

## Formosa 1662: The Dutch Great Loss

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Abstrak

Penyerangan armada besar China ke Formosa di bawah pimpinan Cheng Che'ng Kung atau lebih dikenal sebagai Coxinga pada bulan Mei tahun 1661 membawa kekalahan bagi Belanda (VOC) yang akhirnya menyerah pada bulan Februari tahun 1662. Penyerangan ini mengakhiri supremasi Kongsi Dagang Hindia Belanda di pulau ini. Belanda membangun pelabuhan di Formosa pada tahun 1642 yang terbukti memberi keuntungan berkat posisi strategisnya sebagai pelabuhan transit bagi jejaring pengiriman barang di Asia. Untuk memahami berbagai faktor penyebab kekalahan Belanda, perlu diketahui alasan kedatangan Belanda ke pulau itu dan posisinya di tengah kekuatan besar di Asia Timur, khususnya Dinasti Qing Manchu, Shogun Jepang dan Admiral Cheng. Tulisan ini sebagian besar bersumberkan dari materi sekunder tentang Formosa dari berbagai topik. Tulisan ini hendak mengulas lebih dalam dan bercerita lebih detail berbagai faktor yang mengakibatkan kekalahan Belanda di Formosa dengan perspektif lebih luas, terutama menyangkut posisi Belanda di Asia Timur dan pelbagai perubahan peristiwa di daerah sekitarnya.

**Katakunci:** Formosa, Belanda, Coxinga, Cina.

### Introduction

The attack of large Chinese Fleet under Cheng Che'ng Kung, or so called Coxinga, in Formosa on May 1661 was a long feared rumor which finally materialized. After ten months of siege, The Dutch under Governor General Coyett, surrendered to Coxinga in February 1662. The attack ended 38 years supremacy of the Dutch East India Company on the island of Formosa.

The Dutch succeeded to extend its power in East Asia by establishing a new profitable port in Formosa in 1624. Their first and foremost goal in Formosa was to develop a trading port and to obtain monopoly over the trade with China and Japan. The Dutch was then succeeded during 1630s as Formosa developed into an important transit port within intra Asian shipping network (Ho, 1997: 94-114). Later in 1640s-1650s, this settlement turned out to be one of the most profitable VOC settlements in Asia, raising revenues through inland

production and series of taxes (Andrade, 1997: 57-93). However, within two decade the flourishing settlement was suddenly plummeted in the hand of Cheng Ch'eng Kung or Coxinga. Thus this paper will explore the factors led to the Dutch loss in Formosa.

Historian Ernst Van Veen brilliantly portrayed the organization of The Dutch in governed and financed Formosa (Veen, 2003: 140-160), while Johannes Huber clearly described relation between the Company and Coxinga before the downfall of the settlement (Huber, 2003: 210-241). Furthermore Oosterhoff briefly discussed the failure of a Dutch colonial city on Formosa (Oosterhoff, 1080: 1-14). However, this paper intend to go further by analyzing more in detail the factors led to the Dutch loss in Formosa, within wider perspective concerning the position of The Dutch in East Asia and changing circumstances inland and surrounding region.

In order to comprehend factors led to the loss of Formosa from Dutch, it is important to understand the reason of their coming to Formosa and later on the position of the Company *vis-à-vis* within surrounding powers in East Asia, in this case Ching Manchu dynasty, Japanese Shogunate, and Cheng warlord. Furthermore, in connection to changing circumstances, it is necessary to trace internal affairs between Batavian and Formosan council, and external relation between Formosan Government with Chinese immigrant and indigenous people. Policies applied to Chinese immigrant and indigenous people also put into examination to define how newly established society perceived and utilized rules within its correlation to the loss of Formosa. In doing so, this study mostly uses the secondary sources material which concern about Formosa in various subjects.

### **The Dutch in Formosa: Unintentional Quest**

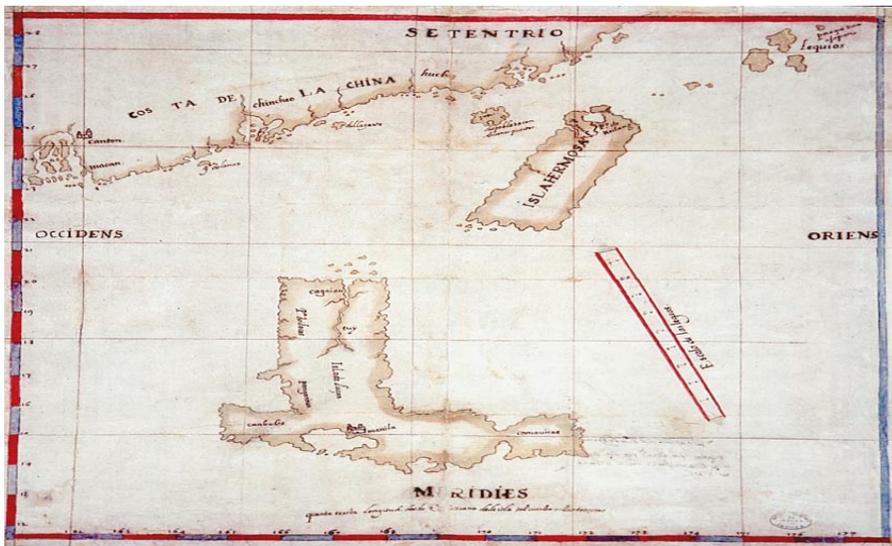
Lies strategically in the southeastern coast of china and straddling in the tropic of Cancer, Formosa comprise about 394 kilometers (245 miles) long and 144 kilometers (89 miles) wide mountainous area. Little was known about Formosa until 16<sup>th</sup> century. This island was remaining just outside of Chinese ruling power although situated less than 100 miles close to the mainland of China. Halted mostly by fisherman, smugglers and pirates, there were only minor activities occurred in the island. The reason of its isolation was the amount of marketable products to attract trader visited Formosa was small. Moreover, its position was lay outside the network of Asian trade route of that time (Ho, *ibid*).

According to Stainton, the island was largely inhabited by *Malayo-Polynesian* people who originated from Polynesia, Malay Peninsula and Luzon, which by then called *aborigines*. They consist of different tribes and

practiced Neolithic culture by spirit worshipping, headhunting, and tattooing (Stainton, 1999:27-44).

The achievement of Renaissance in Europe enabled new scientific invention that helped Europeans sailed to the new world. Portuguese pioneered the voyage into the new world reaching consecutively Goa in 1507, Malacca in 1511 and China in 1513. From then on, they expanded their maritime territory by involved in commerce between South Asia, China, and Southeast Asia.

**Figure 1.**  
Map of Luzon, Ilha Formosa, Penghu Island  
and a Part of the Coast of China, 1597



Source: <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/andrade/appD.html>

Only after 1543, Portuguese by coincidence landed in Japan. In 1530 silver prices in China significantly increased because of the government required to pay taxes in silver. Thus, this caused to high demand for silver in China. Concomitantly in Japan, new silver mine were being open in 1500 and huge exploited. Furthermore, the demands for Chinese silks were large. Portuguese smart enough benefited from this consecutive event within dreadful relation between two countries by becoming middleman in these trades.<sup>1</sup> The main goods traded were silk and gold from Chinese for Japanese silver and copper.

<sup>1</sup> At that time China and Japan was not get along because of trade and piracy problem. The issue concerning their irritated relation will be explaining in following section "The Dutch and Neighboring Power in East Asia".

As Portuguese sailed to Japan in 1544, they came across to an unidentified island. Astonished by its natural beauty, the island was named after *Ilha Formosa* or Beautiful Island. Thus, the island comes to be known as Formosa. However they were less interested in occupying the island and they landed only because of shipwreck in 1582. The reason was because they satisfied with their base in Macau which has been established since 1565 (Wills, 1999: 87).<sup>2</sup>

The establishment of Macau by Portuguese and Manila by Spain in the 17<sup>th</sup> century has transformed Asian trade route involving Macau, Manila, Japan, and South East Asia. All Portuguese and Spain ships, and Chinese junks back and forth were crossing the Formosan straits, either along the coast of northward or southern region. In consequence from then on, Formosa situated in the heart of multinational East Asia trade routes (Ho, *ibid*).

The Dutch with their *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or so called VOC started to participate in trade maritime on Asia water in 1602. Their aims traveled to new world were to contest Portugal and Spain monopolies in trade. Succeeded firmly establishing settlement colony in Spice Island and Batavia in 1610, the Dutch began perforate to East Asia where Portuguese scoop up attractive profit from Sino-Japanese trade. In order to break the monopoly, The Dutch itself intended to ask for trade base to China court as well as Portuguese have in Macau.

On the other hand, the Dutch also realize that they needed Chinese silk for European market as well as for their dealing with Asian countries. Hence initiating trade relation was happened to be crucial for them. In order to infringe on both Portuguese in Macau and Spain in Manila, The Dutch cooperated with British to capture all ships bound for those ports, including preventing Chinese junks to trade in Manila and Macau, under joined military forces Anglo-Dutch fleet of defense.<sup>3</sup>

Initially, The Dutch attempted several times to establish Fort but they were repudiated by the Ming. First attempt was made in 1604 under Wijbrant Van Wijk who negotiated with China authorities nearby Fukien but it was failed. In 1609, they succeeded to build fort in Hirado and this attainment yielded their anxiety to take over Macau from Portuguese. Thus, in June 1622 another endeavor was made by sending forces to attack Macau. Unfortunately, the attempt was futile because the city were well equipped with heavily-armed troops. Having been failure, the Dutch then shifted to nearby island namely

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2 Initially Chinese were objected to the presence of Portuguese in Macau. Only after 1535, Chinese authority gave the right to anchor ships in Macau and performed commerce. Since then Macau flourished into eventful harbor visited by Chinese junks. By the time the policy of direct trade with Japan released in 1549, the Portuguese benefited by gaining authorization to sail and set up factory, as their reward for defeating Japanese pirates and for their rule as middleman. Officially the Portuguese instituted a stable settlement in Macau in 1565 by constructing fortification and church.

3 This was based on cooperation Treaty of Defense between Dutch and British which signed on June 17, 1619. The explanation of this subject will include in next section, "The Dutch and neighboring power in Asia."

Pescadores (or Peng-hu Island) where they built a new base and continued their effort in opening trade relation. It was fruitful action. Their presence in Pescadores exasperated the governor of Fukien who claimed the island as part of Ming territory. In consequence, the Dutch were asked to leave the island and in return they were offered not only Formosa as alternative location but also informal trade agreement between them (Andrade, *Ibid*).<sup>4</sup> After sending an expedition to Formosa, they came to know that the island was no man's island which consists of tribes without single indigenous ruler. The Dutch finally left Pescadores in August 1624 and anchored in Bay of Tayouan.

The Dutch built their post on a narrow peninsula on the Southwestern coast of the island. This would allow the fortress direct access to the sea and eased to handle supplies and reinforcements from Batavia in the event of siege. On a sandbar, they built formidable stone castle called Zeelandia. The Dutch constructed a little house for livestock on Saccam area named Fort Provincia, which was located across the bay from the main Dutch fortress. From then on, they managed to settle and expand their territory.

Some historian drew a conclusion that the establishment of Dutch settlement in 1624 found out to be on velvet for the Company, as the island situated in strategic position within the network and dual-purpose as post, forts, factories, and refreshment station. Not only achieved its main aim, to establish an *entrée* port for China-Japanese trade, the company also doubled vantage to control trade activities of its enemies and its fellow junks. Accordingly, gaining control over the island of Formosa was feasibly not for its impending economy but slightly for its geographical position which allowed the Dutch intensified their sway in Asian waters, particularly in China, Japan and Southeast Asia. Thus, remained in Formosa was austere unintentional quest which later burgeoning into profitable and important link in intra-Asian trade network (Marne, 2003: 17-36).<sup>5</sup>

### The Dutch and Neighboring Power in East Asia

Tonio Andrade has identified that the establishment of Dutch settlement in Formosa applicable to John Wills Jr.'s model (Wills Jr, 1993:83-105) suggesting that state support is a key variable in overseas colonialism during the early modern period. Based on Andrade's research there were at least two East Asia

4 The Fukien's governor agreed sending his people to trade with Dutch in Formosa and forbade his subordinate to visit Manila. Initially this agreement was advantageous for both sided, but however it was broke by both sided because The Dutch burnt ships and attacked Fukien coastal area, and Chinese sent superior forces to Pescadores. Thus The Dutch leave the island under threat of the Chinese.

5 At first economic valuable was not the reason of The Dutch stayed in Formosa due to the fact that the island lacked of its valuable commodity to be trade off in Asian Waters. However, they finally found out that they could make profit from deer skin and meat, and moreover from inland product since the land was incredibly fertile. Thus, geographical position was then became their first foundation to remain in the island in order to serve profit to the company.

neighboring power, in this case Japan shogunate and Ming dynasty, *blasé* to overseas expansion, hence left a vacuum into which Europeans could expand (Andrade, 2007). Accordingly, these endowed ways for The Dutch to occupy Formosa easily. However, Dyke's work prompted that Anglo-Dutch fleet of defense in 1620-1622 and later the absence of British in East Asia waters around that time because of financial difficulties also counted as to smoothing their presence in Formosa since there were no single competitors at all (Van Dyke, 1997: 61-81).

In earlier times, the Ming (1368-1644) also interested in sponsoring voyages, for example commodore Cheng He in early fifteenth century. However, after the death of one emperor in expedition, these activities then discouraged. Moreover, Japanese overseas ships repeatedly crooked into piracy created continuous forays that in due course brought serious problem to China. Their pillaging provoked the Ming emperor, Hung Wu, to forbid Chinese junks to go offshore (Ho, *Ibid*: 95). The private overseas commerce was prohibited and the Chinese residents of nearby island were forced to return. Thereafter, Ming Court in 1524 issued a policy to restrict foreign trade and punish people who involved on it, also minimizing region of fishing vessels.

The Ming court applied tributary<sup>6</sup> restriction to Southeast and South Asia because of its financial difficulties. Japan start attached in tributary affairs with China in 1404. By this relationship, Chinese anticipated Japanese piracy through controlled commerce. On the contrary, it was difficult for Ming to administer their relation with stubborn Japanese samurai. This relation was ceased after rival collision erupted between two factions. Formally, this relation ultimately ended in 1549 that caused to the postponement of an important link in Intra-Asian Trade (Wills, *Ibid* : 88).

As overseas commerce reached its peak in 1600s, the Ming court was unable to retain its rapid wave from their territory. Moreover, restriction policy enacted by Chinese authority caused to elevate figures of smuggling and piracy activities. The island of Formosa which located outside both China and Japan territory, served as a venue for illegal trade between Chinese and Japanese merchants. Bay of Tayouan was the place where the entire activities gathered, which eventually lent its name to the whole of the island – Formosa.

To deal with these problems, The Ming court formed a law called *partial legalization of overseas commerce* in 1567 where they granted few silences for voyages, although those who received the licenses were aggrieved with distrust. By this policy, numbers of Japanese pirates that attacked Chinese ships were decline. On the contrary, the licenses holder instead of sailing to the given region, they often illegally traveled exceeded to Japan. Thus smuggling activities continued to occur (Wills, Jr., 1974: 4-8).

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6 Tributary system was basis form of Ming foreign relation policy. They only admitted foreign ships which paid tribute were allowed to enter Chinese port. They initiated regulation in connection to the term of tribute and the number of ships.

Meanwhile, Japan in the 14<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was consisted of separated small states, where Ryuku was one that involved as agent in overseas commerce in East Asia. In a period 1467 and 1573, they captivated in civil wars, an interlude eminently as the Warring States period. In his study about *History of Japan*, Henshall described that Toyotomi Hideyoshi was succeeded to reunify Japan, and he began to involve with foreign trade and open peace relation with China. However, in 1592 after victorious invasion to Korea, he planned to invade Formosa. Thus, in perceiving the news, the Ming court reinforced its coastal military protection and regularly sending task force to Pescadores. After the death of Hideyoshi, Ieyasu took over the reign from Hideyoshi's son and established Tokugawa shogunate in 1603. Japan under Ieyasu implemented a closed policy so called *sakoku* which valid in 1630 onward. Although he decided to detach Japan from the Europeans, uniquely he permitted The Dutch starting in 1609 to have trading privileges and factory in Hirado then moved to Deshima (Toby, 1984: 35-50).<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, in the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century there were efforts to conquer Formosa by Japanese adventurers who willing to establish Japanese settlement there. The attempts were failed and before another challenge was made, it was immediately ceased after the closed policy came into effective by Tokugawa shogunate (Ho, *Ibid*:98). Thus, the mystery of no land's man continued.

In the mean time, Spain, who stationed in Manila, also grasped its attention on Formosa. Subsequently, in 1621 they sent request to their King in Spain to occupy the land, but the voyage was captured by the Dutch under Fleet of Defenses. Thus, the action delayed Formosa from being occupied by other European nations.

Fleet of Defenses were materialized after the British and The Dutch agreed to usurp Portuguese and Spain monopolies in order to create free and liberal trade in Asia. They set up united fleet consisted of five ships from each countries and this joint military forces were actively made their voyages in 1620. Based on the agreement, the Dutch should conferred one third of the spice trade to British due to compensation of the damage they had done to English East India Company. However, some VOC's official in Asia disagreed that they weakened the treaty. On the other hand, British would

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<sup>7</sup> Toby in his works mentioned there were two main reasons why Japan applied closed policy, first because they were realized how European equipped with superiority military defenses, and they were afraid of either by straight attack from foreign country or from betrayed local ruler who asked military aid from European. However, the application of this policy was also a response of Christianity propaganda imparted by Portuguese, which then made them expelled from Japan in 1617. Portuguese were not only trade but also spread Catholicism as one of their aim, thus they started to convert Japanese into catholic. Tokugawa saw this action as threat to their power. On the contrary they have different view about Protestantism, which they thought were less danger than that of Catholicism because it was more private and modest in conveying their faith. Furthermore Japan recognized that the Catholicism had done in creating empire in the new world. Hence, they considered Christianity as a symbol of western presence which would threaten shogunate's authority.

also dissatisfied as they considered the compensation was imbalanced to the suffered that VOC had made (Van Dyke, *Ibid* : 61-81).

By 1622 and early 1623, The English Company was facing financial difficulties that forced them to close down their factory in Pattani, Ayuthia, Pulicat, Masulipatam, and three other in Moluccas. Finally, in April 1623, as financial burden were even heavier, The English Company decided to end up their station in Japan which has been established for a decade. Henceforward, the Company also ended up the agreement by pulling their ships out from East Asia waters to English base in Batavia. The Dutch took over the position by replacing their ships with another thirteen Dutch ships to continue on guard their mission. Thereafter, the absences of the English Company allowed the Dutch to concentrate on the distribution of company resources and tightening their network and power in East Asian waters, let alone to ease their way to establish settlement in Formosa (Van Dyke, *Ibid*). Within two years of voyages in East Asian waters, Fleet of Defenses not only attained to capture either Spain or Portuguese Ships, but also succeeded to restrain the Chinese junks to Manila. This stroke led to economic weakening in the region, especially China. Therefore, they finally open direct trade with the Dutch after being pressured by the blockades.

### **The Dutch Administration in Formosa Settlement:**

#### **Distrust Collaboration**

From 1624 onward, the Dutch settled down in Formosa, buckled to make profit as soon as possible. On the other hand, the Dutch faces few problems in the new occupied lands. The Dutch soon realized few weaknesses of the location they have chosen, such as the store building could easily washed away by floods, less spaces to build houses and buildings, and its lack of fresh water. In 1625, Marteen Sonck, the first Governor in Formosa, immediately proposed a project to governor General in Batavia to build foundations of a town on the mainland in order to strengthen their position and facilitate their fundamental requirement, such as town hall, church, and school. Soon after succeeded buying lands belong to Saccam village which located in front of their first base, they accomplished the project by using Chinese labor and invited artisan and brick-maker from Batavia. Within a year, first council meeting were completed and ready to use, as the city of Provintia ready to be flourished (Veen, *Ibid*: 71).

Making a good relationship with indigenous were important step for the Dutch to attain their food supply. Yet, they found it difficult to deal with indigenous which consists of many tribes, although they have done well with Saccam tribe where they obtained firewood, venison, and fish. The trouble with indigenous were inevitable consequences for their interference

into primordial culture. Frustrated by Mattau aboriginal attacks in 1629, the Dutch then recognized only by the use of force they can maintain order from indigenous people in Formosa (Veen, *Ibid*).

Meanwhile, there were about 25.000 Chinese who already settled in Formosa and small Japanese trader by the time the Dutch arrived. In order to finance settlement, the Dutch began to collect trade tolls from them. Chinese were easier to cooperate with, but the Dutch did faced trouble from the Japanese. They refused to pay the toll because once the Dutch promised would not interfere their trade. This caused bitter relation to both sides in Formosa. Again in 1628, a quarrel occurred between Japanese and Dutch in Formosa when they disarmed Japanese ships which anchored in Formosa. Being dissatisfied, Japanese attacked the house of newly appointed governor, Peter Nuyt, and used him as a hostage. He was released only after the Dutch fulfilled their demand to restore their trade. This tragedy endangered the Dutch-Japanese relation since Tokugawa authorities were so infuriated. They restrained the Dutch in Hirado and stopped their trade, also demanded the Dutch to leave Formosa. This action indeed made Nuyt removed from the office and recalled by Batavian Council to explain what had happened. The relation between Japan and the Dutch improved again after he was extradited to Japan to ask for apology from Tokugawa shogunate (Blussè, 2003: 95-110). The tragedy in newly established settlement had shown that maintaining trade with Japan was considered to be more important than Formosan settlement itself. It was understandable since the settlement was yet contributed profit to the Company.

In the meantime, rumor spread that Spain who intended to establish fort in Formosa, has landed on northern part of Formosa. Certainly the rumor was factual and later Spain erected Fort in Keelung area in 1626 and in Tamsui 1629. The report was immediately sent to Batavian council but it was ignored. Only in 1641 The Dutch took action after they were stronger in military and financial, and succeeded to expel them with two strikes in 1642 (Davidson, 1903: 4-36).

The Dutch trade in Formosa was greatly dependent on Chinese junks that brought Chinese goods which later to be sold again in Japan. Nevertheless, Chinese trade largely played by warlords and pirates along the coast of China. Regarded to its importance, there was no choice than using their perilous channels. Cheng Chih Lung or so called Iquan was one important figure that involved in Sino-Dutch trade activities on Formosa. He was once worked as Dutch translator, but then moved his activities into piracy. In 1627 his behavior distracted Chinese authority in Fukien province and killed the Dutch representative in Amoy. In response, they promised a reward if the Dutch helped them suppress Iquan. Countering the request, the Dutch sent four ships to attack him, but it was botched. On the contrary, he voluntarily

agreed to Chinese government's offer to defend the coast of Fukien from other pirates and in return he appointed as admiral of Fukien coast and became most prominent power in trade on South China region.

However, the quarrel between the Dutch and Iquan continued, as in 1632-1633 the Dutch arrested and forced him signed trade agreement under their term, and also burnt his ships. In contrast, he reversed by attacking Dutch ships and blockades their trade. Accordingly, once again the Dutch interests were in menace since Chinese goods were their main commodity in trading with Japan. Hence, for the sake of their main pursuit and stable supply of Chinese goods, they agreed to negotiate with him in 1635-1636. From then on, peaceful competition were formed among them and followed by appointing him to be main supplier of Chinese goods to the Dutch in Formosa. The commodities he brought were those that high in demand such silk, gold, porcelain, and sugar (Wills, *Ibid*: 88-90).<sup>8</sup> For the time being, the Dutch managed to prevent abortive flaw of their new settlement.

Survived in passing difficult time in their first decade in Formosa, they managed to stabilize the settlement. It was Hans Putman (1629-1636) who succeeded to convey Formosan settlement into its break-through. The Company began to put their attention on inland industries. The richness of deer in the island and deer hunt activities were had been done long before the Dutch came, as it was part of indigenous economy. The demands for deerskin were quite high in Japan, for clothing and armor. Besides, the antler and the meat, dried and salted, were valuable as trade goods, especially in China. Hence, the deerskin activities were continued to be practiced until the Dutch arrived. Attracted by promising profit because of its large demand, the Dutch in 1630s decided to participate in activities by issuing hunting licenses, which without the licenses whosoever were forbade hunting. Let alone in 1635 the Company officially issued a decreed that all deerskin produced from the island must be sold to the Company on fixed prices (Andrade, 1997: 57-93).

Moreover, sugar was primary commodity that profiting in the Dutch-Asian trade, which actually brought in from South China to Formosa. Considering the fertile soil thus promoting possibility of becoming of producer itself, the Council, as an experiment, began opening up sugarcane plantation near Saccam. Following explicit order from J.P Coen, the Governor General of Batavia, Putman encouraged Chinese immigrant by providing them small sums of money and company cattle to plow the land. Their first experiment was a great success. Subsequently, the Company invited more Chinese to the island to cultivate the fertile lands of the western plains and followed by experimenting new crops, such as hemp and cotton. Later, indigo, tobacco, and rice hoped could also be cultivated (Strydom, *Ibid*).

<sup>8</sup> Cheng Chih Lung was also played important role on the beginning of the Dutch presence in Formosa. He was a person, together with Li Tan, who promoted the Dutch to try Formosa as a base in 1622. Thus that is why Cheng Ch'eng Kung claimed Formosa as his ancestor's land when he attacked the Dutch in 1662.

In materializing these expectations, the Dutch invited as many Chinese as possible to work in agriculture with the promise that they will pay no tolls or residence taxes for the first four years and, as well, that they will be paid 'a guaranteed price of 40 pieces of eight for every last of rice produced' (*Ibid*). Encouraged by these policies, Chinese entrepreneurs built houses and farms near Saccam and brought laborers from mainland China. As a result, by early 1635 entrepreneurs were planting larger plantations. In the meantime, the company continued its subsidies, by lending money and oxen for plowing. Besides, many Chinese were eager to respond this call because of riot occurred from Ch'ing conquest on China's coastal area (Andrade, *ibid*). Hence, officials mused that Formosa would soon become "the breadbasket of the Indies" (*Ibid*).

However, the great influxes of Chinese bothered Putman, as he tried to remind Batavian council about Chinese rebellion in Manila in 1603. Thus he stressed his interest to strengthen the Dutch colony in Formosa as counterbalance of Chinese number in the island, by promoting immigration and marriage with indigenous women. In spite of in favor to this idea, the Batavian council promoted 'realistic' policy as to poll head taxes in controlling their number and could be use as endorsement of Christianity by charging half of it to converted Chinese, but bitterly refused by Putman, who decided only to poll one tenth levy on export goods (Veen, *ibid*: 151).

The investments began rewarding. The export of deerskin to Japan rose to 151,400 and in Saccam's fields produced 3,000 piculs (180,000 kg) of sugar in 1637. In the following years, as the area under cultivation increased and as rice harvests provided alternate sources of food, more and more sugarcane was milled, bleached, and exported. By the mid 1640s, the colony of Formosa was self sufficient in agriculture and was exporting rice and sugar to China and elsewhere for profit.

Different from his predecessor who disagrees on head tax, Johan Van De Burgh (1636-1640) drawn his attention to the growing number of Chinese on the island and reconsidered advice from Batavian council. Hence, in December 1639, the Council decided to start extracting tax for Chinese residents and duties on the stalking of deer, the cutting of bamboo, distilling of *arrack*, production of bricks, on fishing and oyster harvesting (Veen, *ibid*: 156). The first collection settled in August and September 1640, all the Chinese residents, except those who work on special duty for the Company, had to have a *hoofdbrief* stamped every month upon payment. The policies of licenses and taxation regulated by the Dutch gave rise to what Tonio Andrade called 'a system of co-colonialism' where both closely depended to each other and essentially the settlement was a Chinese colony under the Dutch rule (Andrade, 2007).

By the late 1640s, the trading post in Formosa enabled to contribute profit and considered as one of most profiting settlements of the Company. It was estimated that throughout the most cost-effective years, forty percent of

all income was as a result of taxation and tariff on Chinese traders, farmers, hunters, and laborer, while trade, in which once again the Chinese engaged a crucial part, yielded the other sixty percent.

For the time being, the Dutch were drawn inland further and claimed the indigenous sovereignty. The number of village occupied by the Dutch rose from 44 in 1644 to 217 in 1646, and, from 251 to 315 in period 1648 to 1650. The headmen of each village were given best clothes, personnel and offices. The Dutch assembled each headman to yearly regional councils where their disputes were reconciled, maintain the peace among them, and not attack Chinese in their village if they brought the Company's permission, as this ceremony called *Landdag*. Furthermore, the Dutch also used their skills by appointing some of the tribe to be their garrison, in order to answer their army shortage problem. On the other hand, the Dutch detached the indigenous from Chinese in order to avoid from any chance of their cooperation in attacking the Company (Wills, *Ibid*).

Indeed, feared of Sino-indigenous cooperation never exist, but the attack itself came from dissatisfied and hatred Chinese. The head tax system which enforced by using soldiers for inspection, frequently using night visit, created disturbance to Chinese settlers. Besides, they were vulnerable to exploitations and abuses by the soldiers. Contradicted to the company that reach its peak profit in 1650, the economy for Chinese settlers were in troublesome because the fall of deer meat prices, the rise of rice prices, bleak situation of the agriculture in 1651, and the Chinese influxes from the political turmoil in china. These conditions led to Chinese rebellion in September 1652 supervised by Quo Fa-Yi, a head of the settlement in Smeedorp, two miles north of Saccam. Although the rebellion could easily be overcome by the Dutch, still it was injured both trade and agriculture profit and impacted on strict regulation to Chinese settlers (Strydom, *ibid*: 26-29).

The event of rebellion happened to be correlated with the spreading rumor about the attack from China. The rumor spread as early as 1646. However, from 1652 the rumor was specified that Cheng Ch'eng Kung or Coxinga designed to conquer Formosa as a sanctuary from Ching. According to Johannes Huber's worked, there were no direct historical evidence about correlation of these two events, and the involvement of Cheng Ch'eng Kung and his regime to the rebellion. The rebellion was purely rural-farmer rebel who heavily indebted and dissatisfied to the Company. Meanwhile in around the same time, Cheng Ch'eng Kung frantically fighting the Ch'ing Authority in Fukien (Huber, 1990: 265-296).

Instead of reinforcing the garrison and strengthening the fortification, the rumors were neglected by the Batavian council. On the contrary, the Batavian council began to search the option of eluding the expenses of the establishment on Formosa by opening up trade by Dutch ships in Chinese

seaports. Inquisitively, expedition to Canton in 1652 and 1653 led to transmit of an embassy to Peking via Canton under Pieter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyser, where they were received with all the usual tributary system in the summer 1656. Nevertheless, the court was decided to begin restrict maritime trade in an effort to interrupt trade with Cheng Ch'eng Kung. Thus, there was no chance for Dutch that might be permitted to trade every year as they requested. In 1659, the Dutch soon decided that the trading condition was not promising and they returned to Formosa. Apart from that, the economic condition in Formosa relatively declined. Since 1658 only few junks were called in Tayouan, and the Formosan economy was sagging. Dreadful weather had damaged the sugar crops, let alone the sugar prices fell in China. Rice yield had improved, but no junks came from China to buy the harvests. <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/andrade/andrade11.html-note44> Only if trade endured still in Fukien, Tayouan could not expect to recuperate. Some officials believed that *"with that established colony the best has already come, and it is more likely to decline than to rise"* (Andrade, 2007). Later on, they were halfhearted sending the army to Formosa because of the expenses they would spend on unbeneficial settlement (Wills, *ibid*: 17-25). From this action showed that the Company concerned mainly about the amount of the profit they could gather from their settlement other than the settlement itself. Thus, settlement's protection to considerably less profitable, which at that time Formosan's heading its profit decline, was more or less ignored.

**Figure 2.**  
Dutch East India Company Governors of Formosa 1624-1662

Name of Governor General of Formosan Council	Year of Reign
Maarten Sonck	1624-1625
Gerard Frederiksz de With	1625-1627
Pieter Nuyts,	1627-1629
Hans Putmans	1629-1636
Johan van der Burch	1636-1640
Paulus Traudenius	1640-1643
Maximiliaan Le Maire,	1643-1644
François Caron	1644-1646
Pieter Anthoniszoon Overtwater,	1646-1649
Nicolaas Verburgh,	1649-1653
Cornelis Caesar	1653-1656
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frederik Coyett,</li> <li>• ((Hermanus Klenck van Odessa, 1661-62)</li> <li>• (Jacob Cau, 1661)</li> </ul>	1656-1662 (The replacement when the Dutch were under siege by Cheng Ch'eng Kung in 1661-1662).

Source: <http://www.gutenberg-e.org/andrade/appB.html#appbl1>

### The Moment of Great Loss: Cheng Ch'eng Kung's Attack

As a son of Cheng Chih Lung, Cheng Ch'eng Kung or so called Coxinga also actively involved in maritime trade activities. The harmonious relationship between the Dutch and Cheng Chih Lung since 1636 lasted until the civil war broke in 1644. The war created disturbances not only in maritime trade along China region and affected the Dutch trade in Formosa, but also disrupted Dutch and Cheng relationship. As an Admiral of Fukien in Ming dynasty, Cheng Chih Lung was battling against Ch'ing power. Thus, there were hardly any contacts at that time with the Company in Formosa. From the news received by the Dutch, Cheng Chih Lung was surrendered to Ch'ing and taken to Peking. On the contrary, refused to follow his father's option, Cheng Ch'eng Kung regarded himself as Ming loyalist and battled the Ch'ing in Fukien.

**Figure 3.**

Cheng Chih Lung and his son, Cheng Ch'eng Kung (left) and self portrayed of Cheng Ch'eng Kung or *Coxinga* in his apex power 1658 (right).



Source: [www.taiwandocuments.org/koxinga.htm](http://www.taiwandocuments.org/koxinga.htm)

According to Huber in *Relations between Cheng Ch'eng Kung and The Netherland East India Company in the 1650s*, only in May 1650, contact with Cheng regime reestablished under Cheng Lien. In September 1650, Cheng Ch'eng Kung expropriated the Cheng Regime from his uncle, Cheng Lien, by coup and maintained a good relation with the Dutch in Formosa. There were some conflicts occurred between them but they managed to settle peacefully. Furthermore, Cheng Ch'eng Kung also requested medical treatment from the Company's doctor for him. The friendly relations were not even bothered by the 1652's rebellion in Formosa and their following massacre. Around the same time, Cheng Ch'eng Kung was parleying with the Ch'ing who attempted to mollify him with entitlement and certain regional authority. Yet, he was also fused his regime by gathering mercenaries and supplies to prepare for the forthcoming combat. This was a relative peaceful period for the Dutch, but it was not lasted long as in around 1656, Cheng Ch'eng Kung in his decree decided declaring boycott on trade with the Company in Formosa (Huber, *ibid*: 210-241).

As he reached his apex power in 1658, he attempted to capture Nanking, but it was failed and caused him lost his influence. He then felt insecure, let alone he had to seek a new place for refuge and pedestal of resistance. Since suffered from supply deprive because Ch'ing Manchu cut off his sources of supply, he was constrained to attack Formosa in 1661 and instituted headquarters there.

**Figure 4.** The events of the Dutch loss Formosa.



Source: [members.shaw.ca/leksu/mainp3e.htm](http://members.shaw.ca/leksu/mainp3e.htm)

It was in the summer of 1660 when the Batavian finally sent 600 men on 12 ships to fortify Formosan defense force. Nonetheless, the order was to attack Macau if the hearsay of a Cheng thread came up to be groundless. As the commander saw no danger and signed of attack, they sailed away. In

contrast, on April 30, 1661, huge Cheng fleet carrying over 25.000 well-trained armies visibly off Castel Zeelandia. It was obvious Formosan fort could not barely face them as at that time its garrisoned occupied only around 1000 men. Within a few weeks Cheng's forces had taken control over the island, apart from Castel Zeelandia with very frail resistance left. Help was sent from Batavia, after a new commander who supposed to land in Formosa ran away to Japan soon after he saw the situation in Formosa, consist of ten ships and 700 men and arrived in early September 1661. After a long struggle to push the Chinese out the town, the endeavor was failed. Cheng's forces were too strong. On the other hand, the Chinese settlers in Formosa indeed supported their presence in the island. Thus, it was a dead lock for the Dutch in Formosa. Batavia could not do anything to send forces until the beginning of south Monsoon in March or April. Nevertheless, Cheng Ch'eng Kung could not wait any longer; he sent small forces inside the fort and began to make treaty. On February 1, 1662 the treaty was concluded that the Dutch were permitted to withdraw in peace, but had to leave behind company money, goods and records. Thus, the treaty ended 38 years of the Dutch administration in Formosa (Wills, *ibid*: 25-28).

## Conclusion

The process of colonization in Formosa in some extend different to colonization in South East Asia. The main reason the Dutch came to Formosa was to establish *entrée* port for Sino-Japanese trade in order to break monopoly of their Iberian enemies, the Portuguese and the Spain. Furthermore, they realized that Chinese goods were important not only for their European market, but also for their South East Asian trade. Thus, it was crucial to open direct trade and established base in China, just as Portuguese did in Macau. To do so, the Dutch applied strategies and concepts that often successful in South East Asia or China. However, it was misapplication, because China was more capable in defenses and yet they were less dependent on foreign trade. Hence, the Dutch requests were rejected and they involved in war with China.

Their triumphancy in Formosa connected to the apathetic of Japanese Shogunate and Ming Authority on overseas trade. Yet, the absence of their fellow European countries, the British, eased their way to occupy the island. Inevitably, the establishment of Dutch settlement in 1624 was advantageous as its strategic position within the network for dual-purpose as post, forts, factories, and refreshment station. Not only to achieve its main aim and to establish an *entrée* port for China-Japanese trade, the company also doubled vantage to control trade activities of its enemies and its fellow junks. Accordingly, gaining control over the island of Formosa was feasibly not for its impending economy but slightly for its geographical position which

allowed the Dutch to intensify their sway in Asian waters, particularly in China, Japan and Southeast Asia.

The Company's basic orientation was toward the use of force to obtain and enforce monopolies. Even in terms of general policy, the Formosan council mismanaged things for their first ten years that they made enemies for themselves and aggravated the general disorder, as disputes occurred with Japanese and Cheng Chih Lung. Furthermore, in the upcoming decade, their policies toward taxation, mainly head tax that used night visits by the soldiers, exposed harassment among vulnerable Chinese settlers. In consequence, it created hatred and dissatisfaction. As the tension grew, rebellion considered to become best solutions for distressed Chinese, which took place on September 1652 under one Chinese headman, Quo Fa-Yi. The ease with which the rebellion was suppressed, led to overconfidence in the mastery of the Dutch soldiers that would in the end be fatal to Dutch rule over Formosa. Although there was no indication of Cheng Ch'eng Kung intervention on the rebellion, eventually the effect of its strict policy after rebellion, shaped Chinese settlers to be ready to give him allegiance and help him throw off the Dutch regime as soon as Cheng turned his attention on Formosa.

On the other hand, the way the Batavian council underestimated the spreading rumor was a miscalculation step, particularly by the time the rumor was materialized. The help was on their way to attack Portuguese in Macau, due to troubles among the officers. However, their action of searching other trade options in Chinese seaports illustrated distances and lack of communications among council that led to miscommunication. Nevertheless, it was understandable movement since they were under consortium of a trading company, which their first and foremost goal was profit. Hence, no matter the Formosan settlement was bagging revenues to the Company's balance sheet, but since it was heading its decline at that time, the Company should try other alternative means in acquiring profit.

Finally, it was the attack of Cheng Ch'eng Kung in 1661 that ended up 38 years reign of the Dutch in Formosa. Brought about over 25,000 men and heavily armed ships with him, the Dutch were at that time equipped only with 1000 men. It seemed that these were not able competing power with their enemy. Thus, these factors intertwined apparently to each other that contributed to the loss of Formosa from the Dutch. ●

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