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The rift between the Taiwanese and the Amoy merchants

On 1 February, 1662, after enduring a nine-month siege, Governor Frederick Coyett surrendered Fort Zeelandia in Taiwan to the Chinese invader, General-in-Chief, Coxinga (Cheng Ch'eng-kung), who had transported his army over from his posts on Amoy and Quemoy. The bulk of Coxinga's soldiers were regrouped along the west coast of Taiwan to be ready to counter the expected engagement with the Ch'ing army, which had been successfully blocked from crossing the Taiwan Strait.¹ Making shrewd use of this situation, Coxinga was able to dissipate the crisis menacing his command, although a shortage of food almost incited a mutiny among his adherents. By moving most of his subjects from Amoy and Quemoy to Taiwan, he could turn these port cities into vanguard posts confronting the newly established Ch'ing Empire, the vast territory now under Manchu control. These two islands were transformed into part of a frontier area he could either occupy from the sea if need be or just as easily desert if this seemed the only viable option. As long as his Taiwan base remained inaccessible to the Ch'ing army, Coxinga could effectively exert his strategic advantage over the whole coast of China at any time he wanted. During his long-range expedition to Nanking in 1659, to his satisfaction, he had demonstrated that his army had the strategic capacity to harass any part of the coastal area in which a river

¹ Kees Zanvliet, 'The Contribution of Cartography to the Creation of a Dutch Colony and a Chinese State in Taiwan', *Journal Cartographica*, 35 No. 3-4, 123-135 at 134.

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system debouched into the sea.² As the parvenus Manchus were still busy conquering the whole of what had been the Ming Empire, as much by forming strategic alliances with Chinese allies as by feats of arms, the Emperor had still not ruled out granting the Cheng clan various privileges such as a trade monopoly along the coast of China in exchange for its obedience.³

This issue would have been simpler had not some Fu-chien merchants conspired with the Dutch—who had lost their factory in Taiwan—to make a grab for the lucrative Japan trade. The Amoy merchants, by then under the Ch'ing, expected that their business with Japan would be able to proceed as usual, and their Dutch allies planned to crush the Cheng naval force in exchange for permanent free-trade privileges to be granted by the Manchu Emperor.⁴ By making a pre-emptive strike before the Manchu Emperor had been able to build a loyal armada of his own, whoever commanded the Chinese coast would become Coxinga's successor and to him would fall the spoils of the prosperous monopolistic trade with Japan. While he still lived, the towering stature of Coxinga's military reputation made it impossible for either the Amoy merchants or the Dutch to interfere in the negotiations

² John E. Wills Jr, 'Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang', in Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, Jr (eds), *From Ming to Ch'ing*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 204-38 at 225-6; Tonio Andrade, 'The Company's Chinese privateers: how the Dutch East India company tried to lead a coalition of privateers to war against China', *Journal of world history*, vol.15, no. 4 (2004), 415-44 at 441-2. Both authors concentrate on this one single attack, but I think it is also important to examine how the Cheng fleet and troops dealt with the harbours they encountered on their way to Nanking.

³ Wills, 'Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang', 222, agrees that the Ch'ing court tried to accommodate the entire structure of the Cheng clan's military and commercial exploitation in the course of 1647, after Cheng Chih-lung had surrendered.

⁴ John E Jr. Wills, *Pepper, Guns, And Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622-1681*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974), 67.

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between Coxinga and the Manchu Emperor. However, Coxinga suddenly passed away in the summer of 1662, at the age of only thirty-nine. The most compelling reason for hopes of successful negotiations between the Manchu Emperor and Coxinga had been the Emperor's determined drive to establish a consistent, solid military organization, backed up by a sophisticated maritime logistic network under one leader—and this reason now suddenly disappeared. What seemed to herald the impending erosion of the Cheng regime allowed the two above-mentioned challengers to gain some room to manoeuvre which would allow them to aspire to gaining privileged status in the Sino-Japanese trade.

When the Cheng army and its families were transported to Taiwan, the trading fleet remained behind on the islands of Amoy and Quemoy. The Governor of these two islands was Cheng T'ai, who was also the Official of Revenue (*Hu Kuan*) in charge of Sino-Japan trade under Coxinga and chief negotiator with the Manchu court in Peking between 1662 and 1663. In the growing uncertainty, since his father had passed away without leaving any official testamentary disposition, Coxinga's elder son, Cheng Ching, decided to stake his claim to his legal right to the throne by force. The Official of War (*Ping Kuan*), Hung Hsü, and Regional Commander, Chou Ch'üan-pin, supported him, so all three of them set work to prepare the ground by pacifying the disgruntled army units in Taiwan during the autumn and winter of that same year.

Cheng T'ai probably did not share the full details of his negotiations with the Ch'ing court with his courtesy-nephew Cheng Ching. Sensing he was holding something back, Cheng Ching, began harbouring suspicions about Cheng T'ai's reliability, especially because upon Coxinga's sudden death, Cheng T'ai had not paid immediate homage to his son.

Whatever the real story might have been, desperately in need of funds, the young heir decided to execute his courtesy-uncle, Cheng T'ai, and confiscate his property to finance the Cheng army and navy. Apprised of this, Cheng T'ai's younger brother, Cheng Ming-chün, persuaded the rest of the

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family to surrender their junks and trading capital to the Ch'ing government and, in June of 1663, Cheng Ming-chün and his followers abandoned Quemoy. The true damage lay in the fact that these deserters were precisely the coterie of experienced merchants who had run the Sino-Japanese trade expertly for years.⁵

The upshot was that unity crumbled and the Cheng merchants were split into two opposing parties. As representatives of the ruler of China, the Ch'ing authorities immediately made use their newly acquired junks by mounting an expedition to drive Cheng Ching's force out of Amoy and Quemoy. With the assistance of the Dutch fleet, in November 1663 they targeted Cheng Ching's armada, but the latter successfully avoided the engagement, and was able to preserve most of his junks by retreating to Nan-ao, an island lying off the southern border between Fu-chien and Kuang-tung.⁶

Cheng T'ai's adherents' desertion to the Ch'ing camp in July 1663 took place almost at the end of the southwest monsoon season, when the junks traditionally sailed northwards to Japan. The news about the split in the Cheng regime disturbed those Chinese traders who had already arrived in Nagasaki, because they realized that they would have to take sides upon returning to China. Six of the junks were from An-hai. During the truce required by Cheng T'ai as a condition for peace negotiations, these junks had loaded their goods at Ch'üan-chou, a city under the Ch'ing.⁷ Most of the captains under the Cheng regime found it hard to reach any decision it was difficult to come by reliable information in Japan. By the end of the northeast monsoon season, around 1 January, eight junks set sail on course for Amoy but the crews of the thirteen to fourteen other junks could not make up their

⁵ Wills, 'Maritime China from Wangchih to Shih Lang', 228-9.

⁶ Wills, *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys*, 68-75.

⁷ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 77. 13, 15, 17, 24, 26, July, 1663.

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minds which destination to choose.⁸ According to Dutch records, ten junks eventually announced that they were intending to sail to An-hai.⁹ Owing to the lack of records kept by the Cheng side, it is hard to estimate how many junks did eventually decide to go over to the Ch'ing. What happened is that in the following southwest monsoon season, about half (15 of 33) of the Chinese junks from Kuang-tung Province or its surrounding areas—probably Kao-Lei-Lien or Chieh-shih - returned to Japan, as will be explained below. Given the fact that the Cheng frequently purchased rice on Nan-ao, on the border of Kuang-tung Province, and that rice was rather scarce in Japan during the winter of 1663, it is plausible to infer that most of these Chinese junks rejoined the Cheng forces on Nan-ao in order to purchase rice.¹⁰

On the other hand, in August 1663 eager to seek revenge for the damage caused by Coxinga, the Dutch fleet had swept the northern Cheng harbour of Sha-ch'eng clear of any junks, an action which cut off the primary Cheng route for collecting silks in Chê-chiang Province.¹¹ Henceforth the coast from Nanking to Amoy was secured by the Dutch fleet from the sea and by Ch'ing troops on land. Quite apart from this major setback, some of the Cheng's most senior soldiers surrendered to the Ch'ing on Nan-ao in March

⁸ VOC 1247, Missive van de opperhoofden te Nangasacki aen den gouverneur generaal Joan Maetsuijcker ende raden van India, Japan, 1 Jan. 1664, fo. 32.

⁹ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 90-2; 94. 19 Nov. (3 junks); 1, 9, 10, 28 Dec. 1663 ;1, 21 Jan. 1664.

¹⁰ VOC 1247, Missive van de opperhoofden [Willem Volger et al.] te Nangasacki aen den gouverneur generaal Joan Maetsuijcker ende raden van India, Japan, 1 Jan. 1664, fo. 28.

¹¹ VOC 1243, Appendix op seeckere missive dato 5 November 1662 door den Ed. commandeur Balthasar Bort voor Tinghaij aen haer Eds.[Joan Maetsuijcker] tot Batavia geschreven [Appendix in certain letter dated on 5 Nov. 1662 written by commander Balthasar Bort at T'inghai to governor general Joan Maetsuijcker at Batavia], Canton, 7 Jan. 1663, fo. 74^v.

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1664.¹² The Cheng resident forces in several other harbours near Fu-chou soon followed suit.¹³ As a consequence, neither Amoy nor Fu-chou merchants had to live any longer in fear of Cheng raids. Now the Ch'ing-allied Fu-chien merchants could safely purchase raw silk in Chê-chiang for shipment to Nagasaki when the new raw-silk season opened in April of 1664.

The merchants who had deserted to An-hai also celebrated the occasion. In the southwest monsoon season of 1664, a junk from Fu-chou arrived in Japan loaded with 'the richest goods that had ever been seen in thirty years'. The value of its cargo was estimated at roughly 900,000-1,000,000 guilders, or 315,000-350,000 taels.¹⁴ In a letter written by the Dutch officials residing in An-hai, there is confirmation that this big junk was owned by the Count of T'ung-an (T'ung-an Po), the title of nobility borne by Cheng T'ai's younger brother, Cheng Ming-chün.¹⁵ This trade was obviously in breach of the edict pronounced by Manchu K'ang-hsi Emperor in 1662. The imperial edict stipulated not only the prohibition of foreign trade, it also contained the decree that all inhabitants living within the range of 30 Chinese *li* (about 15 km) from the coast should forsake all their fields, houses and so on, and

¹² VOC 1248, Missive van den residenten in China [Ernst van Hogenhouck] aan den oppercoopman en opperhooft Willem Volger en zijn raet in Japan geschreven [Letter Written by Those Residing in China to Chief-Merchant Willem Volger and His Council in Japan], China, 3 May 1664, fo. 2580. On 20 March, the most important commander under Cheng Ching, Chou Ch'üan-pin, deserted to the Ch'ing side from Nan-ao, taking with him 6,000 experienced soldiers and 100 junks..

¹³ Wills, 'Maritime China from Wangchih to Shih Lang ', 228-9.

¹⁴ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 116. 25 June 1664. Because the record of 23 Jan. 1665 counted 20 tons of gold as equivalent to 700 chests of silver, 1 ton of gold should equal 35 chests of silver. 1 chest of silver referred to 1,000 taels.

¹⁵ VOC 1248, Missive van den residenten in China aan den oppercoopman en opperhooft Willem Volger en zijn raet in Japan geschreven, 3 May 1664, fo. 2582; VOC 1248, Missive van de residenten te Nangasacki aen den gouverneur generaal Joan Maetsuijcker ende raden van India, 22 Oct. 1664, fo. 2401.

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move inland behind the newly fortified frontier. The Ch'ing government believed that this prescription would eradicate the Cheng commercial network and ruin its financial base. However, its real effect was to assign the Provincial Navy Commander (*Shui-shih Ti-tu*) full authority over the areas evacuated. This arrangement was also confirmed by the Governor-General of Fu-chien, Li Shuai-tai, in his report to the Emperor on 24 March, 1664.¹⁶

Although the Ch'ing Provincial Navy Commander, Shih Lang, should have had enough vessels at his disposal to invade Taiwan during the summer of 1664, he and his officers excused themselves from launching the invasion by asserting that a series of typhoons had severely damaged their vessels and had consequently rendered the invasion impossible.¹⁷ It seems to me that related lucrative trade opportunities must have had something to do with this postponed expedition.

This sudden change of mind expressed in the delaying tactics of the Ch'ing navy was very unreasonable in the eyes of its Dutch allies, who had dispatched a fleet to the Taiwan Strait from Batavia during the southwest monsoon season of 1664. They had crushed the Cheng fortifications on the Pescadores Islands before arriving in Fu-chou in July and had also re-occupied Chi-lung, on the northern tip of Taiwan, which might have provided the Ch'ing army a secure landing point in the event of an invasion.¹⁸ As a foothold on which the Ch'ing army could land on Taiwan had now been

¹⁶ Li Shuai-tai, 'T'i wei shui-lu kê hsün-ti fang-shou shih-pên [A Report on the Defences in the Different Strongholds along the Coast] 3 June 1664', in CKTI (ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'ü chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I, no. 8, 74.

¹⁷ Liang Ching-piao, 'T'i wei cho-p'ai shih-lang kung-ch'ü t'ai-wan shih-pên [Considerations for Dispatching Shih Lang to Conquer Taiwan] 16 Sept. 1664', in CKTI (ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'ü chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I no. 8, 91.

¹⁸ VOC 1248, Resolutie van China genomen door de commandeur Balthasar Bort en de raad te Hoksiew [Resolution by Commander Balthasar Bort and the Council in Fu-chou], Fu-chou, 16 Oct. 1664, fo. 2675-2678.

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prepared, it seemed to them to be no reason to postpone the engagement. Their confidence strengthened by their private trade in Japan, the Fu-chien authorities still dallied but tried to make amends by building a warehouse in which the Dutch could store their tropical trade goods. Twisting the meaning of the Emperor's edict, the Fu-chien authorities used the Emperor's permission to provide his Dutch allies with victuals prior to the Taiwan expedition as an excuse to dodge the prohibition on foreign trade with the Dutch.¹⁹ According to information later reported to the Japanese authorities, the VOC had been able to sell 50,000 taels' worth of pepper, sandalwood and cloves in Fu-chien. In their turn, the Dutch purchased large quantities of goods, including 500 piculs of Chinese white silk. Moreover, the Fu-chien authorities recommended that the Emperor give the Dutch presents soon after their fleet arrived in Fu-chou in 1663. The gift-giving would imply that the Dutch might be in line for some more trade with China at a later date.²⁰

The joint Ch'ing-Dutch fleet set sail on 27 November, 1664, but it seems that, shortly thereafter, the weather deteriorated. Seeking shelter, the armada returned to Wei-t'ou Bay where they celebrated folk festivals and amused themselves by watching some theatre. Even though the Dutch sailors

¹⁹ Mingandali, 'T'i-ch'ing chun-yü hê-lan-kuo chia-pan ch'uan mai-wu mai-mi shih-pên [Petition to Allow the Dutch Fleet to Trade Goods for Provisional Rice Supplies] 22 Nov. 1664', in CKTI (ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'ü chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I no 8, 117.

²⁰ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 136. 26 Jan. 1665. Rumours spread in Nagasaki that, in China the Dutch had sold goods valued at about 50,000 taels; Sha Ch'eng, 'T'i-pao hê-lan-kuo chia-pan-ch'uan ti-min chu-kung shih-pên [Report of the Arrival of the Allied Dutch Fleet](10 Nov. 1683)', in CKTI (ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'ü chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I, no. 8, 48. The Fu-chien authorities sent their recommendation to the Emperor on 2 October, 1663. The Minister of Ritual, Sha Ch'eng, replied to Emperor K'ang-hsi suggesting that the court should not give more than 300 pieces of satin and 1,000 taels to the Dutch as presents, and that the presentation could only take place after the joint Dutch-Ch'ing forces had defeated the Cheng force.

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had almost caught sight of the coastline of Taiwan during the voyage, they had no option but to return to Wei-t'ou Bay because the Ch'ing armada had decided to withdraw to the coast of China, remaining in the bay for a whole month until December 24. Only then did Provincial Navy Commander , Shih Lang, attempt to sail across the Taiwan Strait a second time. The expedition was again terminated when several war-junks collided with Dutch vessels just outside the harbour.²¹

In the meantime, on 2 December two more junks departed from Fu-chou and set course for Japan. Not surprisingly, these richly laden trading junks were the property of Keng Chi-mao, the highest military commander in Fu-chien Province, whose title was the Ching-nan Viceroy. They left just before two other junks, which belonged to the T'ung-an Count and the Hai-ch'êng Duke also carrying a rich cargo, returned from Japan.²² The two junks on course to Japan entered Nagasaki Bay on the 21 and the 23 January respectively in the company of another smaller junk from Fu-chou. The Japanese valued the total cargo of those three junks at about 700,000 taels, or 2,000,000 guilders.²³ Considering that the Manchu Emperor's prohibition on foreign trade must have lowered the purchasing prices of silk goods in China, while demand in the Japanese market remained constant, the profits on the sale of the cargo in Nagasaki must have been enormous.

Admittedly,owing to the very bad weather conditions that winter, it would have been difficult to lead a fleet of 400 junks across the Taiwan Strait

²¹ VOC 1249, Missive van d'Ed. Balthasar Bort en den raat aen haer Eds. tot Batavia, Canton 3 Jan. 1665, fos. 183-186.

²² VOC 1252, Missive van seigneur Nobel [Constantijn]en raadt tot Hocksieu aen haer Eds.[gouverneur generael Joan Maetsuijcker][Letter from Sir Constantijn Nobel and the Council at Fu-chou to Governor-General Joan Maetsuijcker], Canton, 28 Feb. 1665, fo. 200. The T'ung-an Count's junk is recorded to have arrived on the 25 June 1664, but the Hai-ch'êng Duke's junk is not mentioned in this record.

²³ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 136. 21;22;23 Jan. 1665.

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for an invasion, but it is also not beyond the bounds of possibility that the strictly prohibited Nagasaki trade generated such lucrative profits for the Fu-chien authorities, they would have been very reluctant about pursuing their military mission. They excused themselves from this duty by asserting that undertaking co-operative missions with the Dutch was compounded by the difficulties arising from navigation in foul weather. Therefore they respectfully submitted that the Emperor should reject any further offers of Dutch assistance. These views were never made known to the Dutch. Although the Fu-chien authorities promised the Dutch that they would try to persuade the Emperor to grant privileges for free trade, they actually used the Dutch fleet only as a protector and, thereby, reduced the risk of their junks falling prey to the Cheng force.

The merger between the Taiwanese and Kuang-tung merchants

According to the Dutch records, during the southwest monsoon season of 1664 twelve junks from Kuang-tung arrived in Japan. Assuming that the crews of those junks were still sailing under the flag of the Cheng when they departed, how did they behave in Kuang-tung between February and May 1664? Prior to the summer of 1663, the Kuang-tung merchants under Ch'ing rule had been involved in the rice trade with the Cheng troops residing at Amoy and on Nan-ao. At least six different reports written by the Kuang-tung authorities accused the naval forces detailed to the eastern border of Kuang-tung of allowing the transportation of paddy to the Cheng camps at Amoy and on Nan-ao.²⁴ For example, around May 8, 1663, some seventy

²⁴ Minandali, 'T'i-fu yang yü-ming wei hsü-lung têng wei-chin yü tsê t'ung-shang shih-pên [Letter in Reply to Yang Yuming Detailing How Hsü Lung Traded with Privateers without Permission] 2 Dec. 1663', in CCTI (ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'u chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I no. 7, 55-61.

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junks loaded with rice sailed to Amoy from the eastern part of Kuang-tung.²⁵ During the sea battle between the fleets of the Cheng and the Ch'ing navies off Nan-ao on 30 June, 1663, the Ch'ing naval captains witnessed how their Regional Commander of Chieh Shih, Su Li, deliberately let the Cheng junks escape their encirclement.²⁶ Like the naval force stationed at Amoy, the fleet under Su Li anchored off Chieh Shih Island was located outside the new boundary defined in the Evacuation Edict, but Su Li's fleet was also prohibited from conducting any trade. Of the Kuang-tung junks arriving in Japan in 1664, two declared themselves to be subject to Su Li. The Japanese estimated the value of the cargo of these two junks at 700,000 guilders.²⁷ Although the Dutch journal kept on Deshima does not mention the precise nature of the cargo, on the basis of the evidence that there was another junk from Kuang-tung which had brought raw silk and silk goods, it is likely that the junks were loaded with silk goods smuggled from Chê-chiang.²⁸ Unquestionably Su Li had a shrewd understanding of how he too could benefit from the maritime prohibition policy. The goods must have been smuggled through unsupervised gaps along the long coastline of Kuang-tung. Some rumours of what was going on reached the Dutch in Fu-chou: 'We have been informed that Hung Hsü, who is the person closest to Coxinga's son, has deserted him and fled to Kuang-tung.'²⁹ This information implies that Hung Hsü might also have been involved in smuggling activities in Kuang-tung. There is another point worth noting about these Kuang-tung

²⁵ Minandali, 'Wei shih-ma têng-ti ch'ao-tsê ch'ing-hsing pên [Report on the Suppression of the Privateers on Shihma] 28 June 1663', in CKTI (ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'u chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I no. 7, 454.

²⁶ Minandali, 'Wei chin-ch'ao nan-ao shih-pên [Report on the Expedition to Nanao] 10 Sept. 1663, in CKTI (ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'u chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I no.8, 24-25; 28.

²⁷ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 117,121. 2 July 1664; 11 Aug. 1664.

²⁸ Ibidem, 124. 9 Sept. 1664.

²⁹ VOC 1249, Missive van d'Ed. Balthasar Bort en den raat aen haer Eds. [Joan Maetsuijcker] tot Batavia, Canton, 3 Jan. 1665, fo. 187.

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junks: two had departed from the Kao-Lei-Lien (*Colira*[D.]) areas.³⁰ These were the three different prefectures situated on the Lei-chou Peninsula which had been excluded from the compulsory evacuation along the Kuang-tung coast. From the Lei-chou Peninsula, it was possible to have complete control of the sea route between Kuang-tung and the northeastern part of Vietnam. Records exist which say that some local people resisted the compulsory evacuation and even retaliated against it by attacking Kuang-chou City with a naval force in 1663.³¹ Other sources also indicate that the people who inhabited the Kao-Lai-Lien areas co-operated with the Cheng force.³²

While the Kuang-tung junks lay anchored in Nagasaki Bay during the autumn of 1664, the Ch'ing focused their attention on Su Li. On 1 October, the Kuang-tung authorities sent troops to attack Su Li's castle in the Chieh-shih. He was subsequently defeated and decapitated but his 10,000 subjects surrendered and were spared.³³ News of this was probably brought by the above-mentioned junks of the Ching-nan Viceroy which sailed to

³⁰ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 117, 120. 7 Aug. 1664; 8 Aug. 1664.

³¹ Tu Chên , *Yüeh-min hsün-shih chi-lüeh* [The Commissioner's Journey through Kung-tung and Fu-chien Provinces] 6 vols, (Shang-hai: Shang-hai ku-chi bookstore, 1979), I, 12. The Manchu court established the naval station at Shun-tê to counter the raids of two privateers/ pirates, Chou and Li.

³² Chao Erh-hsün, *Ch'ing-shih kao* [Draft of Chinese History in the Ch'ing Dynasty], (Taipei: Ting Wen, 1981, 9413. 'Chou-yu, originally a person of lowly origin living on the junks, proclaimed himself general of the liberation army of Kuang-tung. He led several hundred junks, with three sails and eight rudders which moved rapidly on water. They were skilled mariners. When the Coxinga's junks arrived, they assisted them in their piracy. '

³³ TWYH(ed.), *Ch'ing-shih-tsu shih-lu hsüan-chi*, 24. The governor of Kuang-tung, Lu, reported ' Pingnan Wang and the commander led the army to attack the base of Chieh-shih's privateers, decapitated the leader, Su Li, and captured more than 10,000 people.' This implies that most of his subjects had been pardoned by the Kuang-tung authorities, even though they had violated the maritime prohibition edict.

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Nagasaki.³⁴ Unlike the Fu-chien authorities, who were charged with the conquest of Taiwan, the Kuang-tung authorities now confined themselves scrupulously to executing the edict which prohibited maritime trade and required the evacuation of the coastal provinces to the letter. The top military commander, the Ping-nan Viceroy, Shan Ke-hsi, had already made an attempt to load two junks with silk goods for Japan in 1661, but before they could set sail the civil authorities in Kuang-chou City confiscated the vessels citing the prohibition as their grounds for this action.³⁵ Despite the fact Su Li lost his life, the rest of the Kuang-tung junk traders somehow managed to continue their activities under his colleague, Hsü Lung (*Colion*, *Corion*, *Colien*[D.]). The pilot of a Macao-based Portuguese ship which arrived in Malacca in the spring of 1665 reported:

*'Although the Emperor of China has issued an order that he must wage war against those in Taiwan with all the Chinese residing along the coast and with the whole navy financed by him, there are still some people living on a large, elongated piece of land near Macao who are unwilling to obey this directive.'*³⁶

During the southwest monsoon season of 1665, only four junks departed from Kuang-tung *en route* to Japan. All belonged to Hsü Lung.³⁷ Furthermore, the Dutch in Ligor heard about some 'long-haired' Chinese merchants, that is people who had not submitted to the Manchu rulers, who had visited Siam during 1666. These Chinese merchants were said to originate from an island under Su Li's rule. It turned out that merchants originally based on Chieh Shih Island had escaped and had regrouped in

³⁴ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 136. 23 Jan. 1665.

³⁵ VOC 1236, Missive door den koopman Hendrick Baron aen haer Eds.[Joan Maetsuijcker] tot Batavia, 13 Nov. 1661, fo. 853.

³⁶ VOC 1252, Missive van d'edele [Jan van] Riebeeck en raadt aen haer Eds.[Joan Maetsuijcker], Malacca, 20 Feb. 1665, VOC 1252, fol. 75.

³⁷ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 155. 19 July 1665.

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Japan before sailing to Siam. They were still planning to check the current situation on their island in June of that year.³⁸ Evidently Kuang-tung merchants, or the local junk traders, had gradually begun to participate in the trade of the Cheng regime based in Taiwan after they had found themselves barred from their harbours on the Chinese coast by the promulgation of the Ch'ing policy of compulsory evacuation.

After 7 September, 1664, when the K'ang-hsi Emperor formally ordered the wresting of Taiwan from the hands of the Cheng, Shih Lang was expected to accomplish this mission without delay. This time something extraordinary happened. On 31 May, 1665, on its way across the Taiwan Strait, the armada was lying at anchor off the Pescadores Islands when it was engulfed by a typhoon of enormous proportions.³⁹ The Dutch chief merchant on Deshima heard from a Fu-chou junk:

*'...our fleet and that of the Manchus had run into a heavy storm off the Pescadores last November. One of our ships and most of the Manchu fleet (which consisted of at least 400 junks) has been destroyed. Time will tell if the report is true.'*⁴⁰

³⁸ VOC 1264, Rapport van den koopman Adriaen Lucasz. wegens sijne verrichtinge op Ligoor overgegeven aen de heer Balthasar Bort president en commandeur van de stadt en Forteresse Malacca[Report Written by Merchant Adriaen Lucasz about his Activities in Ligor to the President and Commander of the City and Castle Malacca Balthasar Bort], Ligor, 22 Nov. 1666, fo. 208^{r-v}.

³⁹ Shih Lang, 'Fu-chien shui-shih t'i-tu shih-lang t'i wei chou-shih chin-kung t'ai-wan t'u-tz'u pei-fêng p'iao-san ni k'ê-ch'i fu-chêng shih-pên[Report Written by the Naval Commander of Fu-chien, Shih Lang, Recounting How the Fleet Was Struck by a Typhoon on Its Way to Taiwan and Being Fitted out for Depart Again]', in CKTI, Sha-mên ta-hsüeh t'ai-wan yen-chiu-so[Taiwan Research Institute XMU] (eds), *K'ang-hsi t'ung-i t'ai-wan tang- an shih-liao hsüan- chi*[Selections of Historical Material concerning the Conquest of Taiwan during the K'ang-hsi Period], (Fu-chien: Fu-chien jên-min publisher, 1983), 50.

⁴⁰ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 152. 18 June 1665.

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This calamity represented a tremendous loss for the Fu-chien authorities, because they had paid for the construction of most of the vessels from their own private purses. Two hundred and fifty junks belonged to the Provincial Navy Commander, Shih Lang, and the Hai-ch'êng Duke, and another 100 were owned by the Ch'ing-nan Viceroy. The remainder were the property of various Fu-chien officials.⁴¹ This pattern of ownership might explain why the subsequent suggestions of these Fu-chien officials that Emperor K'ang-hsi should seek conciliation with Taiwan gained a largish following and why the Emperor decided to call a halt to any further expeditions.

This heaven-sent gale which struck the Pescadores in the early summer of 1665, enabled the Cheng regime to release its Taiwan-based troops from the unproductive duty of defending the island. The merchants who lived under the Cheng regime immediately poured their energy into maritime trade activities and resumed their monopoly over the trade. The first thing they intended to accomplish was to secure their share in the Japan market and, in particular, to repair the damage to the weakened Chinese silk export business.

Between 1664 and 1665, as the Ch'ing Fu-chien authorities were beginning to dispatch silk-laden junks to Japan, the Cheng regime in Taiwan sought the co-operation of the disaffected elements in Kuang-tung, either privateers or rebels. As the Dutch had destroyed their commercial harbour at Sha-ch'eng, the Cheng junk traders had to try to find some alternative port along the Chê-chiang- Fu-chou route at which they could obtain Nanking silk. Now that virtually the entire coast of China had been sealed off, the intermediate land route via Vietnam emerged as viable alternative. If the border between Vietnam and China was opened, then it would be possible to transport the Nanking silks overland and then channel them to Japan via

⁴¹ Su Nahai, 'Su-na-hai t'i wei chuan-ts'ai tsao-ch'uan ch'ou-pan ping-hsiang pên [Report Written by Su Nahai about Donating Money to Build Ships and Support Soldiers] 2 Aug. 1663', in CCTI (ed.), *Ch'ing-ch'u chêng-ch'êng-kung chia-tsu man-wên tang-an i-pien*, TWH, I no 7, 518.

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North Vietnamese ports. Ever since the beginning of the Manchu invasion, opposing bands had been cruising the coastal waters between China and Vietnam. The Dutch had also seen how about 1,200 ‘long-haired’ resistance fighters had occupied the most westerly harbour at Longmen in September 1661.⁴² After the Manchu force had driven these intruders away in 1662, they probably sought refuge in Tonkin.⁴³ As mentioned before, as a consequence of Hung Hsu’s contacts in Kuangtung they had connections with the Cheng regime in Taiwan. Certainly, the Cheng trading fleet did dispatch junks to Vietnam from Japan and, in the spring of 1663, a Cheng junk carrying 100 armed men arrived in Tonkin (Hanoi). It was said that she had come from Japan and was loaded with pepper, lead, rattans and the like, which the Dutch suspected of being the booty plundered from Dutch Fort Zeelandia in Taiwan.⁴⁴ Just before this armed junk arrived in Tonkin, dozens of Chinese merchants residing there advised the resident Dutch merchant there to encourage the border trade. He reported the following to Batavia

‘In Lung-chou (Loctjouw[D.]) and Chiao-chou (Caatcjouw[D.]) we met more than ten Chinese merchants who had been travelling for twenty-seven days on a journey from Nanking (Nanquin[D.]) to Lung-chou. If they had not reached this border (near Lung-chou) by way of Chiang-hsi (Kiancij[D.]) Province and, further along, by way of the entire province of Hu-kuang (Huquam [D.]), and have headed straight to Kuang-chou (Canton[D.]) City, they would have had to travel the entire length of Chiang-hsi Province. Kuang-tung Province is situated about 60 Dutch miles

⁴² VOC 1236, Missive door den koopman Hendrick Baron aen haer Eds.[Joan Maetsuijcker] tot Batavia geschreven, Tonkin, 13 Nov. 1661, fo. 848.

⁴³ Chen Chingho , ‘Ch’ing-ch’u chêng-ch’êng-kung ts’an-pu chih i-chih nan-ch’i (shang) [The Migration of the Cheng Partisans to South Vietnam (Part I)]’, *The New Asia Journal* , 5/1 (1960), 433-359, at 442.

⁴⁴ VOC 1241, Missive van ’t opperhoofd [Hendrick Baron]en den raet in Tonquin aen den gouverneur generael [Joan Maetsuijcker] en de raden van Indien, Tonkin, 6 Nov, 1663, fo. 357^v.

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*(450 km) away, eastwards from here by the sea. Because Kuang-chou City (and especially Macao) is situated on a geographical promontory stretching eastwards, it seems that Kuang-chou City is farther from Nanking than Lung-chou is.*⁴⁵

These Chinese merchants did their best to convince the Dutch merchants in Tonkin that the land route (via the river systems) was now more convenient than the sea route via Kuang-chou or Macao. In fact, the Dutch had heard rumours of this plan from local Chinese merchants as early as 1661.⁴⁶ What the advisors failed to mention was that the difficulties at present upsetting Kuang-chou City were caused by both the evacuation and the prohibition on maritime trade. As the Chinese merchants Tonkin hailed from Nanking, it can be reasonably inferred that their bulk commodities were silk goods. The land route they were advocating so enthusiastically passed through the Cheng-nan Gate (nowadays Friendship Gate), where was the official gate the Ch'ing court received the ambassador from Vietnam (Tonkin) pay homage to the Manchu Emperor, K'ang-hsi. As they approached the gate, the merchants could choose to visit other border cities in Kuanghsi province namely: *Lung-chou*, *P'ing-shiang* (Pingkang[D.]), *Ssu-ming-fu* (Siminfoe[D.]) and *T'ai-ping-fu* (Theibinfoe[D]). Notoriously the King of Tonkin had handed over the last royal descendant of the Ming dynasty to the Ch'ing authorities via this route in May 1662.⁴⁷ After this event, the officials of the

⁴⁵ VOC 1243, Verantwoordinge door d'heer Hendrick Baron aen haer Eds.[Joan Maetsuijcker] tot Batavia, Tonkin, 14 Feb. 1663, fos. 136-137. The duration of the journey tallies with other Dutch records, which indicate that the overland journey from Nanking to Kuang-chou took 25 days. *Daghregister Batavia*, 1653, 60-1. 9 May 1653.

⁴⁶ VOC 1236, Missive door den koopman Hendrick Baron aen haer Eds. [Joan Maetsuijcker] tot Batavia geschreven, Tonkin, 13 Nov. 1661, fo. 851.

⁴⁷ VOC 1241, Missive van 't opperhoofd [Hendrick Baron] en den raet in Tonquin aen den gouverneur generael [Joan Maetsuijcker] en de raden van Indien, Tonkin, 6 Nov. 1663, fo. 357^v; Sha Ch'eng, 'T'i-pao hê-lan-kuo chia-pan-ch'uan ti-min

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two countries gradually secured the Chengnan Gate against any illegal intrusions.

On January 24, 1664, a junk left Nagasaki bound for Tonkin.⁴⁸ It probably belonged to an independent Chinese merchant by the name of Wei Chiu-kuan.⁴⁹ Having first called at Cambodia this junk made good time to Tonkin.⁵⁰ She sailed into Tonkin on February 3, carrying a cargo worth 200,000 taels, and she returned to Japan in the summer of 1664.⁵¹ However, as early as May 1663, Dutch ships had received orders to intercept any Chinese vessel sailing to Japan.⁵² In August 1664, Dutch vessels noted that two Chinese junks, each worth 100,000 to 200,000 guilders, were leaving the harbour.⁵³ Assuming that one of them belonged to Wei Chiu-kuan, it is fairly safe to conclude that the other junk was operating under the orders of the Cheng regime. The trading mission of the two ships was abortive and they

chu-kung shih-pên', 48. This document also refers to the last royal descendant of the Ming dynasty as Chu Yan-ji.

⁴⁸ VOC 1248, Dagregister van het gepasserde in Japan ten comnptoir Nangasacki gehouden bij Willem Volger, coopman ende opperhoofd aldaer, Japan, 24 Jan. 1664, fo. 2450.

⁴⁹ VOC 1247, Missive van de opperhoofden te Nangasacki [Willem Volger] aen den gouverneur generaal Joan Maetsuijcker ende raden van India, Japan, 1 Jan. 1664, fo. 33.

⁵⁰ VOC 1246, Missive van de heer Hendrick Baron en Hendrick Verdonck te Tonquin aen den gouverneur generaal Joan Maetsuijcker ende raden van India, Tonkin, 12 Feb. 1664, fo. 280.

⁵¹ VOC 1248, Missive van de heer Hendrick Verdonck te Tonquin aen den gouverneur generaal Joan Maetsuijcker ende raden van India, Tonkin, 5 Nov. 1664, fo. 2779.

⁵² VOC 1249, Missive van Ed. Enoch Poolvoet en raet aen haer Eds. tot Batavia, Siam, 2 Dec. 1664, fo. 118.

⁵³ VOC 1248, Missive van de residenten te Nangasacki [Willem Volger] aen den gouverneur generaal Joan Maetsuijcker ende raden van India, Japan, 22 Oct. 1664, fo. 2407.

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never reached Japan because of the Dutch interception.⁵⁴ The blockade elicited strong reactions from the authorities both in Tonkin and in Japan, who suffered great losses because of what they had invested in this venture. In the aftermath of this incident, in the summer of 1665 the VOC administration finally lifted its blockade order against Tonkin.⁵⁵ Soon, Japan was once again witnessing the safe arrival of junks from Tonkin.⁵⁶

Although the joint pressure exerted by both the Japanese and Tonkin authorities compelled the Dutch to lift their blockade, the smuggling scheme hatched by the Kuang-tung rebels collapsed because it had run up against other obstacles.

When official diplomacy between China (the Ch'ing court) and Vietnam (the Thrin Court) gradually moved on to a more stable footing after 1662, the Thrin king suddenly issued radical measures which forced the Chinese within his borders to assimilate to Vietnamese culture. On 27 September, 1663, the king promulgated a placard declaring that, if they wished to remain in Vietnam, all foreigners should immediately tie up their hair, dye their teeth and go bare-footed according to the Vietnamese fashion. The placard also declared that, with the exception of the Dutch, all foreigners should move outside the city walls of Tonkin.⁵⁷ These requirements signalled that Chinese 'long- hair resistance fighters', who preserved their Chinese identity, could be easily distinguished from Vietnamese and it would be

⁵⁴ Hoang Anh Tuan. 'Silk for silver: Dutch-Vietnamese relations, 1637-1700' (Diss., Leiden University, 2006), 114; VOC 1252, Missive van seigneur [Hendrick] Verdonck aen haer Eds. [Joan Maetsuijcker], Tonkin, 23 Feb. 1665, fos. 209-248.

⁵⁵ Tuan, *Ibid.*, 115.

⁵⁶ VOC 1253, Dachregister des comptoirs Nangasackij [bij Jacob Gruijs], 25 July 1665, fo. 2139; 25 Aug. 1665, fo. 2146.

⁵⁷ VOC 1241, Missive van 't opperhooft en den raet [Hendrick Baron] in Toncquin aen den gouverneur generael [Joan Maetsuijcker] en de raden van Indien, Tonkin, 6 Nov. 1663, fo. 364.

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simple to keep them under surveillance. According to the Kuang-tung governor's report, sometime before April 1665 a group of resistance fighters had seized a port in Kuang-tung.⁵⁸ While the Tonkin assimilation policy was in force, this group, which had retreated to Tonkin in 1662, must have had inklings that the Tonkin authorities would no longer give them refuge if the Manchu court declared them fugitives. As expected, the Ch'ing court did indeed demand that the King of Tonkin (the Thrin king) should extradite those rebels. It sent an official letter to the Thrin king, threatening him with war if he failed to hand over the fugitives in Vietnam.⁵⁹ For unknown reasons, the Thrin court did not feel obliged to obey. Consequently, tensions on the border worsened. Not long after this demand had been made, four Chinese junks visited Tonkin where they offered pepper and sandalwood at reduced prices. Their prices were so competitive they even lured Ch'ing merchants across the border. The goods might have been cheap but the taxes collected by the Thrin king were heavy, so in order to circumvent them, the merchants from Manchu China and the merchants under the Cheng regime choose to conduct their trade in a remote village near the border. However, when the king eventually discovered this rendezvous, he gave immediate orders that all trade should be confined to a certain site where it would be under the supervision of appointed officials and guarded by 1,000 soldiers to see that there were no defaulters. The site designated lay cross the river from Tonkin City.⁶⁰

During the early summer of 1665, when the mood in Tonkin was

⁵⁸ Hua-wên shu-chü (comp.), *Ta-ch'ing shêng-tsu jên* (*k'ang-hsi*) *huang-ti shih-lu* [Selection of the Veritable Records of the K'ang-hsi Emperor], 300 vols (Taipei: Hua-lien, 1964), XIV, 14-15. 26 April 1665.

⁵⁹ Hua-wên shu-chü (comp.), *Ta-ch'ing shêng-tsu jên* (*k'ang-hsi*) *huang-ti shih-lu*, XIX, 3-4. 17 June 1666.

⁶⁰ VOC 1264, Missive door den coopman [Constantijn] Ranst ende den raet aen haer Eds. de gouverneur generael Joan Maetsuijker en heeren raden van India, Tonkin, fos. 118^{r-v}, 119^r. 21 Jan. 1667.

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gradually turning inimical towards the Chinese maritime merchants, a typhoon damaged the armada under the Ch'ing Admiral Shih Lang in the Taiwan Strait. Delivered from a strong Ch'ing naval presence by the weather, the ties between Cheng Ching's force in Taiwan and the Kuang-tung privateers became tighter, especially after Hsü Lung (the successor of Su Li who trades with Cheng force in secret) had had to withdraw from the coast in obedience to the Imperial Order in 1666.⁶¹ Their mutual interests encouraged the two parties to consider developing a new corridor for the Sino-Japan trade. It would involve the joint forces exploiting their mastery of the Kuang-tung waters, either to smuggle Nanking silks from the Kuang-tung coast or to secure a sea route by which silks from Tonkin could be safely shipped. After the summer of 1666, this project gradually began to lose its appeal as it ran into obstacles created by both the VOC fleet and the Ch'ing court. Despite this disappointment, after the Fu-chien competitors retreated from the strait, the Cheng regime in Taiwan had the opportunity gradually to recoup its strength and revive its maritime trade. The joint forces of Taiwan and the Kao-Lai-Lien areas now turned their attention to their only competitor in these waters, namely the Dutch East India Company.

Suppression of Fu-chou, desertion of Siam and a focus on Cambodia

The Dutch merchants in Japan heard that, while bound for Japan in the late summer of 1665, a Chang-chou Junk (loaded with riches and probably belonging to the Hai-ch'êng Duke and the T'ung-an Count) had been seized by Cheng war-junks based in Taiwan.⁶² The Dutch merchants residing in Fu-chou claimed the junk was loaded with 600 piculs of white raw silk. They

⁶¹ TWYH (ed.), *Chêng-shih shih-liao san-pien* [The Third Compilation of Historical Documents referring to the Cheng Family], TW no. 175, 71.

⁶² *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 159-60, 162.30 Aug. 1665; 25 Sept. 1665.

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also reported that, during the same season, the Cheng naval force had captured three other extremely valuable junks during their voyage to Japan.⁶³ These captures marked the turning point after which the Cheng naval forces had definitely taken the upper hand, helped by the fact a typhoon had devastated the Ch'ing armada in May 1665. Not very long after (October 1665), seizing the day the Cheng authorities resident in the southwestern plain of Taiwan decided to dispatch six vessels to Tamsuy, a harbour on the northwestern tip of Taiwan facing the Taiwan Strait. Seventy armed soldiers repaired the redoubt (lain unoccupied since deserted by the Dutch in 1661) and fortified the area with gun emplacements for several cannon.⁶⁴ Since their invasion of Taiwan in 1661, the Cheng forces had not considered stationing a garrison in that part of the island, and apparently this small fort was seen as a counterweight to the Dutch garrison in Chi-lung on the northeastern tip of the island.

In the spring of 1666, the Cheng reinforced the Tamsuy garrison, bringing the total strength up to between 700 and 800 soldiers. They lived in some bamboo huts in a camp protected by a wooden palisade.⁶⁵ Cheng Ching sent a delegate from An-ping to Tamsuy to open peace negotiations with the Dutch in Chi-lung. On 2 March, 1666, the Dutch captain received them officially in Fort Noord Holland in Chi-lung.⁶⁶ Cheng Ching offered the Dutch a piece of the sandbar called Pei-Hsien-Wei (*Baxemboy*[D.]) near Fort Zeelandia, on which the VOC merchants could build a lodge and, as a reciprocal gesture, the Dutch would have to agree to trade peacefully with the Cheng regime. Eager to have his enemies out of northern Taiwan, Cheng

⁶³ VOC 1253, Missive door den koopman Jacob Gruijs [en den raat ten comptoir Nangasackij] aen haer Eds [Joan Maetsuijcker], Japan, 19 Oct 1665, fo. 1584.

⁶⁴ J. L. P. J. Vogels., 'Het Nieuwe Taijouan: De Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie op Kelang 1664-1668 [New Taiwan: the Dutch East India Company at Chi-lung]' (unpublished MA thesis, Utrecht University: 1988), 23.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 24.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 26.

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Ching required that the Dutch withdraw from Chi-lung and cease their hostilities against all junks affiliated with the Cheng regime. After his proposal was rejected, a few months later, in May, Cheng Ching dispatched 6,000 soldiers to attack the fort at Chi-lung, but the Dutch managed to repulse the attackers after 10 days of fighting, in which time the Cheng army suffered some 1,000 casualties.⁶⁷ At this point, the Cheng troops had to adopt another tactic and tried to cut off the food supply the aborigines were providing the Chilung garrison. They then simply sat back and kept a watch on the Dutch in Chi-lung.

During these expeditions, at least twenty junks were needed to transport the Chinese soldiers back and forth between Tamsuy and Chi-lung. As there were only one or two Dutch yachts transporting supplies to Chi-lung from Fu-chou, the 300 Dutch soldiers in the fort were more or less helpless and, after the events of 1666, the Cheng junks could go and come the Strait as they pleased, safe in the knowledge that their vessels far outnumbered those of the Dutch. Finally, after the Ch'ing court had unconditionally rejected their petition for free trade, the Dutch deserted their fort on 6 July, 1668.⁶⁸ Hence, Cheng Ching finally realized his strategic goal of securing the trade route through the Taiwan Strait, but as this was only one part of the whole trade route, Cheng Ching now needed to secure the ports on the Cochin-China Peninsula.

As mentioned earlier, after what happened in 1663 securing the silk trade between China and Japan must have been the first priority for the Cheng regime. Since the autumn of 1663, the Amoy merchants who had defected to the Ch'ing had become the main rivals, but, owing to the Dutch blockade, the merchants under the Ch'ing still did not feel free to send their junks to all the harbours around the South China Sea. The strategy of the VOC was to try to block the harbours of Tonkin, Cambodia, Siam, anywhere

⁶⁷ Ibid. 29-33.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 91-93.

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in fact where the Dutch residents had enough authority to press the local rulers to expel Cheng Ching's merchants.

Not unnaturally, this heavy-handed tactic rebounded on the Dutch. It certainly stirred up resentment at the Siamese court, where King Narai was poised to expand his royal trade with Japan and China. If and when the Siamese King entered into the trade, previously monopolized by the Chinese and the Dutch merchants, it stands to reason that the percentage of the trade allocated to the Dutch must invariably shrink to compensate for the Siamese King's newly created share. Moreover, for over a decade, ever since the 1650s in fact, the Dutch had frequently leveled accusations against Coxinga's adherents, saying that they were infringing the privileged Dutch monopoly on the export of animal skins (especially deerskins).⁶⁹ Coxinga's invasion of Taiwan cutting them off from one of the best sources of supply, forced the Dutch to employ tougher tactics to protect their rights. A notable example of this occurred on 16 August, 1661, when a VOC ship intercepted a Siamese crown junk sailing from Tonkin to Japan and justified her interception on the grounds that the junk was being manned by Chinese and Portuguese.⁷⁰ The news of the seizure spread in Siam during March 1662 and exacerbated the resentment felt by the local Chinese community against the Dutch residents. About 800 Chinese people gathered around the Dutch trading-post in Ayutthaya shouting that they would cut off the ears and noses of the Dutch.⁷¹ Encouraged by this, King Narai lost little time in demanding that the VOC compensate him for the seizure of the junk (and her cargo) valued at 84,000 guilders. To express his people's feelings of contempt for the Dutch, the Siamese King not only personally received the envoy and accepted the gifts

⁶⁹ Dhiravat Na Pombejra, 'The Dutch-Siamese Conflict of 1663-1664: A reassessment', in Leonard Blussé (ed.), *Around and About Formosa*, (Taipei: Ts'ao Yungho Foundation for Culture and Education, 2003), 291-306 at 295.

⁷⁰ VOC 678, Resolutie van gouverneur-general Joan Maesuijcker ende raden, Batavia, 11 May 1663, fo. 71.

⁷¹ Dhiravat, *The Dutch-Siamese Conflict*, 295.

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sent by Coxinga in the spring of 1662, he reciprocated and dispatched an envoy bearing gifts and goods on the junk of Coxinga's envoy on her return voyage to Taiwan. The Siamese King also insisted that the Dutch factory issue free passes to all his junks sailing to China and Japan, including that of the envoy.⁷²

Aware that the VOC could not reasonably expect to obtain valuable commodities under these conditions, the Dutch in Ayutthaya closed down their office in November 1663 and, following the orders issued by Batavia, began to patrol the coastal waters in the vicinity of the Chao Phya estuary.⁷³ They decided to take this step about this time that Cheng Ching's adherents left Amoy and Quemoy, re-establishing themselves first on Nan-ao and, later (1664), totally withdrawing from all the islands along the China coast.

No junk from either Taiwan or Japan visited a Siamese harbour between 1664 and 1665. The Cheng authorities in Taiwan must have got wind of the Dutch blockade in the Gulf of Siam. After the Dutch seized a Siamese crown junk homeward bound from Japan off the coast of Cambodia, the Siamese court capitulated. In the peace treaty concluded between the Siamese King and the Dutch, the former agreed in principle not to employ any Chinese on his trading junks, irrespective of their destination or port of departure.⁷⁴ Although the Dutch merchants requested the Siamese King banish all local Chinese merchants from his kingdom, he balked at such a demand, claiming that all the resident Chinese (numbering about 1,000) were his own subjects, not those of the Cheng regime. To strengthen his assertion, the Siamese King pressed the local Chinese merchants to declare their allegiance to the Siamese crown.

⁷² VOC 678, Resolutie van gouverneur-general Joan Maesuijcker ende raden, Batavia, 11 May 1663, fo. 71.

⁷³ Dhiravat, *The Dutch-Siamese Conflict*, 298-9.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, 300-1.

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Unlike the situation in Tonkin and Siam, the Dutch outposts did not have any formal relationship with Quinam which, perhaps as a consequence, was disposed to provide the Chinese merchants with shelter. Four junks departed to Japan from Quinam during the summer of 1664, even though Dutch ships were patrolling the Gulfs of Tonkin and Siam. However, although disposed to be friendly, Quinam could not provide the Cheng junk traders with deer- and rayskins, which were the key commodities in the strategy devised by the Cheng regime to preserve its Japanese trade.

While Coxinga was laying siege to the Dutch in Fort Zeelandia from 1661 to 1662, political conditions in Cambodia had degenerated into chaos. After a sixteen-year long rule (1642-1658) by his brother, the Muslim Sultan Ibrahim, who had usurped the throne, the legitimate heir (Prince Nacpra Boemton) rose in revolt, principally because Ibrahim had introduced a radical Islamic movement into Cambodia. The legitimate prince demanded that the Cambodian people reinstitute traditional Buddhist worship and expel all the Malay high officials appointed by the Sultan.⁷⁵ When the revolt broke out, the prince took his mother's advice and asked the Quinam court for military support, a request acceded to in October 1658. The Quinam army invaded Cambodia, captured the Sultan and his family, and plunged into an orgy of plundering so fierce that it even caused the new Cambodian court to flee to the mountain areas. Instead of being a brother-in-arms, the Quinam army became the new oppressor. It plundered one big Chinese junk when she took shelter on the Mekong River after running into a typhoon on her voyage from Japan to Siam.⁷⁶ This was the straw which broke the camel's back, finally driven to react to this invasion, the Siamese King announced he would

⁷⁵ Ludovicus Carolus Desiderius van Dijk, *Neêrlands vroegste betrekkingen met Borneo, den Solo-Archipel, Cambodja, Siam en Cochinchina: een nagelaten werk*[The Earliest Dutch Relations with Borneo, the Sulu Archipelago, Cambodia, Siam and Cochinchina: A neglected work], (Amsterdam: J.H. Scheltema, 1862), 343.

⁷⁶ VOC 1233, Missive door den coopman Jan van Rijck en desselfs raet met een appendix[an gouverneur generael Joan Maetsuijcker], Siam, 26 Feb. 1660, fo. 560^r.

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intervene and lead 100,000 soldiers and 1,000 vessels on a mission to expel the Quinam invaders.⁷⁷

News of his declaration caused the Quinam army to withdraw in 1659.⁷⁸ By the beginning of 1663, economic conditions in Cambodia had begun to recover. For example, that same year, a Chinese junk belonging to Wei Chiu-kuan exported 39,350 deerskins from Cambodia.⁷⁹ Two other junks carried a total of 53,360 deerskins to Japan.⁸⁰ The cargo of two other Chinese junks arriving in Nagasaki from Siam did not fare very well in comparison as they carried only 13,087 deerskins.⁸¹ It is important to note that, at this time, the Dutch blockade of Ayutthaya had just commenced and that, caught up in the throes of their crisis with Siam, the VOC merchants received an invitation from the new Cambodian king, Nac Boeton.⁸²

Trade negotiations officially commenced in February of 1665. The Dutch laid thirteen conditions before the King and his counsellors for their consideration, including the proviso that the Chinese should be totally excluded from the deerskin trade and the Dutch should be given the authority to patrol the Mekong River delta so as to be able to enforce their demands.

⁷⁷ VOC 1233, Missive door den coopman Jan van Rijck en desselfs raet met een appendix[aan gouverneur generael Joan Maetsuijcker], Siam, 26 Feb. 1660, fo. 560^f; NFJ 351, Missive uit Jan van Rijck in Judia opt Nederlands Comptoir Siam aan E Zacharias Wagenaer President opperhoofd over s' Compagnies voortreffelijke negotie als vorderen ommeslach int koninckrijcke Japan, Siam, 5 July 1659, not foliated.

⁷⁸ Dijk, *Neêrlands vroegste betrekkingen*, 343.

⁷⁹ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 78. 5 Aug. 1663; Nagazumi, *Tōsen yushutsunyūhin sūryō ichiran*, 93.

⁸⁰ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 78-9. 18 Aug. 1663; 25 Aug. 1663; Nagazumi, *Tōsen yushutsunyūhin sūryō ichiran*, 93-4.

⁸¹ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 77,81. 11 July 1663; 6 Sept. 1663; Nagazumi, *Tōsen yushutsunyūhin sūryō ichiran*, 92, 95.

⁸² Dijk, *Neêrlands vroegste betrekkingen*, 344; *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 120-1. 5 Aug. 1664; 7 Aug. 1664; 15 Aug. 1664.

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The King balked at this and stated that the Dutch could confront the Chinese junks only after they had left the coastal waters.⁸³ As a sop to Cerberus, he was willing to grant the Dutch an exclusive twenty-year privilege on the export of deerskins to Japan.⁸⁴

On 8 March, 1665, Merchant Pieter Ketting urged the *Shabandar* and several Cambodian grandees to announce that the VOC had been granted the exclusive right to export the skins; hence, all the local skin collectors were warned not to sell any of their wares to Chinese junks because any of these commodities sold in this manner would be liable to confiscation.⁸⁵ The Chinese deerskin traders immediately drew up a petition to the King, stating that

'Last year we advanced a considerable capital sum which our friends invested in purchasing and collecting of deerskins. We shall be able to supply those investors with the deerskins if Your Majesty permits us to keep one-third of the deerskins [to dispose of as we please]. Moreover, the Dutch do not have enough cash to pay for all the skins. Therefore, we shall find ourselves in a precarious position should the unsold deerskins remain in our warehouses, not able to be traded for the sizable sums of cash which the big

⁸³ Dijk, *Neêrlands vroegste betrekkingen*, 346; VOC 1252, Missive van seigneur [Pieter]Ketting [ende J. van Wijkersloot te Cambodia] aen haer Eds.[Joan Maetsuijcker], Cambodia, 12 Feb. 1665, fos. 101; 109. The boundaries of the territorial waters were defined as from the hook of Sinque Jaques in the north, to Pulo Obi in the south, and Pulo Candore in the east.

⁸⁴ Dijk, *Neêrlands vroegste betrekkingen*, 344.

⁸⁵ VOC 1254, Dagregister gehouden bij den coopman Pieter Ketting wegens het voorgevallene omtrent 's compagnies saecken in 't rijk van Cambodia, beginnende in dato 12 Februarij 1665 dat den commissaris Jan de Meijer naer Batavia vertrock ende eijndigende den 12 November 1665 [Diary Kept by Merchant Pieter Ketting about the Company Business in the Kingdom of Cambodia, Beginning on 12 Feb. 1665 When Commissioner Jan de Meijer Departed for Batavia and Ends on 12 Nov. 1665], Cambodia, 8 March. 1665, fo. 1322. (Hereafter cited as 'Diary of Cambodia')

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junks will bring.'

In their submission, the skin collectors asked the King to reduce the term of the Dutch privilege from twenty to ten years, and that he cut the annual export of skins from Cambodia by one half. The upshot was that the King did allow the Chinese to export one-third of the total number of the animal skins exported annually. The Dutch merchants did not raise any objections at this point, because Cambodian grandees told them that the order was only an expedient measure to appease the Chinese skin collectors in this one particular year.⁸⁶

Between March and April 1665, two Chinese junks arrived carrying silver coins, copper and some porcelain from Japan to Cambodia.⁸⁷ On 24 April, another junk arrived in Cambodia from Nanao.⁸⁸ These junks—perhaps under the aegis of the joint forces of Kuangtung privateers and the Cheng regime in Taiwan—were commanded by captains who must have noticed the deteriorating conditions in the deerskin trade in Siam. Intense rivalry flared up between the Chinese junk traders and the Dutch residents as soon as the Chinese junks arrived in Cambodia from Japan. At the beginning of May, the VOC merchants sought an audience with the king, urging him to force the Chinese collectors to sell their supplies of deerskins to the Dutch. The equivocal answer of the court was that the Chinese collectors had not built up a significant supply of deerskins on account of the shortage of copper coins.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ VOC 1252, Rapport van den coopman Johan de Meijer wegens zijn verrichtingh in Cambodia, Cambodia [Report Written by Merchant Johan de Meijer about His Activities in Cambodia], 10 March. 1665, fos 118-9.

⁸⁷ VOC 1254, *Diary of Cambodia*, Cambodia, 27 Mar 1665, Fol. 1332; 23 Apr. 1665, fo. 1341.

⁸⁸ Ibidem, 23 Apr. 1665, fo. 1341. The diary mentions that this junk from Nanao was actually a Quinam junk.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 8 May 1665, fo. 1346. 'some copper had been brought [by the Chinese junks],

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The Dutch refused to be palmed off with such prevarication and demanded that the King order all Chinese traders to deliver forthwith whatever number of deerskins they already had in store to the Dutch Factory . The King ordered one of his courtiers, Nacpra Theeportioen, to write a short memorandum in the King's name, declaring that the Dutch demand be fulfilled.⁹⁰ On 26 June, the news spread that a Chinese junk was preparing to depart from the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh. When it came to his ears, the Dutch chief merchant requested permission to inspect her holds before it set sail on the high seas.⁹¹ After he had obtained permission and a search warrant, he took Nacpra Theeportioen and some inspectors to investigate the junk in question,⁹² but when the Chinese vigorously resisted their attempts to do so, the inspectors allowed the junk to set sail. Nacpra Theeportioen was indignant, but later, the Chinese mandarin, Tjauponia Sisermoth, declared that the inspectors had been wise to let the junk leave, because the King had issued another pertinent order in which he said that the junk should be left unharmed. Eventually the truth was out, namely that the King had purchased Japanese copper for casting cannons from the *nachoda* of the Chinese junk, and had paid the *nachoda* in deerskins.⁹³ As this pertained to the King's own private trade, the junk was inviolate. The long and short of it is that the Dutch residents in Cambodia failed miserably to enforce their privilege, because later that year, in the southwestern monsoon season, three junks loaded with deerskins departed from Cambodia to Japan.⁹⁴ To add insult to injury, the deerskins which the junks transported to Nagasaki yielded the Cheng more

with which he [the Cambodian King] had cast coins here in order to purchase and collect deerskins and some other sorts of goods. With this money, the Chinese would be ready to pay [and to collect the deerskins].'

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 26 June 1665, fo. 1352.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., fo. 1354.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 13 July 1665, fo. 1358. One of the junks would sail to Naoao first.

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silver than the Dutch were able to make.⁹⁵

The arrival of the 'Taiwanese Chinese' force under Piauja

As mentioned above, after a typhoon had wrought havoc with the Fu-chien armada in the early summer of 1665, the balance of maritime power in the Taiwan Strait gradually fell into Cheng Ching's hands. Along the Kuang-tung coast, the evacuation policy implemented by the Ch'ing court created a vacuum which was eagerly being filled by roaming Kuang-tung privateers/pirates. They became particularly active after the fall of Su Li in 1664. Although some of the Kuang-tung privateers/pirates had attempted to set up an alternative silk trade route from Vietnam, they failed because of obstacles thrown in their path by the Ch'ing, Tonkin and the Dutch. At this stage of the game, as the Siamese King had declared his preference for the Dutch to the Cheng traders, the Cheng regime sensed the importance of the Cambodian deerskins and urgently recognized the necessity to cut the Dutch out of this trade.

One of the victims of the 1663-1664 Dutch blockade of Tonkin was the Chinese privateer/pirate Piauja. He had his revenge as later he was to play an important role in the Chinese raid on the Dutch factory in Cambodia. His own recorded recollections reveal that the Dutch had put him in custody on a VOC ship while they blockaded the Gulf of Tonkin. His summary custodial sentence cost him most of his property, reducing him to the level of a humble soldier instead of his former glory as a rich merchant.⁹⁶ On 20 February,

⁹⁵ VOC 1253, Missive door den koopman Jacob Gruijs [en den raat ten comptoir Nangasackij] aen haer Eds.[Joan Maetsuijcker], Japan, 19 Oct. 1665, fo. 1589.

⁹⁶ VOC 1265, Rapport van den ondercoopman Jacob van Wijkersloot gedaen aen den Ed. Daniel Sixx coopman en opperhooft mitsgaders den raedt over 's Comps. swaerwichtigen handel int keijser reijck van Japan omme in tijde en wijle haere Eds. [Joan Maetsuijcker] op Batavia bekent te maken den droevigen toestant in 's Comps.

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1666, he arrived in Cambodian waters with a fleet of eight or nine Kuang-tung junks. He and his adherents sailed up the Mekong Delta and robbed seven or eight Malay vessels anchored there. Piauja and his men even captured a ship bound for Macao with a Portuguese priest on board. Later, he loaded four Kuang-tung junks with booty from the raids and sailed away, announcing that they were bound for Taiwan and that a bigger force of compatriots would return during the next northeast monsoon season. Four of his junks remained behind in Mekong River.⁹⁷

The Dutch Chief Merchant in Phnom Penh, two hundred kilometres up river, Pieter Ketting, was still insisting on claiming the exclusive privilege to any deerskins. However, his fortunes were about to take a turn for the worse. The most important Cambodian merchant on whom he relied died suddenly and his protector, Naval and River Master Occenja Calahon, got married and was absent from his post. Bereft of their protection, he was unable to prevent the Chinese traders from exporting deerskins to Japan.⁹⁸ At the end of this monsoon season, Ketting could purchase only about 6,262 taels' worth of goods for Japan, and could do nothing when the Chinese sent five junks to

voorgevalle saecke en ongehoorde proceduren int rijk van Cambodia aldaer 's Comps. ministers door den Chinesen rover Piauja aengedaen als mede het affloopen en verbranden der loges mitsgaders het droevigh vermoorden van 't opperhoofd seigneur Pieter Ketting als 'tgene andersints daer voorgevallen en gepasseert is [Report Written by Junior Merchant Jacob van Wijkersloot to Chief Merchant Daniel Six and Council in Japan and in Due Course His Excellency in Batavia about the Incidents and the Outrageous Happenings in the Cambodian Kingdom Committed by the Chinese Pirate Piauja Who Burned Down the Lodge and Grievously Murdered Chief Merchant Pieter Ketting, As Well As What Has Happened Since], [on the yacht the *Schelvis*], 19 Aug.1667, fo. 793^v. [Hereafter cited as 'Report by Jacob van Wijkersloot from Cambodia']

⁹⁷ VOC 1264, Missive door den koopman Pieter Ketting aen de edele heer gouverneur generael Joan Maetsuijker en heeren raden van India, Cambodia, 5 Dec.1666, fos. 101^v-102^r.

⁹⁸ Ibid., fo. 101^r.

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Japan loaded with more than 70,000 pieces of skin.⁹⁹ The writing was on the wall, the presence of Piauja and his people in the Mekong Delta was exerting a strong influence on the attitude of the Cambodian court towards the Dutch.

On 15 February, 1667, the Chinese privateer sailed upstream from the mouth of the Mekong River to Phnom Penh in a small vessel. Not long before, on 16 January, two Chinese junks arrived in from Japan, carrying some 600 soldiers taken aboard in Taiwan.¹⁰⁰ Having joined forces with Piauja's men, in the king's name these soldiers massacred almost all the Quinam people living in the vicinity of the Mekong River.¹⁰¹ The Dutch suspected that the Cambodian King was behind this action, for they described him, in essence, as a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing.¹⁰² The massacre resulted in the deaths of almost 1,000 local Quinam people.¹⁰³

Piauja's influence at the Cambodian court underwent a sudden growth spurt after the King's official acknowledgment of his loyal service. He now commanded three junks and five local war-vessels, and was in the process of having another five war-vessels constructed.¹⁰⁴ Feeling that they were in a very precarious position, the Company servants in the Pnom Phen factory were afraid, and consulted their Cambodian adviser Tjuponja Zam. Through

⁹⁹ *Generale missiven*, III 1655-1674, 537-8. 25 Jan. 1667.

¹⁰⁰ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 225. 10 Aug. 1667.

¹⁰¹ VOC 1265, Report by Jacob van Wijkersloot from Cambodia, Cambodia, 19 Aug. 1667, fol. 793^r. The manuscript is very hard to read. The author appreciates Dr Hugo s'Jacob's assistance in translating the text.

¹⁰² VOC 1264, Missive door den koopman Pieter Ketting aen de edele heer gouverneur generael Joan Maetsuijker en heeren raden van India, Cambodia, 12 Mar. 1667, fo. 104^r.

¹⁰³ VOC 1265, Report by Jacob van Wijkersloot from Cambodia, Cambodia, 19 Aug. 1667, fol. 793^r.

¹⁰⁴ VOC 1264, Missive door den koopman Pieter Ketting aen de edele heer gouverneur generael Joan Maetsuijker en heeren raden van India, Cambodia, 12 Mar. 1667, fo. 104^v.

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him, Pieter Ketting got in touch with the court mandarin Tjauponja Tesemot, whom he asked to deliver Piauja 1,000 taels on his behalf in exchange for the safe conduct of the Dutch people out of Phnom Penh. Piauja turned down this proposal, suggesting that instead Ketting should give him a pass for two of his junks to sail to Batavia to enable his adherents to collect the debt a Chinese inhabitant of that city owed Piauja. The Dutch rejected this request as arrant nonsense. A little later their advisor was reduced to engaging in a shouting match with Tjauponja Tesemot. In March, the Dutch merchants were forced to call for help when the Chinese quarter in Phnom Penh mobilized 300 armed men, supported by heavy weapons. Chinese junks now also sailed into the river where they carried out patrols.¹⁰⁵

On 20 June, Piauja led between 170 and 180 armed soldiers to the Dutch trading-post in Phnom Penh. They entered through the palisade and delivered a letter translated from Chinese into Portuguese demanding the extradition of Pieter Ketting. Piauja took the Chief Merchant and some of his men hostage, and ordered the other Dutchmen to collect a ransom of 4,873 taels of silver. After the money had been handed over, the crisis seemed to abate.

On 25 June, when a VOC yacht from Batavia sailed into the Mekong River, Pieter Ketting in Phnom Penh asked the Cambodian King for protection, assuring him that Dutch reinforcements and a rich cargo were on their way to his kingdom. The yacht brought with it a cargo of piece goods which could be traded for deerskins. But, before the trade could begin, on 9 July Piauja suddenly raided the Dutch trading-post at midnight.¹⁰⁶ Earlier that day, Piauja's men had captured two Dutch sailors from the yacht on their way to visit a friend in the Spanish quarter of Phnom Penh, with whom they

¹⁰⁵ VOC 1265, Report by Jacob van Wijkersloot from Cambodia, Cambodia, 19 Aug. 1667, fo. 794^v.

¹⁰⁶ VOC 1261, Missive door d'overheden van 't jacht de Schelvis uijt de revier van Cambodia na Malacca geschreven, [on the yacht the *Schelvis*], 11 July 1667, fo. 359^f.

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intended to spend the night. When the two captives informed Piauja that no further aid could be expected from Batavia, he decided to attack the Dutch trading-post that same night.¹⁰⁷

Eighty Chinese soldiers broke through the palisade and took the VOC servants who were still asleep by surprise. Although the yacht was anchored nearby, the low water level made it impossible for the sailors and gunners aboard to fire on the factory, which was situated on high ground. Watching from the bloody massacre in the trading-post which was soon engulfed in flames, from afar, the crew dared not go ashore. The killing went on until dawn.¹⁰⁸

All acknowledged by the kings

This unequivocal use of force and violence by the ‘Taiwanese Chinese’ presents a picture of Cheng power around the South China Sea. The incident has remained almost completely outside the scope of Chinese records because, after seizing Taiwan from the Cheng regime in 1683, the Manchu government destroyed most of its official documents.

The tangled history of Chinese merchants pursuing revenue from the Japan trade and the military operations of the Taiwan-based Cheng regime bear a close similarity to the overseas adventures of Japanese samurai adventurers like Yamada Nagamasa in Ligor and Hamada Yahyoe in Taiwan several decades earlier.

¹⁰⁷ VOC 1269, Verbael van drie Nederlanders uijt Cambodia gevangen te Macassar aengebraght, nopende haer wedervaren geduijrende haere gevangenisse aldaer [Report Written by Three Netherlanders Who Were Captured in Cambodia Recounting Their Imprisonment There], Macassar, 17 Jan. 1670, fo.701^{r-v}; *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 226. 19 Aug. 1667; VOC 1265, Report by Jacob van Wijkersloot from Cambodia, Cambodia, 19 Aug. 1667, fo. 769^{r-v}.

¹⁰⁸ VOC 1265, Report by Jacob van Wijkersloot from Cambodia, Cambodia, 19 Aug. 1667, fo. 797^v.

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This overview of the military operations directed by the Cheng regime between 1666 and 1667 reveals how it ran the Tung-ning (that is, the realm of the Cheng regime in Taiwan) as an entrepôt where goods, information and military resources could be exchanged. The Cheng merchants and soldiers were organized so that they could react quickly and flexibly to preserve their strategic advantage. Even though quite a few senior Cheng military officers and soldiers surrendered to the Ch'ing in 1663, most of the vessels remained at the disposal of the Cheng navy.¹⁰⁹ After the Cheng moved its commercial base from Amoy to Taiwan, they also established concealed bases along the coast of Kuang-tung in 1664, and the typhoon which had wreaked havoc on the Shih Lang armada in 1665, enabled the Cheng regime to gain control of the waters between Fu-chou and Tamsuy. The Dutch succeeded in keeping control of the export of Siamese deerskins in 1666 and again in 1667, but when they also tried to butt in and secure the deerskin market in Cambodia, they met with strong Chinese opposition.

Undoubtedly the most important driving force behind these events was the Japanese demand for deerskins. Ever since the middle of the sixteenth century, Japan had been exporting silver to the areas around the East and South China Seas. By issuing the proclamation that no Chinese vessels should be harmed in the waters between China and Japan, the Japanese authorities spread a *de facto* protective umbrella over the trading junks of the Cheng regime, keeping them safe from Dutch attacks.¹¹⁰

Although the fleets of the Dutch East India Company could still blockade any harbour, such an action would do it little good if the local rulers

¹⁰⁹ Shih Weich'i, 'Shih Weich'i mi-t'i t'ai-wan chêng-shih t'ung-yang ch'ing-hsing ping-ch'ên ch'ao-fu chi-i shih-pên [Secret Report about the Trading Activities of the Cheng Regime and Suggestions about How to Defeat It] 14 Aug 1668', in CKTI (et al eds), *K'ang-hsi t'ung-i t'ai-wan tang- an shih-liao hsüan-chi*, 82.

¹¹⁰ *The Deshima dagregisters*, XIII 1660-1670, 95. 1 Feb. 1664. The Shogun issued a direct order that no Dutch vessels might attack any Chinese junks sailing to Japan.

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could not be pressed to keep their promises. The VOC could not afford to lose its supply of silver from Japan. In the case of Cambodia, the Dutch could not effectively blockade the waters around the Mekong Delta because the capital, Phnom Penh, was located 200 kilometres inland.

Therefore, they were unable to keep an eye on the individual local vendors and ascertain their credit sources. Furthermore, the VOC could never collect the commodities it required without the assistance of the local rulers. Too weak to dominate the native market, the Company could not enforce its privileges effectively.

The 600 Cheng soldiers who were landed in Phnom Penh were far more seasoned fighters than the Dutch merchants. With the consent of the Cambodian king, the Cheng Chinese of Taiwan was free to ransack the Dutch trading-post. In 1663, the Siamese king chose to make peace with the VOC, fearing Dutch retaliation on the sea routes, but in 1667 the Cambodian king allied with the Cheng side because he did not expect sufficient aid on land from the VOC. The new ties between the Cambodian and Taiwanese rulers were built on an acknowledgement of mutual interests. The King of Taiwan assisted the King of Cambodia in expelling the Quinam enemy, and the Shogun of Japan guaranteed that the Taiwanese traffic between his country and Cambodia would be free of interference from the VOC.

Cheng Ching actually completed the trading system designed both by his grandfather, Iquan, by fending off the European competitors on the overseas markets, and his father, Coxinga, by building trading relationships with overseas rulers based on military alliances. What he could not foresee was the decline in the silver exports from Japan and Manila, which were just beyond the horizon. When this did become palpable he was forced to look for new markets. How the changing patterns in the Asian maritime trade eventually led to the decline and fall of the merchant princes of Taiwan will be described in the following chapter.