

Articles concerning Formosa (Taiwan) in *The Canton Register*

Compiled by Douglas Fix

Note: When compiling this set of 1830s articles in *The Canton Register*, we relied on the following journal article for source information.

朱瑪璣。「自由貿易、帝國與情報：十九世紀三十年代『廣州紀事報』中的臺灣知識」
[Free trade, empire, and intelligence: Knowledge of Formosa in *The Canton Register* in the 1830s]，『漢學研究』[Chinese Studies (Taipei)]，32 卷 2 期（2014 年 6 月），頁 49-82。

"Formosa." *The Canton Register* (15 June 1830): 30.

Success against the insurgents is reported to Court, and rewards are conferred on the officers.

A Constant Reader. "Formosa." *The Canton Register* (15 July 1831): 68-69.

In the course of a recent perusal of Burney's *Chronological history of voyages and discoveries in the South Sea*, I was much struck with the account which it contains of the establishment of the Dutch on the Island of Formosa; and, thinking it may prove interesting to your readers, I here present you with an abridgment of it. [Signed:] A Constant Reader

On the formation of the Dutch East India Company in 1602, one of their first objects was to contest with the Portuguese for the Moluccas and the China trade. They endeavoured to enter into treaties of commerce with the Chinese, and, on the ground of the indulgence shewn to the Portuguese in granting them the settlement of Macao (A.D. 1557) they demanded similar facilities for their trade, including the establishment of a *Comptoir* or Factory.

It is not necessary to detail the failure of an attack on Macao, by the Dutch in 1622 further than to say that the attempt afforded the Portuguese an excuse for the present fortifications; and the part taken by the Chinese in the defence, gave the Dutch sufficient cause of war with the Empire.

They therefore resolved to take possession of the *Ponghou* or Pescadores Islands, between Formosa and the continent, and, on the 5th of July, 1622, anchored off the principal of them named Pehou in a well enclosed bay with good bottoms in 8 or 9 fathoms -- where, the Chinese having no force capable of resistance, they immediately set about building a fort. To forward this, they condemned the crews of many Chinese vessels which fell into their hands, to labor at its construction, whom they treated with extraordinary cruelty; for, of 1,500 workmen employed, it is related that 1,300 died "by misery more than by other causes, not being allowed victuals sufficient for their support, seldom more than

half a pound of rice per day." The Dutch justified this treatment as a retaliation for the ill usage experienced by these of their countrymen who had the misfortune to become prisoners to the Chinese, who were rigorously confined and kept upon small and bad diet on which it was not possible for them to subsist long; also that proposals had been made to the Chinese for a change of prisoners, and eighteen Chinamen had been offered for one Hollander, but the answer returned by the Chinese, was, that they would not consent to any exchange though a thousand should be offered for one.

The great uneasiness felt by the Chinese Government at the Dutch fixing themselves at the Ponghou Islands caused them willingly to enter into negotiations and to depart from their usual leisurely mode of proceeding. The Dutch Admiral sent three ships to Amoy with proposals for an accommodation of differences, which were transmitted to the Emperor; who, in return, sent an embassy to Pehou, with great promptitude, declaring his willingness to enter into a treaty of commerce with the Admiral; but it was required as a preliminary that he should withdraw from the Ponghou Islands, which being a part of the dominions of the Emperor, he could not, consistently with his dignity, treat of commerce with those, who, in defiance of his authority, kept possession of them. The Dutch were at the same time told that if they would quit the Ponghou Islands, they should be allowed to fortify themselves in Formosa. The Dutch Admiral and Council did not consider themselves at liberty to consent to this without instructions from Batavia and the conference having broken off without producing any agreement, they despatched eight ships to plunder and destroy along the coast of China. Each side nevertheless continued desirous of accommodation, and hostility proved no bar to negotiation, which occasionally produced short suspensions, and, at length something like an amicable adjustment.

The Dutch Admiral still alleging the want of instructions from Batavia, the Chinese offered to despatch two junks to that port in order to obtain an answer; and they sailed laden with silks, under convoy of a Dutch ship. Further, to satisfy a most unreasonable demand of the Dutch, the Chinese Government, issued an order prohibiting the vessels of China from trading to Manila, against which, as Spain and Portugal were at that time under one Sovereign, the Dutch likewise carried on hostilities.

The Junks, sailing against the monsoon, made a long passage and their return was retarded so much beyond the expected time, that the Chinese attributed the delay to design, and concluded the Dutch meant only to amuse them without having any serious intention to comply with their demand. In this belief, the Chinese trade with Manila was again opened; the Dutch seized the vessels employed in it, and hostilities recommenced.

In April, 1624 the Chinese made a desperate effort to expel the Dutch, built a fort within two leagues of them and collected an army of about fifteen thousand men, with numerous vessels, some of which were filled with stones for the purpose of being sunk to choke up the harbour occupied by the Dutch. Still, however, they held out proposals for peace, and the Dutch seeing them so much in earnest to

regain possession of the disputed islands, thought prudent to consent to the terms offered. Towards the close of one year a peace was concluded, agreeably to which, the Dutch evacuated Pehou, and took possession of the harbour on Taywan, in the Western part of Formosa. By this treaty the Dutch obtained the liberty of commerce demanded with China; but it does not appear that the Chinese consented or that, at this time, any demand was made on them to lay restrictions on their trade with the Philippine Islands.

For the defence of their new establishment, the Dutch built a Fort and batteries named Fort Zeeland, of which the remains are visible to this day; and, although less eligible as a naval station, than that which they had left, it was observed, on the other hand, that in lieu of barren rocks, like the Ponghou Isles, they had obtained a settlement in a fruitful country, inhabited by a quiet well disposed people.

Formosa, though considered an appendage of the empire, appears to have been at this time looked on by the Chinese with comparative indifference; for, I observe that, two years latter, [sic] in 1626, the Spaniards took possession of, and fortified, the port of Kelang, at the north end of Formosa, for the protection of their trade, between Manila and China. It was afterwards taken from them, and possessed by the Dutch. Of this harbour a Chart has been lately published by Horsburgh from a survey by Capt. Parkyns of the *Merope*, who passed some time there, and considered it far superior to any part of the West coast, which it is dangerous to approach, owing to extensive banks of quicksand, stretching out for a considerable distance into the sea.

The Dutch were not long destined to retain the splendid possession thus acquired. On the conquest of the Northern provinces of China by the present Tartar dynasty, in 1644, numerous Chinese emigrated to Formosa, who, in the first instance, were encouraged by the Dutch; but, towards the year 1650, appearances of danger, from these settlers, began to manifest themselves. In 1652 the Chinese peasantry took up arms against the Dutch. And, finally, owing to gross mismanagement, internal dissension, and want of support from the supreme Government at Batavia, possession was wrested from them in 1662, by Koxinga the well-known Chinese leader, who so long defended the provinces of Fu-kien, Quang-tong [sic] and Quang-se, [sic] against the conquering Tartars, and who established himself in Formosa when no longer able to maintain a successful opposition on the continent.

Formosa resisted the attacks of the Dutch as well as [69] of the Imperial Government of China, and continued independent till the year 1682, when the grandson of Koxinga yielded up possession to the Emperor Kang-hi, and went to reside at Peking.

It is almost superfluous to add that the Western part of Formosa, which alone is subject to China, is here spoken of; the Eastern part separated by a lofty range of mountains, is still in the occupation of the aboriginal inhabitants, of whom some particulars are related by the famous Polish voyager Benyowski, who passed some time among them.

The Chinese portion of the Island is very fertile in corn, and may be styled the granary of the comparatively barren province of Fokien.

Asiaticus. "Formosa." *The Canton Register* (16 February 1832): 23-24.

Mr. Editor,

From an account, inserted some months back in the *Canton Register*, of the Dutch Establishment on the Island of Formosa, I have been led to examine the subject, and have collected a few notes, chiefly extracted from two Chinese works, the one a statistical account of the whole of the Chinese division of the Island, the other an account of the immediate district of Tae-wan, the capital. If you should think right to admit the following to a place in your Paper, I shall probably lay at your disposal some further remarks on the same subject. [signed:] Asiaticus.

That so large an island as Formosa, lying so near to the coast of China, as well as to the route pursued by vessels passing between Fo-kien and the Lew-chew Islands, should have remained unknown till the 15th century, as stated by Grosier (*Description de la Chine*, Vol. 1.¹) -- or the middle of the 14th, as is generally asserted by the Chinese writers on the subject, is scarcely credible and certainly very improbable. Were it even to be admitted that the government had remained so long ignorant of it (but there is abundant reason to suppose the contrary) how shall we account for its having never been seen by traders or fishermen; especially when we find it stated by the Chinese themselves, that the Pong-hou islands or Pescadores, situated about one third nearer to Formosa than to China, may be occasionally seen from the Chinese coast? This alone is sufficient to render it extremely probable, that it was occasionally visited; and that this was not more frequently the case may be accounted for by the supposition that the Island had become the abode of pirates. We possess, however, better ground to go upon than mere probability.

Not to go back, with M. Klaproth (vide *Memoires relatifs a l'Asie* p. 322.²), to remote antiquity, or even to the time of the Han dynasty, -- the names *Hwang-fuh*,³

¹ Transcriber's note: The text in question is the following book, available in English in 1788: [Jean Baptiste Gabriel Alexandre Grosier:] *A general description of China: Containing the topography of the fifteen provinces which compose this vast empire; that of Tartary, the isles, and other tributary countries; the number and situation of its cities, the state of its population, the natural history of its animals, vegetables and minerals. Together with the latest accounts that have reached Europe, of the government, religion, manners, customs, arts and sciences of the Chinese. Illustrated by a new and correct map of China, and other copperplates. Translated from the French of the Abbé Grosier, 2 vols.* (London: Printed for G.G.J. and J. Robinson, Paternoster-Row, 1788). The early 19th-century French version of this book was the following edition: *De la Chine, ou description générale de cet empire, rédigée d'après les émoires de la Mission de Pé-kin. Ouvrage qui contient la description topographique des quinze provinces de la Chine, celle de la Tartarie, des îles et des divers Etats tributaires qui en dépendent; les trois règnes de son histoire naturelle, rassemblés et donés pour la première fois avec quelque étendue; et l'exposé de toutes les connoissances acquises et parvenues jusqu'ici en Europe sur le gouvernement, la religion, les lois, les mœurs, les usages, les sciences et les arts des Chinois.* Troisième édition, revue et considérablement augmentée avec deux cartes par M. l'Abbé Grosier, 7 vols. (Paris: Pilliet, 1818-1820).

² Transcriber's note: Klaproth, M.J., "Description de l'île de Formose, extraite de livres Chinois" [Description of the island of Formosa, extracted from Chinese texts], *Mémoires relatifs à l'Asie* (Paris: Librairie Orientale de Dondey-Dupré Père et fils, 1826), Vol. 1, pp. 321-374.

desert lands, and *Man-e*, savage barbarians, which he gives as having been then applied to this Island, being common to all foreign countries; -- it is worthy to remark that mention is made of the Pong-hou islands in the time of Kae-hwang of the Suy dynasty, A.D. 589-601; and that it is stated, in accounts of that period, that near to those islands there was a country called Peshay-yay or Peshay-na inhabited by a savage and barbarous race of people, who wore no clothes and could scarcely be ranked among human beings, and who spoke a language unintelligible to the Chinese. It is related of these people that they were extremely fond of iron, and when they possessed any, were so careful of it, that they had cords attached to their javelins, to prevent their being lost. "In this," says a Chinese writer, "the present inhabitants of Formosa agree with them entirely. I therefore conclude that they are the same people."

It is further stated that, at the above mentioned period, an officer was sent to examine the Pong-hou islands. He reported that they were 36 in number, and that the only occupation of the inhabitants was fishing, although the land was well suited to afford pasturage to cattle and sheep. -- In this latter circumstance he is quite at variance with Du Halde. The compilers of the above -- named Chinese works refuse credence to these accounts, because they are not to be found in any authentic history; nor do we find any further mention of either Formosa or the Pescadores until the close of the Yuen dynasty, in the middle of the 14th century, when the latter were brought under the Chinese government. M. Klaproth, in the above *memoires* gives a plausible reason for this silence respecting them. "Les historiens Chinois" (says he) "en faisaient rarement mention, parce que ces habitans, réputés barbares, n'envoyaient pas d'ambassade et de tribut aux Empereurs."⁴

During the Ming dynasty, the Pong-hou islands experienced several changes, being at one abandoned, and all the inhabitants removed to Fokien province, at another time re-peopled and fortified against the pirates who had taken possession of them. About the year 1430, Wang-shan-paou, an eunuch, was driven to Formosa by a storm. In the year 1563-4 Lin-taou-kéen having, with Japanese pirates under his command, committed depredations on the Chinese coast, the Admiral Yu-ta-yew pursued him to the Pong-hou islands, and from thence drove him to Formosa, but was afraid to follow him thither, being ignorant of the passage, which moreover was narrow and shallow. Lin-taou-kéen did not remain long on Formosa, but, after a cruel massacre of many of the inhabitants, sailed away for Canton province. In the 1st year of Tëen-ke, 1620-21, a Chinese, who had obtained office in Japan, landed, with some Japanese, on Formosa, where he was joined by Ching-che-lung, the father of Koxinga; and, from that time, the

³ Hwang-fuh, the distant desert lands, formed, in ancient times, the last of four descriptions of country surrounding the central nation of China. The great Yu, who succeeded to the sage and holy Emperors Yaou and Shun, divided the Chinese world into five parts; -- 1. *The cultured lands*, extending 500 miles on every side of the Imperial residence; this was China proper: -- 2nd. *The smaller and larger Baronies*, surrounding the former: -- 3rd. *The tranquillized lands*, probably subdued territories, where the *soothing art* (so well known at the present day?) was practised: -- 4th. *The lands of restraint*, containing the E. or barbarians, and exiles: and 5th: *The desert lands*, inhabited by savages, *Man*, and more guilty convicts.-- It would appear that from this division sprung the name of "central nation."

⁴ Transcriber's note: English translation of this sentence: "Chinese historians rarely mentioned it, because these inhabitants, reputed to be barbarians, did not send an embassy and tribute to the Emperors."

Chinese began to emigrate thither. Ching-che-lung and his confederates are said to have soon left the island; but, if so, they seem to have returned not long after.

It was at this period, according to the Chinese, that the Dutch first arrived, and a curious story is told about a stratagem by which they obtained ground to build on. A request which they made for a small spot of ground being rejected, they entreated the grant of only much as an ox-hide would enclose, offering a large sum for it. This was granted, and they immediately cut up a hide into narrow strips, which joining together, they therewith measured out a piece of ground, and on it built a fort. This was the Castle Zelanda. In the following year, A.D. 1622, they seized on the principal of the Pong-hou islands, and built a fort there also. And, from that period, merchants of Fokien province began to resort to Formosa, to trade with them.

The Dutch were allowed to retain peaceful possession of the territory which they had thus gained, till after the accession of the present Tartar dynasty, when Chinese emigrants began to persuade Ching-ching-kung, better known to Europeans by the name of Koxinga, to drive the Dutch away, and seize on their possessions. But Koxinga being, at that time, still able to make head against the Tartars, did not follow their persuasions, until 11 years afterwards, when he entered Tae-wan, the capital, under cover of a dense fog. In a few months he forced the Dutch to leave the island, and established himself in the sovereignty of it.

After Koxinga's death, his son Ching-king, and his grandson, Ching-kih-shwang occupied successively the throne of this petty kingdom. Neither of them possessed much talent for governing; and the latter was brought to submit to the Emperor Kang-he, partly by the desertion of his people, occasioned by the promise of pardon to all who returned to their country, and partly by the reduction of the Pong-hou Islands. This took place in the 22nd year of Kang-he's reign, A.D. 1682-3. All the subjects of Ching-kih-shwang were compelled, as the other Chinese had been before, to shave the front part of the head, and wear the Tartar tail.

To the conquest of Formosa, so easily obtained, His Imperial Majesty was but little disposed; and even after its reduction, it was a question with him whether to retain possession of it or not. The Admiral of Fo-kien province, She-lang, who eventually subdued the Pong-hou islands, persuaded His Majesty to engage in the conquest, by representing the ease with which it might be done, and the advantages which would accrue from it. He also, by a comparative statement of the advantage and disadvantages of retaining or giving up possession of Formosa, brought His Majesty to decide on the former line of conduct. The chief reasons which he brought forward in support of the conquest were, that it would render the adjoining seas more peaceful, and consequently lessen the navel force necessary to be kept up; that it would give rest to the people, and bring more revenue into the Imperial treasury; at the same time that the Island would thereby be prevented from becoming a hiding place for the disaffected and guilty. He also informed the Emperor, that the then king, Ching-kih-shwang, had ten sons: of those one or two, at least, might be expected to have more talent than their father; and were they to possess themselves of the whole Island, and to form alliances with foreign nations, they would become much more difficult to subdue than at that period.

Much the same arguments, it may be supposed, were brought forward to induce His Majesty to retain possession of his conquest; in addition to which, it was urged, that, if not retained, the crafty Dutch might be expected to seize on it again.

The Admiral She-lang was afterwards raised to the nobility, with the title Baron Tsing-hae, i.e., Baron "Pacifator of the seas." Since this conquest, nothing remarkable seems to have occurred relating to Formosa, except the dreadful hurricane in the year 1782, related by Grosier (*Description de la Chine* Vol. 1 pp. 334-338), in which great part of the country was overflowed by the sea, many houses destroyed, and numerous vessels sunk or stranded.

The policy of the present dynasty with regard to Formosa, has been to take every measure to prevent its becoming a resort for people disaffected to the government. For this purpose, a heavy demand is made on every person requesting permission to emigrate, and many difficulties are put in the way of those desiring to do so. It is, however, notwithstanding these precautions, subject to frequent insurrection; besides which, a constant border warfare is carried on between the Chinese colonists, and the Aborigines of the Eastern parts.

"Formosa." *The Canton Register* (7 April 1832): 41-42.

The lofty chain of mountains, which divides Formosa in its whole length from north to south, forms a barrier between the Chinese, inhabiting the fertile plains on the west, and the yet unsubdued natives of the east; and is the scene of a border warfare constantly maintained between these two parties. The aboriginal inhabitants of the west have been mostly subdued, and, in great part, enslaved by the Chinese; but they do not continue in quiet submission to their haughty conquerors, unless indeed we be induced, by the name, to except the small proportion who are styled Shûh-fan, *matured foreigners*, in contradiction to the Sâng-fan, *raw, untrained foreigners*.

Of the unexplored territory to the east of the mountainous chain nothing certain is known, but it is generally believed to contain abundance of gold and silver, which form chief articles of trade between the natives and the Lew-chewans. The western division, of which alone we have detailed accounts, is enriched, however, not by precious metals, but by the great fertility of the soil.

This part of Formosa, lying between the 22nd and 25th degrees of N. Lat., became, on its conquest by the present dynasty, a department of the province of Fuh-keen, under the name of Tae-wan-Foo, and was divided into three Hëen districts viz: Tae-wan-Hëen, Fung-shan-Hëen, and Choo-lo-Hëen. Since that period, these districts have been more equalized; Chang-hwa-Hëen and a smaller district, called Tan-shwuy-Ting, have been added; and the Pong-hou, or rather Pâng-hoo, Islands have also been formed into a Ting district, under the jurisdiction of Tae-wan-Foo.

Tae-wan-Hëen, the chief district, is bounded by Choo-lo-Hëen, on the north, and Fung-shan-Hëen, on the south. It is a very narrow slip of land, comprehending, at the period when the last statistical accounts were published, a town. -- which occupies the site of the Dutch Tayo-wan, and is without walls, -- and about 21 villages, inhabited by Chinese and their descendants; also three natives villages, inhabited by the Shuh-fan,

"matured foreigners." The town Tae-wan, the Capital of the department, is in 23. 0' N. Lat. and 3. 32' Lon. E. of Peking.

Fung-shan-Héen lies to the south of Tae-wan-Héen. It is a broad district, comprehending a town, eight villages, and a few farms occupied by Chinese. The number of native villages is 73, of which eight only are occupied by the civilized natives. Lat. of the Town, 22. 40' N.: Lon. 3. 37' E. of Peking. Lat. of Sha-ma-ke-tow, the most southern point, 22. 6' N.; Lon. E. 4. 9'

Cho-lo-Héen lies to the north of Tae-wan-Héen. It comprehends likewise a small town and four Chinese villages, besides several hamlets and farms, and 38 native villages; -- eight belong to the Shûh-fan. Lat. of the town 23. 37' Lon. E. 3. 44'.

Chang-hwa-Héen is on the north of the last, and, like the others, comprehends a small town or enclosed village, besides 16 Chinese hamlets, and 132 farms. The number of native villages is 51, -- inhabited entirely by the Sâng-fan or "raw natives."

Tan-shwuy-Ting is an inferior district, situated northeast of the last. It has also its palisaded town besides a fortified town or citadel, 132 farms, and 70 native villages. In this district is Ke-lung, or Ke-lang where, the Spanish, and after them the Dutch, had for some time a fort. Ke-lung is a chief landmark, on the passage from Fûh-kéen to the Lew-chews and Japan. Lat. of the town, Tan-shwuy-ching, 25. 7'. -- Lon. E. 4. 43'. The Lat. of Ke-lung, the most northern, as well as the most eastern point, is about 25. 16'; -- its Lon. E. 5. 9'.

Pâng-hoo Tin [sic] -- the Pescadores -- is a barren and deserted district, and can boast little beyond a few ruinous fortifications. The chief Island (on which the Dutch had a fort) is in about 23. 34' N. Lat.; and 3. 1' E. Lon.

The MOUNTAINS of Formosa are many of them very lofty and, in the months of November and December, are said to be slightly covered with snow [sic]. The highest of the chain, is Mûh kang-shan, by which name the whole chain is sometimes designated. It lies N.E. of Tae-wan-Héen. Yûh-shan is also a very high mountain, and not inferior to any; when the rays of the sun are reflected from its white summits, it presents a beautiful appearance, resembling bright silver. It is situated about E.N.E. of Choo-lo-Héen. Besides these there are several other remarkable mountains, on one of which is a hot mineral spring. Some of them are volcanic and sulphureous. More detailed accounts of these mountains may be found in Klaproth's *Memoires relatifs a l'Asie*, Vol. 1 pp. 329-334.

Among the rivers and rivulets, which, flowing in great numbers from the mountains and hills, are principally instrumental in fertilizing the western plains, none are particularly worthy of mention; but it is remarkable that the water of them all is not only unpleasant to the taste, but also very unwholesome, and indeed poisonous.

The HARBOURS of Formosa are secure and spacious; but the entrances to them are generally narrow and dangerous; and, in many cases, so shallow as to admit only vessels of very light burthen.

The principal Harbour is that of Tae-wan, to which in the time of the Dutch, there were two entrances; -- one called Ta-keang is now entirely blocked up by the accumulation of sand; and the other Luh-urh-mun is both so shallow and so closely surrounded by shoals and quicksands as to be impracticable without the assistance of experienced pilots. It was at the entrance of Ta-keang, that the Dutch built the Castle Zelandia; which still subsists under the name of Hung-maou-ching, the city of the red-haired people.

Another good harbour is that of Tan-shwuy, defended on three sides by high mountains. There are also the harbours of Ke-lung and Pâng-hoo: the latter is of depth sufficient for the largest vessels and would probably afford good shelter in stormy weather.

The currents in the Formosa channel are very strong; so that, unless the wind be quite fair, it is impossible, with Chinese vessels at least to keep their course, -- and, in passing between Fuh keen and Formosa, they are frequently driven so far to the southward, that they can have no prospect of reaching their destination until a change of the monsoon take place. In that case they generally bear away for Cochinchina or Siam.

(To be continued.)

"Insurrection on Formosa." *The Canton Register* (20 December 1832): 141.

We have delayed, for a day, or two issuing the present No., with a view of laying before our readers the following particulars of an

INSURRECTION ON FORMOSA.

About ten days ago, a friend of ours received intimation from the commander of a Junk, from Formosa, of an insurrection having broken out on that island; but, fearful that the information might not prove correct, he refrained from mentioning it till two days ago, when the Governor of this province received intelligence from *Namou*, in a letter from the *T'hung-che* of that place. A *Consu* was immediately held, when the *Ancha-sze* was requested to prepare himself for a journey to Amoy.

The insurrection commenced near *Chang-foo-hëen*, about 40 *le* from *Tae-wan-foo* (the capital of the island), where twenty-six mandarins, great and small, together with about two thousand men, were killed. Among the officers killed were the *Tae-wan-foo*, two *Chung-hwa-hëen*, one of whom had recently arrived to relieve the other; a *Too-sze*; four *Tsëen-tsung*; ten *Pa-tsung*; and six or eight *Wae-wei*, the *Tuh-peaou-chung-keun-foo-tseang*, and one *Tso-tang*.

The inhabitants of the western side of Formosa are natives of the island, Chinchew men, and Canton men; and the affray originated about five piculs of yams, which some Chinchew vagabonds took away from some of the resident Canton people, who immediately applied to the heads of the village, where the plunderers lived, and received redress; but thinking, that by applying to the *Chang-hwa-hëen* they might prevent a recurrence of similar outrages, they did so and the *Chang-hwa-hëen* directly

called upon five of the heads of families, and demanded money, to the amount of 1000 dollars each; the payment of which they resisted, alleging that the affair was already settled. To this he lent a deaf ear, keeping them in prison till the money should be paid. When they had been thus, for seven or eight days, in confinement, finding them untractable, he raked up a stronger charge against them, calling upon them to produce a Ladrone, who had escaped some time before, and who could not be found. The head-men concerned, exasperated at this unexpected demand, sent to the village privately; and offered a reward of 1000 dollars to any one who would kill the *Chang-hwa-hëen*. The villagers listened to the proposal, and, in open day, attacked the house of the officer, killed him, and all his attendants. The *Tae-wan-foo*, hearing of the affair, went in person, attended by about five hundred soldiers, when he was attacked, killed, and all his force destroyed. Several other bodies of troops advanced, under various officers; and were also beat off with great slaughter.

When the last accounts left, the *Ching-tsung-ping-kwan* was missing; the city of *Tae-wan-foo* in possession of the *Tae-wan-tae-yay*, and about 30,000 men hired for the occasion. The villagers, under the five head-men, were advancing against it, more than 50,000 strong. From Amoy, 5000 troops had embarked for the island, under the land and water *Te-tuhs*. So the affair rests for the present.

"Formosa." *The Canton Register* Vol. 6, No. 1 (10 January 1833).

We hear that the rebellion on this island has assumed a very formidable appearance; and that all the disposable military force, is being sent, with all speed, from the province of Fokien. Our native informants are by no means communicative on the subject, perhaps from the ignorance in which the government wisely shrouds all information of an unpleasant nature from the knowledge of the public. Some reports are afloat of the rebels having submitted, and the ringleaders surrendered to the Imperial forces, but to these we do not attach much credit. The gross national vanity of the Chinese makes them exceedingly jealous of any reports, that may detract from the supposed power of the empire, reaching the ears of foreigners; and thus it is, that the usual reply to any question as to any of the numerous rebellions (which, year after year, spring up in some part of China, or it's [sic] half conquered tributaries) is that the business is "just settled."

"Formosa." *The Canton Register* (24 January 1833): 8

We hear of late but little relating to the insurrection; except that troops have been ordered from different parts of this province, to proceed to *Tae-wan*, to assist the troops of the province of *Fo-kien*. A report was, a short time since, in circulation, of the Imperial forces having been defeated in a pitched battle, by the rebels; and as the troops of each province are (except in particular cases), seldom called upon to act in another, we should think it likely, that the Imperial arms have hitherto been unsuccessful.

Formosa is the granary of *Fo-kien*, and produces a great part of the Camphor exported from Canton, the privilege of dealing in which is sold by the government, at an annual rate, to an individual -- the exportation will be, most probably, suspended for the present. The Chinese state, that it is the policy of their government to retain possession of Formosa, not so much from its intrinsic value, as with a view to prevent

others from occupying an island so contiguous to their maritime provinces, and from apprehensions, that it might be made, as formerly, a resort of pirates. The western side of the island is alone possessed by the Chinese; the eastern, on which they have not attempted to form settlements, is inhabited by the aborigines, and but little known to foreigners, by none of whom are we aware of it having been visited, since the temporary residence of the adventurous Benjowsky, about sixty years ago.

"Formosa." *The Canton Register* Vol 6 (20 March 1833).

The insurrection on the island, which, at one time, threatened a protracted and serious opposition to the Chinese government, has been suppressed. Troops had been ordered from the provinces of *Shan-tung* and *Chih-le*, which previous to embarkation, were met by the intelligence of the "pacification" of the island. His Celestial Majesty is said to have recently regarded this affair in a more serious light, than at the first breaking out of the islanders, whom he dubbed "a mere assemblage of crows."

"Formosa." *The Canton Register* Vol 6 (13 April 1833).

The accounts which we hear of the state of things in this island, are so various and contradictory, that it is not easy to arrive at anything approaching to the truth. Some of the insurgents appear to have been subdued, more by treachery, and bribery, than the force of arms; but others are said to be still holding out in formidable strength against the government. We are not, however, in possession of any particulars.

"Rebellion in Formosa." *The Canton Register* (18 May 1833).

The statements in regard to it's [sic] progress have been various. We were at first informed of it's [sic] having broken out, by the mandarins of the *Chu-san* group. A great part of the naval force and the most renowned officers had been despatched thither by the Lieutenant-Governor of *Chè-keang* to suppress it. The *Chu-san* mandarins even harboured fears, that the *Amoy* men would join their countrymen in *Formosa*. We were informed, that the viceroy of *Fuh-këen* had gone over to arrange the business. The mandarins told us, that they feared the worst consequences, for, if *Formosa* could not supply the *Fuh-këen* province with grain, the people in the southern parts, who already suffered so much from scarcity, would revolt immediately. The baneful effects upon the natives of the sea-coast were very apparent. They had betaken themselves to piracy, and attacked vessels even in sight of the mandarin junks, the crews of which are their inferiors in physical strength and activity. Such was the state of affairs, when we received the news that the rebellion had been quelled in the southern parts of *Formosa*, but was still raging in the northern districts with great fury. Several junks were upon the eve of leaving the *Fuh-këen* harbours for *Tae-wan-foo*, in order to purchase cargoes of rice. We have never been able to ascertain fully to what extent the rebels carried their operations in the northern parts, nor are we sure, whether they have been up to the present moment subdued. The greater part of the Chinese colonists at *Formosa* are either natives of *Tung-gan-heen*, *Chau-choo-foo* or *Tseuen-chow-foo*. There are a few hundred thousands of *Chaou-choo* men, and *Kea-jia*, as they style themselves, from

³ The substance of information was received on the East Coast of China.

Canton province. The whole population may amount to two or three millions. The greater part are cultivators of the ground, many (principally the Amoy men) are merchants, fishermen, and sailors. In the whole they are a lawless tribe, who put the government and every human regulation at defiance, strictly adhering to their clans. Some of the country-born in the interior have never acknowledged the mandarins as their rulers; even the rebels in La Perouse's time have never been entirely subdued, but have taken refuge on the eastern coast and in the mountains. But, notwithstanding their aversion to every government, they are a very industrious race. The quantity of rice exported to *Fuh-këen* and *Chë-keang* is very considerable, and employs more than three hundred junks. At *Tëen-tsin* alone, there arrive annually more than seventy junks loaded with sugar; the exportation of camphor is likewise by no means trifling. The owners of the plantations are generally *Amoy* men, whose families live in their native country. The capital they employ is very great, the trade profitable. Yet, notwithstanding this superabundance of produce, the mandarins at *Chë-keang* were obliged to send grain boats to *Formosa*, in order to furnish the soldiers with their rations. The friendly feelings of the *Formosan* colonists towards foreigners are quite proverbial, but hitherto they have had very little intercourse with them. Some traces of the Dutch government still remain, but the name of this nation is almost forgotten. The natives have receded further and further towards the east coast, and have been partly amalgamated with the eastern planters. Both the imperial naval as well as military force at *Formosa* is far from contemptible, when we count the numbers; but they have nothing to oppose to violent men like the colonists, but subtlety and concessions.

"Formosa." *The Canton Register* No. 9 (17 June 1833).

The rebellion rages as fiercely as ever, and with the most determined resolution. The substance of our information is as follows: --

"After the supposed tranquility, the colonists from *Canton* province enlisted as soldiers, to revenge themselves on the *Fo-kien* men, and were on that account supported by the mandarins. At first they proved successful, and cut off many thousand heads, after having been joined by the garrisons; but the *Fo-kien* men, all at once, enraged at the loss of so many of their friends, retaliated upon the aggressors, and killed many thousands. The carnage is going on without cessation, but is confined to the interior. The *Fo-kien* men have resolved to fight to the last, till they have revenged the blood of their countrymen."

The supply of grain for *Fo-kien* province is thus still checked; the consequences to that province in case of failure of the crops this year, may be dreadful.

"Formosa." *The Canton Register* (24 October 1833).

We see it stated in one of the recent London papers that Mr. *Marjoribanks* (late Chief of the Company's Factory in *Canton*) had given notice of a motion "to call the attention of the House to the present state of the island of *Formosa*, which has declared its independence of the Chinese; and to the great exclusion of interest which may arise between the British and Chinese empires from that event."

We hope that this call may have been heard somewhat better than has hitherto been the fate of most motions connected with British interests in this part of the world. The time is not far distant when some such occupation as that often suggested of *Formosa* will become *necessary*; and the sooner the subject is thought of the better.

The rebellion on this island is now said to be over -- for the present at least. Concessions and bribery are, of course, understood to be the means resorted to for the pacification: from the arms of the Chinese soldiery little could be expected; they were, it is asserted, beaten in almost every battle. The Chinese, it is generally believed, still retain this island or, at least, do not relinquish what has always been a most troublesome and rebellious colony, from the fear which they entertain of its again falling into the hands of some European power.

"Character of the Chinese; Weakness of the government; Not able to subdue the mountaineers; Dangers from the tribes on the borders." *The Canton Register* No. 50 (16 December 1834): 200, and supplement.

(From a correspondent.)

[Concluded from No. 49, page 195.]

[Transcriber's note: Only the portion of this article relevant to Formosa has been transcribed below.]

. . . If the government officers therefore tremble at the sole thought of irritating a foreign power, which has the means of punishing their arrogance, we must not consider their fear unfounded. They may have recourse to haughty edicts and a show of power; but when all stratagems and expedients are exhausted they will sue for peace as humbly from, as they formerly, in the height of pride, announced their decrees to, the barbarians. It is true, they have stopped the trade, but if the matter were now reversed, and the power or people which they wish to injure stopped their trade -- an easy thing - - how dreadful would be the consequences in the maritime provinces? The thousands of junks employed for carrying the necessities of life from one part of the coast to the other, if detained in the harbours, would give rise to incalculable mischief. How can Fuh-keen subsist without Formosa? How Pe-che-le without the southern provinces? The imperial government ought really to recoil with horror from every act of aggression which might involve the most valuable provinces in ruin. As lovers of peace we should urge the local government at Canton and the imperial at Peking to hasten the adjustment of matters, which have nearly come to a crisis. Often has the experiment of the stoppage of trade been tried with great success and with impunity; but maritime China is now too well known, and a renewal of the old system will entail the heaviest losses upon those who adopt it. . . .

. . . An exhausted treasury, a deranged state of finances, a number of presumptuous and ignorant officers to boot, enhance the difficulty with which the Chinese monarch, in contending with a powerful foreign nation, has to struggle. If the Meaou-tsze and Formosan rebels could not be subdued, except by large bribes, how will the imperialists be able to deal with a people who are bold and valiant to the verge of temerity; who dauntless spirit is supported by the contempt of danger and death? . . .

[Supplement] . . .

For the sake of our friends, the officers of government, we will point out the dangers to which they expose themselves, if they ever again indulge in the fancy of rendering their edicts efficacious by stopping the trade.

Formosa is the granary of Fuh-keen and occasionally of Che-keang. Two sloops of war would be quite sufficient to blockade the four harbours of the island from which the grain is exported. The most numerous part of the population of Fuh-keen subsists by trade; if three sloops of war cruise on the coast -- and it is seldom Chinese vessels go out of sight of land -- they would prevent all vessels from proceeding to the northward, for they are all dull sailing craft, and their crews too timorous to encounter unknown dangers. The commerce of Shih-po, Ning-po, and Hang-choo, might be intercepted by an equal number of vessels; one man of war is quite sufficient to blockade the most important part of Shang-hae, from the opening of which the lives of millions depend. . .

"Benyowsky's travels." *The Canton Register* 7 (30 December 1834).

[Transcriber's note: The text of this 18th-century visitor to Formosa began to be excerpted in this issue, but we were unable to obtain a copy to transcribe.]

"Benyowsky's travels." *The Canton Register* Vol 8, No. 1 (6 January 1835).

[Transcriber's note: Font size difference was used in the original to distinguish the original text from the (larger-sized) editor's summary of portions of the text. We have maintained that same distinction below.]

(Concluded from Vol. 8. Page 267.)

This attack having enraged the count's men, they determined to be revenged on the natives; and, as they were uncontrollable, the count agreed to direct their proceedings.

About seven in the evening, I caused the boats to tow our vessel to the river of the massacre, where I anchored. At three, I ordered forty-six companions on shore, commanded by Messieurs Crustiew, Kuzueczow, Baturin, Wyndbladth, and Stephanow; and we only waited for Don Hieronimo, who arrived at four. They then proceeded inland, and we heard nothing till about three quarters after six, when the noise of the musquetry [sic] convinced me that the action had begun. Soon after I saw a number of islanders retiring towards a steep mountain; and then it was that my companions on board directed their pieces at them, and made a dreadful slaughter. These unhappy men, seeing themselves pressed on one side by my troops, and on the other by the islanders, under the conduct of the Spaniard, threw themselves prostrate upon the ground. I was then forced to declare to my whole party, that I would fire upon them if they continued the massacre. On this message the parties contented themselves with making prisoners, the number of whom amounted to six hundred and forty-three. The killed were reckoned and proved to be eleven hundred and fifty-six.

What surprised me the most was, that among the wounded and prisoners there were a great number of women armed in the same manner as the men.

On the 30th of August the count encamped on shore, the Spaniard having erected huts for him and his men by the assistance of the friendly indians, who set a guard at night, to protect the camp from the attacks of the allies of the nation with whom they had been at war.

At day-break, Don Hieronimo presented his family to me with a great number of his friends, and likewise acquainted me that Huapo, a prince of the country, was coming to express his gratitude for my having avenged his subjects upon the two nations who were their enemies. He informed me, that Huapo lived in a town about thirty or thirty-two leagues distant inland; that the central parts of his dominions were well civilized, as was also the whole western part of the island; the eastern coast only being possessed by a savage people, among whom, however, he excepted the territory belonging to Huapo, which was inhabited by a gentle and industrious race. He added, that the Prince Huapo could muster twenty, or five and twenty thousand armed men, notwithstanding which he was often disturbed in his capital, either by the Chinese party, or their allies.

After this information, he insinuated that it would be easy to conclude a treaty with this prince, to form establishments in his country, the productions of which consisted in gold, crystal, cinnabar, rice, sugar, cinnamon, silk, and particularly the most beautiful kinds of wood, might form advantageous branches of commerce; in exchange for which they would receive a quantity of hardware, iron, and European cloth, to the profit of two hundred per cent. to the sellers. Such was our conversation, when it was interrupted by the arrival of the Bamini, or General.

The habits of this General consisted of a long red paulon, [sic]^a Chinese half boots, a white shirt, with a vest of black, and a red surplice, or outer garment, which had some buttons of coral, set in gold. His head was covered with a bonnet of straw, exceedingly pointed, and the upper extremity was ornamented with horse hair, dyed red. His arms consisted of a sabre, a lance, and a bow, with a quiver, containing twenty-five arrows. The troops who attended him were entirely naked, except a piece of blue cloth round their middle, and their arms were lances and bows.

Our repast was not of long duration. The Formosian [sic] General eat [sic] with astonishing rapidity, without speaking a word; and after he had devoured a quantity of rice, with some pieces of roast meat, he rose, and began to chew his betel, and smoke tobacco. As I was desirous of making [sic] my court to him, I followed his example, though my palate suffered for it. After dinner we walked round my camp. When we came near a battery, Bamini requested [sic] me to order some cannon shot to be fired. I immediately gave orders to fix a butt at five hundred paces distance, and pointed the pieces myself. At the second fire, the boat which the islanders had exposed as a butt, was broken in pieces; at which the Formosian General testified the greatest surprize [sic]. To increase his astonishment I gave orders to my companions to take their arms,

^a The paulon [sic] is a close garment fitted to the body, and all of one piece from head to foot.

and fire at a plank at eighty paces distance. Very few of their shot missed; and as the plank was shot through, this exercise gave him great satisfaction, and induced him to spare no flattering expressions on the occasion.

About eleven o'clock, Don Hieronimo returned to invite me, in the name of the prince and see him; and he brought several horses, though the distance was very short, I immediately mounted, and soon arrived at the Prince's tent. His appearance struck me at first sight. He was between thirty and thirty-five years of age, about five feet three inches high, of a strong and vigorous make, with a lively eye and majestic carriage. Upon being introduced to him, I found Mr. Crustiew already in great familiarity with him, who said to me in Russian, this youth would do our business, if we proposed to remain at Formosa; and his good disposition would permit him to assure me, that I might be King of the island whenever I pleased. He had scarcely spoken, when the Prince addressed me by our interpreter, assuring me, that I was welcome on the island; and that he had heard, with the greatest satisfaction, of the manner we had treated his enemies, for which he thought it proper to make his grateful acknowledgements. To this he added, that he had no doubt but that I was the person whose coming was announced by the Prophets, who had foretold that a stranger should arrive with strong men, who should deliver the Formosans from the Chinese yoke; in consequence of which he had determined to pay me a visit, and make me an offer of all his power and forces to support and obey me. This commencement changed my system, and the Spaniard insensibly led me to play a new part, by assuring the Huapo that I was a great Prince, who had visited Formosa, with the intention of satisfying myself concerning the position of the Chinese, and to fulfill the wishes of the inhabitants of the island, by delivering them from the power of the treacherous people.

The prince Huapo afterwards made six demands of the count: the following being the fourth, in the count's own words: "whenever I would accept the concession he would make me of the province of Ha-vang sin; which, with its cities, towns, and inhabitants he would cede to me in perpetuity, on condition that I should support him with Europeans, until he should have driven the Chinese out of his dominions, at which period he would yield up to me his whole kingdom."

The Count, after replying to the six requisitions, took the command of the prince's army, fought and defeated his enemies. The following is his more detailed account of the island.

The island of Formosa is called by the Chinese, Touaiouai; and by the natives Paccahimba. It is one of the finest and richest islands of the known world. The soil, in an infinity of places, produces two harvests of rice and other grain, with a great variety of trees, fruits, plants, animals and birds. Cattle, sheep, goats and poultry, are very abundant here. This island is intersected by great rivers, lakes, and waters, abounding with fish. It has many commodious harbours, bays, and sounds on its coasts. Its mountains produce gold, silver, cinnabar, white and brown copper; and likewise pit coal.

The island of Formosa is divided into eight principalities, three of which, situated on the western side, are governed by the Chinese, and peopled by the same nation. Every year an ambassador arrives from China, to receive tribute from these three provinces, which is raised by a poll tax; and the emperor of China keeps five hundred vessels for the purpose of annually exporting this tribute, which consists of a large quantity of rice, wheat, millet, salt, beans, raw silk, cotton, gold, silver and mercury. The governors of these three provinces continually extend their possessions, either by alliance or intrigue, in such manner, that they have obtained several towns and districts from their neighbours.

The inhabitants of the island are civilized, except those who live on the eastern coasts. They are of an effeminate disposition, without any marks of courage; given to indolence, and are indebted to the goodness of the climate for their preservation, as the soil supports them with very little labour. If we except the three Chinese provinces, the mines on the island are no where worked. They are contented to wash the sand to extract gold out of it; and if they find pearls in the shells, it is by mere accident. The common people of Formosa are clothed only in blue cotton cloth; the towns are always built in the plains; and the villages are upon the mountains. The houses of people of condition among them are extensive and beautiful, but plain. Those of the people are mere huts; and they are not permitted to build better. Most of them are covered with straw and reeds, and are divided or separated from each other by rows of pallisades [sic]; their moveables are nothing more than what necessity had rendered indispensable. In the houses of men of rank, there are advanced rooms, in which they eat, receive strangers, and divert themselves. The apartments of the women are always separate, and apart from the house. Though they are built within the court, no one is permitted to approach them. In this country there are no inns for travellers; but those who are on a journey sit themselves down near the first house they come to, and the master of the house soon after receives them, and entertains them with rice and some flesh meat, with tobacco and tea.

The only commerce of the inhabitants of Formosa is with some Japanese barks, who touch here, and with the Chinese.

The count afterwards drafted a plan to colonize Formosa and then continued his voyage to Canton. -- From the foregoing extracts is [sic] appears that Formosa is a vulnerable point of the Chinese empire; and, both from the count's narration and the late rebellion, it may be safely concluded that the boasted tender compassion and reasonable rule of the celestial government are there also but mere names; the subjugated Formosians have not yet felt any transforming influence from their conquering exemplars.

"Benyowsky's travels." *The Canton Register* 8 (17 February 1835).

[Transcriber's note: "Benyowsky's travels" continued in this issue, but we were unable to obtain a copy to transcribe.]

"Chinese islands." *The Canton Register* Vol 10, No. 1 (3 January 1837): 3-4.

[Transcriber's note: Only the portion of this article relevant to Formosa has been transcribed below.]

The only alternative for placing our commercial connections with China on a firm footing, which appears to meet with general approbation, is the acquisition of an island, either by purchase or treaty. That this last resource will follow in the ordinary course of events, and that such a measure will be forced on us is even not doubtfully expressed in a late memorial of a sagacious adviser of his celestial majesty; and why then, it may be asked, should we ourselves be doubtful and backward? Without giving our opinion on the subject at present, or holding out any encouragement to it as a just measure of policy, we may say that surely it is right to extend geographical knowledge.

...

FORMOSA, or TAE-WAN, the largest island under Chinese domination, with three very considerable emporia and Bar-harbours on its west coast, namely *Taewan Foo*, *Lokang* and *Tan Shwuy*, and one good harbour, that of *Kelung* or *Kelang* on the northern point, is well fitted for becoming one of the most flourishing colonies on the globe. The possession, however, of this part of the island is too valuable to the Chinese empire for it's [sic] government to cede it on any terms or for any price to any foreign power; for from the moment strangers establish their influence on the western side of Formosa, Fuhkeen must cease to be numbered amongst the eighteen provinces of the middle Kingdom. Our knowledge of the east coast does not enable us to decide whether a suitable spot for the formation of a settlement could there be found. For a pleasing account of this island, extracted from Benyowsky's travels, we beg to refer our readers to the concluding numbers of the 7th and the 1st no. of the 8th volumes of the Canton Register.

Between Formosa and Luconia we find a number of small islets little known, and inhabited by a very uncivilised race. The heavy gales, however, which frequently [4] blow through these straits render the navigation dangerous. We are, moreover, not aware that there are any good harbours; and the inhabitants are decidedly hostile to strangers.

A chain of islands, called by the natives *Katchi Kasema* (the eight islets) [and] by some *Madjicasema* extending in an easterly and north easterly direction from Formosa, were visited in 1797 by Captain Broughton in the *Providence*. They deserve peculiar attention, since they are beyond the influence of the Chinese government, and inhabited by a humane race of people, who are said to be tributary to Loo Choo, and to speak a dialect of the Japanese language.

(To be continued.)