwan was used to pay for these newly trained troops.

In the spring and summer of 1647, the An-hai merchants also managed

Charles Ralph, 'The Rise and Fall of Nicholas Iquan (Cheng Chih-lung)', *T'ien Hsia Monthly*, Apr.-May (1941), 1-39 at 36.

⁵² Yang Yün-p'ing, 'Chêng ch'êng-kung fên ju fu k'ao' in: id, *Nan-ming yen-chiu yü t'ai-wan wên-hua* [Studies about the Southern Ming and the Culture of Taiwan], (Taipei: T'ai-wan fêng-wu, 1993), 375-91 at 383-6.

⁵³ Juan Min-hsi, *Hai-shang chien-wên lu*[Observations about All the Events in Coxinga' Maritime Career], TW no. 24, 5. 300 persons may only referred to the officials, not including the attached soldiers.

⁵⁴ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 285. 29 May 1647.

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to appropriate another crucial military resource: rice from Taiwan. The Diary of Zeelandia Castle records that between May 1 and July 1, Chinese traders exported 2,636 big bales and 1,372 sacks of rice and 2,560 sacks of paddy to the China coast.⁵⁵ This trade assumed such alarming proportions that, at the end of 1647 the Dutch Council in Taiwan had to issue a placard forbidding any further exports of rice.⁵⁶

As always happens in conflicts, the civil war brought widespread famine to the areas around the battlefields in Fu-chien and Kuang-tung. In April of 1648, in the areas around Fu-chou the rice price rose to between '1,000 wen per Tou (10 taels per picul)' and '20 taels per picul'.⁵⁷ Cheng Ts'ai was forced to send junks as far as Kao-chou, almost in Kuang-hsi province, to purchase rice. As the areas around Ch'üan-chou and Chang-chou were also famine stricken,⁵⁸ Coxinga found himself compelled to resort to

⁵⁵ *Dagregister Zeelandia*, II 1641-1648, from 1 May 1647 to 1 July 1647, 568-82; From 15 July 1647 to 24 July 1647, 584-5; 1 Sept. 1647, 592; 11 Oct. 1647, 599; Nov. 1647, 605-7.

⁵⁶ VOC 1164, Resolutie genomen [door Antonissen Overtwater] in 't Casteel Zeelandia, 9 Oct. 1647, fo. 545^v. On what date the placard was announced, is not recorded by the Zeelandia Diary. But the Chinese junks which departed from Taiwan after April 1648 carried only the rice for crews.

⁵⁷ Sung, *Tsun-jang lüeh*, 194-5. 'In April 1648, a serious famine occurred in Fu-chou, the rich price rose to twenty taels per *Tan*, and forty taels inside the city, starving people wandered on streets. ... The soldiers [under Cheng Ts'ai] imported rice from Kuang-tung, and thus avoided starvation.' Juan, *Hai-shang chien-wên lu*, 6. 'The rice price reached 1,000 maas per *Tou* in Fu-chien'; one *Tan* equals about 60 kilograms, hence a *Tan* was more or less equal to one picul (62.5 kilograms). Because one *Tan* equalled 10 *Tou*, one tael equalled 1,000 wen, '1,000 wen (maas) per *tou*' equals '10 taels per *Tan*.'

⁵⁸ Shên Ting-chün, *Chang-chou fu-chih* [Local Gazette of Changchou Prefecture], 50 vols, (T'ai-nan, Têng-wên publisher, 1965), vol. 47, 10. 'In 1648, every county suffered from famine, the rice price reached 6 maas per *tou*.'; Huang Jên, *Ch'üan-chou Fu-chih* [Local Gazette of Ch'üanchou Prefecture], 73 vols, (T'ai-nan,

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the same measures.⁵⁹ The Portuguese in Macao, who depended on Kuang-chou for their food supplies, were likewise staring starvation in the face.⁶⁰ They dispatched two junks to Siam carrying an enormous sum of gold to purchase rice there. On the way back, both vessels foundered because they were so overloaded.⁶¹ Despite the placard which forbade the export of rice to China, the Dutch in Taiwan detected plenty of smuggling activity.⁶² Governor-General Cornelis van der Lijn in Batavia ordered the Dutch factory in Siam to ship 200 to 300 *last* of Siamese rice (about 250-375 metric tons) to Taiwan.⁶³ Because a mass of Chinese refugees poured into Taiwan seeking shelter, this large cargo of rice was consumed in no time at all. At his wits' end, the Dutch Governor of Taiwan, Pieter Overtwater, had to ask for aid

Têng-wên publisher, 1965) , vol.73, 12. 'In 1648, ... there was a famine.'

⁵⁹ Juan, *Hai-shang chien-wên lu*, 6. 'In the year of 1648, Fu-chien was afflicted by a severe famine, Coxinga and Cheng Ts'ai dispatched junks to Kao-chou to purchase rice.'

⁶⁰ Ch'êng His-tso, *Wu-ch'uan hsien-chih* [Local Gazette of Wu-ch'uan Distrct], in The Palace Museum Committee (ed.), *Ku-kung chên-pên ts'ung-k'an* [Collectanea of Rare books in Palace Museum] (Hereafter cited as KKCP) no. 183, (Hai-k'ou: Hai-nan, 2001), 458. 'In 1648, the rice price soared and reached 7 *maas* per *tou*. Some families gave their children for cannibalism.'

⁶¹ NFJ 282, [Missive]aan d E heer Frederick Coijett, President in Japan, van Jan van Muijden in Judia op 't Coptoirs Siam [Letter to the President of the Factory in Japan, Frederick Coijett, Written by Jan van Muijden in Ayutthaya in Siam], Siam, 24 June 1648, not foliated.

⁶² VOC 1170, Resolutie des Casteel Zeelandia [genomen door Pieter Antonissen Overtwater], Taiwan, 8 May 1648, fo. 524^r.

⁶³ VOC 1170, Brieff door den coopman Jan van Muijden opperhooft in Siam 26 Junij 1648 aen den praesident Pieter Antonisz [Overtwater] [Letter sent by Chief Merchant Jan van Muijden in Siam to the Taiwan President Pieter Antonize Overwater], Siam [in't fluijt schip de witte duijf ter rhede voorde Reviere van Siam on the ship the *Witte Duijf* in the roadstead of the Siamese River)], 26 June 1648, fo. 484^v. One *last* equalled 1,250 kilograms, Cf. Judith Schooneveld-Oosterling, *VOC-glossarium*, 67.

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from Japan.⁶⁴ In November 1648, the Dutch merchants in Nagasaki were permitted to ship 6,000 bales (309 metric tons) of Japanese rice to Taiwan.⁶⁵

While Cheng Ts'ai and Coxinga were dispatching junks to purchase rice in Kao-chou, Iquan's brother Cheng Hung-k'uei sailed from Nan-ao to Chieh-yang where Iquan and he used to purchase rice in the 1630s. Now the circumstances had changed and, instead of purchasing the rice, he used force to subjugate several independent towns and castles. When this step had been accomplished, he urged the peasants to pay their land-tax to him in paddy.⁶⁶ This region, which is located in the eastern part of Kuang-tung, had not been affected by a bad harvest so Cheng Hung-k'uei had ample access to rice and sugar in 1648. In the following years, news reached Fu-chien that another claimant Ming Emperor, Yung-li, had established a court in Kuang-hsi province in the southwest. A little later the Manchu Regional Commanders Li Ch'eng-tung in Kuang-tung and Chin Sheng-huan in Chiang-hsi rebelled against the Ch'ing court in Peking. Their defection meant that although the war raged on in central China but the coastal areas remained relatively

⁶⁴ NFJ 282, Missive van Pieter Anthonisz. Overtwater naer Japan aen den E. Frederick Coyett, oppercoopman en operhooft in Japan en den voorderen raedt des Comptoirs aldaer [Letter from Pieter Anthonisz Overtwater in Taiwan to Chief Merchant Frederick Coyett and the Council in Japan], Taiwan, 24 Aug. 1648, not foliated; *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 322. 15 Sept. 1648.

⁶⁵ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 329. 8 Nov. 1648; VOC 11207, *Uijterekening Van de Goude en Silvere Munts Waardye, Inhout der Maten en Swaarte der Gewichten, in de respective Gewesten van Indiën* [Calculation of the Value of the Gold and Silver, Content of Weights and Measures in Different Regions of East India], (Middelburgh: Johannes Meertens, 1691), 11. In Nagasaki, one bale weighed 82-83 catties, while one catty weighed 0.625 kilograms. Therefore one bale weighed about 51.5 kilograms.

⁶⁶ Juan, *Hai-shang chien-wên lu*, 6; Tsang Hsien-tsu, *Ch'ao-yang hsien-chih* [Local Gazette of Ch'ao-yang District], KKCP, No.176, 463. 'In 1648, Ch'eng Hung-k'uei dispatched Ch'ên Pao to this town to levy taxes and collect rents. Local bandits tried to lay a siege to them, but the siege collapsed after about one month.'

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peaceful. Emperor Yung-li of the Southern Ming dynasty dispatched a delegate to recognize Coxinga's private army as a formal Ming force and to welcome the assistance he was prepared to give his new court.⁶⁷ Coxinga now had a legal basis from which to conquer the still independent districts around Ch'ao-chou which he set out to do with the assistance of his uncle, Cheng Hung-k'uei. They were quite successful because on 11 December 1649 Coxinga sent his Tax Levying Official (*Tu-hsiang-kuan*), Huang K'ai, to Amoy with a rich cargo of about 10,000 piculs (625 metric tons) of paddy.⁶⁸ In January 1650, Coxinga assigned Hung Hsu to reside in Ch'aoyang (the harbour of Ch'aouchou) and put him in charge of the rice exportation there.⁶⁹ Consequently, another several tens of thousands of piculs of paddy were shipped to Amoy in May.⁷⁰ The Dutch sources reveal that the rice trade along the coast of China was very profitable during these years. In March 1649, the High Government in Batavia decided to ship 600-700 last (750-875 metric tons) of rice to Taiwan, because it desired to maintain the price at about 60 rials per last (2.5 taels per picul) in Taiwan.⁷¹ Governor Pieter Overtwater wrote to Japan in 1649 saying that he believed that the rice price in Japan had also begun to rise. However he advised, 'It is only advisable to purchase rice and wheat if the rice price is lower than one tael two maas per bale (1.46 tael per picul).... which was the price last year and the year before.'⁷² The Chinese junk traders in Nagasaki also testified that

⁶⁷ Juan, *Hai-shang chien-wên lu*, 6; *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 355. 17 July 1649. 'Iquan's son - who is said to have become a great mandarin of Canton a short while ago.'

⁶⁸ Yang Ying, *Ts'ung-chêng shih-lu*, TW no. 32, 5.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷¹ VOC 672, Resolutie van gouverneur-generaal Cornelis van der Lijn ende raden, Batavia, 13 Mar. 1649, not foliated. 60 rials per last equals 50.7 taels per last. Therefore it was equal to 2.5 taels per picul.

⁷² NFJ 282, Missive van Pieter Anthonisz. Overtwater naer Japan aen den E Dircq Snoucq, oppercoopman over 's Compagnie ommeslagh in 't keijzerrijk Japan,

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‘on June 29, 1649, no fewer than seven ships had arrived in [Taiwan] from Batavia, the bulk of their cargo being rice for China.’⁷³ In October 19, the Dutch Chief Merchant in Nagasaki obtained permission from the Japanese authorities to export 6,000 bales (309 metric tons) of rice.⁷⁴ How much rice was transported to Taiwan is unknown, but Governor Pieter Overtwater commented that this supply: ‘had greatly contributed to the welfare of this place,’ and that it constituted a ‘desirable business.’⁷⁵ The high price of rice might be the explanation of why An-hai merchants like Huang K’ai and Hung Hsü never had any difficulty in laying their hands on Chinese gold in the years 1648-1650. The opening of the Ch’ao-chou- An-hai route came to the notice of the Dutch merchants when some commodities from Kuang-tung also began to flow into Taiwan.⁷⁶

The lucrative pepper trade targeted against Macao

The spices still in store in Taiwan were almost sold out between during March and June 1647.⁷⁷ The pepper price rose and fell depending closely on the news from China.

Taiwan, 26 July 1649, not foliated.

⁷³ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 355. 17 July 1649.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, 371. 19 Oct. 1649.

⁷⁵ NFJ 283, Missive van Nicolaes Verburgh naer Japan aen d’ E. Anthonio van Brouckhorst, oppercoopman en opperhooft over ‘s Compagnies negotie in ‘t keijzerrijck Japan [Letter from Nicolaes Verburgh to Chief Merchant Anthonio van Brouckhorst about the Company Trade in Japan], Taiwan, 21 July 1650, not foliated. Every ‘*bal*’ should equal 40 ‘*ganting*’.

⁷⁶ VOC 1170, Missive van Pieter Antonissen Overtwater naer Batavia aen Cornelis van der Lijn, Taiwan, 2 Nov. 1648, Fo. 573^v.

⁷⁷ VOC 1164, Missive van Pieter Antonissen Overtwater naer Batavia aen gouverneur generael Cornelis van der Lijn, Taiwan, 24 Sept. 1647, Fos. 624^v-625^f.

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Table 9-2: The pepper price in Taiwan from March to September 1647

Month	Price (rial per picul)	Pepper sold Rumours from the China coast	Exported pepper amount (picul) (sack)	
1647-3	15 5/8 15 3/4	400 piculs		
1647-4	18 1/2 14 1/2	Two junks would return from Batavia A Quinam junk arrived in Kuang-tung	165	30
1647-5	15 11/16		142	42
1647-6	-		20	225
1647-7	15 1/4 15 3/4 16 16 1/4 17 17 1/4 17 5/8 17 3/4	1,500 piculs 500 picul	1716	1452
1647-8	19 1/2		1145	230
1647-9	16 16 3/8	Rumours about instability in China	900	
1647-10			17	195
1647-11			32	59
sum			4137	2233

Source: VOC 1164, Missive van Pieter Antonissen Overtwater naer Batavia aen gouverneur generael Cornelis van der Lijn[Letter from Pieter Antonissen Overtwater to Batavia for the Governor-General Cornelis van der Lijn], Taiwan, 24 Sept. 1647, Fos. 624^v-625^f; *Dagregister Zeelandia*, II 1641-1648.

Before September 1647, the An-hai merchants had apparently had high expectations of the profits to be made in the pepper trade, because Manchu troops had bungun to invade Kuang-tung since January 1647. It seems plausible that, because some of Iquan's former troops had participated in this

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expedition, the An-hai merchants would have been well-informed about the general conditions in Kuang-tung.⁷⁸ Although the city of Kuang-chou surrendered when the Manchu cavalry arrived before its gates in January, the troops loyal to the of Ming cause laid siege to the city on 16 March 1647. The siege lasted one month.⁷⁹ The resistance struggle spread all over the coastal area and as a consequence Tung-kuan, Hsin-an and Ch'ing-yuan districts were re-occupied by the Ming forces in April.⁸⁰ They even attempted to take Kuang-chou in August.⁸¹ In the meantime, the area between Kuang-chou and Macao had become an extended battlefield, effectively barring the trade route between Kuang-chou and Macao. The situation in Fu-chien remained fairly peaceful, although An-hai Castle had had to endure an attack by the Manchu troops. The Dutch chief of the Deshima factory in Nagasaki described the situation as:

*'The Manchus are progressing peacefully, bringing everyone under their yoke. The Tartars(Manchus) offered to free Iquan and give him a high office on the condition that this [Iquan's] sons surrendered. His Japanese wife has died. The great conquests of the Tartars(Manchus) are carried out in the most civilized manner to the satisfaction of the subjugated: no one may rob anyone of a single penny or commit any theft.'*⁸²

⁷⁸ Anonymous, *Lung-wu chi-lüeh*, 165. 'The Bolo prince of Ch'ing dispatched his subordinate officer, Shih Fu, to lead the cavalry and Chêng Hung-k'uei to direct the navy towards Kao-chou, Lei-chou and Chi'ung-chou. Cheng Hung-k'uei excused himself on the grounds of ill health, so that Shih Fu and Cheng Chi-pao moved first.'

⁷⁹ T'ung Yang-chia, 'Liang-kuang tsung-tu ts'n chieh-t'ieh [Remaining Part of a Letter sent by the Governor of Kuang-tung and Kuang-hsi, T'ung Yang-chia] 10 Aug. 1647', in TWYH (ed.), *Nan-ming shih-liao*[Historical Sources of the Southern Ming period], TW no. 169, 70; Anonymous, *Hsing-tsai yang-ch'iu*[Events at the Yungli Emperor's Court], TW no. 234, 9.

⁸⁰ Anonymous, *Hsing-tsai yang-ch'iu*, 12-15.

⁸¹ Ibidem, 17.

⁸² *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 286. 29 May 1647.

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Under such conditions, the pepper trade could be pursued without a hitch and this boosted the price of pepper in Taiwan. The boom did not last. A steep decline set in at the beginning of September when Cheng Ts'ai launched an attack on Fu-chou which was located along the main trade corridor connecting Chê-chiang with Chiang-hsi provinces. Coxinga also attacked Ch'üan-chou and Hai-ch'êng during the same period but he was not able to take a single district until the beginning of the following year.

All other commodities shipped to Taiwan by the Dutch, such as lead, cloves, myrrh, amber, wax, camphor and sappanwood, were sold out by the end by the year.⁸³ The VOC ships generally purchased pepper in Jambi and Palembang in the island of Sumatra at a price of 10 rials per picul, and sold it for almost double that price in Taiwan. About 70 per cent (109,643 guilders) of the pure profit earned by the Dutch in Taiwan in that year (155,655 guilders) came from the sales of pepper.⁸⁴

In 1648, heavily overshadowed by the civil war in China, the trade situation in Portuguese Macao was still gloomy. Informed of what was happening in China, Governor-General Cornelis van der Lijn in Batavia believed that this was the reason the Taiwan trade had risen:

*'The longer the war in China continues, the more the trade in Macao declines. They [the Portuguese] have received very few provisions and commodities this year. Therefore the Company commodities have enjoyed a better market in Taiwan.'*⁸⁵

It is true that with the exception of gold hardly any of the Chinese goods for which orders had been placed reached Taiwan, but most of the tropical commodities the VOC had shipped from the Indonesian Archipelago to Taiwan were sold to Chinese merchants at a high price.

⁸³ Generale Missive, 31 Dec 1647, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 248.

⁸⁴ *Generale Missiven*, II 1639-1655, 328. 31 Dec. 1647.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, 343. 18 Jan. 1649.

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Table 9-3: The profits of some tropical commodities sold in Taiwan in 1648

	Purchased Price per picul in rial	Sold price per picul in rial	Profits
Lead	(f.) 5.5	(f.)11	100%
Sappanwood	(f.) 3	10	800%
	1.25	10 1/2	
		11	
Tin	15	30 1/2	203%
		31	
		31 1/2	
Nutmeg	2 7/16	33	1,358%
		34	
		40	
Wax	20	35	150%
Pepper	10	19	190%
		20	
		20 1/4	
		20 5/8	
		20 3/4	
		20 7/8	
		21	
		21 1/2	
		22 3/4	227.5%
Sandalwood	15	25	160%
		26	
		27	
		30	
		31	
		36	
		37	
		37 3/4	251%
Coconuts oil	(f.3)	16	1,280%
(per jar)	1.25	17	

Source: Missive van Pieter Anonissen Overtwater naer Batavia aen Cornelis van der Lijn, Taiwan, 2 Nov. 1648, VOC 1170, Fo. 567^r-569^r. (f) means it is counted in guilders.

In total 1,645,982 catties (= 882.91*lasts*) of pepper were carried to Taiwan in

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1649, which amounted to 40 per cent of the value of the cargo of the fifteen VOC ships dispatched to Taiwan from Batavia and Siam.⁸⁶ Most of these commodities were exchanged for Chinese gold.⁸⁷

The Re-organization of the Min-nan monopoly

on Chinese overseas trade under Coxinga

In the summer of 1649, the export of new silk from Fu-chien province to Japan picked up again for a number of reasons: some of the Manchu generals in Kuang-tung and Chiang-hsi rebelled thereby moving the battlefields of the civil war farther inland and, as a consequence, the export of Nanking silk was forbidden by the Manchu coastal defence troops. In July, one junk belonging to Coxinga and two junks the property of Iquan arrived in Japan.⁸⁸ In the meantime there had been signs that An-hai merchants were expanding their trade with Quinam and Cambodia. The Dutch Chief Merchant in Nagasaki reported that thirteen Chinese junks had suddenly brought large quantities of deerskins to Japan from these two countries:

*'We are unable to say whether the Company will make large profits on its Siamese wares, because so many goods have been brought by thirteen Chinese junks (all very large vessels) from our enemies, Cambodia and Quinam. This not only thwarts our trade in Japan, it is also a daily undermining of the Company profit by the treacherous grandees in this country.'*⁸⁹

As long as it was at war with Quinam, the VOC did its best to intercept

⁸⁶ Generale Missive, 31 Dec. 1649, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 261.

⁸⁷ Ibidem, 263.

⁸⁸ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XI 1641-1650, 355. 23; 26 July 1649.

⁸⁹ NFJ 282, Missive van Dircq Snoucq naer Taijouan aen de heer Pieter Anthonisz. Overtwater, Japan, 24 Oct. 1649, not foliated.

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all junk shipping from there, but to little avail.⁹⁰ Apart from that, the Fu-chien merchants were now also the only corridor through which the Siamese King could run his crown trade with China. Because the Manchu troops were marching towards Kuang-tung at the end of 1649 and again laid a siege to Kuang-chou in March 1650, the Siamese crown trade with that city was severely impeded. Seizing the opportunity created by this situation, the An-hai merchant fitted out ten junks to visit Siam right away.⁹¹ The siege of Kuang-chou also seriously obstructed the trade of Macao. This is what a Portuguese merchant, Francisco Bravo, who arrived in Malacca from Macao had to say about it:

*'He told us how the Manchus had taken Kuang-chou by force in December last year (1650) after a nine-month siege. They forced the inhabitants of the city to the sea shore and massacred most of them. ...Once Kuang-hsi province shall be conquered too, the whole of China will be under Manchu domination. Furthermore, he told us that the Portuguese situation in Macao is critical as no business is being conducted in the city because of the turmoil created by the war. But now Kuang-chou has surrendered to the Manchus, they[the Macauese] are hoping that the commerce will recover in the coming year.'*⁹²

The Fu-chienese merchants not only spoiled the Company trade in Japan because of their importation of large cargoes of deerskins,⁹³ their competition was felt elsewhere by the Dutch. Because An-hai merchants had

⁹⁰ *Generale Missiven*, II 1639-1655, 351. 18 Jan. 1649. The VOC had also established a factory in Cambodia in 1636-1644, and in Quinam in 1634-1639. But it later withdrew from both places and began to carry out frequent patrols.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, 448. 20 Jan. 1651.

⁹² VOC 1187, *Missiven* [aen haer Eds.gouverneur generael Carel Rijniersz te Batavia] [door Joan Thijssen, Joan Verpoorten en Jan Willemse], Malacca, 26 Jan. 1651, fos. 794^v-795r.

⁹³ *Generale Missiven*, II 1639-1655, 448. 20 Jan. 1651.

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dispatched two junks to Ligor to purchase pepper and tin, a Dutch ship which arrived slightly later was unable to purchase sufficient amounts of these commodities.⁹⁴ Not surprisingly, the sale of pepper and other tropical condiments fell short of expectations in Taiwan in 1650.⁹⁵

Apparently the An-hai merchants were able to capture the bulk of the Chinese foreign trade thanks to the maritime ban in force in Chê-chiang and the siege of Kuang-chou. The only Chinese harbour left which could offer a safe anchorage to the largest trade-junks plying the Siamese route was Amoy. If the An-hai merchants wished to preserve and enlarge their trade, the security of Amoy harbour was the prize. Therefore the local garrisons were assigned a key role in their project. In his memoirs, Juan Min-hsi recounts that Coxinga's commercial agent and naval commander, Cheng Chih-wan, quarrelled with the regional commanders of the garrison troops in Amoy and Quemoy, Iquan's nephews Cheng Ts'ai and Cheng Lien, over the question of the control of the foreign trade based in Amoy Harbour.⁹⁶ In May 1650, Governor Nicolas Verburgh of Taiwan received complaints from An-hai merchants, who accused Cheng Lien (alias *Salackia* [D.]) of dispatching an officer to the Pescadores to levy a tax on all the junks there, especially those bound for Taiwan.⁹⁷ Cheng Lien later offered Verburgh his excuses,

⁹⁴ VOC 1175, Missiven door den gouverneur Joan Thijssen aen de Ed. heer gouverneur generael [Carel Rijniersz] ende heeren raaden van India, Malacca, 26 Nov. 1650, fo. 389^r.

⁹⁵ Generale Missive, 20 Jan. 1651, in Cheng, *De VOC en Formosa*, 274.

⁹⁶ P'êng, *Ching-hai chih*, 20. 'In Amoy, Cheng T'sai and Cheng Lien had a conflict with Cheng Chih-peng... 'I assume that 'Cheng Chih-peng' refers to Cheng Chih-wan who was also fourth in Command of the Naval Force (*Shui-shih Ssu-chên*) under Coxinga and responsible for the rice import to Amoy from Chao-chou. Yang, *Ts'ung-chêng shih-lu*, 5.

⁹⁷ *Dagregister Zeelandia*, III 1648-1655, 127. 8 May 1650. In the letter sent by Salackja to Nicolas Verburgh, 2 July 1650, the signature '*Teibing, Thunbingh, Tseij-souw Tingwanhouw*' refers to Cheng Lian's official title and noble rank

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explaining that he would issue passes to the Taiwan-bound junks and that no junk would suffer any harassment in the future. He explained that he needed to collect taxes from the local fishermen who were under his jurisdiction at Amoy. He could use these funds to offer some financial aid to the Ming Emperor Yung-li:

'It is said that the cousin of our late Emperor has re-conquered the province of Kuang-tung from the Manchus. He requires all the support he can get in order to wreak even more havoc on the Manchus, who to our great sorrow have captured our illustrious country....I have decided to support him with well- equipped troops and junks. We are short of money to pay the many expenses, hence I must levy an annual tax for the Emperor. The inhabitants of the Pescadores are counted the same as other subjects.... Therefore I have sent my men to the Pescadores to collect the annual tax.'

All junks, departing from here bound for that destination must carry a pass issued by me and pay a certain tax. Those who do so are exempt from any further taxes and will not be harassed. All these junks will not be required to pay any other tax, not even as much as a single straw. I have forbidden my inferiors to demand any such on pain of death, I shall never allow such abuses to occur.⁹⁸

Since Cheng Lien had the authority to control all Amoy junks, including the right to issue passes and levy taxes, the An-hai merchants must have been afraid that they might be arbitrarily supplanted by some other merchants who pleased Cheng Lien more. They felt someone should take

'Ta-ming tsung-ping t'ai-shih ting-yüen-hou' [The Ming Regional Commander, Grand Preceptor of the Heir Apparent, the Marquis-Pacifier of the Far Frontier]. Hence it is evident that 'Sablackja' is another of Cheng Lian's names.

⁹⁸ VOC 1176, Translaat missive door de groot mandorijn Sablacja uijt Emoij aen den gouverneur Nicolaes Verburch geschreven [Translated Letter Written by the Great Mandarin Sablacja to the Governor of Taiwan Nicolaes Verburch from Amoy], Amoy, 2 July 1650, fo. 877^r.

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action to prevent the realization of this nightmare. Therefore, after the junks sailing to Siam and Ligor had returned to Amoy in the summer of 1650, the An-hai merchants persuaded Coxinga to seize control of Amoy. On 10 September 1650, Coxinga returned to Amoy from Chieh-yang, under the pretence of escorting a convoy of rice junks. He murdered Cheng Lien by a treacherous ruse and incorporated his cousin's troop into his own army.⁹⁹ Soon afterwards a richly laden junk belonging to Coxinga departed from Amoy setting course for Nagasaki, where it duly arrived on 18 October 1650. A formidable trading power was in the making. Possession of a naval force, the facilities offered by the deep-water harbour in Amoy and the rich trading capital of the An-hai merchants were now combined under one leader: Coxinga.

⁹⁹ Juan, *Hai-shang chien-wên lu*, 9; P'êng, *Ching-hai chih*, 20.