

“The Rise and Fall of the Spanish and Dutch Colonies on Taiwan, 1624-1662¹”

Tonio Andrade, Emory University
 “Lost Colonies” Conference, March 26-27, 2004

(Please do not cite, quote, or circulate without written permission from the author)

Scholars have long tried to explain how early-modern Europeans established colonies throughout the world, but they have focused on success stories. This paper examines two instructive failures. Both occurred on *Ilha Formosa* or, as it is known today, Taiwan. Until the 1500’s, Taiwan had been commercially and culturally isolated.² In the 16th and 17th centuries, however, as Eurasia experienced an upswing in international trade, the island grew in importance, for it was situated

¹ Sources designated by the acronym VOC (for Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) are from the Dutch East India Company Collection of the Dutch National Archives in The Hague. Those designated by the acronym AGI are from the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain. For documents from other collections I provide full location information. Transcriptions and translations of Spanish documents cited here can often be found in José Eugenio Borao Mateo, ed., *Spaniards in Taiwan*, Volumes I and II (Taipei: SMC Publishing, Inc, 2001 and 2002). Some Dutch documents cited here have been published in English translation in Leonard Blussé, Natalie Everts, and Evelien Frech, eds., *The Formosan Encounter: Notes on Formosa's Aboriginal Society: A Selection of Documents from Dutch Archival Sources* (Taipei: Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, 1998-). Only two volumes of the series have been completed so far. The Acronym APSR stands for Archivo de la Provincia del Santo Rosario, the Dominican Order’s Philippine Province. The archive is split between two locations, whose collections are nearly identical: Avila, Spain, and the Universidad de Santo Tomás, in Manila, Philippines. I note the provenance of APSR documents in the endnotes. Many Chinese sources can be found online, in the *Scripta Sinica* (漢籍電子文獻), an outstanding digital text database accessible on the Academia Sinica website. The URL, as of 4 February, 2004, is <http://www.sinica.edu.tw/ftms-bin/ftmsw3>.

² Chinese traders certainly visited Taiwan before the 1500s, especially in the north (Tanshui and Chilung), where they could buy sulfur and gold. The scope of the trade increased dramatically in the sixteenth century.

on the sea-lanes between Japan and southern China.³ Japanese and Chinese traders began trading with each other there in the mid-1500s. It was Europeans, however, who established the first formal colonies: the Dutch in the Southwest in 1624, and the Spanish in the north in 1626. At first, the colonies were successful. The Europeans displaced or co-opted their Asian predecessors and established hegemony over Taiwan. Yet both colonies fell: the Spanish to a Dutch invasion in 1641, and the Dutch to a Chinese invasion in 1662. The history of these two lost colonies provides fodder for ruminations about European expansion.

Explanations for European expansion have been influenced by two phenomena: Europeans' spectacular conquests of the New World, made possible primarily by Old World pathogens; and the overwhelming power of Europeans' industrial imperialism after 1800. If we confine our gaze to the Old World and to the early modern period, however, we gain a more balanced perspective. Recent scholarship on Europeans in early-modern Asia shows two things.

³ It is difficult to generalize about world trade and economic growth, but there nonetheless seems to be a consensus emerging: in the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century, many areas in Eurasia simultaneously experienced an increase in international trade and concomitant economic growth. For overviews, see Anthony Reid, "An 'Age of Commerce' in Southeast Asian History," *Modern Asian Studies* 24, no. 1 (1990): 1-30; Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680*, Vol. II (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Victor Lieberman, "Transcending East-West Dichotomies: State and Culture Formation in Six Ostensibly Disparate Areas," *Modern Asia Studies* 31, No. 3 (1997): 463-546 (this article has been reprinted alongside responses by other historians in the outstanding collection edited by Victor Lieberman, *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-Imagining Eurasia to C. 1830* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999]); David Ringrose, *Expansion and Global Interaction, 1200-1700* (New York: Longman, 2001); Although Reid and Lieberman agree about the general outlines of this new periodization, they disagree on certain specifics. See, for example, Victor Lieberman, "An Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia? Problems of Regional Coherence – A Review Article," *Journal of Asian Studies* 54, No. 3 (1995): 796-807. For information about coastal China during this period, see Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Arbitrage, China, and World Trade in the Early Modern Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, no. 4 (1995): 429-448, p. 429; and William Atwell, "Ming China and the Emerging World Economy, c. 1470-1650," in *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume 8, ed. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 376-416.

First, the scale of European dominance was more tenuous than traditionally believed. And, second, the factors often adduced to explain European dominance (technology, military techniques, and economic organization) were less important than a different sort of variable. As John Wills Jr. writes in a superb review essay, Europeans' success in Asia arose from "the organization, cohesion and staying power of [Europeans'] state and corporate organizations."⁴ This is not to say that early modern European states were stronger than their Asian counterparts, but merely that they were willing to support overseas adventurism whereas Asian states generally were not. The *rise* of European power on Taiwan supports this paradigm: both the Spanish and the Dutch colonies were successful in Taiwan because they had state support whereas the informal Chinese and Japanese colonies did not. But what does the *fall* of European Taiwan say about the importance of statist organization?

It turns out that Europeans' loss of Taiwan is an exception that proves the rule, for the Chinese who invaded Taiwan themselves benefited from an unusual statist power. A group of powerful merchants who were loyal to the recently fallen Ming dynasty created an anomaly in modern Chinese history: a Chinese state with a maritime orientation. When things went badly for them in China, they decided to move their base to Taiwan. A maritime Chinese state was, to be sure, a rarity in modern history, but its victory shows that European dominance was not due primarily to military, technological, or economic factors. Chinese armed forces easily prevailed over European ones. Statist projection, as the new paradigm holds, is one of the keys to understanding early modern colonialism.

⁴ John E. Wills Jr., "Maritime Asia, 1500–1800: The Interactive Emergence of European Domination," *American Historical Review* 98 [1993]: 83–105, p. 86.

The history of Taiwan can shed light on another aspect of the “statist” paradigm: “the *interactive emergence* of European dominance” (indeed, we might name the new model the “interactive emergence” model, after Wills’s eponymous article).⁵ In most colonial situations, but especially in Asia, empire emerged out of relationships between indigenous groups and the newly arrived European powers. In India, the Portuguese and Dutch built their empires atop preexisting trading structures, in a process of complex symbiosis mixed with “contained conflict.”⁶ In Southeast Asia, Dutch power was extended by means of alliances with certain native groups against others.⁷ In East Asia, Europeans established entrepôts only with the aid of local merchants and officials, such as the Cantonese officials who helped the Portuguese set up shop in Macao.⁸ Throughout Asia, Europeans depended closely upon indigenous groups – usually merchants – to establish their colonies.

Taiwan provides fresh data to test “interactive emergence” because the Spanish and the Dutch colonies had different degrees of interaction with Chinese settlers. Whereas the Spanish

⁵ Wills, “Maritime Asia.”

⁶ Wills, “Maritime Asia,” pp. 94–96.

⁷ In Java, for example, the company found itself, in the words of one historian, “inexorably sucked into Javanese affairs almost against its better judgment, egged on ... by the Javanese themselves.” See Reinout Vos, *Gentle Janus, Merchant Prince: The VOC and the Tightrope of Diplomacy in the Malay World, 1740-1800*, Beverley Jackson trans., Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993), p. 208. See also Luc Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger: The Dutch East Indies Company and the Northeast Coast of Java, 1680-1743*, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996). Leonard Blussé speaks of Europeans’ ability “to nestle in and around Asian empires” in the age before industrial imperialism changed the equation of power (Leonard Blussé, “Amongst Feigned Friends and declared Enemies,” Paper presented at the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences, University of Oslo, 6 August to 13 August 2000, pp. 3–4).

⁸ For a superb look at the foundation of Portuguese Macao, see John E. Wills Jr., “Relations with Maritime Europeans,” In *The Cambridge History of China Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, edited by Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, 333-375, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

did not encourage Chinese immigration, the Dutch did, and Chinese settlers flocked to Dutch Taiwan, some establishing rice farms and sugar plantations, and others trapping or trading animal products. These immigrants were the key to Dutch success: nearly all revenues from Taiwan came through Chinese colonists. By contrast, the Spanish colony brought no revenues of its own and had to be supported from Manila, whose rulers eventually decided to withdraw all but a token force of soldiers. The Dutch easily overcame those who remained. Thus, the Dutch colony thrived because it had a higher degree of Sino-European interaction than did the Spanish colony. Indeed, the Dutch colony was in essence a Chinese colony under the rule of the Dutch East India Company. We will examine the genesis and workings of this colony and its less successful Spanish rival, but first we must understand the ethnology of precolonial Taiwan and the geopolitical situation in East Asia on the eve of colonization.

The Background: Taiwan and the China Seas

Taiwan lies only 150 kilometers from China, yet no large-scale colonization took place until the 1600s. One reason is that Taiwan's aborigines were headhunters who assiduously guarded their lands. Austronesian peoples settled Taiwan four thousand years ago, planting rice in swiddens and hunting. By the seventeenth century, they inhabited the entire island, from the fertile alluvial plains of the west, to the high mountains of the center and east. Their languages had diverged so that villages separated by a few miles sometimes spoke mutually unintelligible tongues. Yet there were common features in their diverse societies. Most important for our purposes was a pervasive culture of war.

Until the seventeenth century, no sources speak of the Taiwanese aborigines in detail. In 1603, however, Chinese scholar and military expert Chen Di went to Taiwan to extirpate

Japanese pirates and upon his return wrote “An Account of the Eastern Barbarians” (*Dong fan ji* 東番記).⁹ “By nature,” he wrote, “they are brave and like to fight.” There were frequent wars between the villages, in which “they kill and wound each other with the utmost of their strength.” Warriors who made a kill took their victim’s head, stripped its flesh, and hung it at his door, and “those who have many skeletons hanging at their doors are called braves.”¹⁰ Thirty years later, Dutch missionary Georgius Candidius wrote his “Discourse and Short Narrative of the Island Formosa,” based on eight years’ experience in southwestern Taiwan.¹¹ The inhabitants of Formosa, he wrote, “do not live in peace with each other, but rather wage war continually, one village against the other.”¹² Between some villages there was permanent hostility, with raids carried out regularly. Other villages allied themselves with each other temporarily for mutual protection or to fight against a common enemy.¹³ Large celebrations followed successful raids:

⁹ Chen Di is 陳第. His “Account of the Eastern Barbarians” (*Dong Fan Ji* 東番記) has been translated in Laurence G. Thompson, “The Earliest Chinese Eyewitness Accounts of the Formosan Aborigines,” *Monumenta Serica: Journal of Oriental Studies* 23 (1964): 163–204, pp. 170–171. Chen most likely had experience only with the aborigines of Southwestern Taiwan, for he implies that his data were gathered while he and the rest of the expedition were anchored at the bay of *Daiyuan* (大員), near present-day Tainan, the place the Dutch would later call the Bay of Tayouan.

¹⁰ The previous three quotes are also from Thompson, “Earliest Chinese Accounts.”

¹¹ Georgius Candidius, “Discourse and Short Narrative of the Island Formosa” (the manuscript is found in the Familie-archief Huydecoper, in Rijksarchief Utrecht, R 67, nr. 621). A partial translation can be found in William M. Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch: Described from Contemporary Sources* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. LTD, 1903), and a more complete translation along with a transcription of the original Dutch, has been published in the first volume of Leonard Blussé, Natalie Everts, and Evelien Frech, eds. *The Formosan Encounter: Notes on Formosa's Aboriginal Society: A Selection of Documents from Dutch Archival Sources, 1623-1635*, Vol. V. I (Taipei: Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, 1998).

¹² Candidius, “Discourse and Short Narrative.” (See also Campbell, *Formosa*, pp. 9–25.)

¹³ See, for example, Leonard Blussé, Margaretha E. van Opstall, and Yung-ho Ts'ao, eds., *De Dagregisters van het Kasteel Zeelandia, Taiwan, 1629–1662 [The Journals of Zeelandia Castle, Taiwan, 1629–1662]*, 4 Volumes (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1986–2001), V. 1, I: 912. Henceforth I

When they succeed in bringing home a head from their enemies . . . the whole town holds a great celebration, with cheering and jubilation. First they take the head, parading with it through the whole town. They sing songs to glorify their idols, through whose help they believe they were able to obtain [the head]. Wherever they go in the town they are greeted as heroes and made welcome, being offered the best and strongest drink available. Then they take the head to the church of the one who obtained it (for every 15 or 16 houses there is a special church), where it is cooked in a pot until the flesh . . . falls away. Then they leave it to dry, dousing it with their best and strongest drink. They slaughter a pig in honor of their idols and in this way hold great celebrations These victory celebrations sometimes continue for fourteen days on end.¹⁴

Heroes who captured heads were so revered “that no one has the confidence openly to speak to them for nearly fourteen days [after the head is obtained].”¹⁵

Anthropologist John Shepherd shows that Formosan Austronesian society was characterized by gender separation, which was closely linked to warfare.¹⁶ He focuses on the Siraya people of southwestern Taiwan, where boys, from age four, lived in male-only houses, undergoing strict training in fighting and hunting. As they grew older, they advanced in rank along an age grade system, their arrival at each new stage being marked by changes in hair and clothing. A male’s age was the most important part of his identity: his position in the age grade system determined not only his social authority, but also his ability to reproduce, for he was allowed to marry only after the age of 21, and, once married, had to live apart from his wife until he turned 42. Shepherd confines his analysis to southwestern Taiwan, but the features he

will refer to these works as *Zeelandia Dagregisters*.

¹⁴ Candidius, “Discourse and Short Narrative.” (See also Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch*, pp. 14–15.)

¹⁵ Candidius, “Discourse and Short Narrative.” (See also Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch*, p. 15.)

¹⁶ John Robert Shepherd, *Marriage and Mandatory Abortion among the Seventeenth Century Siraya*, American Ethnological Society Monograph Series (Arlington: American Ethnological Society, 1995). Although Shepherd is writing about the Siraya people in southwestern Taiwan, his conclusions concerning gender separation are applicable to other Austronesian peoples on Taiwan in the seventeenth century.

describes – the strict separation of male and female spheres and the male age-grade system – were also present in the other Formosan aboriginal societies.

Gender separation both fostered and was fostered by warfare. Male houses were like barracks, and their residents received strict military training. Chen Di notes that men devoted themselves to running and training in the village’s public squares. Similarly, an early Dutch account describes how “the men are daily trained on the public markets, which are quite large.... They exercise with – and race against – each other, sparring with bamboos or reeds, each seeking to gain advantage over the other.”¹⁷ The exercises occurred to the beating of drums, and were well organized.¹⁸ The male houses were usually located near village gates, for the warriors also had to make sure that their village’s walls were in good repair.¹⁹ Such fortifications could be elaborate. In 1630, for example, inhabitants of a village in the southwest built “a sturdy double wall around their village, the inside filled with clay, as well as a moat and many demi-lunes.”²⁰ Some village fortifications were remarkably large, such as the defensive bamboo hedges around another village, which were reported in 1637 to be some ten meters [*30 voeten*] wide.²¹ The

¹⁷ Leonard Blussé and Marius P.H. Roessingh, “A Visit to the Past: Soulang, a Formosan Village Anno 1623,” *Archipel* 27 (1984): 63-80, p. 75.

¹⁸ See, for example, Chen Chi-lu, “Age Organization and Men's House of the Formosan Aborigines,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica*, no. 32 (1965): 217-235. See also Shepherd, “Marriage and Mandatory Abortion,” p. 33.

¹⁹ Cf. Chen, “Age Organization.”

²⁰ Letter from Missionary Georgius Candidius to Governor-General Jacques Specx, 27 March, 1630, VOC 1100: 347-359, fo. 6. Demi-lunes [*halven maenen*], a hallmark of the European revolution in fortification, were defensive works built outside of fortifications that served to protect bastions from assault. What might have been meant by demi-lunes in the case of Mattau is not entirely clear, but they must have been some sort of defensive outwork.

²¹ *Zeelandia Dagregisters*, V. 1, K: 433.

fortified village was found all over Taiwan, and vestiges of bamboo defenses can still be seen in some areas.²²

Because of Formosan Austronesians' martial culture, outsiders who wished to settle on Taiwan needed protection, which East Asian governments declined to provide. This factor more than any other explains the absence of large-scale colonization before European rule. The Chinese Ming government (1368–1644) generally saw the oceans not as highways for trade but as geopolitical barriers. To be sure, it sponsored the famous naval expeditions of the eunuch admiral Zheng He, but these were the work of one emperor and died with him.²³ China's citizens were banned from private trade abroad until 1567, after which a carefully licensed trade was allowed, and even then Chinese were forbidden to trade with Japan.²⁴ So the thousands of Chinese traders

²² Soulang may have been an exception to this pattern, for an early description of it does not mention walls around the village as a whole (Blussé, "Visit to the Past"). It seems quite possible that the arrival of the Dutch intensified tendencies toward fortification. Mattau, for example, may well have learned something of European fortification techniques when it tried to improve its fortifications against a possible Dutch attack. For another discussion of aboriginal fortifications, see Raleigh Ferrell, "Aboriginal Peoples of the Southwestern Taiwan Plain," *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica*, no. 32 (1971): 217-235.

²³ One expedition was carried out after his death, but after 1434 there was a backlash against the Zheng He legacy. A 1477 proposal to resume the voyages resulted in another backlash and the destruction of Zheng He's records.

²⁴ We must be careful not to overstate the extent of the Ming Dynasty's Maritime Prohibition (海禁). It did not, as many have argued, completely eliminate all private foreign trade. Several Chinese ports, of which Canton was the most important, allowed private foreign trade even before 1567, apparently with imperial consent. See Zhang Dechang (Chang Te-ch'ang), "Maritime Trade at Canton during the Ming Dynasty," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* (Beijing), 19 [1933]: 264-282. Bodo Wiethoff, *Die chinesische Seeverbotspolitik und der private Überseehandel von 1368 bis 1567* (Hamburg: Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, 1963). John Lee, "Trade and Economy in Preindustrial East Asia, c. 1500-c. 1800: East Asia in the Age of Global Integration," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58, no. 1 (1999): 2-26. See also Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 119-121. This limited private trade appears gradually to have been subjected to greater and greater restrictions, as officials' attitudes against trade hardened in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The system of legal private trade (if it can be called a system, for it appears to

who took to the seas received no official help from their home government. Japan, too, had multitudes of potential colonists, but their history is different. In the mid 1500s, Japan was divided into fiercely competing states, many of which fostered trade and piracy to raise money for war. The sixteenth century was thus a golden age for Japanese commerce, and Japanese traders sailed throughout East and Southeast Asia, establishing small colonies wherever they traded. Indeed, on two occasions, Japanese prepared expeditions to invade Taiwan, but neither was successful. Japan seemed set to follow a different path from China and perhaps develop overseas colonies, but in the 1600s, this path was closed. Japan was unified, and as the new shoguns consolidated their rule, they began regulating foreign trade. At first, they merely required Japanese traders to obtain special licenses. In 1635, however, the shogunate made one of the most monumental decisions in the history of global trade: it forbade its subjects to sail abroad. At once Japanese traders were recalled from their far-flung settlements. If it had not been for this decision, the Dutch might not have consolidated their rule on Taiwan, and the island might have become part of the Japanese empire.²⁵ After 1635, however, Japan was no threat to Europeans on Taiwan.

That is not to say that East Asians avoided Taiwan. Both Chinese and Japanese traders called, especially after 1550. Most numerous were Chinese peddlers similar to the French *coureurs de bois* of the New World: sojourners who traded in animal products among the aborigines. Sino-aboriginal trade had likely begun among Chinese fishermen who camped on Taiwan's coast to repair nets and salt their catch, but its scope increased dramatically in the mid-

have been ad hoc and local) thus collapsed by the mid 16th century. This was the same time that the Tribute trade system itself was falling into desuetude, and the two developments had grave consequences for China's maritime security.

²⁵ Indeed, evidence suggests that the Dutch East India Company explicitly took advantage of Japanese traders' withdrawal from markets throughout Southeast Asia to further expand its trade.

sixteenth century.²⁶ In 1603, Chen Di wrote that some merchants from Fujian province even spoke aboriginal languages. He was concerned that this trade hurt the aborigines: “I am afraid their pure simplicity is becoming more and more corrupted.”²⁷ Chinese traders were most interested in deer products, for deer were abundant, “sometimes two or three thousand in a flock together.”²⁸ Hides brought the largest profits – a three hundred percent return in Japan, where they were used to make clothing and armor – but venison was also valuable.²⁹ In exchange, the *coureurs de bois* offered iron, brass, salt, porcelain, and textiles. Many lived among the aborigines. In 1624, for example, a Dutch visitor to the village of Soulang (Chiali) wrote: “There is scarcely a house in this town ... that does not have one or two or three, or even five or six

²⁶ For the argument about fishermen being the first Chinese traders on Taiwan, see for example, Ts’ao Yong-ho (曹永和), “Zhonghua minzu de kuozhan yu Taiwan de kaifa,” in Ts’ao Yong-ho, *Taiwan zaoqi lishi yanjiu* (Taipei: Lianjing Press, 1979), pp. 1–24, p. 10.

²⁷ Thompson’s translation, “Earliest Chinese Accounts,” pp. 172–178.

²⁸ “Account of the visit of John Struys to Formosa in 1650,” in Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch*, p. 254. The account is Jan Janszoon Struys, *The perillous and most unhappy voyages of John Struys: through Italy, Greece, Lifeland, Moscovia, Tartary, Media, Persia, East-India, Japan, and other places in Europe, Africa and Asia: containing I. Most accurate remarks and observations ... of the inhabitants: II. A due description of the several cities, towns ... and, III. An exact memorial of the most disastrous calamities which befell the author in those parts ... to which are added 2 narrativs sent from Capt. D. Butler, relating to the taking in of Astrachan by the Cosacs* (London: Printed for S. Smith, 1683).

²⁹ It is difficult to know how many deerhides were shipped to Japan before the Dutch arrived, for our data are limited to the Dutch period, a time during which the deerhide trade increased enormously. Yet given the Japanese interest in the trade and the number of Chinese hunters the Dutch discovered on Taiwan when they arrived, pre-Dutch trade in deer products must also have been large. W.Ph. Coolhaas, ed., *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1960-1985) (henceforth referred to as *Generale Missiven*), V. I, p. 708, and, for a tabulation of yearly yields during the Dutch period, Thomas O. Hölmann, “Formosa and the Trade in Venison and Deer Skins,” in *Emporia, Commodities and Entrepreneurs in Asian Maritime Trade*, ed. Roderich Ptak, Dietmar Rothermund, and Franz Steiner (Stuttgart: Verlag, 1991), 263–290, p. 273 and pp. 289–290.

Chinese living there.”³⁰ Indeed, according to this visitor, who, it must be noted, had no knowledge of the local language, the inhabitants of the village spoke a tongue that contained many Chinese words, “such that it ... is a mixed and broken language.”³¹ Although later sources suggest that the Soulangers’ language was alive and well, the account suggests that Chinese influence was strong and increasing in the years before the Europeans arrived. In addition to the Chinese *coureurs de bois* there was a richer class of traders: Chinese and Japanese merchants who met on Taiwan to evade Ming restrictions on trade between China and Japan. Their main base was southwestern Taiwan, where two or three heavily laden Japanese silver junks moored yearly. Yet these rich traders did not establish formal colonies because their home governments refused to support maritime expansion.

European states, on the other hand, were eager to support overseas aggression. Like Japan before Tokugawa, Europe was made up of warring states that encouraged commerce and piracy to raise money for war. But whereas Japan’s Warring States Period only lasted from 1467 to 1573, Europe’s lasted until 1945. The Spanish and the Dutch were especially vehement rivals. After 1492, the Spanish crown established colonies in Africa, the Americas, and, finally, the Philippines. When Portugal’s possessions came under the control of Philip II in 1580, the Spanish king ruled an empire on which the sun never set. In 1579, however, seven of his provinces in the Low Countries had revolted, naming themselves the United Provinces of the Netherlands. In 1603, they created the United Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-*

³⁰ J.A. Van der Chijs, H.T. Colenbrander, J. de Hullu, eds., *Dagh-Register Gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant Passerende daer ter Plaetse als over Geheel Nederlandts-India* (Batavia/The Hague: Landsdrukkerij/Martinus Nijhoff, 1887-1903), 1624–1629, pp. 23–24. Henceforth referred to as *Batavia Dagregisters*.

³¹ *Batavia Dagregisters, 1624–1629*, p. 24.

Indische Compagnie, or VOC), which was designed to take over Spanish and Portuguese shipping in Asia and, in the process, raise money for war against Spain. The Dutch Estates General granted to the company rights usually reserved to sovereign states: the right to wage war and the right to conclude treaties with foreign powers. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) represented the Dutch state in maritime Asia.

In 1619, the VOC took control of the city of Batavia (present-day Jakarta), which became the capital of its fast-growing empire. The company's objective in East Asia was to oust the Portuguese from the Sino-Japanese silk-for-silver trade. In 1622, a Dutch fleet besieged Macao but was repelled and instead sailed north toward Taiwan.³² It landed on the Penghu (澎湖) Islands, which lay directly across the sea route between Macao and Japan.³³ The Company began building a base there, but Chinese officials sent military forces to remove it.³⁴ The Dutch therefore retreated to an area the Chinese state did not consider part of its jurisdiction: Taiwan.

³² See John E. Wills Jr., *Pepper, Guns, and Parleys: The Dutch East India Company and China, 1622–1681* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

³³ The Penghu Islands were known to Europeans as the Pescadores.

³⁴ W.Ph. Coolhaas, *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1960-1985), P. de Charpentier, Frederick de Houtman, J. Dedel en J. Specx, Batavia, 25 December 1623, VOC 1079:124–126, fo. 125. Cheng Shaogang has transcribed and translated into Chinese portions of the *Generale Missiven* that concern Taiwan. See Cheng Shaogang, “De VOC en Formosa 1624–1662: Een Vergeten Geschiedenis” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Leiden, Netherlands, 1995). His dissertation has been published in Taiwan, but without the Dutch transcriptions: Cheng Shaogang (程紹剛), *Helan ren zai Fu’ermosha*(荷蘭人在福爾摩莎) (Taipei, Lianjing Publishing Company, 2000). For more on the VOC in the Pescadores, see Leonard Blussé, “The Dutch Occupation of the Pescadores (1622–1624),” In *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan, No. 18*, 28–44, Tokyo: Toho Gakkai (Institute of Eastern Culture), 1973. See also Seiichi Iwao, “Li Tan, Chief of the Chinese Residents at Hirado, Japan, in the Last Days of the Ming Dynasty,” *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Tokyo Bunko* [1958] 17: 27–83.

They chose Bay of Tayouan, near today's Tainan, in southwestern Taiwan.³⁵ Here, in 1624, they began building Fort Zeelandia, the headquarters of their new colony. Their actions alarmed the Spanish government in the Philippines, which outfitted an expedition that landed in Taiwan in 1626.

Thus were established the first formal colonies in Taiwan. Europeans, backed by their warring states, had managed to found colonies in a land 150 kilometers from the powerful Empire of China. Free from the attention of the Chinese emperor, the two colonies were free to flourish. Yet they did not flourish equally. The Dutch encouraged Chinese to immigrate to Taiwan and turned southwestern Taiwan into a flourishing agricultural colony. The Spanish achieved missionary successes but failed to make Taiwan profitable. Let us start with the Spanish colony since it was the first to fall.

La Isla Hermosa: The Rise and Fall of the Spanish Colony

Known in Spanish documents as Isla Hermosa, Taiwan lay seven hundred kilometers north of the island of Luzon, the heart of the Spanish colony of the Philippines.³⁶ Documents from the late sixteenth century suggest that Spanish officials considered Formosa to be part of the Philippine Archipelago and thus a possession of the Crown of Castile.³⁷ Yet they found no compelling

³⁵ Generale Missiven, P. de Charpentier, Frederick de Houtman, J. Dedel en J. Specx, Batavia, 25 december 1623. VOC 1079:124–126 (in Cheng, “VOC en Formosa,” p. 27). The Bay of Tayouan no longer exists, having been filled in with alluvial deposits.

³⁶ The name Formosa came from the Portuguese, who referred to Taiwan as “Ilha Formosa” or “Beautiful Island.” The Spanish used the Spanish version of the word. Thus, “Ilha Formosa” became “Isla Hermosa.”

³⁷ See Memorial sent to the Council of the Indies by the Junta de Manila (Memoria enviada al Consejo de Indias presentada por la Junta de Manila), 26 July 1586, AGI Filipinas, Patronato, 24, R. 66, 125–126.

reason to establish a base there until 1596, when they heard rumors about a Japanese naval expedition against the island.³⁸ Many Spaniards believed Taiwan must be defended to preserve the Philippines, but Spanish officials decided against sending an expedition to Taiwan.³⁹ In any event, the Japanese invasion did not materialize until twenty years later, when a rich Japanese merchant named Murayama Toan sent thirteen Japanese war junks under the command of his son to conquer Formosa.⁴⁰ After Formosan aborigines ambushed one junk, the rest turned to pillaging on the Chinese coast.⁴¹ By that time, however, the Spanish were less worried about the Japanese than about the Dutch.

In 1618, the governor general of the Philippines dispatched a Dominican father named Bartolomé Martínez to China. His mission was to warn Chinese merchants that a Dutch fleet was

³⁸ Instructions given by the king [Philip II] to the new governor of the Philippines, Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, 9 August 1589, AGI Filipinas, 339, L. 1, 368-389.

³⁹ Juan de la Concepción, *Historia general de Philipinas. Conquistas espirituales y temporales de estos españoles dominios, establecimientos, progresos y decadencias*, 14 vols. (Manila: A. de la Rosa y Balagtas, 1788-1792), V. 3, p. 320. See also the Letter from interim governor of the Philippines Luis Pérez Dasmariñas to Philip II, Cavite, 8 July 1596, AGI Filipinas, 18B, R. 6, N. 52, Bloque 1. On Japanese plans to invade Taiwan, see Seiichi Iwao, “Shiqi shiji Riben ren zhi Taiwan qinlüe xingdong” 十七世紀日本人之臺灣侵略行動 (Japanese attempts to invade Taiwan during the seventeenth century) *Taiwan yanjiu congkan* 臺灣研究叢刊 (Collection of Researches on Taiwan), 71 (1959): 1-23 (published by Taiwan Yinhang).

⁴⁰ Letter from Francisco Tello, Governor General of the Philippines, to King Philip II, Manila, 19 May, 1597, AGI Filipinas, 18B, R. 7, N. 61. See also Memorial from Luis Pérez Dasmariñas about the conquest of Isla Hermosa for Francisco Tello, Governor General of the Philippines (Primer memorial sobre la conquista de la Isla Hermosa), undated [1596 or 1597], AGI Filipinas, 18B, R. 6, N. 52, Bloque 2; and Letter from interim governor of the Philippines Luis Pérez Dasmariñas to Philip II, Cavite, 8 July 1596, AGI Filipinas, 18B, R. 6, N. 52, Bloque 1.

⁴¹ One apparently ended up in Penghu, according to the *Huangming shifa lu* (皇明世法錄), cited in Ts’ao Yong-ho, *Mingdai Taiwan yuye zhilüe*, in Ts’ao Yong-ho, *Taiwan zaoqi lishi yanjiu* (Taipei: Lianjing Press, 1979), pp. 157-254, p. 160. See C. R. Boxer, *Christian Century in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), pp. 298-299; see also Richard Cocks, *Diary Kept by the Head of the English Factory in Japan: Diary of Richard Cocks, 1615-1622*, ed. University of Tokyo Historiographical Institute, *Nihon Kankei Kaigai Shiryo: Historical Documents in Foreign Languages Relating to Japan* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1980).

attacking shipping to Manila, but on the way home his ship sought refuge in Formosa and Martinez had an opportunity to survey southwestern Taiwan. He was impressed and decided Spain should add the island to its empire: "There is," he wrote, "no better ... way to do away with the Dutch and all our other enemies than to place the silver of Manila at China's trading gate, which is the Isla Hermosa."⁴² Martinez's advice went unheeded until after the Dutch had established their base on Taiwan in 1624. In February, 1626, the Spanish governor general of the Philippines, Fernando de Silva, led a fleet to Taiwan. Martinez himself went along, accompanied by five other Dominicans.

Because the Dutch had occupied the Bay of Tayouan in the south, the Spanish decided to establish their base in the north. In 1597, a Spanish explorer named Hernando de los Rios Coronel had written a memorial asserting that the best port on Formosa was Chilung, at the northeast corner of the island: "With three-hundred men and a fortress placed there, all the powers of these parts would not be enough to dislodge them, for the entrance is very narrow and easy to defend with artillery. The port is safe from winds, and is large and very deep."⁴³ Chilung was also a focus of Chinese trade. Chinese sources indicate that after 1593 ten Fujianese junks were licensed to sail to Taiwan yearly, all destined for the north: five to Chilung and five to Tanshui (淡水), located some fifty kilometers west of Chilung.⁴⁴ Since such permits merely recognized

⁴² Memorial of the Dominican Bartolomé Martinez concerning the advantages of conquering the Isla Hermosa (*Memoria acerca de la utilidad de la conquista de Isla Hermosa*), Manila, 1619, APSR (Avila), Formosa, Tomo 1, 371-377. Martinez also argued that Formosa could serve as a base from which Spain's enemies' could be watched so that information could easily be relayed between Manila and China.

⁴³ Letter from Don Hernando de los Rios Coronel to Philip II concerning the importance of occupying a port on Isla Hermosa, 27 June 1597, AGI Filipinas, 18B.

⁴⁴ See Chang, "Chinese Maritime Trade," pp. 266-267.

preexisting smuggling, we can be sure that northern Taiwan had long been a destination for Chinese junks, which called to acquire deer products, gold, and sulfur.

De Silva's men landed on the island at the entrance to Chilung Bay, where they found a settlement of an aboriginal people called the Taparri-Kimaurri. The latter fled at the sound of guns, and the Spanish promptly appropriated their village, which reportedly consisted of fifteen hundred houses built of fragrant wood.⁴⁵ Then they conducted a ceremony of possession. First they said mass, erected a cross, and raised the royal standard. Then the military leader of the expedition took into his hands some of the island's soil and branches of trees and said, "Long live the King, our Lord Philip IV!" Thus, "in the best form and manner that can be lawfully allowed," the expedition took possession of Formosa for the crown of Castile.⁴⁶ They built a fortress on the island and a redoubt on a hundred-meter hill, making the place "unassailable," to use the word of a Dominican missionary.⁴⁷ They called the Bay of Chilung Santísima Trinidad (Holy Trinity) and the fortress San Salvador.

⁴⁵ Letter from Don Fernando de Silva, governor of the Philippines, to Philip IV, Manila, 30 July, 1626, translated in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22 (1625–1629), p. 98. The correction of the omission in the translation in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, was accomplished by reference to the transcription of the letter that was printed in José María Alvarez, O.P., *Formosa Geográfica e Históricamente Considerada* (Barcelona: Librería Católica Internacional, 1930), V. 2, pp. 415-418. Thanks to José Eugenio Borao for alerting me to the existence of the different versions. See also Relation of the condition of the Filipinas Islands and other regions surrounding, in the year, 1626, from Ventura del Arco MSS in Ayer Collection of Newberry Library, reprinted in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22, p. 142. See also Don Fray Diego de Aduarte, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1963 [1693]), V. 2, Chapter 29, p. 261.

⁴⁶ Copy of the Act of Possession of Isla Hermosa, the fortress of San Salvador, and the native villages by the Sergeant Major Antonio Carreño de Valdés, Isla Hermosa (Copia del acta de la toma de posesion de la Isla Hermosa), 16 May, 1626, AGI Filipinas, 20.

⁴⁷ Aduarte, *Historia de la Provintia*, V. 2, Chapter 29, p. 260.

Conditions were tough. The Taparri-Kimaurri who had fled into the mountains refused to sell rice and prevented the Spanish from trading with other villages.⁴⁸ A relief expedition from Manila was blown off course by a typhoon and never arrived. Junks from China were also few.⁴⁹ So the new arrivals suffered, “eating even dogs and rats, also grubs and unknown herbs.”⁵⁰ Most of the Spanish and their Philippine auxiliary troops, the Papangers, became ill, and many died.⁵¹ Malnutrition was one cause; another was the drinking water, which contained sulfur. According to a Chinese helmsman who had visited several times, Chilung was unhealthy: “No one can stay there for a one, two, or three months without becoming sick and having his belly grow as thick as

⁴⁸ See Aduarte, V. 2, Chapter 46.

⁴⁹ Description of that which David Pessaert and Vincent Romeijn heard in Cambodia from some Spaniards concerning their fort and forces in Formosa, Nagasaki, 10 September, 1627, VOC 1092: 404-406, fo. 405.

⁵⁰ Relation of the condition of the Filipinas Islands and other regions surrounding, in the year, 1626, from Ventura del Arco MSS in Ayer Collection of Newberry Library, reprinted in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22, p. 143.

⁵¹ This information, from a Dutch document that was based on interviews with Spaniards in Cambodia, must be used with care. Although it appears to be correct in most of the details, the figures it gives (250 Spanish dead) may be exaggerated. It is a useful counterpoint, however, to some Spanish documents of the same period, which paint the Formosan colony in overly rosy tones. See the Description of that which David Pessaert and Vincent Romeijn heard in Cambodia from some Spaniards concerning their fort and forces in Formosa, VOC 1092: 404-406, Nagasaki, 10 September, 1627, VOC 1092: 404-406, fo. 404. Cf Relation of the condition of the Filipinas Islands and other regions surrounding, in the year, 1626, from Ventura del Arco MSS in Ayer Collection of Newberry Library, reprinted in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22, pp. 141-145.

a barrel.”⁵² Yet conditions gradually improved as junks began bringing rice from China and as some of the Taparri-Kimaurri began trading food for porcelain and silver.⁵³

The aborigines near the Spanish fortress were constantly at war with one another. The Spanish therefore soon found themselves embroiled in intervillage wars, where alliances were constantly shifting. For example, in late 1627, for “reasons of state, which are not wanting even among barbarians,” a chief of a village in the Tanshui area asked for help against an enemy.⁵⁴ The Spanish dispatched twenty men to the region, hoping to acquire rice for their hungry garrison. The chief held a feast for the Spanish but refused to provide rice for Chilung. He also secretly made peace with his enemy and laid plans to betray his guests. One morning, he led the Spanish into an ambush on the pretext of taking them on a hunting trip. The Spanish soldiers fought back, killing the chief and several others, and then fled, leaving eight of their fellows dead in the fields. When they arrived back in Chilung, they were pleased to find anchored there a relief ship from Manila. They told the story of their ambush to senior military officials, who immediately prepared a response. They sent a galley up the Tanshui river, which was “beautiful and densely inhabited by the natives.”⁵⁵ The latter fled at the sight of the Spanish vessel. The Spanish landed and filled the entire galley with rice from the aborigines’ rice sheds (“they could have filled fifty

⁵² Description of that which David Pessaert and Vincent Romeijn heard in Cambodia from some Spaniards concerning their fort and forces in Formosa (Descriptie van het gene bij David Pessaert ende Vincent Romeijn in Cambodia door eenige Spanjaerden verstaen hebben wegen haer fort ende macht op het Eijlant Formosa als anders), Nagasaki, 10 September, 1627, VOC 1092: 404-406, fo. 404.

⁵³ Relation of the condition of the Filipinas Islands and other regions surrounding, in the year, 1626, from Ventura del Arco MSS in Ayer Collection of Newberry Library, translated and printed in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22, p. 143.

⁵⁴ Relation of 1627-1628, in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22, pp. 181–212, p. 185.

⁵⁵ Relation of 1627-1628, in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22, pp. 181–212, p. 186.

[galleys] if they had had them, so great is the abundance in that country”).⁵⁶ Shortly thereafter the Spanish built a wooden fortress in the Bay of Tanshui. Again, the aborigines fled, abandoning their rich fields.⁵⁷

In 1629, the initial troubles in Hermosa were past, and the governor general of Manila memorialized to the king of Spain, “there is little to fear from Japan or the Dutch, for the post [on Formosa] is strong enough that it cannot be taken except by hunger.”⁵⁸ Indeed, he wrote of extending Spanish domination over the entire island.⁵⁹ In 1632 three Japanese vessels arrived in Chilung, their captains saying that they had once traded with the Dutch but would prefer to do business with the Spanish. The silver they spent on deerskins brought prosperity and hope to the colony. One missionary observed that if Japanese junks came every year, northern Taiwan could become a lucrative center of Sino-Japanese trade.⁶⁰ The shogun’s decree of 1635, however,

⁵⁶ Relation of 1627-1628, in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22, pp. 181–212, p. 186. A synopsis of another relation of 1627-1628 indicates that the relief expedition punished not natives, but Chinese: Its garrison were able to punish . . . the Chinese who had killed two captains, with twenty-five or thirty Spaniards” (Events in the Filipinas Islands from August, 1627, until June, 1628, in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 22, pp. 212-216, p. 214).

⁵⁷ Memorial of things concerning the state of the Isla Hermosa (Memoria de las cosas pertenecientes al estado de la Isla Hermosa) by the Dominican Father Jacinto Esquivel, August, 1633, APSR (Avila), Formosa, Tomo 1, Cuadernillo 8: 345-354, fos. 346-347.

⁵⁸ Letter from Don Juan Nino de Tabora, Governor of Chilung in Isla Hermosa, to King Philip IV, Cavite, 1 August, 1629, AGI Filipinas, 21, R. 3, N. 14.

⁵⁹ Letter from Don Juan Nino de Tabora, Governor of Chilung in Isla Hermosa, to King Philip IV, Cavite, 1 August, 1629, AGI Filipinas, 21, R. 3, N. 14. This letter also mentions the discovery of a large, deep bay in the South of Formosa, whose inhabitants were “more docile [*tratable*] than any we have yet encountered.” The governor-general suggested that this area might be added to the king’s possessions. Philip IV responded that the governor-general should attempt to make peace with these people, but it appears that no further actions were ever taken (Decree of King Philip IV directed to Don Juan Nino de Tabora, governor of Chi-lung in Isla Hermosa, 4 December, 1630, AGI Filipinas 329, L. 3, Image 328).

⁶⁰ Jacinto Esquivel, Memoria de las cosas pertenecientes al estado de la Isla Hermosa, 1633, APSR [UST], Libros, Tomo 49, fos. 306-316, fo. 315.

removed this possibility. The Spanish colony became dependent once more upon Chinese traders and relief from Manila.

While soldiers built fortresses, missionaries preached to the aborigines. As we have seen, the Dominican Father Bartolomé Martínez, who had urged Spain to colonize the island, accompanied the initial Spanish expedition in 1626. By that time Martínez had become the provincial (leader) of the order's Philippine province. That the provincial himself went indicates how highly the order valued the colony. He and his brothers were less interested in converting the aborigines than in using Formosa as a stepping-stone toward China and Japan.⁶¹ As one missionary wrote in 1632, "The spiritual goals ... of [Isla Hermosa] do not end with the conversion of the natives, but rather extend to the great land of China, its near neighbor. Just as when laying siege to a city and battering its walls one digs one's trenches closer and closer and thus slowly gains land; so in the spiritual conquest of that powerful and enchanted [*encantado*] land God is laying the siegeworks of evangelism, approaching bit by bit until the walls of resistance tumble to the ground."⁶² That is not to say that the Dominicans neglected Taiwan. Their missionary activity was remarkably intense given the size of the colony. There were almost as many missionaries present on the initial Spanish expedition as there were in Dutch Taiwan in 1650, at the height of Dutch power.

⁶¹ A list of those who used Formosa as a stepping stone to China and Japan can be found in "Fundación y Restauración de la Mision Católica en Formosa," *Campo misional: Órgano de los misioneros de la provincia*, [Manila], 2(8) [1959]: 876-895, p. 887, a copy of which reposes in APSR (Avila), Formosa Section.

⁶² Memorial of Matters Concerning the Isla Hermosa (Memoria de cosas pertenecientes a isla Hermosa), by Fr. Diego Aduarte, O.P., Manila, 24 November, 1632, APSR (Avila), Formosa Section, Tomo 1, Cuadernillo 8: 340-344, fo. 341.

The Dominicans' first act was to found a "small and humble" church on the island of Chilung to minister to the Spanish. Soon thereafter they built a church in the Parián, or Chinese settlement as well.⁶³ At first, missionaries did not live among the aborigines. In 1630, however, Dominican father Jacinto Esquivel arrived from Manila and went to live in the aboriginal village of Taparri. He founded a small church and began learning Bacay, the aborigines' lingua franca. At first the Tappari were suspicious, especially because Esquivel refused to marry, but they ended up accepting him for a simple reason: so long as a Spanish priest lived with them they were safe from Spanish arms. The Dominicans had a long tradition of siding with natives against secular authorities.⁶⁴ This role earned them respect from the aborigines. A leader of a village called Lichoco, upstream along the eastern branch of the Tanshui River happened to see Esquivel intercede with the Spanish governor to obtain freedom for some prisoners from Taparri. Upon witnessing Esquivel's actions he reportedly said, "So this is a priest? Well if the other headmen want one, I also want a priest for my village."⁶⁵ He – and many other aboriginal leaders – viewed the presence of a priest as a symbol of Spanish protection. One never knew when enemies might appear to "cut heads" [*cortar cabessas*]. Any attack had to be followed by a quick response, or one's village would be considered weak and become a target for other attacks. If one could not respond oneself, one sought allies. The Spanish, with their powerful arms, were attractive allies.

⁶³ Aduarte, *Historia*, V. 2, Ch. 29, p. 260.

⁶⁴ See Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*, trans. Herma Briffault (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), and Lewis Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949).

⁶⁵ Memorial of that which concerns the state of the new conversion of the Isla Hermosa, anonymous (probably Jacinto Esquivel) Formosa, 1633, APSR (Avila) Formosa Section, Tomo 1, Cuadernillo 8: 362-364, fo. 356.

It is thus no surprise that the high point of missionary success coincided with the high point of military power: the brief rule of governor Alonso García Romero (1634-1635). He intervened militarily and judicially in aboriginal life, bringing about a *pax hispanica* in an area along the coast between the two fortresses and in much of the Tanshui river valley. It was possible during his rule to walk alone safely from Tanshui to Chilung, following an arm of the Tanshui River. Missionaries extended their influence as well. "I alone," wrote the Dominican missionary Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios, "baptized in eight days three hundred and twenty people in the Tanshui river, when they had smallpox in that year [the year García Romero governed], and in Santiago baptized 141 in five days. I went alone ... into those villages, without any threat from our enemies, since fear of the governor kept them away."⁶⁶ Governor García Romero also focused on eastern Taiwan, where the Spanish were often attacked when landing to avoid storms. The worst offenders were from Cavalan, a group of villages near the Ilan Bay. Not only did they attack Spanish ships, but they also ventured near the Spanish fortresses to hunt the heads of Spain's aboriginal allies. García Romero launched an expedition, which left the people of Cavalan so diffident that Dominicans worked among them without protection.⁶⁷ A couple years later, Spanish authority in the area was still strong, for missionary Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios apparently went alone and baptized 186 children in eight days. He was about to proceed further when he received a letter from Chilung: the new governor-general of the Philippines had

⁶⁶ Letter-Relation to the P. Provincial in Manila concerning the loss of Formosa, P. Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios, Binondo, 26 July, 1643, in Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, pp. 432-438, p. 436.

⁶⁷ Letter-Relation to the P. Provincial in Manila concerning the loss of Formosa, P. Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios, Binondo, 26 July, 1643, in Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, pp. 432-438, p. 436.

decided to withdraw Spanish forces from Taiwan.⁶⁸ “After that,” wrote Quirós, “everything began falling apart.”⁶⁹

Why did Manila remove support from the Formosan colony? Dominican and Franciscan historians blame Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, the governor-general who made the decision, but the reason is deeper: Spanish Formosa did not achieve its non-spiritual goals at a time when Manila’s economy was in the doldrums. It failed as a bulwark against the Dutch, who were still able to enforce blockades of Manila after the Spanish established their colony on Taiwan. It failed to protect Spanish trade because citizens of Manila found it cheaper to have Chinese traders come to them directly from China, or, when Dutch ships were especially numerous, to use Macao instead of Formosa as a transshipment point. Governor García Romero wrote that during his rule Chinese traders arrived in Chilung, but “because of [our] lack of money, they returned to China with large [unsold] amounts of silks, rare velvets, and damasks.”⁷⁰ The colony did, to be sure, serve missionaries en route to and from China and Japan, and the Dominicans made notable successes converting the natives, but the island drained Philippine coffers without tangible benefit.

⁶⁸ The chronology is difficult to determine from Quirós’s letter, which makes it sound as though he received the letter in, 1635, or “a bit after” the expedition (Letter-Relation to the P. Provincial in Manila concerning the loss of Formosa, P. Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios, Binondo, 26 July, 1643, in Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, pp. 432-438, p. 436). We know, however, that the decision to withdraw Spanish forces was not taken until, 1637. Alvarez writes that the letter was received “around, 1638 or 1639” (Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, p. 73).

⁶⁹ Letter-Relation to the P. Provincial in Manila concerning the loss of Formosa, P. Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios, Binondo, 26 July, 1643, in Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, pp. 432-438, p. 436.

⁷⁰ Letter from Alonso García Romero, formerly Governor of Isla Hermosa, to the Viceroy of New Spain, Manila, 12 July, 1636, AGI *AHN Diversos*, 34, Doc. 39, Images 1–7, Image 1.

When times were good, the expense was manageable, but in the 1630s and 1640s, times were not good. Dutch blockades, competition from Taiwan, and a lack of cooperation with Macao all hurt Manila's trade with China, the lifeblood of its economy.⁷¹ Yet dislocations in the China trade were only part of the problem. Manila was also suffering from an economic downturn that affected all of the Spanish Empire during the mid-seventeenth century.⁷² According to tax receipts in Manila and Acapulco, the decade of the 1630s saw drastically lower silver flows across the Pacific.⁷³ To be sure, smuggling was rampant, which has led many scholars to argue that for the seventeenth century as a whole, trade across the Pacific remained steady.⁷⁴ Yet evidence suggests that the 1630s and 1640s saw lower amounts of silver arriving in Manila. The lack of silver hurt the Manilan economy, and a wealth of anecdotal evidence indicates that citizens of Manila were much less wealthy in the 1630s and 1640s than earlier in the century.⁷⁵ Equally importantly, the government of Manila had to get by on lower tax revenues.

⁷¹ See Ruurdje Laarhoven and Elizabeth Pino Wittermans, "From Blockade to Trade: Early Dutch Relations with Manila, 1600–1750," *Philippine Studies* 33, no. 4 (1985): 485–504 for an excellent introduction to Dutch-Spanish relations in the Far East. Discussion Regarding Portuguese Trade at Manila, Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 25, pp. 111-144.

⁷² See Herbert S. Klein and John TePaske, "The Seventeenth-Century Crisis in New Spain: Myth or Reality," *Past and Present* 90 (1981): 116–135, and Carla Rahn Phillips, "Growth and Composition of Trade in the Iberian Empires, 1450–1750," in *Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern Period*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁷³ This is the conclusion reached by Pierre Chaunu in *Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Ibériques (16e, 17e, 18e, siècles)* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960). See also Carmen Yuste López, *El Comercio de la Nueva España con Filipinas, 1590-1785* (México D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1984).

⁷⁴ See Brian Moloughney and Xia Weizhong, "Silver and the Fall of the Ming: A Reassessment," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 40 (1989): 51-78; and Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 237-248. Cf. Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giraldez, "Silk for Silver: Manila-Macao Trade in the Seventeenth Century," *Philippine Studies* 44 (1996): 52–68, pp. 58-60.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Juan Grau y Monfalcón, Memorial to King Philip IV on behalf of the City of

At the same time, the costs of defense were rising. Fighting against the Dutch took enormous resources, and Manila had to worry about protecting far more than just the Philippines and Taiwan. Because the Portuguese crown was worn by the King of Castile, the governor-general of the Philippines was responsible for protecting a swathe of territory throughout maritime east and southeast Asia, precisely the area that the Dutch East India Company was targeting in its bid to monopolize the East Indian trade. In 1627, Manila launched an expensive expedition to dislodge the Dutch from Tayouan, but most of the Spanish fleet was forced to turn back because of Typhoons. Two galleys managed to reach the Penghu Islands and “were much welcomed” by the Chinese, who promised to help with ammunition and supplies, but the expedition failed in its overall aim. Governors-general were always under pressure to take up a new assault against the Dutch, yet they also faced other enemies, such as the Islamic sultanates of Johor and Mindanao, which fought vigorously against Spanish rule in the southern Philippines. The governors general of the Philippines thus had a difficult task: to coordinate a huge defense project with attenuated forces and a shrinking income.

It is therefore no surprise that Philippine officials viewed the Formosan colony as a waste of resources. When governors general wrote to Philip IV to suggest that Spain’s Formosan forces be reduced or withdrawn, the king and his counselors adopted a cautious approach, asking for more information rather than ordering any action.⁷⁶ But when Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera became governor general in 1635, he was determined to make changes. In 1636 he

Manila, Madrid, 1637, James A. Robertson’s translation, in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 27, pp. 55-212.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Letter from Philip IV to Corcuera, Madrid, 11 October, 1636, in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 27, pp. 36-44. Corcuera would not, of course, have received this by January 1637.

wrote to Philip IV: “The fact that the enemy maintain a post [in Formosa] does not at all embarrass or hinder the crown of Castile; for the Chinese do not fail to come in twenty-four hours to the forts of your Majesty that are on this side of the sea [i.e. Manila], bringing the necessary merchandise and supplies. That island, Sire, is of very little use to your Majesty, and it serves only to consume a large part of the revenues.”⁷⁷ Without waiting for the king’s response, he convened a war council and proposed withdrawing forces from Formosa.⁷⁸ Most of the twenty-odd members of the council concurred. As one member put it, “Having experienced the little or no fruit that has been drawn from the island in the eleven years we have had it and the great expenses which his majesty has had to expend to conserve it, and considering that there is a great lack of money and soldiers here, it is imperative that the proposed withdrawal be carried out.”⁷⁹ Four disagreed, arguing that Spanish forces should remain in Formosa to protect the fragile Christian aboriginal communities.⁸⁰ Nearly all believed, however, that whatever the decision, the king should be advised before any action was taken.

⁷⁷ Letter from Corcuera to Philip IV, 11 July, 1636, Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 26, pp. 269–290, p. 279.

⁷⁸ Records from the Junta de Guerra considering the desirability of withdrawing forces from the Isla Hermosa, Manila, 22 January, 1637, AGI Escribanía 409B, fos. 76-82. Another version is provided as part of the prosecution’s testimony (AGI Escribanía 409B, fos. 20-24).

⁷⁹ Records from the Junta de Guerra considering the desirability of withdrawing forces from the Isla Hermosa, Manila, 22 January, 1637, AGI Escribanía 409B, fos. 20-24.

⁸⁰ In a letter to the king Corcuera claimed that there was only one dissenter in the meeting, who, he insinuated, had a financial interest in the colony: “the Formosan colony has not been bad for the augmenting of his fortune.” Letter from Corcuera to Philip IV, Manila, 20 August, 1637, AGI Escribanía 409B, fos. 73-75. Another copy of this letter, along with records from the Junta and a list of relief expeditions to Formosa from Manila, can be found at AGI Filipinas, 21, R. 11, N. 55.

Just days later, however, Corcuera wrote a letter ordering the governor of Formosa to dismantle the Tanshui fortress and remove all but around 200 soldiers from the Chilung fortress.⁸¹ After some dithering, the orders were followed, and the results were drastic: Spain's authority in Formosa collapsed. The Spanish had imposed control because of military might. Without soldiers, they lost their ability to rule.⁸² Missionaries who had once ventured far from military outposts were now afraid to leave the fortress.⁸³ Paths between Tanshui and Chilung that had once been safe to cross alone became dangerous even for armed groups. Fewer and fewer merchants came from China, and those who did found that the Spanish had no money to buy their merchandise.⁸⁴

Some of these Chinese merchants told the Dutch about the Spanish withdrawal, and in August, 1641, a Dutch expedition arrived. Accompanied by five hundred aborigines, the soldiers entered the village of Kimaurri without opposition, climbed the hill behind it, and methodically counted the Spanish infantry by telescope, "seeing in this way everything that they wanted to."⁸⁵ Although the Dutch soldiers – there were 205 – outnumbered the Spanish and were supported by hundreds of aborigines, their commander decided he did not have enough men to take the Spanish

⁸¹ Orders given to the Captain and Sergeant Major Francisco Hernandez, Governor of the Forces of Isla Hermosa to dismantle the fortress of Tanshui, 27 January, 1637, AGI Escribanía 409B, fo. 90.

⁸² Letter-Relation to the P. Provincial in Manila concerning the loss of Formosa, P. Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios, Binondo, 26 July, 1643, in Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, pp. 432-438 and pp. 82-87, p.83.

⁸³ Baltasar de Santa Cruz, *Tomo segvndo de la Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de Filipinas, Iapon, y China del sagrado orden de Predicadores* (Zaragoza: Pasqual Bueno, Impessor del Reyno, 1693), Chapter 2 (a copy of this work can be found at the Houghton Library at Harvard University).

⁸⁴ Letter from Governor Pedro Palomino to Governor-General Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, Chi-lung, Formosa, 8 October, 1638, AGI Escribanía 409B, fos. 90-93, fos 91 and 93.

⁸⁵ Letter from Governor Gonzalo Portillo to Governor-General Corcuera, Chi-lung, 9 September, 1641, AGI Escribanía 409B, fos. 105-106, fo. 105.

fort and left, burning Kimaurri on the way, and “making fun of the Spanish, seeing that nobody came out against them.”⁸⁶ The Spanish celebrated the departure of the Dutch, but their incursion had already had an effect. By burning Kimaurri and mocking the Spanish beneath their very fortress, the Dutch took from the Spanish the attribute most prized and necessary in the warlike world of seventeenth century Formosa: military reputation. The Spanish governor wrote in a letter to Corcuera that he could no longer persuade the aborigines to cooperate even in small matters: “They are traitors, and are risen against us, being of a nature that they only help those who vanquish them.”⁸⁷ In early August, 1642, a larger Dutch expedition arrived: four large ships, several smaller ones, and 369 Dutch soldiers.⁸⁸ They landed on Chilung Island and captured a small redoubt from which they could aim their cannon directly down into the Spanish fortress.⁸⁹ With little water, few supplies, and no hope of relief, the besieged forces surrendered. Spain’s Formosan adventure had come to an end.

⁸⁶ Letter-Relation to the P. Provincial in Manila concerning the loss of Formosa, P. Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios, Binondo, 26 July, 1643, in Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, pp. 432-438 and pp. 82-87, p.83.

⁸⁷ Letter from Governor Gonzalo Portillo to Governor-General Corcuera, Chi-lung, 9 September, 1641, AGI Escribanía 409B, fos. 105-106, fo.106.

⁸⁸ According to some Spanish sources, the Dutch attacked with eight-hundred soldiers; another Spanish source claims that there were 1200. We know, however, from Dutch sources that there were 369 (Brief relation of the loss of the island of Hermosa composed by Fray Juan de los Angeles, O.P., in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 35, pp. 128-162, pp. 140-141; Letter from Gonzalo Portillo to Philip IV concerning the loss of Isla Hermosa to the Dutch, Batavia, 6 December, 1642, AGI Indiferente General, 1874 (unfoliated); General Missive, V. Diemen, Caen, V. d. Lijn, Maetsuycker, Schouten, Sweers, and Witsen, XVIII, 12 December, 1642, in *Generale Missiven*, V. 2, 1639-1655, pp. 171-178, p. 171).

⁸⁹ Brief relation of the loss of the island of Hermosa composed by Fray Juan de los Angeles, O.P., in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 35, pp. 128-162, p. 140. Letter-Relation to the P. Provincial in Manila concerning the loss of Formosa, P. Teodoro Quirós de la Madre de Dios, Binondo, 26 July, 1643, in Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, pp. 432-438 and pp. 82-87, p.84. Brief relation of the loss of the island of Hermosa composed by Fray Juan de los Angeles, O.P., in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 35, pp. 128-162, p. 142.

The Spanish prisoners were taken to the Dutch fortress in Tayouan, where they witnessed a different colonial model.⁹⁰ The Dutch had more men and ships, and they lived better: “As for provisions from Holanda – biscuit, pork, beef, wine, oil, vinegar, etc. – the amount that they have cannot be told or imagined; for of these articles alone they have enough for two or three years. I mention only the Castilian wine, of delicious quality, which they consume more freely than if they were in España; and when they go to draw it ... they rinse the glasses with it, and waste it; and yet this goes on without causing a scarcity of it.”⁹¹ Missionary Quirós was one of the prisoners taken to the Dutch fortress. He, too, was impressed, but what struck him most was precisely *how* the Dutch were making their profits: “Every year the Chinese who live in the vicinity of their fortress pay them fourteen thousand pesos, four thousand of which come from hunting licenses, and ten thousand from fishing.... They also glean from the island ten thousand deer skins per year, which are gold in Japan.”⁹² The Dutch had hit upon a way to raise revenues from Taiwan’s lands: build a Chinese colony under the rule of the Dutch East India Company.

Spain could have done the same in the north. Indeed, some Spaniards had even proposed the idea. In 1633, missionary Jacinto Esquivel suggested that Chinese or Japanese farmers be invited to Formosa to develop the rich lands of the Tanshui River. The aborigines themselves, he observed, were not good at farming and “plant only the amount they need to eat and there are

⁹⁰ See, for example, the testimony that soldiers who served in Formosa gave in the Corcuera case, AGI, Escribanía 409B, fos. 159-167.

⁹¹ Brief relation of the loss of the island of Hermosa composed by Fray Juan de los Angeles, O.P., in Blair and Robertson, *Philippine Islands*, V. 35, pp. 128-162, p. 154.

⁹² Letter-Relation to the P. Provincial in Manila concerning the loss of Formosa, P. Teodoro Quiros de la Madre de Dios, Binondo, 26 July, 1643, in Alvarez, *Formosa*, V. 2, pp. 432-438 and pp. 82-87, p. 434.

none who sell rice in quantities, only here and there a little bit [*chicubitillo*].”⁹³ Chinese, however, were excellent agriculturists and could fill the area around Tanshui with fields of rice and wheat. Esquivel probably knew from his Chinese contacts in Chilung that plenty of poor Chinese lived just across the Taiwan Strait and would have been delighted to come, given proper encouragement. Unfortunately for the Spanish, his advice was not followed. It was left to the Dutch to undertake a bold colonial experiment: a Chinese colony under European rule.

The Company’s Chinese Colony: The Rise and Fall of Dutch Taiwan

When the Dutch established their colony in 1624, they intended it to be an entrepôt like Macao, a port from which to buy Chinese silk and exchange it for Japanese silver. They chose the Bay of Tayouan partly because Chinese and Japanese traders already used it as a trading base. Yet the Dutch soon realized that the lands near the bay could make rich farmlands and that the multitudes of deer could yield hides and venison worth a fortune in Japan and China. The problem was labor. By Dutch standards, the aborigines were inefficient agriculturists: they produced small yields and were generally not interested in selling surpluses.⁹⁴ Some Dutchmen proposed importing farmers from Europe, but the directors of the Dutch East India Company demurred because of the cost. Instead, they decided to encourage Chinese immigration. They developed a set of incentives: free land, temporary freedom from taxes, guaranteed prices paid for first harvests, and even the loan of oxen and farm implements. The results were striking. Thousands of immigrants crossed to Taiwan and established rice and sugar plantations. Establishing the Chinese colony was not easy.

⁹³ Memorial of things concerning the state of the Isla Hermosa, by the Dominican Father Jacinto Esquivel, August, 1633, APSR (UST), Libros, Tomo 49, fos. 306-316v, fo. 311.

⁹⁴ Some villages south of the Bay of Tayouan appear to have produced some rice for export, a topic for further research.

The Dutch encountered grave setbacks: aborigines attacked immigrants; Japanese traders disputed Dutch sovereignty; and Chinese pirates and smugglers undermined Dutch authority. But because their East Asian competitors lacked state support the Dutch were free to focus on the main obstacle to colonization: the aborigines. The company made a sustained military investment and ultimately established dominance, after which Chinese immigration took off.

It is difficult to know how many Chinese lived near the Bay of Tayouan when the Dutch arrived.⁹⁵ In 1623 a Dutch observer reported that the Chinese themselves reckoned their number at around 1500, a figure with which most present-day scholars concur (many of these were sojourners rather than permanent residents).⁹⁶ Dutch and Portuguese sources refer to two Chinese villages near the Bay of Tayouan in the early seventeenth century.⁹⁷ Other Chinese visitors lodged with aborigines. In 1623, for example, a Dutch visitor to one of the most accessible Formosan villages wrote: “There is scarcely a house in this village ... that does not have one, two, three, or even five or six Chinese living there.”⁹⁸ The Chinese in this village spoke the aboriginal language, but many aboriginal inhabitants also spoke Chinese. Farther from the coast Chinese influence

⁹⁵ Kuo Ting-yee argues that the Chinese population was already around 20,000 when the Dutch arrived, and changed little under Dutch rule, an assertion accepted by other historians with a nationalist bent. See Ting-yee Kuo, “The Early States of Sinicization of Taiwan, 230–1683,” in *Taiwan in Modern Times*, ed. Paul K.T. Sih, Asia in the Modern World Series, No. 13 (Saint John’s University Press, 1973), 21–29; Paul K.T. Sih, “Introduction,” in *Taiwan in Modern Times*, vii–xix; and Su Bing, *Taiwan’s 400 Year History: The Origins and Continuing Development of the Taiwanese Society and People* (Taiwanese Cultural Grass Roots Association, 1986). This estimate is extremely inflated. Shepherd, who has sifted much more carefully through the evidence, comes up with a far lower estimate, around 1500 or 2000 (Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy*).

⁹⁶ Blussé, “Protestant Missionaries,” p. 77.

⁹⁷ Salvador Diaz, “Relação da fortaleza poder e trato com os Chinas, que os Olandeses tem na Ilha Formosa dada por Salvador Diaz, natural de Macao, que la esteve cativo e fugio em hua soma em Abril do Anno de 1626,” Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS 3015, fos 55–62v, fo. 56v.

⁹⁸ *Batavia Dagregisters, 1624–1629*, pp. 23–24 (16 February, 1624). The village was called Soulang (probably today’s Chiali, not far from Tainan City).

decreased, although small groups of Chinese traders and fishers sometimes found their way far inland. Most were likely temporary residents who came to catch fish or trade with the aborigines.⁹⁹

Shortly after the Dutch arrived, they established a small farm to grow fruits and vegetables for subsistence.¹⁰⁰ The fertility of the soils sparked dreams about Taiwan as an agricultural colony.¹⁰¹ Company employees therefore began encouraging Chinese colonists to take up residence in a town called Saccam, on the mainland side of the bay, but the poor town was beset with difficulties. In 1626 it caught fire, and not long thereafter, Dutch officials wrote: “The town ... is, God help us, in a sober state. The Chinese have all fled, great sickness and death reign there so much that of all the company employees who have been there ... not one has remained healthy.”¹⁰² When a party of 130 Dutchmen chopped wood near the town, half contracted heavy fevers. Yet fire and fever were the least of the obstacles to colonization.

Hans Putmans, governor of Taiwan from 1629 to 1636, named two obstacles to Chinese colonization.¹⁰³ The first was lack of women, which he suggested could be resolved by sending Javanese female slaves to Taiwan to sell to Chinese, for “as nature teaches, when they have

⁹⁹ On pre-1624 Chinese crops, see the Letter from Pieter Jansz. Muijser to Pieter de Carpentier, 4 November, 1624, VOC 1083: 508. On the lack of development of Chinese agriculture, see the careful arguments of John Robert Shepherd *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier 1600–1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 85.

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Governor Martinus Sonck, to Governor-General Pieter de Carpentier, 12 December, 1624, VOC 1083: 49-54.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, letter from Governor-General Pieter de Carpentier to Governor Martinus Sonck, 13 May, 1625, VOC 67-75, fos. 72-73.

¹⁰² Letter from Lieutenant Governor Gerrit de Witt to Batavia, 15 November, 1626, VOC 1090: 196-206, fo. 203.

¹⁰³ Instructions from Coen to Putmans, 24 April, 1629, VOC 1097: 146-154.

children by them they will be moved to settle down and make Tayouan their permanent home.”¹⁰⁴

The second obstacle was far more important: aboriginal violence. In 1629, inhabitants of two aboriginal villages destroyed the company’s farms and chased away inhabitants of Provintia. Putmans argued that unless the company had military authority over the aborigines, Chinese would not come to Formosa. His superiors, however, decided to wait until the colony proved its value as an entrepôt before investing significantly in Taiwan.

Nonetheless, Putmans and his staff did what they could to foster Chinese immigration to prove the value of Taiwan. They encouraged Chinese to plant sugarcane near Saccam, “providing them, to this end, small sums of money and company cattle to plow the land.”¹⁰⁵ The first results came in 1634: “The sugar here will be just as white as that of China, and perhaps better.”¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Putmans wrote, “through the copious immigration of Chinese this place can in a few years be made into a small breadbox [*spijskamer*] for the company’s holdings in all the Indies.”¹⁰⁷ He continued urging his superiors to send soldiers to protect Chinese farmers, especially from the inhabitants of a troublesome village called Mattau.¹⁰⁸ In 1635, he wrote, “if it should happen (which we fear, since there have already seen incidents ... in which they have cut and stolen

¹⁰⁴ Letter from Governor Hans Putmans to the Kamer Amsterdam, 15 September, 1629, VOC 1098: 33-38, fo. 38.

¹⁰⁵ Letter from Governor Hans Putmans to Governor-General at Batavia, 20 February, 1635, VOC 1116: 311-323: 319v. It is not clear when exactly this policy began, but a letter of 1634 refers to a trial harvest of the previous year, thus likely 1633, meaning that the policy was likely begun in late 1632. Letter from Governor Hans Putmans to Heren 17 in Amsterdam, 28 October, 1634, VOC 1114: 1-14: 11v.

¹⁰⁶ Letter from Governor Hans Putmans to Kamer Amsterdam, 28 October, 1634, VOC 1114: 1-14: 11v.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Governor Hans Putmans to Governor-General at Batavia, 20 February, 1635, VOC 1116: 311-323: 321.

¹⁰⁸ Mattau is probably present-day Matou, in Tainan county.

sugarcane and harassed Chinese) that these Mattauwers become jealous and set the fields on fire, these poor [Chinese] would be greatly hurt and would become so afraid that they would not dare to try planting anything again in the future.”¹⁰⁹ It was vital, he concluded, that the company’s authority in the lands around the Bay of Tayouan be strengthened.

In 1635, his superiors finally sent a large contingent of troops to Taiwan. With them came a letter, which stated explicitly that they were to be used to protect Chinese agriculture:

We believe that it is a necessary and useful matter to attract many poor Chinese and foster their agriculture, which should be done the sooner the better, and we have therefore resolved to send you the four hundred men you sought, so that ... this can be undertaken with full liberty.¹¹⁰

In the winter of 1635-1636, Putmans led a grand expedition against Mattau, the most powerful village near the Bay of Tayouan. It was spectacularly successful and set off what might be called a diplomacy race. In the warlike world of Austronesian Taiwan, a powerful ally was a valuable asset, and a power that was not an ally was a powerful threat. Dozens of aboriginal villages asked to join the newcomers whose loud guns had routed mighty Mattau. Thus the company established a *pax hollandica* in southwestern Taiwan.¹¹¹

Thereafter Dutch officials redoubled their efforts to establish a Chinese colony. In 1636 they resolved to put up signs “calling all Chinese who are so inclined to come to us here from China and settle to plant rice, with the promise that they will pay no tolls or residence taxes for

¹⁰⁹ Letter from Governor Hans Putmans to Batavia, 20 February, 1635, VOC 1116: 311-323: 320.

¹¹⁰ Letter from Governor General Hendrik Brouwer to Governor Hans Putmans, 3 June, 1635, VOC 857: 425-446, fo. 433. The troops were sent on 26 July, 1635. See Letter from Governor General Hendrik Brouwer to Governor Hans Putmans, 26 July, 1635, VOC 857: 462-465.

¹¹¹ For a more detailed look at the conquest of Mattau in the context of aboriginal geopolitics, see Tonio Andrade, “Geopolitics and Diplomacy in the Formosan Plains, 1623-1636,” In 平埔族群與臺灣歷史文化論文集 *Pingpuzu qun yu Taiwan lishi wenhua lunwenji*, edited by Pan Inghai and Chan Su-chuan, Academia Sinica Press, 2001.

the first four years and, in addition, that they will be paid a guaranteed price of 40 pieces of eight for every *last* (1200 kg) of rice produced.”¹¹² This four-year grace period would apply to other products as well: sugar, hemp, cotton, ginger, indigo, and Chinese radish. The governor believed that colonists would stay even after the grace period had passed, since “a Chinese who senses profits will not leave.”¹¹³ Encouraged by these policies, Chinese entrepreneurs built houses and farms near the Bay of Tayouan and imported laborers from Fujian province.

Agriculture on Taiwan required large investments. One Chinese entrepreneur complained about his outlays to establish a sugar plantation: he had invested 800 pieces of eight to prepare the land, buy oxen and buffaloes for the plows, build houses to bleach the sugar, and obtain mills, pans, and pots, and so far he had made no money. Putmans wrote that if the task was “so difficult for this man, who has resources enough, [consider] how difficult it must be for those poor farmers just arrived from China, who have little in the world.”¹¹⁴ Yet thanks to Dutch subventions and Chinese capital, sugar plantations were firmly established by the mid 1640s, sometimes producing more than 10,000 piculs (600,000 kg) a year.¹¹⁵ Rice production, too, expanded, and by the early 1640s, Chinese settlers were producing both rice and sugar for export. They also tried planting other crops, such as ginger, indigo, tobacco, Chinese radish, and silk, but with less success. Still, profits from rice and sugar were enough to drive further growth, and the Chinese colony expanded rapidly. The company had started a chain reaction. In the absence of aboriginal

¹¹² Letter from Governor Johan van der Burch to Batavia, 5 October, 1636, VOC 1120: 288-323: 307. A *last* was a unit of measurement used for rice equivalent to 20 piculs (or around 1250 kilograms).

¹¹³ Letter from Governor Johan van der Burch to Batavia, 5 October, 1636, VOC 1120: 288-323: 308v.

¹¹⁴ Letter from Governor Hans Putmans to Batavia, 7 October, 1636, VOC 1120: 252-282: 264.

¹¹⁵ See for example Letter from Governor General Cornelis van der Lijn to Governor François Caron, 19 June, 1645, VOC 869: 273-288, fo. 280 and Letter from Governor General Cornelis van der Lijn to Governor François Caron, 18 June, 1646, VOC 870: 179-191, fo. 182.

violence, more and more Chinese colonists exploited Taiwan's lands. Agriculture, which required large investments of time and money, could only be established in areas the company controlled firmly. It was a different matter with the other major source of company revenue on Taiwan: deer hunting.

Long before the Dutch arrived, Chinese *coureurs de bois* traded with aborigines for deer products. They arrived each year in November and December aboard fishing junks and proceeded to aboriginal villages to trade salt, iron implements, textiles, and pots and pans for deer hides and venison. They sold their deerskins to Japanese traders. When the Dutch arrived, they tried taxing and regulating this lucrative trade, but Japanese traders resisted. Frictions increased to such a pitch that Dutch trading privileges in Japan were revoked in 1629. Since the primary purpose of the Taiwan colony in its early years was the Sino-Japanese silk-for-silver trade, the revocation of trade privileges in Japan was a setback for the company. Fortunately for the Dutch, the shogun reinstated their trade privileges in 1633. In 1635, when the shogun forbade his subjects to trade abroad, the Dutch were free to focus on the second hindrance: Chinese smugglers. Extirpating Chinese smugglers from their aboriginal partners was a long and difficult task. The Dutch prevailed only after sustained military pressure and draconian policies that exiled Chinese sojourners from aboriginal villages. By the 1640s the Dutch had gained control over large parts of Taiwan. And, unlike the Spanish, they were making profits.

All these profits came from Chinese colonists. The Dutch drew revenues from the following sources. First were goods bought in Taiwan and sold abroad. The company reserved the right to purchase all deerskins and most sugar produced in Taiwan. Second, once the growth of the Chinese colony had become self-sustaining, the company started levying taxes: on rice

harvests, slaughterhouses, weigh masters, venison, etc. Each year, the right to collect such taxes was sold annually to the highest bidders, most of whom were Chinese. Third, the company sold licenses to Chinese colonists: deer hunting licenses, fishing passes, residency permits, and, most important of all, licenses that guaranteed trade monopolies over aboriginal villages. Disregarding the silk-for-silver trade, company revenues came primarily from Chinese colonists. “The Chinese,” wrote one Dutch governor, “are the only bees on Formosa that give honey.”¹¹⁶

Yet the company’s reliance on Chinese colonists was risky. At first, Chinese farmers needed the company to protect them from aborigines. But as the colony matured, and especially as taxes and fees increased in the 1640s and 1650s, the interests of the Chinese colonists began to diverge from the company’s interests. In 1652 Chinese peasants revolted. Their major complaint was the residency tax, which the Dutch had begun collecting in the 1630s and enforced with increasingly harsh methods. The rebels, 5000-strong, hoped superior numbers would allow them to defeat the red-haired barbarians with homemade weapons, but the Dutch had close relations with richer, commerce-oriented Chinese who lived near their fortress, one of whom tipped off the governor. Dutch troops along with thousands of aborigines hunted the rebels down, killing thousands. Some captured rebels revealed that they had expected help from a powerful source: Zheng Chenggong.

Known in western sources as Koxinga, Zheng led a powerful trading network that extended from Japan to Malacca. In 1644, when Manchu armies entered the Ming capital, China erupted into civil war. Zheng declared his loyalty to the Ming and became a champion of the Ming loyalists. He established a Ming state in Fujian province, which attracted thousands of other

¹¹⁶ Letter from Governor Nicolaes Verburch to Batavia, VOC 1172: 466-491, fo. 472 (cited in *Zeelandia Dagregisters*, V. 3, pp. 96-97).

loyalists. From his capital of Xiamen City, which in 1654 he renamed the Ming Memorial Prefecture (思明州), he began preparing for a glorious assault to capture Nanjing and restore the Ming dynasty. He fought hard but unsuccessfully. By the late 1650s, he realized that he must either surrender or relocate to a base outside of China. He chose the latter. In 1661 his armies swept into Taiwan, easily defeating Dutch forces. In early 1662, the Dutch surrendered their main fortress on Taiwan. The “only bees on Formosa” had gained a Chinese master.

Conclusions

Why did the Dutch East India Company’s second-most profitable colony fall to a Chinese invasion? An examination of the military campaign shows that Zheng’s army swept through the countryside, easily overcoming Dutch forces. The latter were perhaps overconfident, expecting a foe like the Chinese peasant forces they had fought ten years earlier. One Dutch commander roused his troops with the following sentence: “The Chinese cannot bear the smell of powder and the roar of muskets and will flee at the first charge, as soon as a few of them have been shot down.”¹¹⁷ Chinese troops withstood Dutch musketry salvos, and it was the Dutch who broke formation and ran. Zheng had more difficulty with the Dutch fortress, which held out for nine months, but ultimately, it, too, fell.¹¹⁸ As Geoffrey Parker and others have argued, European

¹¹⁷ Frederic Coyett, *'t Verwaerloosde Formosa, of waerachtig verhael, hoedanigh door verwaerloosinge der Nederlanders in Oost-Indien, het Eylant Formosa, van den Chinesen Mandorijn, ende Zeeroover Coxinja, overrompelt, vermeestert, ende ontweldight is geworden* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1991 [1675]). See also the English translation by Inez de Beauclair, *Neglected Formosa: A Translation from the Dutch of Frederic Coyett's 't Verwaerloosde Formosa* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, Inc., 1975).

¹¹⁸ The fact that the artillery fortress was the only real obstacle to Zheng’s invasion lends support to Geoffrey Parker’s arguments. See Geoffrey Parker, “The Artillery Fortress as an Engine of European Overseas Expansion, 1480-1750,” in *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective*

military technology and tactics conferred a smaller advantage in East Asia than elsewhere around the world. Japanese armies were as effective with muskets as European armies, and European cannons were almost useless against Chinese fortifications.¹¹⁹ European ships were deadly against most Chinese and Japanese vessels, but when necessary Chinese shipwrights built powerful war junks with two decks of cannons, capable of defeating European ships.¹²⁰ Thus, military prowess cannot in itself explain European expansion.

The case of Taiwan supports the “statist” model for European Expansion, for it is clear that a key factor in the rise and fall of European Taiwan was state support.¹²¹ Both China and Japan could have established colonies in Taiwan or elsewhere in East and Southeast Asia. The floating cities of Chinese admiral Zheng He had projected Chinese power across the Indian Ocean in the early 1400s, and Japan’s great unifier Toyotomi Hideyoshi might easily have extended the Japanese Empire to Taiwan and the Philippines if he had not made the mistake of invading Korea first (and thus confronting troops sent by Korea’s ally, China). Instead, however, Ming China and

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹¹⁹ Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Geoffrey Parker, “The Artillery Fortress.” See also Matthew Keith, “The Logistics of Power: Tokugawa Response to the Shimabara Rebellion and Power Projection in Seventeenth-Century Japan” (Ph.D. Dissertation, The Ohio State University, in progress [2004]).

¹²⁰ See Letter from Governor Hans Putmans to Governor-General Hendrik Brouwer, 30 September, 1633, VOC 1113: 776-787, fo. 777. The letter describes an armada of large war junks, each armed with between sixteen and thirty-six large cannons. See also *Zeelandia Dagregisters*, V. I, F: 16.

¹²¹ Compare my conclusions here to those of P.H.H. Vries, “Governing Growth: A Comparative Analysis of the Role of the State in the Rise of the West,” *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (2002): 67-138. Vries is more interested in the economic “rise of the west” than in the question of European expansion, and, as he himself makes clear, one must be careful to distinguish between colonialism and economic growth. The case of Taiwan helps to show that early-modern European colonialism rested on a foundation of state support. Without it, European traders would not have established colonies in East Asia. Moreover, if East Asian states had wished to engage in overseas colonialism, Europeans would have had difficulty competing.

Tokugawa Japan turned away from overseas adventures, actively discouraging their citizens from sailing abroad. The Spanish and the Dutch thus benefited from a power vacuum. Lacking state support, Chinese and Japanese private traders could do little to resist Europeans' dominance in Taiwan. On the contrary, most cooperated.

The Spanish and Dutch also benefited from political fragmentation among Taiwan's aborigines, who offered no concerted opposition. Indeed, aborigines frequently asked the newcomers to intercede against rivals. Taiwan was thus similar to many other colonies, in which European dominance was established by means of local alliances.¹²² In Taiwan the process was facilitated by the aborigines' remarkably martial culture. The Spanish and the Dutch were seen as valuable allies and were, in a manner of speaking, invited into expansion on Taiwan. Moreover, both Spanish and Dutch officials were savvy about capitalizing on their military prestige. In the Spanish colony, for example, troops took part in aboriginal religious processions, strengthening Spanish authority. On one occasion, Spanish soldiers performed a sword dance and lit fireworks as a statue of the Virgin Mary was paraded through an aboriginal village. The aborigines reciprocated with a martial display of their own, dancing in a way "which is very disgraceful to

¹²² According to Luc Nagtegaal, so great was division among the Javanese that the company was "inexorably sucked into Javanese affairs almost against its better judgment, egged on ... by the Javanese themselves." See Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger: The Dutch East Indies Company and the Northeast Coast of Java, 1680-1743*, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1996). Another Dutch scholar argues that the company indeed had little to offer Southeast Asians aside from European military power: "Political support, based ultimately on military power, was what the VOC had to sell local rulers in exchange for trading privileges." See Reinout Vos, *Gentle Janus, Merchant Prince: The VOC and the Tighrope of Diplomacy in the Malay World, 1740-1800*, trans. Beverley Jackson, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1993). For an examination of diplomacy and warfare in the Spanish conquests in America, see Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988). See also the flawed but fascinating study by Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper Collins, 1984)

our eyes.... Each time they turn round, in twos, they take a swallow of a very bad wine they have, and, sustained by this drink, continue dancing for six or eight hours, and even sometimes entire days without stopping.”¹²³ Such dances were often preludes to headhunting expeditions, and, indeed, on this occasion the dancers grew bold and defiant, denigrating other villages and saying “that none was like theirs, which had Spaniards, priests, and a church, whereas the others did not.”¹²⁴ The Dutch, too, held grand ceremonies to cement their rule over the aborigines. In annual gatherings called *landdagen*, aboriginal delegates gathered before the Dutch governor, who was flanked by an honor guard and saluted with cannon blasts and musketry salvos. The governor used these ceremonies to choose local headmen and explain company policies. They were an effective means of converting military prestige into political authority.¹²⁵

Military prestige also helped Europeans spread Christianity. The Protestant mission in Dutch Taiwan is well understood thanks to the work of Leonard Blussé, which shows how missionaries promoted military expansion.¹²⁶ To some extent his conclusions are applicable to Spanish missionaries, who owed many of their successes to European war craft. Yet the Dominican missionaries in Taiwan had a more ambivalent attitude toward military force than their Protestant counterparts in southern Taiwan. Partly this was due to their order’s history as

¹²³ Aduarte, *Historia*, V. 2, Ch. 35, p. 309.

¹²⁴ Aduarte, *Historia*, V. 2, Ch. 35, p. 309.

¹²⁵ See Tonio Andrade, “Political Spectacle and Colonial Rule: The *Landdag* on Dutch Taiwan, 1629–1648,” *Itinerario*, 21 (3) [1997]: 57-93.

¹²⁶ Leonard Blussé, “Dutch Protestant Missionaries as Protagonists of the Territorial Expansion of the VOC on Formosa,” In *Conversion, Competition and Conflict: Essays on the Role of Religion in Asia*, edited by Dick Kooiman, Otto van den Muizenberg and Peter van der Veer (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1984), 155–184. See also Leonard Blussé, “Retribution and Remorse: The Interaction between the Administration and the Protestant Mission in Early Colonial Formosa,” In *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, edited by Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 153–182.

advocates for *indios* in the New World, but partly it was due to their autonomy. As members of independent orders, they were able to pursue their spiritual goals freely, and they frequently remonstrated with colonial officials on behalf of their converts. In contrast, Dutch missionaries were employees of the Dutch East India Company, which had little compunction about using them as colonial agents. Their loyalties were divided between profits and proselytization.

But the most important difference between the Dutch and Spanish colonies on Taiwan was Chinese immigration. The Dutch colony prospered because the Dutch fostered a Chinese colony on Taiwan. It was a lucrative policy but a risky one, for the colonists' interests were not always aligned with the company's. The Dutch weathered the peasant revolt of 1652, but Zheng Chenggong changed the balance of power. His Ming loyalist state was an oddity in modern Chinese history, a Chinese government interested in maritime expansion. It erased the major advantage Europeans had in the Far East: the willingness of their states to sponsor overseas colonialism. Once Zheng decided to invade, the European adventure on Taiwan came to an end. It is interesting to note that Zheng Chenggong also considered attacking the Philippines. In 1662 he sent an ultimatum to Manila: if the Spanish did not submit and pay him tribute, their colony would be destroyed and replaced by one of his own. The Spanish governor general replied with a defiant letter, refusing to submit. We will probably never know how Koxinga would have responded, for he died on 23 June, 1662. If he had not, or if his son and successor had followed up on his threats, the thousands of Chinese settlers who lived near Manila might have joined his soldiers to help take the city, thereby changing the course of modern Asian history as we know it.