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European Perspectives on Taiwan

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Part I
Europe and the Historical, Political and Social
Development of Taiwan

Ann Heylen

Taiwan's Historical Relations with Europe: Perspectives on the Past and the Present

In 2006, during one of the opening speeches at an academic conference, the Minister of Education at that time, Tu Cheng-sheng, listed with a series of Western names how “throughout the history of Taiwan, many people have come to this island and contributed to their Taiwan perspectives” (Tu 2006: 7). The attention was drawn to the Westerners who visited Taiwan itself, and not the traditional Western encounter with the Chinese world through the image of “Matteo Ricci sailing to China.” It is a kind of reference that demonstrates the Taiwan style of branding that the Chen administration (2000-2008) promoted as part of its cultural policy of internationalization.

Within the broader picture of Taiwanese history (re)writing, this particular episode of European contact and closure is integral to the “rise of a nativistic Taiwan study” (Chang 2008). The “rise of a nativistic Taiwan study,” depicts the transition from a Sino-centric to a Taiwan-centric interpretation of history, which, as a force for social change, followed in the wake of the democratizing processes and the accompanying negotiation of power relations. As demonstrated by Chang, the development of a Taiwan-centered history entailed several steps, of which the three most prominent can be described as the work of source collections or “infrastructure-building,” academic “institution-building” and the probing of new research horizons to further the required “field-building” (Chang 2008: 143-145). In this respect, the building of a nativist Taiwan study included the search for archival repositories on the Western (Euro-American) presence on the island throughout the centuries, and its public disclosure as reprint or in Chinese translation. However, the purpose of this chapter is not to analyze the ways in which these European sources feature in the current writing (and rewriting) of Taiwanese historiography in order to historicize Taiwan's past but to illustrate the ways in which the European powers have written about Taiwan over the centuries. This article employs a chronological approach and the European perspective in the writings at the heart of this chapter will shed light on the contemporaneous literary and geopolitical frames of reference.

I contend that these outsiders' narratives have acted as interpreters of European intellectual tradition in their own right. Within the framework of world history, historical accounts of developments in Taiwan developed out of contacts through conquest at different stages in its history. In successive order and as they saw fit, these external powers positioned the island as a bounded entity in terms of a fixed territorial space of culture and continuity. Through this spectrum, the wider world gained its knowledge of Taiwan and it is therefore important to consider the depiction of these writings in the context of the Western grand narrative as it emerged in the conventional categories of national and imperial Euro-centric history.

Foreign Settlements in 17th Century Formosa

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to become active in Asian waters. After occupying Malacca in 1511, they pushed further east to the “Spice Islands,” and surveyed the Chinese coast in search of bases from which they could engage in trading activities. In 1543 they reached Japan, and in 1557 they were granted permission to establish themselves in Macao. By that time, the Spaniards had also made their entrance and were busily developing Manila in the Philippines as an entrepôt for East Asian and Trans-Pacific Galleon commerce. By the end of the 16th century, the Portuguese and Spanish had practically monopolized trade between China and Japan (Ts’ao 2001: viii). Taiwan was not unknown to these two European powers, who frequently crossed the Taiwan Strait between Macao, Chincheo, Manila and the Ryukyu chain onwards to Japan while carrying out their profitable Sino-Japanese trade carrying Chinese silk in exchange for American silver. The harbors of Taiwan functioned in the well-established nexus of Sino-Japanese trade, especially with the expansion and commercialization of the Japanese market from the second half of the 16th century onwards. The Chinese presence on Taiwan consisted mainly of small communities of Chinese fishermen and pirate-merchants, trading with their Japanese counterparts, who also had enclaves on the island. However, the main inhabitants at the time were the Aborigines or Austronesian-speaking peoples, also known as the Formosa Aboriginal peoples (Blundell 2009: xv).

Chronologically speaking, the Portuguese were also the first Europeans to set foot on Taiwanese soil, but no archaeological evidence has been found which could testify to the existence of a temporary Portuguese settlement resembling those of the Dutch and the Spanish. Recollections of the Portuguese presence in Taiwan include the story of a junk (Chou 2006: 26-27) belonging to André Feio which was shipwrecked en route to Japan (Borao 2001: 2-15). Father Pedro Gómez’ autobiography, both in the Spanish version and the translated Portuguese version, reveals that in 1582, a small community of four Jesuits was living in Taiwan who were entirely dedicated to the spiritual care and material survival of almost three hundred shipwrecked Christians (Mateos 1998: 7).

The circumstances under which the Dutch came to Taiwan have been the topic of many stories and the most well-known of these is related to the Dutchman, Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1563-1611), who, sailing under the Portuguese flag, recorded the sighting of the “*Ihla Formosa*,” the *beautiful island*, because sailors called out this name when their vessel sailed past the island’s shores in 1543. *Itinerario* or travel atlas notes provided Dutch compatriots with travel routes which enabled them to undertake independent journeys to distant lands in search of spices from the East. One of the first big voyages based on such cartographic information and recorded in 1595-1596 was to the Indonesian island of Bantam. This represented the beginning of the Dutch mercantile ventures in the Far East and, in 1602, the United East India Company (VOC) established its headquarters in Batavia (present-day Jakarta) to coordinate Dutch maritime trade.

The Spanish and the Portuguese trading monopoly did not only affect the Dutch; English seafaring merchants were also prevented from gaining access to the China market. English trade in East Asia was limited to Japan, where, together with the Dutch, they had set up factories in Hirado, and in their turn were also employing methods which can only be described as piracy in their efforts to compete with each other. In an attempt to bring an end to the Portuguese and Spanish monopolies in the China trade, Dutch and English merchants

decided to cooperate and in 1619, they signed the treaty of a "United Fleet." This treaty was called the Anglo-Dutch Fleet of Defense (1620-1622), and epitomized "the economic and military forces that pressured China into opening trade relations with the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1624" (cited in Van Dyke 2003: 61). From the very beginning, however, cooperation was anything but smooth, and the treaty was officially dissolved in early 1623, when the English pulled out of East Asia, and the Dutch reinforced their position by replacing the 5 English ships with 13 Dutch ones. After an unsuccessful attack on Macao earlier in 1622, the Dutch went on to occupy a point of land in the Penghu islands where they built a fort (Blussé 1973: 28). The enlarged Dutch fleet hindered Portuguese ships from going in and out of Macao and trade with Manila was again brought to almost a complete halt. Portuguese and Chinese vessels sailing for Japan had to change course and make lengthy diversions in order to evade capture. These Dutch blockades and attacks on their junks were not in line with the wishes of the Chinese Ming government. In an attempt to deal with the Dutch plundering at sea, the Ming issued a ban on all maritime trade, in the hope that the Dutch would leave once they found out that there were no more junks to plunder. This withdrawal policy, however, only worsened the situation and increased piracy activities along the Chinese coast (see Wills 1979: 216, cited in Van Dyke 2003: 80). Finally, the Chinese launched a successful counter-offensive and surrounded the Dutch fort in Penghu. Negotiations between the two parties achieved an agreement: the Dutch would move to the wild shores of what is now known as "Taiwan." The fort was dismantled and the bricks were shipped to offshore waters, from which vantage point they were finally able to commence trading with China.

In August 1624, the Dutch disembarked on a small sandy islet, just across the main island of Taiwan. In this sandy bay of current day Anping (southwestern part), they started the construction of a castle where the headquarters would be located. This castle eventually became the colonial town of Zeelandia or Tayouan City. With its small shipping yard, it served as a way-station for Dutch shipping passing from the Netherlands East Indies to the ports of China and Japan. Acting upon the reports made by two Dutch merchants who had visited the main island the year before, a small plot of land was leased from the native village of Sinkan (Blussé 1984, Blussé 1995: 159). In this way, trade with the Chinese government was effectively legitimized and the Japanese community was made aware of the new Dutch presence. The compelling interest was the securing of trade with China and Japan. Colonization of the island itself resulted from changes in relations with the two empires (Blussé 1980). Dutch overseas mercantilism was accompanied by religious zeal to promote Protestantism. Chaplains accompanied these voyages to look after the Dutch settlers, and also to evangelize the natives. In the case of Taiwan, evangelization was reserved for the illiterate natives or Aborigines, who were "blank slates" as decreed by the prevailing logic of the European Renaissance (Goody 1986). Dutch rule was favorable to Chinese migration, which was often made possible through pirate intermediaries. Chinese labor in Taiwan was beneficial to Dutch revenue, and the Chinese also gained advantages from it. An examination of the interaction between the Chinese, the Dutch and the Aborigines reveals the ways in which they all used each other to exploit the third party, sometimes successfully but relatively peacefully, sometimes involving warfare and casualties (Heyns 2003: 175-76; Andrade 2007). According to Dutch sources, the main island of Taiwan was referred to as either Tayouan or Formosa, but over the centuries which followed, the latter

gradually found acceptance among Western sources as the most favored name-giving term used for the island.

In retrospect and in comparison with the Dutch, much less visibility has been given to the Spanish presence. Preserved maps that mention Taiwan date back to 1554 and 1558.¹ The Spanish interest in conquering *Isla Hermosa* is shown for the first time in a report sent by the city of Manila to King Philip II in 1586 (Borao 2003: 307). The Spanish seizure of *Isla Hermosa* in 1626 was undertaken in order to expel the Dutch enemy which had turned up in Philippine waters around 1600 and was now obstructing the trade between Fujian and the Philippines, but it was also the last Spanish attempt to launch a conquest outside the Philippine archipelago. Through a system of relief-ships, *socorro*, communication between Manila and the outlying satellite forts including *Isla Hermosa* was maintained, which helped to diversify the trade within the Manila network. This network reduced the negative trade balance with China, which had become a major concern since the appearance of the Dutch.

The Spanish founded a settlement at Keelung at the northern end, calling it *La Santísima Trinidad*, which was intended not only as a strategic counterweight to the Dutch Zeelandia, but also as an entrepôt for trade and a gateway for missionaries to China and Japan (Borao 2001: ix). Their mercantile intermezzo in Taiwan lasted from 1626 to 1642. Spain's interests in conquering *Isla Hermosa* produced a Spanish language documentation of the island (Borao 2001, 2002, 2009). The Spaniards were expelled by the Dutch, who captured their fortifications on the northern part of the island. From 1642 onwards, the Dutch were the only external power ruling over the parts of the island where its inhabitants had been pacified. The state of Dutch "supreme" rule is clearly illustrated in correspondence with their Chinese maritime-merchant counterparts, for example, in the letter addressed to Koxinga and dated 2 May 1654: "The Governor Cornelius Caesar who has the supreme power over the Zeelandia Castle and the subsidiary strongholds of the Netherlands and the peoples on the entire island of Formosa, Taijouan and the surroundings, here-with sends his friendly greeting to the Great Mandarin Cocxinja and also wishes His Highness a fortunate long life, victory over his enemies, and prosperity for his subjects" (Huber 2003: 224).

In 1662, the supreme Dutch power lost Formosa to the forces of this same Highness, Zheng Chenggong, known as Koxinga (1624-1662). He was a military leader defending the last vestiges of the Chinese Southern Ming government and head of the South Fujian trading dynasty established by his father, known in Dutch and Spanish sources as the Chinese merchant-pirate, Iquan (Zheng Zhilong 1604-1661). Iquan and his son, Koxinga, had been trade partners with the Dutch but relations turned sour when, in the eyes of these Chinese coastal merchants, the Dutch seemed to have gained possession of too much power and influence. Intrigue, embezzlement and betrayal worked in favor of the Zhengs. Koxinga's military landing resulted in the Dutch surrender after a Koxinga-Dutch treaty was negotiated with the last governor, Frederick Coyett (1615-1687).² The Zheng family then ruled the

¹ The map by Lopo Homen (1554) is preserved at Museo di Storia della Scienze, Firenze. The map by Diogo Homen (1558) is in the British Museum, London. The term for Taiwan is recorded as "Fermosa." On the 1558 map it reads "Fremosa."

² The Koxinga-Dutch Treaty of 1662 is contained in <<http://cns.miis.edu/straittalk/Appendix%201.htm>>; see also <<http://www.taiwandocuments.org>>. Governor Coyett was held nine-month under siege and like the other Dutch forced to leave Taiwan for Batavia. He was put on trial for the loss of Taiwan and served 12 years in exile on the Banda islands.

island until 1683, and tradition has it that they laid the foundations for the future Chinese societal developments. In 1684, Formosa was incorporated as a dependency of Fujian province in the Chinese Empire which it remained for the next two hundred years.

It is interesting to note that historiography on Dutch Formosa makes very little mention of the Dutch attempts to resume trade and re-occupy Keelung between 1664 and 1668 (Wills 2003: 273-290). The re-occupation of the Keelung outpost as a naval base was part of a Dutch attempt to take revenge on the Zheng regime. This attempt harbored plans for capturing some of the rich Zheng trading ships sailing between the Fujian coast and Nagasaki, and also for trading with the Qing in an alliance against the Zhengs (Wills 2003: 274-275). Dutch trade with the northern Aborigines was resumed, but was not as profitable as it had been with the southern Aborigines, in trading deer hides for the Japanese market. As a result of the Qing's strict enforcement of the controls on Chinese maritime trade in the coastal provinces, trade revenue was too limited and the Keelung outpost became too expensive for the VOC authorities. The Dutch started the withdrawal of the Keelung garrison during the summer months of 1668, after "fortifications had been blown up 'as far as possible' so that they would not be of use to the Cheng (Zheng) enemy" (Wills 2003: 289). In December 1668, all the Company's goods and 371 people from Keelung, Dutchmen, local wives and children, arrived back in Batavia.

Another curious episode, which is largely unaccounted for to date, is the existence of the English Factory in Taiwan between 1670 and 1685 (Chang 1995). The English East India Company's factory in Taiwan existed by the grace of its merchant dealings with Koxinga's son, Zheng Jing. In 1670, the East India Company's Council in Bantam received a letter from Zheng Jing inviting foreign merchants to trade in Taiwan.³ Two vessels, the *Bantam* and the *Pearl* were dispatched that same year. A letter from the King of England was presented, requesting that the English be allowed to trade and establish a factory in Taiwan. This request was favorably received and on 10 September 1670, an informal trade agreement was concluded between the Company and the Zheng regime (Chang 1995: 10). The factory was established in July 1672. For the East India Company Directors in London, the Tywan factory was envisioned as part of an elaborate scheme of triangular trade between London, Bantam, Tonkin, Taiwan and Nagasaki. As mentioned in Chang (1995: 12-13), "The Company hoped that English woollens could be traded for Taiwanese sugar and deerskins, which could in turn be traded to Japan for copper, which could buy silk in Tonkin for both Europe and Japan."

However, the outbreak of the Third Anglo-Dutch War in 1672 transported war activities between the two nations to Asian waters. The English vessels, the *Experiment* and the *Camell*, were captured by the VOC squadron in December 1672 and March 1673 respectively. Moreover, the Dutch factory in Nagasaki worked on Japanese officials to frustrate English efforts, which resulted in permission being refused to the English to land when the *Return* arrived in Nagasaki in August 1673. (Chang 1995: 14). In the wake of Zheng Jing's successful invasion of Southern China, the English were invited to set up another factory at Amoy (1676).⁴ The fate of the Amoy factory was sealed by Zheng Jing's defeat by the Qing

³ Bantam had become the English East India Company's most important remaining base in Southeast-Asia, although secondary to a vigorous concentration on India and Persia (Chang et al. 1995: 9).

⁴ In 1675, the English had furnished the Zheng regime with war material; the *Flying Eagle* arrived from Batam with a cargo of guns and gunpowder. The trade agreement was revised, granting the English to take on more war materials as cargo (Chang et al. 1995: 14).

army. He withdrew to Taiwan in 1680, and died the year after. The power struggle and the 1683 Qing invasion of Taiwan by Shi Lang also sealed the fate of the English factory. In hindsight, the English provided the Zheng regime with supplies to increase their military potential, while cargo from the factory at Bantam offered Zheng access to supplies of pepper and other Southeast Asian products, but which only contributed to a modest profit margin for the English factory (Chang 1995: 16).

In addition to the official trade records of the British East India Company available at the India Office Library in London, there are also some eyewitness accounts by a handful of Englishmen “who were still on Taiwan winding up the affairs of the trading post there when the Cheng (Zheng) regime collapsed in 1683” (cited in Wills 1999: 99-100).

Literary Impressions of Dutch Formosa

To what extent did the Dutch presence contribute to early literary, dramatic and artistic imaginings of Taiwan? What do the historical archives tell us about the reconstruction of Dutch Formosa which is relevant to the present day? The first indisputable evidence of the Dutch presence is an ethnographic eye witness account, entitled *Discours ende cort verhael van 't eyland Formosa* (Short account of the island of Formosa) written in 1624 by the pioneer missionary, Reverend Georgius Candidius (1597-1647), who was the first ordained minister on the island.⁵ The English version of this ethnographic eye witness account, most circulated for academic and popular purposes at the moment, is included in William Campbell's *Formosa under the Dutch* (1903, reprint 1987, 1992). It reveals depictions of what were viewed as uncivilized practices and aboriginal cultures, complete with 17th Dutch perspectives of idolatry on the cultural encounter. The ethnography differs from the official records and correspondence that were kept by the Dutch administration at the time (Blussé 1986, 1995, 1996, 2000). Additional historical records preserved in the archives in The Hague and Jakarta (ARSIP) make it possible to reconstruct roughly three decades of a Dutch settler community living in the colonial town of Zeelandia (Heyns and Cheng 2005, Cha 2006).

Immediately after the loss of Formosa in 1662, popular lampoon genres were printed and distributed. These popular literary writings were fictional conversations not intended to be used for theatrical performance but cheaply-sold anonymous broad-sheets used to comment on and criticize contemporary matters. One of the most well-known pamphlets is a 24 page manuscript dating from 1663 entitled *Oost-Indisch-praetjen, Voorgevallen in Batavia Tusschen vier Nederlanders* (East India chat, in Batavia between four Dutchmen), which, in the appendix, includes another fictional dialogue between Jan and Gerrit, two schoolteachers in Formosa.⁶ Later histories about Formosa that appealed to the Dutch popular imagination for successive generations are framed in the larger VOC context. Some of the more frequently cited historical sources are Wouter Schouten's travelogue *Reistogt naar en door Oostindiën* (Travelogue of the East Indies) (1676) and *'t Verwaerloosde Formosa* (Ne-

⁵ The ethnography was made available in print in 1639 in the Dutch Republic by a compatriot Seyer van Rechteren. In 1725, a French translation appeared in the *Records des Voyages de la Compagnie des Indes* (209-263) and in 1744 its English translation was included in the third edition of *Collection of Voyages and Travels* by Awshawn and John Churchill (404-411).

⁶ An English translation is included in Scott, Szabo and Heylen 2004: 258-272 and in Scott forthcoming 2012.

glected Formosa) signed with the initials C.E.S. (1675).⁷ These two works served as additional sources of inspiration for François Valentyn's *Oud- en Nieuw Oostindiën* (Old and New East Indies) (1724-1726).⁸ In 1905, Louwse published an historical novel for "young and old Dutchmen," entitled *Krijgsman en Koopman* (Warrior and merchant), an adventure set in the final days of Dutch Formosa.⁹

More about Formosa could also be heard on the Dutch stage. For a short time, the 1775 play *Anthonius Hambroek, of de belegering van Formosa* (Anthonius Hambroek, or the siege of Formosa) by Johannes Nomz was performed in Dutch theatres (Mattheij 1980, Chen 2002). The tragedy written in rhyming verse describes how the brave clergyman, Hambroek, taken prisoner by Koxinga's forces, is sent to the Zeelandia fortress to ask the Dutch Commander, Cajet, for an unconditional surrender.¹⁰ Although this was not one of Nomz's most popular plays, it seems to be one of the plays that he is most remembered for (Chen 2002: 16). In the preface, Nomz noted that he had used Wouter Schouten's travelogue as the main historical source.¹¹ At the end of the 19th century, debates on the historical authenticity of these historical narratives even became a topic of academic research in The Netherlands. In 1921, Valentyn's *Oud- en Nieuw Oostindiën*, was noted as an authoritative source on the Dutch Indies Studies in *Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woordenboek* (New Dutch biographical dictionary).¹²

Visitors of the 18th Century

With the departure of the Dutch, the Spanish and the English, Western settlement on the island came to an end. For the remainder of the 17th century and all throughout the 18th century, published accounts remained sparse. Even if European interest in the Far Eastern regions of the world was on the rise, it is not certain to what extent the available descriptions of the island were based on eyewitness accounts. For instance, one of the most noteworthy accounts is that of the Jesuit missionary, Du Halde, *Description de la Chine* from 1736 which includes a 19 page description of Taiwan and its people. Only in 1797 was an excerpt from this published as the "Formosa" entry in the third edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (351-352, cited in Shufelt 1998: 258). Even more curiously, Du Halde remained in Paris throughout his lifetime (Foss 1983: 67). According to William Campbell in *Formosa under the Dutch*, Du Halde's description is copied very largely from *Notes on Formosa* made by another French Jesuit missionary, Joseph de Mailla, S.J. (1669-1748) who visited

⁷ These initials most likely refer to Frederick Coyet as its author as C.E.S. is the abbreviation of Coyet et Socius, or Coyet et Socii, meaning Coyet and companion(s) (cited in Chen 2002: 56).

⁸ François Valentyn (1666-1727) was a Dutch clergyman serving most of his time in the Dutch East Indies (Ambon and Java), and was an experienced traveller within the VOC trading networks. For biographical details, see Habiboe 2004.

⁹ In the preface, the author noted that historical research for the novel drew from 't *Verwaerloosde Formosa* (Neglected Formosa) and that the two leading characters were named Chris and Selie, taken from the initials C.E.S. (Louwse 1905: v-vi).

¹⁰ The Dutch version is available online, <<http://www.let.leiden.nl/Dutch/Ceneton/Hamb1775.html>> (accessed 10 February 2010).

¹¹ This was the fourth reprint, which was slightly edited. For instance, a long quote from Valentyn was added. These findings make Chen (2002: 78) conclude that Nomz only read the fourth edition.

¹² For a critical discussion of Valentyn's contribution, see Huigen 2009.

the island in 1715 (Campbell 1903 (reprint 1992): 516).¹³ Joseph de Mailla, together with two confreres, Jean-Baptiste Régis, S.J. (1663-1738) and Romain Hinderer, S.J. (1668-1744), was entrusted with a geographical survey and the mapping of the provinces, territories and islands of Chinese Empire (1709-1718) (Zheng 2003: 174). Accompanied by four Manchu mandarins, the three Jesuit cartographers spent the month of August in Taiwan; they surveyed only that territory which was subject at the time to the control of the Emperor of China, and did not venture into the mountainous aboriginal territory. Although it was common knowledge that Formosa was an island, the Jesuit cartographers drew a curved line from Keelung upward, refusing to sketch the outline of the east coast they did not visit with their mandarin helpers (Mateos 1998: 13; Alvarez 1930: 55-56).

Throughout the 18th century, France witnessed a few “oriental fashions” that led to a continuous increase in all things Chinese, and which gained France a solid position as a main centre of distribution for China/Chinese products” (Demel 1995: 108). *Voyages et Mémoires* (1791) by the Hungarian-born adventurer, Count Maurice Auguste Benyowsky, contained an account of his three week visit in 1771.¹⁴ The volume was published posthumously by Benyowsky’s French patron who hoped to recoup the financial losses incurred from supporting the Count (Shufelt 1998: 267, Adams 1962: 82). An English translation by Oliver Pasfield, entitled *The Memoirs and Travels of Mauritius Augustus Count de Benyowsky* (2 volumes) was published in 1892 by Fisher Unwin in London. Less well-known examples are the reports by French nationals, such as the traveler, Jean-François de La Pérouse, the military officer, Antoine Bruny d’Entrecasteaux, and the Canton-based consular diplomat, Vieillard (Zheng 2003, Corcuff 2006).¹⁵ These 18th century writings about Taiwan situate the description of the island, its topography, peoples, religions and lifestyles within the political and economic framework of European travels and missions to China or around the world. The detailed attention paid to the indigenous population is striking. Taiwan does not feature as an all-Chinese island; both accounts make mention of “the part of Formosa under dominion of the Chinese” and “part of the island on the western side was subject to the Chinese” (Campbell 1903: 508, 521). There is the acknowledgement that “the part under dominion of the Chinese is composed of the two different nations – the Chinese and the Aborigines” (De Mailla, cited in Campbell 1903: 508). Count de Benyowsky’s narrative is dominated by an action-packed adventure of questionable trustworthiness. At the time of the Count’s embarkation, plans had been made and oaths taken to make the place a European colony (cited in Campbell 1903: 534-537). Shufelt (1998: 257) nuances this as “In 1771 Benyowsky offered his services as a colonial mercenary to any European power interested in getting a stake in Formosa.” Benyowsky’s knowledge of the island’s history was gained during a conversation with a former Spanish Captain who had fled from Manila to Formosa and had been living on the island for about seven years (Zheng 2003: 178-179). The missionary accounts, on the other hand, carried a moralistic and didactic

¹³ Campbell has included the English translation of De Mailla’s Notes on Formosa, which were originally written in French and published in *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* in 1715. The English translation appeared in *The Celestial Empire*, published in Shanghai in 1874. Afterwards it was also separately printed as “The early History of Formosa” (Shanghai: Loureiro, 1874). See Campbell 1903: 504-516, 585.

¹⁴ Maurice Auguste Benyowsky was born in an aristocratic Hungarian family in 1746 and died in 1786 in a conflict with the French after having aided them in the colonization of Madagascar (Shufelt 1998 and Adams 1962).

¹⁵ For references to Taiwan in these reports, see Club de Librairies (1965: 228-234) on de La Pérouse, *Journal de d’Entrecasteaux* and on Vieillard *Mémoires et Documents* (1784-1786, vol 4, no 18).

undertone. The history of the island is given validity, not through the words of some Spanish castaway, but through “those of the Chinese historian.” The ecclesiastical frame of reference is often narrated through comparison with cultural and societal developments in China. Keeping pace with European Orientalism, emphasis on the beauty of the landscape and the fertility of the land characterized the elaborate passages on the human geography in de Mailla's *Les Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*. Frequent references to the Japanese presence on the island before and at the time of the Dutch arrival connect the role of the island to the regional maritime world (Kadjanski 1995).

Missionary literature and aristocratic travelogues on China were held in high esteem by 18th century European society. The China-mode or *Chinoiserie* was rich food for the thoughts that inspired writers and philosophers like Fontenelle, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Raynal and Chateaubriand (Aurich 1935, Guy 1963, Watson 1980). Not only in literature and scholarship, however, but also in architecture and arts: the influence was visible in constructions of Chinese pavilions, landscaped gardens, and interior design to the extent that the *Chinoiserie* style took on a life of its own. It would be erroneous to conclude that 18th century French writings on the Chinese world, even by ecclesiasts, were aimed solely at an academic readership in specialized libraries. Written for the public, and presented using the most sophisticated bookbinding techniques then available, these works were representative of the encyclopedic movement of that time and were intended to stand as propaganda pieces for the Jesuit China mission (Foss 1983: 76). In this context, mention must be made of the exquisite example of “Taiwaniserie,” known through the work of the fraudster, George Psalmanazar, who compiled a “genuine” *Description of Formosa* (1704-1705) without ever having visited the place, but was nonetheless powerful enough in his writing to create a credible account.¹⁶ It is possible that George Psalmanazar wrote in defense of “enlightened minds,” in order to counter the absolute teachings of the Catholic Church (Foley 1968). His imaginary account still attracts scholarly attention from within the circle of Taiwan Studies, and has for a considerable amount of time not been subject to question with regard to its fraudulent content (as demonstrated by Shufelt 1998, 2005). Likewise, a critical reading of Benyowsky's chapter on Formosa suggests that this, too, ranks in the same category of such “fantasies of appropriation,” that “exploit real ignorance about a real place for purposes of self-aggrandizement and power” (Shufelt 1998: 271, 259).

By the end of the 18th century, the China trade route was firmly entrenched in European maritime ventures and overseas colonial projects. Articles that featured descriptions of the island of Formosa enriched European knowledge on Asia (Amiot 1776-1814; Burney 1803-1817; Klaproth 1822, 1826; van der Vliet 1842). A couple more decades would have to pass, however, before the European powers would once more set foot on Taiwan, in the second half of the 19th century.

¹⁶ William Campbell notes in his bibliography that a certain Allibone states that the *Account of Formosa* was compiled for Emanuel Bowen's *Compleat System of Geography* (1747) and drew from two works: the ethnography written by Candidius and another work by Varenius, i.e. Varenius, Dr B. *Descriptio Regni Japoniae et Siam; item de Japoniorum Religione et Siamesium; de Diversis omnium Gentium Religionibus...* (Cambridge 1673); cited in Campbell 1903: 611-612.

The 19th Century Indigenous Experience

Western infringement upon China since the beginning of the 19th century culminated in the opium wars of the early 1840s. In the wake of these events the island saw the opening of its harbors as treaty ports in the 1860s. The commodities that Taiwan had to offer on the world market were tea, sugar and camphor. Merchants, missionaries, diplomats, officials and adventurers in the service of the European colonial powers in the Far East entered Taiwan anew. Hence, the island was further incorporated in the published collections of treaties, consular reports and maritime customs publications. As the 19th century wore on, Taiwan's textual entry into international relations became described in terms of expeditions, trade, colonial policies and the question of territorial settlement.

Learned societies and articles in scholarly journals reproduced the popular and scientific assumptions about differential civilizations and hierarchies on the ladder of modernity. Accordingly, accounts on Taiwan's geography, ethnics groups and languages featured in scholarly journals of the day.¹⁷ Generally speaking, the visitor's contemporaneous fascination with the cultural encounter was not so much concerned with the Chinese customs and languages on the island, as with the exoticism of its Austronesian cultural and linguistic presence (Bechtinger 1871, Steere in Li 2002).¹⁸ In fact, an overview of collected writings introducing Formosa to the 19th century European public reveals the same pattern of writing, often consisting of literally copying passages from earlier accounts, inclusive of spelling mistakes and factual errors in its human geography. One of these frequently cited sources draws information from the "Formosa" entry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* which, in spite of revised editions (1810, 1817, 1823), continued to use extracts from De Mailla's 1715 text as the major source (cited in Shufelt 2002: 270).

The Japanese expedition (1874-1875) to Formosa also drew some Western attention, regardless of the fact that these powers were not even remotely involved (de Saint-Denys 1874). Political attention was given to the matter in the British *Parliamentary Papers* (folder *China*, No 2, 1875; folder *China*, No 6, 1875). Among the most well-known of the writings related to this event is *The Japanese Expedition to Formosa in 1874*, written by the American journalist, Edward House (1875).

The expedition helped to prevent a war between China and Japan, but the Qing government was required to pay an indemnity. This territorial issue was also of interest to the European powers that had fared similarly in dealings with the indigenous population. The early 1840s had seen the two shipwrecks of the British ships, the "Ann" and the "Nerbudda" in the south. The surviving crews were marched overland to the southern city of Tainan, and imprisoned in a granary for several months in severe conditions, after which some of them were executed (beheaded) in a public ceremony. The others were freed, among them, the captain of the "Ann," Frank Denham. Two diaries, which had been kept during this period of imprisonment by Denham and a Mr Gully, a passenger-merchant (in opium?) who had been beheaded, were edited and published soon after in London (Gully 1842).¹⁹

¹⁷ A series of these articles have been made available through the Reed College Formosa database. Online. Available <<http://academic.reed.edu/formosa/texts/texts.htm>>.

¹⁸ An English translation is available at <<http://academic.reed.edu/formosa/texts/texts.htm>>.

¹⁹ Thanks to Harold Otness for sharing this information with me. Also see Otness 2005.

The opening of Taiwan brought with it the establishment of several European consulates. The first were established in the southern city of Tainan, but covered the harbor and city of Kaohsiung as well. By 1877 a "steam tug was running three times a week between the two ports and there was a telegraph connection as well" (Otness 2005: 3). Robert Swinhoe (1836-1877) became the first English consul, and he was joined by William Pickering (1840-1907) who in 1865 was appointed Collector of Customs at Anping. Swinhoe is remembered for his firsthand collection of ornithological data in Taiwan between the years 1856-1866, during which he is credited with naming 227 bird species on a checklist of 460, including 14 endemic species (Hall 1987). Their lofty descriptions of the island make pleasant reading, contrasting as they do, the slow pace of life within the Chinese walled cities with the hectic bustling market-scenes outside (Pickering 1898). On the business-side, the European trade presence dutifully kept the meticulous records that have now been made available as *Chinese Maritime Customs Publications, 1860-1948*.

The island's strategic importance in the region developed in the wake of the Sino-French war in 1884-1885. On 11 May 1884, France and China signed a treaty in Tianjin that recognized the French protectorate in the Tonkin region (Vietnam).²⁰ When Chinese troops attacked a French legion on 23 June, war broke out, resulting in disastrous losses for the Chinese fleet in Fuzhou. Rouil (2001) provides an overview of the developments that lead up to the blockade and the ensuing war that lasted from 2 August 1884 until 9 June 1885, when France and China signed a peace treaty in Tianjin. Evacuation from Keelung and the Pescadores was immediate (Rouil 2001: 147, 149). Estimates place the number of French casualties at approximately 700, but they were not buried at two French military cemeteries at Keelung and Magong of which the plan for construction was abandoned by decree of the French consul in Shanghai in 1887 (Rouil 2001: 150).

Often cited works about the Sino-French war of 1884-85 in French include Henri Cordier (1883), Captain Garnot (1894), while additional information is documented in the context of Annam, Tonkin/Vietnam and the French intervention in the Far East /China (Billot 1888, Courbet 1896, Garcin 1903). Noteworthy are the memoirs of the soldier Thirion (1898), Ragot (1903) and works by novelists and artists (Dargène 1898; Bonifacy 1931).

Finally, the most detailed information on Taiwan's human geography, customs, language and culture is to be found in the missionary journals, *The Chinese Repository* and *The Chinese Recorder*, or those founded by the congregations in the wake of the missionaries' evangelizing activities in China and Taiwan. Among the first Europeans to enter the island were the Presbyterian missionaries: the Canadians in the north and the Scottish in the south (Rubinstein 1991). The Catholic Spanish Dominicans arrived in 1859 (Fernandez 1994).

It was under the impetus of these foreign residents and visitors that the distant past of Taiwan regained attention. An interesting account is that provided by the noted Sinologist, Herbert Allen Giles (1927), who in 1869 had been appointed Assistant Consul in Anping where he excavated the ruins of Fort Zeelandia in the hope of finding relics from the Dutch era. To date, Scottish Reverend William Campbell's *Formosa under the Dutch* (1903) remains an authoritative source and offers an English translation of Dutch materials, mainly drawing from the Dutch Reverend Dr. J. A. Grothe's volumes in the 1880s on the Dutch mission in Taiwan.

²⁰ The treaty was signed between Li Hongzhang and Francois Fournier.

Formosa as Part of the Japanese Empire

In 1895, Taiwan became Japan's first colony (1895-1945). The 50 years of Japanese rule would exert a lasting impact on the island's further development. The arrival of the Japanese as the new rulers of Taiwan also brought changes for the foreign community. From now on, the privileges granted to the foreign community fell under the arrangements between Japan and various nations (Davidson 1903: 597, 599). The Customs representatives were replaced by Japanese officials. Nevertheless, in the early years, there was a small increase in foreign merchants; the British and the Americans did particularly well in trade. Japanese rule meant the introduction of more imported goods facilitated by new steamship lines that were opened. However, a Westerner needed to show proof of "definite business that demanded one's presence." If an "excuse for being" in Taiwan could not be found, the only option was to arrange for the "personally conducted tours" that the Japanese organized from Japan to the colonies.

Until the beginning of the Japanese colonial period, histories on Taiwan in Western languages were mainly compiled by missionaries, diplomats and academics. Some of these often cited "classics" include Imbault-Huart (1893), MacKay (1896), Riess (1897) and Davidson (1903). A note of caution is required with regard to Imbault-Huart's work. His geographical descriptions have given rise to suspicion of virtual trekking, based on the travel reports and travelogues of others (Fix 2009: 25).

With the Japanese having entered the scene, the grand narrative of Formosa at the Chinese frontier was now spelled out. Formosa was discussed as an integral part of the Japanese empire. Japanese publications written in English to the international public ensured that this was the message to come across. Reference is made here to the rhetoric of Great Game narratives. One way to show the Western world that Japan was of equal status was to boast their "mission civilatrice, and depict the island to the outside world as a model colony. Some examples are Katsura Taro (1904), Hishida Seiji (1907), Gotō Shimpei (1909), Den Kenjirō (1938) and George Braithwaite's translation of Takekoshi Yosaburō's *Japanese Rule in Formosa* (1907). The authors were Japanese statesmen and officials who served in the highest echelons of the colonial administration. In Japan they belonged to the cosmopolitan political elite who enjoyed the privileges of studying and travelling abroad on diplomatic missions to Europe and United States and partaking in the decision-making processes at home. Western scholars and journalists in their East Asia writings also integrated "the Japanese presence." Or rather, the Taiwan colony was included in literature documenting the rise of imperial Japan. European writings about the island were expanded with a style of writing that was in line with the Japanese colonialist and modernization rhetoric (Keane 1904; Mueriot 1907; Ralston 1924). The status of Taiwan as a Japanese colony also made the island visible to an audience that was primarily interested in Japanese affairs (Bigelow 1923; Haguenaer 1930), and which gave rise to travel guides (Terry 1920).

The Japanese presence as the power player put Western observations on the Chinese and Aborigines race into perspective. Japanese writings emphasized the subordinate role of the Chinese in the racial hierarchy. Whereas Japanese descriptions of Taiwanese tours around the island to Westerners spoke in relatively derogatory tones about Chinese culture, Western accounts commented on the discriminatory treatment of the Chinese and indigenous Formosans by the Japanese (Pickering 1898). Some questioned the Japanese policies

of “benevolent or humanitarian assimilation” in view of the rapidly declining aboriginal population (McGovern 1922, reprint 1997: 16). More information about Taiwanese society under Japanese rule was provided by the missionaries (Campbell 1915; Band 1936; Fernandez 1994).

Western journalistic attention to Taiwan increased in the wake of the Japanese aggression in the Pacific after 1937 with the attack on Pearl Harbor. In the 1940s, research writings consciously positioned Taiwan as a distinct colonial entity, viewed as a place worth studying because of its disposition, rather than with the aim of providing another descriptive account of its Chinese and aboriginal inhabitants and societal development before and after the Japanese annexation (Grajdanzev 1942; Kerr 1942). Taiwan's diplomatic history had been documented under the Japanese imperial banner. After the Japanese surrender in 1945, the international community decided that the island would be restored to the Republic of China (ROC) under the leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The regime change coincided with an ideological shift in academic scholarship.

Towards a Conclusion

This article provides an overview of the foreign language literature about Formosa throughout the centuries. Clearly, these works do not fail to mention that the island has been under the domination of successive external powers, and invariably depict the multi-ethnic character of the society. Attention has been paid to the aboriginal presence right from the beginning to the extent that it was already obvious in the 18th and 19th centuries, and this continues to characterize both popular and scholarly writings. On the one hand, the cultural encounter demonstrates no more than the process of the established Eurocentric paradigm and its presuppositions: fascination with the exotic. On the other hand, the relatively less outspoken attention paid to the nature of Chinese society and its population, which by the time of the Japanese colonial period was in the majority, is not that surprising either. As observed by Heather Sutherland, “indigenous ways of linking past and present were taken seriously insofar as they were linked to powerful states, capable not only of maintaining archives and chroniclers, but also of challenging Western expansion” (Sutherland 2007: 503). The Chinese empire and its mandarins did not conform to these Western conventions. Generally speaking, Taiwan's annexation to Japan was evaluated positively by the foreign (missionary) community (Sommers 2001). But also in the representation of the history framed in the context of Taiwan's postwar development, the Western state-centered grand narrative upholding the values of progress, superiority and diffusion prevailed. The march to modernity was no longer framed in an imperialist narrative, but was gradually replaced by the postwar central-state ROC road to modernization rhetoric, which provided political validation and a social context for Taiwan's cultural Chineseness.

Against this background, it is useful to revisit the archives and documentation related to the historical relations between the European countries and the geopolitical formation of Taiwan to the present day. It requires us to reconsider our perspectives in the light of this new historical evidence. This is not an easy task. The rhetoric of entitlement which ties the role of history in with state and identity still plays a role in determining the limits of discourse. One of these is the conventional master narrative of modernity employing the constructed Western narrative on “China and the Chinese,” which is closely tied to identifica-

tion with a particular state agenda. The People's Republic of China power bloc and its claims on Taiwan, whilst acting as a global "power bloc" deserves critical attention. In Taiwan, it remains to be seen to what extent the incorporation of these Western language sources into the construction of a regional macro-history will find a continuous venue. Will they be able to transcend or face another challenge from the emerging narrative based on a reaffirmation of Chinese historiographical schools that may be prone to blend the past into a new form of state-sponsored history with narratives to legitimize claims to politically inspired entitlement.

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