

Taiwan – A Bridge Between the East and South China Seas

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Taiwan – A Bridge Between the East and South China Seas

Edited by Angela Schottenhammer

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Acknowledgements and Technical Remarks

The present volume is the eleventh volume of *East Asian Maritime History*, introducing results of the research project “*The East Asian ‘Mediterranean’*” that has generously been sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation from May 2002 to July 2009. The papers included here were originally presented for the second project concluding conference entitled “Taiwan – a Bridge between the East and South China Seas” and held at Munich University on November 5, 2007.¹

First of all, I wish to thank the Volkswagen Foundation for their generous sponsorship of both the conference and the publication of this volume.

The conference was also supported by the Taipei Representative Office in Munich. I therefore also want to thank the Taipei Representative Office, in particular its General Director in 2007, Chu Jian-Song.

The present volume is basically written in English but includes one article in Chinese and one in German. Citations and footnotes were standardized to a large measure. However, due to the wishes and suggestions of individual authors, some items were not changed. The Chinese contribution by Chu Te-lan is written in long characters as are the characters included in the English and German contributions. Quotations from websites that use short characters are reproduced in short characters. Chinese transcriptions, as a rule, follow the Pinyin system.

Except for the Chinese contribution each paper has its own bibliography. Titles of secondary literature have, as a rule, not been translated. The reign periods of emperors are given in small letters and in italics and are not capitalized.

Finally, I wish to thank the Harrassowitz Publishing House for kindly having allowed this to be published also in Chinese.

AS (蕭婷)

1 Two papers, those by Leonard Blussé and by Murray Rubinstein, are not included in this volume.

Introduction and Historical Context

Angela Schottenhammer

The aim of the conference “Taiwan – a Bridge between the East and South China Seas”, held at Munich University on November 5, 2007, was to discuss the historical role of Taiwan as a bridge but also as a barrier for exchange relations between Northeast and Southeast Asia in both vision and reality. After all, Taiwan has played a particular role in the geographical context of the East Asian waters. Of course, only a few aspects of the wide range of Taiwan’s historical exchange relations can be covered here. But we hope to provide at least another small contribution to certain aspects of Taiwan’s history. And we are very happy to eventually complete this volume just in time for the centenary of the Republic of China (ROC, 1912–), which was officially declared by Sun Yatsen’s 孫逸仙 (or Sun Zhongshan 中山) on January 1 1912.

The Peoples Republic of China (PRC), since its establishment in 1949, considers Taiwan to be a part of mainland China, thus of the PRC, but the ROC has continued to exist on Taiwan. With the flight of the Nationalist Party (Guomindang 國民黨) under Jiang Kaishek 蔣介石 to Taiwan in 1949, the ROC also moved to Taiwan. Still today, in addition to the Western calendar, a Republican calendar is used that takes 1912, the year of its official declaration, as year 1, 2012 accordingly as year 100.

In 1683, after an eventually successful military campaign of Qing naval forces under the leadership of Shi Lang 施琅 (1621–1696), Taiwan officially became part of the Qing Empire. But it is well-known that the Qing Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1661–1722) was originally hesitating to incorporate the island into Chinese territory. And the role the Qing rulers assigned to Taiwan is at least revealing. The island was not really considered a part of the mainland but rather an “appendix” of Fujian 福建 (Min 閩) Province, as a kind of protection belt from dangers that might arrive from the southern seas. As Christian Soffel shows at the end of this volume, in Chinese poetry Taiwan was rather considered “a remote outer island that never has been a part of Chinese territory (*zì gù bù rù bǎn tú* 自古不入版圖), but has strategic importance to shield Min and Yue 粵 (modern Fujian and Guangdong) from outside”¹ – a *frontier* in other words. Between 1895 and 1945 Taiwan was a colony of Japan.

1 See his contribution in this volume, pp. 129–130.

Little is known about the early history of Taiwan. Archaeological evidence only provides vague hints. Early Chinese descriptions, too, mostly remain very vague and it is not known with certainty if the expression “Liuqiu 琉球” of which there exist various character variants and which in early texts appears with the adjectives “big” (*da* 大) or “small” (*xiao* 小) refers to Taiwan and the Liuqiu or Ryūkyū Islands or either *only* Taiwan or *only* the Ryūkyū Islands. The name of “Taiwan 臺灣” seems not to have been used before the 1630s.²

Probably, the island was early on known to the Chinese particularly since we know about sea explorations. But we do not possess any definite date or time period of the first contacts between mainland Chinese and Taiwanese aborigines. Even about the first mention of the island in Chinese sources, there are still controversies among historians. Some are of the opinion that the island Yizhou 夷州 mentioned in the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 and the *Linhai shuitu zhi* 臨海水土志 was identical with the Liuqiu Islands and both actually referred to Taiwan.³ But since Song 宋 times (960–1279), the term “Liuqiu”, as a rule, referred to the Ryūkyū Islands. This, however, would suggest that early Chinese historians were at least not conscious of the island. On the other hand, taking into consideration that a state like Wu 吳 in Southeast China during the time period of the Three Kingdoms (222–280) already possessed a kind of a navy and ocean-going ships and attacked for example an island like Hainan 海南, it would remain at least astonishing that the Chinese knew about islands as far away as Japan but at the same time possessed no geographical knowledge of Taiwan? The Sui Emperor Yangdi 煬帝 (r. 605–617) eventually ordered the construction of a fleet and undertook military expeditions to Liuqiu 流求.⁴ But, once again, the problem remains to which island does this actually refer, the Ryūkyū Islands or Taiwan? Until today scholars have not arrived at a definite conclusion. According to Ts’ao Yung-ho 曹永和 the majority of historians considers it to be Taiwan.⁵ These problems at least attest to the particular geographical role Taiwan has played in East Asia’s maritime history.

Prior to the late sixteenth century, this is certain, the island was generally bypassed by merchants, although it was visited by fishermen, shipwrecked refugees and international outlaws from Song times at the latest.⁶ In particular the Penghu 澎湖 Island group off the west coast of Taiwan, today a district of Taiwan, seems to have been used as a kind of meeting point by traders, fishermen, and “outlaws”.

2 See the contribution by Chang Pin-tsun in this volume, p. 12.

3 See the reference in Yü Ying-shih, *Trade and Expansion in Han China. A Study in the Structure of Sino-Barbarian Economic Relations*. (Berkeley. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 187, footnote 61.

4 *Sui shu* 隋書 (636) by Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643). (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), j. 81, pp. 1822–1823 (*Dongyi* 東夷) states: 流求國，居海島之中，當建安郡東，水行五日而至。

5 Ts’ao Yung-ho 曹永和 (Cao Yonghe), *Zhongguo baiyangshi lunji* 中國海洋史論集. (Taipei: Lianjiang chubanshe, 2000), p. 40.

6 Ts’ao Yung-ho, *Taiwan zaoqi lishi yanjiu xunji* 臺灣早期歷史研究續集. (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe, 2000), pp. 43–44.

Penghu apparently appeared for the first time in Song period sources. In his *Zhufan zhi* 諸蕃志 Zhao Rugua 趙汝适 (1170–1231) states:

“In the district of Ts’üan-chou [i.e. Quanzhou 泉州] there is an island in the sea named P’öng-hu (澎湖); it belongs to the jurisdiction of Tsin-kiang-hien (晉江縣)...[The country of Pisheye 毗舍耶, by Hirth and Rockhill identified as people of probably Philippine origin living on South Formosa] is so near to this island that smoke on it may be discerned.”⁷

A number of Song and Yuan ceramics have been excavated on Penghu⁸ and it was certainly known to some merchants and fishermen by Song times. Nevertheless, it remains unclear if the large island east of Penghu was perceived as an island distinct from the Ryūkyū Islands.

Penghu may perhaps have served as a strategic place to exchange cargoes during the maritime prohibition period. In the eyes of the Ming court, Taiwan seems rather to have represented a hiding place for “pirates”. When the *Ming shi* explains that Jilongshan 雞籠山 lies in the north of Penghu and this is why it is called the “Northern Port” (*beigang* 北港)⁹, this reads as if until Ming times obviously Penghu was still the point of orientation. Exchanged with aborigines were products such as ceramics, textiles, salt, some copper jewellery and the like for deer skins, dried deer meat (Sambar und Muntjak) and antlers.¹⁰ And the island was certainly visited by Fujianese fishermen – evidence for which is also suggested by the later Portuguese designation of the island group, namely “Pescadores”, literally meaning “fishermen”. But Taiwan emerged only relatively late as a bridge, as a trading “rendezvous”, in the East Asian waters. Not before the opening of the port of Haicheng off the Fujian coast (formerly called Yuegang 月港) and the subsequent gradual liberation of Chinese private maritime trade in 1567 – the year in which the maritime trade prohibition was lifted – did its history as an international trading “rendezvous” begin. This process of Taiwan’s emergence as an international “meeting point”, the question of why this happened at that time, even before Chinese colonization actually started and what consequences this had for the island, is treated in Chang Pin-tsun’s contribution.

7 Friedrich Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-Kua. His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the twelfth and thirteenth Centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*. (St. Petersburg: Printing Office of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, 1911; reprint: Amsterdam: Oriental Press, 1966), p. 165.

8 Chen Xinxiong 陳信雄, *Penghu Song Yuan taoci* 澎湖宋元陶瓷. (Penghu: Penghuxian wenlihua zhongxin, 1985).

9 *Ming shi* 明史 by Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 (1672–1755) *et. al.* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), j. 323, p. 8376.

10 Cf. for example Thomas Höllmann, “Formosa and the trade in venison and deer skins”, in Roderich Ptak & Dietmar Rothermund (eds.), *Emporia, commodities and entrepreneurs in Asian maritime trade, c. 1400–1750*. (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1991), pp. 263–90; John Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600–1800*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); also Gudula Linck-Kesting, *Ein Kapitel chinesischer Grenzgeschichte. Han und Nicht-Han im Taiwan der Qing-Zeit 1683–1895*. Stuttgart: Steiner, 1979. *Münchener Ostasiatische Studien* 22.

Also Roderich Ptak argues that far into the Middle Period Taiwan remained “terra incognita” for the Chinese. He considers maritime space around the island. There existed an Eastern (*dong hanglu* 東航路) and a Western sea route (*xi hanglu* 西航路) but these routes generally bypassed Taiwan. Gradually, however, first due to the commercial activities of Fujian merchants in particular but during the high-tide of the Ming maritime trade prohibition (1371–1567) also by Ryūkyūan “competitors” or intermediaries in the East Asian waters, the role of the Taiwan Strait changed. In the last third of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century with the abolition of the trade prohibition it was not only Fujian merchants who reappeared. Other, new competitors also appeared on the scene. Thus, Taiwan gradually emerged as a “playball” (p. 32) in international commercial relations. In separate sub-chapters Ptak discusses Taiwan’s role as a commercial link (*Bindeglied*, p. 33) between internationally acting powers under its rule of the Zheng 鄭 clan, when the island was occupied by Zheng Chenggong’s 鄭成功 (1624–1662) forces and subsequently self-administered for some time, and its integration into the Manchu Qing regime. Consequently, we can observe the process of how Taiwan functioned first as a barrier between two maritime zones that communicated almost exclusively along the Western sea route, before it emerged as a kind of a bridge, maintained primarily by the Fujianese.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans who eventually systematically ventured into the East Asian waters. They, too, obviously first bypassed the island, which they originally called “Lequio Pegeno” (Smaller Liuqiu) and then “Formosa” (Beautiful), as they were trading in luxury articles that could not be found on Taiwan. They may have had contact with the island or people there before the 1580s, by accident, for purposes of exploration or something else, but no traces of such visits have been found. But, eventually, as Rui Manuel Loureiro explains in his paper, they considered Taiwan absolutely unattractive – not only due to their established trade in luxury commodities, but also, because – in contrast to the Spanish and the Dutch – they disposed of a secure and more attractive base in South China, Macao, with direct access to the Canton area.

Manel Ollé expounds upon a rather neglected aspect of Taiwan’s history – activities of Castilians in the north of Taiwan during the time period between 1626 and 1642, that is, the brief period before Taiwan became Dutch. Information on the Castilian presence on the island is mainly transmitted in letters, memories and other documents from primarily Spanish and Philippine archives. These sources provide an insight into many aspects of daily life of the new settlers on Taiwan (Castilians, Chinese, Dutch) and how they interacted, what they traded in etc. Castilian Taiwan was a colony that depended on the archipelago of the Philippines and through the Philippines was linked up with both New Spain and the Iberian colonies there and with Madrid. We see which commercial relations the Castilians maintained via Manila to Mexico and New Spain, what kind of missionary initiatives in north Taiwan existed and how the Castilians were situated on the island during a period of inter-

national competition. Eventually, in 1642, a Dutch naval attack with 500 men conquered the Spanish ports in the north of Taiwan. Within only a couple years, the Iberian Oriental Asian scene underwent a radical transformation. In 1639, the Portuguese were expelled from Japan and were forbidden to trade, which was left to the Dutch, Chinese and Koreans.¹¹ In 1641, the Dutch expelled the Portuguese from Malacca and briefly afterwards the Castilians from North Taiwan – before the Dutch were expelled from Taiwan by Zheng Chenggong twenty years later.

Mathieu Torck discusses the importance of dietary provisions for naval and general military enterprises, focussing on travel accounts of and naval operations in and around Taiwan. We see that, although distances from and to the mainland were actually very short, the factor of food supplies in the success of military operations remained crucial. Zheng Chenggong, for example, during his conquest of the island experienced serious problems with food provisions in 1661 and eventually had to procure sweet potatoes (*fanshu* 番薯) from the local Taiwanese population.

Chu Te-lan opens another, more recent chapter of Taiwan's commercial history. Today, Taiwan is a renowned international tea producing area.¹² The history of its production and export can be traced back to the second half of the nineteenth century. In this context, Chu Te-lan discusses the rise and the international trading networks of Taiwanese Powchong 包種茶 tea merchants during the time period when Taiwan was a colony of Japan, 1895–1945). Powchong or light Oolong 烏龍 tea is a lightly fermented (oxidized) tea. With floral notes and roasted it is called “flower tea” (*huacha* 花茶). The contribution in detail introduces organizations (such as *hang* 行) and finance structures of and among these merchants and their gradual development, including measures they undertook to improve their position in the international competition. Famous tea merchants on Taiwan had already existed since the 1870s but their rise began during the time period of Japanese colonization. In 1915, the Taiwanese Powchong tea merchants founded the “Taibei Tea Merchants Association” which in Chu's eyes reflects their advantageous position within the Taiwanese Powchong export market. They made great profits in the trade with for example Indonesia (Java), China and Hong Kong. However, with the boycott of Japanese commodities in the course of the Japanese Pacific War and their hostile activities against many countries, the Taiwanese tea merchants also began to feel these effects. Eventually the export of Powchong tea was overtaken by strong Japanese merchants.

The final contribution by Christian Soffel sheds light on yet another aspect of Taiwan's role as an island off the Southeast coast of China. He investigates Qing pe-

11 C. R. Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon. Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade, 1555–1640*. (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, 1963), p. 153.

12 Her paper contribution has originally not been part of the 2007 conference, but it has been included here, as it nicely investigates trading networks of Taiwanese tea merchants during a period when the island was a colony of Japan.

riod poetry on Taiwan. Taiwanese poetry emerged when Zheng Chenggong and his clan ruled the island. A second period of Taiwanese poetry can be discerned for the first half of the Qing period, including the time when the island was officially incorporated into Chinese territory and mainland officials dispatched to the island described what they saw. From the nineteenth century onwards, when Taiwan more and more became a defence area against colonial forces, an increasingly patriotic awareness even led to the emergence of so-called “poetry societies” (*shi she* 詩社), in particular after 1851, and these societies continued their activities during the period of Japanese colonization. Christian Soffel shows that the topos “Taiwan” was present in a broad range of works, and even Qing emperors like the Emperor Qianlong expressed their views on the island. Qianlong’s verses were composed with the help of servants “in order to embellish his military achievements and to propagate imperial splendour” (pp. 130–131), and did not show much interest in natural or cultural particulars of Taiwan:

We did not expect that calamities would sweep through the ocean region and that it would take over a year to seize the bandits completely....

...

The prophecy came true and the heroes arose, however the island was occupied; but in the end the war ended, the beast was shot and finally the sea became calm again.

...

I lessened the taxes and duties and thus did a favour; the rebellious people and the disobedient clerks regretted their former errors.

I recite these parallel verses to remember the errors and not the joy, to remember how the power of the country is spread and propagated over ten thousand miles.¹³

Already these few lines may provide evidence of Qianlong’s official vision of Taiwan – an area in the ocean that was full of bandits and had therefore been “pacified” to prevent the mainland having to face such dangers.

Analyzing entries in the *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi* 世宗憲皇帝硃批諭旨 we receive a similar picture.¹⁴ Taiwan is, generally speaking, either considered as an important strategic point (*jinyao* 緊要)¹⁵ in terms of frontier defence or as a rice providing area¹⁶ in terms of defence belonging to the “maritime frontier” (*haijiang* 海疆).¹⁷ Repeatedly, we find entries on people who crossed the Taiwan Straits secretly (*toudu* 偷渡). Taiwan is described as “lonely hanging beyond the seas” (*gu xuan haiwai* 孤懸海外)¹⁸, an expression (*haiwai*) also used to designate a foreign country, as a “lonely island hanging beyond the seas with the evil of cruel foreign

13 Cf. the complete poem in the contribution by Christian Soffel, pp. 128–129.

14 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi* 世宗憲皇帝硃批諭旨 by Yongzheng 雍正 (1677–1735) and Qianlong 乾隆 (1711–1799), in *Siku quanshu*, fasc. 418–423.

15 For example *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 43, section xia, p. 20b.

16 See for example several entries in *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 176, section 5, passim.

17 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 72, p. 17a–b, 22a.

18 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 176, section 5, p. 27b.

people” (*gu xuan haiwai you xiong fan zhi huan* 孤懸海外有兇番之患) and robbers,¹⁹ as a “far away place beyond the deep ocean” (*yuan zai zhongyang zhi wai* 遠在重洋之外).²⁰ The local inhabitants are repeatedly referred to as cruel, ruthless, and stubborn. They are described as “foreign people that came from several places beyond [the seas]” (*fanmin zachu er wailai zhi min* 番民雜處而外來之民).²¹ The Provincial Governor of Fujian Province, Zhu Gang 朱綱 (?–1728), in a memorial from 1728 (*yongzheng* 6, 7th month, 6th day) interestingly categorizes them as a group of “*yi*” people from many origins, a term that traditionally was used for the so-called “Eastern barbarians”²² (*Taiwan yijun gu xuan haiwai, min yi zachu, zui wei jinyao zhi qu* 臺灣一郡孤懸海外民夷雜處最為緊要之區).²³ Here, however, “*yi*” referred to the locals and aborigines of Taiwan who were apparently really considered as a kind of wild, cruel barbarians with qualities very much distinct from the population of any other of China’s neighbouring countries.

In the *Pingding Zungar fanglue* 平定準噶爾方略 Taiwan is even compared with the Zungar frontier and it is stated that since the territory has become part of China the villains of Fujian and Guangdong no longer have any place to hide.²⁴ The relation between Taiwan and the mainland is described as one of “coat and lining” or “outside and inside” (*biaoli* 表裡).²⁵ Penghu is seen as the “channel” or “throat” (*yanhou* 咽喉) between Xiamen and Taiwan.²⁶

All these examples may show that Taiwan, although it had officially become an integral part of mainland China under Emperor Kangxi in the late seventeenth century, continued to occupy a particular position as a kind of outer frontier, viewed by both officials and emperors as not really belonging to China proper.

19 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 13, section xia, p. 61a.

20 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 13, section xia, p. 22b; also j. 72, p. 1b (*yuan ge haiyang difang* 遠隔海洋地方).

21 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 72, p. 3b.

22 The term was used differently in Qing times, because the Manchus themselves were a people that traditionally had been categorized as “*yi*” by Han Chinese. Still we can find a great amount of hits when checking, for example, the electronic version of the *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi* in the *Siku quanshu* database. The *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 7, section 4, p. 3b, speaks of “*yiguo* 夷國”. The term seems to be related not only to foreigners from the East, that is, people who had traditionally been designated as “Yi barbarians” by Han Chinese, but also foreigners in general, including those from the West. In the *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 7, section 2, p. 19a, it is used in relation with French ships (*Falanxi chuan* 法蘭西船).

23 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 33, pp. 77b–78a.

24 *Pingding Zungar fanglue* 平定準噶爾方略 by Fu Heng 傅恒 (d. 1770) *et. al.* (Electronic version of the *Siku quanshu*-edition), *qianbian* 前編 j. 4, p. 29a, 1791 (*qianlong* 56).

25 *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 13, section xia, p. 12b.

26 See for example *Shizong Xianhuangdi zhupi yuzhi*, j. 176, section 5, p. 30a.

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