

**University of Alberta**

**The English East India Company's  
Trade in the Western Pacific through Taiwan, 1670 – 1683**

by

**Ryan Edgecombe Holroyd**

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Arts**

in

**History**

Department of History and Classics

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Spring 2011

Edmonton, Alberta

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the 1670 to 1683 trading relationship between the English East India Company and the Zheng family, a Ming loyalist organisation that controlled Taiwan in the late seventeenth century. It draws on the available sources of data for the Zheng family's trading network to create an analysis of how the network functioned and developed, and then applies the available information from the East India Company's records to understand how the company's trade to Taiwan developed.

The Zheng family's trade was altered by their participation in the Sanfan Rebellion during the 1670s. The rebellion commercially isolated the Zheng family from mainland China, which in turn gave the East India Company an opportunity to supply substitute goods for the Zheng family's trade elsewhere. However, the rebellion also weakened the Zheng family and brought about their surrender of Taiwan to Qing China, which ended the company's trade there as well.

## Acknowledgements

Many people supported me in various ways during the period I wrote this thesis, and I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to a few of them. First, my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jennifer Jay, helped me throughout the project. She provided me with valuable insights on the content of the thesis. I am also extremely lucky to have found myself among the group of graduate students that I did in the University of Alberta's Department of History and Classics. Very few of my fellow students were working on projects even remotely close the maritime world of the seventeenth century western Pacific, but the great diversity of topics they were researching (ranging from ancient Greek poetry to Soviet history) exposed me to perspectives on history and historiography that I would not have otherwise had an opportunity to learn about. In particular, I would like acknowledge the help given to me by Rylan Kafara and Amit Sharma, both of whom took the time to read through various bits and pieces of my early drafts and provide criticisms and suggestions.

My family's support was unflagging during my work on this project. My decision to pursue a degree in East Asian history took them somewhat by surprise, I believe, but they nonetheless encouraged me and have remained a Rock of Gibraltar throughout both my undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Finally, the largest debt I owe is to the love of my life, Su Shu-Wei. Besides helping me with the difficult Chinese sources, she patiently tolerated the long nights I spent sifting through sources and writing and rewriting my work. More than any other single factor, her love and support made this work possible.

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## Introduction

This thesis is an analysis of the thirteen year trading relationship that existed from 1670 to 1683 between the English East India Company and the family of the late Ming 明 (1368 – 1644) loyalist warlord, Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (1624 – 1662), better known as ‘Koxinga’ in contemporary European sources. In the late 1660s, the East India Company operated extensively in the Indian Ocean, but did very little trade outside the islands of modern day Indonesia in the western Pacific region. Interested in finding new sources of revenue, the company’s management made plans to expand its operations into the western Pacific so that the company could participate in the trade between China, Japan, and the Philippines- the three most important territories for maritime trade in the region.

The political situations in China and the Philippines made direct access to those places impossible for the company, and Japan was soon discovered to be off limits to the company’s ships as well after the one experimental voyage the company sent there in 1673 was refused the right to trade by the Japanese authorities. The company’s sole success at expanding into the western Pacific region was the establishment of a factory (what the company usually called its trading posts) on the island of Taiwan 臺灣, which was then ruled by Zheng Chenggong’s son, Zheng Jing 鄭經 (1642 – 1681), and his family. During this time, the Zheng family and their followers in Taiwan operated a huge merchant fleet that traded with China, Japan, and the Philippines, as well as with numerous ports in South-East Asia. The company’s management was aware of this, and so planned to use their new base on Taiwan to establish indirect trade with the region’s major markets through the Zheng family’s merchants. This arrangement created a situation where the East India Company’s trade in the western Pacific region was almost entirely dependent on its trade with the Zheng

family. Between the first voyages the company sent in 1670 and the end of the Zheng family's rule of Taiwan in 1683, the company's levels of success trading indirectly through the Zheng merchants fluctuated, and the main reasons for these fluctuations can be found in the shifts that the Zheng merchants' trade was undergoing over the same period.

In the initial years of the East India Company's trade in Taiwan, from 1670 to 1673, the relatively strong bilateral trade between China and Japan, and China and the Philippines meant that the East India Company was not able to participate in any significant way. However, the ongoing political and military conflict between the Zheng family in Taiwan and the ruling government of China, the Qing 清 dynasty (1644 – 1911) caused a shift in the amount of trade the Zheng merchants conducted away from China and towards South-East Asia. Because the East India Company was essentially a South-East Asian merchant company in relation to the Zheng merchants' network (as it was attempting to trade mostly the same types of goods as other South-East Asian merchants), its trade improved significantly with this shift.

However, the success the company had in Taiwan was temporary. The conflict between the Zheng family and Qing China caused the economic situation in Taiwan to become degraded by the final years of Zheng family rule in Taiwan. This hurt the company's ability to profit from its trade because of the difficulty it had collecting debts from the cash-strapped Zheng merchants. The conflict also eventually brought about the surrender of the Zheng family and ended Taiwan's role as an intermediary hub between the major markets of the western Pacific.

To date, only two studies in English have looked at this short-lived adventure in the long history of the East India Company: D. K. Bassett in 1960 and Derek Massarella in 1993.<sup>1</sup> Both have done much to bring this episode in the company's history out of obscurity by giving detailed analyses of how the East India Company arrived at the decision to establish its factory in Taiwan, and how trade to that place was managed by the company thereafter. Both articles, however, focus on the internal decision-making processes of the company and the successes and failures of the trade from the perspectives of the observers within the company itself. At the same time they pay relatively little attention to Taiwan's economic relationships within the region. Consequently, the changes to Taiwan's economic situation that were not necessarily obvious to the company's employees and managers in Taiwan and Banten are neglected in these articles. The East India Company's strategies for its trade in the western Pacific and its managers' assessments of the results can only partially explain how the company's trade with Taiwan developed. To understand why the fluctuations in the performance of the company's trade with Taiwan occurred, we need more analysis of how the Zheng merchants' trade in the region functioned and how it affected the company's attempts to trade through Taiwan.

Therefore, in the following chapters of this thesis, I intend to create a more detailed evaluation of the company's Taiwan strategy in light of the specific complexities of Taiwan's economic and political relationships with the different territories where it traded. Fortunately, the East India Company kept extensive records of its operations and ventures in the western Pacific and elsewhere during the seventeenth century, and many of these have

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<sup>1</sup> D. K. Bassett, "The Trade of the English East India Company in the Far East 1623-1684: Part II: 1665-84," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 3/4 (October 1960): 145 – 157; and Derek Massarella, "Chinese, Tartars and "Thea" or a Tale of Two Companies: The English East India Company and Taiwan in the Late Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd ser., 3, no. 3 (November 1993): 393 – 426.



been published,<sup>2</sup> so creating a detailed outline of the company's trade with Taiwan and attempts to trade elsewhere in the region is a relatively straightforward task.

There are fewer records that have survived from Zheng Taiwan itself, however. This means the available information on the Zheng merchants' operations is uneven, but there are still some crucial records that can be used to help us better understand the Zheng merchants' commercial situation. Among the most important are the records from the customs agencies in the Zheng merchants' two most important ports of call outside of mainland China: Nagasaki, Japan's main port for foreign trade, and the Philippines' capital and main port, Manila. Statistics from the Nagasaki records have been conveniently compiled and published by Iwao Seiichi and Robert Innes, and from the Manila records by Pierre Chaunu.<sup>3</sup>

Extensive work has also been done on the changing economic and political circumstances within China and other parts of the region and on the operations of the Zheng merchants' main European competitors. Various observations of contemporary witnesses to the rise and fall of Zheng Taiwan have survived, including and especially those of the East India Company employees who resided there. Using the information on Zheng Taiwan that can be gleaned from these sources, I intend to construct as detailed as possible an analysis of the basic trends that affected Zheng Taiwan's maritime trading organisation from 1670 to 1683. The outcome of this research will put the East India Company's

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<sup>2</sup> Some of the most useful published volumes for this project include Chang Hsiu-jung, Anthony Farrington, Huang Fu-san, Ts'ao Yung-ho, Wu Mi-tsa, Cheng Hsi-fu, and Ang Ka-in, eds., *The English Factory in Taiwan 1670 – 1685* (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1995); Anthony Farrington and Dhiravat na Pombejra, eds., *The English Factory in Siam 1612 – 1685*, 2 vols. (London: The British Library, 2007); Ethel Bruce Sainsbury, ed., *A Calendar of the Court Minutes, etc., of the East India Company*, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907 – 1938); and William Foster, ed., *The English Factories in India*, 13 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906 – 1927).

<sup>3</sup> Iwao Seiichi 岩生成一, "Kinsei Nisshi boeki ni kansuru suryo teki kosatsu 近世日支貿易に關する数量的考察," *Shigaku Zasshi* 史學雜誌 62, no. 11 (1953): 1 – 40; Robert LeRoy Innes, "The Door Ajar: Japan's Foreign Trade in the Seventeenth Century" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1980); and Pierre Chaunu, *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Ibériques (XVI<sup>e</sup>, XVII<sup>e</sup>, XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles) Introduction Méthodologique et Indices d'activité* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960).

relationship with the Zheng family in the context of the changing trading world of the western Pacific.

**Map 1.** The seventeenth century western Pacific



## Chapter I: The Trading World of the Seventeenth Century Western Pacific

In 1670, when the East India Company began its push to re-enter the western Pacific, the overall pattern of trade in the region was on the cusp of undergoing a temporary, but deep shift that would alter its structure over about a decade. Prior to the mid-1670s, the structure of trade in the region had remained relatively consistent in terms of the types of goods traded and the regions they flowed between. For most of the seventeenth century, the structure of the trade in the region was dominated by two major trade routes that connected China and Japan, and China and the Philippines, while less important trade routes connected all three places with South-East Asia as well.

For much of the seventeenth century the China-Japan trade route was the most important of these. In the mid-sixteenth century the domestic production of silver in Japan had risen dramatically while silver production in China continued a decline that had begun in the previous century. The growing profitability of importing Japanese silver into China was balanced by an appetite for Chinese luxury goods in the Japanese market, the most important of which was silk, both raw and woven.<sup>4</sup> The result was that through most of the seventeenth century, by far the most profitable trade in the western Pacific region was that which flowed between China and Japan, primarily in the form of an exchange of Chinese silk for Japanese silver, though copper also became an increasingly important Japanese export in the latter half of the century.<sup>5</sup>

The second most important trade route connected China and the Spanish colony of the Philippines. Like Japan, the main attraction of the Philippines for merchants throughout the

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<sup>4</sup> Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000 – 1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 114 – 115; and Innes, pp. 25 – 29.

<sup>5</sup> Von Glahn, p. 229; and Innes, p. 526.

region was the large quantities of silver available there that could be profitably exported to China. Very few goods useful for foreign trade were produced in the Philippines themselves, but a regular annual voyage of one or two large galleons from Acapulco in New Spain to Manila in the Philippines that brought loads of American silver, both in form of bars and Spanish dollars, had been established in 1565 and continued on through to the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Also like Japan, the merchants in the Philippines were primarily interested in trading their silver for silk and, to a lesser extent, cotton cloth.<sup>7</sup> Most of the goods imported from China and elsewhere in the region were then re-exported back to the Spanish colonies in the Americas on the returning galleons.<sup>8</sup>

The third set of trade routes connected China, Japan, and the Philippines, the region's major markets, to less important trading ports in South-East Asia. There were numerous small states in Indo-China, the Malay Peninsula, and the islands of modern day Indonesia that participated to varying degrees in the intra-regional trade. Among the most important of these in the late seventeenth century were Dong Kinh (in modern day northern Vietnam, often written as 'Tongking' or 'Tonkin' in contemporary European sources), Cochinchina (in modern day southern Vietnam), Siam, Cambodia, Pattani (in modern day southern Thailand), Makassar (a city in the southern part of Celebes Island), Malacca, Banten (a city state in the western part of the island of Java), and Batavia (modern day Jakarta, also in western Java). Of these, Dong Kinh was the most consistently important South-East Asian territory for

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<sup>6</sup> The destination of the galleons in the Philippines was originally the city of Cebu, but it was transferred to Manila in 1571. William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1939), p. 23.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Serafin D. Quiason, "The Sampan Trade, 1570 – 1770," in *The Chinese in the Philippines*, vol. 1, ed. Alfonso Felix, Jr. (Manila: Solidaridad, 1966), pp. 161 – 164. For some observations of the enormous profits made from the silk trade to the Philippines during different periods of its existence, see "Letters from the Royal Fiscal to the King," in *The Philippine Islands (1493-1898)*, eds. Emma Helen Blair, James Alexander Robertson, and Edward Gaylord Bourne, vol. 11 (Cleveland: The A.H. Clark Company, 1904), p. 111; Francis Breton, Thomas Merry, and William Pitt at Swally Marine to the East India Company, January 25, 1647, in Foster, vol. 8, 1646 – 1650, p. 81; Casimiro Diaz, "The Augustinians in the Philippines, 1670 – 94," in Blair, vol. 42, pp. 118 – 119; and "Commerce of the Philippines with Nueva Espana," in Blair, vol. 44, p. 256.

maritime trade because it was the only major producer of silk in the region other than China. Although Dong Kinh silk was usually considered of lower quality than Chinese silk, it was still substitutable in both the Japanese and the Philippine markets when the exports from China did not meet the demand in those places (see Map 1).<sup>9</sup>

The other ports in South-East Asia supplied goods including pepper, agarwood (also called ‘eagle wood’), sappanwood, sandalwood, betel nuts, birds’ nests, putchuck (the root of *Aplotaxis auriculata*, which was used to make incense), ungulate skins, sugar, various kinds of dye, and various kinds of spices. The ports of South-East Asia were also meeting places for merchants and merchant organisations coming from the Indian Ocean region and beyond (including the East India Company). So coral, saltpetre, iron, lead, firearms, and different types of cloth from both the Indian subcontinent and Europe among other goods were re-exported from there as well. These products brought north to China, Japan, and the Philippines from South-East Asia all had limited profitability at least some of the time in some of the places, but up until the mid-1670s, none came close to eclipsing the consistent importance of silk and silver.

At least until the early 1670s, these general patterns of maritime trade in the western Pacific would persist because of the strength of the demand for the different types of important trade goods in the major markets of the region. It was not until the mid-1670s that the trade routes between China and Japan began to decline in importance, and other goods, specifically copper from Japan, and silk and cotton cloth from South-East Asia and trading regions beyond the western Pacific began to challenge the dominance of silk and

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<sup>9</sup> See Leonard Blussé, “No Boats to China. The Dutch East India Company and the Changing Pattern of the China Sea Trade, 1635-1690,” *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 1 (February 1996): 67; Samuel Baron, “A Description of the Kingdom of Tonqueen,” in Olga Dror and K. W. Taylor, ed., *Views of Seventeenth Century-Vietnam: Christoforo Borri on Cochinchina & Samuel Baron on Tonkin* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2006), p. 211; and Innes, pp. 311 – 312.

silver in the region. However, because of major political changes over the course of the century, especially in Japan and in China, the specific patterns of trade carried by the various participants from different parts of the region transformed, sometimes gradually and sometimes drastically.

In Japan, the Tokugawa clan succeeded in taking control of the country and establishing themselves as the rulers of a Shogunate government in 1603. The new government began almost immediately to take steps to solidify its control of foreign trade. A licensing system for Japanese ships going abroad was adopted,<sup>10</sup> the ports where foreign merchants could land were specified, and the importation of silk was regulated.<sup>11</sup> By the 1630s, the Japanese government's foreign trade policies became even more restrictive. Japan-based merchants were prohibited from sending ships abroad in 1635, and in 1639, after an upsurge of anti-Roman Catholic sentiment in the Japanese government in the wake of the Shimabara Revolt. Portuguese traders, who had previously carried a major part of the commerce between China and Japan, were banned from Japanese ports.<sup>12</sup> This left the Dutch Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, another company of European merchants operating out of the city of Batavia on the island of Java, as the only European organisation that was allowed to trade in Japan. But merchants from China, Korea, the Ryukyu Islands, and South-East Asia continued to trade in Japan.

In Ming China, by the early seventeenth century the government was gradually losing its ability to enforce its rule along the Chinese empire's coastal periphery. This situation led to the rise of independent merchants and pirates who were laws unto themselves along the coast, particularly in the maritime provinces south of the Yangtze River 長江 delta (Zhejiang

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<sup>10</sup> Innes, p. 116.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 248 – 249.

<sup>12</sup> See C. R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan 1549 – 1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), chap. 8.

浙江, Fujian 福建, and Guangdong 廣東) from where most foreign trade had traditionally been conducted.<sup>13</sup> The relatively unrestricted trade during the early seventeenth century, combined with the increasing availability of silver in Japan and the Philippines and demand for it in China, made many independent traders extremely wealthy during this period.

After the Ming dynasty finally collapsed in 1644, the situation changed. The Ming capital, Beijing 北京, was taken by rebel armies and the last Ming emperor to rule from that city hanged himself there that year. Years of war ensued, beginning with the invasion of China by the Manchu state that had been established to the north of the Ming territory. The foreign invasion became a civil war after the rulers of the Manchu state proclaimed the establishment of the new Qing dynasty and began drawing more and more support from the local Chinese populations it had conquered, especially in China's northern regions. Despite its success at garnering support however, the Qing dynasty's conquest of mainland China was a slow and difficult process. It was not completed until 1663, because even after the conquest of northern China there were still several resistance movements in southern China that struggled against the consolidation of Qing rule for several decades after the 1644 conquest.

Even after 1663, the Qing government's rule of China, especially in the southern regions, remained precarious. In 1673 the tenuousness of the Qing government's control of southern China was revealed when a second civil war, commonly known as the Sanfan Rebellion 三藩之亂, or Rebellion of the Three Feudatories, broke out. The three governors of the southern provinces of Yunnan 雲南, Fujian, and Guangdong, who had been appointed to the hereditary positions and granted extraordinary governing powers by the

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<sup>13</sup> John E. Wills, Jr., "Maritime China from Wang Chih to Shih Lang: Themes in Peripheral History," in *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China*, eds. Jonathan D. Spence and John E. Wills, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 206.



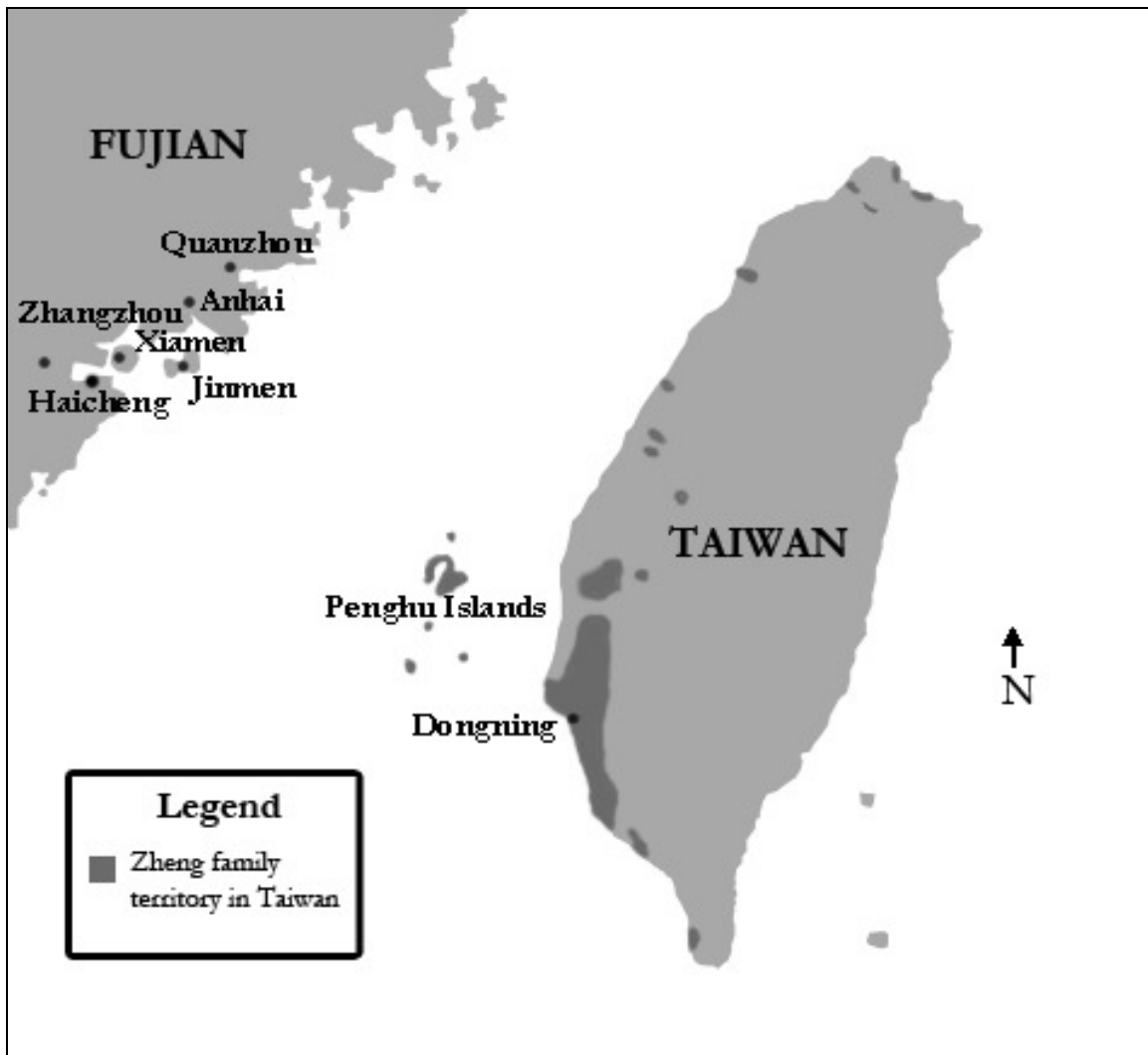
Qing government in gratitude for service given by themselves or their fathers to the Qing dynasty during its conquest of China, rebelled against the Qing government in 1673, 1674, and 1676, respectively. The rebellion consumed China in war for eight years until it was finally defeated in 1681, when the last remaining rebel, the ruler of Yunnan, surrendered.

The wars that swept through China in the middle decades of the seventeenth century had two major effects on the trading world. The first was the unintentional disruption of the production and distribution of goods in various places throughout China while the land mass was divided into warring blocs. The second was the Qing government's intentional disruption of maritime trade targeted against the Taiwan based Ming loyalist organisation controlled by the Zheng family (discussed below). This was done through the implementation of a ban on all foreign trade and a forced evacuation of a strip of land all along China's coast, inspired by the ironclad logic that there could be no intercourse between the Zheng family and the coastal population if there was no coastal population. The enforcement of both these policies was only partially successful, but it had a clearly negative effect on China's contribution to maritime trade in the region.

### **The Zheng Family and Zheng Taiwan**

China's coasts and maritime trade remained preoccupations of the Qing government from the establishment of its rule in 1644 until 1683, mostly because of the continued presence of the Zheng family and the threat it posed to the stability of the new regime. Summarising the history of this family's unique organisation is difficult because of the transformations it went through over the course of the seventeenth century. The family's organisation began as a private merchant fleet, then became a Ming loyalist army and navy resisting the Qing conquest of China, and finally ended as a *de facto* state on the island of

**Map 2.** Taiwan and southern Fujian with Zheng family territory circa 1670 highlighted  
(Adapted from Shepherd, p. 98)



Taiwan. Through these various incarnations, what remained consistent was the family's orientation towards the sea. The bulk of the family's military strength always rested on its naval power, and the wealth that funded the family's operations was always drawn from maritime trade in the region.

The original patriarch of the family, the savvy Fujianese Zheng Zhilong 鄭芝龍 (1604 – 1662), first emerged as an important figure in the trading world of the western Pacific during the 1620s.<sup>14</sup> At this time there were many seaborne Chinese and Japanese adventurers who were attempting to make their fortunes as merchants, pirates, or in many cases both, by plying the seas between China and Japan. Indeed Zheng Zhilong was initially just one of many would-be maritime tycoons competing against one another. By the 1630s, he had eliminated all of his major rivals and had established his fleet as the principal trading organisation in the region. Taking advantage of the declining, but not yet collapsing condition of the Ming dynasty, he was able to build up a private navy to enforce his domination of the lucrative China-Japan and China-Philippines trade routes, virtually unopposed by the Ming government's weak, ineffective navy.

Zheng Zhilong's dominance in the seas between China and Japan was unassailable until the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644. When this happened he was put in an awkward position between the Ming loyalists struggling against the conquest of China and the advancing Qing military. Initially he chose to support the Ming loyalists, but the loyalists' disorganised and ineffective resistance against the advancing Qing military in south-eastern China soon made it clear that if the invasion was to be halted, it was his organisation that

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<sup>14</sup> Seiichi Iwao, "Li Tan 李旦, Chief of the Chinese Residents at Hirado, Japan in the Last Days of the Ming Dynasty," in *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library)*, no. 17 (1958), pt. 8; and Tonio Andrade, "The Company's Chinese Pirates: How the Dutch East India Company Tried to Lead a Coalition of Pirates to War against China, 1621–1662," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 4 (December 2004): 428 – 429.

would have to take the brunt of both the necessary fighting and financing. Zheng Zhilong was apparently unwilling to take on the risk of failure, so he opted instead to surrender to the Qing armies in 1646, after the Qing government promised that he would be allowed to continue to operate his commercial empire once it had consolidated its rule of Fujian and the rest of China.<sup>15</sup> This promise went unfulfilled, however. Upon his surrender, Zheng Zhilong was taken into captivity and transported to Beijing where he spent the remainder of his life until his execution in 1662. But all was not lost for the Ming loyalist cause because Zheng Zhilong's surrender did not mean the end of his family's organisation. Because he had given himself up with only a few hundred troops in attendance, most of the organisation remained intact and still in control of southern Fujian.

After Zheng Zhilong's surrender, his eldest son, Zheng Chenggong (otherwise known in many sources as Koxinga) took his father's place as the new leader of the family. Zheng Chenggong was born in Hirado (a city in Nagasaki prefecture) in 1624 to a Japanese woman whom his father had met during his early years as a merchant participating in the China-Japan trade. Zheng Chenggong had left Japan at the age six to join his father's family in Fujian and was subsequently sent to the original Ming capital, Nanjing 南京, to be given a classical education, presumably in preparation for a career in the Ming government's civil service. The fall of Beijing and the Manchu invasion that followed brought an end to the prospect of Zheng Chenggong becoming an official. Instead, he became involved with his father's attempts to support several Ming loyalist groups, and by the time Zheng Zhilong surrendered, Zheng Chenggong was an important commander within the military branch of his father's organisation. Whether Zheng Chenggong had any true loyalty to the Ming

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<sup>15</sup> See C. R. Boxer, "The Rise and Fall of Nicholas Iquan," *T'sien Hsia Monthly* 11, no. 5 (1941): 401 – 439; and Leonard Blussé, "Minnan-jen or Cosmopolitan? The Rise of Cheng Chih-lung alias Nicolas Iquan," in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. E. B. Vermeer (Leiden: Brill, 1990), for different perspectives on the life and career of Zheng Zhilong.

dynasty or he merely learned from his father's mistake in 1646 is not clear, but either way, despite repeated overtures from the Qing military attempting to induce his surrender, he chose to mount a determined resistance against the Qing invasion of Fujian.<sup>16</sup>

To fight the long bloody war with the Qing, Zheng Chenggong used the profits from his family's trading organisation to build up a new army and navy. When we consider the small territory he controlled relative to the large Qing empire, combined with the fact that his father's military had been exclusively designed to bully other merchant marines and weak Ming naval patrol ships into submission in the coastal waters around China and Taiwan only a few years earlier, the transformation of Zheng Chenggong's organisation into a full-fledged military power on both land and sea was impressive. However, in the long run it was not adequate for defending Fujian, still less for mounting a reconquest of China in the name of the Ming. Zheng Chenggong won some surprising victories, but suffered more defeats, including one spectacular, unsuccessful bid to capture Nanjing in 1659. Ultimately by 1660, the Zheng organisation simply did not have the resources to match those of the Qing, and it became isolated on the small islands of Xiamen 廈門 and Jinmen 金門, off the south-eastern coast of Fujian.

Even though large profits were still being made from the Zheng family's overseas trade, isolation so near the Chinese coast on Xiamen and Jinmen put Zheng Chenggong in a precarious position. Seeking a more secure base from which to continue the war against the Qing, he set his sights on the island of Taiwan, which had several attractive features. Taiwan was close enough to the Chinese coast that a base there would allow the Zheng family to

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<sup>16</sup> For information on the colourful life of Zheng Chenggong, see Donald Keene, *The Battles of Coxinga: Chikamatsu's Puppet Play, Its Background and Importance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), chap. 3; Lynn A. Struve, *The Southern Ming, 1644 – 1662* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Lynn A. Struve, ed. and trans., *Voices From the Ming – Qing Catachism: China in Tigers' Jaws* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), chap. 12; and Ralph C. Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism: History, Myth, and the Hero* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

maintain close contact with their agents and associates on the mainland while being far enough away that the Qing military, which was still lacking an effective naval force, would not easily be able to invade it. The island could also supply raw materials, like sugar, rice, wood, and ungulate skins for the maintenance of Zheng Chenggong's fleet and for export in his trading network. Finally, it lay neatly between China, Japan, and the Philippines, making it potentially a convenient hub for the Zheng family's trading network. Taiwan seemed like the ideal base for Zheng Chenggong's organisation, but there was one obstacle in the form of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, which was already occupying Taiwan.

In the 1620s, the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie had established a colony in the south-western part of Taiwan. For the next forty years it had used the island as a convenient base for its trade with Japan. Initially, Taiwan had given the Dutch company the ability to tap into the lucrative China-Japan trade route, but, by the mid-1630s, Zheng Zhilong had become powerful enough to simply cut the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie out of this trade by sending his ships directly to Japan and preventing any others from going to Taiwan.<sup>17</sup> After this, the Dutch company had substituted silk from Dong Kinh and Bengal for the more valuable, but no longer accessible, Chinese silk in its Japan-bound cargoes.<sup>18</sup> Taiwan, however, had continued to function as a useful way station for the Dutch company's Japan-bound ships and as a supplier of sugar and ungulate skins, which could also be sold for reasonable profits in Japan.<sup>19</sup>

But after 1662, the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie had to operate its trade with Japan without the use of its Taiwan colony. Zheng Chenggong, having decided that Taiwan

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<sup>17</sup> Blussé, "No Boats to China": 67.

<sup>18</sup> Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630 – 1720* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 121 – 122.

<sup>19</sup> See Thomas O. Höllmann, "Formosa and the Trade in Venison and Deer Skins," in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade, C. 1400 – 1750*, eds. Roderich Ptak and Dietmar Rothermund (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991), for information on the importance of skins to the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie trade with Japan.

would serve as a good place to use as a base from which to continue the war against the Qing, launched a large-scale invasion of the island colony in 1661. Early the next year, the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's garrison in Taiwan, seriously outnumbered and poorly supported by the Dutch company's headquarters in Batavia, surrendered to Zheng Chenggong's forces. Zheng Chenggong died a few months later, leaving his dreams of reconquering China unfulfilled. His family, however, was left firmly in control of the southwestern portion of Taiwan.

After Zheng Chenggong's death, his son Zheng Jing became the new head of the family after a brief internal struggle against one of his uncles. Zheng Jing does not seem to have possessed either the obsessive drive to restore the Ming or the military leadership skills of his father. But in spite of repeated attempts by the Qing government to induce his surrender, he never submitted and remained a dangerous enemy of the Qing dynasty for the rest of his life. The Qing military, with the help of a fleet sent by the incensed Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, managed to oust the Zheng family's forces from Xiamen and Jinmen in 1663,<sup>20</sup> but was unable to threaten the family's position in Taiwan because Zheng Jing's navy continued to dominate the Chinese coast and the Taiwan Strait. In the early years of Zheng Jing's rule, the best the Qing government could do to weaken his position was to disrupt Taiwan's ability to trade in China's coastal regions.

Under Zheng Jing's rule, the Zheng family's organisation went through its final major transformation from a Ming loyalist resistance army and navy to the administrators of a *de facto* state on Taiwan. The organisation still controlled a vast military, but in Taiwan they

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<sup>20</sup> Jiang Risheng 江日昇, *Taiwan Waiji* 臺灣外紀 (Project Gutenberg, 2008), <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/27218/pg27218.html.utf8>, sec. 13, accessed September 17, 2010; Lo-Shu Fu, editor and translator, *A Documentary Chronicle of Sino-Western Relations (1644-1820)*, vol. 1 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1966), p. 33; and John E. Wills, Jr., *Pepper, Guns and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China 1622-1681* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 73.

took on the responsibilities of governing a territory in the south-western portion of the island that was much larger than the small islands of Xiamen and Jinmen. The economy and population of Taiwan expanded under the Zheng family's rule, but the organisation never lost its maritime orientation, as the profits from the Zheng family's overseas trade remained the central support of its military and administration.

The Zheng family's administration (which I will refer to throughout this thesis as the "Zheng administration" for the sake of simplicity) acted as the government of Taiwan and the other territories controlled by the Zheng family between 1662 and 1683. In theory the administration was a regional government, governing on behalf of the defunct Ming dynasty,<sup>21</sup> but in practice it was an independent government controlled by three generations of the Zheng family: Zheng Chenggong, Zheng Jing, and finally by Zheng Jing's son after 1681 (who assumed leadership as a child and was in fact only a puppet ruler). The administration itself consisted of various ministers appointed by the Zheng patriarchs who oversaw different aspects of Taiwan's governance. Absolute authority within the administration seems to have rested in the hands of the Zheng patriarchs themselves, however. This meant that the administration's treasury that was used to support the Zheng military and the development of infrastructure in Taiwan was not distinguishable from the personal wealth of the patriarchs. The treasury's funds were therefore drawn from the trade done by the Zheng family's own trading vessels, taxation of the other merchants operating out of the territories under their control, taxation of foreign merchants coming to their

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<sup>21</sup> Hung Chien-chao, "Taiwan Under the Cheng Family, 1662 – 1683: Sinicization After Dutch Rule" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 1981), p. 126; and John E. Wills, Jr., "The Seventeenth-Century Transformation: Taiwan Under the Dutch and the Cheng Regime," in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), p. 97.



territories, and taxation of land.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, the East India Company's employees in Taiwan always simply referred to the government as the "king", meaning the Zheng patriarch.

Agriculture and industry in Taiwan expanded during the rule of the Zheng administration. Under Zheng Jing, the territory under his rule had a population of roughly between 100 000 and 120 000 Chinese settlers, about half of whom had lived in Taiwan during the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's rule from 1624 to 1662; the other half had come with Zheng Chenggong's invasion force or afterwards.<sup>23</sup> This increase in Taiwan's population meant a surge in agricultural development occurred to provide food for all the soldiers and settlers that had flooded in from the mainland. The growing population had also helped a limited number of other industries, already present in the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's colony, to further develop in Taiwan during the Zheng period. These industries included sugar refining, consumable salt production, camphor production, the hunting of ungulates for their skins, and ship-building.<sup>24</sup> But despite its growth under Zheng Jing's rule, Taiwan's internal economy was never close to being large enough to support the Zheng family's vast military organisation, which consisted of hundreds of warships and tens of thousands of soldiers.<sup>25</sup>

Like his father, Zheng Jing depended on overseas trade to sustain his military rather than settled agriculture or industry. The Zheng family's merchant marine was the largest in the western Pacific at the time, with what must have been, at the very least, a fleet of one

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<sup>22</sup> See John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600 – 1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 101 – 102, for information on Zheng administration's revenues.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 96; and Wen-hsiung Hsu, "From Aboriginal Island to Chinese Frontier: The Development of Taiwan before 1683," in *China's Island Frontier: Studies in the Historical Geography of Taiwan*, ed. Ronald G. Knapp (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980), pp. 22 – 23.

<sup>24</sup> Hung, pp. 183 – 185.

<sup>25</sup> One of the East India Company employees who came to Taiwan in 1670 estimated that the army consisted of 70 000 men. Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, p. 68.

hundred large ocean-going ships at their disposal that were used to send regular voyages to Japan, the Philippines, and some parts of South-East Asia, even though direct trade with the latter region had diminished because of the ongoing conflict with the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie after 1662.<sup>26</sup> The patchy nature of the records that have survived from Zheng Taiwan makes understanding the organisation of the merchant community difficult, but based on the observations of East India Company employees in Taiwan, most of the individual trading ships seem to have been owned privately by individual members of a group of wealthy merchants who doubled as the major figures within the Zheng administration, the most important being Zheng Jing himself. There were also some merchants not directly connected with the Zheng administration whom Zheng Jing licensed to send ships to Japan or elsewhere, and some of these were not even residents of Taiwan. For example, merchants on the island of Putuoshan 普陀山, off the coast of Zhejiang, were granted trading licences by Zheng Jing.<sup>27</sup>

The Zheng administration maintained a certain amount of control over the merchants operating out of its territory. It charged customs dues from the East India Company and other foreign merchants who came to Taiwan. It also appointed officials to oversee foreign trade, who often made sure that the patriarch and his immediate family got the best deals from the foreigners. The Zheng merchants' overseas voyages to Japan, the Philippines, and South-East Asia seem to have been coordinated centrally by the Zheng administration, and in the case of their trade with mainland China, which was done clandestinely because of the Qing attempts to block the Taiwan-based merchants, the merchants all worked together

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<sup>26</sup> Hung, p. 185. According to the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's governor of Taiwan, Zheng Chenggong's invasion fleet alone consisted of "several hundreds of war vessels," William Campbell, *Formosa Under the Dutch Described from Contemporary Records* (Taipei: Ch'eng-wen Pub. Co., 1967), p. 413.

<sup>27</sup> Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, p. 69.

through semi-secret agencies that facilitated the smuggling of goods in and out of China.<sup>28</sup>

However, ultimately individual, private Taiwanese merchants, rather than a single collective body, conducted business with foreign merchants in Taiwan. Although many of these merchants who were affiliated with the Zheng family were not actually members of it, for the sake of simplicity I refer to them collectively as the Zheng merchants here.

No record survives of the exact volumes of trade carried by the Zheng merchants, but the profits must have been immense to cover the expense of maintaining the Zheng family's military, the reoccupation of Xiamen and Jinmen in 1674, and the subsequent reinvasion of the mainland during the Sanfan Rebellion. The Zheng family's war on the mainland during this rebellion must have been particularly taxing on the resources accumulated through trade, considering that the war dragged on for more than six years and that the disparity between the sizes of the populations and territories under the control of the Zheng family and the Qing was wide. Under these circumstances, the performance of the Zheng military was just as impressive as their trading network's ability to produce resources to support it. The Zheng military was never able to control more than a small portion of southern Fujian and eastern Guangdong, but, after the forces of the governor of Yunnan, the Zheng family was certainly the second most dangerous antagonist of the Qing dynasty during the rebellion. It continued to fight independently against the Qing in south-eastern China for more than three years after the governors of Fujian and Guangdong had surrendered in late 1676 and early 1677, respectively.<sup>29</sup>

There were limits to the amounts of resources the family's trading network could supply, however. The cost of waging the long war on the mainland and its eventual defeat seems to

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<sup>28</sup> Nan Qi 南棲, "Taiwan Zhengshi Wushang Zhi Yanjiu 臺灣鄭氏五商之研究," *Taiwan Yanjiu Congkan* 臺灣研究叢刊, no. 90 (1966): 45 – 46.

<sup>29</sup> Kai-fu Tsao, "The Rebellion of the Three Feudatories Against the Manchu Throne in China, 1673 – 1681: Its Setting and Significance" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1965), pp. 128 – 129.

have sapped much of the Zheng administration's resource base and organisational integrity. Just as Zheng Chenggong had found in the 1650s, the family's trading network simply could not make up for the disparity in manpower and raw materials available to them and to the Qing. In the late 1670s, the Zheng military once again found itself isolated on Xiamen and Jinmen, and in 1680 they were again forced to give up even those toeholds.

The cost of the war and the eventual defeat had other negative consequences for the Zheng family. Trade with Japan, the Philippines, and South-East Asia continued, but the Zheng merchants' smuggling connections in the important Chinese market had disappeared after the second loss of Xiamen and Jinmen left them with no better access than other seaborne merchants in the region. The disruption to the trading network, combined with the exhaustion of the Zheng administration's treasury, made it difficult for it to find sufficient funds to pay for the maintenance of its tattered armies, desperately needed with the invasion of Taiwan by the Qing dynasty looming in the near future. After Zheng Jing's retreat to Taiwan in 1680, many former Zheng men and ships deserted or defected to the Qing, thus increasing the resources and expertise of the Qing military for the creation of an effective invasion force, even as the Zheng administration struggled to reorganise its holdings in Taiwan in the immediate aftermath of the failed campaign.

The death of Zheng Jing in 1681 further complicated the situation. A bitter internal struggle left his eldest son dead and his second son, then eleven years old, the puppet patriarch of Taiwan controlled by a former councillor of Zheng Jing. In the summer of 1683, the Qing force launched their assault, and won a major naval battle near the Penghu Islands 澎湖群島 (in the center of the Taiwan Strait). The administration promptly surrendered to

the Qing without any further fighting, thus ending the twenty-two year history of Zheng Taiwan.<sup>30</sup>

### **The East India Company's Plans for Re-entry into the Western Pacific**

The English East India Company had been originally chartered in 1600 by Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533 – 1603) as a London-based company of merchants to participate in the maritime trade of the lands that lay east of the Cape of Good Hope. The company had been rechartered several times since its establishment and its structure had evolved over the course of the century, but its singular purpose, the generation of revenue for its investors, had remained the same. By the 1660s, when the establishment of relationship between the East India Company and the Zheng family was first proposed, the highest level of the company's hierarchy was a governing body in London made up of a twenty-four member board called the Court of Committees, elected annually by all the stock-holding members of the company, who theoretically held the ultimate decision-making power within the organisation.<sup>31</sup> However, the practical reality was that many important decisions were made by the Court's subordinate managerial bodies in its Asian factories, because of the five or six-month delay in communication between London and Asia. The three primary managerial bodies that represented the Court in Asia were the Presidency of Surat, the Agency of Madras (both in the Indian subcontinent), and the Agency of Banten, located on the island of Java.<sup>32</sup> These three bodies each consisted of a council of employees

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<sup>30</sup> For detailed accounts of the history of the Zheng family, see Patrizia Carioti, "The Zhengs' Maritime Power in the International Context of the 17th Century Far East Seas: The Rise of a 'Centralised Piratical Organisation' and Its Gradual Development into an Informal 'State'," *Ming Qing Yanjiu* (1996): 29 – 67; Wills, "The Seventeenth-Century Transformation"; Hung; and Shepherd, chap. 4.

<sup>31</sup> K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660 – 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 27.

<sup>32</sup> Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient 1600 – 1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 90.

appointed by the Court of Committees whose chief held the title of president or agent, and was the company's highest authority within their respective factories in Surat, Mardras, and Banten, and within the subordinate factories that fell under the agency or presidency's sphere of control.

In the early seventeenth century, the Agency of Banten in Java, operating the East India Company's easternmost headquarters, had overseen the establishment of subordinate factories in Pattani on the Malay Peninsula, Ayutthaya, the capital of Siam, and Hirado in Japan. However, all of these were withdrawn in 1623 because they failed to make profits for the company.<sup>33</sup> Interest in reopening trade in the western Pacific region was intermittently expressed both in London and Banten after 1623, but until the late 1660s, no serious steps were taken towards the East India Company's re-entry into the region. Various plans for trade in the western Pacific were proposed, but the Court of Committees in London repeatedly rejected them. The Banten agency sent a handful of voyages to Manila, Macau, Siam, and Cambodia in the intervening years, but these were sporadic, largely unsuccessful, and all done without the knowledge or consent of the Court in London.<sup>34</sup>

In the late 1660s, the East India Company's volume of trade was expanding,<sup>35</sup> and the Court of Committees began for the first time in forty years to look seriously at the possibility of reopening regular trade in the western Pacific. The three territories in which the Court was most interested were China, the Philippines, and Japan, which were also, by no coincidence, the most important destinations of the Zheng merchants' ships. Identifying the most important trading territories in the region was easy, but the real difficulty facing the

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<sup>33</sup> D. K. Bassett, "The Trade of the English East India Company in the Far East, 1623 – 84: Part I: 1623 – 65," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1/2 (April 1960): 35.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*: 37 – 41. The one exception was the voyage of the *Surat* to Macau in 1663, which the court was aware of. See Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China 1635 – 1834*, vol. 1 (Taipei: Ch'eng-Wen Publishing Company, 1966), pp. 33 – 35; and Foster, vol. 11, 1661 – 1664, p. 330.

<sup>35</sup> Chaudhuri, p. 345.

East India Company was the problem of gaining access to them. To develop strategies to overcome this problem, a sub-committee was established in 1668.<sup>36</sup>

The sub-committee's best idea for accessing China was to enlist the help of the English government to petition the Portuguese government to allow the East India Company to trade in its enclave of Macau in southern China.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the best idea they had for accessing the Philippines was to enlist the help of the English ambassador to Spain to petition the Spanish government for the right to trade in Manila.<sup>38</sup> Both initiatives failed miserably because of the uncooperativeness of the Iberian governments, but in the meantime the sub-committee concentrated on reviewing the company's options for establishing trade with Japan.

The subcommittee concluded that the most effective way to conduct trade with Japan would be to establish a factory in some territory in the western Pacific where ungulate skins could be easily bought for resale in Japan. The Dutch company, the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, was the only European group then allowed to trade in Japan and served as the only model available for the East India Company to emulate. The three places that were considered as skin suppliers were Siam, Cambodia, and Taiwan. The East India Company had some knowledge of Siam and Cambodia because of the unauthorised voyages sent from Banten to those places during the previous decade, but the subcommittee decided that Zheng-ruled Taiwan would be the best option. The ongoing hostility between the Zheng family and the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie meant that the latter could no longer send ships or merchants to the island. The Dutch company would therefore not be able to interfere with the East India Company's skin-buying operations, which it likely would

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<sup>36</sup> A Court of Committees, May 22, 1668, in Sainsbury, vol. 13, *1668 – 1670*, pp. 62 – 63.

<sup>37</sup> The East India Company to Sir Robert Southwell, June 18, 1668, in Sainsbury, vol. 13., *1668 – 1670*, p. 67.

<sup>38</sup> The East India Company to the Earl of Sandwich, May 29, 1668, in Sainsbury, vol. 13, *1668 – 1670*, pp. 65 – 66.

have tried to do in either Siam or Cambodia to minimise the English company's ability to compete with it in Japan.<sup>39</sup>

In the fall of 1670, the Court of Committees decided to send ships to Taiwan to establish a relationship with the Zheng family, but this move had already been pre-empted by their agent in Banten, Henry Dacres (fl. 1638 – 1682). Dacres was a long time company employee, and was one of the longest serving agents in Banten, holding the post from 1669 to 1676. He was also a strong proponent of the company re-expansion into the western Pacific, so when a letter sent by Zheng Jing, inviting any willing merchant or group of merchants in South-East Asia to send ships for trade in Taiwan, came into his hands in the spring of 1670, he immediately decided to act upon it. That summer he ordered two ships fitted out for a voyage to Taiwan to establish contact with the Zheng family there.<sup>40</sup> Dacres was thus the initiator of the trading relationship between the East India Company and the Zheng family in 1670 and, because of his relatively long term as agent in Banten, he served as the overseer until 1676, the year that he was recalled to England.

The Court of Committees and Dacres both agreed that establishing a relationship with the Zheng family, and subsequently a factory in Taiwan would be a useful step for expanding into the western Pacific, but they differed slightly in their understandings of the ways that it would be useful. The Court saw a Taiwan factory primarily as a supporting feature for their yet-unrealised Japanese trade as it had been for the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie before it lost Taiwan in 1662. Dacres, on the other hand, had a more developed and ambitious vision of what a Taiwan factory could do for the East India Company.

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<sup>39</sup> A Committee to Consider About a Trade to Japan, October 21, 1668, in Sainsbury, vol. 13, *1668 – 1670*, pp. 105 – 106.

<sup>40</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to George Foxcroft and Council at Madras, April 7, 1670, in Chang, pp. 50 – 51.



Supporting the company's Japanese trade was a potential function of the Taiwan factory, but for him it was a secondary role.<sup>41</sup>

Dacres recognised that the Zheng merchants of Taiwan traded with all three of the region's major markets. He therefore hoped that the Zheng merchants' strong commercial links throughout the region meant that they could be utilised as middlemen for indirect trade between the East India Company and the important markets that were inaccessible to it, specifically China and the Philippines. In Dacres' imagination, the company would be able to import goods from South-East Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and Europe, including cloth, lead, pepper, sandalwood, putchuck, and coral among other things, and trade them to the Zheng merchants for silver, copper, gold, and a limited quantity of Chinese products including silk, musk, and a spice known as "China root" (the roots of different species of *Smilax* indigenous to China). The goods that the East India Company traded for in Taiwan could then be re-exported to the English company's other markets in South-East Asia and beyond, and possibly to Japan if the company was allowed to trade there directly.<sup>42</sup>

In 1673, the company's first ship to reach Nagasaki since the 1620s was refused the right to trade by the Japanese authorities, which stripped the Taiwan factory of its potential role as a supporting feature of the Court of Committees' planned Japanese trade. The refusal by the Japanese authorities to allow the East India Company to trade in its ports meant that the company had no direct access to any of the three major markets in the region. Thus any hope of the East India Company participating in the trade passing between those three places rested on the possibility of indirect trade. Dacres' envisioned role of the Taiwan

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<sup>41</sup> For some of Dacres' doubts about Taiwan's usefulness as a supplier of skins and sugar for the Japan market, see Instructions from Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to David Stephens, Samuel Baron, Simon Delboe, and other factors for their settlement at Taiwan, June 9, 1672, in Chang, pp. 127 – 128.

<sup>42</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to George Foxcroft and Council at Madras, April 7, 1670, in Chang, pp. 50 – 51.

factory (which had been established as planned in 1672) as a centre from which indirect trade could be conducted through the Zheng merchants became its sole purpose within the company's structure. At the same time, that role of the factory became the company's only serious hope for expansion into the western Pacific.

In fairness, it is necessary to mention that the East India Company also established a factory in Dong Kinh in 1672 and one in Siam in 1674, but neither of these places was at all suitable for conducting indirect trade to the rest of the region through. Merchants operating out of both places visited Japan and the Philippines, but compared to the Zheng merchants operating out of Taiwan, their numbers were insignificant. To illustrate this, from 1670 to 1683 when the East India Company maintained its relationship with the Zheng family, the Zheng merchants sent one hundred forty-two ships to Japan. In the same period, only forty Siam-based merchant ships sailed to Japan, while only twenty Dong Kinh-based ships arrived there.<sup>43</sup> In the case of the Philippines, during the same period, the Zheng merchants sent twenty-seven ships there from Taiwan alone (disregarding the ships that sailed from the Zheng family's mainland territory during the Sanfan Rebellion), compared to ten ships owned by Siamese merchants and only one owned by a Dong Kinh merchant.<sup>44</sup> The volume of trade through Taiwan on its way to Japan and the Philippines was therefore much greater than the volumes that passed through either Siam or Dong Kinh. The East India Company's factories in those two places had far less opportunity to sell their goods for re-export to merchants than the factory in Taiwan did, simply because there were so many more Taiwan-based ships and merchants participating in the region's maritime trade.

## **The East India Company and the Trading World of the Western Pacific after 1670**

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<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 6.2.

<sup>44</sup> See Appendix 5.2.

In 1670, the year the East India Company's first ships arrived in Taiwan, the structure of maritime trade in the western Pacific was on the cusp of changing. In the first few years of the company's attempts to trade through Taiwan, little was accomplished. However, once the changes to the structure of the region's trade took effect in the mid-1670s, the company began finding opportunities to play a minor, though not insignificant or unprofitable role in the exchange of goods throughout the western Pacific. Even if the company remained limited to operating indirectly through the Zheng merchants, this was a major improvement for its situation because the prevailing conditions of the region's trading world prior to the mid-1670s had given it almost no opportunities to participate in anything but insignificant ways.

The structural change that trade in the region underwent in the 1670s was China's declining importance to the region's maritime trade. In the 1660s, the Qing government's attempts to limit the Zheng merchants' access to China's coasts had diminished the flow of goods entering and leaving China, but the Zheng merchants, who were a dominant force in the trade of the region by this time, were still able to circumvent the Qing government's attempts at blocking them and maintain the integrity of the trade routes between China and the other two major markets of Japan and the Philippines. The advent of the Sanfan Rebellion in the early 1670s exacerbated the decline, and effectively reduced China to a minor component of region's maritime trade until the Qing government opened its ports to foreign trade in 1684, the year after the Zheng family surrendered their control of Taiwan.<sup>45</sup>

The temporary removal of China as a major component of the region's maritime trade caused an overall contraction in the western Pacific's trading network, but this effect was mitigated by the redistribution in the weight of importance among the different routes that

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<sup>45</sup> Fu, vol. 1, pp. 61 – 62.

criss-crossed the region. South-East Asia, particularly the larger states like Dong Kinh, Cochinchina, and Siam, became more important trading partners for Japan and the Philippines, because the Zheng merchants and the other maritime traders in the region began looking for substitute goods to replace the Chinese goods they could no longer access in sufficient quantities to make up their Japanese and Philippine cargoes.

The East India Company therefore arrived at an opportune time. The company was essentially part of the South-East Asian branch of the western Pacific region's trade because it had access to the same types of goods that other South-East Asian merchants had (cloth, spices, dyes, etc.), and also hoped to trade for the same types of goods as they did (silver, copper, and, to a lesser extent, Chinese silk and other luxury goods). From the advent of Sanfan Rebellion until to the fall of the Zheng family's rule of Taiwan, the Zheng merchants needed more and more non-Chinese cloth for their trade with Japan and the Philippines, and were willing to expend more and more of their silver and copper on it. The East India Company needed copper for other parts of its trading network, and had cloth it wished to trade, so its relationship with the Zheng family allowed it to participate in the region's trade for a short time as an indirect trading partner of both Japan and the Philippines.

The following chapters of this thesis will examine the specific ways that this temporary change in the structure of the western Pacific's maritime trade affected the Zheng merchants' trading network and how they reacted to it. It will also examine how the East India Company's attempt at establishing itself as a participant within the trading world of the western Pacific through its factory in Zheng Taiwan was affected by these changes. To this end, I have divided the remainder of this thesis into three chapters that look at three basic phases the Zheng merchants' trading network underwent during the period the East India Company was trying to become part of it.

The first phase, from 1670 to 1673, was the most stable period of Taiwan's trade during the Zheng family-East India Company relationship, which also made it the least profitable for the company. The second phase, from 1675 to 1679, began after a two-year interruption of the East India Company's voyages in the western Pacific caused by the outbreak of the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672 – 1674), which temporarily forced the English company out of the region. These were the years during which the Zheng family's organisation had taken advantage of the Sanfan Rebellion to reoccupy Xiamen and Jinmen, and then had launched an invasion of southern Fujian that resulted in a protracted struggle against the Qing dynasty. During this phase the East India Company's trade with Taiwan was at its most profitable because the Zheng merchants' trading network was disrupted, but they were able to keep it mostly intact by shifting some of its focus from China to South-East Asia. The final phase, 1680 to 1683, covers the years between the collapse of the Zheng family's war on the mainland and their final surrender to the Qing military. The disintegration of Taiwan's trade with China combined with the internal economic turmoil caused by the political unrest within the Zheng-ruled territory did not do much more than modest damage to the Zheng merchants' trading network, but the East India Company had difficulty collecting its debts, which hurt its trade during these final years.

## **Chapter II: The Early Years of the East India Company's Relationship with the Zheng Family, 1670 – 1673**

The first phase of the thirteen year relationship between the East India Company and the Zheng family began with the arrival of the first East India Company fleet at Taiwan in the summer of 1670 and ended with the departure of the final ship of the second fleet in the spring of 1673. These voyages to Taiwan were the first stage in the company's plan for re-entry into the western Pacific. The voyages' primary purpose was to establish a relationship with the Zheng family and then establish a company factory in Taiwan that would facilitate the company's trade throughout the region.

The plan had been devised primarily by Henry Dacres, who also oversaw its implementation from his post as the East India Company's agent in Banten. However, he had to defer to the direction of the Court of Committees in London who sent him general instructions about the implementation of the plan. The Court was primarily interested in trade with Japan, so according to their vision, the plan for the company's re-entry into the region saw the Taiwan factory as a way station for East India Company ships bound from Banten to Nagasaki, and as a supplier of Taiwanese ungulate skins and sugar, Chinese silk, and other Chinese goods that could be re-traded to the Japanese merchants in Nagasaki.

Dacres accepted the Court's vision of Taiwan as a supporting base for Japanese trade, but he also saw other opportunities in the establishment of a new factory there. According to Dacres' vision, a factory on Taiwan could be used to trade indirectly with other parts of the region. The company could trade its cloth and other goods to the Zheng merchants in exchange for the Chinese goods to be sent to Japan, as well as some that would also be re-exported to Europe or other parts of the East India Company's trading network. He also imagined that the factory could trade the company's goods for silver, both in the form of

bars and Spanish dollars, and copper, which the Zheng merchants imported from Japan and the Philippines each year.

During the early years of the East India Company's relationship with the Zheng family, in 1670 to 1673, the company's efforts to achieve both objectives of the plan, that is, support for direct trade to Japan and indirect trade with China and the Philippines, were disappointed. The part of the plan the Court of Committees had insisted on, the use of Taiwan as a way station between Banten and Nagasaki and as a supplier of goods for the Japanese market, was rendered pointless when the Japanese authorities denied the East India Company the right to trade in their ports. The part of the plan that Dacres had conceived, which envisioned the new Taiwan factory managing indirect trade with China and the Philippines through the Zheng merchants, was also highly unsuccessful during these early years of the East India Company-Zheng family relationship, and there were several more complicated reasons for this.

In the case of China, the Zheng merchants' access to Chinese goods was becoming increasingly difficult and expensive because of policies the Qing government implemented in the 1660s to block maritime trade along the Chinese coast. This meant that the volumes of goods that the Zheng merchants were exporting from China each year were relatively smaller than they had been before this blockade. As a result, almost all of the Chinese goods the Zheng merchants managed to export were needed for their Japanese and Philippine cargoes, and there was no surplus available for the East India Company to buy.

Dacres' hope that the company could trade its cloth to the Zheng merchants for silver and copper was also not workable during this phase of the company's trade with Taiwan, because the Zheng merchants were not interested in using any of their silver or copper to trade for anything more than trivial amounts of the East India Company's cloth, despite

their diminishing access to Chinese goods. Dacres had imagined the Zheng merchants using the company's cloth as cargo for their Philippine trade, but this would have meant that the Zheng merchants would have had to invest some quantity of their silver and copper into the company's cloth rather than into silk and other luxury goods from China, which they had traditionally traded for each year. The Zheng merchants had little interest in doing this because even though Chinese silk and other luxury goods had become more expensive and difficult to acquire relative to the years before 1664, Chinese goods were still the best investment for the Zheng merchants' Japanese and Philippine silver and copper. This meant that the company was able to sell almost none of its cloth to the Zheng merchants during these first few years of its relationship with the Zheng family.

Finally, the East India Company had difficulty because it was beset with competition even in the relatively minor role it was relegated to as a supplier of South-East Asian, Indian, and European goods. There were numerous other merchants from South-East Asia who were supplying the same types of goods as the company did to the Zheng merchants in Taiwan. When the company's fleets arrived, the Zheng merchants already had access to pepper, ivory, birds' nests, saltpetre, lead, and other types of goods that could be got throughout South-East Asia, so the company had difficulty making profitable trades for even the small quantities of goods the Zheng merchants were willing to take from them.

### **The East India Company's First Voyages to Taiwan**

From 1670 to 1673, only two fleets of East India Company ships arrived at Taiwan intact, though three were sent there. The first fleet was sent from Banten by Henry Dacres in the summer of 1670 in response to Zheng Jing's letters inviting South-East Asian merchants to come to Taiwan. The fleet consisted of two ships, the *Bantam* and the *Pearl*. The leader of



this expedition was a recently employed servant of the East India Company named Ellis Crisp (d. 1671).<sup>46</sup> Crisp was well-received by the Zheng administration when he arrived, but his expedition managed to do only a very minimal amount trade with the Zheng merchants in Taiwan.

In late 1670 Dacres received a report from Crisp in Taiwan that gave a grim assessment of the trading conditions there. Dacres, however, was undeterred and decided to send a second expedition with Crisp acting as co-leader the following year. This voyage was intended to first solidify the tentative agreements made between Crisp and Zheng Jing the previous year for the establishment of a permanent East India Company trading factory in Taiwan. After landing at Taiwan the ships were then to press on for Nagasaki in Japan to launch the plans that the East India Company's Court of Committees had been making for the re-establishment of trade with Japan since the late 1660s.<sup>47</sup> Of the three ships that comprised the second fleet, only the small *Camel*, the fleet's pilot ship, arrived at Taiwan. The other two ships were lost at sea along with all of their cargoes and crews, including the unfortunate Crisp, so the East India Company and the Zheng family had to wait until 1673 to resume their commercial relationship.<sup>48</sup>

The third fleet sent to Taiwan, actually the second to arrive there, also consisted of three ships: the *Return* and the *Experiment* (both large vessels sent directly from London to Banten specifically for the voyage to Taiwan), and the *Camel*, once again sent as the fleet's pilot ship. The original leader of the expedition grew ill and died between Banten and Taiwan, so the man who assumed control was another employee of the English company named Simon Delboe (d. 1675), who is primarily remembered by history as the author of the 'Japan Diary'

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<sup>46</sup> Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, pp. 62 – 70.

<sup>47</sup> Commission and instructions from Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to James Arwaker, Ellis Crisp, and Charles Frith, June 30, 1671, in Chang, pp. 91 – 99.

<sup>48</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to the East India Company in London, July 28, 1672, in Chang, p. 142.

from the *Return*'s voyage to Nagasaki in 1673.<sup>49</sup> The plan for this third voyage was more or less the same as Ellis Crisp's second expedition: land at Taiwan, negotiate with the Zheng administration for the establishment of a permanent factory there, and then press on to Nagasaki to re-establish trade with Japan.

The second part of the plan was an unambiguous failure. The *Return*, the only one of the three ships to sail from Taiwan to Japan in 1673, was turned away by the Japanese authorities without being allowed to trade. However, the expedition was able to do a very small amount of trade in Taiwan and managed to reach an agreement with the Zheng administration that allowed them to establish a factory in the town of Dongning 東寧, the Zheng family's main centre in Taiwan in the area of modern day Tainan. A small group of East India Company employees was left in charge of the new factory after the *Experiment* and the *Camel* sailed back towards Banten in the fall of 1672 and the *Return* sailed for Japan the following spring.<sup>50</sup>

No ships were sent to Taiwan in 1673 or 1674 because the outbreak of the Third Anglo-Dutch War between England and the Netherlands (which lasted from 1672 to 1674) meant that the East India Company and the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie were also at war. In the western Pacific, the Dutch company was by far the stronger of the two; its fleets succeeded in capturing many of the East India Company's ships in the region, including the *Experiment* and the *Camel* on their return journeys from Taiwan. A Dutch blockade of Banten also temporarily put a halt to most of the English company's operations out of that factory until news of peace between the companies' respective states reached their Asian

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<sup>49</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to the East India Company in London, September 16, 1672, in Chang, p. 149. See also Japan Diary, June 29, 1673 to August 28, 1673, in Engelbert Kaempfer, *The History of Japan Together with a Description of the Kingdom of Siam 1690–92*, trans. J. G. Scheuchzer, vol. 3 (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1906), pp. 341–360.

<sup>50</sup> Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, pp. 62–63.

establishments in the fall of 1674.<sup>51</sup> As a result, the next voyage that Henry Dacres sent from Banten to Taiwan did not sail until the spring of 1675.

For both East India Company expeditions that reached Taiwan between 1670 and 1672, business there was disappointing. In 1670, Ellis Crisp wrote from Taiwan to Henry Dacres in Banten, “As the trade is now, great quantities of goods will not sell.” He went on to complain that, “Noe kintlage [heavy goods that could be used for ballast] can be procured heere, only sugar, & Japan copper from the King [Zheng Jing], and that in noe great quantities.”<sup>52</sup> In 1673, Simon Delboe, the leader of the second voyage to reach Taiwan, echoed Crisp’s sentiments. He lamented in even stronger terms about the difficulties that his expedition had met in Taiwan after managing to muster an export cargo worth only 7804.25 Spanish dollars for the *Experiment* that consisted mostly of low quality Japanese copper bought with Spanish dollars the fleet had brought from Banten.<sup>53</sup>

Wee sufficiently by our almost 8 months’ experience have experienced how little here is to be sold & how much expended. Since the *Experiment’s* departure [in October 1672] we have made no sales worth mentioning. We can get no ready mony for goods but they impose on us trifles for toyes, rating the price at their pleasure, & constraine us to be satisfied.<sup>54</sup>

The expeditions’ leaders and Henry Dacres found a variety of excuses to explain away the depressing results of both voyages, including the perfidious double-dealings of the 1670 expedition’s ethnic-Chinese translator,<sup>55</sup> the non-arrival of the Manila galleons that year,<sup>56</sup> and the wreck of a Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie ship heading to Japan off the

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<sup>51</sup> See C. R. Boxer, “The Third Dutch War in the East (1672 – 4),” in *Dutch Merchants and Mariners in Asia, 1602 – 1795* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988), for a detailed account of the conflict in both the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific.

<sup>52</sup> Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, pp. 64 – 65.

<sup>53</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, November 15, 1672, in Chang, pp. 160 – 162.

<sup>54</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, February 12, 1673, in Chang, p. 170.

<sup>55</sup> Commission and instructions from Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to James Arwaker, Ellis Crisp, and Charles Frith, June 30, 1671, in Chang, p. 94.

<sup>56</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to the East India Company in London, January 30, 1671, in Chang, p. 81.

coast of north Taiwan in 1672, from which Zheng Jing's men managed to recover a large supply of pepper, cloth, and other goods that supposedly glutted the market in Taiwan that year.<sup>57</sup> All of these things likely had a negative influence on the East India Company's trade, but the real problems rested on the overall configuration of Taiwan's trade with the rest of the region during these early years of the company's attempts to trade there.

### **The Zheng Merchants' Diminished Access to the Chinese Market**

The major factor that limited the Zheng merchants' overall trade in the western Pacific was their diminished access to silk and other Chinese goods, which in turn limited the access of the East India Company and other merchants from South-East Asia who wished to purchase Chinese goods in Taiwan after the early 1660s. The primary cause of this difficulty was the Qing government's attempts to prevent the Zheng merchants from trading with the Chinese coastal populations. These attempts were never fully successful, as the Zheng merchants continued to find ways to get around them, but the difficulty and expense that they forced the Zheng merchants to incur rendered the volume of trade passing between China and Taiwan much reduced relative to the volumes that had been maintained before the Qing government blockaded the Zheng merchants' access to the Chinese coast.

In 1662, the last serious claimant to the throne of the Ming dynasty had been captured and executed in south-western China.<sup>58</sup> This had left the Zheng family, who then held only Taiwan and a small parcel of territory around the islands of Xiamen and Jinmen in southern Fujian province, as the sole remnant of the Ming loyalist resistance against the new Qing dynasty. With all of the Qing's other major enemies eliminated, neutralising the danger the

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<sup>57</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to the East India Company in London, September 16, 1672, in Chang, p. 154.

<sup>58</sup> Struve, *The Southern Ming*, p. 178.

Zheng family posed to their state had become their foremost military priority. In late 1663, working with a fleet sent by the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, the Qing military had succeeded in dislodging the Zheng forces from Xiamen and Jinmen, but the balance of naval power between the Qing state and the Zheng family still rested with the Zheng family. The Zheng family's naval dominance meant that Taiwan remained safe from invasion and posed a potential security risk for the Qing through the 1660s.

Long before 1663, when the Qing military had needed to enlist the help of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie to capture the offshore islands of Xiamen and Jinmen, the military's weakness at sea had been obvious to the Qing government. At least six years earlier, the Qing rulers had begun looking for alternative strategies for reducing or eliminating the threat that the Zheng family posed to their state. In 1657 an official named Huang Wu 黃梧 (d. 1674), a former Zheng commander who had been ennobled by the Qing government for defecting, had proposed one such strategy that was seriously considered and eventually adopted by the Qing government. He had argued that the Zheng family was able to continue its resistance against the Qing even when they occupied only Xiamen and Jinmen, "because the maritime population [had] ventured to supply them with food, oil, iron, and masts."<sup>59</sup> He therefore submitted a simple and drastic plan that took advantage of the Zheng family's apparent dependence on the Chinese coastal population: burn all the ships on the coast, prohibit any further foreign trade, and forcibly relocate the entire populations of Guangdong, Fujian, Zhejiang, Jiangsu 江蘇, and Shandong 山東 that lived near enough to the sea to do business with the Zheng merchants inland.

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<sup>59</sup> Jiang, sec. 11. This translation is taken from Hsieh Kuo Ching, "Removal of the Coastal Population in Early Tsing Period," trans. Chen Tung Hsieh, *The Chinese Science Review* 15 (January 1932): 565. Hsieh's very old article is still quite valuable because of its extensive quotes from primary source documents.

Huang Wu's justification of this plan focussed primarily on how it would weaken the Zheng family by cutting off its supply of basic materials needed to maintain its military organisation, but he would have known that, if successfully implemented, the plan would also have prevented the Zheng merchants from conducting their usual trade along the coast: buying Chinese silk and other luxury goods with Japanese and American silver, an exchange crucial to the maintenance of the organisation. The Qing central government was evidently aware of this; a later official edict demanding a suppression of maritime trade listed silk and silk products among the types of goods known to have been regularly and illegally traded to the Zheng family and their followers.<sup>60</sup>

Hoping to hurt the Zheng family in any way it could, the Qing government soon accepted Huang Wu's advice, but several years passed before it was able to begin implementing it because the Zheng family forces had been able to project power along much of the China's coasts until their 1659 defeat at Nanjing.<sup>61</sup> In 1660, when the Qing military had the Zheng family forces isolated in the Xiamen area, they began carrying out Huang Wu's plan in all its maritime provinces. The Zheng family's continued presence in Xiamen and Jinmen left a gap in the Fujian portion of the evacuation area for a time, but when they were finally driven from those islands in 1663, the Qing military was able to complete the implementation of the policy.

The thoroughness with which the policy was applied varied from place to place. In the northern provinces, Shandong, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang, the implementation was spotty, but in the southern provinces, Guangdong and Fujian (especially Fujian for obvious reasons), it was far more strictly applied. Sparing only the larger cities, the Qing implemented the policy

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<sup>60</sup> Fu, vol. 1, p. 28.

<sup>61</sup> Hsieh: 567; and Robert. B. Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback: Manchu Politics in the Oboi Regency 1661 – 1669* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 127 – 128.

by clearing a strip of land of its inhabitants from the sea to what was usually about fifteen to twenty kilometres inland. Towns and villages within this strip were razed, fortifications were built in strategic areas, and regular patrols were sent to prevent people from sneaking back in.<sup>62</sup> The coastal evacuation policy remained in full effect until late 1668, when the central government deemed the various seaports along the coast sufficiently fortified against the Zheng merchants and other sea-bound outlaws and decided that allowing the displaced population to return to their homes would no longer pose a danger to the state. Maritime trade remained prohibited until after the fall of the Zheng family's rule of Taiwan, however.<sup>63</sup>

Evaluating the effects of the coastal evacuations and trade prohibition on the Zheng merchants' ability to smuggle goods in and out of China is difficult because the secretive nature of the trade meant there were few records kept. Based mostly on the writings of contemporary, or near contemporary, observers within China, some modern historians have argued that these policies were largely ineffective at disrupting the Zheng merchants' commercial network along the Chinese coast.<sup>64</sup> The endurance of Zheng merchants' trading network lends credence to this position; from 1664 to 1673, the first period that the Zheng family did not occupy Xiamen and Jinmen, they were obviously not completely cut off from the mainland. It is known that after the cities on Xiamen and Jinmen were razed and abandoned, a collection of pirates and smugglers began squatting on the islands. They became loosely affiliated with the Zheng family and helped its merchants smuggle goods in

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<sup>62</sup> Hsieh: 579 – 583; and Lawrence D. Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and the Consolidation of Ch'ing Rule 1661 – 1684* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 43 – 46.

<sup>63</sup> Fu, vol. 1, p. 43. Ten years later, in the final stages of the Sanfan Rebellion, the coast was once again evacuated. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 50.

<sup>64</sup> Cheng K'o-ch'eng, "Cheng Ch'eng-kung's Maritime Expansion and Early Ch'ing Coastal Prohibition," trans. Burchard Mansvelt Beck, in *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, ed. E. B. Vermeer (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 240 – 241; Jane Kate Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 69; Ng Chin-Keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast 1683 – 1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983), p. 53; and Hung, p. 190.

and out of Qing China.<sup>65</sup> Probably even more helpful to the Zheng merchants' smuggling efforts were the apparently numerous Qing officials who were receiving bribes in return for turning a blind eye.<sup>66</sup>

Intuitively however, it is hard to accept that the necessity of smuggling all the goods in and out of China, with the risk of getting caught and the added expenses of bribery, combined with the general economic devastation caused by the coastal evacuations,<sup>67</sup> did not have a negative impact on the Zheng merchants' ability to trade. And, in fact, it is not very difficult to find evidence that there was indeed a negative impact on their trade. When the records kept in Nagasaki at the other end of the China-Japan trade route are examined, a noticeable drop in the volume of the Zheng merchants' trade is evident. By counting the numbers of ships coming from territories controlled by or affiliated with the Zheng family, it can be estimated that from 1654 to 1663 the number of Zheng ships arriving at Nagasaki averaged 21.5 per year. In contrast, after Xiamen and Jinmen fell to the Qing in 1663 and before they were reoccupied by the Zheng family in 1674, the average number of Zheng ships arriving at Nagasaki every year was only 11.4.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, the average value of officially recorded Chinese imports to Japan between 1654 and 1663 was 67 893.5 kg of silver per year,

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<sup>65</sup> Zhou Kai 周凱, *Xiamen Zhi* 廈門志, vol. 5 (Taibei 臺北: Taiwan Yinhang 臺灣銀行, 1961), p. 671.

<sup>66</sup> Yu Yonghe, *Small Sea Travel Diaries: Yu Yonghe's Records of Taiwan*, trans. Macabe Keliher (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2004), p. 156; and Cheng, p. 241. The Qing government's own edicts make it clear they were concerned about the loyalty of their officers and officials in charge of enforcing their policies on the coast; see Fu, vol. 1, p. 21, 28.

<sup>67</sup> See the report given by Fan Chengmo 范承謨 (d. 1676) the *zongdu* 總督 (governor-general) of Fujian in 1673 for an account of the economic effects of the coastal evacuation policy in his province. Fang Chengmo 范承謨, "Tiaochen Minsheng Lihai Shu 條陳閩省利害疏," in *Huangchao Jingshi Wenbian* 皇朝經世文編, comp. He Changling 賀長齡 (Shanghai 上海: Guangbai Song Zhai 廣百宋齋, 1827), sec. 84.

<sup>68</sup> See Appendices 6.1 and 6.2. For the 1654 to 1663 period, I have counted all the ships coming from Anhui 安海, Jinmen, and Taiwan. The town of Anhui, also known Anping 安平, had been the base of the Zheng family in Zheng Zhilong's time. After negotiations between Zheng Chenggong and the Qing government broke down in 1656, the town was probably not directly under Zheng family control. However, Zheng ships arriving at Nagasaki still seem to have been identified as originating there, even if they were actually sailing from Xiamen. For the 1664 to 1673 period, I have counted the ships sailing from Taiwan and the ships from Putuoshan, as the Zheng family appears to have been giving licenses to merchants from that island to send ships sail to Nagasaki. Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, p. 69.



compared to 55 142.77 kg between 1664 and 1673 (this includes those goods brought not only by the Zheng merchants' ships, but also ships belonging to ethnic-Chinese merchants from other parts of Asia, and smuggling ships from mainland China not affiliated with the Zheng family).<sup>69</sup>

The relative difficulty importing and exporting goods in and out of China, as experienced by the Zheng merchants, aligns with the observations of the East India Company's employees in Taiwan, who reported that the Chinese goods available for purchase there were few and expensive. In 1670, Ellis Crisp in Taiwan reported to his superior in Banten, Henry Dacres, "Att present the towne [Dongning] is very empty of goods, the Japon joncks haveing carried away great quantities." Crisp went on to state that "Great quantities of these goods went off in the Dutch's time & would againe if they had peace with China."<sup>70</sup>

Crisp also complained that the Zheng merchants did not trade for East India Company goods (especially pepper) in larger quantities primarily because the Qing trade prohibitions prevented these bulkier types of goods from being smuggled into China for re-trade as easily as precious metals.

'Tis a difficult thing [pepper] to carry into China, as allsoe all such bulkey comodities, for upon all this coast there are forts for to hinder the coming in of all goods. Nay, if any person is found without the wall [the evacuation area boundary] 'tis death. What is done is by bribeing. The most they carry from hence [Taiwan] is Japons copangs [kobans; Japanese coins made of gold, silver, and copper], for 'tis much less trouble to bring goods out then carry in.<sup>71</sup>

In 1672, Simon Delboe would find the situations more or less unchanged when he arrived with the second East India Company fleet to land at Taiwan. He observed that trade had to be done clandestinely at inconvenient times and inconvenient places and with much added expense from the necessary bribes given to corrupt Qing officials. Just as Crisp had

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<sup>69</sup> Innes, pp. 410, 416.

<sup>70</sup> Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, pp. 66 – 68.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

done, he concluded that this was the main reason the English company had so much difficulty selling its goods to the Zheng merchants.

Also the trade of China was very considerable for this place, so that the Dutch Company anno 1643 & 44 for cleare gaines did lay up 3 or 400 thousand pond sterling. But it's now totally declined, & what is Tywan without that trade? To cause us to remaine here they still perswade us of a peace concluding betweene them & the Emperor of China. But were it so 'twould be to the proffitt of the Emperor & if theis people desire a peace they must submit to tearmes of the Emperor. Theis people have nothing at all on the firmeland of China saving Cape Summer (or Pothay)<sup>72</sup>, the islands Ay [Xiamen] & Quemoy [Jinmen] (by the Tartars & Dutch anno 1662,3,4 taken & destroyed), besides some other also inconsiderable places which are retaken & in possession of this Kinge [Zheng Jing]. It is there where the doore is open to violence, theft & murder, & theis people corrupt the Tartar governors to carry on their stolen trade, comeing by night & at unseasonable times, upon forfeiture of goods & life sheltring themselves under pretence of Tartars, which may continue till the Emperor doth disturbe them. This difficulty of trade is the reason the China goods are deare here & ours will not sell.<sup>73</sup>

Trading the East India Company's goods for Chinese products through the Zheng merchants may have seemed like a reasonable plan to Dacres in 1670, but unfortunately for the company, the limited flow of goods into and out of China prevented it from being a workable option. The Qing government's coastal evacuation and trade prohibition policies could not completely shut out the Zheng merchants from the mainland because various Zheng confederates still worked within China and the officers charged with enforcing the Qing government's policies were frequently corrupt. Nevertheless they made the Zheng merchants' commerce more difficult and expensive.

The largest share of the relatively small volume of goods exported out of China were re-exported from Taiwan to the Philippines and Japan where the Zheng merchants were able to trade them for silver, copper, and gold. These metals, silver especially, could then be more easily and more profitably smuggled back into China, unlike the bulky goods such as pepper that the company hoped to trade to the Zheng merchants as re-export goods for China. The East India Company was therefore effectively blocked from indirect trade with China both

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<sup>72</sup> The editors of *The English Factory in Taiwan 1670 - 1685* identify this as Putian 莆田 in Fujian. Chang, p. 775.

<sup>73</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, February 12, 1673, in Chang, pp. 170 – 171.

ways. The Zheng merchants had little interest in taking the company's goods for re-export to China and few of the Chinese goods they imported to Taiwan were available at affordable rates for the company to trade for.

### **Difficulties Trading Cloth Indirectly Trade to the Philippines**

Unfortunately for the East India Company, the Zheng merchants' diminished access to Chinese goods did not provide opportunities for the company to supply substitute goods for the Zheng merchants' Philippine trade. Henry Dacres knew that the Zheng merchants were sending regular voyages to the Philippines every January,<sup>74</sup> and so he planned to send European and Indian cloth to Taiwan. According to his plan, the company's employees would trade it to the Zheng merchants, who would then re-export it to Manila, thus allowing the company to trade indirectly with the Philippines. To this end, Dacres gave Simon Delboe and the other merchants of the second successful journey to Taiwan in 1672 the following instructions.

You are to bee likewise carefull that wee may have good storehowses upon Tywan, such as may bee both capable and convenient for the reception of our concernes by reason that our intentions is not only to carry as much goods as may bee vendible but that wee may upon Tywan keepe such a store that upon occasion that the Manillah trade maybe bee furnished with divers sorts of goods, whereby the correspondence (which is reported to bee) betweene Tywan and the Manillahs may answer our expectations and turne to our great advantage.<sup>75</sup>

During these early years, however, there was to be no great advantage. Part of the problem with this plan was the poor timing of the East India Company's first voyage to Taiwan. When Ellis Crisp arrived in 1670, he found that the Manila galleons had not arrived that summer, which was a highly uncommon occurrence. The Zheng merchants who had

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<sup>74</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to the East India Company in London, September 16, 1672, in Chang, p. 151. See Appendix 5.1.

<sup>75</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to David Stephens, Samuel Baron, Simon Delboe and other factors, June 9, 1672, in Chang, p. 129.

sent their ships to the Philippines in 1670 could not have traded many of the goods they had taken, because there would have been little silver available in Manila that year. In 1671, likely because of the uncertainty created by the absence of a Manila galleon in 1670, only one Zheng ship was sent to Manila.<sup>76</sup> Because the Philippine cargo sent from Taiwan in 1671 was only one ship compared to the three or four that were usually sent, the Zheng merchants would have had little use for the company's cloth even if they would have normally been interested in re-trading it in Manila.

The trade between Taiwan and the Philippines normalised in 1672, when four Zheng ships sailed to the Philippines, which was slightly above the average annual number between 1664 and 1670.<sup>77</sup> This should have been good news for Simon Delboe and the other merchants who also arrived that year with the East India Company's second fleet to land at Taiwan. They soon discovered, however, that there were other obstacles to the success of Dacres' plan for indirect trade with the Philippines. Delboe reported that he thought a great quantity of English and Indian cloth could be sold in the Philippines if the East India Company was able to go there directly or send the cloth with the Zheng merchants. "But," he went on to write, "to trade from hence [Taiwan] we see no possibility with security, for theis Chineses are not to be trusted, being such excessive gamesters and vitious people that nothing can be expected from them that once they have in their possession".<sup>78</sup>

The implication of Delboe's statement was that the Zheng merchants were not willing to buy the company's cloth outright for resale in the Philippines. If the Zheng merchants were willing to take it at all, it would have been on commission, which meant that they could have taken it to the Philippines and chosen to trade it or not depending on the prevailing market

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<sup>76</sup> See Appendix 5.2.

<sup>77</sup> See Appendix 5.1 and 5.2.

<sup>78</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to the East India Company in London, September 16, 1672, in Chang, p. 151.

situation that year. If they had not been able to get good enough exchange rates for the cloth, or if it had interfered with the trade of their more profitable Chinese commodities, they could have chosen not to trade it, and instead returned it to the East India Company, having incurred no risk and little expense to themselves in the process. Delboe was unwilling to give the company's cloth to Zheng merchants on commission, and they were unwilling to buy much of it outright, so most of the cloth remained unsold in the Taiwan factory's warehouse.

To understand the Zheng merchants' reluctance to take the East India Company's cloth, a closer examination of the how their trade with the Philippines functioned is needed. The Philippines' foreign trade was similar to Japan's in most respects. The Zheng merchants were the biggest single bloc of merchants trading to both places during this period, the most sought after commodities in both markets were Chinese goods, particularly silk, and the most important exports from both places were metals (silver and copper from Japan, and just silver from the Philippines). However, trade in Japan and the Philippines differed in two important respects.

The first was the market for cotton cloth in the Philippines and cotton cloth's limited potential as a substitute for silk. Cotton cloth was tradable in relatively greater quantities in the Philippines than it was in Japan, in part because the Philippine merchants were willing to re-export it to New Spain aboard the outbound Manila galleons. This is evident because after the Zheng family ended its rule in Taiwan in 1683 there was a steady increase in the quantities of cotton cloth from the Indian subcontinent that were shipped to Manila over the course of the next eighty years.<sup>79</sup> The historian of English trade to the Philippines, Serafin D. Quiason, estimates that by the mid-eighteenth century, free English merchants (English

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<sup>79</sup> Serafin D. Quiason, *English "Country Trade" With The Philippines, 1644 – 1765* (Quezon City: University of Philippines Press, 1966), p. 45.

merchants who were licensed but not employed by the East India Company) were importing between 150 000 and 300 000 Spanish dollars worth of Indian cotton cloth into the Philippines annually, most of which was shipped back to New Spain aboard the Manila galleons.<sup>80</sup> Even prior to the 1670s, records from contemporary observers show that Chinese cotton cloth (albeit in smaller quantities than Chinese silk) had been a usual part of the Manila galleons' Acapulco-bound cargoes since the early days of the China-Philippines trade route in the late sixteenth century.<sup>81</sup>

In Japan, on the other hand, the market for any cloth other than silk was much smaller relative to the overall annual imports. A list of goods imported into Japan by Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie between 1672 and 1674, conveniently published by the modern historian C. R. Boxer as an appendix to one of his articles, shows that the Dutch company was importing small amounts of different kinds of non-silk cloth during these years. However, these amounts of cloth were dwarfed by the volumes of Dong Kinh and Bengali silk brought in the same ships.<sup>82</sup> Over the course of the East India Company's relationship with the Zheng family, it does not appear to have traded much, if any, cloth to Japan indirectly either. In the later years of the English company's trade to Taiwan, the company's factory there would report trading cloth of various types to the Zheng merchants specifically for re-export to the Philippines, but there are no corresponding instances where the company's cloth is mentioned as being acquired by the Zheng merchants for re-export to Japan. The reason for the Japanese market's much slighter interest in foreign cotton cloth as an import was most likely because Japan, unlike the industry-poor Philippines, had a

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 71 – 72.

<sup>81</sup> Schurz, p. 32; and Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, trans. and ed. by J. S. Cummins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 305.

<sup>82</sup> C. R. Boxer, "Jan Compagnie in Japan 1672 – 1674, or Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in Japan and Formosa," in *Dutch Merchants and Mariners in Asia, 1602 – 1795* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1988), pp. 184 – 195.

domestic cotton industry that rapidly developed over the course of the seventeenth century.<sup>83</sup>

Between 1670 and 1673, the Zheng merchants' unwillingness to take the East India Company's cloth was therefore not because cotton cloth was untradable in the Philippines. Indirect trade in cotton cloth with Japan on a large scale would never be a feasible option for the company because there was so little market for it. However, the company should have been able to send its cotton cloth to the Philippines, had the Zheng merchants been willing to take the cloth. The Philippine merchants were willing to send cotton cloth back to New Spain aboard the outbound Manila galleons, and were willing to trade their silver for it. The problem therefore lay with the Zheng merchants, rather than the Philippine market. During the early 1670s, the Zheng merchants were applying a strategy to their Philippine trade to maximise their profits, and the East India Company's cloth was not useful in this strategy because of the second dissimilarity between the Philippine and Japanese markets.

The second dissimilarity between Japan and the Philippines was that the latter had clear limitations on the amounts of foreign goods it could absorb annually because of the Manila galleons' cargo-capacities. The Spanish government had decreed that there were to be no more than two galleons sailing to and from Manila each year, and that each galleon could be no larger than three hundred tons. The restriction on the number of galleons was almost always obeyed, but the restriction on their sizes was not. Some of the Manila galleons were up to 2000 tons or slightly above, so each year there was a possible maximum total tonnage

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<sup>83</sup> Furushima Toshio, "The village and agriculture during the Edo period," trans. James L. McClain, in *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 4, *Early Modern Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 510 – 511; and Heita Kawakatsu, "The Emergence of a Market for Cotton Goods in East Asia in the Early Modern Period," in *Japanese Industrialization and the Asian Economy*, eds. A. J. Latham and Heita Kawakatsu (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 28 – 29.

of about 4000 tons.<sup>84</sup> For the inbound cargoes of silver, the capacity of the ships was not an issue because even the most liberal estimates do not suggest that much more than a maximum of around fifty tons of silver were transported each year,<sup>85</sup> but it was an issue for the re-export of the bulkier goods like silk that were destined for New Spain. The merchants in the Philippines would only trade at premium rates as much of their silver for as much silk, cotton, and other imported Asian goods as could be loaded onto the galleons for reshipment back across the Pacific Ocean.

The Spanish merchants with a stake in the Manila galleons' cargoes, who usually included the crews and commanders of the galleons, did their best to maximise the volume of Asian goods transported back to New Spain each year. Often outbound Manila galleons had every available bit of space crammed with Asian cloth and other goods, sometimes at the expense of crucial supplies and equipment, and sometimes the galleons even towed rafts carrying additional bales of silk and other goods. On more than one occasion, a galleon sailed outbound from Manila so dangerously overloaded that it foundered or met some other disaster in the open ocean, because necessary supplies or equipment had been jettisoned to make more space for trade goods.<sup>86</sup> What these creative and frequently dangerous attempts to squeeze as many tons of Asian goods as possible aboard the galleons demonstrate is that there were distinct limits to the capacities of galleons, and that the imports to the Philippines brought by Asian merchants each year could easily exceed those limits.

In practical terms, the capacities of the Manila galleons set a firm ceiling on the demand for Asian goods in the Philippines each year. What this meant for the Zheng merchants was that if more silk and other re-exportable goods were imported into the Philippines than

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<sup>84</sup> Schurz, pp. 193 – 194.

<sup>85</sup> Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "China and the Manila Galleons," in *Japanese Industrialization and the Asian Economy*, eds. by A. J. H. Latham and Heita Kawakatsu (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 82.

<sup>86</sup> Schurz, pp. 184 – 185.



could be loaded on to the outbound galleons, prices would fall and so would their profits.<sup>87</sup>

The Zheng merchants were in an enviable position to maximise their advantage in this situation between about 1666 and 1673 because far more of their ships sailed to the Philippines than those of their rival merchants from China and Macau; there were thirty-three Zheng ships that sailed to Manila compared to four from China and one from Macau during this period.<sup>88</sup> This would have given the Zheng merchants a dominant position in the market in Manila, which they could have exploited by shipping a volume of trade goods just large enough to maximise their trade while keeping the price of the goods in silver at the maximum possible level. The remainder of their silk and silk products, which were always the most important goods they dealt in, could have been shipped to Japan, where no such restriction on consumer demand existed, thus optimising their profits.

Judging by the drop in the volume of exports to Japan and the relative stability of shipping to the Philippines (after the Qing applied its coastal evacuation and trade prohibition policies and the Zheng family lost Xiamen in 1664), the Zheng merchants were indeed maximising their profits. Based on the recorded numbers of Chinese ships arriving annually in the Philippines from China and Taiwan (Zheng and otherwise), we observe an average of 5.5 ships arriving in Manila each year between 1654 and 1663, then only a slight drop to an average of 5.1 between 1664 and 1673.<sup>89</sup> In contrast, the Chinese trade to Japan dropped significantly during the same period, as shown above.

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<sup>87</sup> Chinese merchants controlling the market in Manila was by no means a new phenomenon; see Morga, p. 144, for a description of how the Chinese merchants were able to get more profit from their trade to the Philippines by limiting the volume of their imports at the end of the sixteenth century written by a contemporary Spanish official in the Philippines.

<sup>88</sup> See Appendix 5.1 and 5.2.

<sup>89</sup> See Appendix 5.1 and 5.2. The Manila customs records compiled by Pierre Chaunu do not give the specific cities within China that arriving Chinese ships originated from, so it is impossible to distinguish Zheng shipping from non-Zheng shipping before 1664, but this means that even if the Zheng merchants' share of the trade increased, the overall average was maintained.

So the problem was that because the Philippine market was limited by the capacities of the outbound Manila galleons, importing the East India Company's cloth would have interfered with the Zheng merchants' trade in Chinese silk and cotton cloth, which between 1670 and 1673 were still bringing higher returns. If the Zheng merchants had traded the East India Company's cloth to the Philippine merchants, it would have been competing for space on the Manila galleon with the more profitable Chinese cloth the Zheng merchants also exported to the Philippines, and would have thus brought the Zheng merchants lower returns on their investments of silver and copper. As long as the Zheng merchants had sufficient quantities of Chinese cloth available, as they did during the early 1670s, exporting a fixed quantity to Manila each year would maximise their profits, and there would have been no advantage in taking the East India Company's cloth, even though it was tradable there. Simon Delboe recognised this and wrote to his employers in London to explain. "As to all sorts of callicoos [a type of Indian cotton cloth], this place vends but little, being served from Chyna with severall sorts of linnen cloth that is strong and cheaper then callicoos, of which sorts here comes great quantityes & goeth with the jouncks for Manilhas, which vents great quantityes & would also of callicoos & other Indian comodityes from the [Coromandel] Coast & Surat if wee could be admitted by order from the Queene Regent of Spayne [Mariana of Austria]." <sup>90</sup>

Since the early 1660s, the volume of trade the Zheng merchants were able to maintain with China had diminished, but by the early 1670s, the difficulties they had importing goods from there had not yet made the trade so hazardous and expensive that the Chinese goods were no longer the best investment for their limited quantities of silver and copper. The East India Company's cloth was simply a poorer investment for the Zheng merchants

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<sup>90</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to the East India Company in London, September 16, 1672, in Chang, p. 151.

attempting to maximise their profits in the restricted Philippine market between 1670 and 1673.

### **Competition from South-East Asia**

Besides cloth, Henry Dacres also hoped to send a variety of other goods from South-East, the Indian subcontinent, and to a much lesser extent, Europe to Taiwan. These included pepper (particularly important to the company because it was Banten's main produce), putchuck, lead, iron, vermilion dye, frankincense, myrrh, saltpetre, amber, ivory, and corral, to name a few.<sup>91</sup> He intended these types of goods from South-East Asia and beyond, like the company's cloth, to be traded to the Zheng merchants for silver, copper, or Chinese goods, and he expected that the Zheng merchants would then re-export them to China and the Philippines.<sup>92</sup>

During the early 1670s, trade with South-East Asia was far less important to the Zheng merchants than the trade conducted between China, Japan, and the Philippines- that much Dacres seemed to have understood. However, he believed that there was an opportunity for growth in the South-East Asian branch of Taiwan's trade that the East India Company could take advantage of. Dacres imagined that in the early 1670s, the paucity of trade between Taiwan and South-East Asia did not simply result from the fact that the South-East Asian branch of the Zheng merchants' trading network was its least important. In his somewhat limited understanding of the western Pacific region's trading world, it was also a result of the hostility between the Zheng family and the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie that had

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<sup>91</sup> See Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, pp. 67 – 68, for a list of goods that the first fleet of East India Company ships brought to Taiwan in 1670.

<sup>92</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to George Foxcroft and Council at Madras, April 7, 1670, in Chang, pp. 50 – 51; and Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to Gerald Aungier and Council at Surat, August 16, 1670, in Chang, p. 55.

begun when the Zheng family attacked and conquered the Dutch company's colony on Taiwan in 1662. He believed that this ongoing conflict prevented trade from flowing between South-East Asia and Taiwan (and by extension China, Japan, and the Philippines) at the level prior to 1662 because the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's ships were no longer able to sail to Taiwan and the Zheng merchants were no longer able to sail to ports controlled by the Dutch company.

Dacres explained his assessment of the situation in a letter to his counterpart in Surat. Despite the commercial failure of Ellis Crisp's voyage in 1670, Dacres told his counterpart, the real profit from that expedition was that the East India Company had obtained "the knowledge to goe where nobody else dares to goe, for the Dutch dare not goe themselves nor will they permitt the Chynees or any of these people to goe for Tywan, accompting the Tywanners their enemies and endeavour to interrupt all junks that goe or come thence."<sup>93</sup> So armed with this knowledge of the trade routes between Taiwan and South-East Asia, Dacres rationalised that the East India Company, as a neutral third party, should be able to dominate those trade routes. The East India Company could take advantage of the scarcity of goods from South-East Asia and the trading worlds beyond in Taiwan to make a tidy profit by trading them to the Zheng merchants who would then re-export them to China, the Philippines, and elsewhere along with their larger cargoes of silk, silver, and copper, or so Dacres thought.

Dacres' hope was not completely baseless. Since 1662, when the Zheng family attacked and conquered the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's colony on Taiwan, the two naval powers in the region had been in a smouldering conflict with one another. The only major engagement between the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie and the Zheng family since

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<sup>93</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to Gerald Aungier and Council at Surat, August 16, 1671, in Chang, p. 104.

the fall of Taiwan had occurred in late 1663, when a fleet of warships sent from the Dutch company's headquarters in Batavia had assisted the Qing military in driving the Zheng family from Xiamen and Jinmen. Since then, there had been a handful of other smaller incidents. For example, in 1665, two Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie ships plundered the island of Putuoshan, which was then under the Zheng family's sway.<sup>94</sup> The Zheng family occasionally found opportunities to go on the offensive as well; three years later, a small group of Zheng sailors took advantage of a drinking party in the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's factory in Cambodia to launch a surprise attack, during which they slaughtered all the Dutch company's employees there and burned the factory.<sup>95</sup>

Unfortunately for Dacres and his company, these and other relatively minor incidents were not enough to stop or even slow the trade between South-East Asia and Taiwan noticeably. The problem was that despite the ongoing Zheng family-Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie conflict, trade between South-East Asia and Taiwan was not nearly as atrophied as Dacres had imagined. The conflict inhibited the Zheng merchants' direct access to some South-East Asian markets, but this did not mean there was an air-tight seal preventing any trade between South-East Asia and Taiwan. According to Simon Delboe, who had spent his eight month stay in Taiwan collecting an impressive amount of information on Taiwan's trading operations, the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie was effectively keeping the Zheng merchants from reaching Borneo, Johor (a city near the southern end of the Malay Peninsula), and Pattani, but Zheng ships were still risking capture to make a limited number of voyages for "small profit" to Siam, Cambodia, and

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<sup>94</sup> Wills, *Pepper*, p. 121.

<sup>95</sup> Relation of Affairs in Cambodia, May 1668, in Farrington, *The English Factory in Siam*, vol. 1, pp. 364 – 365.

Cochinchina.<sup>96</sup> So it is apparent that the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie was not succeeding at preventing the Zheng merchants from continuing to do some direct trade with South-East Asia.

There were other less direct ways that Zheng merchants managed to trade with South-East Asian merchants, even ones from Batavia. One tactic the Zheng merchants used to avoid the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie was to meet ethnic-Chinese Batavians in Nagasaki and trade Chinese commodities for products from South-East Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and even Europe that had been brought from Java.<sup>97</sup> As South-East Asian merchants from different parts of the region also sailed to Manila, the same thing likely occurred there as well. There were also ships sent from ports not under the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's control that sailed to Taiwan. Writing to Dacres from Taiwan, Ellis Crisp reported that there was a Siamese ship upon his arrival in 1670, and that a ship belonging to a Bantenese merchant also arrived about two months later.<sup>98</sup>

So Dacres was mistaken in his belief that the East India Company had an opportunity to dominate trade between South-East Asia and Taiwan. This was mainly because he underestimated the role native South-East Asian merchants played in the commerce of the region. Even though the ships of the Zheng merchants and those of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie could not visit the ports directly under one another's control, there were still many neutral South-East Asians who could visit both, and many neutral South-East Asian ports where both the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie and the Zheng

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<sup>96</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, February 12, 1673, in Chang, p. 171.

<sup>97</sup> Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women, and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1988), p. 119.

<sup>98</sup> Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, p. 65.

merchants traded, even if this occasionally led to unpleasant, but relatively minor, incidents such as the massacre of the Dutch company's employees in Cambodia.

Therefore the East India Company's role in the Zheng merchants' trading network was limited to being just one of the many suppliers of goods from South-East Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and Europe to Taiwan. In the later years of the English company's trade to Taiwan, when the South-East Asian branch of the Zheng merchants' trading network grew in importance, this role would give it greater opportunities to profit from the cloth and other types of goods that it brought from South-East Asia and beyond, even though the competition from other South-East Asian merchants would not lessen. But because the market for South-East Asian goods was both slight and competitive in the early 1670s, there was little opportunity for the East India Company to profit from its participation in the Zheng merchants' trading network during these early years.

The results of Dacres' plan to use Taiwan as gateway into the major markets of the western Pacific through indirect trade were dismal after the first two voyages. The Zheng merchants had traded for very small quantities of the goods the East India Company's ships had brought and the company's employees had been able to acquire only very slender cargoes to send back to Banten. The Zheng merchants did not have a surplus of Chinese goods or much silver or copper from Japan and the Philippines that they were willing to trade to the East India Company at affordable rates. Dacres' plan to establish his company within the existing trade network by trading South-East Asian goods and cloth to the Zheng merchants for re-export to the Philippines and China was a failure for different but related reasons.

Despite the mounting difficulties the Zheng merchants had accessing Chinese goods, the Chinese goods were still a more profitable investment than the East India Company's cloth for re-export to the Philippines. The Philippine market would only absorb limited quantities of Asian goods and cloth each year because of the limited capacities of the Manila galleons, so the Zheng merchants would have only been diluting their profits from this trade by using Indian and European cloth rather than the more esteemed Chinese cotton and silk cloth to make up their Philippine cargoes. The Zheng merchants therefore traded for very little of the company's cloth.

Finally, the company had difficulty making a profit off the South-East Asian goods its ships brought to Taiwan. Dacres had imagined the South-East Asian goods could be traded to the Zheng merchants, who would then re-trade them to China and the Philippines. He had also imagined that because the Zheng family and the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie continued to be hostile to one another, there would be a diminished flow of goods from South-East Asia to Taiwan. The East India Company could take advantage of this and supply the South-East Asian goods that the Zheng merchants had difficulty acquiring. Unfortunately, in spite of the conflict between the Zheng family and the Dutch company, the trade between Taiwan and South-East Asia was still more than adequate to supply the small quantities of South-East Asian goods the Zheng merchants used to supplement their cargoes to China, Japan, and the Philippines. The Zheng merchants were therefore unwilling to trade for more than inconsequential quantities of the East India Company's South-East Asian goods.

As it was, the relative stability of the Zheng merchants' trade meant that there was nothing the company could do to fix these problems, lacking either military clout in the region or independent and affordable access to any goods the Zheng merchants wanted in



anything but small quantities. The outbreak of war between England and the Netherlands forced the English company to take a hiatus from its Taiwan project; this was probably a blessing in disguise, as voyages sent to Taiwan in 1674 would likely have met exactly the same conditions as had the earlier voyages. It was not until after 1674 and the entry of the Zheng family into the Sanfan Rebellion that the conditions of the Taiwan's trade would change.

### **Chapter III: The East India Company's Trade with the Zheng Family during the Sanfan (Three Feudatories) Rebellion, 1675 – 1679**

The second phase of the East India Company's relationship with the Zheng family covers the years 1675 to 1679. This period coincides with the Zheng family's participation in the Sanfan Rebellion, the event primarily responsible for reconfiguring the structure of trade in the western Pacific region, and subsequently, the structure of the Zheng merchants' own trading network. Although the rebellion had a modestly negative impact on the overall health of the Zheng merchants' trading network, it benefited the East India Company by providing greater opportunities for participation from it and other South-East Asian merchants. This, for a time, meant that the East India Company was able to find a niche within the structure of the Zheng trading network and gain moderate profits through their participation.

The main disruption to the Zheng merchants' trading network caused by the Zheng family's reinvasion of southern Fujian during the Sanfan Rebellion was a further reduction of their trade with China. The Zheng merchants' access to Chinese goods became so difficult and expensive that it became necessary to shift some of their focus from China to South-East Asia, by trading for larger quantities of goods from the latter place to supplement their Japanese and Philippine cargoes. The East India Company may not have been the most important supplier of substitute goods for these cargoes, but it was able to trade much more of its cloth to the Zheng merchants who used it in their annual cargoes bound for the Philippines.

The difficulty the Zheng merchants' had accessing the Chinese market also caused them to begin exporting greater volumes of copper from Japan. Copper could not be smuggled as easily as silver, but was a useful trade commodity in several important South-East Asian

markets. This benefited the East India Company as well because it had recently opened a mint in Bombay and needed copper to mint coins for use in its Indian factories.

These effects allowed the development of a regular trade between the Zheng merchants and the East India Company, the most important component of which was an exchange of cloth for Japanese copper. This was an obvious improvement for the East India Company's trade compared to the earlier years, 1670 to 1673, when the company employees found that their opportunities to trade in Taiwan were almost negligible.

### **The Zheng Family's Participation in the Sanfan Rebellion**

To understand the background of the East India Company's trade in the western Pacific during these years, a brief introduction of the event that precipitated the political and economic changes to Zheng Taiwan's position within the region is needed. The Sanfan Rebellion (also commonly called the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories) was a civil war that engulfed China from late 1673 to late 1681. The Three Feudatories were three provinces in southern China- Yunnan, Fujian, and Guangdong- whose ethnic-Chinese governors, appointed by the Qing government, revolted against the Qing dynasty.

The common name of civil war implies equality between the participation of the three provinces in the rebellion, but this is misleading. In reality, the rebellion was primarily that of the province of Yunnan, which had by far the largest and best equipped army of the three. Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612 – 1678), the governor of Yunnan, acted alone in declaring his rebellion against the central government in 1673 and he was not joined until April 1674 by the governor of Fujian, Geng Jingzhong 耿精忠 (d. 1682).<sup>99</sup> The last of the three, the governor of Guangdong, Shang Zhixin 尚之信 (d. 1680), only joined in March 1676 and

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<sup>99</sup> Kai-fu Tsao, p. 101.

contributed almost nothing to the rebellion besides his symbolic participation. In November 1676, Geng Jingzhong surrendered to the Qing military and was followed by Shang Zhixin in January 1677, which meant that all three provinces were only in revolt together for a total of only seven months.<sup>100</sup>

Wu Sangui's most consistent and arguably most valuable ally through the course of the rebellion was neither Fujian nor Guangdong; it was the Taiwan-based Zheng family. Zheng Jing, ostensibly at least, had a different ideological motivation for his participation in the rebellion than any of the three governors. He still claimed to be loyal to the fallen Ming dynasty and sought its restoration, whereas the three rebelling provincial governors fought only for an increase of their own power, and in the case of Wu Sangui, the establishment of a new dynasty. Nonetheless, the Zheng military participated in the rebellion from 1674, when they reoccupied the islands of Xiamen and Jinmen, to 1680, a far longer period than Fujian or Guangdong did.

Unfortunately for the anti-Qing cause, distrust between Geng Jingzhong and Zheng Jing prevented effective cooperation against the Qing military. An initial alliance was formed between them, but after Geng Jingzhong reneged on part of his agreement, the Zheng military attacked southern Fujian and occupied a large part of the coastal region.<sup>101</sup> It was only near the end of 1674 that Wu Sangui's emissaries began working to mediate a truce between Zheng Jing and Geng Jingzhong. The truce would hold briefly, but the Zheng military would soon break it again, forcing Geng Jingzhong's regime, trapped as it was in an untenable two-front war, to surrender to the Qing.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., pp. 128 – 129.

<sup>101</sup> E. S. Larsen, "Keng Ching-chung," in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1644 – 1912)*, ed. Arthur W. Hummel, vol. 1 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), pp. 415 – 416; and Kai-fu Tsao, p. 105.

The surrender of Geng Jingzhong allowed the Qing government to send troops through northern Fujian into the southern part of the province to confront the Zheng family's forces directly. In February 1677, the Zheng armies were forced to withdraw from the territories they had conquered and retreat to Xiamen and Jinmen.<sup>102</sup> The Zheng family held out until March 1680 when fear of an imminent Qing attack caused them to flee to Taiwan for the second time.<sup>103</sup>

### **Expectations and Results of the East India Company's Trade during the Sanfan Rebellion**

Since the departure of the *Experiment* and the *Camel* from Taiwan in 1672, there had been no communication between Banten and the factory in Taiwan because the Third Anglo-Dutch War and the subsequent Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie blockade of Banten had prevented Henry Dacres from sending any ships to the factory.<sup>104</sup> News of peace between England and the Netherlands had come in the fall of 1674, but it was by then too late in the year for any ships to undertake the northerly voyage to Taiwan. However, Dacres had already learned of Simon Delboe's failure in Nagasaki and of the poorness of the East India Company's trade in Taiwan by this time. The news was discouraging, but Dacres still advocated maintaining the company's new Taiwan factory to his superiors, the Court of Committees, explaining that even without direct access to Japan, the factory might still provide opportunities for indirect trade if they were patient.<sup>105</sup> It is unknown whether the Court of Committees would have been willing to take Dacres' advice based solely on his

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<sup>102</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Amoy to the President and Council at Surat, November 2, 1677, in Chang, p. 287.

<sup>103</sup> See Wills, *Pepper*, pp. 154 – 157, for a concise account of the Zheng family's participation in the Sanfan Rebellion.

<sup>104</sup> Boxer, "The Third Dutch War," p. 351.

<sup>105</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to the East India Company in London, October 5, 1674, in Chang, p. 188.

optimistic belief that the situation would improve, but more news reached Banten in the winter of 1674 that strengthened his argument.

The news was brought by two Dutch burgher ships (ships owned by Dutch residents of Batavia not directly affiliated with the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) that had spent the summer lying near Macau attempting to trade there. Their crews reported that China was once again engulfed in civil war; the Sanfan Rebellion had begun. When this news had travelled the short distance from Batavia to Banten, Dacres immediately saw a major opportunity for the Taiwan factory to benefit the company. Writing to his employers in London shortly after receiving the news of the rebellion, he explains, “It is expected from the good comportment of Mr John Dacres [then the chief merchant in the Taiwan factory] & the rest of the English there [Taiwan] that they may with much facility be admitted trade at Huckhew [Fuzhou 福州] or Ainam [Xiamen] & also have a deede of gift for some part of Tywan, nay, the report goes of the whole island Formosa if they undertake to keepe it.”<sup>106</sup> A few months later after dispatching the *Flying Eagle*, a one hundred ton ship,<sup>107</sup> which happened to be available in Banten at the time, he went on to write that Taiwan “may in time yeild a flourishing trade, especially now that the Chineses have lately made such prosperous attempts on China & conquered a great parte thereof.”<sup>108</sup>

The gradual collapse of the rebellion over the course of the next six years would prove Dacres’ hope that the Zheng military in concert with the other rebels would conquer some or all of mainland China overoptimistic. Likewise, the idea that the Zheng family might give Taiwan as a gift to the East India Company was nothing more than idle fantasy. The

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<sup>106</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to the East India Company in London, December 4, 1674, in Chang, p. 192.

<sup>107</sup> Anthony Farrington, *Catalogue of East India Company Ship’s Journals and Logs 1600 – 1834* (London: The British Library, 1999), p. 249.

<sup>108</sup> Consultations by Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, May 18, 1675, in Chang, p. 195.

establishment of new factories in Xiamen or Fuzhou was, however, a much more realistic possibility. Fuzhou was the capital of Fujian, and the centre of Geng Jingzhong's regime. Because he was more often an enemy than an ally of the Zheng family, establishing a factory there would have been difficult to do while simultaneously maintaining a relationship with the Zheng family. The East India Company therefore never bothered to send ships to Fuzhou despite an offer sent to them by Geng Jingzhong in 1675.<sup>109</sup> However, the company accepted an offer of permission from the Zheng family to establish a new factory in Xiamen, which it proceeded to do in the summer of 1677.<sup>110</sup>

The frequency of the company's ships sailing to the Zheng family held territories increased during this period as well. Between 1675 and 1679, the East India Company sent regular expeditions of one or more ships every year to Taiwan and Xiamen, for a final total of ten ships. The precise values for the East India Company's imports and exports are incomplete (for the available export statistics see Appendix 2), so calculating the East India Company's balance of trade without relying heavily on guesswork is impossible. However, using the numbers that are available and the observations of the English company's employees recorded in their letters, the general trends are evident from year to year.

The two most important improvements in Taiwan and Xiamen's trading conditions for the East India Company were an increased market for its cloth, especially the Indian varieties, and an increased availability of Japanese copper in Taiwan and Xiamen. Relatively small quantities of other goods, including lead, putchuck,<sup>111</sup> gunpowder, and firearms found good

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<sup>109</sup> John Dacres, Edward Barwell, and Samuel Griffith at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1675, in Chang, p. 223.

<sup>110</sup> There is some disagreement over when the Xiamen factory was established among historians. I side with D. K. Bassett's interpretation here, David Kenneth Bassett, "The Factory of the English East India Company at Bantam, 1602 – 1682," (PhD diss., University of London, 1955), p. 346.

<sup>111</sup> John Dacres, Edward Barwell, and Samuel Griffith at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1675, in Chang, p. 221.

markets in Taiwan and Xiamen as well,<sup>112</sup> but the fact that the Zheng merchants began trading for the East India Company's cloth was particularly important because so much of it had been brought by the *Return* and the *Experiment* in 1672 and then even more had been brought by the *Flying Eagle* in 1675.<sup>113</sup>

Had the cloth not sold, the East India Company's factories would have been forced to trade more of their own silver for the Zheng merchants' copper, which consistently made up the most valuable part of company's outbound cargoes. Sugar, gold, tutenague (an alloy of zinc, copper, and nickel),<sup>114</sup> mercury, alum, galangal (probably *Kaempferia galangal*), benzoin resin, vermilion pigment, and tea were all traded for as well, but the value of copper always dwarfed the relatively small quantities of these goods that the company exported.<sup>115</sup> Copper was useful to the East India Company during this period because the company had established a mint in the city of Bombay near Surat in the western part of the Indian subcontinent in 1676, and needed copper to mint coins.<sup>116</sup>

During the last two years of this period, the strength of the company's trade in Taiwan and Xiamen began to wane, mainly because copper had become harder to acquire. Copper was still being imported to Taiwan and Xiamen from Japan, but the East India Company merchants were informed that much of it was needed to cast new cannons for Zheng Jing's

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<sup>112</sup> Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to John Dacres, Edward Barwell, and Samuel Griffith at Taiwan, May 30, 1676, in Chang, p. 235.

<sup>113</sup> Consultations by Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, May 18, 1675, in Chang, pp. 195 – 196.

<sup>114</sup> Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive*, ed. William Crooke (London: John Murray, 1903), p. 932.

<sup>115</sup> See Invoice of goods loaded for Surat on the *Advice* at Amoy, November 2, 1677, in Chang, pp. 290 – 291; and Invoice of goods loaded for Surat on the *Tywan* at Taiwan, November 6, 1677, in Chang, pp. 294 – 295, for examples of the types and amounts of goods exported from Taiwan and Xiamen.

<sup>116</sup> Charles Fawcett, *The English Factories in India (New Series)*, vol. 1, (*The Western Presidency*) 1670 – 1677 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 52 – 53; and Charles James and Caesar Chamberlain at Surat to the East India Company in London, March 10, 1677, in Chang, p. 257.



armies in the mainland.<sup>117</sup> This may have been partly true, as the Zheng armies had lost several major battles on the mainland by 1678, and it is completely plausible that they would have lost some or all of their old cannons in the process, but an alternative explanation presented itself after the fall of Xiamen, when it was noticed by some company employees that some of the copper was being taken by the Zheng merchants to the Pearl River 珠江 estuary south of Guangzhou 廣州, the capital of Guangdong, and sold at higher prices to other South-East Asian merchants who met them there.<sup>118</sup>

Part of the reason why the Zheng merchants were re-exporting some of the copper they brought from Japan rather than selling it to the East India Company in Taiwan and Xiamen was that many of the merchants had accumulated large debts to the company. The East India Company employees on Taiwan attempted to put pressure on the Zheng merchants to repay their debts and on Zheng Jing to use his authority to force repayment, but they usually had little luck.<sup>119</sup> The East India Company factories' only option was usually to refuse to do further business with the indebted Zheng merchants until those debts had been paid. Although the company's observations of the Zheng merchants' re-export of copper to the Pearl River estuary do not identify the individual merchants sending their copper there, it seems probable that some of the indebted merchants opted to do this rather than use the copper to pay their debts to the company.

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<sup>117</sup> George Gosfright, Charles Sweeting and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan to Thomas Rolt and Council at Surat, November 1, 1678, in Chang, p. 367.

<sup>118</sup> John Chappell and Council at Taiwan to George Gosfright and factors off Macao, September 12, 1682, in Chang, p. 482; and George Gosfright and factors at Tempo Quebrada off Macao to John Chappell at Taiwan, December 4, 1682, in Chang, p. 497.

<sup>119</sup> See Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam to Zheng Jing, May 30, 1676, in Chang, p. 244; Charles Sweeting and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan to Edward Barwell and John Chappell at Amoy, February 20, 1678, in Chang, p. 312; and Edward Barwell and John Chappell at Amoy to Charles Sweeting and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan, April 12, 1678, in Chang, p. 324, for examples.

In the final years of the East India Company-Zheng family relationship (1680 to 1683), the company would have even more trouble collecting its debts in Taiwan, mostly because the economic situation in Taiwan was declining and the Zheng administration itself did not have the available resources to pay off its debts to the company (see the following chapter). The economic situation in Taiwan does not seem to have been nearly as bad in the late 1670s as it was after the Zheng family's second retreat from Xiamen, but the Zheng administration's mounting expenses from the war in China may have been a contributing factor to the company's inability to collect its debts during these years.

### **The Impact of the Sanfan Rebellion on the Zheng Merchants' Chinese Trade**

The improvement of the East India Company's trade in the western Pacific would seem to imply an improvement in the Zheng merchants' access to the major markets of the region, but on closer inspection this does not seem to have been the case with China. Henry Dacres in Banten had hoped, as Zheng Jing likely had, that the Zheng family's reoccupation of Xiamen would solve the Zheng family's difficulties importing and exporting goods in and out of China (caused by the Qing government's coastal evacuations and trade prohibition policy), but the opposite appears to have happened. From 1664 to 1673, the relative peace of this period had meant that the Zheng merchants, with the help of the pirates squatting in the ruins of Xiamen, had been able to find weak points in the Qing government's defence of the coastline or corruptible officials charged with guarding certain sections of it, who could be bribed into allowing the Zheng merchants to carry on their smuggling operations. After the outbreak of the Sanfan Rebellion, however, the area in southern Fujian surrounding Xiamen and Jinmen became a war-zone, a situation not at all conducive to large-scale smuggling. The division of China into several distinct blocs at war with one

another also likely contributed to the Zheng merchants' difficulties; the lower Yangtze River delta region, the most important silk producing region in China,<sup>120</sup> remained under Qing control throughout the war.<sup>121</sup> This meant that the flow of silk from this region to Fujian must have been greatly inhibited during the rebellion.

The East India Company employees stationed in Xiamen and Taiwan during these years are unanimous and unequivocal about the impact that the Sanfan Rebellion had on the Zheng merchants' trade. Even in 1675, during the early stages when Zheng Jing's campaign in southern Fujian was going relatively well, the East India Company's chief merchant in Taiwan reported that contrary to Dacres' predictions, there was no influx of Chinese goods into Taiwan and no demand from the Zheng merchants for East India Company goods to be resold in China.

Through the new revolution and greate disturbances in China all tradeing doth in a manner cease. As no goods can be carried up into the inlands so likewise none can be brought downe, by which meanes wee can neither bee furnished with commodities from thence nor dispose of our Europe manufactures, for of all sorts have not sence the ship arrived sold two bales & none of the Dutch cloth.<sup>122</sup>

The situation only worsened after that. In early 1677, the Zheng armies were beaten back to Xiamen and Jinmen by the advancing Qing forces.<sup>123</sup> By this time both Geng Jingzhong and Shang Zhixin had surrendered to the Qing, so any serious hope of the Zheng family participating in a successful conquest of China was gone. The East India Company's chief merchant at Xiamen, observing these developments from the vantage point of the

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<sup>120</sup> Nan: 46; Shih Ming-hsiung, *The Silk Industry in Ch'ing China*, trans. E-Tu Zen Sun (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies the University of Michigan, 1976), p. 1; and Louis Le Comte, *Memoirs and observations topographical, physical, mathematical, natural, civil, and ecclesiastical, made in a late journey through the Empire of China*, 3rd ed. (London: Benjamin Tooke, 1699), p. 138. See E-Tu Zen Sun, "Sericulture and Silk Textile Production in Ch'ing China," in *Economic Organization in Chinese Society*, ed. W. E. Willmott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 80 – 84, for information on the geographical distribution of sericulture through the Qing period.

<sup>121</sup> Kai-fu Tsao, pp. 88 – 89.

<sup>122</sup> John Dacres, Edward Barwell, and Samuel Griffith at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1675, in Chang, p. 216.

<sup>123</sup> Hung, pp. 257 – 258.

company's factory there, reported to the Surat presidency that, because of the Zheng military's setbacks, trade between Xiamen and the mainland had all but ground to a halt.

By the sudden mutation of government the hopes wee had of this trade is much abased & if may calculate from this yeare's experience doe see, if affaires continue in this posture, but litle probabilitie of vending any quantitys of merchandize proper for China, for all passages into the inlands are so narrowly watched that noe grosse goods can be imported nor exported. Some silkes & fine goods by private conveyance doe pass & repass & though wee have disposed of most part of the cargoes of this yeare's shipping yett they lye unsould upon the buyers' hands & wee unpaid, which considered, are timerous to advise for any goods to this place.<sup>124</sup>

During the final two years, Xiamen's overall economic outlook grew increasingly bleaker, according to the chief of the Xiamen factory. To secure Chinese goods for their trade, the Zheng merchants began sending ships to the Pearl River estuary region to attempt to buy them from Guangdong merchants. The troops of the governor of Guangdong, Shang Zhixin, never actually engaged the Qing military, and his rebellion lasted only from March 1676 to January 1677,<sup>125</sup> so Guangdong was probably one of the regions in southern China least affected by the Sanfan Rebellion. Even so, the chief of the Xiamen factory laments in one of his letters that the disruption of the war had caused "great obstruction" of trade in Guangdong.<sup>126</sup> Another possible reason why the Zheng merchants had difficulty trading in Guangdong is that the local merchants were sending their merchandise abroad on their own ships, as can be seen in Nagasaki customs records.<sup>127</sup> But whatever the reason for the Zheng merchants' failure to access the markets of Guangdong, by the final year of the Zheng family's occupation of Xiamen, it had become so isolated from mainland China that the East

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<sup>124</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Amoy to the President and Council at Surat, November 2, 1677, in Chang, pp. 287 – 288.

<sup>125</sup> Kai-fu Tsao, pp. 128 – 129.

<sup>126</sup> Edward Barwell and John Chappell at Amoy to Charles Sweeting and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan, May 28, 1678, in Chang, p. 331.

<sup>127</sup> See Appendix 6.2.

India Company factory there reported that it could not even find boards to make chests to pack their sugar in.<sup>128</sup>

Turning to the available trading statistics for this period, the Nagasaki customs records confirm an overall trend of decline in trade between China and Japan. The numbers of Chinese merchants, Zheng and otherwise, sailing to Japan fell appreciably. During the Zheng family's second occupancy of Xiamen between 1674 and 1679, the average number of ships sailing to Nagasaki from China and Taiwan was 16.83, compared to 21.4 between 1664 and 1673.<sup>129</sup> During the Zheng family's second occupancy of Xiamen, the goods that the Chinese merchants (including Zheng merchants, non-Zheng affiliated merchants from different ports in China, and ethnic-Chinese South-East Asian merchants) brought to Nagasaki annually were worth on average 46 453.21 kg of silver, compared to 55 142.77 kg between 1664 and 1673.<sup>130</sup>

More evidence for the impact of the Sanfan Rebellion on the Zheng merchants' ability to do business in China can be found in the dramatic rise of the price of silver relative to Qing government issued bronze coins in China at the outbreak of the war. According to Richard von Glahn in his history of the money and monetary policies in imperial China, the price of silver rose from 29 333 coins for one kilogram of silver to 53 333 coins at the outbreak of the war, and continued to rise to a height of more than 80 000 coins until 1676, when the price began to fall.<sup>131</sup> Undoubtedly, this was partly a result of the internal disruption to the flow of goods and money within China, caused by the division of the country into warring blocs. But there is a general agreement among modern historians that it was also a result of

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<sup>128</sup> Edward Barwell, John Chappell, and George Griffith at Amoy to Thomas Rolt and Council at Surat, November 6, 1679, in Chang, p. 398.

<sup>129</sup> See Appendix 6.1 and 6.2.

<sup>130</sup> Innes, pp. 410, 416.

<sup>131</sup> Von Glahn, pp. 214 – 215.

the scarcity of silver in circulation.<sup>132</sup> Considering that the output of silver from China's domestic mines was miniscule and had been for some time,<sup>133</sup> the scarcity of silver implies that the smugglers (the Zheng merchants were by far the single most important group), who had been moving goods in and out of China since the Qing government's trade prohibition policy came into force in the early 1660s, failed to maintain the same volume of silver flowing into China prior to the Sanfan Rebellion.

The available evidence therefore indicates that the Sanfan Rebellion had a strong negative impact on the amount of trade done between the Chinese mainland and the outside world. Statistics from both ends of the trade route make it clear that there was less silver flowing out of Japan into China than during the 1664 to 1673 period when the Zheng family had been without any territory on mainland China. Although this meant that the Zheng merchants' volume of trade was almost certainly shrinking, it obviously was not enough to bankrupt them because their trading network endured during this phase. As the East India Company's chief at its Xiamen factory indicated, some Chinese silks were still getting past the entrenched soldiers into Xiamen, and the Zheng merchants probably managed to purchase a small quantity in the Pearl River delta area, but what was likely more important for maintaining the stability of their organisation was the greater emphasis they put on their trade with South-East Asia.

### **The Shift to South-East Asia**

Despite the disruption and decline of the Chinese branch of the Zheng merchants' trading network, their larger trading operations did not collapse or even contract dramatically.

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 214; Mio Kishimoto-Nakayama, "The Kangxi Depression and Early Qing Local Markets," *Modern China* 10, no. 2 (April 1984): 240; and William S. Atwell, "Some Observations on the "Seventeenth-Century Crisis" in China and Japan," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 45, no. 2 (February 1986): 234.

<sup>133</sup> Von Glahn, pp. 140 – 141.

The Zheng merchants actually appear to have maintained their trade marginally better than the different merchants operating out of the mainland. This is surprising because the merchants based out of Fujian and Guangdong, at least before late 1676 when Geng Jingzhong surrendered, would have been operating relatively freely, being no longer subject to the Qing state's trade prohibition policy, and should have had better access to Chinese silk and other goods than the Zheng family, who never controlled more than a small portion of southern Fujian. When the numbers of Zheng ships sailing to Nagasaki each year are extracted from the total number of ships originating from Taiwan and China, the results show that the decline in Zheng shipping after the reoccupation of Xiamen is actually slightly less than the overall decline. Between 1664 and 1673, the Zheng merchants sent an average of 11.4 ships to Nagasaki each year compared to 9.33 between 1674 and 1679: a decline of 18.15 percent. The average yearly number of ships coming to Nagasaki from both Taiwan and China dropped from 21.4 to 16.83 during the same respective periods: a decline of 21.36 percent.<sup>134</sup>

This means that the Zheng merchants improved their position, albeit only slightly, as importers of foreign goods to Japan relative to other Chinese merchants when they should have actually lost ground because of their comparatively inferior access to the Chinese market. This appears to have been accomplished by increasing their commerce with South-East Asia in order to find substitute goods to replace the diminishing quantities of those from China available for their Philippine and Japanese cargoes. Unfortunately, comprehensive records of the shipping coming and going to and from most of the important ports in South-East Asia are not available for this period, but the observations of

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<sup>134</sup> See Appendix 6.1 and 6.2.

many contemporary witnesses allude to this increase of traffic by Zheng merchants in South-East Asia.

Of the South-East Asian territories that the Zheng merchants visited, the two where an increase in the volume of the Zheng merchants' commerce is most observable are Dong Kinh and Siam, thanks in part to the reports written by the East India Company's employees there. Dong Kinh evidently became the most important territory after the outbreak of the Sanfan Rebellion for both the Zheng merchants and other merchants who also traded in Japan. In 1673, before the rebellion, Simon Delboe, the chief merchant of the company's second fleet to arrive in Taiwan, had reported that the Zheng merchants rarely sailed to Dong Kinh.<sup>135</sup> After the outbreak of the rebellion, the East India Company employees stationed in the company's Dong Kinh factory began observing greater numbers of Zheng ships arriving there.

They also observed that Dong Kinh's importance was due to its location as the only place in the western Pacific outside of China where silk and silk products could be attained in significant quantities, a situation the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie had been exploiting since the early 1640s when Zheng Jing's grandfather, Zheng Zhilong, had forced it out of the China-Japan silk trade.<sup>136</sup> Dong Kinh silk was worth less than Chinese silk in Japan, but the Zheng merchants (along with other merchants who sailed to Japan) were able to make up for this by importing greater quantities of it. This can be seen in the increase of the total volume of silk imported by Chinese traders while the volume of white silk (which was usually Chinese) diminished during the 1670s and early 1680s.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, February 12, 1673, in Chang, p. 171.

<sup>136</sup> Blussé, "No Boats to China": 66 – 67.

<sup>137</sup> Innes, pp. 311 – 312.



The rise in the price of Dong Kinh silk in the Japanese market because of the falling quantities of Chinese silk encouraged the Zheng merchants to sail to Dong Kinh. According to observations made in 1677 by the East India Company employees at the Dong Kinh factory, the Japanese had begun giving better prices for the Dong Kinh silk and this had encouraged more Zheng merchants and other Chinese traders than usual to sail to Dong Kinh that year.<sup>138</sup> Robert Parker (d. 1679), the East India Company's current agent in Banten in 1678 (Henry Dacres had been recalled to England in 1676),<sup>139</sup> summarised the reports of his subordinates in Dong Kinh and the overall trend of the silk trade in the western Pacific laconically. "We take notice," he writes, "the great trade the King of Tywan drives thither, as likewise the Chinamen, for silkes for Japon, which is the chiefe cause not only of the dearness but scarcity of that comodity [in Dong Kinh]".<sup>140</sup>

There was also an East India Company factory in the city of Ayutthaya, the capital of Siam, that had been established after Simon Delboe and the crew of the luckless *Return* took refuge there in 1674 on their round-about journey back to Surat from Nagasaki.<sup>141</sup> The East India Company's employees there made similar observations to their counterparts in Dong Kinh. They reported that by 1679, the Zheng merchants were sending two or three ships to Siam annually. Siam, they went on to explain, did not produce its own silk, but some merchants operating out of Macau and Guangzhou were opting to sell their silk in Siam for re-export rather than transporting it to the Philippines or Japan themselves, possibly because they did not have ships capable of making the dangerous journey on the open ocean to those places, or because they feared capture by the Zheng family's navy, who were not above

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<sup>138</sup> Tonkin diary, March 19, 1677, in Chang, p. 256.

<sup>139</sup> Bassett, "The Factory of the English East India Company at Bantam," pp. iii – iv.

<sup>140</sup> Robert Parker and Council at Bantam to Thomas James and factors at Tonkin, June 5, 1678, in Chang, p. 334.

<sup>141</sup> Journal of Captain John Atkins on the *Return* at Siam, December 1674 – February 1675, in Farrington, *The English Factory in Siam*, vol. 1, pp. 383 – 384.

piracy when the opportunity presented itself. Besides silk, the Zheng merchants also traded for sandalwood, pepper, henna, birds' nests, and Indian cloth for their regional trade, and saltpetre for the production of gunpowder to use in the family's war in China.<sup>142</sup>

Some of the best evidence for the Zheng merchants' shift of focus from China to South-East Asia can be found in the apparent changes in the distribution of the trade of copper within the region. As there was with silver, there was also a scarcity of copper in China. But unlike the scarcity of silver, which seems to have only existed during the Sanfan Rebellion, the scarcity of copper had been evident since the 1650s. As a result, many provincial mints that had been opened by the fledgling Qing government were forced to close or suspend their operations within only a few years because not enough copper could be obtained to produce bronze coins through the 1650s into the 1670s.<sup>143</sup> Surprisingly however, in the 1670s a clear increase can be seen in the volume of copper exported by the Zheng and other Chinese merchants from Japan. Between 1664 and 1673, an annual average 443 454.71 kg was exported from Japan by Chinese merchants (again including the Zheng merchants, non-Zheng affiliated smugglers in Qing China, and ethnic-Chinese South-East Asians). Between 1674 and 1679 that number more than doubled, rising to an annual average of 981 714.81 kg of copper.<sup>144</sup>

From 1668 to 1671, when silver exports were briefly banned by the Japanese government, the increase in the export of copper is understandable, but after 1671, when the restriction

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<sup>142</sup> George White at Ayutthaya to Robert Parker and Council at Bantam, November 15, 1679, in Farrington, *The English Factory in Siam*, vol., pp. 511 – 512. As discussed in the previous section, Siam was also a major supplier of ungulate skins, but the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie had been granted a monopsony by the Siamese government on the export of skins. George Vinal Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, 1977), p. 78.

<sup>143</sup> Von Glahn's on the beginning of the copper scarcity. Von Glahn indicates that the scarcity was apparent from the 1650s onwards; according to Hall, the mints only began having difficulty obtaining copper in the 1670s. John Hall, "Notes on the Early Ch'ing Copper Trade With Japan," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12, no. 3/4 (December 1949): 451 – 452.

<sup>144</sup> See Appendix 4.

on silver exports by Chinese merchants was removed, it is harder to understand why the Chinese merchants were still exporting large volumes of copper. The mints in the Qing state continued to have difficulty securing copper into the mid-1680s,<sup>145</sup> so there is no indication that the larger exports of copper from Japan were increasing the supply in China. Also, considering the dramatic rise in the price silver in China during the rebellion, and the relative ease with which it could be smuggled because of its greater value to mass ratio than copper, there would have been no good reason for the Zheng merchants not to immediately revert to exporting relatively more silver and relatively less copper after the restriction was removed in 1672 if they were maintaining the same volume of trade with China as they had in the 1660s.

Instead of China, the increased volumes of copper that the Zheng merchants were exporting from Japan after 1672 were probably destined for South-East Asia where there were ready markets for it. One near-contemporary account of the rise and fall of the Zheng family explains that there were good markets for copper and copper weapons in South-East Asia, especially in Cochinchina (in modern-day southern Vietnam), Dong Kinh, and Siam.<sup>146</sup> Dong Kinh in particular was noted by observers as having been deficient in domestic supplies of copper during the 1670s.<sup>147</sup> A former employee of the East India Company living in Dong Kinh during the late 1670s and early 1680s reported that any silver that came there was soon traded overland to Yunnan in south-west China or to the lands west of Dong Kinh for copper coins.<sup>148</sup> The Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie's factory in Dong

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<sup>145</sup> Von Glahn, p. 215.

<sup>146</sup> Jiang, sec. 13.

<sup>147</sup> Hoang Anh Tuan, "Silk for Silver: Dutch-Vietnamese Relations, 1637 – 1700" (PhD diss., Universiteit Leiden, 2006), p. 133; Innes, pp. 65 – 66; George Bryan Souza, *The Survival of Empire: Portuguese Trade and Society in China and the South China Sea, 1630 – 1754* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 115; and Li Tana, *Nguyen Cochinchina: Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1998), pp. 90 – 92.

<sup>148</sup> Baron, "A Description," p. 211.

Kinh was also aware that copper was highly valued in that state, as the Dutch company's employees had noticed in the early 1670s that Japanese copper coins gave a greater profit than silver there. Interestingly, by the late 1670s it found that unminted copper was more profitable, possibly because the Dong Kinh government had opened its own mints, or because of the greater flow of Chinese coins coming in through Yunnan.<sup>149</sup>

Either way, copper, in minted or unminted form, had ready markets in South-East Asia during the 1670s where the Zheng merchants could dispose of it without the difficulty and risk of smuggling it into war-ravaged China. The increasing amounts of copper being exported from Japan by Chinese merchants, of whom those affiliated with the Zheng family remained the single largest bloc, is therefore a strong indication that the South-East Asian branch of the Zheng merchants' trading network was strengthening during the Sanfan Rebellion.

### **The East India Company's Participation in the South-East Asian Branch**

As part of the South-East Asian branch of the Zheng merchants' trading network, the East India Company was in a position to benefit from this shift in importance between the network's branches. Had the East India Company had a supply of silk to trade to the Zheng merchants, its position would have been stronger. As it was, the company was still able to establish a regular and reasonably profitable trade that consisted mainly of the exchange of cloth, primarily Indian but also some European, on the English company's side for Japanese copper on the Zheng merchants' side.

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<sup>149</sup> Hoang, pp. 137 – 138.

Based on what the East India Company's employees in Taiwan reported, the Zheng merchants began buying the company's cloth in 1675 for their Philippine cargoes to compensate for the dearth of Chinese goods available to them.

We have often advised them [the Zheng merchants] that quilts and chints [two types of Indian cloth] are a commodity proper for that port [Manila], but all our perswasion to no purpose until this year the scarcity of China goods hath helped us off with the remaines of the chints broad and narrow, and shall endeavour to put off some other before the jonks' dispatch, for which place this year is designed two vessells.<sup>150</sup>

Because the Zheng merchants' access to the Chinese market did not improve, the Zheng merchants continued to buy cloth from the East India Company's factories for their trade with the Philippines. To a limited degree, the English company's employees were even able to exploit their knowledge of the Zheng merchants' regular trade to improve their position, especially after the establishment of the second factory in Xiamen. For example, the chief of the Xiamen factory (who was the superior of the Taiwan factory's chief) noted in the winter of 1678 that there was a scarcity of cloth in Taiwan and that two Philippine-bound ships would be leaving from there soon. He therefore ordered the Taiwan factory to keep all of the types of cloth that were most likely to be useful in the Philippines and send Xiamen only two bales of slightly less vendible cloth.<sup>151</sup> On another occasion, the Xiamen factory sent a letter to the Taiwan factory requesting two bales of scarlet cloth that it believed it could sell for a good profit in Xiamen because the Zheng ships that had just returned from the Pearl River delta region had been very unsuccessful and no ships from South-East Asia had yet arrived at Xiamen.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> John Dacres, Edward Barwell, and Samuel Griffith at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1675, in Chang, p. 218.

<sup>151</sup> Edward Barwell and John Chappell at Amoy to Charles Sweeting and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan, January 3, 1678, in Chang, p. 305.

<sup>152</sup> Edward Barwell and John Chappell at Amoy to Charles Sweeting and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan, May 28, 1678, in Chang, p. 331.

As discussed above, the main product the company traded its cloth for was copper, most of which was then sent to Surat. The East India Company, along with the merchants of Dong Kinh, Cochinchina, Siam, and other places in South-East Asia, was an outlet for the Zheng merchants' Japanese copper. The company was also probably the most conveniently placed buyer of copper for the Zheng merchants because of the maintenance of its two factories in Taiwan and Xiamen. The company's employees, ensconced as they were in the Zheng family's islands, would buy copper anytime during the year and were usually willing to buy as much copper as the Zheng merchants were willing to sell if the exchange rate was good enough. It cannot be stated with absolute certainty because of the missing data for several years of the East India Company's trade, but copper likely comprised the bulk (both in terms of volume and value) of the company's exports from the Zheng family's territory every year during the 1675 to 1679 phase, except 1679.<sup>153</sup>

It should be noted that despite the mutual benefit of the East India Company's acquisitions of copper from Zheng merchants, the company's overall contribution to Zheng merchants trading operations was still minor. To demonstrate this we can look at the East India Company's copper exports in 1677, which were likely the largest of any year during the whole period of the East India Company-Zheng family relationship. That year the company acquired 39 128.44 kg of copper from the Zheng merchants.<sup>154</sup> Exports of copper from Japan by Chinese merchants the previous year totalled 913 864.66 kg.<sup>155</sup> Of the twenty-five Chinese ships that visited Nagasaki in 1676, ten were affiliated with the Zheng family.

Assuming that the Zheng merchants' ships each took the same average value of copper as

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<sup>153</sup> The relatively poor cargo sent in 1679 was worth only 3151.61 Spanish dollars, and seems to have consisted primarily of sugar. The poorness of this year's cargo was partly a result of difficulties the factories had shipping goods between Taiwan and Xiamen because one of the company's ships had been badly damaged on the voyage there. Edward Barwell, John Chappell, and George Griffith at Amoy to Thomas Rolt and Council at Surat, November 5, 1679, in Chang, p. 397 – 399. See Appendix 2.

<sup>154</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>155</sup> See Appendix 4.

the overall average among all the Chinese ships, their proportion of the exported copper would have been forty percent, or 365 545.87 kg. Based on this estimate, the returning Zheng merchants traded a little less than eleven percent of that copper to the East India Company. This estimate may be slightly generous because the Zheng merchants' ships were likely larger on average than the overall average size of all ships classified as "Chinese" that sailed to Nagasaki, because ships from South-East Asian ports tended to be smaller than Chinese and Taiwanese ships.<sup>156</sup> Nonetheless, it demonstrates that the company was a minor, but not insignificant outlet, for the Zheng merchants' copper.

Although the year-round maintenance of the two factories in the Zheng family's territory certainly gave the East India Company an advantage, it could not make up for the fact that it was not a supplier of silk, the commodity that remained the central pillar of the Zheng merchants' Japanese trade, the most important branch of their network. The East India Company's most important trade good, non-silk cloth, was of secondary importance in the Zheng merchants' trading network's secondary branch, their Philippine trade. This meant that the majority of the copper and silver the Zheng merchants were exporting from Japan and the Philippines was still passing the company's factories by *en route* for South-East Asia to be used to purchase silk in Dong Kinh and Siam, or to the Pearl River estuary to secure whatever small amount of Chinese silk the merchants of Guangdong were willing to sell to them.

However, when the East India Company's trade with the Zheng merchants during the Sanfan Rebellion is compared to the early voyages of Ellis Crisp and Simon Delboe in 1670 and 1672, there is no doubt that the company's position was much enhanced. The value of

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<sup>156</sup> Anthony Reid, "The Unthreatening Alternative: Chinese Shipping in Southeast Asia, 1567 – 1842," *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 27, no. 1/2, (1993): 19.

the cloth that the company had traded in Taiwan during the early period was negligible, so its use as a secondary substitute for the diminishing quantities of silk available to the Zheng merchants for export to the Philippines during the Sanfan Rebellion represented a remarkable improvement. It was not the most important part of either the East India Company or the Zheng merchants' networks, but it was a modest asset to both of them.

Similarly important for the East India Company were the greater opportunities it had to trade for Japanese copper during this period. In 1672, Delboe had been able to buy a small quantity of copper that he described as low quality, but without any real market for any of the company's other products, he had had to use silver to trade for it.<sup>157</sup> The Zheng merchants' willingness to take the East India Company's cloth provided a much more affordable alternative way to trade for Japanese copper. The East India Company's factory was not the most important outlet for the Zheng merchants' copper, but it contributed to their trading network in a useful way by taking the copper in exchange for cloth and small quantities of South-East Asian goods.

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<sup>157</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, November 15, 1672, in Chang, p. 160.



## **Chapter IV: The Final Years of the East India Company's Relationship with the Zheng Family, 1680 – 1683**

The final phase of the East India Company's relationship with the Zheng family covers the years 1680 to 1683, from the Zheng military's second retreat from Xiamen to the surrender of Taiwan and the end of the Zheng family's rule. During this phase, the trends affecting the Zheng merchants' trading network followed a similar pattern to the 1675 to 1679 phase, the years during which the Zheng family was engaged in the Sanfan Rebellion and controlled the islands of Xiamen and Jinmen. The decline in the condition of the Zheng merchants' trade with China continued, and seems to have reached the point where their only way to access the Chinese market was by meeting Guangdong-based smuggler-merchants on islands in the Pearl River delta region south of Guangzhou in the area of Macau and modern-day Hong Kong. In order to trade there, the Zheng merchants' ships had to lie in wait amongst the islands for the merchants from Guangzhou to steal down and meet them. Unlike their smuggling network through Xiamen and other places on the east coast of China that had been active before the Sanfan Rebellion, the Pearl River delta region afforded the Zheng merchants no special opportunities to trade that were not available to anyone else in the region with a cargo and a seaworthy ship, so they were in competition with numerous other merchants from throughout the western Pacific who were coming there for the same reason. Their attempts to trade with China were further complicated by the increasing effectiveness of the Qing navy, which had considerably more success interfering with the Zheng merchants' trade during these years than in any earlier phase.

Their reduced access to China was, however, only modestly detrimental to the Zheng merchants' trading network because the shift in importance from the Chinese branch of the network to the South-East Asian branch continued as well during this phase. Copper

exports from Nagasaki rose in spite of the declining numbers of Chinese merchant ships sailing there, strongly implying that the merchants trading for copper (of whom the vast majority were either affiliated with the Zheng family or were sailing directly from different South-East Asian ports) intended to do more trade in South-East Asia and less in China. This is supported by the recorded observations of merchants from different parts of the western Pacific, including the East India Company's employees, which show that the Zheng merchants maintained a strong presence in South-East Asia in their final years operating out of Taiwan.

In the meantime, the East India Company's agency in Banten (no longer under the control of Henry Dacres because he had been recalled in 1676) had become disenchanted with the idea of using Taiwan for indirect trade when they had learnt of the loss of the Xiamen factory in 1680. During this final phase of the company's trade to Taiwan the Banten agency only sent two ships to Taiwan, one in 1680 and one 1682. It chose instead to focus on establishing trade in the Pearl River delta with the merchant-smugglers of Guangzhou, and so sent ships there every year from 1681 to 1683, just as the Zheng merchants themselves were doing. In spite of the Banten agency's pessimism, both ships that sailed to Taiwan managed to acquire good cargoes, and the employees operating the factory in Taiwan remained reasonably enthusiastic about the trading conditions there. The East India Company's cloth seems to have sold well and there was more Japanese copper available for trade than in either of the earlier phases; the two shiploads of cargo that the factory exported from Taiwan during these years were likely among the largest that the company sent during its whole trading relationship with the Zheng family.

The East India Company encountered one major obstacle to the success of its enterprise in Taiwan, however, and this was its difficulty collecting debts from the Zheng merchants

and particularly from Zheng Jing and his son, Zheng Keshuang 鄭克塽 (b. 1669), who succeeded him after his death in 1681. The main reason for this was that the Zheng administration had lost many men and ships during the Sanfan Rebellion and even more through defections and desertions that occurred during and after Zheng Jing's flight from Xiamen. For the Zheng family to defend Taiwan from the increasingly powerful Qing navy, it was necessary to rebuild the Zheng military, but this seems to have stretched the administration's resources to their limit. The East India Company was an increasingly valued part of the Zheng merchants' trading network, but it suffered because the Zheng rulers attempted to extract as much credit as they could from the company's factory without abusing their relationship so much that the East India Company's management would decide the trade with Taiwan was not worth the maintenance of its the factory.

The East India Company's trading conditions in Taiwan during these years are therefore ambiguous. Although no firm conclusions can be drawn because of the gaps in the data, the available figures do suggest that the company's situation during this phase, judged purely on its ability to trade, was at least as good as it had been during the 1675 to 1679 phase, and, based mostly on the values of the export cargoes and amounts of copper they included, this phase may even have been better. However, the company's inability to collect its debts before the surrender of Taiwan meant that it suffered a major loss in spite of the factory's relatively successful trade.

### **The Last Years of Zheng Taiwan**

On March 26, 1680, fears that Xiamen and Jinmen would soon be attacked by the Qing military caused a panic among the Zheng forces stationed there. Zheng Jing and his household were the first to flee and he was soon followed by the rest of his army and navy

who left the islands in a disorganised rush.<sup>158</sup> Some of the Zheng ships followed Zheng Jing, but others sailed off to surrender to the Qing military, and some, including one particularly large group under the command of a Zheng officer, sailed off for South-East Asia. Zheng Jing and what remained of his battered military made their way back to Taiwan and were thereafter once again isolated there.

The Zheng family's difficulties deepened with the death of Zheng Jing in March 1681, about a year after the loss of Xiamen and Jinmen.<sup>159</sup> An internal power struggle followed between partisans of Zheng Jing's eldest son and designated heir and the heir's enemies. The latter, who included Zheng Jing's mother and many of the powerful men within the Zheng administration, carried the day; Zheng Jing's eldest son was strangled and his younger brother, Zheng Keshuang, then eleven years old, was set up as the puppet ruler of the island under the control of one of Zheng Jing's former councillors.

Zheng Keshuang's rule did not last long. By 1683, the Qing military, augmented by troops and ships that had defected from the Zheng military during the Sanfan Rebellion and after the fall of Xiamen, was prepared to end the threat the Zheng family posed to their state once and for all. A fleet of three or four hundred warships launched an attack on the Zheng position in Penghu islands that July. The Qing fleet was initially repulsed, but soon regrouped and attacked again. The second attack succeeded and the Zheng forces defending the islands fled back to Taiwan. After some debate amongst the leaders of the Zheng administration, it was agreed that their position was indefensible. In early September, ambassadors were sent to the Qing fleet, which was still riding off the Penghus, to offer a

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<sup>158</sup> See Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, pp. 418 – 419, for an eyewitness account by the employees of the East India Company in its Xiamen factory.

<sup>159</sup> Hung, p. 265.

full surrender.<sup>160</sup> The surrender was accepted, and the Qing fleet arrived offshore of Dongning in early October to take control of the island.<sup>161</sup> Taiwan's unique position as an independent island state and major nexus of the region's trade had come to an end.

### **The East India Company's Final Voyages to Zheng Taiwan**

When the general, disordered flight from Xiamen had begun, Edward Barwell (fl. 1671 – 1683), the chief of the company's factory there, had appealed to the merchant who acted as Zheng Jing's liaison to the East India Company. Barwell had requested secure passage for the company's employees and their goods aboard a Zheng ship back to Taiwan. Zheng Jing's liaison had agreed, and the company's employees had dutifully hauled their most valuable stock down to Xiamen's wharf, hoping to have it loaded on one of the Zheng ships there. To their horror, instead of loading the cargo, the Zheng soldiers at the wharf took advantage of the chaos and plundered the company's carefully packed chests. There was nothing that Barwell or his subordinates could do to stop the theft of the company's property, but they managed to secure passage for themselves aboard a ship back to Taiwan.<sup>162</sup>

In Taiwan, Barwell and his subordinates rejoined their comrades in the Taiwan factory and prepared to wait for the next East India Company ship to arrive. They had planned to withdraw the factory because of the unsettled condition of Taiwan in the aftermath of the retreat from Xiamen and because they anticipated a worsening of the trading conditions for the remaining factory. However, the trading conditions actually proved to be unexpectedly

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<sup>160</sup> Thomas Angeir and Thomas Woolhouse at Taiwan to the Agent and Council at Siam, December 20, 1683, in Chang, pp. 552 – 553.

<sup>161</sup> Thomas Angeir and Thomas Woolhouse at Taiwan to the Agent and Council at Siam, December 20, 1683, in Chang, p. 551; and Wills, Jr., "The Seventeenth Century Transformation," pp. 101 – 102.

<sup>162</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, pp. 419 – 420.

good during the remainder of 1680, so by the time the next East India Company ship arrived that summer, they had resolved to maintain the factory for at least another year.<sup>163</sup>

The one East India Company ship that arrived in the Taiwan Strait that summer was the *Formosa*, and it was sailing for Xiamen. Fortunately it was intercepted by a Zheng ship before it unknowingly sailed into the Qing-occupied harbour, so it was able to change its course for Taiwan in time. It returned to Banten that winter with the copper the factory had traded for, the employees' letters explaining the new situation, and Barwell, who was no longer needed because the Taiwan factory was overstaffed since the merging of the two groups of employees.

The agent in Banten decided that, in spite the surprisingly good trade in 1680, the *Formosa* might be put to better use visiting Macau and the Pearl River delta in 1681. As a result Taiwan, for the first summer since 1674, was not visited by an East India Company ship. Nonetheless, the employees there reported that their trade improved in the spring, especially their trade in cloth. At the same time, however, they were having difficulties collecting debts from the Zheng merchants, especially from Zheng Keshuang who had inherited his father's estate and his debts.<sup>164</sup>

The Court of Committees in London had planned to send four ships from London to Xiamen via Banten, but got news in the summer of 1681 that Xiamen was occupied by the Qing military, and so changed their orders to the Banten agency, instructing it to send the ships to the Macau and Pearl River delta region instead, and to establish a factory in Guangzhou if possible.<sup>165</sup> The Banten agency (which had actually ceased operating out of

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 421.

<sup>164</sup> John Chappell and Council at Taiwan to Edward Barwell and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1681, in Chang, pp. 458 – 460.

<sup>165</sup> The East India Company in London to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, August 19, 1681, in Chang, pp. 452 – 453.

Banten in the spring of 1682 because its staff had been forced to relocate to Batavia as the guests of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie when the new Sultan of Banten had expelled them from his city in the spring of 1682)<sup>166</sup> sent two ships to the Pearl River delta, but still opted to send one, the *Kent*, to Taiwan in the summer of 1682.<sup>167</sup> The *Kent* was the final ship to Taiwan before the Zheng administration surrendered to the Qing military in 1683. It was also the one that exported the largest cargo in terms of value of any single ship that visited Taiwan or Xiamen during Zheng rule for which the figures are available; the cargo was valued at 43 350.66 Spanish dollars.<sup>168</sup> Most of the value was in copper, some of which the factory managed to acquire from Zheng Keshuang as partial repayment of his debts, and some of which they bought with Spanish dollars from the Zheng merchants.<sup>169</sup>

After the departure of the *Kent* in early 1683, only three East India Company employees and their slaves were left in the factory. In the summer of that year, the exiled Banten agency, still operating out of Batavia, once again opted to send one ship to the Pearl Delta region and no ships to Taiwan. The three East India Company employees remaining in Taiwan seem to have continued to do a moderate amount of business through the first half of the year, but the arrival of the Qing fleet in October made the successes and failures of their trade that year a moot issue. A fascinating series of negotiations between the employees and the Qing admiral followed, but it is beyond the scope of the present work to follow these trials and tribulations of the East India Company's employees in Taiwan after the surrender of the Zheng family. It suffices to say that the East India Company's relationship with the Zheng family came to an end on October 3, 1683, the day Zheng

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<sup>166</sup> Bassett, "The Factory of the English East India Company at Bantam," p. 418.

<sup>167</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Batavia to George Gosfright and factors for China, June 24, 1682, in Chang, pp. 478 – 481.

<sup>168</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>169</sup> John Chappell and Council in Taiwan to Edward Barwell and Council at Batavia, January 31, 1683, in Chang, p. 503.

Keshuang, the child ruler of Taiwan and last patriarch of the Zheng family, formally handed control of the island over to the Qing military.<sup>170</sup>

### **The Zheng Merchants' Trading Network after the Sanfan Rebellion**

Surprisingly, the state of the Zheng merchants' trading network does not seem to have suffered more than a mild contraction after the fall of Xiamen. Though the Zheng merchants were not completely cut off from Chinese goods, they seem to have enjoyed no special advantage accessing that market compared to merchants from other parts of the western Pacific. As a result the shift of their trade's emphasis from China to South-East Asia became even more pronounced than it had been during the Sanfan Rebellion, but the Zheng merchants' substitution of cotton cloth and non-Chinese silk for Chinese goods does not seem to have hurt their trade with Japan and the Philippines more than slightly between 1680 and 1683.

Our best indicator for the overall volume of the Zheng merchants' trade, the available statistics for their trade with Japan, show that trade diminished only slightly during these years; 9.33 Zheng ships sailed to Nagasaki on average each year during the Sanfan Rebellion, and that number only fell to 8.5 ships between 1680 and 1683.<sup>171</sup> The Zheng merchants' trade to the Philippines offers far less useful data, but from what is available, we can tentatively conclude that, like the Zheng merchants' Japanese trade, their Philippine trade shrunk modestly, but remained an important part of their network. The recorded numbers of Zheng ships that sailed to the Philippines annually can be taken with confidence for only two of the four years of this phase. In 1680, no ships sailed from Taiwan, but five sailed

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<sup>170</sup> Consultation by Thomas Angeir and Thomas Woolhouse at Taiwan, September 25, in Chang , pp. 514 – 515.

<sup>171</sup> See Appendix 6.2.



from China. Because the Zheng ships always sailed south for the Philippines and elsewhere in winter, and because Xiamen was not abandoned until late March 1680, it is quite possible that some or all of the five ships from China belonged to the Zheng merchants. For 1682, no data is available. So all that remains are 1681, when three ships from Taiwan arrived at Manila, and 1683 when two did. For comparison, between 1664 and 1673, the first period when the Zheng family was isolated on Taiwan, on average 3.2 ships were sent to the Philippines each year.

Three pieces of evidence indicate that the maintenance of the Zheng merchants' trade to these two places was managed with little input from the Chinese market, despite the importance that Chinese goods had had in the trading network before Sanfan Rebellion. First is the general evidence that the Qing government had much greater success at enforcing its prohibition of foreign trade during these years, as compared to the earlier years after the ban's institution. The yearly average number of non-Zheng ships reaching Japan from China during these years was 3 compared to 7.5 between 1674 and 1679, and 10 between 1664 and 1673.<sup>172</sup> In the case of the Philippines, except the five ships of indeterminate allegiance that sailed there in 1680, only one ship from China sailed to the Philippines in the four years of this phase, and it was from the Portuguese enclave of Macau.<sup>173</sup>

Besides reducing the number of China-based merchants sending their ships abroad, it appears that Qing government also managed to restrict the access of foreign merchants, including those affiliated with the Zheng family, to China. There is no indication that after the end of the Sanfan Rebellion, the Zheng merchants were able to recover any of their old smuggling routes through Xiamen or elsewhere along the eastern coast of China that they

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<sup>172</sup> See Appendix 6.1 and 6.2.

<sup>173</sup> See Appendix 5.2.

had maintained in the pre-Sanfan Rebellion phase. Instead they seem to have been restricted to lying amongst the islands in the Pearl River delta near Macau and modern day Hong Kong, waiting for merchants from Guangzhou to secretly send ships to meet them for trade.

Although it appears that this tactic sometimes worked, the Zheng merchants had no special access; other merchants from throughout the western Pacific, including the East India Company's employees, were also sailing to the Pearl River delta for exactly the same reason.<sup>174</sup> In 1682 for example, the chief merchant aboard one of the East India Company ships sent to the Pearl Delta region reported that besides themselves and a fleet of Zheng merchant ships, there were also Dutch ships (either belonging to the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or Batavian burgers), Chinese-Batavian ships, Cochinchina ships, and Siamese ships all riding in the same general area with the common hope of trading with merchants from Guangdong.<sup>175</sup> Again in 1683, the chief merchant aboard the English company's ship sent to the region reported lying in company with a motley fleet of at least thirteen other merchant ships that included Batavian Chinese ships, Batavian burgher ships, and one private English vessel.<sup>176</sup>

The Zheng merchants actually appear to have been at a disadvantage compared to the other merchants who sailed to the Pearl River delta. The Qing naval officers charged with enforcing their government's policy in that area seem to have regarded most of the foreign merchant ships as nuisances and would merely warn them off, but the Qing navy would attack Zheng ships on sight when it found them. The crew of one Siamese ship arriving in Nagasaki in 1683 reported that the Qing government had issued a secret order that "no

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<sup>174</sup> George Gosnell, Captain James Jeffroot and John Affleck at Macao to Edward Barwell and Council at Bantam, January 2, 1682, in Chang, p. 463, reports five Zheng ships there in 1681.

<sup>175</sup> George Gosfright and factors at Tempo Quebrada off Macao to John Chappell and factors at Taiwan, October 30, 1682, in Chang, p. 494.

<sup>176</sup> John Vaux and Council at Lapaçao to the East India Company in London, December 1, 1683, in Chang, p. 540.

foreign ship should be harmed except for the ships from Dongning [Taiwan] which were to be destroyed immediately.”<sup>177</sup> This statement agrees with the observations of the chief merchant aboard one of the East India Company’s ships lying in the Pearl River delta in 1682, who reported that at one point during the summer the crew of his ship, along with those of the other South-East Asian and Dutch ships that were also waiting for opportunities to trade in the area were briefly panicked by the approach of a Qing war fleet until they realised that “their [the Qing war fleet’s] commission extend[ed] no farther then to make prize of the junks belonging to Tywan.”<sup>178</sup> Later that year, the same chief merchant was able to report that the Qing fleet managed to fulfil its commission by surprising and destroying eleven Zheng ships near modern day Hong Kong Island.<sup>179</sup>

The second strong indicator that the Zheng merchants were continuing to manage their trading network with even less dependence on the Chinese market than they had during their occupation of Xiamen can be found, once again, in their increasing exports of Japanese copper. Between 1674 and 1679, Chinese merchants (again including the Zheng merchants, non-Zheng affiliated smugglers in China, and ethnic-Chinese South-East Asian) annually exported on average 981 714.81 kg of copper. In the final four years of the Zheng family’s rule of Taiwan that value rose to 1 129 370.59 kg.<sup>180</sup> What makes this figure even more telling is that the overall value of goods exported by Chinese merchants declined from an amount valued at 55 142.77 kg worth of silver to an amount valued at 25 598.27 kg over the same two periods.<sup>181</sup> The increase in the number of South-East Asian merchant ships

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<sup>177</sup> Yoneo Ishii, ed., *The Junk Trade from Southeast Asia: Translations from the Tōsen Fusetsu-gaki, 1674 – 1723* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1998), pp. 34 – 35.

<sup>178</sup> George Gosfright and factors at Tempo Quebrada off Macao to John Chappell and factors at Taiwan, October 30, 1682, in Chang, p. 494.

<sup>179</sup> George Gosfright and factors at Tempo Quebrada off Macao to John Chappell at Taiwan, December 4, 1682, in Chang, p. 497.

<sup>180</sup> See Appendix 4.

<sup>181</sup> Innes, p. 416.

arriving in Nagasaki between these two periods (an average 9.67 ships annually between 1674 and 1679, compared to 11.5 between 1680 and 1683) partly explains the rising exports of copper, but unless the China-based merchants ships visiting Nagasaki, whose numbers fell so dramatically after 1679 (see above), had been taking almost no copper in the 1674 to 1679 period, it is highly probable that the Zheng merchants would have had to increase their export of copper from Japan as well for the overall annual average copper exports to rise.

Finally, despite the difficulties determining the numbers and nationalities of merchant vessels arriving in South-East Asian ports, observations made by the East India Company's employees and other merchants indicate that the Zheng merchants maintained a strong presence in that region. Siam in particular seems to have become an important destination for the Zheng merchants. In 1680, the crew of a Zheng ship reported to the customs agents in Nagasaki that it and three others had left Xiamen in February of that year (before Xiamen had been abandoned), sailed to Siam for trade and then sailed for Nagasaki during the summer.<sup>182</sup> There may have been a fifth ship sent from Xiamen as well at the beginning of the year that returned to Taiwan in the summer, because the East India Company factory in Siam recorded a Zheng ship there that was trading primarily for saltpetre for use by the Zheng military.<sup>183</sup> In 1682, the factory reported that eight ships had come from China or Taiwan; three of them, the factory reported, were from Guangzhou, which strongly implied that the remaining five were from Taiwan.<sup>184</sup>

For Dong Kinh, the historian Hoang Anh Tuan has recently compiled a list of ships sailing there divided by their nationalities based on the archives of the Vereenigde Oost-

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<sup>182</sup> Ishii, pp. 22 – 23.

<sup>183</sup> Richard Burnaby at Ayutthaya to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 10, 1680, in Farrington, *The English Factory in Siam*, vol. 1, p. 555.

<sup>184</sup> Samuel Potts and Thomas Ivatt at Ayutthaya to Edward Barwell and Council at Bantam, November 29, 1682, in Farrington, *The English Factory in Siam*, vol. 1, p. 690.

Indische Compagnie (which maintained a factory in Dong Kinh during this time) and other sources. Unfortunately, Hoang's list does not distinguish between ships originating from China and Taiwan, and does not provide statistics for every year. Nonetheless, from it we can see that there were at least two Chinese or Taiwanese ships there in 1680 and two in 1682 as well, of which some, and perhaps all, likely belonged to the Zheng merchants.<sup>185</sup>

In the final two years of the Zheng family's rule, the Zheng merchants seems to have been engaged in selling and buying rice from South-East Asia in addition to the usual trade goods. In 1682, a report given by a Siamese ship in Nagasaki stated that three other ships from their port had sailed to Taiwan to buy rice because a famine was then in progress in Siam.<sup>186</sup> The following year, the situation had changed; Taiwan was experiencing a famine that year,<sup>187</sup> and three Taiwanese ships were reported going to Cochinchina to buy rice.<sup>188</sup>

### **Factors Affecting the East India Company's Trade in Taiwan**

In the immediate aftermath of the flight from Xiamen, the East India Company's employees in Taiwan were very pessimistic about their factory's future there. They were therefore surprised when they found that the trading environment was, if not improved, at least no worse than it had been prior to the loss of Xiamen. There were two related factors that made this the case. The first was the predominance of the South-East Asian branch of the Zheng merchants' trading network since the Zheng merchants' access to China had been limited to competing with other merchants in Pearl River delta region for trade through merchant-smugglers operating out of Guangzhou. As part of that branch, the East India Company continued to be able to trade its cloth to the Zheng merchants and, more

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<sup>185</sup> Hoang, pp. 228 – 299.

<sup>186</sup> Ishii, p. 28.

<sup>187</sup> Shepherd, p. 104.

<sup>188</sup> Li, p. 69.

importantly, trade for Japanese copper in Taiwan. The second factor was the Zheng administration's recognition of the East India Company's value to the trading network. This made the administration more willing to make concessions to the company in order to encourage it to maintain its factory in Taiwan.

Edward Barwell, the former chief of the Xiamen factory, discovered both these factors in 1680 after he had returned to Taiwan. Thinking that there was little hope for anymore profitable business in Taiwan, he had approached the Zheng administration and requested permission to withdraw the factory. The administration was reluctant to allow the factory to leave, so to encourage the employees to willingly stay, Zheng Jing waved the company's customs fees for that year and the next, and granted the factory unrestricted trade, except in the case of lead, iron, and rattans (a type of plant material used in ship building), which the Zheng administration still wanted first access to.<sup>189</sup> Besides this, in spite of the unrest caused by the Zheng military's flight from Xiamen, trade continued to be brisk for the factory. Barwell wrote the following explanation for why he had changed his mind about withdrawing from Taiwan.

But sence finding our sales farr to exceed our expectations both in prizes & quantities, the turbulent humors in late better composed, the King or his grandees seemingly prove to allow more freedome in trade and unwilling to part with us, hath inclined us to ralinquish that resoelution and continue this factory untill your pleasure further known therein.<sup>190</sup>

The following year, trade continued to be good for the factory, because, as the employees recognised, there was so little trade flowing between Taiwan and China. In 1681, the Zheng merchants' Chinese trade seems to have been even worse than usual, because the Zheng administration had gone so far as to prohibit its merchants from sending their ships to the Chinese coast that year, probably for fear of further defections. This improved the East

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<sup>189</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, p. 427.

<sup>190</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, p. 421.

India Company's trade further, as their stock of cloth was even more in demand to make up for the declining volume of imported Chinese cloth. The factory was able to trade its cloth for a large quantity of copper, silk, and gold that year to the satisfaction of its employees. The chief of the Taiwan factory wrote wistfully that had the Banten agency chosen to send a ship that year, the factory would have "dispatched her with the best cargoe that ever went upon our Masters' account from this place."<sup>191</sup>

The two cargoes that the East India Company's ships exported from Taiwan were both primarily composed of Japanese copper. The writings of the factory's employees are deceptive about the amount of copper they were exporting; they implied that the amount was disappointing. However, the company ships that sailed from Taiwan in 1680 and 1682 likely took more cargo than they had in any of the earlier years of the Zheng family-East India Company relationship, except 1677 when three ships were sent and all took back good cargoes. "To our inexpressible sorrow and great dissatisfaction have received but 700 chests [of copper]," Edward Barwell told his superiors in Banten in his report concerning the *Formosa's* cargo in 1680.<sup>192</sup> Barwell was trying to emphasise the difficulty the factory was having collecting debts from Zheng Jing and the other Zheng merchants, but it is obvious he was exaggerating the poorness of the cargo when the figures from the East India Company voyages to Taiwan and Xiamen are examined.

If the *Formosa* took with it only seven hundred chests (43 750 kg) of copper in 1680 (it is unclear whether this was the total amount the factory was able to procure over the course of the whole year or only part of it), it was still very likely the largest amount of copper yet taken from Taiwan or Xiamen on any single East India Company ship since the beginning of

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<sup>191</sup> John Chappell and Council at Taiwan to Edward Barwell and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1681, in Chang, pp. 458 – 459.

<sup>192</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, p. 424.

the relationship. This amount was surpassed in 1682, when the *Kent* took more than 1000 chests (62 500 kg) of copper,<sup>193</sup> which, along with the other goods the factory had traded for, made the cargo worth 43 350.66 Spanish dollars.<sup>194</sup> In fairness, the factory had had two years to collect this cargo because of the absence of any East India Company ships in 1681. On the other hand, it had had no fresh imports brought to Taiwan from Banten to trade either. One way or the other, except for 1677, it was still almost certainly the best year for the East India Company's relationship with the Zheng family, at least by the standard of the value of its exports.

Despite the fact that the East India Company's trade in Taiwan continued to be good and in some respects even better than during the earlier phase, the aftermath of the Zheng family's loss of Xiamen created one problem for the company: difficulty collecting debts from the Zheng merchants, and particularly from Zheng Jing and later his son, Zheng Keshuang, who were its biggest debtors.<sup>195</sup> The East India Company's trade with Taiwan was important to the Zheng rulers of the island, and they wished to maintain a good relationship with the company for that reason. At the same time however, they were experiencing a major shortage of resources then desperately needed for the reconstruction of their military, which was a much higher priority than repaying their debts to the company.

The Zheng military was in tatters after its retreat to Taiwan. Without even considering the casualties of the family's war in China, a huge number of men and ships were lost just during or after the disorganised flight from Xiamen through desertion of soldiers and commanders who were not interested in returning to the isolated frontier society of Taiwan for the low pay and uncertain future that service in the Zheng military offered. One

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<sup>193</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>194</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>195</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, p. 421.



particularly grievous loss for the Zheng military was a single Zheng naval commander who chose to sail away with at least seventy war ships and thousands of men under his command to offer his and his fleet's services to the government of Cochinchina.<sup>196</sup> In that case the Zheng family was lucky that the deserter had chosen to defect to Cochinchina rather than to the Qing. After Zheng Jing's flight from Xiamen, the Qing military was also offering employment and higher pay to any Zheng commanders or soldiers who were willing to change sides and fight for them, and many former Zheng men accepted this offer.<sup>197</sup> These deserters who joined the Qing military simultaneously deprived the Zheng family of resources and augmented the Qing government's fledgling naval force. The undermanned and undershipped condition of the Zheng military put Taiwan, which had previously been an unassailable fortress when the Zheng family had naval predominance, in a vulnerable position.

In order to restore its position in Taiwan, the Zheng administration therefore needed to recruit more soldiers and build more ships, but efforts to do this were hampered by a lack of resources. In 1680, after the retreat from Xiamen, the administration conscripted 3000 new men into its military.<sup>198</sup> Provisioning, equipping, and paying these new recruits apparently strained the administration's budget, because that same year a revolt broke out among the soldiers caused by a lack of pay.<sup>199</sup> The next year the East India Company employees noted

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<sup>196</sup> Ishii, pp. 29 – 30. See also Fu, vol. p. 61; and Tonkin diary, March 5 and April 24, 1682, in Chang, pp. 467 – 468. The report given by the crew of a Siamese trading ship in Nagasaki published by Yoneo Ishii states there were seventy military ships in this deserter's fleet. The employees in the East India Company's Dong Kinh factory also reported this fleet, but claimed there were about two hundred ships. The difference in reported numbers may be because the Siamese crew counted only large warships and the East India Company employees counted all the ships in fleet including smaller support vessels.

<sup>197</sup> Shepherd, p. 104, and Thomas Angeir and Thomas Woolhouse at Taiwan to the Agent and Council in Siam, December 20, 1683, in Chang, pp. 551 – 552.

<sup>198</sup> Hsu, p. 23; and Hung, p. 270.

<sup>199</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, p. 421.

that the administration was having difficulty finding resources to construct new ships.<sup>200</sup>

Other indicators of the Zheng administration's difficulties finding resources to support its military and cover its other expenses included a failed attempt to raise taxes on houses in 1682,<sup>201</sup> and expeditions sent by the administration into the interior of Taiwan in search of gold in the final years.<sup>202</sup>

These shortages meant that the Zheng rulers were reluctant to give up any more of their silver or copper to the East India Company than was necessary to keep the company satisfied, especially for repayment of debts where the Zheng administration would receive nothing of immediate value in return. As a result, their policy towards the East India Company was ambiguous; the administration made concessions to the company while at the same time it found excuses not to repay its debts to the company's factory. In 1680, for example, Zheng Jing promised the East India Company that it would be free of customs fees for two years, but when Barwell complained about his unpaid debts, the patriarch decided to charge the company for the final year's rent of the building that had housed the Xiamen factory. The settlement was probably done by subtracting the rent fees from his debt.<sup>203</sup>

There is no indication that Zheng Keshuang (or the men managing his administration and estate for him) failed to keep his father's promise not to charge the East India Company any customs fees, as the factory would have certainly reported it to the Banten agency if he had. But that same year, Zheng Keshuang's representative demanded the iron and saltpetre that the East India Company's ships in the Pearl River delta had brought be given to the administration on credit despite Zheng Keshuang's pre-existing debts. Had the ships

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<sup>200</sup> John Chappell and Council at Taiwan to Edward Barwell and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1681, in Chang, p. 458.

<sup>201</sup> Hsu, p. 23.

<sup>202</sup> Shepherd, p. 103.

<sup>203</sup> Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, p. 425.

brought the goods to Taiwan, the factory likely would have had to extend more credit to Zheng Keshuang, but fortunately for the company, as the factory's chief merchant explained to the ruler's representative, the factory had no authority over the ships and their cargoes in the Pearl River delta, as they were under the control of their own chief merchant.<sup>204</sup>

1682, the final year an East India Company ship sailed to Taiwan, provides perhaps the best example of the Zheng administration's double-edged approach to its relationship with the company. In the previous year Zheng Keshuang had given the company two hundred chests (12 562.5 kg) of copper as partial repayment for his much larger debt. In the fall of 1682, he decided that he needed these two hundred chests of copper returned to him, and proceeded to repossess them. Late that year, some of the ships from the Zheng merchants' Japan fleet returned with more copper, so the factory again requested reimbursement; this time Zheng Keshuang sent it six hundred chests (37 500 kg) of copper. This was less than what he owed the factory, but it was certainly more than he would have given them had he not valued the continuation of their trading relationship.<sup>205</sup>

After Zheng Keshuang and his administration surrendered to the Qing fleet in the fall of 1683, the Qing officer in charge of dealing with the East India Company's factory demanded a list of all the factory's stock and outstanding debts owed to it. Based on the list of debts submitted to the Qing officer, the factory was owed 16 636.80 Spanish dollars, of which 12 108.37 Spanish dollars was owed by Zheng Keshuang.<sup>206</sup> The relative success the factory

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<sup>204</sup> John Chappell and Council at Taiwan to Edward Barwell and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1681, in Chang, p. 459.

<sup>205</sup> John Chappell and Council in Taiwan to Edward Barwell and Council at Batavia, January 31, 1683, in Chang, pp. 501 – 503.

<sup>206</sup> In this list, the East India Company employees have divided the debts by Zheng Keshuang between three people; Zheng Keshuang, his late father, and the man who had been their chief representative for dealing with the East India Company. The family's representative is assigned the majority of the debt in this list. This division may have been a ploy by the company employees to make it appear that the factory was less involved in business with the ruling family than they actually were. Consultation by Thomas Angeir and Thomas Woolhouse at Taiwan, October 10, 1683, in Chang, pp. 523 – 524.

had trading in Taiwan during this phase therefore has to be balanced against the large loss of goods through unpaid debts. Unfortunately, the incompleteness of the available data on the company's trade to Taiwan during these last four years makes it impossible to determine with certainty how large this loss was relative to the overall profits of the company's trade with Taiwan. However, considering that the value of the unpaid debts was more than one third of the total value of the *Ken*'s export cargo in 1682 (43 350.66 Spanish dollars), there is no doubt that it was a very significant loss for the company, but the loss was probably not enough to out-weigh all of the company's profit.

In the final assessment of East India Company's trade in Taiwan from 1680 to 1683, it is possible to make two conclusions, based on the limited data available. First, based on the amount of copper exported from Taiwan and the overall value of the cargo exported in 1682, during these final years the East India Company's trade remained at least as strong as it had been when the Zheng family occupied Xiamen and was participating in the Sanfan Rebellion. The company's trade in Taiwan may even have been stronger than it had been during the Sanfan Rebellion because, unlike the earlier phase when most years saw the arrival of multiple East India Company ships importing goods for the factory to trade, between 1680 and 1683, the Taiwan factory only had the stock left over from 1679 (much of which was lost with the Xiamen factory) and the cargo brought by the *Formosa* from Banten in 1680 to trade for the two export cargoes sent from Taiwan during these final years.

Second, the Zheng administration's difficulties securing enough resources to support their militaries and other expenses prevented them from repaying much of the debt to the factory they had accumulated during the earlier phases of their relationship with the company and the final four years of their rule. Had the debts been repaid by them and the

other Zheng merchants, the East India Company's trade would have been clearly better during these four years than during any of the earlier years of its relationship with the Zheng family. As it was the success of trade enjoyed by the company's factory was greatly mitigated by the large loss it was forced to absorb in the form of unpaid debts after Zheng Keshuang's surrender in 1683.

## Conclusion

This thesis has been an attempt to analyse the brief but complicated relationship that was formed between the East India Company and the Zheng family who ruled Taiwan between 1662 and 1683. The relationship lasted thirteen years, from 1670, when the company first sent ships to Taiwan, to 1683, when the Zheng family finally surrendered control of the island to the Qing dynasty in China. The driving motivation behind the decision made by the East India Company's management in London and Banten to establish this relationship was their desire to see the company enter the trading world of the western Pacific. They knew that large amounts of goods were traded between China, Japan, the Philippines, and, to a lesser extent, amongst various states in South-East Asia every year, and they hoped to see their company participate in the trade entering and leaving the major markets of the region.

The company's management knew that it lacked direct access to at least two of the three major markets in the region (China and the Philippines) so the strategy conceived by the company's agent in Banten, Henry Dacres, envisioned the company trading with the Zheng merchants in Taiwan instead. Dacres knew that the Zheng merchants traded with all three of the region's major markets. He imagined that they would be willing to trade for the company's goods in Taiwan, re-export them to China or the Philippines (and later to Japan as well, after the company discovered in 1673 that it would not be allowed to trade there directly). In the three major markets, the Zheng merchants would then trade the company's goods for the important goods available in those places (primarily silk from China, silver from the Philippines, and silver and copper from Japan), and then bring them back to Taiwan to be re-traded for more goods from the East India Company. In this way, the company would be able to maintain indirect trade to the major markets in the region where it had no access.

The starting point of this thesis was a recognition that any attempt to understand how the East India Company's trade in the western Pacific developed would hinge on understanding how the Zheng merchants' trade functioned because of the company's almost complete dependence on them for access to the region's most important markets. The Zheng merchants' trade in the region depended in turn on the changing political and economic conditions of the most important regions it traded with (China, Japan, and the Philippines). Throughout the thirteen years when the Zheng family maintained its relationship with the East India Company, its trade to both Japan and the Philippines remained relatively stable. The main catalyst for the changes in the Zheng merchants trading network, and subsequently the East India Company's participation, can be easily identified as the mutation in the Zheng merchants' trade with China independently.

Prior to the arrival of the first East India Company ships at Taiwan in 1670, the Qing government of China had been attempting to block the Zheng merchants' access to trade with the mainland by prohibiting all foreign trade and evacuating a strip of land along the whole length of the Chinese coast. These policies had limited effectiveness, but they succeeded at making the Zheng merchants' access to Chinese goods and markets more difficult and expensive. This in turn weakened the Zheng merchants' overall trade in the region by limiting their access to crucial goods needed for their Japanese and Philippine trade.

Despite the negative impact that the Qing government's coastal evacuation and trade prohibition policy had on the Zheng merchants' trading network, the policies did not change its structure in a fundamental way. The fundamental changes to the Zheng merchants' trading network, and to trade throughout the region, were caused in the mid-1670s by the Sanfan Rebellion and the Zheng family's participation in it. The family occupied a portion

of southern Fujian province in 1674, but the long, bloody struggle that ensued for the next six years against first the governor of Fujian, and then the Qing military, severed most of the Zheng merchants' connections to their smuggling network in the mainland that they had been using to get around the Qing government's attempts to block their trade.

This caused a major shift in the structure of trade in the western Pacific, and most especially in the Zheng merchants' trading network. Access to Chinese goods diminished, but demand for the goods in Japan and the Philippines did not abate. To maintain their trading network therefore, the Zheng merchants needed to find substitutable goods for those markets. The primary type of Chinese goods exported to both Japan and the Philippines was silk, so Dong Kinh (a large South-East Asian state in modern-day northern Vietnam) became a much more important trading partner for the Zheng merchants, mainly because it was the only producer of significant quantities of silk in the western Pacific besides China.

The Japanese market was primarily interested in silk, and only took very small quantities of other types of cloth, but the Philippine market, which bought goods primarily for re-export to New Spain, was more flexible. The Philippine merchants were willing to buy cotton cloth from the Indian subcontinent, and to a lesser extent, cloth from Europe, for reshipment across the Pacific. Non-silk cloth available in South-East Asia was brought by merchants who traded in the Indian Ocean region, not the least of which was the East India Company, so the Zheng merchants were able to keep their trade routes to Japan and the Philippines intact by trading more and more with South-East Asia in place of China after about 1674.

This shift from China to South-East Asia also prompted the Zheng merchants to export greater quantities of copper from Japan instead of silver during this period. Copper was



more useful than silver in some of the South-East Asian markets that the Zheng merchants were increasing trade with, especially Dong Kinh, which was supplying larger quantities of silk for their trading network.

These are the basic patterns in the development of the Zheng merchants' trade in the region that the research presented here has revealed. The next step was to compare them to the East India Company's experience trading through Taiwan. The role the East India Company played in Taiwan was primarily that of a South-East Asian merchant organisation. Like other South-East Asian merchants, the company supplied cloth, spices, and dyes, and was primarily interested in the metal the Zheng merchants' exported from Japan and the Philippines, most especially Japanese copper. Therefore, in the first years of the company's trade with Taiwan (1670 to 1673), the company was unable to do much business in Taiwan because trade in the region was still structured around strong bilateral trade routes between China and Japan, and China and the Philippines. As trade in the region shifted from the links between Japan and the Philippines and China to links between the former two places and South-East Asia, the East India Company was able to participate more and more in the region's trade through the Zheng merchants.

The type of commodity that the East India Company was primarily interested in selling was cloth (both Indian and European), and this became useful to the Zheng merchants who needed new sources of it for their Philippine cargoes because of their diminishing access to Chinese silk. Likewise, the company had a use for copper in its factories and territories in the Indian subcontinent, which was convenient because copper was a commodity the Zheng merchants were able to export in greater quantities from Japan during the 1670s and early 1680s. Therefore, a regular and mutually profitable trade was able to develop between the

Zheng merchants and the East India Company after 1675 that consisted mostly of an exchange of cloth for copper.

The one factor that made the East India Company's position unique among other South-East Asian merchants in the Zheng merchants' trading network was the placement of their permanent factories in Zheng territories (Taiwan and Xiamen). This arrangement allowed the extension of credit to different Zheng merchants by the company because the company had a relationship with the Zheng administration on Taiwan that would theoretically assist the company's factory with the collection of debts. This arrangement was mostly beneficial, because it allowed the company to trade goods throughout the year rather than just at times when the Zheng merchants' copper and silver were readily available. However, in the final years of the Zheng family's rule of Taiwan, problems arose collecting debts from the Zheng administration itself, because of the difficulty the administration was having financing its wars in China. The company was still a valuable trading partner for the Zheng merchants, so the Zheng administration continued to accommodate the company's factory on most matters (relief from customs fees, for example), but found excuses to delay the repayment of its debts. As a result, the company had to absorb large losses from unpaid debts after the surrender of the Zheng family to the Qing military in 1683.

This analysis of the East India Company's trade with the Zheng family has sought to show the connection between the variance in the company's levels of success trading in Taiwan and the overall patterns of trade in the region that were affecting the Zheng merchants. The patchiness of the available statistics on the Zheng merchants' trade makes the creation of a highly detailed analysis difficult, so there are questions that remain to be answered. For example, the East India Company established a factory in Dong Kinh in 1672, the same year a permanent factory was established in Taiwan. Through the Dong

Kinh factory, the East India Company should have had access to silk, and should have been able to export the silk it bought there to Taiwan for re-export to Japan and the Philippines, but there is no indication it ever did this.

The thesis offers an explanation of the trends in the commercial world of the western Pacific during the 1670s and early 1680s that affected the Zheng merchants' trading network. It explains how the changes to this trading network in turn affected the East India Company's attempt to establish trade in the region. Further research into specific aspects of the Zheng merchants' trade (such as their trade in Dong Kinh, Siam, and with the Guangzhou merchants in Pearl River delta in the final years of the Zheng family's rule of Taiwan) would greatly benefit our understanding of the East India Company's trade through Taiwan, and increase our knowledge of the larger trading world of the western Pacific during these unique years in its history.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Notes on masses, currencies, dates, and names

#### Masses

When giving the mass of silver exported from Japan, I have converted all values into modern metric kilograms, using Robert Innes' formula 1 *kanme* = 3.75 kg.<sup>207</sup> When the value of goods in the possession of non-Europeans is given, I also give the value in the kilograms of silver. When mass is given in piculs, the name used by the English for the unit of mass *dan* 擔 commonly used in China and Taiwan, I have used K. N. Chaudhuri's formula 1 picul = 60.382 kg.<sup>208</sup> Chest of copper sold in Taiwan weighed 100 catties, according to one of the East India Company employees who stayed for several months in Taiwan,<sup>209</sup> and 1 catty = 0.625 kg.<sup>210</sup>

For the size and theoretical capacities of English ships I have retained the old style tonnage measurements used at the time.<sup>211</sup> Because the calculated "tonnage" of ships in the period covered by this thesis was only a very rough estimate of how many tons (meaning long tons rather than the modern "short ton") a ship could carry based on its dimensions, and because the modern metric tonne is close to equivalent to the long ton (1 long ton = 1.016 tonne), I have continued to refer to capacity of ships in terms of 'tons' throughout this thesis rather than making the conversion to tonnes.

#### Currencies

For the value of goods carried on East India Company ships and sold or bought by that company, I give their value in Spanish dollars (*real de a ocho*), the currency most commonly used by Europeans in Asia in the late seventeenth century. To convert English currency into Spanish dollars, I have used the formulas given by Chaudhuri: 1 Spanish dollar = 5 shillings, and 1 English pound = 20 shillings = 240 pence. I have also used Chaudhuri's formula to convert taels of silver, the most common unit of currency used by Chinese and Taiwanese merchants for import and export purchases and sales, into Spanish dollars: 1 Spanish dollar = 5 shillings = 0.75 taels.<sup>212</sup>

#### Dates

All dates stated in the text have been converted to the "new style" Gregorian calendar, which during the period covered in this thesis was ten days in advance of the "old style" Julian calendar used by the English at that time. Also according to the Gregorian calendar, January 1 is considered New Year's Day throughout.

#### Names

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<sup>207</sup> Innes, p. 6.

<sup>208</sup> Chaudhuri, p. 472.

<sup>209</sup> Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to the East India Company in London, September 16, 1672, in Chang, p. 152.

<sup>210</sup> Chang, p. 750.

<sup>211</sup> See Peter Kemp, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Ships & the Sea* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 876, for a description of the historical use of the term "tonnage" when applied to ships.

<sup>212</sup> Chaudhuri, p. 471.

All Chinese names are given in *hanyu pinyin* 漢語拼音 with traditional Chinese characters in parentheses at the first occurrence, except where I have been unable to identify the place or individual referred to in a non-Chinese language source.

For names in other Asian languages, I have tried to use modern transliterations instead of the names appointed to them by seventeenth century Europeans wherever possible (for example, Dong Kinh instead of Tongking, and Banten instead of Bantam). This was not always possible to do while maintaining clarity, so in some cases, especially when a name is still commonly used in English or when there is some ambiguity as to what the most appropriate name of a certain place should be, I have retained the common European name (for example, Cochinchina and Cambodia).

**Appendix 2.** East India Company ships sailing to Taiwan and Xiamen, and the value of exported goods, 1670 to 1682

Year of Arrival	Ship	Export Cargo (Spanish Dollars)	Destination	Notes	Source
1670	<i>Bantam</i>	Not Available	Banten		
1670	<i>Pearl</i>	Not Available	Banten		
1672	<i>Experiment</i>	7804.25	Madras	Captured on return by Dutch Ships	Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, November 15, 1672, in Chang, pp. 159 – 160.
1672	<i>Return</i>	Not Available	Nagasaki	Probably exported very little	
1672	<i>Camel</i>	Not Available	Banten (?)	Captured on return voyage by Dutch Ships	
1675	<i>Flying Eagle</i>	12 048.15	Banten	Some sugar was removed at Taiwan after value of cargo was given	John Dacres, Edward Barwell, and Samuel Griffith at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1675, in Chang, pp. 226 – 227.
1676	<i>Advice</i>	Not Available	Banten		
1676	<i>Formosa</i>	Not Available	Surat		
1677	<i>Tywan</i>	15 379.93	Surat		Invoice of goods loaded for Surat on the <i>Tywan</i> at Taiwan, November 6, 1677, in Chang, pp. 294 – 295.
1677	<i>Advice</i>	7764.09	Surat		Invoice of goods loaded for Surat on the <i>Advice</i> at Amoy, November 2, 1677, in Chang, pp. 290 – 291.
1677	<i>Formosa</i>	40 123.94	Banten		Edward Barwell and John Chappell at Amoy to Charles Sweeting and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan, January 3, 1678, in Chang, p. 304.
1678	<i>Advice</i>	11 774.96	Surat	Sailed to Surat in place of the <i>Flying Eagle</i>	George Gosfright, Charles Sweeting, and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan to Thomas Rolt and Council at Surat, November 1, 1678, in Chang, p. 367.
1678	<i>Flying Eagle</i>	Not Available	Banten		Benjamin Delaune, Edward Barwell, and John Chappell at Amoy to George Gosfright and factors at Taiwan, January 16, 1679, in Chang, p. 376.
1679	<i>Return</i>	3151.61	Surat		Edward Barwell, John Chappell, and George Griffith at Amoy to Thomas Rolt and Council at Surat, November 6, 1679, in Chang, p. 397.
1679	<i>Advice</i>	Not Available	Banten (?)		
1680	<i>Formosa</i>	Not Available	Banten		Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, c. December 1680, in Chang, p. 427.
1682	<i>Kent</i>	43 350.66	Batavia		Edward Barwell and George Gosfright at Batavia to the East India Company in London, August 21, 1683, in Chang, p. 511.

### Appendix 3. East India Company copper exports from Taiwan and Xiamen

Year	Amount (kg)	Price/100 kg in Spanish Dollars	Notes	Source
1670	Not Available	25.6	Price given, but no indication any copper was acquired	Ellis Crisp at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, October 22, 1670, in Chang, p. 68.
1672	26 500	24.21	Copper was low quality, and was lost on return voyage	Simon Delboe and Council at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, November 15, 1672, in Chang, p. 160.
1675	Not Available	25.6		John Dacres, Edward Barwell, and Samuel Griffith at Taiwan to Henry Dacres and Council at Bantam, December 22, 1675, in Chang, p. 224.
1677	39 128.44	14.4		Invoice of goods loaded for Surat on the <i>Adrice</i> at Amoy, November 2, 1677, in Chang, pp. 290 – 291.
1677	36 250	25.86		Invoice of goods loaded for Surat on the <i>Tywan</i> at Taiwan, November 6, 1677, in Chang, pp. 294 – 295.
1678	20 375	Not Available		George Gosfright, Charles Sweeting, and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan to Thomas Rolt and Council at Surat, November 1, 1678, in Chang, p. 367.
1679	Not Available	24		Benjamin Delaunc, Edward Barwell, and John Chappell at Amoy to George Gosfright and Thomas Angeir at Taiwan, January 26, 1679, in Chang, p. 378.
1680	43 750+	Not Available		Edward Barwell and Council at Taiwan to Francis Bowyear and Council at Bantam, December 1680, in Chang, p. 424.
1682	62 500+	25.6	Chief merchant notes receiving nine hundred chest of copper, and says that several Zheng merchants each sold one hundred chests more	John Chappell and Council in Taiwan to Edward Barwell and Council at Batavia, January 31, 1683, in Chang, p. 503.

**Appendix 4.** Refined copper exported from Japan by Chinese merchants (Adapted from Innes, p. 528)

Year	Weight of Copper (kg)
1663	273 953.13
1664	150 870.47
1665	119 133.69
1666	272 566.76
1667	473 902.09
1668	501 291.36
1669	297 200.20
1670	442 280.04
1671	815 839.32
1672	699 283.94
1673	662 179.20
1674	680 559.48
1675	1 160 324.67
1676	913 864.66
1677	940 892.85
1678	991 173.55
1679	1 203 473.64
1680	962 247.55
1681	324 070.19
1682	1 824 653.47
1683	1 406 511.14



**Appendix 5.1.** Numbers of Asian ships reaching Manila per year, 1654 to 1668 (Adapted from Chaunu, pp. 161 – 169)

Region	1654	1655	1656	1657	1658	1659	1660	1661	1662	1663	1664	1665	1666	1667	1668
China	8	3			5	10	11	10	6	2	4	10	2		
Macau															
Taiwan											1	3	2	2	4
China, Macau, and Taiwan															
Subtotals	8	3	0	0	5	10	11	10	6	2	5	13	4	2	4
Dong Kinh														1	
Cochinchina		1	1		1						1				1
Cambodia				1	1						1				
Siam				1	1	1	1	1	2		2			1	
Sumatra													1	2	
Java					1						1				
Borneo															
Makassar	1	1	1		4	1	3	2	2	1	2		2	1	
Unspecified Indonesian Archipelago															2
South-East Asian Subtotals	1	2	2	2	8	2	4	3	4	1	7	0	3	5	3
India															
Totals	9	5	2	2	13	12	15	13	10	3	12	13	7	7	7

**Appendix 5.2.** Numbers of Asian ships reaching the Philippines per year, 1669 to 1683 (Adapted from Chaunu, pp. 161 – 169)

Region	1669	1670	1671	1672	1673	1674	1675	1676	1677	1678	1679	1680	1681	1682	1683
China					2	N/A <sup>213</sup>	2	7	9	3	6	5		N/A	
Macau				1		N/A								N/A	2
Taiwan	3	8	1	4	4	N/A	1	2	1	1			3	N/A	2
China, Macau, and Taiwan															
Subtotals	3	8	1	5	6	N/A	3	9	10	4	6	5	3	N/A	4
Dong Kinh						N/A								N/A	
Cochinchina	2	3				N/A	1			1				N/A	
Cambodia	1					N/A				1			1	N/A	
Siam		3	1	1	1	N/A			1	1	1	1		N/A	
Sumatra						N/A								N/A	
Java						N/A								N/A	
Borneo						N/A								N/A	
Makassar						N/A								N/A	
Unspecified Indonesian Archipelago	2	3	1	3	2	N/A	2	3		2	1	1	1	N/A	
South-East Asian Subtotals	5	9	2	4	3	N/A	3	3	1	5	2	2	2	N/A	0
India	1	1		3		N/A	1			2	3	4	5	N/A	4
Totals	9	18	3	12	9	N/A	7	12	11	11	11	11	10	N/A	8

<sup>213</sup> N/A indicates that the numbers are not available.

**Appendix 6.1.** Numbers of Asian ships reaching Japan per year, 1654 to 1669 (Adapted from Iwao 岩生, “Kinsei Nisshi boeki ni kansuru suryo teki kosatsu 近世日支貿易に関する数量的考察”: 12 – 13)

Cities and Regions	1654	1655	1656	1657	1658	1659	1660	1661	1662	1663	1664	1665	1666	1667	1668
Nanjing 南京	1	3	2	1	3	4	2		1	1	2	2			
Suzhou 蘇州															
Putuoshan 普陀															
Zhoushan 舟山					(1)										
Wenzhou 温州							1		2						
Fuzhou 福州	11	1	10	1	1	5					4			2	6
Quanzhou 泉州	6	5	9												
Jinmen 金門										(3)					
Shacheng 沙埕						2	2	8	2						
Zhangzhou 漳州															
Anhai 安海	(23) <sup>214</sup>	(29)	(15)	(28)	(24)	(29)	(19)	(14)	(14)	(11)					
Chaozhou 潮州															
Guangdong 廣東						2					18	3	2		
Hainan Dao 海南島							5								
Gaozhou 高州															
Unknown Chinese		2	4	2	10	5	12	4	18		1	5		2	12
China Subtotal	41	40	40	32	39	47	35	32	35	17	25	10	2	4	18
Taiwan 臺灣									(2)	(3)	(5)	(8)	(14)	(11)	(12)
China and Taiwan Subtotal	41	40	40	32	39	47	35	32	37	20	30	18	16	15	30
Dong Kinh			2	1	1				1			2		1	1
Cochinchina	4	2	7	2	4	2	4	1	3	4	5	9	6	3	4
Cambodia	4		4	11	2	4	1	2	1	3	4	3	4	3	1
Siam	2		3	3	5	6	5	3	3	3		1	4	3	5
Malacca															1
Pattani	1	3	1	2	1	1	9	1	1			1	2	2	
Batavia			1				1					1	1	2	1
Banten															
South-East Asia Subtotal	11	5	18	19	13	13	20	7	9	10	9	17	17	14	13
Total	52	45	58	51	52	60	55	39	46	30	39	35	33	29	43

<sup>214</sup> Numbers in parentheses indicate ships coming from Zheng controlled territory.

**Appendix 6.2.** Numbers of Asian ships reaching Japan per year, 1669 to 1683 (Adapted from Iwao 岩生, “Kinsei Nisshi boeki ni kansuru suryo teki kosatsu 近世日支貿易に関する数量的考察”: 12 – 13)

Cities and Regions	1669	1670	1671	1672	1673	1674	1675	1676	1677	1678	1679	1680	1681	1682	1683
Nanjing 南京	1	2	4	1		1	1	2	2	1	1			1	1
Suzhou 蘇州															
Putuoshan 普陀	(2)	(3)	(1)						2	2	3	2			
Zhoushan 舟山															
Wenzhou 温州															
Fuzhou 福州	1	2				2	2	2		3		1		1	
Quanzhou 泉州								(1)							
Jinmen 金門															
Shacheng 沙埕															
Zhangzhou 漳州								(1)			6				
Anhai 安海															
Chaozhou 潮州															
Guangdong 廣東			1	2	3	4	4	1		3	3	2		3	1
Hainan Dao 海南島															
Gaozhou 高州															
Unknown Chinese	11	9	1		3										
China Subtotal	15	16	7	3	6	7	7	7	4	9	13	5	0	5	2
Taiwan 臺灣	(10)	(11)	(20)	(16)	(1)	(6)	(11)	(8)	(13)	(8)	(8)	(7)	(5)	(9)	(13)
China and Taiwan Subtotal	25	27	27	19	7	13	18	15	17	17	21	12	5	14	15
Dong Kinh	1			4	1		2	1	3	2	2	3		2	
Cochinchina	4	4	3	6	2	3	1	2	3	1	5	4	2	1	3
Cambodia	1	2	2	4	2						1	1	1	1	
Siam	3	1	1	4	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	6		6	6
Malacca		1													
Pattani		2		1			1								1
Batavia	4	3	5	7	7	3	5	3	1	3	1	3	1	2	2
Banten												1			
South-East Asia Subtotal	13	13	11	26	13	8	11	9	10	9	11	18	4	12	12
Total	38	40	38	45	20	21	29	24	27	26	32	30	9	26	27

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