



Illustration 1. View of Judea, the Capital of Siam, attributed to Johannes Vinckboons, c. 1662 - c. 1663.

Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Narai (r. 1656-1688) to the Supreme Government in Batavia, 27 January 1683 and a reply from Batavia 11 May 1683

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1 Introduction

Bhawan Ruangsilp and Hendrik E. Niemeijer, “Letter from the Phrakhlang on behalf of the King of Siam Narai (r. 1656-1688) to the Supreme Government in Batavia, 27 January 1683 and a reply from Batavia 11 May 1683”. In: *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta*, document 18. Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2016.

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Political relations between Siam and the Dutch Republic started as early as in the 1600s when the first VOC representatives visited the royal court of Ayutthaya and established the first Dutch trading post in the kingdom. At the same time the first Siamese embassy was sent to The Hague and Europe.¹

The Dutch involvement in Siam was initially motivated by its significance in the Company’s scheme of East Asian trade. Initially, the VOC hoped to make use of the commercial links between Siam and China based on Ayutthaya’s tributary relations with the Manchu court. It soon found out, however, that Thai products, especially animal skins and sappan wood, could be used to barter for Japanese silver and red copper which the VOC needed to purchase Chinese silk and Indian textiles.

From the start, the Company tried to obtain exclusive rights to buy and export these Thai goods by presenting itself to the Siamse court as a worthy trading partner, diplomatic counterpart and political ally. The Dutch business pattern, which included acquiring exclusive monopoly rights, led to frequent commercial conflicts between the Company and the court. In the context of modern historiography. This might be called a ‘clash between two monopolistic powers’.²

Siam’s fixation on state control of foreign trade expressed itself in the creation of an extensive bureaucratic apparatus, the *Phrakhlang Sinkha*, “Ministry of External Relations and Maritime Trading Affairs”. This was responsible for foreign trade, foreign affairs, and the regulation of foreign trading communities.³ Its minister, Okya Phrakhlang, often spelled as Oya Berquelangh in Dutch records, was responsible for exchanging state letters and gifts with Batavia on the king’s and his own behalf. During the seventeenth century, this took place on an almost annual basis involving an intense correspondence between the two sides dominated by trade issues in which both the VOC Governor-General and the Phrakhlang sought to maximise their respective commercial advantage.

¹ For more details of the founding phase of the Siamese-Dutch relationships and the overview of the VOC presence in Ayutthaya, see Han ten Brummelhuis, *Merchant, Courtier and Diplomat: A History of the Contacts between The Netherlands and Thailand* (Lochem-Gent: De Tijdstroom, 1987).

² Dhiravat na Pombejra, ‘Crown Trade and Court Politics in Ayutthaya during the Reign of King Narai, 1656-1688’, in: Kathirithamby-Wells, J. and Villiers, John (eds.), *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity: Rise and Demise* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), pp. 127-42, here p. 133.

³ For the history, structure and personnel of the Phrakhlang Sinkha, see Kennon Breazeale, ‘Thai Maritime Trade and the Ministry Responsible’, in idem (ed.), *From Japan to Arabia: Ayutthaya’s Maritime Relations with Asia* (Bangkok: The Foundation for the Promotion of Social Sciences and Humanities Textbooks Project, 1999), pp. 1-54.

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Illustration 2. King of Siam (Thailand) observes moon clips from his palace, Drawing by Jan Luyken, Aart Dircksz Oossaan, 1687

The reign of King Narai (r. 1656-1688) was characterized by an avid interest in the outside world. This was expressed in many forms: the trinity of trade, war and diplomacy were crucial here but so too were more personal aspects such as King Narai's keen interest in foreign knowledge and material culture. The monarch's personality and the influence of other foreigners at court, especially the Moors, Chinese and French, posed a threat to the hitherto privileged position of the Dutch.

During Narai's reign, disagreements between the two powers became ever more evident, as the VOC tried to exert their diplomatic and political influence throughout Asia

and impose restraint upon Siam's seaborne trade. This mounting commercial competition over control of the East Asian trade eventually resulted in a Dutch naval blockade of the mouth of the Chao Phraya River. This also involved the selective capture of junks sailing to Siam from China and Japan. The blockade was eventually settled by the conclusion of the 1664 Trade Treaty between the Siamese court and the VOC ambassador, Pieter de Bitter.⁴ This first Dutch-Siamese Treaty defined the VOC's commercial privileges and introduced new concepts of immunity and extraterritoriality for Company subjects in Siam.⁵ These, however, ran counter to Siamese perceptions that all the

⁴ For details and debates of the incident of the Dutch naval blockade and the following signing of the 1664 Treaty, see Dhiravat na Pombejra, 'The Dutch-Siamese Conflict of 1663-1664: A Reassessment', in: Blussé, Leonard (ed.), *Around and About Formosa: Essays in Honor of Professor Ts'ao Yung-ho* (Taipei: Ts'ao Yung-ho Foundation for Culture and Education, 2003), pp. 291-306.

⁵ The original Dutch text of the 1664 Treaty is in *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*, 6 vols., ed. J. E. Heeres and F. W. Stapel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1907-1955), II, 280-5. (Hereafter: *Corpus Diplomaticum*.) The English translation of 1886 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Siam has been published in George Vinal Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand* (Illinois: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies Special Report 16, 1977), pp. 138-41.



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lands and people in Siam were subject to the king's authority. The privileges of the Dutch were, in reality, far from absolute, and they repeatedly complained about Siamese breaches of their exclusive trading rights. This frequently resulted in shortages of trade goods to meet the quotas they claimed to be entitled to under the 1664 Treaty.

The VOC's naval capacity and control of sea routes in many parts of Asia made the Siamese court dependent on VOC co-operation. At the same time, the company had to contain the maritime ambitions of Siam. As we have seen, the Dutch had successfully used their naval superiority to force commercial concessions from King Narai. Both they and the other Europeans in Narai's Siam had enforced control over Asian waters which challenged existing indigenous Asian notions of *mare liberum* or freedom of the seas and navigation. Besides concessions to allow passage to certain areas, Siam often needed the Company's ships to connect it to the outside world.

The contents of the 27 January 1683 letter show that the Dutch lost no opportunity to tell to the Siamese about the extensive areas of the Indonesian Archipelago under their influence or direct control, such as Mataram, Cirebon, Jepara, Jambi, Palembang and Banten. The Siamese court also recognized that the Company and no other foreign merchants had the privilege of trading in certain commodities like textiles, opium and spices in these areas. The only exception was Jambi which the Phrakhlang diplomatically argued should be recognised as a Siamese vassal by virtue of its voluntary submission to Ayutthaya. The case of Jambi was complicated, however, for it pledged allegiance to both the VOC and the king of Siam.

Two further incidents addressed in this letter highlight the conflicted nature of Dutch policy towards Siam, suspended as it was between the Company's discriminatory measures designed to curb Siam's maritime activities and its support for the court's overseas enterprise. First, the VOC complained about the damage to its textile trade in Cirebon caused by one of Narai's emissaries selling large quantities of fabrics while actually on a mission to procure Javanese horses. Having long been acquainted with the use of horses for transportation, warfare and ceremonial purposes, the Siamese court had started purchasing these mounts from Java during King Narai's reign. Buying horses from Java became an issue that made the Siamese court dependent on the VOC because it needed the Dutch to grant their ships access to Javanese ports where they could procure the horses and transport them to Siam.⁶

Secondly, the VOC trading post in Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) had provided material and financial assistance to the crew of King Narai's royal junk which had been wrecked on the Ceylonese coast on a trading voyage to Persia. Following this accident, the Dutch complained that the Siamese cargoes bound for Persia were injurious to the Company's business. As with the case of the purchase of Javanese horses, they asked the Siamese to rely on their service for all destinations east of Burma such as Surat, Persia, Bengal, Masulipatnam, and Mokka.

It is apparent that the VOC was attempting to fight off competition from Asian traders, including Siam. This can be seen from the instructions drawn up in 1685 by the outgoing Trade Director, Aarnout Faa, reveal how much control the VOC believed it had over

⁶ Dhiravat na Pombejra, 'Javanese Horses for the Court of Ayutthaya', in: Greg Bankoff, et al, *Breeds of Empire: the 'Invention' of the Horse in Southeast Asia and Southern Africa 1500-1950* (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2007), pp. 65-81, here 72-74.



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Siamese shipping in areas outside those parts of the archipelago which it claimed were under its direct or indirect control: thus the *Opperhoofd* (trade director) instructed his successor to grant a pass to the Siamese King to enter Northern Luzon, Cambodia, Cochin China, Tonkin, Canton, Japan, Pahang, Riau, Johor, Malacca, Coromandel, Bengal, Surat, and Persia. The King's ships to West Java had to call at Batavia and were not allowed to take in textiles to sell there. Significantly, the Company barred him passage from Coxinga's Formosa, as well as from Indragiri, Jambi, and Palembang, with which the Dutch claimed they were the sole trading partner by virtue of their treaties with these places.⁷

Against such Dutch discrimination veiled in ostensible offers for help, the Phrakhleng argued for Siam's rights to enter these regions in its own right, insisting on the inability of the Dutch to select appropriate goods for the Siamese market due to cultural differences. In return, the Siamese court also tried to discourage the Dutch, claiming concerns for their safety from the malice of the locals, from trading in its southern territories:

Thalang, Bangkhli, and Takuathung. Earlier in the 1640s, the VOC had tried to monopolize the tin production in the Malay Peninsula by signing treaties with the heads of these tin-producing places including Phuket and Bangkhli. The tin trade in this region had a violent history and the Dutch were forced to respond to strong challenges from all parties from the local elite, the Malays, the Moors, the Chinese and, later in King Narai's reign, both the English and the French, all of whom were bent on resisting Dutch monopolistic practices.⁸

The 27 January 1683 letter gives a good insight into the complex relationship between the VOC and the Siamese court both during King Narai's reign and those of his successors. Despite the fact that both sides were sporadically engaged in commercial conflicts, the VOC remained the most regular European trade partner and diplomatic counterpart for Siam. Although the Dutch sought to limit Siam's maritime trade for their own benefit, they still played a vital role in contributing to the expansion of King Narai's world.

⁷ VOC 1407, *Memorie van Faa zaliger aan Keijts* [Memorandum left by the late Faa to Keijts], 15 Jan. 1685, fo. 3215r-v. Actually, Zheng Jing, the grandson and successor of Zheng Chenggong, had already been defeated in 1683.

⁸ Dhiravat na Pombejra, 'Towards a History of Seventeenth-Century Phuket', in Sunait Chutintaranond and Chris Baker (eds.), *Recalling the Local Pasts: Autonomous History in Southeast Asia* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002), pp. 89-126.

2 Transcription of the Dutch text

DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 27 JANUARI 1683.

[fol. 141]

Volgt nu de translaat missive van den Oya Berquelangh in Siam aan Sijn Edelheyt de heere gouverneur generael geschreven. Bovenaan stondt (O verthoonder van de gebeden)

Dese brieff komt aff van Tsjauparaje Seri Derma Rava [fol. 142] Detsieh Tsjada Amataja Ratsjet Pipid Ritanrata Kosa Ribaedi Apie Piri Aer Germa Pahak Tsjauparaja Bergalang aan den gouverneur generael Cornelis Speelman, raet van India, en capiteyn van Jacatra.

Voorts den gouverneur generaal heeft Nerikpi gesonden met een brieff en een schenckagie bestaende in een comptoir van caneelhout, 2 lange roers die ingeleyt sijn, nevens 2 korte, alsoock 2 piecken en een rol van goude gefigureerde damast Japansch werck, met 4 stucken goude en silvere kant, ende een kist met papier, om daarop te schrijven off schilderen; een stuck root laken met een stuck fluweel, hebbende ick al hetselve naar de gewoonte ontfangen, en den inhoud van hetgeen in die brieff vervat is, wel verstaan alsdat den gouverneur generael de stad en 't lant van Jaccatra in gesontheyt en welvarentheyt regeerde, waarover ick dan oock uyttermaten verblijd en verheugt ben geweest, alsmede dat in die brieff gemelt staat aangaande de gelegentheyt van het schip off schepen die naar Siam vertrecken, dat wanneer hare coopmanschapen reeds ingeladen hebben om te verseylen dan nogh lange opgehouden werden om te wagten naar de brieven, versoeckende aldus, dat de missiven in het toekomende spoedigh wilden vervaardigen, sonder eenige tardançe opdat het schip off de scheepen oock in haast seyl mogen maecken.

Voorts wat belangt het schip dat in dit mouson hier gecomen is, wanneer den brieff stonden te beantwoorden, en dien bodem spoedigh wilde laeten vertrecken, soodanigh als in den brieff van den capiteyn vervat staet, soo seyde den capiteyn van de logie dat dit schip nogh niet naar Batavia vertrock, maar eerst naar Japan varen soude, en aldus is het dan oock bijgekomen dat die brieff niet beantwoort is geworden, dogh hiernaer en zal hierontrent geen veragteringh meer gepleegt maar alle spoedigheyt bijgebracht werden.

Voorts dat de Compagnie den zoon van den coninck van Mataram geassisteert had om hem tot coninck te helpen, en 't land van Tseribon en Japara weder in stant te brengen, alsmede dat hare hulpe oock bewesen had aan den coninck van Jambi en Palimbangh, en de Compagnie daar een groote somma zilver aen te kost geleyd en gegasteert had, en dat in alle die landen een zoodanigh contract gemaackt had, dat aan geen [fol. 143] andere coopliden den handel aldaar souden mogen laeten genieten, als alleen aan de Compagnie, ende dat Bantam nu oock door de Compagnie veroverd was, sullende de Compagnie bij dese avançe in alle die landen oock groote profijten en winsten hiernaer

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opsteken, wesende ick oock over het verstaan van dese tijdingh bovenmaten seer verheugt geweest.

En wat aangaat des conings jonck dat naar Tsjerebon gesonden was, hetselve is voor Batavia verscheenen en van daar voorts naar Tsjerebon geseuld, en naardat 2 dagen op reys was door Javanen ontmoet, geattacqueert en verbrand geworden, daar dit nogtans een jonck van den coningh was, sullende het nu hiernae oock seer beswaerlijck vallen om 's conings joncken te senden naar de plaatsen die dicht aan de gouvernije van het Jaccatrase lant leggen, dogh den gouverneur generael weet best hoedanigh [hij] dit accomoderen en remediëren sal.

Voorts werd in die brieff oock gewagh gemaackt hoe dat een slaaff van den coning een Hollantse pascedul versogt had om op Tsjerebon paarden te mogen coopen, dog dat naar dit versoeck niet te werck gegaan [was] en die reyse ten eersten ondernomen [had], maar sigh naar Bantam en Palimbangh begeven had, en van daar weder op Jaccatra geretourneert was, versoeckende doen weder een licentie acte van den gouverneur generael om op Tsjerebon sijne kleeden te mogen verhandelen, dat hierop den capiteyn uyt een extraordinaire gunste en faveur hem oock een soodanig licentieschrift verleend had, brengende aldus een groote quantiteyt kleeden op Chirrebon aen, waardoor Compagnies doecken die op Chirebon lagen dan oock aan de hand¹ gebleven, en de Compagnie aldus daarbij schade geleden heeft gehad, en dat aldus geene soodanige acten meer voortaan passeeren souden.

Dat nu dese nachoda een Hollants pas verkregen hebbende om op Chirrebon paarden te mogen koopen, ende niet ten eersten derwaerts maar naar een ander lant vertrocken is, hetselve is qualijck van dien nachoda gedaan, en [hij] sal op sijn wederkomst daarover oock gecorrigeert werden, en [het] is een groote gunst en courtosye van den capiteyn geweest dat hem een soodanige acte geaccordeert heeft gehad, en [dat] comt oock overeen met de wegh van een onderlinge vruntschap en genegentheyt. En wat de kleeden belangt, dewelcke dien nachoda [fol. 144] medegenomen heeft, [deze] sijn door hem versogt en aan paarden besteet, hebbende de kleeden oock geen groote quantiteyt uytgemaackt, bedragende naar gissingh aan capitael niet meer als 9 off 10 cattis silver. En wanneer [hij] gesonden wiert om paarden op de Cust van Java te coopen, soo was het nogh de regte tijt van het mouson niet, off het mousoun was doen niet ten eynde, en [het] was het oock maar een enckele bodem die inmiddens somtijts wel elders heenen senden, en somtijts oock wel niet. En aldus is het dan hiermede gelegen.

Voorts den capiteyn van de logie heeft geseyd dat wanneer [wij] paarden willen koopen dit dan maar aan den gouverneur generael wilde bekend maken, [en hij dan] daarvan den incoop soude laten doen. Dit is wel goet, dogh de Hollanders hebben een andere keur en zinlijckheyt, en die van Siam weder een andere ontrent de paarden ende daarom soud'et oock niet wel gaan, dat de Hollanders die opkogten, omdat die [paarden] dan soodanigh niet souden wesen als deselve van de Siammers begeert werden. Den capiteyn van de logie heeft mede geseyd van een conings slaaff met de Hollanders mede te senden, en dat denselven dan weder met een Hollants schip terugh bestellen

¹ Onverkocht

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souden, dogh de Hollanders en hebben geen eene spraacke² met de Siammers en souden misschien malckander niet wel verstaan, en daardoor in questie en verschil geraecken, en de onderlinge vrundschap en genegentheyt tusschen beyde [zou] daardoor een krak en breuck lijden.

Voorts dat het coninx jonck 'twelck naar Persia gestevent is, op Ceylon is komen te vervallen, hebbende den gouverneur generael van Ceylon in silver 7200 stucken daaraan verschooten³ en sijne vordere hulpe daarentrent betoond, sijnde daarvan een hantschrift aldaar gepasseert om dit silver aan den capiteyn van de logie weder uyt te keeren, en is daarop dien bodem naardat deselve wat verholpen en gerepareert was, voort naar Coetchin geraect⁴ alwaar den capiteyn hetselve oock met touwerck⁵ en ander scheepsgereetschap versien heeft gehad, sonder nog regt te weten, hoeveel de onkosten aldaar gedaan wel belopen sullen, die naar gissingh al een goede somme silver te sullen bedragen. En wanneer daarvan seeckere [fol. 145] kennisse hebben, soo sullen [wij] die somma dan weder aan den capiteyn van de logie in de groote stadt van Siam restitueeren, en accordeert dese hulpe van de Hollanders aan 's coninx slaven oock met de cours van vrundschap en genegentheyt, die van den beginne en van de oude tijden af onderhouden is geworden.

Voorts dat het ondernemen van soodanige besendingen naar Persia aan de Compagnie groote schaede toebragt en dat⁶ [wij] dit voortaan wilden nalaten. Ende soo⁷ wanneer [wij] iets van Souratta, Persia, Bengale, Masulipatnam en Mocha, daar de Compagnie haere scheepen send, begeerden, dat⁸ [wij] dit aan den capiteyn van de logie wilden bekend maecken en hierop dan voorts belast souden werden, om dit zoodanigh te laeten maecken als het soude willen hebben tot voorkominge van de groote schaede en nadeel, die de Compagnie bij die equipagie leedt en aldus oock niet meer voor dat vaarwater souden behoeven Hollantse paspoorten te versoecken. Dit seggen van den gouverneur generael quadreert⁹ wel met de wegh van de onderlinge vruntschap alhier, dogh het lant van Persiën, en van Hederabath (dat is Golkonda) corresponderen mede in een soodanige harmonye en sijn aldus gewoon over en weder besendingen aan malckanderen te doen en 'tgeen te laten maecken dat [wij] begeren. Hetselve is wel waar, dogh misschien soud'et dan soodanigh niet bekomen werden als de intentie en de zinlijkheyt soude vallen, gelijk het stuck root laken dat voorleden mousoun hier gelast is aan te brengen in couleur niet overeenquam soals het gaarne hadden, dat daarom oock wederom laten geven hebbe, seggende den gouverneur aengaende dit laken dat geen coopliden in die couleur behagen hadde, en derhalven aan de hant gebleven was

² Hebben niet dezelfde taal.

³ Uitgegeven.

⁴ D.w.z. gevaren.

⁵ Touwwerk.

⁶ Of.

⁷ Indien.

⁸ Of.

⁹ Is overeenkomstig met.

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tot schaede van de Compagnie. En soude wel eenige slaven van den coningh met de Hollantse scheepen kunnen overvaeren, gelijk eens gecontracteert, off geaccordeert is geweest dat te geschieden had, dog wanneer nu ingevolge van dit eenige goederen bijbragte, om in het Hollantse schip te laden, doen seyden de Hollanders dat er al teveel goederen en kisten waren en dat deselve niet innemen konden, en soo is 't hiermede dan oock [zodanig] gelegen [als hiervoor]. De Hollanders in Siam en kunnen oock de tael niet, om anders de Siammers in die voyagie [fol. 146] te versellen want anders mischien eenige misverstanden soude kunnen ontstaen, die de goede vrundschap van wedersijden krencken mogte, oock schoon of¹⁰ nu al kennisse gaven, van de benodigde goederen die uyt alle die landen komen moesten, en dat de Compagnie deselve mede al liet aanbrengen en bestelden, wie weet off deselve dan oock niet verschillen mogte van het monster, en soude men die weder moeten geven, en dit soude aldus sonder eynde en altijd weder aen te doen, ende over en weder te gaan wesen. Maer de goederen die de Hollanders alleen maecken kunnen, daarover soude men naar Hollant [een bericht] kunnen stueren, om die daar te vervaardigen, dogh het senden van een coningxschip naar Persiën, en kan nog proffijt nog schaede bijbrengen, alsoo het senden over en weder maar alleen specteert tot onderhouding van de vrundschap die van voorige tijden af al gecultiveert is geweest.

Voorts wert daar oock aangehaelt van het contract van sijn beginne af tot nu toe dat het volck van de Compagnie daarbij gequalificeert is om de hartevelen en koehuyden op te koopen, dogh dat deselve jegenwoordigh niets en kregen soowel als voordesen omdat de joncken van Siam alle mousons naar Japan vertrocken, en de Hollanders daardoor geen genoegsame procure hiervan konden doen, en aldus de Compagnie daarbij seer groote schaede leet, dat dan bijaldien [wij] konden, aen geen anderen wilden toelaten om die op te koopen, en dat bijaldien de coopliden in de groote stad van Siam deselve quamen in te coopen en naar Japan te vervoeren om aldaar te verhandelen, dan in dit geval wanneer iemant hierin quamen te aghterhaelen ofte rescontreren, aen deselve mogten die waerdije doen betaelen tot soodanigen prijs als die in Japan sal vercocht hebben, opdat de Compagnie hierontrent van schaede mogten vrijblijven.

Hierop dient dat ontrent het contract ten tijde van De Bitter aangegaan niets verandert is geworden, werdende in schriftelijcke tractaet vooraan geseyt, dat aan de Hollanders de hartevelen en koehuyden uyt een koninglijcke genade vergunt, en aan andere coopliden verboden waer, en bijaldien er vele geprocreert werden, dat dan van de gecogte door de Hollanders 10000 stucx vellen, voor de prijs van den inkoop mogten nemen [fol. 146] en met 's coninx jonck of joncken naar Japan senden, en soo wanneer den inkoop schrael en de vellen in quanteyt niet [te] bekomen sijn, dat dan van de Hollanders maar 7000 vellen zouden nemen, in 4 jaren niet meer genomen, en met 's coninx joncken versonden als naar reequening maar 2135 stux vellen, hebbende de Hollanders aldus 18725 stux minder geleverd als het contract hout, en oock wanneer gesien hebben dat de Hollanders weynig vellen magtigh wierden, soo is aan het volck van de thresorye oock verboden geworden om gene vellen van de Hollanders af te

¹⁰ Ofschoon, hoewel.

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halen, die inmiddels in de tijd van 11 jaeren een getal van 128725 stux souden belopen hebben.

En ingevalle nu naar dese reecquening de vellen van de Hollanders genomen, sooals het contract luyd, mitsgaders deselve naar Japan vervoert en aldaar verhandelt hadden, soo souden daarbij een soo notable somma van 1059 cattys, 12 thails en een maas geprofyteert hebben, en is dan aldus het voorige hooge faveur nogh soo veel te grooter en overvloediger geworden door het verbod dat er gedaan is, om van de Hollanders geene vellen meer te nemen, om die naar Japan met joncken te vervoeren, laetende deselve door de Hollanders alleen bemagtigen en houden, en is aldus de uytsteekende gunst van Sijn Mayesteyt hieruyt klaar genoegh blijckende, alhoewel misschien den capiteyn in de groote stad van Siam dit aan den gouverneur soo duydelijck niet en verthoont, en aanwijst, en kan de mindere becoming van de vellen oock voor geen veranderingh van het contract getaxeert werden, want het in den coophandel gemeenlijck soo toegaat, dat de whaaren in meerder en minder quantiteyt te krijgen sijn, naardat de koopers en verkoopers sijn, off sien aanstellen, sullende lieden van kennisse wel een groote quantiteyt kunnen bemagtigen want ten tijde van den capiteyn Enogh Poolvoet aff, tot aan capiteyn Johannes off Jansen toe, dogh men wil in 't verhandelen te naeuwen prijs op het proffijt van de Compagnie sien, gelijk oock aan den capiteyn van de logie in de groote stad van Siam wel te verstaan gegeven hebbe, met een duydelijcke vertooning, [fol. 147] hoedanigh het hiermede eygentlijck gelegen zij.

Voorts heeft den capiteyn van de logie oock bekent gemaect dat de Chinese cooplieden de vellen te sluycx opkogten en naar Japan bragten, en is daarop dan oock aan de sabandhaar gelast geworden, om dierwegens een verbod aan alle de Chinesen te doen, alsmede aen den capiteyn van de logie te notificeren dat wanneer het zaysoen sal wesen om de vellen op te kopen, dan oock een persoon sal hebben te stellen om daar op te passen, en dat den capiteyn dan oock iemant van sijn volck wilden ordonneren om daar op te waacken, en toesigt te nemen dat geene vellen ter sluycx mogten bemagtigt werden en dus is 't dan hiermede gelegen. Nog soo wert in die brief mentie gemaect van Hollanders tot den handel te willen plaetsen op Salang Bangirei en Tokoet, dogh bij een brief hebben [wij] reeds de gelegentheyte en hoe het gestelt is, bekent gemaect, soodanigh dat de Hollanderen aldaar in gerustheyt en volkomen theyt geen thin soude kunnen negotieeren, alsoo het lant aldaar in geen esse is en de inwoonders boosaardigh en oock nogh met volck van andere landen in verstant sijn, en corresponderen, ja selffs aan het hoeft van dat lant hare wreedelijckheyt toonen, soodanigh als de vreemde handelaars aldaar oock dickmaals te kennen gegeven hebben. En soo men nu de Hollanders daar liet resideren, om te handelen, soo soude het ligt kunnen gebeuren, dat trouwlooslijck en schelmagtigh met de Hollanders omgingen, ende deselve daardoor schade aan haar goet leden, 'tgeen dan niet de wegh die tot een goede vrundschap leyd, en tot de onderhoudingh van dien streckt, soude komen te strijden, en deselve misschien daardoor oock een krack leyden off gebroocken werden. En aldus is het hiermede dan inderdaet gelegen, en hebben nu hiervan oock kennisse gedaan aan den capiteyn die in de logie van de groote stad Siam resideert.

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Aangaande de quaedaardigheyt en de schelmagtigheyt van de luyden op Salang, Banggirei en Takoet, sijnde oock aan den capiteyn haare [fol. 149] boose dadelijkheden van den beginne af in schrift opgegeven om hetselve aan den gouverneur bekent te maecten, wesende voorts het gebruyck en de stijl van alle landen wanneer een onderlinge vruntschap aangegaan is, dat men alles moet contribueeren om die te onderhouden ende sijn overlegh en sijne gedagten daartoe leyden en de saken en actiën daarnaer stieren dat er geen verschil en onlusten tusschen beyde komen te spruyten ende t'ontstaan. En nu ben ick met den generael in vrundschap verbonden, en daarin oock van den beginne gebleven ende continuere daar noch in. Ende met het land van Salang, Banggirei en Takoet staet het soodanigh als hiervooren verclaart is. Soo dit nu niet bekent maecten, en aldus de Hollanders aldaar residentie lieten nemen, ende aldus dit quaat slagh van volcke iets aan de Hollanders mogt komen te misdoen, soo soude dit met onse vruntschap strijdigh wesen, en t'eenemaal van die wegh afleyden. En om dese reden doen dan dese notificatie opdat de Hollanders hierontrent niets quaats mogten ontmoeten.

Voorts soo werd oock gesproocken wegens het goude koffertje dat gesonden was om te esmaileren, seggende dat [jullie] dit naar Hollant geschickt hadden, om dat daar te laten doen, dogh dat het groote schip, waarmede dit kofferken weder terugh gevoert werd in sijne herwaerts reyse vermist en nogh niet op Jaccatra te voorschijn gekomen was, werdende vertrouwt, dat deselve in zee sal gebleven wesen, waarbij de Compagnie dan oock 2100 kattis soude komen te verliezen, en dat den generael hierover seer bedroeft was, alsmede dat dit kofferken daaronder oock quyt geraeckt soude wesen. Dog wat reat is hiertegens, alsoo dit de fortuyn van de zee is, hebbende de Compagnie daerbij oock soo veele goederen te missen, willende den generael dit oock niet al te seer ter harte nemen.

Vorders werd oock in die brieff aangehaalt dat den generael verheugt was, over dat den esmailleerder aangenomen hadden, dogh dat een weynigh bedroeft was, doordien den metselaar en den beelthouwer weder terugh laten gaen hadden, seggende mede dat op Batavia geen fortificatiemeester, nogh de andere werckmeester waren, alsoock dat de modellen van alle de goederen die overgesonden waren, om het werck daernaer te maecten reeds al voortgeschickt waren, hadden hetselve oock [fol. 150] herwaerts te bestellen, wanneer al dit goet met de scheepen uyt Holland soude aangebragt wesen, en dit correspondeert oock met de goede vrundschap die onder ons is, en wanneer dan aldus al het voorsz. uyt Hollant met de scheepen komt, soo wil togh die aanbesteden goederen, met den eersten nae de groote stad van Siam doen transporteeren alsmede de Hollanders die kennisse en practijcq hebben om fortificatiewercken, casteelen en bolwercken te leggen en op te bouwen, gelijk oock soodanige Hollanders die in groff en fijn smeden ervaren sijn, en uyt Hollant daar komen aen te landen.

Eyndelijck werd aan den gouverneur generaal bij dese oock kennisse gedaan dat in dese tijt den coninck van Jamby in onderdanigheyt eenige bloemen van goud en silver opgeoffert heeft gehad, met versoeck dat voor een slaaff van Sijn Mayesteyt erkent en sijn lant oock voor onderdanigh aan de groote stad van Siam mogt gereeckent en aangenomen werden, biddende seer instantelijck om de aelmoesse van Sijne Hooge Gen-

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de, en om hem oock een goede somma te leenen en heeft Sijne Hooge Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt hem oock met barmhertighe oogen aengesien en aldus sijn begeren genadelijck toegestaen, en wil den gouverneur generael hierontrent oock onse mutuele vrunt-schap die van den beginne aan tot nu toe geduurt heeft, in aanschouw nemen, en sigh daarnaar oock voegen. En ingevalle aan den coninck van Jamby iets mogt overkomen, dat den gouverneur hem daarin oock behulpsaam wil wesen, aengesien nu in dese tijt het lant van Jamby onder de groote stad van Siam gehoorigh is.

Sijn Hoog Aansienelijcke Mayesteyt, mijn heer, schenckt aan den gouverneur uyt een goedertierenthey 32 bharen thin in de negorije van Ligoor, en send ick aan den gouverneur generaal oock 7 bharen thin toe. Voorts de onderlinge vrunt-schap en gene-genthey blijve onafscheydelijck tusschen ons beyde, tot den dagh der opstandinge toe, soo lange als de maan en son sullen schijnen, en dit wil den gouverneur generael sigh oock soodanigh ter herten laeten gaan.

Dit is geschreven den 22 dagh van de 11 maant op een vrijdagh in het hondenjaar. Eynde.

DAGHREGISTERS VAN BATAVIA, 11 MEI 1683.

[fol. 474]

De brief die de koning aan ons heeft geschreven is ons op 18 januari 1683 wel toege-bracht en met de gewone statie ontvangen. De brief is in antwoord op onze brief die wij in 1682 aan Zijne Majesteit hadden geschreven.

De koninklijke Majesteit werd bij dezen bedankt voor het onderhouden van het verleende monopolie op de huidenexport aan de Compagnie. [Ook] dat de syahbandars tot dat einde is gelast om alle sluikhandel van de Chinezen en andere naties te ver-hinderen, met toestemming aan onze kapitein dat hij daarop ook toezicht zal mogen nemen. [Ook] dat de koninklijke tresauriers voortaan geen huiden zullen mogen inne-men van de Compagnie, maar deze de kapitein laten houden om voor rekening van de Compagnie naar Japan gezonden te worden, waar de Japanse groten te Nakasaki die huiden tegen zeer lage prijzen inkopen, in groot verschil met voorgaande tijden. Dit heeft de koning zonder twijfel verstaan, zodat onze kapitein geen ongelijk heeft dat hij de huiden in Siam ook tegen een schappelijke prijs probeert te bedingen.

Uit het vaderland zijn met de laatste schepen volgens de modellen ons toegekomen de gevraagde 28 stuks zeer fijne kastoorroeden¹¹, alle geverfd zoals opgegeven, gezon-den in een kist van binnen met lood beslagen, met last aan onze kapitein om deze te bezorgen opdat deze Uwe Majesteit tot voldoening van zijn smaak ten spoedigste mochten gebracht worden. Wij twijffelen er niet aan of zij zullen U Majesteit zeer goed bevallen en aangenaam zijn.

Alhoewel wij er zeker van zijn dat de koning al bericht zal hebben ontvangen van het verongelukte schip in de rivier van Suratte, hebben wij niet willen nalaten onze kapitein in de grote stad Siam te berichten wat de toedracht is geweest, opdat hij de

¹¹ Kastoren hoed: een zwarte, van beverwol / bevervilt gemaakte hoed. Het Siamse hof begon zulke hoeden te bestellen tijden de regering van Koning Narai. Het is niet duidelijk bij welke gelegenheden ze werden gedragen.

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

koning of de phrakhlang indien het gevraagd werd daarvan communicatie kan doen. De dienaren van de koning aldaar [in Suratte] hebben van onze directeur een grote som van geld gevraagd ter grootte van 3000 rupiah om daar een nieuw schip te bouwen. Dit heeft de directeur niet durven besluiten uit vrees om de koning te mishagen. En ook omdat de sloopstimmering niet alleen zeer duur is maar ook langzaam verloopt. Niettemin heeft hij hen 15000 rupiah aangeboden, of hen met hun goederen per compagnieschepen te laten vertrekken.

Maar de commandeur van Cochin heeft nog niet laten weten welke hulp is geschonken aan het koningsschip aldaar. Het staat de Gouverneur-Generaal en raden van India niet bij dat het de onderdanen van de koning geweigerd zou zijn om hun goederen in compagnieschepen te laden omdat de kwantiteit te groot was. Integendeel, de Gouverneur-Generaal herinnert zich zeer wel dat enkele jaren gelden de koningsdienaren met zo veel goederen als in compagnieschepen geborgen konden worden uit Surat te herwaarts [naar Batavia] gebracht zijn. En dat wij de 2000 rupiah die de directeur van Suratte voor vrachtgeld had bedongen niet hebben gevorderd uit respect voor de koning. De dienaren zijn na een goed onthaal van hier [uit Batavia] met hun goederen naar Siam overgevoerd en hierin zullen wij nooit in gebreke blijven.

Maar wat nu de koning en het land van Jambi betreft, hebben wij verleden jaar in onze brief aan Uwe Koninklijke Majesteit laten weten hoe het tussen Jambi en de Compagnie gelegen was volgens het laatst gemaakte contract.¹² De koning [van Jambi] heeft ons niet alleen evenals de koning van Palembang, de Susuhunan van Mataram¹³ en de prinsen van Cirebon de vrije handel vergunt in zijn rijk, met uitsluiting van alle andere natiën. Hij heeft zichzelf ook gesteld onder de bescherming van de Compagnie, zoals onze kapitein in de grote stad Siam U Majesteit, indien het gevraagd werd, daarvan nader zou kunnen berichten. [De koning van Jambi] kan zichzelf buiten voorkennis en toestemming van de Gouverneur-Generaal en de Raden van Indië niet onder andere heren stellen. Het verwonderd ons dus dat hij met dat doel zijn gezanten met gouden en zilveren bloemen tot een teken van onderdanigheid naar Uwe Majesteit had gezonden. Zonder twijfel om daardoor geld te kunnen lenen en om de geschenken die hij krijgt bij de terugkomst van zijn eigen gezanten en de Siamse afgezanten. Maar Uwe Majesteit zal uit het hiervoor gezegde genoegzaam begrijpen dat wij dit gedrag van de koning van Jambi tot nadeel van de Compagnie niet kunnen accepteren. En dat wij derhalve ook het land en de onderdanen of het volk van Jambi niet kunnen erkennen voor slaven of onderdanen van Uwe Majesteit, aangezien zij eigenlijk onder de bescherming van de Compagnie staan, en de Compagnie grote onkosten heeft gemaakt om de [autoriteit van] de koning over zijn gebied zeker te stellen en de rust in het land [van Jambi] te herstellen. Bovendien zijn de koning en de inwoners van Jambi aan de Compagnie nog een grote som van geld schuldig. Daarnaast zijn die van Jambi van zeer oude tijden her, evenals de inwoners van Palembang, een vazal van de Susuhunan geweest.

¹² Het contract van 20 augustus 1683 tussen Sultan Ingalaga (1679-1687) en de VOC in *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Derde Deel (1676-1691), pp. 280-282.

¹³ Susuhunan van Mataram was ten tijde Amangkurat II

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH TEXT

Wij maken Uwe Majesteit mede bekend, dat [de Susuhunan] eveneens onder de bescherming van de Compagnie was geaccepteerd.¹⁴ En zo is het met Jambi gelegen en wordt Uwe Majesteit verzocht daarop te reflecteren. Wij hebben het nodig geacht dit uitvoerig te verklaren opdat hierdoor geen disputen veroorzaakt mogten worden. De rebellen van Banten die tegen hun koning¹⁵ waren opgestaan zijn nu volledig verslagen en door de wapens van de Compagnie gedwongen zichzelf voor hun koning te verootmoedigen, zodat dat land onder de bescherming van de Compagnie nu eveneens opnieuw in rust is hersteld, hetgeen God de Heere believe te laten voorduren.

De Gouverneur-Generaal en raden van India hebben geen moeite gespaard om tot een wedergeschenk zodanige curieuze goederen te selecteren die volgens onze gissing Uwe Majesteit het allermeest zouden mogen behagen, bestaande in het volgende:

twee zeer unieke, fijne vergulde snaphanen expres voor de Koning uit Holland besteld

twee paar unieke, fijne vergulde pistolen

twee stuks fijne vergulde kromme zwaarden

twee stuks fijne vergulde rechte zwaarden

twee stuks fijne vergulde karabijnen

twee stuks spiegels van 1 1/3 pond met vergulde lijsten met houtsnijwerk

lofwerk van bloemen en fruit

een stuk aurora fluweel

een stuk kanten satijn met kant van witte en gouden bloemen

een uniek ebbenhouten kistje met snijwerk en zilveren beslag

een zwaar, kostbaar gouden laken

een witte *boudaar*¹⁶ met dichte gouden bloemen

een rode *boudaar* met gouden en gekleurde bloemen

zes zeer mooie papegaaien met rode koppen

een flesje met kaneelolie

een flesje met kruidnagelolie

een flesje met foelie-olie

een flesje met olie van muskaatnoten,

welke oliën tot behoud van de gezondheid en versterking van het lichaam zeer noodzakelijk en kostbaar zijn.

¹⁴ Een verwijzing naar het contract van 25-28 februari 1677 met de Susuhunan van Mataram Amangkurat II, zie *Corpus Diplomaticum, Tweede Deel (Derde Deel, 1676-1691)*, pp. 40-41 artikel 2.

¹⁵ Sultan Abu Nasr Abdul Kahar ofwel Sultan Haji (1682-1687).

¹⁶ *Boudaar*, niet hetzelfde als het woord *boudoir*. Wellicht *boutidars*, een zachte doek, erg duur en met sierlijke gouden draad.



3 English translation

DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA CASTLE, 27 JANUARY 1683.

[fol. 141]

Below follows a translation of the letter written by the Oya Berquelangh in Siam to His Excellency the Lord Governor-General. Above was a presentation of the salutations).

This letter comes from Tsjauparaje Seri Derma Rava [fol. 142] Detsieh Tsjada Amataja Ratsjet Pipid Ritanrata Kosa Ribaedi Apie Piri Aer Germa Pahak Tsjauparaja Bergalang to the Governor-General Cornelis Speelman, Councillor of Asia and Captain of Batavia.

The Governor-General has dispatched Nerikpi as messenger to Siam with a letter and gifts consisting of a writing-slope of cinnamon wood, two long inlaid muskets, as well as two short side-arms of the same, and also 2 pikes and a bolt of damask embroidered with gold thread Japanese work, four pieces of gold and silver lace, and a chest of paper, on which can be either written or painted; a piece of red broadcloth with a piece of velvet, and I have received these same in the customary fashion. From the content of what is written in the letter, [I] understand that the Governor-General rules the city and countryside of Jaccatra in health and prosperity. I am greatly delighted and pleased with this. As well as with the contents of the letter about the opportunity for a ship or ships to depart for Siam, [namely] that when their cargoes have been loaded to sail will be yet longer delayed in order to await letters, [and I] request that the letters will swiftly be composed, without further delay, so that the ship or ships will be able to make sail right soon.

Now, concerning the ship which has arrived on this monsoon. As we were on the point of answering the letter, and wished that the ship might depart with all speed, as has been noted in the letter of the captain, the captain of the trading-post said that the vessel would not yet sail to Batavia, but would depart for Japan first. This is the happenstance whereby that letter has not been answered. Nevertheless, after this there will be no longer any such delays but all will be expedited with the utmost speed.

Furthermore, that the Company has assisted the son of the king of Mataram in his efforts to become king, that peace has been restored to the countries of Cirebon and Jepara and that the Company has also lent its assistance to the king of Jambi and Palembang, and [that] the Company had spent and bestowed a large sum in gold [on this enterprise] and that a contract has been drawn up with all three countries, so that [fol. 143] no other merchants might enjoy the privilege of trading there, but the Company alone, and that Bantam has now also been conquered by the Company and this development foreshadows that in all these places it will be able to make great profits and gains in the future. I desire to state that I have been greatly delighted to have taken note of these tidings.



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And now concerning the royal junk which had been dispatched [from Siam] to Cirebon, the same put in to Batavia, whence it sailed on to Cirebon, but two days into her voyage she was met by Javanese, attacked and burned, even though it was a junk which was the property of the king. After this [incident], it will be extremely problematic to send royal junks to places which lie in close proximity to the governorship of the country of Jaccatra. Nevertheless, the Governor-General knows best how he will deal with and remedy this [problem].

Furthermore, this letter also announces that a servant of the king had requested a Dutch licence to buy horses in Cirebon, but when this request was disallowed and he could not undertake his first voyage, he had journeyed first to Bantam and Palembang, and had returned to Jaccatra and from there once again submitted a request to the Governor-General for a licence [to trade] which would enable him to trade his textiles in Cirebon. Whereupon displaying extraordinary favour and goodwill the Governor-General had granted him such a licence. Wherefore he took large quantities of textiles to Cirebon, as a result of which the Company textiles which were in Cirebon remained unsold, and therefore the Company suffered great damage, and that henceforth [the Company] will no longer grant any more such licences.

That now that this sea captain had been granted a Dutch pass to enable him to sell horses in Cirebon, and did not go there directly but first sailed to another country is the fault of the captain himself. And upon his return [he] will also be punished for it and it was a great favour and courtesy of the captain of the lodge that [he] had granted him this licence, and is also in accordance with the path of reciprocal friendship and amity. And as far as the textiles which that sea captain [fol. 144] had brought with him, [these] were sold by him and spent on horses. These textiles did not amount to any great quantity, being worth at an estimate a capital of no more than 9 or 10 *catties* silver. And, when he was sent to purchase horses on the Coast of Java, it was not yet the right monsoon season, and the West monsoon had not yet ended. [It] was also only rarely that [we] sometimes send a few vessels elsewhere in the middle of the monsoon, but again sometimes do not. And therefore the matter is now closed.

Furthermore, the captain of the trading-post in Cirebon has said that if [we] wish to purchase horses [we] should make this known to the Governor-General, [and then he] will order that they be bought for us. Although this is a good way to arrange matters, nevertheless the Hollanders have a different choice and taste than the people of Siam and yet another in the purchase of horses and hence it will not be a success should the Hollanders buy them because [the horses] would then not be same as those the Siamese desired. The captain of the trading-post has said that he would send a royal servant with the Hollanders, and that that same [the servant] would then be brought back on a Dutch ship. However, the Dutch have no common language with the Siamese and therefore they might not be able to understand each other, and hence will fall into disputes and quarrels, and the reciprocal friendship and amity between both [peoples] will therefore be dented, even breached.

Furthermore, about the royal junk which set sail for Persia had foundered in Ceylon, the Governor of Ceylon has spent 7,200 silver pieces on her and also shown proof of



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other services to do with her. A decree has been passed here by which this silver will be repaid to the captain of the trading-post [in Siam]. Thereafter this vessel, when she had been rescued and repaired, sailed to Cochin where the captain was supplied with cordage and other nautical requirements, but we do not know precisely how many costs were incurred, but which can be estimated to amount to a goodly sum in silver. When we have exact [fol. 145] knowledge of this, [we] shall reimburse that amount to the captain of the trading-post in the great city of Siam, and repay this help from the Hollanders to the king's servant with the same friendship and amity, as it has flourished since the beginning and in yesteryear.

Furthermore, the enterprise of the dispatch of such cargoes to Persia has been highly injurious to the Company and that in future [we] should like to abandon [it]. Therefore, whenever we desire anything from Surat, Persia, Bengal, Masulipatnam and Mokka, whither the Company dispatch its ships, henceforth we shall make this known to the captain of the trading-post. And that the in the wake of this Company will arrange these matters as the King of Siam would like them to be, so as to prevent any great damage or detriment to the Company were the Siamese themselves to dispatch ships and that then these Siamese ships would no longer be required to submit a request for Dutch passports for these waters.

What the Governor-General says accords with the path of true friendship in our country and also because the country of Persia, and of Hyderabad (which is Golkonda) also relate to each other in such harmony and have therefore agreed to engage in reciprocal trade with each other and to demonstrate it, so that we also desire the same. This is in accordance with the reciprocal friendship, but perhaps it will transpire to that we shall not receive a cargo corresponding with our preferences and taste, such as the piece of red broadcloth which last monsoon did not correspond in hue to that which we had really wanted, and therefore once again [we] had returned it. Therefore [the message] is passed on that this colour pleases none of the merchants and therefore has remained unsold to the detriment of the Company. If indeed several of His Majesty's subjects might sail on the Dutch ships, as it was once agreed and set down in a contract. And indeed, even if [they, the servants] in fulfilment of this agreement be able to sail on the Dutch ships and had gathered together some goods to be loaded into the Dutch ship as a consequence [of this agreement], the Hollanders said that there were too many goods and chests and that [they, the Hollanders] could not take them on board, and so the matter was left [as it was before].

The Hollanders in Siam are also unacquainted with the [Siamese] language and are therefore cannot accompany the Siamese on the voyage [to Persia] [fol. 146], as various misunderstandings could arise, which might sour the friendship between both parties. Even though we might now pass on the knowledge of the goods required from those lands [and] even though the Company itself might carry them and order them, we do not know if these might deviate from the sample, and once again might have to be given back. And this [situation] might endure, [going] back and forth endlessly and always. However, as for the goods which only the Dutch can produce, [a message] about them could be sent to Holland, that they be made there. The dispatch of a royal



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ship to Persia, would bring us neither profit nor loss, as the sending of such a ship there and back is only intended to maintain the friendship which was cultivated in former years.

Furthermore, in the letter [from the Supreme Government] the subject of the contract which has existed from the very beginning up to the present time, under whose terms the people of the Company are granted permission to buy up deer skins and cattle hide has been raised, however these same are no longer be obtained [in such quantities] as once [was the case], because junks from Siam sail to Japan irrespective of the monsoon, and consequently the Hollanders are unable to purchase them in sufficient [quantities] as they once were, whereby the Company suffers great [financial] damage. Therefore, if [we] were able permit no other [traders] to participate in the purchase, and that if the merchants from the great city of Siam came to buy these same and send them to Japan in order to trade them there and if we were to grant anybody [permission] to take over and carry on, that same would have to [be prepared] to pay that sum which is the same as the price against which they would have been sold in Japan, to ensure that the Company will suffer no loss.

In this respect, the contract drawn up in De Bitter's time has not changed, being said at the beginning of [this] written document that the Hollanders have been granted a royal warrant for deer skins and cattle hides, and that other traders are forbidden [to buy up] these wares, and that should a great many of them be procured, that the Hollanders can have 10,000 pieces for the purchase price [fol. 146] and they might send [these] to Japan with the royal junk or junks. Conversely, when the hides cannot be got in any quantity, the Hollanders will take no more than 7,000 skins. [In view of the fact that we] during the last four years have taken no more, and have sent [to Japan] an estimated 2,135 hides on the royal junks, therefore we have supplied the Hollanders with 18,725 fewer hides than the contract specifies. And when we realized that the Hollanders could procure so few hides, the treasury forbade the people to take any hides whatsoever from the Hollanders, who in the meantime have been able to procure the sum of 128,725 pieces in the space of eleven years.

And should this be the case that according to this calculation the skins taken by the Hollanders, as specified in the contract, and moreover transported to Japan and traded there, so will [it, that is, the Company] will have made the very notable profit of 1,059 catties, 122 taels and 1 maas profit. Therefore the previous high profit has become so much greater and more generous because the ban was put in place, namely not to take [parties of hides intended for] the Hollanders, to transport to Japan on junks, leaving these same for the Hollanders and they alone to procure and keep, and this [gesture] is more than enough to display the extraordinary favour of His Majesty. Although it might be that the captain in the great city of Siam has not explained this clearly enough to the Governor, the weaker supply of the hides cannot be interpreted as a change in the contract. Because, generally speaking, in trade it is usual for wares to be obtainable in greater or lesser quantities, depending on the numbers of buyers and sellers, and skilled people will certainly be able to procure a larger quantity. Because since the time of Captain Enogh [Enoch] Poolvoet, to that of Captain Johannes or



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Jansen, people have sought too great a margin on the profit of the Company, and will have informed the captain of the trading-post in the great city of Siam of this, adducing the unequivocal argument [fol. 147] of how matters really stand.

Furthermore, the captain of the trading-post will have also passed on the information that Chinese traders have bought up hides illegally and taken them to Japan, and that for this reason a *shah bandar* [harbour master] has been ordered to place a ban on all Chinese, and to notify the captain of the trading-post that when the season will have [arrived] to buy the hides, he will also have to have appointed a person to purchase the hides, and will also have installed a person to keep an eye on the contraband trade. Moreover, that the captain will also order someone among his personnel to stand guard and take care that no hides are procured illegally, and this is what has happened.

Also in the letter there was some mention that the Hollanders want to trade in the places Salang, Bang[g]erei and Tokut, therefore in a letter [we] have already given notification of the situation and what it is like [in these places], which is such that the Hollanders will not be able to trade for tin peacefully and undisturbed, because in those areas there is no tranquillity and the inhabitants are vicious and are also allied to people of other countries and correspond with them, yea even display their cruelty to the head of that country, and this is what foreign traders there have also often said. And should the Hollanders be permitted to reside there to trade, it could perhaps very well happen that they will be treated treacherously and villainously, and through this they will suffer damage to their goods, the which [would not be in agreement with] the path which leads to good friendship, and the relationship which corresponds with this, and indeed that same could also cause a breach or be broken off. And therefore for this reason, knowledge of it has been passed on to the captain who resides in the trading-post in the great city of Siam.

In relation to the viciousness and villainy of the people of Salang, Banggirei and Takut, from the beginning their [fol. 149] evil deeds have been told to the captain in writing so that he could make them known to the Governor, being again the usage and style of all countries in which mutual friendship has been made, that one must contribute to maintaining it and their discussion and thoughts lead to this and all affairs and actions are directed by it, so that no dissension and troubles will take root between them both and grow. And now I am bound to the [Governor-]General in friendship, and have remained in this from the beginning and shall continue in it. And in the countries of Salang, Bang[g]irei and Takut the situation is as has been declared above. Were [we] not to make this known, and thereby allowed the Hollanders to take up residence there, consequently this pernicious sort of people might have caused the Hollanders some harm, this would be contrary to our friendship, and at once stray from the path. This is the reason we pass on this notification, so that no harm might befall the Hollanders.



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Finally in this [letter] the Governor-General is also informed that at this time the king of Jambi has offered some gold and silver flowers as sign of his tributary status, requesting that a servant of His Majesty recognize and shall also count his country as a vassal of the great city of Siam, praying most fervently as the gift of recognition of a tributary from His Illustrious Graciousness that he be lent a goodly sum and His High Illustrious Majesty has also cast his merciful eye upon him and has graciously granted him all he wished. Therefore, in this matter, will the Governor-General take into consideration our mutual friendship which has endure from the beginning up to the present, and concur with this. Should anything befall the king of Jambi, will the Governor-General also lend his aid, in view of the fact that now at this time the land of Jambi is subject to the great city of Siam.

In his graciousness, His Most Illustrious Majesty, My Lord, presents 32 *bhaar* of tin from the *negeri* of Ligor as a gift to the Governor, and I also personally send the Governor-General 7 *bhaar* of tin. Furthermore, may the mutual friendship between the both of us remain indestructible, until the Day of the Resurrection, as long and the sun and moon shall shine, and that the Governor-General will accept this in the spirit in which it is given.

This is written on 22nd day of the 11th month on a Friday in the Year of the Dog. Finis.

DAILY JOURNALS OF BATAVIA CASTLE, 11 MAY 1683

[fol. 474]

The letter which the King has sent us was delivered to us on 18 January 1683 and was received with the usual state. The letter is in answer to our letter which we had written to His Majesty in 1682.

His royal Majesty is hereby thanked for maintaining the monopoly granted to the Company on the export of hides. [Also] that to that end the syahbandars have been instructed to hinder the smuggling by the Chinese and other nations, with permission to our captain to be allowed to supervise this. [Also] that the royal treasurers henceforth will not be allowed to seize any hides of the Company, but have the captain keep them, to be sent to Japan at the expense of the Company, since the Japanese rulers at Nagasaki buy these hides at very low prices, in great contrast with former times. The King has without doubt understood this, so that our captain is not at fault when he attempts to get the skins for a reasonable price in Siam.

From the fatherland the latest ships have, according to the models, brought us the requested 28 very fine castor hats¹, all varnished as indicated, and sent in a case lined with lead, with the instruction to our captain to deliver these so that they may be brought to Your Majesty with all haste for the satisfaction of your taste. We do not doubt that they will give very great satisfaction and be pleasing to Your Majesty.

¹ Castor hat: or beaver (hat), a black hat made of felted beaver fur. The court of Siam began ordering European-style hats from the reign of King Narai onwards. It is not clear on which occasions these hats were worn.



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Although we are certain that the King will already have had news about the ship that came to grief in the river of Surat, we did not wish to omit informing our captain in the great city of Siam about the facts of the case, so that he can communicate these to the King or the Phrakhlung if asked about it. The servants of the King there [in Surat] have asked a large sum of money, to the amount of 3,000 rupees from our director to build a new ship there. The director did not dare to decide this out of fear of displeasing the King, and also because the shipbuilding is not only very expensive but also takes a long time. Nevertheless he has offered them 15,000 rupees, or to let them depart with their goods on Company ships.

But the commander of Cochin has not yet informed us of what help was given to the royal ship there. The Governor-General and members of the Council of the Indies cannot recall that the servants of the King were refused permission to load their goods in Company ships because the quantity was too great. On the contrary, the Governor-General does remember well that some years ago the King's servants were brought hither [to Batavia] from Surat with as much of their goods as could be stowed in Company ships, and that we did not demand the 2,000 rupiah that the director had fixed as freight charge, out of respect for the King. After being well entertained the servants have been transferred from here [Batavia] with their goods to Siam, and we shall never be remiss in this.

But now with regard to the king and the land of Jambi, last year in our letter to Your Royal Majesty we informed you of the situation between Jambi and the Company according to the recently made contract.² The king [of Jambi], and likewise the king of Palembang, the Susuhunan of Mataram³ and the princes of Cirebon, has granted us free trade in his realm, to the exclusion of all other nations. He has also placed himself under the protection of the Company, as our captain in the great city of Siam would be able to further inform Your Majesty, if this was asked. [The king of Jambi] may not place himself under other lords without the prior knowledge and agreement of the Governor-General and the members of the Council of the Indies. It dismays us that he had sent his emissaries with golden and silver flowers with that aim, as a token of submission to Your Majesty, without doubt in order to borrow money thereby and for the gifts that he obtains on the return of his own emissaries and those of the Siamese. However, Your Majesty will understand well enough from what has been said above that we cannot accept this conduct of the king of Jambi to the detriment of the Company; and that we therefore also cannot recognize the land and the subjects or the people of Jambi as slaves or subjects of Your Majesty, seeing that actually they are under the protection of the Company, and the Company has incurred great expenses in order to ensure the [authority of] the king over his territory and the restore peace in the land [of Jambi]. Moreover the king and the inhabitants of Jambi still owe the Company a large sum of money. As well as this the people of Jambi have from very early times, as also

² The contract of 20 August 1683 by Sultan Ingalaga (1679-1687) and the VOC in *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Volume 3 (1676-1691), pp. 280-282

³ Susuhunan of Mataram was at this stage Amangkurat II.



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the inhabitants of Palembang, been a vassal of the Susuhunan.

At the same time we inform Your Majesty that [the Susuhunan] has likewise been accepted under the protection of the Company.⁴ Such is the situation with Jambi, and Your Majesty is invited to reflect on this. We have considered it necessary to explain this at length, so that no disputes should be caused by this. The rebels of Banten who had risen against their king⁵ are now completely defeated and have been obliged by the Company's weapons to humble themselves before their king, so that under the protection of the Company the land is likewise once more restored to peace, which it may please the Lord God to allow to continue.

As a return gift the Governor-General and members of the Council of the Indies have spared no trouble to select such curious items as in our estimation might please Your Majesty most of all, consisting of the following:

two very splendid and fine gilded flintlocks ordered expressly for the King from Holland

two pairs of splendid and fine gilded pistols

two fine gilded curved swords

two fine gilded straight swords

two fine gilded carbines

two mirrors of 1½ pounds with gilded frames with carved leafwork of flowers and fruit

one piece of aurora velvet

one piece of satin with lace of white and gold flowers

one splendid ebony box with fretwork and silver fittings

one heavy, valuable piece of gold worsted

one white *boudaar*⁶ with closed golden flowers

one red *boudaar* with gold and coloured flowers

six very fine parrots with red heads

one little bottle of cinnamon oil

one little bottle of oil of cloves

one little bottle of mace-oil

one little bottle of oil of nutmeg

which oils are very necessary and expensive for maintaining the health and strengthening the body.

⁴ A reference to the contract of 25-28 february 1677 with the Susuhunan of Mataram Amangkurat II, see Corpus Diplomaticum, Volume 2 (Third part, 1676-1691), pp. 40-41 article 2.

⁵ Abu Nasr Abdul Kahar or Sultan Haji (r. 1682-1687).

⁶ Boudaar, not the same as the word boudoir. Perhaps boutidars, a soft cloth and expensive with elegant golden embroidery.



4 Colophon

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