

Promotion of Chen Tse to Senior Division Commander of Right-Vanguard Troop in Zheng Dynasty

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ABSTRACT

Chen Tse (陳澤) was an important military officer in Zheng Dynasty with a number of war exploits against the Ching state and Dutch colonists. Chen followed Koxinga (國姓爺) to Taiwan in 1661 and was subsequently promoted to senior division commander leading right-vanguard troop (先鋒右鎮). His new official title illustrated that he was held in high esteem at that time. However, he served initially as the acting commander only. Interpretative analysis in this study suggested that Chen's promotion was an example of the official strategy for stabilizing the political situation. After Koxinga's death in June of 1662, some military officers garrisoning Taiwan opposed to the succession of Zheng Jing (鄭經), the son of Koxinga, to the throne and a civil war thus broke out. Historical materials showed that substantial military personnel changes in Taiwan had occurred when Zheng Jing first assumed power. Through staff reassignments, Zheng Jing promoted those loyal and helpful, sacked those who were not trusted or suitable, reserved his authority on personnel, and reorganized armed forces for counterbalancing. His intention of preventing military coup in order to consolidate his sovereignty was understandable. In view of the above, Chen's promotion was most probably around late 1662 to early 1663 toward the end of civil war. Hence, the naming of Chen's residence in Tainan as "Tung-Ling-Fu" (統領府) (meaning residence of senior division commander) would not be earlier than that period.

Keywords: Chen Tse, Zheng Dynasty, Senior Division Commander, Right-Vanguard Troop