



**THE ZHENG FAMILY AND THE DUTCH IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO:
COMPETITION AND CONFLICT IN THE 17TH CENTURY**

Ku Boon Dar

History Programme, School of Distance Education
Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 Minden, Penang, Malaysia
Email: kubd@usm.my

Received: 24 August 2018, Accepted: 29 November 2018

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to examine the development of the Zheng family's trading activities in the Malay Archipelago, especially during the time of Zheng Chenggong, when the family had to compete with the Dutch in the Straits of Malacca. For this purpose, the qualitative analytical approaches are employed with reference to the primary sources of the Western and Chinese travellers during the 17th century, namely, Willem Ysbrandsz Bontekoe and George Hughes, apart from the gazettes annotated by Li Jinming and Liao Da Ke. In addition, secondary sources, such as the books, monographs, articles and journals written by some distinguished scholars in the field of international maritime research have been studied. The works of Patrizia Carioti, Leonard Blusse, Meilink-Roelofs and Xing Hang, among others, have also been investigated for their critical views and arguments. In sum, this study aims to show that trade conflicts and competition between the Zheng family and the Dutch in the 17th century have impacted particularly the Chinese traders in the Malay Archipelago. This is because both of these powers are seen trying to assume the role which had hitherto been played by these Chinese merchants as a strong competitor in the marine trade in the east and southeast of the Malay Archipelago. In this regard, discussions on this topic would contribute to a better understanding of the big powers competing in the region to dominate the Straits of Malacca. Additionally, this study sets to prove that private trading activities in the Malay Archipelago which flourished during the 17th century was built and developed by the Zheng family from Taiwan and not merely attributed to the Chinese traders from China.

Keywords: Zheng Family, trading network, Malay Archipelago, port cities, primary records

Cite as: Ku, B.D., (2018). The Zheng family and the Dutch in the Malay archipelago: Competition and conflict in the 17th century. *Journal of Nusantara Studies*, 3(2),54-65.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol3iss2pp54-65>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The well-known members in the Zheng family were Zheng Zhilong (Cheng Chih-lung) alias Nicholas Iquan (c. 1604-1662) and his son, Zheng Chenggong (Cheng Ch'eng-kung) alias Koxinga (1624-1662). Zheng Chenggong was bestowed the title of Guo-xing-ye or Lord of the Imperial Surname. Since the title was pronounced as 'Kok-seng-ia' in Fujianese, he came to be known to the Dutch and other westerners as Koxinga. The Zheng family had succeeded in establishing a trading empire which enjoyed glorious success during its era in the South Sea (read: Malay Archipelago). However, according to Moloughney (1986), between 1661 and 1684 the 'maritime prohibitions' (haijin), which were implemented to bring pressure to bear on the Ming loyalist forces of the Zheng family network based in Formosa (now Taiwan), saw ports closed and ships forbidden to leave the Chinese shore. Almost all ships that sailed to Taiwan or through Batavia (now Jakarta) during that period were controlled or owned by the Zheng family.

Zheng Zhilong was born in a fishing village in Fujian in 1604. When he reached adulthood, he went to Macau in search of a better life. Over there, he was baptized and admitted to the Portuguese Catholic Church, and was given the Christian name of Jasper. He was also known as Nicolas Iquan. With the help of the Portuguese, Zhilong learnt Lusitanian, the common language used by the European traders in the Far East. By 1620, one of the prominent pirates in the region was Yan Siji, who was from Fujian. Although Yan Siji appeared to be a legitimate trader, he had in fact, cunningly merged a legitimate trade with the activities of pirate gangs, giving rise to the Yan group as the strongest organization in the Malay Archipelago. Yan Siji forged the alliance with the small pirate groups by exacting loyalty and the pledge of full allegiance to his group. At that time, Zheng Zhilong was one of the captains in the Yan's pirate activities (Yang, 1976).

Earlier on, Zhilong worked under the Dutch as a translator and privateer for a period of time in Taiwan. Then, in 1623, he tried his luck in Hirado (Nagasaki), Japan where he had the chance to get acquainted with a wealthy trader named Li Dan, who came from Quanzhou province. Li Dan (or Captain China, as the Dutch and the English knew him) controlled the Chinese trade with Japan and was ruling the small Chinese trading community the Dutch found in Tayouan when they arrived there (Zhuang, 2000; Carioti, 2012). Thanks to Zhilong's competence and dedication to his work, he gained Li Dan's confidence with ease. Eventually, he was given the responsibility of handling Li Dan's business dealings with Japan and the countries in the Malay Archipelago. In Japan, he married Tagawa Matsu from the Tagawa family and gave birth to their first child, Zheng Chenggong. After Li Dan's death, Zhilong took over his entire commercial fleet in the sea trade (Carioti, 1996).

In the year 1624, Zhilong was reported to have returned to Taiwan in order to strengthen his pirate-trade activities by joining Yan Siji as a result of the enforcement of a ban on ocean trade by the Japanese. Taiwan by then, had emerged as an important pirate base for establishing trade relations with China and Japan. It was afterwards that the Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch joined in the trade which turned Taiwan into the main sea base in the Eastern Sea. Later on, Zhilong became one of the most respected pirates, albeit a much feared one in the Malay Archipelago. He was described as a noble Robin Hood-style criminal. Like Robin Hood's character, he ran his modus operandi of robbing the rich and handing over the loot to the poor. Many narratives about his admirable act to help the poor have been recorded. According to Andrade (2000), in 1627, when a severe famine struck Fujian, Zhilong helped the

victims cross the Taiwan Straits and subsequently settled them in Formosa by giving them land, cattle, and equipment to work with.

2.0 THE EMERGENCE OF THE ZHENG FAMILY'S PRIVATE TRADE EMPIRE

Zheng Zhilong's group later on focused its trading activities in Fujian's southern province, specifically by building its base of strength on the Xiamen and Jinmen islands. These islands served as terminal points for the trade routes across East Asia and the Malay Archipelago, from Japan to the Straits of Malacca. The base, unfortunately for the group, did not last long because of a coup by the Manchu faction against the Ming dynasty. However, the existing links and routes had opened up a new chapter in trade relations between Fujian and the Malay Archipelago. In addition, it is noted that trade in Batavia reached its peak in 1657 when a total of 93 ships from China stopped over for dealings with Batavia as exerted by Li (1996). In the interim period (1640-46) between the collapse of the Ming dynasty and the establishment of the Qing dynasty and the death of Yan Siji in 1626, Zheng Zhilong managed to control almost all the trade in the South Sea with Japan, the Malay Archipelago and even parts of the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch colonies. As claimed by Chao (2005), Zheng Zhilong had undoubtedly become one of the richest moguls of the early modern world through commerce with different ports across the East and with the Malay Archipelago by the 1630s. Contemporary accounts note that his income totalled "tens of millions of [silver] taels per year," and his assets "rivalled that of entire nations." (Chao, 2005, p. 260).

According to Blusse (1988), during the period from 1600 to 1800, approximately a hundred Chinese boats with a cargo of about 20,000 tons sailed over the years to the Malay Archipelago, providing employment opportunities in shipping activities for thousands. Xing (2016), estimating the trading value per vessel between the Zheng family and the Malay Archipelago at 80,000 (3 tons) to 100,000 taels (3.7 tons), concludes that Zheng and his followers made 630,000 taels (23.6 tons) each year from the Malay Archipelago market. Xing (2016) continues that during the late Ming, the Zheng family began sailing in large numbers further out into the ocean; to Japan and the Malay Archipelago to take advantage of the high demand for the lucrative Chinese exports. From the three coastal provinces of Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong, the Zheng family again expanded its trading network all the way to the Straits of Malacca and the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, Viraphol (1977) discloses that its trade with Siam in particular, could fetch a profit of 40,000 (1.4 tons) to 50,000 taels (1.9 tons) from each round trip journey.

Misfortune fell on the Zheng family in November 1646 when Zheng Zhilong, who was in Fuzhou, supposedly to be appointed as Viceroy of Fujian and Guangdong, was instead arrested and imprisoned, and eventually killed in Beijing by the Qing ruler. The planned assassination came about because the Qing dynasty believed that the growth of the Zheng family's marine trade empire seemed to have interfered with the international relationships of China's tributary-based system. China believed that only its tributary system could permit trade. It was always because of 'the tributary that trade exists' when China established its external relations with the territories on its shores.

Having further strengthened the family's trading empire after the death of his father, Zheng Chenggong faced some difficulties in mobilising his troops and accumulated economic resources from his maritime trade with Japan and the Malay Archipelago. Therefore, he resorted to sending a number of traders and an 'adopted son' to the Malay Archipelago to

control the trade. Men such as Hong Xu (d. 1666), Zhilong's adopted son and Zheng Chenggong's half-brother, Zheng Tai (d. 1663), shared in the profits of the family's vast trading network in their own rights. However, those who did not trade by their own efforts and yet gained access to the network were the adopted sons of the powerful and wealthy gentry in Fujian, Zhejiang, and Guangdong. Others, with a more independent identity, often could not afford their own junks and had to employ the services of the specialised individual ship-owners or hire cargo space on vessels directly from the Zheng's Oceanic Five Firms (Xing, 2010). Besides these officially sanctioned entrepreneurs, independent merchants and artisans all along the coast maintained a cooperative relationship with the organization. Indeed, the Zheng network served as one of the very few access points to the highly lucrative foreign commerce while its powerful naval fleet stood ready to protect the lives and assets of the private traders from harassment. Zheng Chenggong's intention was only to ensure his stranglehold on the trade links which had already been monopolised by his family's empire. By the same token, the overseas Chinese merchants also relied upon the Zheng family as the key provider of products from China, and turned to him for assistance in the event of conflicts with their own native rulers (Xing, 2010).

The rise of the Zheng family in the Malay Archipelago coincided with the expansion of the Dutch and other European powers, namely the Spaniards and the British, in the area. In elaborating on the Zheng's relations with the countries in the Malay Archipelago, Nie (1994) believe that in the course of the competition between the Chinese and the Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, or VOC, 1602-1800), Zheng Chenggong managed to finally eliminate the Dutch power and threat to give the Zheng empire the sole authority over the sea to protect the activities and interests of the merchants in the Malay Archipelago. Unlike the Chinese who wanted only to trade, the VOC not only traded but caused the depletion of the resources available in the Malay Archipelago.

3.0 MARITIME CONNECTIVITY IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO: ZHENG CHENGGONG AND THE DUTCH

After the Dutch had captured Malacca from the Portuguese in 1641, they tightened their control over the Straits of Malacca up to Singapore to ensure that their monopoly of activities in Malacca continued to be maintained. Wright (1958) points out that the Dutch monopoly policy was aimed at getting rid of their rivals and the setting up of placements along the trade routes mainly to expand their trade. The Dutch felt threatened if any of the other European powers interfered with the spice trade and other trade activities in the East, such as, when these nations attempted to wrest from the Dutch the exclusive contracts with the lesser princes of the Malay Archipelago, who were required to sell their products only to the Dutch. To thwart such efforts by the other European competitors, the Dutch established many camps and placed troops in several straits paths so that no trading vessel could pass without their permission. Their contract system was enforced extensively and as a result, the Portuguese and Chinese traders were forced to pay duties to pass through the Straits of Malacca. If a ship by accident avoided paying taxes, the ship which arrived later was compelled to pay for both vessels (Bradell, 1856).

In 1667, instructions were issued to the patrol vessels to be more vigilant in the case of ships operated by the Chinese, especially the Zheng family from Taiwan. All these Chinese vessels were declared as enemy ships. The Dutch continued to adhere to the belief that as soon as the Chinese ships of Zheng Chenggong had berthed, they must be taken over whether by force using weapons or in other practical ways. The Dutch authorities also informed their

captains that killing was permitted even though the drastic action should be avoided whenever possible. However, in the event of fierce opposition and enigmatic constraints, the Zheng Chenggong Chinese crew must first be killed except in isolated cases where they could be guarded and controlled by the captain of the ship. Instructions were issued against taking any action after a ship was seized (Leupe, 1936). According to the directive, no further drastic action would be allowed other than the normal hijacking of the Chinese crew from the seized vessels. Subsequently, the ship's door should be closed immediately as the entire cargo would be delayed and eventually the seized vessels would be handed over to the authorities in Malacca (Purcell, 1967).

Meanwhile, the Chinese traders who were biologically unrelated to the Zheng family, were asked to continue sailing to Malacca. The custom was to inform this Chinese group of their choices based on the suitability and the nature of their respective trades. The instructions issued by the Dutch authorities to the captains of the Dutch ship were as follows,

You must accompany them with the excuse to control and observe them from the coast of Johor. Because their voyage was over a long distance, you should advise them to stopover at Malacca or you must persuade them to do so in other ways, failing which occasionally threaten them. Should they refuse although all measures had been taken, their departure to Johor should not be halted with violence. They should be allowed to continue their journey

(Leupe, 1936, p. 175).

Because of the difference in treatment of the various groups of Chinese traders, it was necessary to distinguish those who supported the Qing dynasty from the Chinese of the Zheng family in Taiwan. The Dutch captains were informed that the Chinese supporters of the Qing dynasty would usually shave their hair or spot short hair at the top of the head while their hair at the back would be stretched long. Typically, this group would wear the Manchu straw hat with a brim and decorations of red or silk horsetails at the top. On the other hand, The Zheng Chenggong Chinese had their long hair plaited at the back. Nevertheless, sometimes they would style their hair similar to the Manchu's when they caught sight of Dutch ships approaching them on their journey. Examples of these undercover cases occurred in 1662, hence, the Dutch ship captains were time and again instructed to be cautious with such tricks and impersonations. Long-haired Chinese (in the fashion of the Ming period) who lived in Batavia, Malacca, Palembang and Jambi would be allowed through any port without any restrictions if they could show an official permit. Failing to do so would lead to their capture and being sent to Malacca where they would not be treated as enemies but as friends as stated by Purcell (1967).

The Dutch, after their conquest of Malacca in 1641, also aspired to establish trade relations with China. They had kept the desire to open trade doors with China after their failures to conquer Amoy (now Xiamen) and Macau. Then, realizing potentials in Taiwan and Pescadores Island, they occupied the latter. From there, the Dutch launched attacks on Chinese merchant ships with the help of the Chinese and Japanese pirates. Hughes (1872) reports that the Dutch sent eight ships to explore the Malay Archipelago to confiscate, or destroy the Chinese and Manila vessels and whatever they had earned in the Malay Archipelago.

After the Dutch conquest of Pescadores Island, it is noted that China's merchant vessels "did not dare to trade (there) and none dared to return after trading abroad". This was due to the Dutch offensive taken against Chinese junks. Because of the atrocities they committed, in 1624, the Fujian Governor, Nan Ju Yi sent 150 warships and 4,000 troops to force the Dutch under

the leadership of Martinus Sonck to leave their last defensive fortress in Pescadores. Describing the failure to establish trade relations with China, Sonck wrote:

The former methods employed on the Chinese coast made all China so very bitter against us that we were known as murderers, intruders and pirates...the methods used against the Chinese have been indeed hard and cruel and, in my opinion, they have been such that because of them, trade concession could never have been obtained.

(Chang, 1934, p. 128)

Despite their loss, the Dutch continued their quest for trade relations with China by operating from Taiwan which was still under the grip of China. Eventually, they succeeded in making Taiwan their buffer state as they busied themselves in smuggling activities along the coast of China. By monopolising the trade between China and Japan and between China and Manila, the Dutch were always trying to explore and expand their markets in the Eastern Sea. For example, a few years earlier, as noted in Richard Cock's diary written on June 8, 1617, two Dutch ships patrolling the sea route to Jiaozhi (Cochin-China) seized 14 or 15 Chinese ships sailing to Manila (Li & Liao, 1995). Later, two Dutch ships sailing along the coast of China also plundered 16 Chinese merchant vessels, unloaded the goods they wanted onto their ships and then burned some of the ships before sailing off with the rest.

The Dutch were even willing to engage with the British solely to seize the Chinese merchant ships sailing to Manila. The two colonial powers often competed in the maritime trade, especially in the Malay Archipelago. In 1629, Pieter Nuyts, second Dutch governor at Fort Zeelandia in Taiwan, wrote to the VOC Board,

We must do our utmost to destroy the chain of trade between China and Manila. As soon as this can be done, we are confident that Your Excellency (referring to the VOC Board) will see the Spaniards leaving Moluccas and Manila on their own consent.

(Schurz, 1939, p. 357)

Working in tandem with the British, the Dutch blocked traders from China from using the sea route along the coasts of the Malay Archipelago. All junks would be seized unless they wished to sail to Batavia under the terms and control of the United Netherlands State Security which barred all from trading with Manila, Macau, Cochin-China and the rest of India (Meilink-Roelofs, 1962). The 'piratical' practice of the Dutch had affected China's trade with Manila at the end of the Ming Dynasty era (1368-1644).

Meanwhile, some Chinese were kidnapped by the Dutch and were dumped on the Malay Archipelago. As an illustration, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, founder of the Dutch colonies in Batavia was reported to have been involved in kidnapping the Chinese owing to the serious shortage of diligent Chinese workers to build Batavia as an important commercial centre in the Malay Archipelago. He was accused of sending his subordinates to execute kidnapping activities. In the ten years he held his post, thousands of Chinese were kidnapped from China's waters but only a handful survived the journey to Batavia. For example, in September 1623, a total of 1,150 Chinese were kidnapped from China. Of these, only 571 survived to Pescadores, the stopover island for the Chinese heading to Batavia. From that, only 31 people eventually made it to Batavia. The difficulties faced were the long duration of the voyage and the waiver of socio-economic welfare of the abducted victims (Bontekoe, 2000). The brutality of the Dutch brought anger to the Chinese. When the Dutch occupied Malacca in 1641, the Zheng family

under the leadership of Zheng Chenggong established its extensive maritime commercial network in the coastal areas of southeast China. However, Zheng Chenggong's efforts to expand his empire were often hampered by the Dutch in Taiwan. This provoked Zheng Chenggong's determination to curtail the Dutch greed by expelling them from Taiwan. He was further infuriated by the mistreatment of the junks he had sent to trade in the Malay Archipelago (Andrade, 2000).

His initial inaction can be understood when tracing the history of the Chinese in the South Sea. Therefore, Zheng Chenggong intervened in the overseas Chinese affairs in the Malay Archipelago after his triumphant founding of his government in Taiwan. He realized that his family depended heavily upon the overseas Chinese population to connect the lines of exchange within its trading network in the South Sea which became the bone of contention between the VOC and the Zhengs. Their conflict peaked along the routes of the Malay Archipelago. His efforts in protecting the interests of the Chinese were also due to the Chinese merchants being stranded without a home base because of the implementation of *haijin* by the Ming dynasty. But most important of all, the Malay Archipelago was a hub that could supply local products that were indispensable to the markets in China and Japan. While the Zheng family had finally, the upper hand in their competition with the Dutch to gain control of the trade in the region, their conflicts prompted a backlash against the Chinese traders, who were subjected to harsh treatment, especially by the Dutch in the heat of the dispute. Blusse (1990) is of the opinion that this group was quite patient in dealing with the arbitrary action of the VOC government. They had hoped that their passive response to the Dutch government's poor treatment would change things around, but it was all for naught. The arrests of the Chinese to turn them into slaves, the exorbitant taxes, extortion, persecution, and even the killings committed by the VOC government were enough to prompt the Chinese in Batavia, for example, to feel the need to start a rebellion. Additionally, as war in China surged onwards, Zheng Chenggong took the opportunity to increase the extent of his trading monopoly by sending more junks of Chinese wares, gold, and silver, directly to Japan, Tonkin, Cambodia and other ports in the East and South Seas.

Nara (2003) argues that Zheng Chenggong's domination of the south eastern coast allowed him both to source for silk and other luxuries and to transport them to Nagasaki at a far more competitive price than the VOC's. The latter, on the other hand, managed to find substitutes for Chinese silk by purchasing from Tonkin, present-day northern Vietnam, and Bengal. As Andrade (2000) has indicated, Zheng Chenggong and the VOC were thereby competing more and more directly, for they traded in the same ports with largely the same trade goods. Thus, it seems that once again the Dutch factor was significant in the Zheng family's trading business with the ports in the Malay Archipelago.

The Malay Archipelago played another important role in the region. Sailing from China on merchant vessels, many Chinese traders and immigrants stayed on in the Malay Archipelago to make it their new home while some of them waited for the interchange of monsoons before they continued their journey to other destinations. There were two disparate conditions in which a handful of them ignored the ban on outbound sea trade from China. There were those who would not be returning to China for they dared not do so while some could not return because their ships were wrecked after experiencing disasters, such as, crashes against rocks, being lashed by typhoons and so on.

In spite of their intense competition, to get commodities from China, the VOC shrewdly pretended to maintain a friendly relationship with the Zheng family in the hope that the latter's

ships would continue to sail to Taiwan and Batavia to trade. Notwithstanding the impetus for trade, the Dutch continued to hold and seize the Zheng family's ships for various reasons, as well as try to ban their vessels from sailing to Malacca. In a letter dated June 17, 1655, the Governor of VOC, Joan Maetsuycker, demanded that Zheng Chenggong stop sending his ship to Malacca and Palembang (Huber, 2003). Facing continuous outrage from the Dutch, Zheng Chenggong decided to retaliate. He ordered careful searches of vessels arriving at Xiamen and meted out harsh punishments to anyone caught violating the embargo, confiscating their ships, jailing or killing their owners, and even chopping off the right hands of the crew members (Xing, 2010). In June 1655, Zheng Chenggong issued a decree banning Chinese ships from trading in Batavia, Taiwan and Manila. The purpose was to cripple the VOC economy which was getting a lot of positive commodity outcomes from trading activities with those ports. He gave a stern warning that anyone violating the ban on the trade would be put to death and their vessels and goods would be seized. In 1656, a Chinese ship, alleging that Dutch ships had mistreated his junks in the Malay Archipelago, demanded that an economic embargo be slapped on Dutch Formosa. This brought the economic activity in the colony to a standstill as revealed by Zhou and Tang (2011).

Hence, the Netherlands had no other choice but to compromise with Koxinga. In May 1657, the Dutch governor in Taiwan, Frederick Coyett, sent his translator He Tingbin as a messenger to meet Zheng Chenggong at Amoy. Coyett through He Tingbin appealed to Koxinga to withdraw the ban by pledging that the Dutch would not stop the Zheng family's ships from landing in Siam, Jambi, Pahang, Malacca and Palembang. At the same time, the Netherlands also promised to pay an annual compensation of 5,000 taels of silver, 10,000 arrow units and 1,000 pichets of sulfur to Zheng Chenggong (Campbell, 1982).

Unfortunately, they were just empty promises because the Dutch did not fulfill their end of the bargain. For example, throughout the years 1657 to 1658, four Chinese merchant ships were detained by the Dutch. The situation became more critical in 1658 when the Dutch heard rumours of Koxinga's defeat to Qing China. The Dutch once again grabbed the chance to seize the Chinese merchant vessels and instigated the people in Batavia and Taiwan to stop paying taxes to Zheng Chenggong (Zhou & Tang, 2011).

Zheng Chenggong's viewed this Dutch piracy action as tantamount to criticizing China for its maritime trade and polluting China's integrity (Cheng, 2013). Thus, he was determined to expel the Dutch by taking over Taiwan. In 1661, he achieved this. As mentioned before, the ongoing war in China opened up opportunities for Koxinga to expand his trading monopoly by sending more vessels laden with Chinese wares, gold and silver, directly to Japan, Tonkin, Cambodia and other ports in the East and South Seas. He and the VOC were engaged in more and more direct competition, trading largely in the same goods and at the same ports (Andrade, 2000).

4.0 ZHENG CHENGGONG'S ACTIVITIES IN THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO

Zheng Chenggong's invasion of Taiwan and defeat of the Dutch in 1661 put even more intra-Asian trade into his coffers besides strengthening his already tight hold on Asia's commercial network (Cook, 1998). However, the Dutch continued their trade with his family. This was because the Dutch realized that they still had to rely on Zheng Chenggong to access goods from China. There was a previous instance of a trade arrangement of this kind seen in 1628, when he signed an agreement with the VOC for the purchase of silk. He managed to supply 3000 tons of sugar, 6,000 tons of silk and 5000 tons of other silk goods to the Netherlands for which

the Dutch paid with 3000 tons of pepper and a certain amount of cash. Through these trade activities, the Dutch were aware of how influential and powerful Zheng Chenggong's empire was as it seemed to act as a semi-kingdom along the coast of southern China (Zhou & Tang, 2011).

The Zheng family imposed a tax on the private marine traders by issuing the 'Koxinga Pass'. The cost to be paid by the traders in getting hold of a 'Koxinga Pass' was based on the tonnage of their ships and it could cost them between 2000 and 3000 silver bullion pits. If a trader refused to pay the passage cost, their vessel would be seized and destroyed. Nearly 3000 Chinese vessels sailing to the Malay Archipelago were under the control of Zheng Chenggong. As affirmed by Han (1962), the Malay Archipelago continued to be the destination of focus as the spices produced here were indispensable in China's market where they earned considerable returns. The value of the trade is estimated at 80000 – 10000 pits by Han (1962). The Malay Archipelago states were, according to John (2006), the Zheng family's business partners apart from Japan, the Netherlands and Britain. Indeed, the Zhengs were as wealthy as the Emperor of China.

The same can be observed in the intention behind the expansion of Zheng Chenggong's maritime power to Manila. Having occupied Taiwan, he was interested in Manila. The annual trade with China was the reason Manila's trade flourished in the early days of the Spanish government. According to the American scholar, William Lytle Schurz (1939), the Eastern-traded goods brought to Manila, became the main base for trade in warships with Mexico and set the economy of this colony for more than two centuries. The entrenchment of the Chinese in trading activities in the region is confirmed by this description, "The Chinese in Manila had monopolised the trade and commerce of the colonies so much so that the Spaniards who wanted to enter the business world were forced to demand the eviction and exclusion of the Chinese." (Schurz, 1939, p. 93)

Fr. Victorio Ricci, an Italian Dominican missionary, was sent by Koxinga to Manila as his representative. He arrived at Manila on May 18, 1662 to deliver to Governor Manriques de Lara, Koxinga's message which demanded from the Spanish officials, submission and tributes. However, the governor considered this demand as an abusive act and immediately made preparations for war. The Chinese residents in Manila, who saw impending warfare, were worried about their safety. Many of them sailed to Formosa. In the meantime, Zheng Chenggong's success in getting rid of the Dutch from Taiwan intensified the latter's desire to take revenge on him. The Dutch regarded all Chinese as their enemies. Therefore, the Dutch government's policy in Malacca continued to be anti-Chinese. Any Chinese sailing across the Singapore Straits and the estuary of the Johor River would be arrested and their vessels seized. This explains why during the Dutch governance of 183 years in Malacca (1641-1795 and 1818-1825), there was only a small Chinese population in Malacca for fear of the Dutch anti-Chinese policy. In addition, many Chinese merchants tried to avoid passing through the Malacca Straits because they worried that their ships would be detained and confiscated and their crew's lives endangered.

It was not surprising that after 1641, Malacca under the Dutch administration was seen as a poorer port than before. Although it retained its status as a stopover port, it had ceased to be an entreport for the exchange of goods between the Eastern and Western traders. On the verge of its decline, Malacca was still visited by ships from all the ports in East Asia but most of them came here to provide food, clothing and other basic necessities for the urban residents. On the bright side, with their position as the master of Malacca, their main base, the Dutch successfully

expanded and strengthened their influence into the interior of the Malay Peninsula, in particular. They managed to dominate several trade routes in Perak, Kedah, Johor and Aceh. In 1789, when the French revolution broke out, William V of the Dutch Republic fled to London. To prevent the colonies from falling into the hands of the French, the Dutch surrendered their possessions abroad, which included Malacca, to the British for temporary administration. After the French Revolutionary War ended in 1815, the Dutch repossessed Malacca. With the opening of the British settlements in Penang and Singapore in 1786 and 1819 respectively, interest in Malacca had waned. In 1824, the British and Dutch signed the London Treaty whereby the British exchanged their domination of Bencoolen, Sumatra for Malacca. Therefore, the withdrawal of the Dutch from Malacca marked the beginning of British rule in the Malay Peninsula.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Zheng family, therefore, is credited for playing vital role in establishing and further developing the private trading activities of the Chinese merchants in the Malay World during the 17th century. The 'maritime prohibitions' (haijin) imposed by the Ming Dynasty were the major catalysts among other factors for the rapid expansion of such private trading activities. As it is, the trading restrictions provided the opportunity for the Zheng family to explore the prospects of using their own private networks to meet the high demand by the Chinese and Japanese traders for the local products available only in the states of the Malay Archipelago. Despite the vibrancy of the Zheng family's trading activities, they were disrupted by the emergence of foreign powers, especially the Dutch, who were also bent on dominating the maritime routes in the Malay Archipelago. Since these routes especially the Malacca Straits, were not only strategically positioned but also served as the most important trade route between China and India, the Dutch and Spaniards imposed restrictions to curb the activities of the Chinese traders in Manila, Batavia and Malacca. This was also because the Chinese merchants in the Malay Archipelago were viewed as supporters of the Zheng family despite the fact that it was not the case. However, to the Zhengs in their efforts to expand their trade empire and network, the states of the Malay Archipelago continued to be their happy hunting ground to assemble the local products for their markets. Simultaneously, the Zheng family, especially Zheng Chenggong, took the decisive move to rescue the Chinese merchants from being persecuted by the Dutch. Hence, the involvement of the Zheng family, as they challenged the Dutch for control of the trade in the Malay Archipelago during the 17th century, became increasingly significant and more prominent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The paper is part of ongoing research project supported by the Grant Program of The Sumitomo Foundation (Reg. Number: 168491). 304/PJAUH/650891.T136.

REFERENCES

- Andrade, T. (2000). *Commerce, culture, and conflict: Taiwan under European Rule, 1624-1662*. (Doctoral dissertation). Yale University, New Haven, United States of America.
- Blusse, L. (1988). *Persekutuan aneh: Pemukim Cina, wanita peranakan dan Belanda di Batavia VOC*. Jakarta, Indonesia: Pustaka Azet.

- Blusse, L. (1990). Minnan-jen or cosmopolitan? The rise of Cheng Chih-lung alias Nicolas Iquan. In Vermeer, E. (Ed.). *Development and decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th centuries* (pp. 245-264). Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill.
- Bontekoe, W. Y. (2000). *Memorable description of the East Indian voyage, 1616-1625*. London, England: Routledge.
- Bradell, T. (1856). Notes on Malacca. *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 1(2), 43-65.
- Campbell, W. (1982). Formosa under the Dutch. In *Selected historical materials on Zheng Chenggong's recovery of Taiwan*. Fuzhou, China: Fujian People's Publishing House.
- Carioti, P. (2012). Shiqi shiji Zhengshi Haishang Jituan zai dongya de guoji jiaose [The international role of Zheng's Maritime Group in East Asia in the 17th century] In Zhu Chengru Wang Tianyou (Eds.). *Ming Qing Luncong, a Collection of essays in the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (pp. 221-246). Beijing, China: Gugong Chubanshe.
- Carioti, P. (1996). The Zhengs' maritime power in the international context of the 17th century far eastern seas: The rise of a 'centralised piratical organisation' and its gradual development into an informal 'state'. *Ming-Qing Yanjiu [Ming and Qing Studies]*, 5(1), 29-68.
- Chang, T. (1934). *Sino-Portuguese trade from 1514 to 1644: A synthesis of Portuguese and Chinese sources*. New York, USA: AMS Press.
- Chao, Z. (2005). *Ming Dai Haijin yu Haiwai Maoyi [The Maritime Prohibitions during the Ming and Overseas Trade]*. Beijing, China: Renmin Chuban She.
- Cheng, W. (2013). *War, trade and piracy in the China Seas (1622-1683)*. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill.
- Cook, J. (1998). *Bridges to modernity: Xiamen, overseas Chinese and Southeast coastal modernization, 1843-1937*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, San Diego, United States of America.
- Han, Z. (1962). Yiliu Wuling Zhi Yiliu Liuer Zheng Chenggong Shidai Di Haiwaimaoyi He Haiwai Maoyishang Di Xingzhi [Oversea trade and the characteristics of oversea traders during the age of Zheng Chenggong]. *Xiamen Daxue Xuebao [Journal of Xiamen University]*, 12(1), 136-187.
- Huber, J. (2003). Relations between Cheng Ch'eng-kung and the Netherlands East India Company in the 1650s. In Blusse, L. (Ed.). *Around and about Formosa: Essays in honor of Professor Ts'ao Yungho* (pp. 209-241). Taipei, Taiwan: Ts'ao Yung-ho Foundation for Culture and Education.
- Hughes, G. (1872). *Amoy and the surrounding districts*. Hong Kong, China: De Souza & Company.
- John, W. (2006). The seventeenth-century transformation: Taiwan under the Dutch and the Cheng regime'. In Murray, R. (2006). *Taiwan: A new history*. (pp. 84-106). Armonk: M.E. Sharpe.
- Leupe, P. (1936). The siege and capture of Malacca from the Portuguese in 1640-1641. *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, Malaya Branch*, 14(1), 11-68.

- Li, J. (1996). *Xiamen Haiwai Jiaotong [Xiamen Foreign Trade]*. Xiamen, China: Lujiang Chuban She.
- Li, J. & Liao, D. (1995). *Zhongguo Gudai Haiwai Maoyishi. [A History of Maritime Trade of Ancient China]*. Guilin, China: Guangxi Renmin Chubanshe.
- Meilink-Roelofs, M. (1962). *Asian trade and European influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630*. Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Moloughney, B. (1986). *Silver, state, and society: A monetary perspective on China's seventeenth century crisis*. (Master thesis). University of Canterbury. Retrieved from https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10092/8832/moloughney_thesis.pdf?...1
- Nara, S. (2003). Silk trade between Vietnam and Japan in the seventeenth century. In *Pho Hien: The Centre of International Commerce in the 17th-18th Centuries* (pp. 162-183). Hanoi, Vietnam: The Gioi Publishers.
- Nie, D. (1994). *Mingmo Qingchu Haikou Shangren [The Pirate Merchants in Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasty]*. Taipei, Taiwan: Yangjiang Quan.
- Purcell, V. (1967). *The Chinese in Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Oxford University Press.
- Schurz, W. (1939). *The Manila galleon*. New York, USA: E.P. Dutton & Co.
- Viraphol, S. (1977). *Tribute and profit: Sino-Siamese trade, 1652-1853*. Cambridge, USA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University.
- Wright, H. (1958). *Free trade and protection in the Netherlands 1816-1830*. London, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Xing, H. (2010). *Between trade and legitimacy, maritime and continent: The Zheng Organization in seventeenth-century East Asia*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/etd/ucb/text/Hang_berkeley_
- Xing, H. (2016). *Conflict and commerce in maritime East Asia: The Zheng family and the shaping of the modern world, c. 1620–1720*. Cambridge, USA: Cambridge University Press.
- Yang, X. (1976). Zheng Zhilong yu Helan zhi guanxi [The relationship between Zheng Zhilong and the Dutch]. *Taiwan Wenxian (Taiwan Historica)*, 27(3), 164-165.
- Zhou, W. & Tang, L. (2011). *A history of Sino-Malaysian interactions*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies.
- Zhuang, G. (2000). Lun 15-19 Shiji Chu Haiwai Huashang Jingmao Wangluo de Fa Zhan [The Development of Overseas Chinese Commercial Network from the 15th to the Early 19th]. *Journal of Xiamen University (Arts & Social Sciences)*, 2(1), 41-49.