

Chapter Five

Southward Expansion: Champa and Cambodia, 1672-1698

Nguyen foreign policy between 1627 and 1672 was influenced by the war with the Trinh. However, the Nguyen also paid attention to the situation in the south. In its relations with Champa and Cambodia, the Nguyen initially maintained a cordial relationship. After the 1650s however, they reacted aggressively, choosing military action against Champa in 1693 and the incorporating a large part of Khmer Mekong under its control.

This chapter will pay attention to the Nguyen's relations with these two neighbours throughout the entire period of Nguyen-Trinh War of 1627 to 1672 and the immediate post-1672 years up to 1698. It will first look at the Nguyen's dealings with the uplanders, both within and without its boundaries.

Initial Footing in the Mekong Delta

Since Nguyen Hoang's administration from 1558 to 1613, Nguyen's attitude toward the uplanders is a continuation of the policy laid down by the Le. Likewise, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen also fell back on the same policies and adopted a similar stance when dealing with the uplanders. Like the Le Court before him, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen regarded the uplanders as *Moi* or savages who were culturally inferior to the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese also generally believed that interaction with the highlanders would corrupt their superior culture. Therefore, certain measures that were introduced by the Le Court were continued by the

Nguyen. This included the 1449 decree which forbade marriages between Vietnamese and uplanders, as well as between the Vietnamese and with the Cham people.¹

After Nguyen Hoang's death, Nguyen chronicles contained more reports describing Nguyen policy with the uplanders. In 1621, native chiefs from Luu Huan in Ai Lao sent fighting men across the Giao River and attacked the Vietnamese settlers in those areas. To counter this problem, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen employed traders as bait to ambush the raiding parties. Instead of punishing them, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen tried to show his magnanimity by letting them return to Luu Huan, with provisions and their weapons.² The following year, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen dispatched a total of six troops of boat soldiers to garrison the passages between Cam Lo (in Dang Trang sub-prefecture) and the three areas of Luu Huan in Ai Lao, Van Tuong and Tran Ninh, all on the western side of Nguyen borders. The garrison was named Ai Lao Dinh (garrison).³ The manner in which Nguyen Phuc Nguyen treated the uplanders from Luu Huan could be seen as a strategic move to bring these uplanders under Nguyen influence so as to ensure the security of the western boundaries of the Nguyen domain are firmly secured. This was important to protect the lucrative highland trade.

Despite this, the Nguyen had little actual control over the uplanders. Christoforo Borri, the Italian Jesuit priest who was living in southern Vietnam at

¹ Gerald Cannon Hickey, *Sons of the Mountains: Ethno History of the Vietnamese Central Highlands to 1954*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1982, p. 154.

² *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: 6.

³ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: 6, see also *PBTL*, Vol. 1: 22.7. As for the troops, each troop, or Doi, is equivalent to a company of soldiers, see Yang Baoyun, *Contribution a l'Histoire de la Principaute des Nguyen au Vietnam Meridional (1600-1775)*, Geneva: Editions Olizane, 1992, p. 241.

that time, says that the Nguyen had no suzerainty over the 'Mountain People'(Kemoi).⁴ Up until 1621, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen's dealings with the uplanders was centred upon exerting control over the various tribes in order to ensure stability in areas bordering the mountainous regions and areas where there were uplander settlements. This was crucial in order to make sure that his administration of the two provinces of Thuan Hoa and Quang Nam would not be disrupted by disturbances from uplanders living within the region under his jurisdiction. After 1627, he also had to make sure that no uplanders from the western mountainous areas would pose a security threat to the Nguyen in the face of military threat from the Trinh.

Apart from security, the uplanders were extremely important to Nguyen's international trade. The uplanders were responsible for supplying the Nguyen fairs at the major ports like Hoi An with the much-sought after jungle produce such as wax, bird's nests, elephant tusks, rhinoceros horns, rattan, honey, deer horn, and sandalwood.

As for relations between Nguyen Southern Vietnam and Champa there had been very little interaction since the defeat of the Chams by the Nguyen Army in 1611. In that year, a Nguyen force crossed the old boundaries set in 1471 for the first time to prevent the Champa forces from intruding into Vietnamese territories. In 1629, a Champa Army attacked the region of Phu Yen, possibly to avenge a loss they suffered in 1611. A force under Nguyen Phuc Vinh was sent to stop the Chams.⁵ The campaign was a success for the Nguyen army which captured the

⁴ Christoforo Borri, *Cochin-China*, p. B1 & B2.

⁵ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2, p. 14b.

region north of Phan Rang River. The newly annexed area was designated as the garrison (*dinh*)⁶ of Tran Bien.⁷ The setting up of this garrison marked the expansion of the Vietnamese frontiers in the South beyond the old boundary of Phu Yen for the first time since the days of Emperor Le Anh Tong in 1471.

One interesting point in relation to the event of 1629 is the manner the event was recorded in the Nguyen chronicles. The *Tien Bien* termed it as a 'revolt' by Champa,⁸ suggesting that Champa had submitted to the Nguyen and was already a tributary state of the Nguyen. But the same source is silent on Champa having sent a tribute.

This may have been an attempt to cover up a Nguyen attack on the Chams as Champa was considered a potential security concern for the Nguyen at their southern frontier. According to the *Tien Bien*, during his early administration in Thuan Hoa, Nguyen Hoang's main security concern was "to resist the Cham and to safeguard against the forces of the Mac usurper".⁹ After the outbreak of the Nguyen-Trinh war in 1627, this was translated to defence against the Trinh in the North and resisting Champa in the South. The Nguyen's preoccupation with Champa was again highlighted by Van Khue, one of the last official Nguyen envoys sent to the Le Court in 1630. Van Khue's mission was to explain the reasons behind the Nguyen's failure to contribute to the Le tributary mission to China and to provide military support to the central army against the remnants of

⁶ A *dinh* is equivalent to a military base or garrison in Vietnam.

⁷ The usage of the term Tran Bien or boundary station actually refers to all immediate southern frontiers, newly conquered during the early days of the expansion, and should not be confused with Tran Bien or present day Bien Hoa, which was only wrested from the Khmer kingdom in 1698. See explanation in the Nguyen Chronicle, *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: 15 and *Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi* (hereafter *DNNTC*), Vol. 10: Binh Dinh, p. 3.

⁸ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: p. 15.

⁹ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2, p. 17b.

the Mac forces at Cao Bang at the borders between Le-Vietnam and China. Among other things, he emphasised Nguyen Phuc Nguyen's concern over Champa's military threat in the South.¹⁰ While the Champa threat was real to the Nguyen, the threat was used as an excuse to not to send tax and tribute to the Le Court.¹¹

This is confirmed by Christoforo Borri's note about the Cham as a military concern of the Nguyen Lords in early 1620s:

"He [Nguyen Phuc Nguyen] kept in continuall alarmes on the west-side in the last province of his kingdom called Renram [Phu Yen], by the King of Chiampa, whose assaults he doth easily repell, in regard he is not so mighty as himself, and needeth no other forces there unto but those of the same province, the Governor whereof with his souldiers, is sufficient to defend it".¹²

Borri's observation further strengthens the argument that the Nguyen used Champa as an excuse not to pay tribute to the Le and harboured ambitions to subjugate the Chams.

During the period of the first three Nguyen (1558-1648), the southern Vietnamese were preoccupied with the affairs in the north – first, to assist the Le Court in its fight against the Mac; secondly, after 1627, to resist a series of battles against the Trinh. This preoccupation with the north forced the Nguyen to co-exist with Champa with the Tran Bien garrison as the front line. Between 1629 and 1648, the year of Nguyen Phuc Lan's death, the Chams hardly troubled the

¹⁰ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: 17. Van Khue is one of the personalities whose family name is not mentioned in the chronicles.

¹¹ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: 7.

¹² Christoforo Borri, *Cochin-China*, p. H3.

Nguyen, or at least there are no historical sources to date which suggest otherwise. Nevertheless, the Nguyen were constantly wary of the possibility of Champa launching attacks against them in a bid to regain lost territories. Alexander De Rhodes, one of the most famous and earliest Jesuit priests in Vietnam recounted how sometime in 1639, the Nguyen had placed many galleys in the ports of Ran Ran (Phu Yen) in the south to prevent maritime inroads from Champa.¹³ At that time, Champa was still maintaining its hold on Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Rang, and the two ports were frequently visited by Portuguese ships from Macao at least until 1639.¹⁴

Apart from paying attention to Champa, the Nguyen also began to look further south to the land of the Khmer people in Cambodia. Unlike the Siamese who had begun their intervention in Cambodia since the early 1400s, the Vietnamese got involved almost two centuries later. In 1605, when the Siamese king, Naresuen (1590-1605) passed away, Preah Sri Soriyoppor (Paramraja VII, 1602-1619), the new ruler of Cambodia decided not to send tribute to the Siam Court at Ayudhya. The move came mainly through Soriyoppor's perception that with the passing of Naresuan, a weaker Siam would not be able to impose its sovereignty on Cambodia like before. Secondly, Soriyoppor despised the Siamese for what they did to him and his family.¹⁵ His son, and heir to the Cambodian

¹³ Alexander de Rhodes, *The Travels and Missions of Father Alexander de Rhodes in China and Other Kingdoms of the Orient*, Solange Hertz (trans.), Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1966, p. 88; see also Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe, Vol. III, Book Three*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 1271.

¹⁴ Pierre-Bernard Lafont, "Hubungan antara Champa dengan Asia Tenggara", in *Dunia Melayu dan Dunia Indocina*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, p. 215.

¹⁵ According to W. A. R. Wood, King Soriyoppor or Srisup'anma remained loyal to the Siamese and it was Chey Chetta II who declared independence from Siam. See W. A. R. Wood, *A History of Siam*, Bangkok: 1924, p. 166. Wood's view is different from the Cambodian account.

throne, Chey Chettha II was a captive in the Siam court until 1604. Soriyopor's reading of the strength of the Siam Court was proven right when Naresuen's brother and successor, Ekatosaroat (also known as Intaraja II, r.1605-1620), choose not to do anything about the Cambodian's refusal to send tribute. But as a counter weight to the Siamese, Sri Soriyopor decided to seek an alliance with the Vietnamese. This alliance was sealed in 1619 through a marriage between Chey Chetta II and a daughter of Nguyen Phuc Nguyen.¹⁶

This important event which the French scholar, Khin Sok described as the beginning of the Vietnamese intervention in Cambodian affairs,¹⁷ is not mentioned in any Vietnamese sources. Neither the *Tien Bien* nor the *Liet Truyen Tien Bien* offers any account of the event. In fact, the first record of Cambodia found in the *Tien Bien* was for the year 1658, when a Nguyen army intervened in Cambodia for three years.¹⁸

Reference to the alliance between the Nguyen and the Cambodian court of 1618 is only found in the Cambodian sources.¹⁹ According to the *Royal Chronicles of Cambodia*, King Soriyopor of Cambodia sent an emissary bearing gifts and letters to the Nguyen court, then based at Ai Tu, Quang Binh. The mission was to propose a marriage between his son Chey Chetta II and a Vietnamese princess. The proposition was accepted by Nguyen Phuc Nguyen after consulting his officials. A date was later decided, and on the appointed day,

¹⁶ Nicholas Sellers gives the date of the marriage in 1623, see Nicholas Sellers, *The Princes of Ha Tien*, p. 11.

¹⁷ Khin Sok, *Le Cambodge Entre Le Siam et Le Vietnam (de 1775 a 1860)*, Paris: Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient, 1991, p. 32.

¹⁸ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 4: 22.

¹⁹ Mak Phoeun (ed.), *Chroniques Royales du Cambodge (de 1594-1677)*, Paris: Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient, 1981, ff. 335-337, p. 120.

a Nguyen barge sent Nguyen Phuc Nguyen's daughter with an entourage of two Vietnamese officials and 500 soldiers to the Cambodian court at Lovek, about 40 km north of Phnom Penh.²⁰

Nguyen Phuc Nguyen's decision to marry one of his daughters to the prince of Cambodia demonstrates pragmatism in dealing with his southern neighbour. The act was a part of the Nguyen diplomacy aimed at advancing its interests in the Mekong Delta. Indeed, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen was not the first to employ marriage as a means of diplomacy or political manoeuvre. Earlier, one of his sisters, Nguyen Thi Ngoc Tu was married to Trinh Trang as a gesture of Nguyen Hoang's good will towards the central government.²¹ Neither was this the last time such a diplomatic manoeuvre was used by Nguyen Phuc Nguyen as we shall see later.

According to Father Nicholas Gervaise, a French priest serving in the Siamese Court at Ayudhya in 1662, the arrival of the Nguyen forces accompanying the princess to Cambodia was immediately put to use by Chea Chetta II when he led a joint Cambodian-Nguyen army to defeat a Siamese Army that was advancing into Cambodia.²² This incident, which took place some time between 1618 to 1620 is also not mentioned in any Vietnamese sources nor was it mentioned in Siamese works. The Cambodian sources mentioned a different account regarding the Siamese defeat. It recorded how the Siamese ruler, King Ekadas Saratth (Ekatosarat) decided not to attack the Cambodians at Lovek after

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

²¹ See Vinh Cao et al. (comp.), *Nguyen Phuc Toc The Pha*, Hue: Nha Xuat Ban Thuan Hoa, 1995, p. 118.

²² Nicholas Gervaise, *The Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam*, (trans. & ed.), John Villiers, first published 1728, this edition, Bangkok: White Lotus, 1989, p. 195.

learning that the “Khmer king was very courageous and his troops were numerous, and further more, he maintains good relationship with the king of the Vietnamese”.²³ If the joint Khmer-Vietnamese forces did defeat the Siamese, it would be the first official encounter between the Nguyen and the Siamese.

It is important to note here that from an earlier period, the Cambodians were already seeing the Nguyen as the rulers of southern Vietnam, and regarded the daughter of Nguyen Phuc Nguyen a princess. This is evident from the Cambodian royal chronicles which addressed the Nguyen daughter a princess. Even Christophoro Borri, the Jesuit priest who spent four years in the Nguyen territories from 1617-1621 remarked that Cambodia was already a tribute vassal to the Nguyen Lords.²⁴ Such a perception by a contemporary observer indicates the Nguyen’s status as a de facto independent state.

The Vietnamese princess reported in the Cambodian chronicles was Nguyen Phuc Ngoc Van, the second daughter of Nguyen Phuc Nguyen.²⁵ Interestingly, the official biographies of the Nguyen, *Liet Truyen Tien Bien* only acknowledges Ngoc Van as the daughter of Nguyen Phuc Nguyen with little information on her life.²⁶ She was also known as Ang Chea or Ang Cuv by the Cambodians.²⁷ She was to play an important role in advancing Vietnamese interests in Cambodia. Shortly after the wedding, Sri Soriyoppor abdicated in 1618, in favour of Chey Chetta II. With the ascension of her husband to the

²³ Mak Phoeun (ed.), *Chroniques Royales du Cambodge (de 1594-1677)*, p. 123.

²⁴ Christoforo Borri, *Cochin-China*, p. H3.

²⁵ See Vinh Cao et al. (comp.), *Nguyen Phuc Toc The Pha*, p. 126.

²⁶ *Liet Truyen Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: 38.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, see also Thai Van Kiam, “La Plaine aux Cerfs et la Princesse de Jade”, *Bulletin du Societe D’Etude Indochine* (hereafter *BSEI*), Vol. XXXIV, No. 4, 1959, p. 389.

Cambodian throne, Ngoc Van was named Bhaggavatti and Varakhsatri, or the “Grand Epouse”(Great wife or first wife).²⁸ Chey Chetta II’s ascension to the Cambodian throne coincided with a Siamese attack led by a new king, Preah Chau Song Tham (Songt’am) in 1622. The attack was launched to reassert Siamese suzerainty over Cambodia and to force the latter into paying tribute it had not done so since 1605. The Khmer defence crumbled, and the Siamese gained control of Battambang, and several regions in western Cambodia. The Siamese however, did not venture further. According to Van Vliet, who was the Chief Dutch factor at Ayudhya from 1636 to 1641, the Siamese army was ambushed and was defeated by the Cambodians. The Cambodian monarchy was thus saved.²⁹

However, when writing about the Nguyen’s relations with Cambodia during the years of his stay in southern Vietnam, Christoforo Borri commented that Nguyen Phuc Nguyen continued to lend support to the king of Cambodia, “who had married a naturall [sic] daughter of his, furnishing him with Gallies, and with men against the King of Siam”.³⁰

As king, Chey Chetta II (or Jayajettha II, 1619-1627) was instrumental in introducing a new code of law to safeguard the interests of the people. Apart from an attack from the Siamese army in 1621, Chey Chetta II faced little opposition, and was regarded as one of the more enlightened kings of Cambodia. However,

²⁸ *Chroniques Royales du Cambodge (de 1594-1677)*, p. 126.

²⁹ See Ronald Bishop Smith, *Siam or the History of the Thais from 1569 to 1824*, Bethesda, Maryland: Decatur Press, 1967, p. 43.

³⁰ Christoforo Borri, *Cochin-China*, p. H3.

he began to be pressured by the Vietnamese. As early as in 1623, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen demanded from Chea Chetta II, the authorisation to control the commercial traffic in the provinces of Prei Nokor and Kompong Krabei (present day Saigon and Binh Nhe) in the Mekong Delta.³¹ Both were supposed to have been promised by Soriyopor to the Nguyen in exchange for Ngoc Van's hand in marriage. Customs houses were set up by Nguyen Phuc Nguyen at Moi Xoai and Dong Nai to collect import and export duties from traders who plied the Cambodian borders for business.

While there is no concrete evidence on the volume of business conducted by the Vietnamese in Cambodia, the type of trade involved the importation of goods that could fetch high prices in the various trading centres in the Nguyen region, especially at the port of Hoi An. Cambodian goods prized by the Vietnamese included deer skins, fish products, shark skins, paint for making lacquer, and hardwood. Borri, the Jesuit priest also related how Nguyen Southern Vietnam had imported male elephants from Cambodia.³²

It would appear that in the 17th century, security concerns drove the Nguyen to act versus uplanders, Champa and Cambodia.

³¹ Interestingly, the *Gia Dinh Thanh Thong Chi* (hereafter *GDTTC*), the works which trace the background and development of the six southern most Nguyen provinces in the Mekong Delta, also did not refer to this event. See also Khin Sok, *Le Cambodge Entre Le Siam et Le Vietnam (de 1775-1860)*, Paris: Ecole Francaise D'Extreme-Orient, 1991, p. 34..

³² Christoforo Borri, *Cochin-China*, p. D3.

Champa as a Contesting Power (1629 to 1693)

In dealing with Champa, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen pursued a very firm policy aimed at subduing Champa in order to minimize a potential threat. He was also facing the military onslaught from the Trinh in the North. As it was crucial for Nguyen Phuc Nguyen to keep his southern borders secure, he had to act very swiftly and harshly against Champa.

Nonetheless, these early campaigns against the Cham were not successful in reducing that state into a tribute state. This was mainly due to the fact that Nguyen Phuc Nguyen was probably more interested in securing its southern borders than to exercise control over Champa. Further more, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen conveniently interpreted the prerogative to accept tributes rested solely in the hands of the Le Court, and not with the Nguyen. This position changed during Nguyen Phuc Lan (1635-1648)'s time, when the Chams were obliged to send tribute. Nguyen Phuc Lan was more ready to exert control over Champa as, the Nguyen were finally separated from the Le Court.

Even though the Vietnamese did not annex any Cham territories during the reign of Nguyen Phuc Nguyen and Nguyen Phuc Lan, the two military campaigns launched by them against Champa in 1611 and 1629 were significant as it established Nguyen military superiority and resulted in the resettlement of a large number of Vietnamese people on the contested areas. This put pressure on the Cham population.

Besides the use of force in the effort to secure their borders, the Nguyen also employed the device of marriage to forge an alliance with Champa. In 1631, bilateral relations between the Nguyen and Champa were cemented through the marriage of Nguyen Phuc Nguyen's third daughter, Nguyen Phuc Ngoc Khoa to Po Rome, the King of Champa (r. 1627-1651). Again, this is not recorded in any of the official Vietnamese sources. It is also unclear how the union had come about. A recently published family genealogy of the Nguyen Phuc Nguyen acknowledges that Nguyen Phuc Ngoc Khoa, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen's third daughter was married to the King of Chiem Thanh (Champa), Po Rome.³³ According to the same source, relations between the Nguyen and the Chams were very good. Ngoc Khoa's marriage with Po Rome is also found in a Cham manuscript. However, the name of the Nguyen 'princess' is not given.³⁴

Nguyen Phuc Nguyen's diplomacy through marriage vis-à-vis Nguyen's relations with Champa took place during a time when the Nguyen were preoccupied the Trinh which broke into open hostilities in 1627. With the south relatively secured, the Nguyen were able to devote their attention to the war against the Trinh.

Until 1639 Portuguese ships from Macao continued to Cham ports at Cam Ranh Bay and Phan Rang.³⁵ Champa also traded with the Dutch beginning from

³³ Vinh Cao et al. (comp.), *Nguyen Phuc Toc The Pha*, p. 126.

³⁴ MS Cam 37 (12), "Legend of Po Debatasvar (Po Rome)", ff. 127-150. Like the case of Ngoc Van, the *Liet Truyen Tien Bien* also listed Ngoc Khoa's life as unknown, see *Liet Truyen Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: 38..

³⁵ Pierre B. Lafont, "Hubungan antara Champa dengan Asia Tenggara", in *Dunia Melayu dan Dunia Indocina*, Ismail Hussein, P-B. Lafont & Po Dharma (eds.), Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, pp. 214-215.

the defeat of Portuguese by the Dutch at Malacca in 1641.³⁶ Champa-Dutch relations were good and two royal Cham delegations visited Batavia in 1680.

However, Nguyen-Champa relations lost its cordiality with the passing of Po Rome and his Vietnamese wife in 1651. Po Nraup, the elder brother of Po Rome, was hoping to recoup the lost territories from the Nguyen led a Champa army and attacked Phu Yen in 1653. The Chams were also evidently threatened by the large number of Vietnamese who had settled at the border territories since the reign of Nguyen Phuc Lan in 1648.

King Po Nraup's action was probably based on the need to protect Cham interests from being encroached upon by more Vietnamese resettlement programmes as well as the belief that Nguyen Phuc Tan was still new to the administration and that the Nguyen having just ended military campaigns against the Trinh may be exhausted. However, he was proven wrong.

An army of 3,000 was sent by Nguyen Phuc Tan under the leadership of Hung Loc to face the attacking Chams. The Champa army was defeated by the Nguyen army in a surprise counter-attack near Phu Yen. It then retreated across the Phan Rang River and sued for peace. A peace treaty was concluded under which the Nguyen annexed the entire area north of the Phan Rang River. The area covered the region of Cu Mong to Kauthara (Khanh Hoa), and set up the two phu (prefectures) of Thai Khanh and Dien Ninh. Both came under the administration and protection of Dinh Thai Khanh (present day Ninh Hoa). The annexation of the area also meant that the Vietnamese under the Nguyen had extended their area of control beyond the Thach-Bi boundary marker for the first time since 1471. While

³⁶ Pierre Yves Manguin, *Les Portugais Sur les Cotes du Viet Nam et du Champa*, p. 236

Champa was still in control of the area south of the Phan Rang River, the king of Champa was obliged to send tributes to the Nguyen Court.³⁷ It was here that Champa's status as a vassal state of the Nguyen was confirmed for the first time in the *Tien Bien*.

The imposition of tributary relations meant that the nature of relationship between the Chams and the Nguyen had altered. Whereas in the past, the Chams were reported to have sent regular tribute to the Tran and later the Le Court at Thang Long, tribute was now being sent to the Nguyen Court at Thuan Hoa. The Nguyen were now behaving like a separate state in the South as charged by their rival, the Trinh at that time.³⁸ Thus through its relationship with Champa and later with Cambodia, the Nguyen began to act like an independent ruling house.

With the defeat of Po Nraup, the Nguyen came to have a common border with Cambodia in 1653 with the defeat of Po Nraup. Five years later in 1658, the Khmer kingdom was perceived by the Nguyen to be threatening its southern frontiers. This time, the course of action was to rid itself of this external threats.

When the Nguyen-Trinh War reached a stalemate with neither side able to prevail the next phase of Nguyen's relations with Champa and Cambodia took place – through confrontation.

³⁷ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 4, p. 22.

³⁸ The Trinh had launched their military campaigns against the Nguyen in order to subjugate a renegade regime that was trying to break away from central control. In the northern Trinh-Le records, *Dai Viet Su Ky Toan Thu Thuc Bien*, Vol. 18: 938-939, 955, it was confirmed that the Nguyen's actions were those of a separate state.

First Military Campaign Against Cambodia, 1658

In 1658, five years after the annexation of the Champa territory of Kauthara, the Nguyen intervened in the Cambodian Court by going to war in support of one Cambodian prince against another. This intervention resulted in the Nguyen faction emerging as victor acquiring the area of Bien Hoa. This put Champa in a very unenviable position where, except for the approach from the sea, the remnants of the Champa territory was completely encircled by the Vietnamese.

If Nguyen Phuc Nguyen and Nguyen Phuc Lan's forays into Champa and Cambodia were aimed at securing a peaceful south to facilitate the Nguyen's defence against Trinh attacks, Nguyen Phuc Tan's new policy of aggression was instrumental in consolidating this position. Unlike previous interventions, Nguyen Phuc Tan actually went on the offensive in Cambodia. Previously, Nguyen intervention also was prompted by the desire to support one faction of the royal family against another, without involving military action..

It was the Ramadhipati affair which began in 1644 that offered Nguyen Phuc Tan the opportunity to enter into Cambodia in 1658. Ramadhipati (or Ponea Chan Satha, r. 1638-1655) was the third son of Chey Chetta II. His mother L'Anakdlnan Pussa was a Laotian woman.³⁹ He succeeded the throne after the abdication of both his brothers, Srei Thomma Reachea I (Poneo To, 1627-1631) and Ang Tong Reachea (or Ponea Nou, 1631-1635), and the dethroned Botum

³⁹ Mak Phoeun & Po Dharma, "La Premier Intervention Militaire Vietnamienne au Cambodge (1658-1659)", *BEFEO*, Vol. LXXIII, 1984, p. 298.

Reachea I (or Ang Non, 1636-1638), the son of Outey Reachea I (1626-1627), his uncle and regent after the death of Chey Chetta II.⁴⁰ In 1644, Ramadhipati married a girl from the Cham-Malay community of Khleang Sbêk village, west of Tonle Sap.⁴¹ As the girl was a Muslim, Ramadhipati converted to Islam. This earned him the not so-honorific title of *Prah Ream Chaul Sas* or “Preah Ream the Apostate” from his subjects who were evidently displeased with the king’s action.⁴² After the marriage, Ramadhipati further incurred the wrath of his people when he ordered the court officials to abandon Buddhism for Islam. Apart from that, he also gradually replaced the Khmer officials at the Palace of Oudong with Chams and Malays.⁴³

This led to widespread discontent that culminated in the emergence of resistance against Ramadhipati in 1653. The resistance was led by Ang Sur (Ang Sur eventually ruled as Paramraja, 1659-1672) and Ang Tan sons of the former regent. In a military engagement at Samreng Tong, not far from Phnom Penh, the two brothers’ army defeated Ramadhipati’s army, but was not strong enough to take Phnom Penh and the Royal Palace. Ramadhipati’s army, made up of large numbers of Chams and Malays were naturally loyal to him. The two brothers then

⁴⁰ This period of Cambodian Court history reads like a soap opera. Khin Sok described the period between 1620 and 1775 in the Cambodian Court history as one where “the majority of the Khmer kings did not have the aptitude and the valour that was commensurate with their title of ‘Kings of the Mountain’ (Maître de Terre) or Chakravatin. We see reign after reign, successive quarrels within the royal family which brought about the decaying of the country”. See Khin Sok, *Le Cambodge entre Le Siam et Le Vietnam*, p. 32.

⁴¹ The girl’s name was Nan Hvah, from the Champa royal line of Po Cai. See Mak Phoeun (ed.), *Chroniques Royale Du Cambodge*, f. 403, p. 188.

⁴² *Chroniques Royale Du Cambodge*, f. 405, p. 190.

⁴³ *Chroniques Royale Du Cambodge*, ff. 405 (p. 190) According to David Chandler, the same king was also known in the Cambodian Chronicle as “King who choose [a different] religion”. See David P. Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, St. Leonard: Allen & Unwin, 1992, p. 88.

enlisted the help of Ang Cuv (Nguyen Thi Ngoc Van), the Vietnamese princess-wife of Chey Chetta II, who was also the stepmother of Botum Reachea I.

On Ang Cuv's request, a Nguyen army arrived in 1658 and defeated Ramadhipati at Prek Taten. According to the Cambodian chronicles, Ramadhipati was captured by the Vietnamese general, Ong Heang Thou⁴⁴ and taken back to the Nguyen Court. In his place, Ang Sur (King Paramaraja VIII, r. 1659-1672) was installed as king of Cambodia. The event marked the installation of first Nguyen-sponsored Cambodian king.

Interestingly, the Nguyen chronicles do not carry any reference to Ang Cuv (Ngoc Van)'s request for intervention. Rather, the *Tien Bien* offers a very different view on the Nguyen Army's intervention. According to the *Tien Bien*, a Vietnamese army was sent into Cambodia after a Cambodian army had attacked the garrison at Tran Bien.⁴⁵ Both Mak Phoeun and Po Dharma discussed at length the reasons for the Nguyen Army's intervention in Cambodia. Two views were offered. First, in agreement with the *Tien Bien*, Champa sources seemed to suggest that when Kauthara (Nha Trang) was taken by the Vietnamese in 1653, Cambodian forces under Ramadhipati had passed through Phan Rang,⁴⁶ ostensibly in an effort to regain the two provinces ceded by Chey Chetta II to the Vietnamese in 1623. The second explanation is Ang Cuv's call for Vietnamese

⁴⁴ The *Tien Bien* gives the name of the Nguyen commander as Ton That Yen, who was related to the Nguyen rulers. See *Tien Bien*, Vol. 4: 22.

⁴⁵ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 4: 22.

⁴⁶ Pham Khoang, *Viet Su Xu Dang Trong*, [A History of Dang Trong], Saigon: 1971, p. 403.

intervention. This is in agreement with the Cambodian chronicles that explained that the Nguyen army had arrived to assist Ang Sur and Ang Tan.⁴⁷

There is no mention of the spoils of war in terms of territorial gains after the Nguyen campaign of 1658. Nguyen Phuc Tan (1648-1687) did not acquire any additional concession from the Cambodians for sending in his army. Neither did he punish the defeated Ramadhipati. Instead, Nguyen Phuc Tan released the Cambodian king.⁴⁸ The Nguyen did not gain any territorial concession after the victory over Ramadhipati. As the Nguyen Army had just concluded their campaign against Champa in 1653, and had extended their control to include Cham territories on the right side of the Phan Rang River, they needed time to consolidate their positions. Nevertheless, while the Vietnamese efforts were not rewarded in kind, the installation of Ang Sur, under the influence of Ang Cuv (Ngoc Van), the Vietnamese Dowager in Cambodia, ensured Nguyen's influence in the internal affairs.

A positive outcome was meeting Joao Da Cruz (Jean de la Croix in French documents), a Catholic half-caste Portuguese gun founder who was in the service of the Cambodian King. After the 1658 campaign, Da Cruz was brought by Nguyen Phuc Tan to serve as the principle gun-founder at the Nguyen gun-foundry at Phuong Duc,⁴⁹ not far from Phu Xuan, set up earlier in 1631, with 80

⁴⁷ Mak Phoeun, *Chroniques Royale Du Cambodge*, p. 355.

⁴⁸ Ramadhipati was not released immediately as suggested by the *Tien Bien*, see Vol. 4: 22; instead, he was said to be still in the Nguyen capital in 1661, see W. J. M. Buch, 1936, p. 147. However, the Cambodian chronicles mentioned how Ramadhipati passed away in Champa in 1659 while on his way back to Cambodia, see *Chroniques Royale du Cambodge*, p. 315.

⁴⁹ The date of Joao Da Cruz joining the service of the Nguyen was a point of contention among scholars. Some like L. Cadiere suggested as early as 1615. Many believed that Da Cruz had arrived between 1655 to 1661. But Manguin's evidence suggest on 1658, see L. Cadiere, "Le Mur

workers.⁵⁰ Many have attributed the Nguyen's ability to defend itself against Trinh attacks during the Nguyen-Trinh War (1627-1672) to the better guns used by the Nguyen army, and most of them were made by Joao Da Cruz.⁵¹

Joao Da Cruz was probably not the only one of the Nguyen army's war spoils. The Jesuits missionaries reported that the 1658 campaign in Cambodia was easily won by the Nguyen army. The victorious army then carried back with them four large ships and more than 1,000 pieces of artillery:

In his war against Cambodia, he [Nguyen Phuc Tan] met little resistance and conquered large part of Cambodia. He took with him, four large ships and more than a thousand artillery pieces as well as the [Cambodian] king's personnel.⁵²

The Nguyen decision not to punish Ramadhipati was probably due to two considerations, namely, to exploit the possibilities of playing one party against another in the internal affairs of the Cambodian Court by allowing Ramadhipati to be reinstated. This would allow him to serve as a balance to Ang Sur and the need to avoid further military engagement in the south by showing some reconciliatory gestures. However, Ramadhipati died shortly after being released. With his death, the Nguyen Court's plan could not be implemented as his Muslim supporters escaped to Siam. Nevertheless, the move clearly demonstrated Nguyen intentions to extend their influence on Cambodia.

de Dong Hoi", *BEFEO*, Vol. VI, p. 125; Pierre-Yves Manguin, *Les Portugais Sur Les Cotes du Viet-Nam et du Champa*, Paris: PESEO, 1972, pp. 205-207.

⁵⁰ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 2: 22.

⁵¹ See Li Tana, *Nguyen Cochinchina: Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998, p. 45; see also Yang Baoyun, *Contribution a L'Histoire de la Principaute des Nguyen au Vietnam Meridional (1600-1775)*, Geneva: Editions Olizane, 1992, pp. 109-110.

⁵² *Voyages et Travau des Missionaries de la Compagnie de Jesus: Mission de la Cochinchine et Tonkin*, Paris: Editions Charles Douniol, 1858, p. 178.

Theoretically, prior to 1658, Cambodia was a vassal to Siam as well as China. Chinese records explicitly mentioned how Chenla (a term used by the Chinese as well as the Vietnamese when referring to Cambodia) was a frequent tribute-sending vassal to China.⁵³ According to the *Zhu Fan Chi*, the Cambodians had first established tributary relations with China in 707 AD during the reign of the Emperor Wu De of the Tang Dynasty.⁵⁴ According to the *Xi Yang Chao Gong Dien Lu Jiao Chu*,

“Its tribute (the Cambodia/Chenla) was irregular. During the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Hong Wu, its king and ministers came to present their local produce. After that, the tribute missions became irregular. The Chenla tribute included elephants, ivory, sapanwood, pepper, wax, rhinoceros horns, precious wood, incense, precious stones and peacock feathers”.⁵⁵

The French priest, Father Louis Chevreuil who arrived in Phnom Penh in 1665 implied that Cambodia was a tributary state of the Vietnamese (Nguyen). Relating an incident where Vietnamese were being attacked in Cambodia and that, “During the killings of the Cochinchinese [Vietnamese], the king of Cambodia raised up against Cochinchina and he refused to pay any tribute”.⁵⁶ But it is unclear if the Nguyen-installed Cambodian rulers actually sent tribute to Phu Xuan.

One interesting piece of information relating to the 1658 Nguyen campaign in Cambodia was Nguyen Phuc Tan’s attempt to obtain assistance from

⁵³ *Xi Yang Chao Gong Dien Lu Jiao Chu*, Vol. 1 (first published in the 15th century. This edition by Beijing: Zhong Hua Book Store, 2000), p. 17.

⁵⁴ Chao Ju Qua, *Zhu Fan Chi*, p. 26. First published 1225, this edition, by Hong Kong University Centre for Asian Studies, 2000, pp. 26-27.

⁵⁵ Huang Shenzhen, *Xi Yang Chao Gong Dien Lu Jiao Chu*, (Annotated Record of the Tributes from The West), first published 1520, this edition, Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ji, 2000, p.17.

⁵⁶ A. Launay, *Mission de Cocinchine*. Vol. I, pp. 71-72.

the King of Siam. This piece of information is found in a report by a Jesuit who was in Siam at that time, stated that prior to attacking the Cambodians, Nguyen Phuc Tan sent an ambassador to the Court of Siam at Ayudhya to ask the King of Siam to supply him with saltpetre that were used for making gunpowder, rice and 30 elephants. It was then reported that the Siamese king being apprehensive of the rise of a powerful neighbour, declined to help. Conscious of the conflict that took place between the Nguyen and the Trinh, the Siamese King even went to the extent of trying to play one side against another in order to ensure that the Nguyen would not grow too strong to challenge Siam's position and interest in Cambodia.⁵⁷ This report however, could not be verified.

Nguyen Phuc Tan was reported to be unhappy with the ungrateful princes Ang Sur and Ang Tan, whom he had supported against Ramadhipati. The two had refused to acknowledge Vietnamese suzerainty by refusing to send tribute to the Nguyen Court.⁵⁸ It was probably one of the reasons why Nguyen Phuc Tan had decided to send Ramadhipati back to Cambodia in 1659. Ramadhipati however, died at Bat Anchien, which was then still a part of Champa, while on his way back to Cambodia.⁵⁹ As Nguyen Phuc Tan could not afford another campaign against the Cambodians so soon after the first, Cambodia was able to be free from direct Nguyen control for several years.

Glimpses of resentment over foreign interference can be gleaned from the following. In 1667, saw a series of killings taking place in Cambodian territories

⁵⁷ *Voyages et Travaux des Missionnaires de la Compagnie de Jesus: Mission de la Cochinchine et Tonkin*, p. 178.

⁵⁸ Mak Pheoun & Po Dharma, "La Premier Intervention Militaire Vietnamienne au Cambodge", p. 315.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* See also *Chroniques Royales Du Cambodge*, p. 416.

where Vietnamese settlers were reportedly killed by a combined force of Chinese and Cambodians. A French missionary who was in Cambodia at that time reported that the Chinese were mercenaries. At the time he made the report, the same French priest Bishop Lambert, expressed apprehension with the situation in Cambodia which he feared might lead to another Nguyen attack against the Cambodians.⁶⁰ It would now be pertinent to turn our attention to the activities of the Chinese in the region.

Role of the Chinese in Advancing Nguyen Interests in the Mekong during the 17th century

Even though the first significant presence of Chinese in Mekong Delta is only reported in Nguyen sources in 1679 marking the arrival of the former Ming forces, the existence of Chinese in the waters around the Mekong Delta at this time is known fact. David Chandler attributed the decline of Cambodia's international trade to its access being blocked by the Chinese and Vietnamese merchants.⁶¹ There were already Chinese trading in Angkor since the 13th century. It is likely that some of these Chinese had stayed on after the fall of Angkor at the end of the 13th century. There were also new comers who came to settle in the new centres at Phnom Penh or Lovek. By 1540s, there were around 3,000 of them living in Phnom Penh.⁶²

⁶⁰ "Bishop Lambert to Bishop Pallu", 19 October 1667, AMEP: Cochinchine, Vol. 876, f. 497.

⁶¹ David P. Chandler, *A History of Cambodia*, St. Leonard: Allen & Unwin, 1993, pp. 88-89.

⁶² David P. Chandler, *Ibid.*, p. 80.

The 1667 event is not reported in the Vietnamese sources, neither did the Nguyen launched an attack against the Cambodians. The next mention of Cambodia in the Vietnamese sources was in 1674 when another war broke out between the Nguyen and the Cambodians.

Like earlier occasions, the 1674 Nguyen-Cambodian conflict was sparked by an internal struggle in the Cambodian Court. By then, the structure of power on the Nguyen side had taken a big change. For two years now the Nguyen were freed from its active confrontation with the Trinh as both sides came to a stalemate after the war of 1672. With its northern boundaries secured for the moment, the Nguyen were able to shift their attention towards developments in Champa and Cambodia. The conflicts between the Cambodian princes offered the opportunity for the Nguyen to once again intervene in the affairs of that country and to exact tribute from the Cambodians.

The Cambodian internal conflict of 1674 could be traced to Ang Sur (Paramaraja VIII)'s decision in 1664, to confer on his brother and ally, Ang Tan (Uday Surivans) the title of Ubhayoraj entitling the latter to some territories in Cambodia. In effect, this led to a joint rule over Cambodia by the two brothers. This resulted in disputes over the throne. When Ang Sur died in 1674, he was succeeded by Ang Ji, the son of Ang Tan who called himself as Kaev Hva II. Almost immediately he was challenged by Ang Son's son, Ang Non.

One historical anecdote that warrants some attention here is the suspected Cambodians overture to the Trinh proposing a joint campaign against the Nguyen. The event reportedly took place in 1672, the year the Trinh launched their last

campaign against the Nguyen. That year, an ambassador from Ang Sur, the king of Cambodian, arrived in the Trinh port of Pho Hien. The ambassador had travelled on a foreign vessel. Apparently, the Cambodian ambassador had a meeting with one 'Ou Gia Thuy Hueu', who was recorded in the Cambodian Royal Chronicle as the governor of the eastern province (likely to be Phu Yen) who later joined the Trinh Lord, Trinh Tac (r. 1657-1682). However, the connection between the arrival of the Cambodian ambassador and the 1672 Trinh campaign is tenuous.⁶³

In the disputes that ensued, Ang Tan or Ramadhipathi Uday Surivans (1664-1674), was supported by the Siamese, while another prince, Ang Non or Padamaraja (1674-1691), had the Nguyen support. The Siamese army was reported to be 20,000 strong, with a 2,000 naval force and 1,000 horses and elephants. Nguyen Phuc Tan sent the garrison at Nha Trang (Thai Khang) province under Nguyen Duong Lam to assist Ang Non. The Nguyen army first invaded an area near to Gia Dinh before laying a siege on Udong.⁶⁴ The affair ended after the Siamese army retreated, leaving Cambodia in the hands of the Nguyen. But Nguyen Phuc Tan decided to install two Cambodian kings, with Ang Ji, the son of Ang Tan the pro-Siam prince as the main king at Udong, while the pro-Vietnamese prince Ang Non to preside over a Cambodian Court at Saigon. Both were compelled to send tribute.

⁶³ The event is discussed by Mak Phoeun in his *Histoire du Cambodge de la fin du XVI siecle au debut du XVIII siecle*, Paris: Ecole Francaise d'Extreme-Orient, 1995, pp. 326-327. The name of the mandarin was believed to be 'Ou Gia Thuy Hueu'.

⁶⁴ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 5: 17-18. See also "Father Langlois to de Chamesson", 1 December 1674, AMEP: Cochinchine, Vol. 857, f. 333. Langlois saw the war as a civil war.

The Nguyen's decision to appoint two Cambodian kings, including one who was pro-Siam reflected the dilemma that he was facing while trying to intervene in Cambodia. On one hand, while the Nguyen army was able to defeat the pro-Siamese faction and the Siamese army, it nevertheless, was unable to exert total control over Cambodia entirely. Thus, by appointing two Cambodian kings, the Nguyen was able to extend its control over one half of the country while placating the pro-Siam faction. This gave it effective control over the Mekong Delta.

This situation led inevitably to another conflict with the Cambodians. Interestingly, none of the Vietnamese sources mention the 1678-9 venture in Cambodia. This could be attributed to the fact that the Nguyen did not actually send a sizeable force to Cambodia in aid of the pro-Nguyen Ang Non. Furthermore, Ang Non was defeated by a pro-Siam prince. The accounts of a Chinese merchant gives us an idea of the event which basically saw Ang Non, the Nguyen-sponsored Cambodian king trying to regain the Cambodian throne from the pro-Siam Batom Reachea. When Ang Sur came to Batom Reachea's rescue with an army of 10,000 Cambodians and 6,000 Siamese, Ang Non called for help from the Nguyen. A force of 600 strong force from 'Guangnan' (Nguyen Southern Vietnam) went to Ang Non's assistance but failed to dislodge Batom Reachea from the throne. After his defeat, Ang Non escaped to the region in southern Laos, while the remnants of the 600 from Nguyen Southern Vietnam returned to the Nguyen territory.⁶⁵ The failure for the Nguyen to respond in

⁶⁵ "Report from Ship 20 (5-1 of Ships From Cambodia), 3 September 1679", in Yoneo Ishii, *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the Tosen Fusetsu-gaki, 1674-1723*, p. 156.

strength could not be explained at this juncture as the Nguyen sources are silent over this issue. Neither could the actual identity of the 600 men from 'Guangnan' be ascertained. It was suggested by the Chinese shippers who made this report at Nagasaki that it is likely that they were Chinese who belonged to the remnants of the Ming forces that had come to the Mekong Delta.⁶⁶ More will be discussed about the Chinese in the later part of this chapter. But what is clear is that a failed venture like this did not gain entry into the Nguyen chronicles.

After the defeat of 1679, Ang Non's son settled in Chau-in in Tran Bien, whereas Ang Sur (together with his brother Ang Tan), the Siamese-sponsored King remained in Udong. The latter was obliged to send tribute to Siam. Thus, in this early tussles between the Nguyen and the Siamese over Cambodia, the Siamese seemed to have the upper hand. But this did not deter the pro-Siam Ang Sur from sending a tribute to the Nguyen Court, with the hope that Ang Non's presence in Tran Bien would be neutralised.⁶⁷ Thus, in many ways, Nguyen's domination over Cambodia, as well as being a contesting power on mainland Southeast Asia is most apparent in the example of Cambodia. However, Nguyen aggression could be checked by tributes and appropriate acknowledgement. The same Chinese account of the 1678-9 affair suggests "that the tribute which had so pleased the king of Guangnan [Nguyen] that he has not given assistance to the second king (Ang Non)".⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "Report from Ship 4 & 5 (5-3 of Ships From Cambodia), 8 August 1681", in Yoneo Ishii, *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the Tosen Fusetsu-gaki, 1674-1723*, p. 159.

⁶⁸ "Report from Ship 11 & 12 (5-4 of Ships From Cambodia), 5 August 1682", in Yoneo Ishii, *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the Tosen Fusetsu-gaki, 1674-1723*, p. 160.

The *Tien Bien* devoted more attention to the arrival of the Ming political refugees that year as the latter was a more important factor in Nguyen foreign affairs. Ironically, the presence of these Chinese political renegades sparked the next Nguyen-Cambodia conflict.

In 1679, Nguyen Phuc Tan was caught off-guard with the arrival of 3,000 soldiers of the former Ming under the leadership of their commanders, Yang Yandi, Huang Jing, Chen Shangchuan and Chen Anping.⁶⁹ Yang Yandi and Chen Shangchuan were known to be plying in the Taiwan Straits, and the coast of Vietnam and the Gulf of Siam. A Chinese report from Nagasaki identified Yang Yandi as Yang Pa.⁷⁰ Chen was also known to have blockaded the Mekong River mouth at Gong Dai Ma (Con Tau).⁷¹ The Ming refugees had decided to settle in the Nguyen's domains after they lost their positions in Taiwan and Fujian to the Manchu. In the case of Yang and Chen, they made their presence felt in the region from as early as 1666. After being attacked by the Manchu imperial army, Yang Yandi and his followers had come down to Tonking for supplies and opportunities. When the Manchu learned of their whereabouts, they dispatched a delegation to the Trinh court asking for Yang and his followers' repatriation.⁷² Yang and his group however, managed to slip out of Hanoi in early 1667. Part of the group under the charge of one Shi Piao emerged in the Mekong Delta while

⁶⁹ The *Tien Bien* gives 1679 as the year the Chinese forces came to Nguyen Southern Vietnam, Chen Chingho however, suggested that they had most likely to have arrived in 1682, not 1679.

⁷⁰ "Report of Ship No. 23 from Guangnan" 1678, in *Kai Hentai*, Vol. I, pp. 167-168.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² The letter from the Court of Emperor Kangxi to the Vietnamese Emperor Le Huyen Tong dated 17 June 1666, called for the repatriation of the 'pirates Yang Er, Yang San, Huang Ming Piao and others'. Also listed was Shi Piao and his wife. The Vietnamese were supposed to arrest them and have them sent to the Governor of the two Guangs. See *Qing Shi Lu*, Vol. 19, p. 4.

the rest of the group remained in the Gulf of Tonking. Shi Piao's group later took part in the attack against the Dutch factory at Cambodia.

The Taiwanese scholar, Chen Chingho suggests that Yang Yandi and Chen Shangchuan made the decision to submit to the Nguyen after their fleets were defeated by the Qing forces in the Gulf of Tonking in 1681. Indeed, some sources suggest that the original force had around 200 ships but only 50 survived. Chen disputed the year 1679 as recorded in the *Tien Bien*. This is plausible as the remnants of the Ming forces on Taiwan finally submitted to the Qing in 1683. Thus when Yang Yandi and Chen Shangchuan and their men submitted to Nguyen Phuc Tan, they must have been quite familiar with the situation in the Mekong Delta as they have been marauding in these waters since 1666.

Nguyen Phuc Tan decided to resettle them at the newly captured areas in the Mekong Delta, which was then mainly no man's land between Nguyen-southern Vietnam and Cambodia. Yang Yandi and Huang Jin's forces were asked to garrison Luu La and the My Tho River mouth; whereas Chen Shangchuan and Chen Anping were asked to go to an area near present day Bien Hoa. These two settlements eventually grew into sizeable towns and are indicated on at least one of the maps produced in the late 18th century. The indicator at the region at My Tho for instance, highlights the large Fujian population on the right banks of My Tho River. It is likely that the community had originated from the families of the Ming troops under Yang Yandi and Huang Jing.

The Nguyen's policy of resettling the Ming refugees in newly acquired land reflects its growing power in southern Vietnam. At that time, the Nguyen,

having newly emerged from a protracted confrontation with the Trinh, was still in the process of consolidating its power. Furthermore, as rightly counseled by his ministers, the acceptance and resettlement of these Ming forces in the no-man's land by Nguyen Phuc Tan had a three-prong purpose. First, the Nguyen were apprehensive of the sudden presence of such a large force that could threaten the security of the Nguyen; secondly, the Nguyen could show the benign nature of its rule by accepting these Chinese forces; and thirdly, by resettling the Chinese on a rich but sparsely populated no-man's land, the Nguyen hoped to use the labour of the Chinese to exploit the Mekong Delta.⁷³

As it turned out, Nguyen Phuc Tan's decision was a good one, as the Chinese settlers not only successfully cleared up vast areas, they attracted international trade to the area as well. This decision was markedly different from the as the latter shared a border with Manchu China. The apprehension of Nguyen Phuc Tan and his advisors on the potential security threat posed by the Chinese force was a valid concern. Even though the Nguyen army was large enough to defeat the Chinese, it clearly could not afford such a conflict. The Nguyen were pragmatic enough to divide the Chinese into two areas thus reducing the security threat of a joint Chinese force.

Before sending the Chinese to My Tho and Bien Hoa, Nguyen Phuc Tan informed the Cambodian king, Ang Non of his intention to settle the Chinese in the area. At that time, both regions were still nominally under Cambodian rule, albeit under a Nguyen-sponsored ruler.⁷⁴ Ang Non was then ruling from Saigon.

⁷³ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 5: 22.

⁷⁴ *Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi*, (DNNTC) Vol. 10: Phu Ngoai Phien Chu Quoc-Cao Man, , p. 2.

This decision was the end of the Cambodian king's pretensions to power in the Mekong. Ang Non was now a vassal of the Nguyen. Such demonstration of superiority by the Nguyen towards their vassal states was to continue throughout their rule.

The Chinese refugees were also employed by Nguyen Phuc Tran in military campaigns against Cambodia between 1688 to 1690. The conflict started because of problems encountered the Chinese military refugees. The event was one of the few instances where the Nguyen were unable to exert effective control over the Chinese, who in this case were seasoned fighters. This had inevitably led to situations where the Nguyen had to take prompt action in order to maintain order in the Mekong Delta to minimise negative effects that could undermine its interests.

The 1688 campaign traces its origin to an incident in My Tho where Yang Yandi was killed by his lieutenant, Huang Jin. No reason is given for the killing, but there were accounts which suggest that Yang Yandi, though 'ordered' by Nguyen Phuc Tan to settle in My Tho, actually resorted to piracy, and caused many problems to shipping in the area. Thus, the killing was probably related to problems relating to a dispute over the spoils. After Yang's death, Huang Jin moved his troops to Dinh Thuong where he constructed a barricade (fort) and carried out piratical activities.⁷⁵ With his troops stationed in the mouth of the Mekong and Bassac Rivers, Huang Jin was blockading the entrances to Cambodia and the upper Mekong. Apart from the *Tien Bien*, this event was reported by at least two Chinese merchants who were using the Cambodia-Nagasaki trade

⁷⁵ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 6 6

route.⁷⁶ Their reports were part of the shipping reports made to the harbour master of Nagasaki.

Just as Huang Jin was causing problems to trading activities in the Mekong Delta, Ang Sur, the Cambodian King who was sponsored by Siam was strengthening his defence by constructing forts. He also tried to link up with Huang Jin. It was apparent that Ang Sur was trying to use Huang Jin's military strength to oust the Vietnamese and their sponsored Cambodian King, Ang Non, from the Mekong Delta. The Chinese merchants learned that Nguyen Phuc Tran had acted at the prompting of the Chinese Governor of Guangdong who had sent a letter asking the Nguyen ruler to suppress Huang Jin's marauding activities.⁷⁷ There is no mention in the Nguyen sources regarding the letter from the Guangdong Governor, but the situation in the Mekong Delta had become too precarious for Nguyen Phuc Tran not to intervene.

The *Tien Bien* relates how the Nguyen had acted after Ang Non reported Ang Sur's fort building activities.⁷⁸ However, it is more likely that Ang Sur had joined forces with Huang Jin and was threatening the security of Saigon and Bien Hoa. A Nguyen force consisting of 6,000 troops pushed the combined Cambodian-Chinese forces across the River Mekong and Bassac pursuing them all the way to Udong, the capital of the Ang Sur faction. The fort held out for some time but collapsed at the end of the year. Ang Sur then submitted to the Nguyen. The circumstances that surrounded Ang Sur's submission is reported in

⁷⁶ "Report from Ship 52 (5-7 of Ship From Cambodia), 26 July 1689" and "Report from Ship No. 74 (5-8 Ship from Cambodia), 22 September 1689", in Yoneo Ishii, *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia*, pp. 163-167. In these reports, Huang Jin's name is given as Huang Zhen.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, ship No. 52, p. 164.

⁷⁸ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 6: 6.

detail in the *Tien Bien*. Apparently, Nguyen Phuc Tran was very angry with his commanders for the long drawn campaign that he sacked two of them successively. The Chinese merchants who were in the Cambodian waters at that time however, reported that Ang Sur and Huang Jin had gone into hiding in the hills bordering Siam.⁷⁹ Huang Jin's troops were pursued by the Nguyen forces and he went into hiding and was not reported again in any of the historical sources. With the victory, the Nguyen was able to restore the status-quo in the Mekong Delta. Troops were withdrawn to the eastern banks of the River Mekong and King Ang Non was kept on as the Nguyen-sponsored Cambodian king, based in Saigon. With the victory, Nguyen Phuc Tran restored the tributary system and demanded that the rulers of Cambodia, both at Saigon and Oudong to send tributes to the Nguyen court.

Nguyen's handling of Ming Chinese demonstrates how domestic situations shape foreign policy. Although the Ming Chinese could have been a challenger for domination of the Mekong, the Nguyen used them instead to strengthen its hold over Cambodia.⁸⁰ However when Huang Jin, attempted to subvert Nguyen overlordship, he was ruthlessly defeated thus securing in Machevillian fashion Nguyen prestige and position in the Mekong.⁸¹ As a result the Nguyen enjoyed a cordial relationship with Cambodia. In 1687, a Cambodian

⁷⁹ See *Tien Bien*, Vol. 6: 10-16 and "Report from Ship 52 (5-7 of Ships From Cambodia), 26 July 1689", in Yoneo Ishii, *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia*, p. 164.

⁸⁰ The Nguyen's concern over the presence of a large contingent of seasoned Chinese troops is reflected in *Tien Bien*, Vol. 5: 22.

⁸¹ The event is describe in *Tien Bien*, Vol. 5: 5-6 and also in "Report of Ship No. 74 from Cambodia", 22 September 1689 in *Kai Hantai*, Vol. 2 and "Report No. 5-8 Ship No. 74 from Cambodia", 22 September 1689, in Yoneo Ishii, *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia*, pp. 165-166.

royal delegation even presented incense at the new Nguyen ancestral temple at Phu Xuan signifying their willingness to submit to the Nguyen.⁸²

The imposition of tributary relations on both Champa and Cambodia had strong implications on the position of the Nguyen. Instead of acting as an extension of the Le rule in southern Vietnam, the Nguyen under Nguyen Phuc Tan had taken upon themselves to impose tributary arrangements on Champa and Cambodia. The act signified the adoption of a completely new position with regard to the Nguyen's status. Instead of being a mere provincial administration, the Nguyen had taken on the status of independent rulers who imposed tributary arrangements on two foreign kingdoms south of its borders.

Throughout the entire period of war between the Nguyen and the Trinh, the respective Nguyen were also preoccupied with the situation south of their domain. Conflict with Champa that first started in 1611, continued with attempts by the Chams to regain lost territories. On such occasions the Nguyen used the opportunity to strike swiftly at Champa in order to ensure that it did not jeopardise Nguyen war efforts against the Trinh.

Nguyen-Cambodian relations had began with a marriage proposal from the Cambodian King. The relationship remained good for the first thirty years as the Cambodians played the Nguyen against the Siamese. The cordial relations also brought benefit to the Nguyen especially in terms of economic gains enriching its war chest. However, this arrangement did not last. By 1650s, power struggles in the Cambodian court saw the emergence of a pro-Siam fraction that brought about Siamese intervention. The conflict ended temporarily with the

⁸² *Tien Bien*, Vol. 6: 5.

Nguyen gaining the upper hand and a tributary arrangement introduced. Since then, Cambodian rulers sponsored by the Nguyen submitted to Nguyen overlordship and an unequal relationship emerged. At the same time, Nguyen's activities brought it into contact with Siam. The Nguyen would eventually come to a head with the Siamese over their respective spheres of influence, namely Cambodia.

The Nguyen strengthened its position in Cambodia by supporting Ang Non. Ang Non passed away in 1692 shortly after his retreat to Gia Dinh. He was succeeded by his son, Ang Im, who Nguyen Phuc Chu was hoping to put on the Cambodian throne. Such a policy was crucial in the overall Nguyen strategy of pacifying its distant neighbour. For the Nguyen, the southern frontiers not only had to be secured, its peaceful exploitation was crucial to the state coffer. But before anything could be carried out, Nguyen Phuc Chu was faced with a more immediate problem in the form of an attack by Champa in 1692.

Victory Over Champa, 1693

From 1658 until 1692, the Nguyen was preoccupied in the south with Cambodia. Their intervention in Cambodia resulted in the splitting of the Cambodian court into two, one supported by the Vietnamese and the other by the Siamese court at Ayudhya. Before 1692, Champa was trying to strengthen its position against the Nguyen through its dealings with other regional powers. In 1682, the French priest at the Court of Ayudhya reported that the King of Champa

had submitted voluntarily to the King of Siam.⁸³ While no other information is available regarding this submission at the Court, the event suggests an attempt by the Chams to forge an alliance with Siam with the ultimate aim of resisting the Nguyen. During a stop at Pulo Ubi near the Gulf of Siam on 13 May 1687, William Dampier, the English traveller met a vessel of Champa origin anchored on the eastern side of the island. The vessel carried rice and lacquer and was on its way to Malacca. There were 40 crew members, and all were Chams. They carried broad swords, lances and some guns. Dampier wrote that the Chams were actively involved in trade with the Dutch at Malacca.⁸⁴

In 1692, the Chams were once again feeling confident enough to challenge the Vietnamese. In September 1692, Po Saut (or Po Sau, 1660-1692) or Ba-tranh as mentioned in the Nguyen sources,⁸⁵ the King of Champa at Panduranga (Pho Hai-Phan Rang-Phan Ri region) began building fortifications and had his men attack the region of Dien Khanh (Dien Ninh prefecture and Binh Khang garrison).⁸⁶ It is interesting to note that the *Tien Bien* had used the term 'rebellion' for all Champa military action against the Nguyen since 1629, even though Champa was then still an independent state. Such interpretation reveals that the Nguyen perceived Champa as its tributary vassal.

To counter this problem, a Vietnamese force under Nguyen Huu Kinh, consisting of the main garrison (Chinh dinh) and the garrison from Binh Khang in

⁸³ "Father Duchesue to Directors of the Seminary in Paris", 13 November 1682, AMEP: Siam, Vol. 878, f. 202.

⁸⁴ William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World*, London: 1697. This edition, The Argonaut Press, 1927, p. 272.

⁸⁵ The name Ba-tranh which is found in Vietnamese materials is the same person as Po Saut in the Cham Archives from Panduranga. See Po Dharma, *Le Panduranga (Campa) 1802-1835*, p. 67.

⁸⁶ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 7, p. 4.

Quang Nam was sent by Nguyen Phuc Chu to curb Cham raids. The sending of the main garrison was clearly an indication of the Nguyen's ability to turn their attention from their usually heavy defence commitment in the north towards the south. It is also a sign that the Nguyen were able to spare forces from the northern borders for the campaign against Champa.

The campaign ended with the defeat of the Chams in the first month of 1693. However, Po Saut and his followers were only captured seven months later. Po Saut was brought back to Phu Xuan, where he was interned at the village of Ngoc-tran Son in the district of Tra-huong.⁸⁷ During Po Saut's absence, the Cham Court at Pho Hai-Phan Rang-Phan Ri, previously known as Chiem Thanh to the Vietnamese, was renamed Thuan Thanh Tran. It was occupied by three Nguyen garrisons led by Nguyen Tri Thang (at Pho Hai), Nguyen Thanh Le (at Phan Ri) and Chu Kiem Thang (at Phan Rang), all battalion commanders or Cai Doi. Their mission was to prevent attacks from the remnants of the Cham forces.⁸⁸ With the establishment of the garrisons, the Champa kingdom at Panduranga was finally subjugated. This led to the Nguyen attempts to exercise control over the newly annexed Chams territories. The conquest of Champa can be related to *Nam Tien* or southward movement. The Chinese scholar, Yang Baoyun considers Champa a victim of the Nguyen's deliberate policy of subjugation, which stemmed from the principle of "maintaining good relations with countries of distance, and attack the neighbouring countries".⁸⁹ Title-

⁸⁷ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 7:4.

⁸⁸ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 7, p. 5b.

⁸⁹ Yang Baoyun, *Contribution a l'histoire de la principaute des Nguyen au Vietnam meridional (1600-1775)*, Geneva: Editions Olizane, 1992, p. 151.

inscriptions found on a cannon cast in 1670 by Joao da Cruz (Jean de la Croix), the Portuguese gun founder in the service of the Nguyen sheds light on the matter. The title-inscription on the cannon reads, “for the King and grand Lord of Cochinchina, Champa and of Cambodia”.⁹⁰ It is most likely that Nguyen Phuc Tan had ordered Da Cruz to have the title inscribed as a testament to his victories over Champa in 1653 and the Cambodians in 1658 respectively.⁹¹ Naming the Nguyen as grand lord over Cambodia and Champa supports the existence of such policy. It also symbolises the Nguyen as overlord over its immediate neighbours.

In September 1693, Nguyen Phuc Chu decided to place his nominee to rule over Champa in place of Po Saut, held captive in Phu Xuan since August. Po Saktiraydaputih or Ke-ba-tu⁹² who was Po Saut’s lieutenant was sent back to Thuan Thanh, which was by now further elevated from a Tran (garrison town) to the status of a Phu (prefecture), and was renamed Binh Thuan Phu. Po Saktiraydaputih was given the rank of a Kham-ly (A Civil official) in the Nguyen bureaucracy. His three sons were given the military appointments of de-doc, de-lanh and cai-phu. The Chams were also ordered to change their costumes to that of the Han tradition which meant the costumes of the Vietnamese.⁹³ Thus began a

⁹⁰ Pierre Yves Manguin, *Les Portugais sur les Cotes du Vietnam et du Champa*, Paris: EFEO, 1972, pp. 206-207.

⁹¹ The title which was written in Latin read, “por Eerei Ecas De Cochinchina Champa e Camboia Ioao Dacrusae Esen 1670”. The two surviving cannons cast by Joao Da Cruz in 1670, presently kept at the Ministry of War of Thailand in Bangkok. See L. Cadiere, “Compte Rendu de ‘Deux Canons Cochinchinois au Ministre de la Guerre de Bangkok’, de G. Coedes”, *BAVH*, 1919, pp. 528-532.

⁹² Like the name of Po Saut, Po Saktiraydaputih was used in the Cham Chronicles of Panduranga, whereas Vietnamese sources used the name Ke-Ba-tu. See Po Dharma, *Le Panduranga(Campa)*, 1802-1835, p. 68.

⁹³ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 7, p. 5b-6a.

process of Vietnamization in the Cham territories that was to continue throughout the 18th century.

The establishment of Binh Thuan Phu in the former Pho Hai-Phan Rang-Phan Ri area was followed by a series of battles between the Chams and the Vietnamese in 1693-94. This left the area in severe famine and led to the outbreak of the plagues.⁹⁴ Apart from the difficulties caused by the military clashes, the new Vietnamese administration was ill-prepared to govern the Chams. The main problem being the inability of the Nguyen at that point of time to establish an effective military presence in Champa. The problem was partly resolved when Nguyen Phuc Chu renamed the area Thuan Thanh Tran, and appointed Po Saktiraydaputih as the Ta Do Doc (governor) to administer the region on behalf of the Nguyen.⁹⁵

While the Nguyen chronicles and sources are silent on Nguyen Phuc Chu's rationale in sending Po Saktiraydaputih back to Champa as ruler, several reasons could be suggested. First, Nguyen Phuc Chu who had just succeeded as ruler in 1691, was conscious of the difficulties of immediately extending Vietnamese rule over a newly defeated Champa with only Vietnamese officials. To do so would be tantamount to nothing less than an all-out suppression of the Cham people. He must have known that the Chams would resist this and try to regain their territories. Thus Nguyen Phu Chu could see the value of Champa being ruled by a Cham, though nominated by his court. On top of that, Po Saktiraydaputih was a sensible choice as not only was he the lieutenant of Po

⁹⁴ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 7, p. 9a.

⁹⁵ Another term for military base or garrison.

Saut, he was also a member of the Cham royal family, beholden to the Nguyen. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the Cham people attempted to regain their kingdom in late 1693.

At the end of 1693, remnants of the Cham forces rallied to the call of a Cham official, Oc-nha who had teamed up with a Chinese named A-Ban, who was also called Ngo Lang. The latter was reputed to have shamanistic powers including the ability of being invulnerable to arms. Thus he was able to attract the support of the Chams who wanted to resist the new culture and political domination of the Vietnamese. Initially, the attacking Chams caught the Nguyen garrisons at Phan Rang-Phan Ri by surprise. Nguyen Tri Thang, the garrison commander at Pho Hai was defeated. The advance of the Cham forces was only halted at Phan Rang when Chu Kiam Thang, the Nguyen commander threatened to execute Po Saktiraydaputih should the Cham forces advance any further. Fearing for the life of Po Saktiraydaputih, Oc-nha That and his Cham forces retreated. In his analysis of the event, Po Dharma interpreted Oc-nha That's effort as a manifestation of anti-Vietnamese sentiment among the Cham people.⁹⁶

In the early part of 1694, Po Saut passed away. The Nguyen sent two hundred quan of money to ensure that the burial was carried out in a proper manner. Such action was an act of magnanimity by a ruler over his subject as understood in the Vietnamese realm. A month later, Ngo Lang and Oc-nha That, again led a group of armed Chams to attack Phan Rang. Reinforcements for the defense of Phan Rang arrived from Binh Khang, and Ngo Lang's forces were

⁹⁶ Po Dharma, *Le Panduranga(Campa), 1802-1835*, p. 68.

forced back into Khmer territory and the siege was lifted. These revolts led Nguyen Phu Chu to grant Champa autonomy.

Nguyen Phuc Chu appointed Po Saktiraydaputih as the native king (*Phien Vuong*) of Thuan Thanh Tran, and the latter was obliged to pay tribute to the Nguyen. Thus the tributary relationship was resumed. Nguyen Phuc Chu also returned to Po Saktiraydaputih, the royal seal of Champa together with captured weapons, horses and his population. Thirty Vietnamese soldiers or Kinh Binh (soldiers of the Imperial City) were sent to protect the new Cham ruler. The presence of the 30 Vietnamese soldiers is evident. In a register of the orders of the King of Champa dated 1738, five ligatures of kay dan were loaned by the King of Thuan Thanh to pay the salaries of the Vietnamese soldiers.⁹⁷ It is obvious that Nguyen Phuc Chu, was acting the role of the benevolent ruler, pacifying and harmonizing from a distance. This elevated Nguyen's status in the region.

Nguyen Phuc Chu's decision to elevate Po Saktiraydaputih to the status of *phien vuong* (native king) marked the first of the Nguyen's ascendance as a separate state not unsimilar with the role of the Le. The Nguyen now had sufficient authority to accord a royal title to a subdued neighbour. If prior to this, Champa had been paying tribute to the Nguyen, these earlier instances of tribute was an extension of the Le-Champa tributary relations. The last Champa tribute mission to the Le Court took place in 1509. But the traditional link between the Champa court and the Le Court had been broken since the beginning of the Mac

⁹⁷ *Dai Nam Chinh Bien Liet Truyen, So Tap* or Biographical Records of the Eminent People of Dai Nam, Vol. 1 (hereafter *DNCBLT*), Chapter 33, p. 22b. See *Inventaire des Archives du Panduranga: du fonds de la Societe Asiatique de Paris*, Paris: Centre d'Histoire et Civilisations de la Peninsule Indochine, 1984, p. 75. See "Governor of Binh Thuan to the King of Champa", 1738, Collections Cam, Societe Asiatique de Paris, piece No. 6.

usurpation of the throne in 1529, to be followed by the Nguyen-Trinh confrontation in 1627. Since then, the Nguyen took over the role of the Le in dealing with Champa. This was because the Nguyen were the sole Vietnamese power that the Cham had come into contact with. The move to accord a royal title to the Cham ruler in 1694 reflected the Nguyen's objective of being rulers of a separate realm of their own. This objective was also being pursued later in the Nguyen's relationship with Cambodia, Ai Lao and the Uplanders who were treated in the same manner as Champa. To some degree, the growing confidence of the Nguyen rule, was bolstered by its military capability and flourishing economy reflected in Nguyen Phuc Chu's order to have all the military establishments and shops to be roofed using tiles.⁹⁸

The Cham people, now under the Nguyen-installed Po Saktiraydaputih, maintained tributary relations with the Nguyen. It is important at this point to determine the actual nature of this relationship, given the fact that the Kingdom of Champa no longer existed as an independent entity, but had been integrated as part of the Nguyen domains. The Cham people continued to exist in small pockets from the region of Quang Nam down to the Pho Hai-Phan Rang-Phan Ri region where the seat of the Cham Court under Po Saktiraydaputih was situated. Po Saktiraydaputih's actual palace was situated at Bal Chanar, not far from Phan Ri.⁹⁹

Even though the Chams continued to refer to their Kingdom at Pho Hai-Phan Rang-Phan Ri region as Panduranga, it was actually occupied territory. The

⁹⁸ See *Tien Bien*, Vol. 7: 7.

⁹⁹ It was from here that he gave audience to officers of the French East India Company ship, *La Galatee* in 1720. See Le Thanh Khoi, *Viet-Nam Un Histoire*, pp. 264-265.

Cham court co-existed with a Vietnamese garrison based at Binh Khang. In the eyes of the Vietnamese, Thuan Thanh Tran was no more than another frontier garrison under the jurisdiction of Binh Khanh. In September 1697, the region west of the Phan Rang River was redesigned as the districts of An Phuoc and this included the villages at Ham Thuan (Phan Thiet) and the area west of Phan Rang River as well as of Hoa Da which was East of Phan Ri.¹⁰⁰ All these were placed under the jurisdiction of the new prefecture called Binh Thuan. The Chams were powerless to prevent such a move.

The actual Vietnamese-Cham relations after 1697 under Nguyen Phuc Chu was based on a central-regional relations where the rulers of the Cham were reduced to being no more than a governor of his own people. He became more of a cultural and economic leader than a political one. But it was probably due to such a relationship that the Cham people were able to co-exist with the Vietnamese during the southward expansion of the Nguyen up to the early 19th Century.

The Nguyen-Champa tributary relationship provides an insight into the attitude of the Nguyen with regard to its new status as a suzerain. On one hand, the sending of the tribute had great economic and practical value to the Nguyen. More significantly, this self-created tributary relationship is a manifestation of Nguyen Phuc Chu's achievement of an independent state ruling over its newly acquired tributary state, Champa. The Nguyen court was now centre of a system of tributary states that were made up of weaker states and uplanders.

¹⁰⁰ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 7:12.

In terms of tribute, both the *Tien Bien* and *Phu Bien Tap Luc* [Miscellaneous Records of the Pacified Frontiers] list the goods sent by Po Saktiraydaputih to Nguyen Phuc Chu as tribute in 1694 and 1709 respectively¹⁰¹ The following table provides a list of prized goods accompanying the Champa tribute:

Table 8: Contents of Tribute Sent by Champa to Nguyen in 1694 and 1709

Item	Quantity
Male elephants	2
Yellow Oxen	20
Elephants tusks	6
Rhinoceros horn	10
White scarves	500 pieces
Long boat ¹⁰²	One
Yellow wax	50 catties
Dark wood	200 trees
Fish skins	200 catties
Hot sand	400 pails
Leaves for weaving conical hats	500 pieces

Source: *Phu Bien Tap Luc*, Vol. 2: 30a.

The letter from Po Saktiraydaputih which accompanied his submission stated, “Chinh (Tran)-thon-ba-hu of Thuan Thanh tran (Thy Servant, Po Saktiraydaputih

¹⁰¹ *Phu Bien Tap Luc* (hereafter *PBTL*) or Miscellaneous Records of the Pacified Frontiers, written by Le Quy Don in 1776 provided a list of the tribute of 1709. The list bore similar items to that of the 1694 list except for an extra male elephant recorded for the 1709 tribute, see *PBTL*, Vol. 2, p. 30a. Li Tana in her 1993 translation of the excerpt made an error in reading the 60-year Chinese cycle of *Ky Suu* as 1769, see Li Tana, “Miscellaneous Nguyen Records Seized in 1775-6: *Phu Bien Tap Luc* by Le Quy Don”, in *Southern Vietnam under the Nguyen: Documents on the Economic History of Cochinchina [Dang Trong] 1602-1777*, Li Tana and Anthony Reid (eds.), pp. 100-101. The same *Ky Suu* also means year 1709 when Po Saktiraydaputih sent a tribute to the Nguyen, see *Tien Bien*, Vol. 8, p. 7a for a correct corroboration.

¹⁰² The length of the boat was 7 tam or about 22.4 metres, see *PBTL*, Vol. 2, p. 30a.

of Thuan Thanh), prostrate to present the annual gift of 1709”¹⁰³ These goods were stored in the Nguyen’s central storage house, for the personal use or as gifts. Cash was also accepted in replacement for items undelivered. The *Phu Bien Tap Luc* records, mentioned three male elephants as part of the 1709 tribute, out of which, two were actually delivered at Binh Khang prefecture, and one was replaced by a payment of 150 *quan* tax-money.¹⁰⁴ In the same way, each of the oxen sent in 1709 could be redeemed by paying 60 *quan* in cash.¹⁰⁵

No data is available to help determine if any other tribute was sent between 1694 and 1709. In any case, any irregularity in the sending of tribute was probably due to Po Saktiraydaputih’s inability to raise a respectable tribute, given the fact that his people were still recovering from famine and disease that plagued the Cham territories in 1697. The other possibility was due to the Nguyen’s appreciation of the neutrality offered by the Chams during the Nguyen’s struggle against Cambodia during the period 1700 to 1709. Such neutrality was important for the Nguyen military campaign against Cambodia.

The cordial relationship between Po Saktiraydaputih and Nguyen Phuc Chu however, did not prevent friction from taking place in day-to-day affairs between the Cham people and the Vietnamese settlers. There was also dissatisfaction among the Cham people with the Vietnamese government administration of Binh Khanh prefecture whose jurisdiction covered the Cham territories at Pho Hai-Phan Rang-Phan Ri (Panduranga) region. Such friction involved the jurisdiction of law enforcement, the question of trade, trading taxes,

¹⁰³ *PBTL*, Vol. 2, p. 30a.

¹⁰⁴ See *PBTL*, Vol. 2, p. 30a.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

slaves and labour contracts, and administrative boundaries.¹⁰⁶ The Chams were at a disadvantage when dealing with the Vietnamese in these matters.

An agreement was made in the ninth month of 1712 between Nguyen Phuc Chu and Po Saktiraydaputih under which five provisions were agreed upon to regulate or govern the Vietnamese-Cham relations in Binh Khang. Nguyen records mentioned that the agreement was made at the request of Po Saktiraydaputih, and that Nguyen Phuc Chu 'granted' a list of rules (and not agreement).¹⁰⁷ It is difficult to ascertain if Po Saktiraydaputih really requested such an agreement, but clearly, the agreement was an important one, at least to safeguard the interests of the Chams. Nevertheless, some of the articles were biased against the interests of the Chams:

- 1) Anyone who petitioned at the Royal palace (of Po Saktiraydaputih) has to pay 20 string of cash (quan) to each of the Left-Right Tra (court official), and 10 string of cash to each of the Left-right Phan dung; Whereas those who petitioned at dinh Binh Khanh has to pay 10 string of cash to the Left-Right Tra, and 2 string of cash to each of the Left-Right Phan dung.
- 2) All disputes among Han people (Vietnamese); or between Vietnamese and a resident of Thuan Thanh shall be judged by the Phien Vuong (Cham King) together with a *Cai ba* or treasurer and a *Ky Luc* or judicial official (both Vietnamese officials); Disputes among the people of Thuan Thanh shall be judged by the Cham King.

¹⁰⁶ Both the *Tien Bien* and *PBTL* are silent on the problems faced by the two peoples residing at dinh Binh Khanh. However, later correspondence (between 1702 to 1810 from the Cham Archives of Panduranga (Societe Asiatique Collections) gives an idea of the nature of the friction. See also *Inventaire des Archives du Panduranga: du font de la Societe Asiatique de Paris*, Paris: Centre d'Histoire et Civilisations de la Peninsule Indochinoise, 1984. See also Yoshiaki Ishizawa, *Les Archives Cam Redigees en Caracteres Chinois au Fins de la Societe Asiatique avec Annotation Analyse*, Kagoshima: Historical Science Reports, Vol. 29, Kagoshima University, 1980.

¹⁰⁷ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 8, p. 14a.

- 3) The two stations of Kien-kien and O-cam shall be defended more carefully against spies. The authorities shall have no power to arrest residents of the two stations.
- 4) All traders who wish to enter the land of the registered barbarians (Man de) must obtain a pass from the various relevant stations.
- 5) All Chams from Thuan Thanh who drifted to Phien Tran (borders with Cambodia) must be well treated.

From the agreement, it is apparent that the Chams territories were well-penetrated by Vietnamese settlers and that there was no distinctive demarcation between a Cham and a Vietnamese area in the Binh Khang Garrison (Thuan Thanh area). The terms of the agreement also suggest that the Nguyen had conceded a great deal of authority in administering the Champa people to their sponsored-Cham king. However, the fact remained that such great influx of foreign culture and large numbers of people inevitably forced the Chams to accept the presence of the Viet people while at the same time adopting some of the latter's ways of life, including the wearing of Vietnamese costumes, and the usage of the Vietnamese language.

Nguyen-Champa relations between 1697 to 1728 was described by Vietnamese sources as amicable. In the seventh month of 1714 for instance, after the completion of the renovation of the Thien Mu Temple in Phu Xuan, Po Saktiraydaputih brought his three sons to attend a religious celebration hosted by Nguyen Phuc Chu. Chu, a devoted Buddhist, was "very pleased" with their presence. He appointed each of Po Saktiraydaputih's sons as Hau, or noble in-charge of a village.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 8, p. 18b.

Three months later, Po Saktiraydaputih requested assistance from the Nguyen for the establishment of an official court. The *Tien Bien* recorded how Nguyen Phuc Chu ordered a plan to be drawn up for the Cham ruler where the respective positions of the military and civil officials in the court were specified.¹⁰⁹ Given the nature of the Nguyen chronicles, it is difficult to be sure if Po Saktiraydaputih had actually made such a request, or whether the whole system was imposed upon the Chams. Nevertheless, it represented another step towards the Vietnamization of the Chams.

Under Po Saktiraydaputih, the Cham people remained subordinate to Nguyen authority, between 1700 and 1728, during a period when the Nguyen expanded their power into Cambodian territories. However, even when the Nguyen were preoccupied with the situation in Cambodia, the Chams did not take the opportunity to free itself from the Nguyen.

No Cham ruler after the death of Po Saktiraydaputih ever developed a close relationship with the individual Nguyen ruler as that between Po Saktiraydaputih and Nguyen Phuc Chu. Nguyen-Champa relations underwent a shift after the death Po Saktiraydaputih's death in 1728. In that year, the Chams rose against the Vietnamese, but were swiftly defeated.¹¹⁰ This led to further Vietnamization to the extent that subsequent Cham rulers adopted the Vietnamese family name of Nguyen.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 8, p. 20b.

¹¹⁰ This revolt is not found in other sources, see "De Flory to another Priest", 1728, AMEP: Cochinchine, Vol. 739, f. 600.

¹¹¹ It is not known when did the first Champa ruler first adopt or was given the family name of Nguyen. When Emperor Gia Long established his dynasty, he appointed Nguyen Van Hau, a chieftain from Thuan Thanh as Phien Vuong (Native King), and the successors of Nguyen Van Hau

After 1728, Nguyen relations with Champa were downgraded to that of a prefecture. The Cham rulers continued to be from the line of Po Saktiraydaputih (of the Po Rome line), conducting their affairs with the prefects of Binh Thuan prefecture and rarely having any direct contact with the Nguyen capital at Phu Xuan. A survey of the the Cham Archives of Panduranga however, provide us with some information on post-1728 Nguyen-Champa relations. These relations were still governed by the regulations set by Nguyen Phuc Chu and Po Saktiraydaputih, and thus, there was a continuity of the pre-1728 relationship.

The process of Vietnamization continued, and soon, the position of the Chams became more and more vulnerable by the day. Po Dharma described the remnant areas of Champa as spots on a leopard skin.¹¹² The Vietnamese swamped the Cham area, and the autonomous rule of the Cham rulers became more untenable. At the same time, even though the Cham ruler was an autonomous ruler within the Nguyen domain, he had no access to the Nguyen. All transactions between Champa and the Nguyen were conducted through the local Vietnamese prefectures of Binh Khanh and Binh Thuan, set up in the Phan Rang-Phan Ri-Phan Thiet region. Thus, in many ways, the autonomous Champa ruler as envisaged by Nguyen Phuc Chu was nothing more than a local chieftain under the jurisdiction of the prefecture administrators.

After 1728, there was no major Champa resistance against Nguyen rule. The last one was the attempt by Duong Bao Lai and Ye Ma Linh, two leaders of

were using the name of Nguyen until 1835. See *Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi*, Vol. 10: Binh Thuan, p. 19.

¹¹² Po Dharma, "Les Frontieres du Campa (derbier etat des recherches), in *Les Frontieres du Vietnam*, P. B. Lafont (ed.), Paris: L'Hamattan, 1989, p. 134.

the ‘barbarians of Thuan Thanh who led a gang of people attacking Tran Bien dinh.’¹¹³ The actual nature of this resistance is unknown, but it was defeated by the garrison force from *Tran Bien*.

Beyond state level relations, Champa’s own cultural identity was threatened by the large number of Vietnamese in its territories. Not only did the Vietnamese people swamp Champa, they also began to break down the traditional economic positions of the Chams. The Vietnamese began to take over the Chams’ role in the collection of jungle produce from the highlands. This included the direct collection of calambac (Gharu) and eaglewood. The Vietnamese also began to deal directly with the uplanders for jungle produce. In the process, they marginalized the Chams.¹¹⁴ According to Po Dharma, many Chams became indebted to the Vietnamese through borrowing money from them at an exorbitant interest rate of 150%. This resulted in the the Chams losing their land, rice fields, slaves, their children and even their parents.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

The need to secure its southern frontiers resulted in an aggressive foreign policy against Champa. Eventually this led to expansionism and the colonisation of the Phan Rang region. What began as attempts to secure its southern frontiers led to what became known as the Southward Movement (Nam Tien) of the Vietnamese people.

¹¹³ *Tien Bien*, Vol. 10: 13.

¹¹⁴ Gerald Hickey, *Sons of the Mountain*, p. 160.

¹¹⁵ Po Dharma, *Le Panduranga (Campa) 1802-1835*, p. 71.

Champa was the first and only state fully conquered by the Nguyen. Nonetheless, the Chams were allowed a certain degree of autonomy within the Nguyen realm. The accordant of the title of king on the Nguyen-installed Po Saktiraydaputih was an important act that helped boost the Nguyen's claim of being an independent political entity. The move was consistent with Nguyen Phuc Chu's policy of elevating his court vis-à-vis the Trinh position in the North.

In the case of Cambodia, Nguyen Phuc Nguyen took advantage of the peaceful overtures made by Cambodia in 1618 to begin interfering in the internal politics of the latter. He also began to eye the economic potential of the Mekong Delta. This is evident from the request for the setting up of custom houses to regulate the trade conducted by the Vietnamese in the region of Saigon and Ban Nhe in as early as 1621.

By the mid-17th century however, the Nguyen's position in Cambodia was threatened by the emergence of an anti-Vietnamese faction in the Cambodian court, which resulted in a direct intervention by the Nguyen in 1658. This intervention in Cambodia and the 1653 attack on Champa are two occasions where tribute were exacted by the Nguyen from an independent nations. This marked a watershed in the Nguyen's achievement of independent statehood in its foreign relations. The subject of the following chapter continues with further inroads into the south, more specifically the Mekong Delta.