

The Japanizing of a Chinese Hero **The role of Koxinga in the Japanese colonial discourse²¹⁰**

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„[In each case] nationalists rediscovered and often exaggerated the heroism of past ages, the glories of ancestral civilizations (often not ‘their own’) and the exploits of their great national heroes, even when those heroes belonged more to the realm of legend than history and, if they lived, knew nothing of the nation which was so busy reclaiming them from obscurity.“

Anthony Smith²¹¹

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will examine the process of Japanizing (*nihonka*) by looking at a historic figure, who the Chinese, as well as the Japanese, have claimed to be a national hero. Zheng Chenggong (1624-1662) – today still known as Koxinga or Kokusenya [国姓爺] – was a famous general of the Ming dynasty, born in Japan to a Chinese father and a Japanese mother. He played a major role among Chinese revolutionaries in the beginning of the 20th century, serving, namely, as a national hero. According to contemporary revolutionaries, every Chinese should imitate Zheng Chenggong in order to establish a new national spirit for fighting against imperialism and suppression. In various journals and books published by Chinese shortly after 1900, Zheng has been presented as a leading officer fighting against the encroaching barbarian

²¹⁰ I am greatly indebted to Suzuki Mamiko for her valuable suggestions and helpful comments. Of course, I myself am responsible for all remaining errors. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the Japan Foundation who financed my research stay at the University of Tôkyô.

²¹¹ Smith: 128, in: Smith, Anthony David: *National Identity* (1991). Reno/Nevada: University of Nevada Press.

Manchus, for the last emperor of Ming dynasty.²¹² Though the Manchus had already established their own dynasty in 1644, Zheng continued his fight against them until his death in 1662. When the Manchurian troops were making advances to the south in the 1650's and after having defeated Zheng in the battle of Nanjing in 1661, Zheng had no choice but escape to the island of Taiwan. The southern part of Taiwan was occupied by the Dutch at that time, however, so Zheng was forced to drive those "imperialistic forces" away. He successfully managed to do so, and therefore is now revered as a national hero in the People's Republic of China.²¹³

Yet, this historical figure was and is not only famous in China, but also appears in the histories of Japan. Zheng Chenggong became well known in 1715, when the famous dramatist Chikamatsu Monzaemon [近松門左衛門] (1653-1725) performed a puppet play called "The battles of Coxinga" (the original title is "*Kokusenya kassen*" [国性爺合戦]).²¹⁴ In this play, Zheng Chenggong is vividly presented as a Japanese hero fighting against the barbarian Manchus. Though the drama itself is a literary piece that does not present historical truth, it was decisively influential during the following centuries, as the most well-read and well-loved piece written by Chikamatsu.

²¹² In this respect, Zheng became a key element in the formation of Chinese racism at that time which was directed against the ruling Manchus and was – interestingly enough – formulated in journals like the *Minbao* [民報], *Jiangsu* [江蘇] and *Zhejiangchao* [浙江潮] that were published by revolutionary Chinese students during their stay in Japan (1903-1908). For the role of Koxinga in modern China, see: Spakowski, Nicola (1997): *Helden, Monumente, Traditionen – Nationale Identität und historisches Bewußtsein in der VR China* [Diss]. Hamburg: Lit-Verlag.

²¹³ Koxinga is also referred to as a national hero by the Taiwanese, who claim him to have opened and civilized their island. By doing so, they want to emphasize their independence from Mainland China.

²¹⁴ The second character of *Kokusenya kassen* is Chikamatsu's mistake for *sei* or *xing* [姓]. The pronunciation is also unusual, as it would normally read "*Kokuseiya*". The pronunciation of "*sen*" was maybe an attempt to approximate the southern Chinese one which is "*seng*". The drama has been translated into English by Donald Keene in 1951.

The popularity of Koxinga rose again after the Sino-Japanese war (1894-95) and during the Japanese colonialization of Taiwan, when he was presented unquestionably as a Japanese hero. The question we might ask is, how the historical person of Zheng Chenggong, who fought for the Ming dynasty, was moulded into a Japanese national hero: which techniques were used to make a Chinese pirate – as he was also seen in history works issued in the second half of the 17th century by the Qing-Dynasty – appear as a hero worshipped by the Japanese? How was he presented in Japanese publications, literary or not, during the 19th and 20th century, when the tensions between China and Japan had been rising? Finally, what were the consequences of such a re-interpretation of Zheng Chenggong for Sino-Japanese relations?

2. The formation of national identity – some theoretical remarks

During the 19th and 20th centuries, almost every nation sought for its own national identity. Imperialism and the growth of international trade forced especially non-European nations to give up their self-chosen isolation and figure out a future role in the international community of nations. The national identity becomes relevant when a larger group of people tries to build up a certain community in which members share (or believe to share) a common ancestry and a common culture that shall be kept alive in times of change. In order to enhance the status of the community which was being challenged in the social darwinistic fight for survival, the architects of national identity often referred to their own history to find some symbols which could help orient newly emerging nation and call each individual to join. In other words, in order to establish a national consciousness, the architects of national identity consciously or unconsciously used well-known historical figures who fought for their country in the past.²¹⁵ As

²¹⁵ Those historical figures have in the nationalist rhetoric often been mistaken for national heroes, but it has to be questioned what the real motivation of those “heroes” was. The fight for one’s country can also be interpreted as an act of loyalty to the

Thomas Carlyle has already put forward in his 1891 written book “On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History”, heroes are revered like gods who are able to do the impossible and who personify certain positive key values.

The reverence for heroes may also serve as the creation of a kind of *lieux de mémoire*, or place of memory. Following Pierre Nora’s, a *lieux de mémoire* can be something like a monument, a poem, a battle or anything that embodies the identity of a nation, or in our case, a hero. Normally, a hero is tied to the history of a his own nation, especially when speaking of a national hero. But in a few cases – as will also be shown in this article – a hero of one nation may also be used by *another* nation so as to legitimize *their* political claims. In order to do so, such a hero must, of course, be naturalized for and widely accepted by the nation to which he originally did not belong.

In this paper, I would like to argue that the person of Koxinga – a person of mixed ethnicity – helped define what role Japan should play in Asia in the 19th and 20th centuries. Koxinga’s acceptance into Japanese national history occurred, I argue, through the process of Japanizing, which I will elaborate on shortly. I then ask how and in what ways the loyal fighter for the restoration of the Ming could become a Japanese hero.

3. The process of Japanizing and its characteristics

Japanizing is a process through which something non-Japanese is turned into something that comes to be seen as of pure Japanese origin. Basically, the process of Japanizing consists of three phases. First, something new or foreign is absorbed. Foreign things, whether foreign thinking or foreign products are then in a second step naturalized by transforming them and adopting them to the Japanese context. Yet, as not everything is considered to fit Japan, there takes some selection place, which in many cases is arbitrary. Different elements are differently emphasized. Thus in a third step,

emperor, or stimulated by monetary or other rewards, and not evidently result from nationalist fervour.

combined with Japanese elements, such elements are formed into an indigenous kind of Japanese thinking. Within this kind of thinking, the originally foreign element is then finally incorporated and, in most cases, used for Japan's own purposes. This is especially the case with the absorption of foreign (political, religious etc.) ideas. The ways such things happen, are manifold. Syncretism for example, such as the syncretism of Buddhism and the kami cult, the so-called *shin butsu shûgô* [神仏習合], is not peculiar to Japan. When cultures with differing traditions encounter each other, they influence each other, resulting in a kind of assimilation. In the case of Koxinga, such a syncretism took place, by overemphasizing or adding characteristics to the personality of Koxinga now considered to be purely Japanese.

One of the general assumptions resulting from the many stereotyped views about the so-called phenomena "Japanizing" is that from the viewpoint of the dominant culture, Japanizing appears to be one-directional. Yet, without a capable receiver, the cultural flow ends in a kind of overflow without any concrete results. Thus, the receiver – mostly considered to be the weaker culture – is often said to be assimilated to the former and losing its proper tradition. In fact, Japanizing can be characterized as a process of positive activities aiming to absorb a superior foreign culture, yet this requires tremendous effort, physically, mentally and intellectually. In this context, I would like to mention two particular traits of Japanizing. First, confronted directly with elements of a foreign culture, a process of Japanizing can take place *before* the elements are generally introduced in Japan (as with the case of Chikamatsu); namely in the very act of the careful and purposeful selection of these elements, even when they have been taken out of context. It does not matter whether or not they are correctly introduced and properly established in Japan. Misunderstood messages do make sense under different circumstances. Second, these misunderstandings help the receiving country to establish its own discourse, presenting a very distinct image of the now absorbed foreign component. Its "own"

discourse then serves “own” political aims, may they be legitimate or not. What is interesting is if we link the categories designation what is one’s “own” and what is “foreign” with the idea of the nation in the context of national identity, for more or less obvious contradictions arise to challenge the historian.

In the following, I will first look at the person of Koxinga himself, then, secondly, analyze how he is presented in the drama *Kokusenya kassen*. I ask whether there are any misrepresentations or additional information which does not correspond to the historic person. In other words, are there parts of the person Koxinga and his historic achievements, which were transformed, added or rejected? Finally, I examine what has happened to the person of Koxinga in the Japanese discourse since the end of the 19th century, and whether this has influenced the Sino-Japanese relations, especially with regard to the self-presentation of Japan in a broader Asian context.

4. Koxinga as a historic figure

Zheng Chenggong was a general and military leader of the Southern Ming dynasty. He was born in 1624 in Hirado, near Nagasaki, Japan [長崎平千里]. His father was the well-known pirate and maritime trader Zheng Zhilong [鄭之龍], and his mother was Tagawa Shichizaemon [田川七左衛門], considered to be a daughter of a minor noble, or a courtesan. Historic sources are quite contradictory regarding her background, but it is certain that she was Japanese.²¹⁶ She gave birth to Zheng Chenggong while picking seashells on the beach of Hirado.²¹⁷ The stone beside which she gave birth still exists today as the “Zheng Chenggong Child Birth Stone Tablet” [鄭成功兒誕石碑], which is 80 cm tall and is submerged underwater during high tides.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ For more details concerning the mother of Koxinga, see Keene: 168 (footnote 7).

Chinese sources admit that she was Japanese, see e.g. Huang Zongxi: 9.

²¹⁷ As Zheng Chenggong was born near a pine tree at the beach of Hirado, his child name was Fukumatsu [福松].

²¹⁸ See the photograph in Ishihara (1956): 8.

Shortly after Chenggong's birth, his father returned to China and left his family in Japan. Although he wished to reunite his family in 1630, his wife was only willing to send their first-born – who had been given the name Fukumatsu [福松] – to Anhai in Fujian-Province in South China. She herself was apparently afraid of the long and risky journey to China and decided to stay in Japan with their second-born son, Shichizaemon. Thus, the seven-year-old Fukumatsu traveled alone to China. There he changed his name to Zheng Sen [鄭森] and at the age of 15 he was given the pen-name Damu [大木] by his teacher Qian Qianyi [錢謙益], a famous scholar at the Imperial Collegiate School in Nanking.²¹⁹ In 1641, Zheng Sen married a woman with the surname Dong [董], and, in 1642, his first son Zheng Jing [鄭經] was born.

When the Manchus attacked the Ming and invaded China in 1644, the men of Zheng Zhilong and Zheng Sen were among the troops fighting for the last emperor of the Ming dynasty, Longwu [隆武]. Rewarding these loyal men, Longwu bestowed the name “Guoxingye” [國姓爺] as a sign of honor to the family of Zheng, which literally means “Lord of the Imperial Surname”, and also gave Zheng Sen the name “Chenggong” meaning “achievement.” In the dialect of Zheng Chenggong spoken in the area of Amoy in South China, “Guoxingye” was pronounced “kok-seng-ya”, and recorded by the Dutch in the Europeanized form as “Cocksingja” in 1653, nine years before Koxinga's death.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Qian Qianyi (1582-1664) was a poet, scholar and official during the Ming and Qing dynasty. After the conquest of China by the Manchus, he is said to have been one of the first to declare his allegiance. Thus, in 1646 he became a senior vice-president of the Boards of Ceremonies [禮部]. Later, he was accused of giving aid to a plot against the new regime and therefore imprisoned in Nanjing, but released after one year.

²²⁰ See the “*Dagh-register gehouden int Casteel Batavia vant passerende daer ter plaetse als over geheel Nederlandts-India*”, (1653), edited by J.A. Van der Chijs, p. 15 (I used the version published 1888 by Batavia Landsdrukkerij). Later follow reports of the Second and Third Dutch Embassies to China who mention “Koxinga” (see the, *Tweede en Derde Gesandtschap na het Keyserryck von Taysing of China*, p. 55), and one year later in 1671, an English geographic work has “Coxinga” (Arnoldus Montanus: *Atlas Chinensis*, tr. John Ogilby, p. 73).

In 1646, the Emperor Longwu decided – despite the contrary advice of Zheng Zhilong – to attack the Manchus. The military superior Manchus defeated Longwu’s army and he was forced to flee to South China where he died soon after. This defeat is often considered the result of Zheng Zhilong’s defection that same year, but this is not clear. It may have also been the case that Zhilong surrendered after the death of the Ming Emperor. Nevertheless, in contrast to his son, Zhilong was attracted by monetary rewards and a high position in the Manchurian government and decided to surrender to the Manchus. In addition, the mother of Zheng Chenggong who had, in the meantime, come to the town of Anhai [安海] (near Amoy in South China) in 1645, became a victim of the war. Japanese sources claim that she preferred death to surrender (true to the Yamato spirit) by committing seppuku and leaping from the city wall.²²¹ An early Chinese source tells that she was violated by Manchurian soldiers and then hanged herself. Koxinga alleged fell into a rage and cut open her abdomen.²²²

After these events, and especially the surrender of his father, Koxinga decided to join forces with another group of Ming loyalists. During the following ten years, these forces won significant victories. The Manchus were trying to ignore the open rebellion led by Koxinga and tried to persuade him to surrender by offering him great rewards and status of nobility. Though Koxinga’s naval and other forces were superior to those of the Manchus, Koxinga was not in a secure position. Four times, in 1648, 1652, 1658 and 1660, he sent embassies to Japan asking for assistance. Despite the isolationist policy of the Shogunate government, he was partly successful in obtaining at least some arms.

The campaign at Nanking in 1659 was the high point of Koxinga’s career as a military leader. Nothing could have stopped his onrushing troops.²²³ Yet, his attack on Nanking was a great failure

²²¹ Nishikawa Joken (1926): 261.

²²² Huang Zongxi: 2.

²²³ See therefore e.g. the account of Huang Zongxi, esp. 17-24, or translated parts thereof

for various reasons (i.e. the superiority of the Manchurian cavalry, Koxinga's contempt for the enemy, etc.), and his troops were utterly defeated. There was no way for him but to flee. He retreated to Amoy by boat and was then able to save a major part of his troops. The Manchus wanted to complete their victory by defeating Koxinga at sea, but while they mustered a large fleet of about 800 vessels, they failed because of their lack of naval experience.

After the last emperor of the Southern Ming dynasty, Yongle [永樂], had been captured and murdered by Wu Sangui [吳三桂]²²⁴ in Birma in 1661, Koxinga decided to retreat to Taiwan in order to organize new troops. There was now no hope of restoring the Ming on the mainland. His officers warned him not to go to Taiwan because of the Dutch residing there, the bad economic conditions, and the cannibals. Against the advice of his officers, Koxinga set off in 1661, and with the help and strategic information about Dutch defense facilities supplied by He Bin [何斌]²²⁵, the former interpreter for Dutch governor Frederick Coyett, he successfully attacked the smaller of the two Dutch forts, Fort Provintia, in April of that year. The Dutch troops surrendered on May, 2, 1661, to Koxinga's total force of 25.000 men and 500 war ships. The fort of Taoyuan (Fort Zeelandia) on a little island off the coast of Formosa was the next target to be attacked. While the Dutch still hoped to reach an agreement, Koxinga issued an ultimatum, in which he offered them the choice of surrendering, for which they would be permitted to embark their ships with all their possessions, or of facing the consequences. He declared that it was his clear intention to re-take possession of Formosa, which had always been a Chinese possession in order to facilitate his war against the Manchus. Koxinga justified his claim that Formosa should belong

in Keene: 49.

²²⁴ Wu Sangui [吳三桂] (1612-1678) was a Ming Chinese general who opened the gates of the Great Wall of China at Shanhai Pass to let Manchu soldiers into China proper, leading to the ultimate destruction of the Ming and the establishment of the Qing Empire.

²²⁵ Also known as He Tingbin [何廷斌].

to China by the fact that his father already lived there before the arrival of the Dutch.²²⁶ The Dutch chose not to surrender, and thus the fight continued for months.

The final surrender took place on February, 1, 1662, after nine month siege. The Dutch governor, Coyett tried to hold out until reinforcements arrived from Batavia (contrary to those of the troops of Koxinga, their supplies would have lasted for another four or five months), but he was overruled by the Council of the fort, which favoured capitulation. After the retreat of the Dutch, Koxinga renamed the village Saccam (near Fort Provintia) in *Dongdu Mingjing* [東都明京] (“Eastern Capital of the Ming”).

However, Koxinga could not enjoy his success for long. He died at the age of 39 on June, 23, 1662, and his son Zheng Jing succeeded him. His son raised an army against the Manchus in 1674, and in the years 1675-76, he managed to rule in eight prefectures within the provinces of Canton and Fujian in South China. Yet, the Manchus invaded Formosa successfully in 1683, and since then it has belonged to the Chinese empire.

5. The literary reception of Koxinga and his popularity in Edo-Japan

The debut performance of *Kokusenya kassen* written by Chikamatsu Monzaemon took place on the first day of the eleventh moon of 1715. Originally, it was written as a puppet drama, later also adapted for performance by actors. It was kept playing simultaneously at several theatres in each of the chief cities of Japan, including Edo. Over a period of three years, the drama was performed each day for at least 17 months in the Takemoto Theatre [竹本座] in Ôsaka. This was astonishing in so far as Chikamatsu's plays usually ran at that time for one to three months.²²⁷ According Takano, approximately 240,000 persons saw the play during its

²²⁶ Cf. Foccardi: 87.

²²⁷ See here also Ishihara (1956): 86.

first run in Ôsaka. He estimates the population of Ôsaka to be about 300,000.²²⁸

Due to its success, there emerged a real Koxinga-fever in the years after 1715 – plays, novels, poems, sweets, children’s toys and textile patterns appeared with the name “Koxinga”.²²⁹ After a little pause, the drama was shown again at the Takemoto Theatre in the years 1720, 1731 and 1750.²³⁰

There are several reasons for its success. First of all, Chikamatsu presents a very positive image of Japan when constantly referring to the preponderant Japanese spirit. The audience could identify itself with the images of brave fighters and was – at least on a psychological level – willing to support them. Second, Chikamatsu presents a very exotic picture of China which can be found in the characters’ costumes, the language, the sentiments and the actions. The exotic possibilities of Koxinga are exploited to the utmost extent by contrasting strange Chinese things with familiar Japanese ones. One striking example can be found in the second act where Koxinga and his Japanese wife, Komutsu, meet the exotically dressed Chinese princess, while they themselves only wear their simple, Japanese-style fisherfolk clothes. The effect intended by Chikamatsu was intensified by the widely spread interest in foreign things in the early 18th century. Third, Chikamatsu was extraordinarily skilled in using allusions and puns throughout the play. At the same time, he was also able to create a very tense atmosphere throughout the play. Solemn spectacle, low comedy, pathos, wild combat, terrible suspense and final exultation are all treated in a single play, and in combination with sometimes very bloody scenes, this very much resembles an Elizabethan play.²³¹

²²⁸ Takano: 451.

²²⁹ Cf. Kitani Hôgin: 102-103.

²³⁰ See here the entry for *Kokusenya kassen* in the *Nihon Bungaku Daijiten* [日本文学大辞典], Vol. 3, p. 92, published by Fujimura Tsukuru [藤村作] (1949).

²³¹ Cf. Shigemoto: 219 ff., and in Keene: 2-9. The success of this drama can also be explained by the fact that Chikamatsu wrote this drama not for an elitist, but rather for an urban audience which included merchants and clerical workers.

Because of its overwhelming success, Chikamatsu later continued to write other versions of the *Kokusenya kassen*, namely the *Kokusenya gojitsu kassen* [国性爺後日合戦] in 1717 and the *Tôsen banashi ima Kokusenya* [唐船噺今国性爺] in 1722. Though these sequels also presented patriotic topics and exotic motives in abundance, they should become an utter failure, apparently due to their inferior quality of inspiration and writing.²³² Yet, the audience still liked to see exotic pieces, as the many other revivals of *Kokusenya kassen* demonstrate. Their authors wanted to profit from the popularity of Chikamatsu's piece, like e.g. the kabuki version *Kokusenya Takenuki Gorô* (1727) [国性爺竹拔五郎] (also popularly called *Oshimodoshi* [押戻], or „Pushing back“, referring to the hero's energetic behavior in the last act). It was successful because the adaptor, Ichikawa Danjûrô [市川団十郎] was the most famous Kabuki actor at that time. All characters in this version were given Japanese names, and Koxinga was called Soga Gorô [曾我五郎].²³³ One unusual adaption was the Nô drama called *Watônai* [和唐内] written by Hara Kanchiku [原寒竹] in 1756 which was based on the beginning of the second act of the *Kokusenya kassen*.²³⁴ Other works that have used the theme of Koxinga during the 18th century have been the *Keisei Kokusenya* [傾城国性爺] and *Kokusenya gozen gundan* [国性爺御前軍談] written by Kino Kaion [紀海音] (both 1716), the *Kokusenya Meichô Taiheiki* [国性爺明朝太平記] by Kôshima Kiseki [江島其磧] (1717), the *Ima Watônai Tôdobune* [今和唐内唐土船] by Kan

²³² Keene: 7.

²³³ Tsubouchi Shôyô and Tsûnashima Ryôsen: 306.

²³⁴ Cf. Kitani: 19, 105-106. *Watônai* is another name used for Zheng Chenggong. The syllable *wa* stands for Japan, and *tô* for China, sometimes the character 藤 is also used, like in the piece *Watônai no funsen* [和藤内のふん戦] written by Imoto Nôichi [井本農一]. Keene also mentions that *Watônai* can be read *Wakaranai*, meaning “I don't know”, which may be interpreted as a kind of joke.

Rakushi [閑楽子] (1717) as well as the work *Hiragana imakawa jô* [平仮名今川状] (1732) and many others.²³⁵

Ozaki Hotsuki mentions that in total 104 dramas performed during the Edo period, and as the popularity of Koxinga did not decline, there were still 94 other ones performed after the Meiji-Restoration (until the year 1973).²³⁶

We may thus conclude that the figure of Koxinga was (and still is) widely known in Japan. In fact, the drama of Chikamatsu exerted a huge influence on Japanese awareness of this figure, being present in a huge number of books and theater pieces.

6. The Japanizing of Koxinga in the *Kokusenya kassen*

Yet, the literary adaptation of the historic figure Koxinga by Chikamatsu is in some respect quite problematic, because he did not base his drama on Chinese historic sources, but rather preferred Japanese accounts which were of purely literary character. One of the main reasons for this was that he wanted to focus on the relationship between Koxinga and Japan – thus adding some exotic elements – (at the same time enforcing the image of Koxinga as Japanese), and therefore Chinese historic sources did not seem really helpful to him. But this does not mean that Chikamatsu was arbitrarily renouncing Chinese sources. Rather, they may not have been available or readable to him because he may not have been able to read Chinese.²³⁷

²³⁵ There is not enough space here to offer a complete list of all the literary works dealing with Koxinga, as there are too many to be mentioned. A more complete list of works dealing with Koxinga can be found in Nagasaki: 8-30, Chinese sources dealing with Koxinga are listed on the pages 55-84. See also: Ishihara (1942): 240. As a matter of fact, I have also not been able to read each of these works listed there, those of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Nishikawa Joken and Maezono Jinzaemon shall in the following just serve as an example to show how the historic person of Koxinga has been perceived and presented in Japan. For a more comprehensive analysis of course, other works of Edo period should also be taken into account.

²³⁶ For details, see the list of Ozaki Hotsuki [尾崎秀樹], in: Nagasaki: 113ff. Ozaki further adds 53 more dramas more or less related to Koxinga.

²³⁷ Keene admits that he is not sure whether Chikamatsu really had admission to Chinese sources or not (s. Keene: 76). Possible sources may have been the *Cixing shimo* [賜姓

One of his main sources was the *Minshin Tôki* (Report of the battles between the Ming and Qing [明清鬪記]) published by Maezono Jinzaemon [前園仁左衛門] around 1665.²³⁸ For dramaturgical reasons, Chikamatsu dealt in his piece with some events described there, yet without verifying them, so e.g. in act four of his drama the Go-game between two old men on the Mountain of the Nine Immortals and their prophecy that are in no way related to any historic event.²³⁹ We may conclude from this fact that Chikamatsu was rather interested in writing a good drama without sticking to the historic truth. This was also the reason why Chikamatsu did not consider each detail of the – admittedly inaccurate – *Minshin Tôki*, though he knew about them.²⁴⁰

Another important source was the work *Kokusenya tegara nikki* [国姓爺手柄日記], written by the rather unimportant dramatist Nishiki Bunryû [錦文流] around the year 1700. This work has no real connection to the historic events that had really taken place, but was one which was available to Chikamatsu.²⁴¹

As a consequence of the rather arbitrary use of literary accounts as informational sources – combined with the aim of Chikamatsu to present an exotic drama – the *Kokusenya kassen* itself describes only parts of the life of Koxinga, namely the events taking place after his return to China until the battle of Nanking. Koxinga left Japan in the age of seven²⁴², but the age reported in some sources, which Chikamatsu was able to read, differ enormously. For example, Nishikawa Joken [西川如見] (1648-1724) claims in his work *Ka'i tsûshôkô* [華夷通商考] (1710) that Koxinga had been

始末] written Huang Zongxi [黄宗羲] and the biography *Zheng Chenggong zhuan* [鄭成功傳] written by Zheng Juzhong [鄭居仲].

²³⁸ The relevance of this work as a model for Chikamatsu is analyzed in Noma Kôshin.

²³⁹ For more details, see Keene: 78-80.

²⁴⁰ Noma Kôshin: 629.

²⁴¹ See Ishihara (1942): 239. Unfortunately, this book was not available to me.

²⁴² Chinese sources all agree on this point, see e.g. Huang Zongxi: 10.

seventeen years old when going to Japan.²⁴³ Because Chikamatsu now wanted to intensify the relation between Koxinga and Japan (in order to present a more convincing hero for his audience), he adopted the age as seen by Nishikawa, added still some further years, and claimed that Koxinga was married with a Japanese wife called Komutsu. In fact, Koxinga married a Chinese woman called Dong [董], the person of Komutsu is purely Chikamatsu's creation, which nevertheless has survived until the beginning of the 20th century. Ironically, the marriage of Koxinga with a Japanese woman is in fact a central theme which is never neglected in Japanese literary pieces dealing with Koxinga.²⁴⁴

The drama itself ends with the battle of Nanking in 1660, where Chikamatsu presents Koxinga as the victor. If Koxinga had lost this final battle, the whole drama would have ended as a tragedy, which would not have been liked by the Japanese audience, who undoubtedly expected a winning hero. Especially this ending was one of the most important factors leading to the later widely-spread apprehension of Zheng Chenggong being a kind of national hero.

As a matter of fact, the interpretation of Koxinga as a Japanese hero is not astonishing in so far as that the Japanese have, since the Tang dynasty (618-907), shown a great admiration for Chinese culture. Yet, at the same time Japanese views of China have always emphasized its own characteristics. This sometimes

²⁴³ Nishikawa: 92. Nishikawa wrote this geographical work in Nagasaki, relying on reports of traders coming to Japan. See also the chapter *Takasago no koto oyobi Kokuseiya monogatari* [塔伽沙谷之事 – 並國姓翁物語] in the third part of the *Nagasaki yawa sô*, also written by Nishikawa.

²⁴⁴ See also Keene: 78. The relevance whether Koxinga is married with a Chinese or not becomes apparent, when having a closer look at one passage in Chikamatsu's drama. Chinese women are obviously belittled here, as utterances of Komutsu to Koxinga show: "You horrible man! Do Chinese women attract you? If your father had stayed in China where he used to be, you'd have been born there, and you'd be hugging a woman like that [Komutsu is here referring to the princess Sendan, who is in a bad condition after having crossed the Japanese Sea in a small boat (M.A.M.)] in bed. Instead, because you happened to have been born in Japan, you have a wife like me. What a shame for you!" (The princess Sendan fled to Japan after the attack of the Manchus, asking for support in the war. On her arrival, she is found on the beach by Koxinga and his wife) (see Kitani: 23, the translation is taken from Keene: 117).

awkward combination of things Japanese and Chinese is quite common in the drama, and becomes obvious in act two where Koxinga assembles new troops in China for his fight against the alien Manchurians. The determination to do so emerged from the death of his father, Zheng Zhilong, who in the drama is said to have been killed by the Tartarians (i.e., the Manchurians), and not having surrendered to them as stated in historic sources. Before departing for battle, Koxinga demands:

“However, if you are going to become my followers and serve me, you will have to have your coming of age ceremony performed by shaving your heads in the Japanese style... Now change your names to Japanese ones, putting first the place you come from and adding –zaemon, or –bei, or tarô, jirô, all the way up to jûrô...”²⁴⁵

This demand finally leads to the adoption of quite humorous names, like e.g. Changchowzaemon [ちゃぐちう左衛門], Luzonbei [呂宋兵衛], Tonkinbei [東京兵衛], Chaulshirô [ちやるなん四郎], Unsunrokurô [うんすん六郎], Sunkichikyûrô [すん吉九郎], Moghulzaemon [もうる左衛門], Bataviabei [じゃが太郎兵衛], SanThomaschachirô [さんとめ八郎] and Englandbei [英吉利兵衛]. Chikamatsu is apparently using exotism as a rhetoric device in order to make his play more attractive.

Yet, the somewhat awkward combination of things Chinese and Japanese also becomes apparent in the figure of Koxinga himself, who is considered to be Japanese, though his father is Chinese and he himself has lived most time of his life in China. Koxinga is seen as a kind of perfect hero who has adopted or inherited the positive characteristics of Japan and also looks Japanese. The “Japaneseness” of Koxinga is somewhat proven by claiming that it was mainly his mother – the daughter of a samurai – who educated

²⁴⁵ Kitani: 36. I based my analysis on the version of *Kokusenya kassen* edited by Kitani Hôgin in 1935. The translation follows Keene: 126-127.

him, strengthening his qualities of courage and loyalty. Chikamatsu emphasizes Koxinga's courage and heroic virtue as a key characteristic throughout the play. For him, these are the product of the samurai spirit, the *bushidô*:

„Weakness is the way of the women of China. Neither Watônai nor Ikkan [一官, the father of Koxinga] wept; that is the way of a Japanese warrior [日本武士の風].“²⁴⁶

In addition, the courage of two generals of Koxinga's troops, Wu Sangui (Go Sankei) and Gan Hui (Kanki [甘輝]), on the other hand is judged as premeditated, and not as something spontaneous, thus being inferior to the pure spirit of courage personified by the Japanese.

Such a presentation is one major reason for the success of the drama itself, in which Japan is basically exalted as the land of great bravery. Its inhabitants all seem to stick to the well-known samurai-code, or *bushidô*. For its literature, philosophy, arts and sciences, the Japanese of that time still admired China as the source of their civilization. Yet they considered themselves to be braver and more sincere. Thus the Japanese audience was impressed when told that the castles in China are much more fortified than in Japan, but they were confident that the spontaneous bravery and directness of Koxinga would also overcome this barrier. The ceaseless Japanese insistence on their spiritual supremacy results from a deeply felt awareness of Japan's position of continued inferiority to China. For China, Japan was just one of its small neighboring countries paying periodically tribute to the emperor, and its inhabitants were rather identified as barbarians. The Japanese had no way to refute this, or even to soften this kind of insult, as China was the supreme centre of the world. The Japanese could only try to prove that, though their country was small and insignificant, it was really just as good as

²⁴⁶ Kitani: 44. The translation can be found in Keene: 132-133.

China. This was obviously impossible in the face of the Chinese material superiority (territory, wealth, population etc.), thus they could only try to prove that their spirit, the *Yamato damashii* [大和魂], was something superior. This is done intensively in the *Kokusenya kassen* by presenting Koxinga as a Japanese hero. We may assume that the Japanese spectator of the early 18th century may have felt a kind of national pride when watching how Koxinga vanquished his enemies, yet without an anti-foreign sentiment which is sometimes associated with patriotism or nationalism.

Another person which is historically depicted incorrectly in the work is Wu Sangui (1612-1678). Wu Sangui was a general of the Ming who surrendered very early on in the battle, and by opening the border pass at Shanhaiguan [山海關] let the Manchus enter Central China which finally led to their victory over the Ming troops. In the *Kokusenya kassen*, Wu is made a model of loyalty. This seems to be a strange interpretation, can yet be explained by Chikamatsu's dramaturgical need to counterbalance the wicked Ri Tôten [李踏天], or as he is called in Chinese sources, Li Zicheng [李自成].²⁴⁷ The description of Wu Sangui as a positive hero does in no way correspond to historic truth, but rather shows quite clearly that Chikamatsu was interested in writing a good drama, instead of sticking to the historical truth.²⁴⁸ It may be speculated that even if he had used Chinese sources had they been available to him, he would have sacrificed historic truth for writing a good story.

There is one more crucial aspect in relation to Japanizing which must be mentioned. The final success of Koxinga was not only

²⁴⁷ Li Zicheng (1605?-1645) was a leader of outlaws during the end of Ming dynasty who took Beijing and helped to bring the Ming dynasty to an end by weakening the Qing forces in numerous battles while trying to get China under his control. He was finally defeated by the combined forces of Wu Sangui in Mai 1644.

²⁴⁸ Such a positive interpretation of Wu Sangui can also be found in a work called *Night Tales of Nagasaki* [長崎夜話草] written by Nishikawa Joken some years later than the *Kokusenya kassen*. See Nishikawa: *Nagasaki yawa-sô*: 258-262.

considered a result of his own fighting spirit and courage, but was also due to the support of the Japanese gods. The fourth act of Chikamatsu's drama describes how the imperial troops of the Ming are in a dangerous situation, surrounded by the enemy. The general Wu Sangui and the Chinese prince – at that time still a child Wu takes care of – are praying to the first emperor of the Ming, Ming Taizu [明太祖], for help. But this is to no avail. Therefore Koxinga's wife, Komutsu and the princess Sendan pray to the Japanese goddess Sumiyoshi²⁴⁹ who had assisted them on their way to Japan once before. Sumiyoshi helps them by building a brige over the abyss, and the loyal fighter for the Ming can safely cross. Just as the Manchurian troops approach and are about to cross the bridge, Sumiyoshi lets the bridge collapse und thereby destroying the enemy. At this point of the story, it becomes clear that the restoration of the Ming can only succeed by the help of the Japanese gods! In the drama itself, Chikamatsu persuades the Japanese that they are protected by Japanese gods, and that the Japanese mission of repelling the Manchus is supported by Japanese gods.

This is not only one of the most moving parts of the whole work, but also one of the most exemplary of Chikamatsu's belief that Koxinga was Japanese. His image of Koxinga is repeated by a number of later authors and thus plays an important role in Japanese literature. Ishihara Michihiro has already identified this phenomenon as *Kokusenya bungaku*.²⁵⁰ However, Chikamatsu's imagination not only exerts crucial influence in the field of literature, but also in the field of politics. It is in this arena that brings about severe consequences for Sino-Japanese relations, as we will discuss below.

²⁴⁹ Also known as Suminoe no kami [住吉神], this god is prayed to obtain protection when travelling at sea.

²⁵⁰ Ishihara (1942): 239.

7. The Japanized hero and his role during the occupation of Taiwan (1895-1945)

After Taiwan had ceded to Japan in 1895, the Japanese faced the problem of how to legitimate and secure their rule to the Taiwanese population. They therefore soon implemented a number of policies, such as the introduction of Japanese education system, the enforcement of Japanese as the official language, etc. In addition, they attempted to create a feeling of community between Chinese²⁵¹ and Japanese through certain religious policies. Such policies resulted not only in the popularization of Shintoism to diminish the influence of Buddhism, instead, but also brought about the somewhat strange phenomenon of Koxinga being worshipped in a Shintoist shrine, that will now be further elaborated on.

In the first phase of Japanese occupation (1895-1898), the Japanizing of the Taiwanese people – at least as far as religion was concerned – has to be considered to have been rather unsuccessful.²⁵² This was due to the fact that the first three Governor-Generals of Taiwan, Kabayama Sukenori [樺山資紀] (1837-1922), Katsura Tarô [桂太郎] (1848-1913) and Nogi Maresuke [乃木希典] (1849-1912) were rather busy maintaining public peace and order, suppressing a guerilla warfare initiated by the Taiwanese population. Such unrest was to some extent suppressed through the establishment of a traditional Chinese administrative system, the so-called *baojia zhidu* [保甲制度], or mutual surveillance system, which helped to find and arrest the remaining resistance fighters.

In the second phase, the phase of colonialization, Taiwan grew through industrialization, the building of modern infrastructure and so on. Therefore, the support of the Taiwanese was needed. On the

²⁵¹ I am aware of the fact that by now many Taiwanese do not consider themselves to be Chinese, but for reasons of convenience, I will in the following just talk about “Chinese”, a term which shall refer to all of the non-Japanese living on the island of Taiwan.

²⁵² Cai Jintang: 16.

one hand, they were needed as labor forces for economic development, thus they were offered an education which prepared them as productive forces. On the other hand, the Japanese administration was also aware that a kind of psychological support was needed, and this was to be managed by the policy of “conserving the old habits and customs” [*kyûkan onzon*, 旧慣温存]. Such a policy also included religious practices. But, as the governor-general Yanaihara Tadao [矢内原忠雄] (1893-1961) stressed, the economic development of Taiwan was of more important, and thus *kyûkan onzon* did not mean tolerance or respect of Taiwanese customs, but only the protection of Japanese interests.²⁵³ This point of view also influenced the religious policies of the Japanese government on Taiwan. The rulers believed that it would be beneficial to keep the mental makeup of the Taiwanese. Thus, the dissemination of Shintoism was not considered a primary aim during the first phase of occupation of Taiwan. In addition to this, the question of cost of maintenance of shrines, lack of priests and so on were rather hindering factors. As a result, only five shrines have been erected by the end of Meiji-period. They were publicly financed and most often situated in areas where many Japanese lived. Most of the shrines have been built in the following period, in the Shōwa-period, namely in total forty-eight.²⁵⁴ This was the result of the so-called *kôminka undô* [皇民化運動]²⁵⁵ which now aimed at creating a Japanese and Taiwanese collective consciousness. A nationalisation of temples took place, in order to promote state Shintoism and, at the same time, to wipe out everything Chinese.

Though religious policies during the first phase of occupation were not considered to be of crucial importance to the Japanese administration, the figure of Koxinga seems to play a bigger role

²⁵³ Cai Jintang: 19.

²⁵⁴ Cai Jintang: 140.

²⁵⁵ During the Second Chinese-Japanese War in the 1930s, the situation for the Japanese in their colonies deteriorated, and thus such a policy was implemented first in Korea, and then also in Taiwan.

here. Soon after his arrival to Taiwan, the first Governor-General of the island, Admiral Count Kabayama went to Koxinga's temple in the city of Tainan. He wanted this Chinese temple (*miao*) to be changed into a Shinto shrine (*jinja*).²⁵⁶ The temple had been formerly erected by the Taiwanese population shortly after Koxinga's death in 1662 and bore the name *Kaishan miao* [開山廟], referring to his opening and development of Taiwan. In 1875, the Qing administration renamed it *Ming Yanping jun wang ci* [明延平郡王祠], thus turning it from a rather private temple into an officially recognized one.²⁵⁷ Kabayama's ambitions were not fulfilled immediately. One year later, in July 1896, the governor of the province Tainan on Taiwan, Isogai Seizô [磯貝静蔵] (1850-1910), under whose jurisdiction the temple was asked to change the name of this temple into *Kaitai jinja* [開台神社], thus raising it to the level of a State shrine, *kokuheisha* [国幣社]. He asserted that while on the one hand, the temple had for a long time always been the target of devotion of Taiwanese people, it was on the other hand possible to worship not only the loyal Koxinga himself, but also the virtues of his mother Tagawa (as they are described in Chikamatsu's drama!).

The central government in Japan rejected his plea, because Koxinga was considered to have been loyal to the Ming dynasty, and not to the Tennô.²⁵⁸ Yet, on 13th January 1897, the Minister for Colonial Affairs [拓殖務大臣], Takashima Tomonosuke [高島鞆之助] agreed to name it *Kaisan jinja* [開山神社] ("Shrine of Him Who Opened Our Mountains"), and ranking it as a "province

²⁵⁶ See the article written by Suga Kôji. It was probably no coincidence that in the same year, 1898, the tale *Watônai* was added to Iwaya Sazanami's great collection of children's stories. Photographs of this shrine can be found in Ishihara (1942) and in Kashima (1914).

²⁵⁷ In fact, at the beginning of the Qing dynasty, Koxinga was regarded as an enemy, loyal to the Ming. But by the year 1787, he entered the Confucian pantheon as a loyal official of the Emperor after his former enemies, the Qing, recognized his moral qualities as eternal moral principles that transcended particular political causes.

²⁵⁸ There were also financial reasons: the status of state shrine would have meant higher maintenance costs for the government in Tôkyô.

shrine” [県社]. This was the first shintoist shrine to be opened on Taiwan, and from that time on, Koxinga took his place among the other Japanese immortals worshipped in a Shinto shrine. This was most likely a politically motivated religious policy in the colonialization of Taiwan.²⁵⁹ This is also true, even if we were to admit that Koxinga was a loyal defender of the Ming, and that he was already venerated as a God by the Chinese. For, why else should the Japanese want to worship at his shrine? Although Koxinga’s determination to restore the Ming was praised in many Japanese sources of that time²⁶⁰, rather this was considered to be an expression of loyalty, and not as an act of patriotism, which would have hindered the incorporating Koxinga into the Japanese culture. Here again, Koxinga’s qualities as a samurai are stressed. However, such veneration of Koxinga as a Japanese god was at that time nothing new, nor something surprising, as a shrine worshipping him already existed in Kyoto by the late 18th century.²⁶¹ In addition, a local daimyo erected a monument at his birthplace near Nagasaki in 1852.²⁶²

The rededication of a temple only occurred once during the 50 years occupation of Taiwan²⁶³, but it shows very clearly the direction in which the Japanese forces on the island of Taiwan were moving: they were trying to integrate Taiwan firmly into their own empire by reducing the resistance of the Taiwanese. One possible measure was to try to increase their acceptance of state

²⁵⁹ This has also been denoted by Fujitani Toshio [藤谷俊雄, 1912-], see Fujitani: 227. A detailed description of the process of renaming of the temple can be found in the article of Suga, including a statement of the governor-general explaining his reasons for renaming the temple (pages 201-202).

²⁶⁰ See the works by Iwaya, Kashima, Katsu etc.

²⁶¹ Cf. Akisato Ritô [秋里籬島]: *Shûi Miyako Meisho Zue* [拾遺都名所図絵] (1787), in: Noma Kôshin [野間光辰] (ed.): *Shinshû Kyôto sôsho – dai nana kan* [新修京都叢書第七卷] (1994), p. 112.

²⁶² R.A.B. Ponsonby Fane: 67. It has to be added here that until today, the population of Hirado, Koxinga’s birth place in South Japan, holds a *Tei Seikô matsuri* [鄭成功祭り] each year on July, 14.

²⁶³ Cf. Cai: 26.

Shintoism by declaring Koxinga an immortal figure belonging to a Japanese religion.²⁶⁴

Admittedly, though the temple changed its name, all the religious services were still carried out by the former priests in the Chinese style, and the other figures venerated in this temple, like the generals of Koxinga, Gan Hui and Zhang Wanli [張万礼] and other loyal Ming fighters continued to be worshipped. Only Koxinga's mother was added to the existing list.

When the temple was renovated in 1915, a Shinto shrine gateway, an outer shrine, a washing place [手水舎], a priests' dormitory and an administration office were added and constructed in a Japanese style. The main buildings, the "shrine" itself and the annex still remained Chinese.²⁶⁵ The chief administrator of shrines in Taiwan [台湾神社宮司], Yamaguchi Minoru [山口秀], declared that they must keep the main Chinese characteristics of the shrine (i.e., temple) itself, not only to preserve history, but also the feelings of the god.²⁶⁶

It is unlikely that such views were common among the Japanese living on Taiwan (as will be shown later), but Yamaguchi's attitude demonstrates that in the early phase of colonization, the involvement of Taiwanese in Shintoism was not that strong. Or, to put it the other way: the Japanese did not overemphasize the propagation of Shintoism at that time, fearing that the resistance of the Taiwanese would be too strong and would thus prove counterproductive.

Nevertheless, the contradiction of having a Chinese temple stand as a Shintoist shrine carries the symbolic meaning of an act of Japanizing, which cannot be underestimated. Such an act was a

²⁶⁴ Later in the Second Sino-Japanese war, there was another request of changing the temple of Wu Feng [吳鳳] into a shrine. Wu was one of the model persons [模範人物] presented in the text books of elementary school during the time of Japanese occupation who was venerated for his fight for civilizing barbarian tribes. Yet, before such a request could be finally discussed, the war was already over (see Cai: 26-27).

²⁶⁵ A comparison of two construction plans of the temple before and after his reconstruction can be found in Suga: 207.

²⁶⁶ See Cai: 27.

politically motivated and in the following years decisively influence the question of whether or not Taiwan belonged to Japan.

8. The Consequences of Koxinga becoming a Japanese immortal

When having a look at other works published at the beginning of the 20th century, the author Kashima Ôkô [鹿島櫻巷] in the introduction of his historical play *Kokusenya gojitsu monogatari* [国姓爺後日物語]²⁶⁷ characterizes Koxinga (whom he also calls Watônai) having the Japanese spirit of a Samurai [日本武士の気]. He laments that Koxinga's life span of 39 years was too short. The most revealing part in the introduction is the following:

“Taiwan was the stage on to which Zheng Chenggong poured his blood, and now it belongs to our territory. Zheng Chenggong, who has given an outstanding performance in Taiwan, has also become one of the Japanese heroes. If his spirit was still with us, he would be pleased that Taiwan now belongs to Japan and that he himself would now be a Japanese hero.”

今や、鄭成功の心血を注いだ活動の舞台たりし台湾は、我日本の版図に帰した。台湾座付の大役者たる鄭成功も、自然我日本豪傑に籍を移したことになる。成功にして霊あらば、日本の台湾となり、日本の豪傑とせられることを、必ず地下に満足しているだらう。²⁶⁸

Here, Koxinga is clearly regarded as a Japanese hero whose heroic virtues are considered suitable edifying material for a patriotic

²⁶⁷ Published 1914 by the *Aikoku fujinkai Taiwan shibu* [愛国婦人会台湾支部] in Taipei, Taiwan.

²⁶⁸ See the introduction of Kashima Ôkô. In this piece, the wife of Koxinga is said to be Miss Dong, and not as in the drama of Chikamatsu, a Japanese woman called Komutsu.

organization like the “Patriotic Women’s Association”²⁶⁹ for whom the above quoted play had been written. At the same time, the legitimacy of Japanese rule over Taiwan is taken for granted. In another book about the history and geography of Taiwan, *Japanese Rule in Formosa*, written by Takekoshi Yosaburô [竹越与三郎]²⁷⁰, the integration of Taiwan in the Japanese Empire is similarly reasoned by claiming that

“... the island, which China had torn from Koxinga’s descendants by intrigue, bribery, and brute force, passed again into the hands of the Japanese, in whose veins flows the same blood as filled those of Koxinga.”²⁷¹

Takekoshi succeeds here in separating Koxinga completely from the Chinese nation, by transmuted his enemies, the Manchus, into Chinese. Thus, the sole conclusion for him is that by considering Koxinga to be the previous representative of Japan in Taiwan, Japan is therefore the legitimate ruler of Taiwan. To my knowledge, this is – as I consider it – the most profound form of Japanizing.

The examples stated above show clearly that during the Meiji period, Koxinga came into focus. But this was not because he was a hero of Han nationality (although he is fighting in their name against the Manchurians), nor because of his development of Taiwan (the reason the Taiwanese refer to him as a national hero,

²⁶⁹ The “Patriotic Women’s Association” was originally founded in 1900 and its major aim was not only the consolation of wounded soldiers involved in the repression of the Boxer uprising in China, but also to support the soldier’s families in Japan. It should soon turn out to become the biggest women’s association in Japan at that time. The Taiwan branch was founded in 1902, it organized social services and cultural activities. Cf. Takenaka Nobuko [竹中信子]: *Shokuminchi Taiwan no Nihon josei seikatsushi – Meiji hen* [植民地台湾の日本女性生活史・明治篇] (1995). Tôkyô: Tabata shoten, esp. pp. 130.

²⁷⁰ Takekoshi Yosaburô (1865-1950) was journalist, politician and historian. He was the editor of the monthly published *Sekai no Nihon* [世界之日本] and was working for the *Kokumin shinbun* [国民新聞].

²⁷¹ Takekoshi: 86.

strengthening their independence from Mainland China). He was rather someone with a Japanese mother, in whose veins flew Japanese blood. Not only is this emphasized in a song called “The song of the island Taiwan” [台湾島の歌] which appeared in the Journal *Kokumin no tomo* [国民之友] published by Tokutomi Iichirô [徳富猪一郎]²⁷² in 1895, celebrating the recovery of Taiwan²⁷³, but also in a collection of children stories edited by Iwaya Sazanami.²⁷⁴ Iwaya claims that stories like that of Watônai [和唐内] aim at presenting model heroes to the children, thereby forming their moral education. For this reason, he presented Koxinga as a Japanese hero, who refused to capitulate to the Manchus by asserting that someone with the Japanese spirit [日本魂] would never surrender to a barbarian tribe.²⁷⁵

In fact such a view can be found in many Japanese accounts, whether popularly or scholarly, since the late 19th century. Even in school books composed for Taiwanese pupils at public schools [台湾教科用書国民読本]²⁷⁶, Koxinga’s outstanding virtues of loyalty, determination and courage are naturally derived from his Japanese inheritance – his mother belonged to a samurai family and was considered to be mainly responsible for his education.²⁷⁷ Her heroic death in the fight against the Tartarian tribes (as the Manchus are often called in Japanese sources of the 18th and 19th century) would of course not have been possible if she had not possessed the “*Yamato damashii*”, which was deemed to be of

²⁷² Tokutomi Iichirô, also known as Tokutomi Sohô [徳富蘇峰] (1863-1957), was historian and essayist. Next to the *Kokumin no tomo*, he also published journals like the *Ôbun kyokutô* [欧文極東] and the *Katei zasshi* [家庭雑誌].

²⁷³ See vol. 248 of *Kokumin no tomo*, p. 124-125, publ. March, 23, 1895.

²⁷⁴ Iwaya Sazanami (1870-1933) was a famous children’s book author, who also worked as a university lecturer in Asian Languages at the University of Berlin in 1900.

²⁷⁵ Iwaya: 44.

²⁷⁶ This school book consisted of twelve volumes and was published during 1901-1903 (see Wu Huajun: 8).

²⁷⁷ This view is shared by Ponsonby Fane: 73.

essential influence on Koxinga himself.²⁷⁸ Thus, it is not astonishing that the author Yoda Momokawa [依田百川] demands in the foreword of his novel *Kokusenya tô Shin ki* [国姓爺討清記] published in 1894, that every Japanese should read the story about Koxinga:

“Read this book, read it! Koxinga, who is known to the whole world, once fought against the Qing with his Japanese spirit and proved to be a true hero. Now, let us get Taiwan back, as it is our duty, and let us thus ease his soul. We have to develop buds from the Japanese seed he sowed in those days. Thus I urge you to read this account of the battles of Koxinga against the Qing.”

読め、読め、諸君。世にも名高き国姓爺が、日本人の気象をもつて、かの満清と戦ひし、大雄略をのせたる書ぞ。台湾とるべし、いざとるべし。国姓爺が亡魂を慰むべし。日本の種子に芽を出させよ。読め、読め、諸君、この国姓爺の討清記を。²⁷⁹

After all, the historic deeds of Koxinga should not only serve as a legitimation for the occupation of Taiwan, but were also quoted when referring to the southward expansion of Japan during the Pacific War. Koxinga's expulsion of the Dutch and his alleged plan to expulse the Spanish colonists from the Philipines are regarded to be in a direct line of succession of plans of southward expansion going back to Hideyoshi Toyotomi.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Ishihara (1942): 3, 11. In the same way, his tastes and habits are also usually depicted as Japanese, like his way of celebrating New Year in the Japanese way (see therefore the chapter *Takasago no koto oyobi Kokuseiya monogatari* [塔伽沙谷之事 - 並國姓爺物語] in the third part of the *Nagasaki yawa sô* written by Nishikawa Joken), or his military tactics are regarded as being Japanese (see the descriptions of his battles in Ishihara (1942) and Ishihara (1956), passim).

²⁷⁹ Quoted after Ishihara (1956): 93.

²⁸⁰ Ishihara (1942): 243-244.

9. Contradictions in the Process of Japanizing of Koxinga

Ishihara Michihiro has proven in his manifold studies that the person of Koxinga has been highlighted in Japan, both on a popular and a scholarly level, to various degrees. It is interesting to observe that there are three peaks which mostly – accidentally or not – coincide with periods of intensive contact or conflict with China. The first phase was the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century, following the first performance of Chikamatsu's drama, when many Japanese shared a profound interest in China (especially during the Genroku era, 1688-1703). The second one occurred shortly after the Sino-Japanese War 1894-95, and the third one during the 1930s and 1940s.²⁸¹ In other words, when the Japanese interest in China rose, the hero Koxinga was also revived. The idea suggests itself that the historic person of Koxinga as a Japanese hero was utilized for certain political purposes.

Yet, upon a closer look at the whole matter, such uses, i.e. the Japanizing of Koxinga are of course not without problems. When trying to “japanize” him, one has to be aware of the many conflicts resulting from this multi-faceted person. In fact, these contradictions have to be solved before he can be used for political or other purposes, as will now be shown in the following part. The interesting question now is, how the Japanese have solved these contradictions. The answer is quite simple: they could only do so by neglecting some historic facts, and stressing others with more emphasis in order to prove his “Japaneseness”.

First, Koxinga was of mixed ethnic origin, his father was Chinese and his mother Japanese. The Japanese could only claim him to be Japanese when emphasizing the role of his mother, as being of more decisive influence on him. This is done by constantly referring to her heroic death, the importance of the samurai spirit and is exalted in Koxinga's marriage with a Japanese woman. At the same time, they had to reject the traditional pattern of ancestry in China, the so-called *zuji* [祖籍] which relates lineage to one's

²⁸¹ Ishihara (1956): 86-97.

father and defines one's country to be that place where the graves of the ancestors are.

Second, Koxinga is in some sources described as a pirate fighting for his own, material aims²⁸², and not as a loyal fighter of the declining Ming dynasty.²⁸³ Chikamatsu for example, completely excludes Koxinga's activities as a pirate. In other sources, Koxinga is only described as a maritime trader who uses his profits in order to build up a new army able to fight the Manchurians.

Third, the conflict between the Ming and Qing dynasty must be solved – who is the legitimate ruler of China, and in what relation does Koxinga stand to them? This question is answered by the Japanese in a quite traditional manner: the Manchurians as ruler of Qing-China are in most texts called by the rather derogatory term “Tartars” [韃靼] referring to them as uncivilised and fearsome tribes of Inner Asia. Thus, only the civilised Ming with its advanced culture could be the legitimate ruler.

Fourth, the conflict between the Dutch and the Chinese, or in other words, the question who is the legitimate ruler of Taiwan. This conflict is resolved by adopting a panasian attitude, which claims responsibility for the liberation of the whole Asia from European imperialism. In this context, the peculiar relationship between China and Japan, a relationship which is based on the idea that both culture share a common origin, is stressed. China and Japan are thus bound to fight against aggression from outside.

10. Conclusion

Our analysis has shown that the historic person of Koxinga has, since the first performance of the drama *Kokusenya kassen* in 1715, been regarded as a kind of Japanese hero. The topic of his

²⁸² See e.g. the foreword written by Chen Qiyong [陳祈永] in 1704 for the *Taiwan waiji* [臺灣外記], compiled by Jiang Risheng around 1685. A translation of the foreword can be found in Foccardi: 49-51. Yet, it has to be admitted that the *Taiwan waiji* has been published at the beginning of the Qing dynasty, and therefore Chen could not openly write a positive judgement.

²⁸³ See e.g. the biography *Cixing shimo*, written by Huang Zongxi.

heroic deeds did not cease to appear in various literary works. He became very popular, not only during the time of Chikamatsu himself, but also at the end of the 19th century and in the 1930s, 1940s when tensions with China were rising. Especially since the beginning of Japan's expansionist movements, Koxinga was increasingly presented as a model hero, whom the Japanese people (and the inhabitants of occupied Taiwan) should admire.

The reason for such a presentation can be explained basically by two factors. First, when dealing with the person of Koxinga, most Japanese authors were referring rather to the manifold literary sources and did not cease to retell the story again and again. As their knowledge about Koxinga was now based on literary pieces than on historic sources – even Chikamatsu did so – they were not able to present Koxinga in a historical correct manner. This of course led to the phenomenon of Japanizing of the boy born as Fukumatsu, as information about him was used selectively or arbitrarily, following political premises. This was not inevitable, for historic sources like *Cixing shimo* [賜姓始末] of Huang Zongxi [黃宗羲] (1610-1695), the biography *Zheng Chenggong zhuan* [鄭成功傳] written by Zheng Juzhong [鄭居仲] (1702?) or the *Congcheng shilu* [從征實錄] by Yang Ying [楊英]²⁸⁴ were available in the 19th and 20th century.

This becomes evident when looking at the Japanese literature of the 1940s dealing with Taiwan or works written by Japanese living on Taiwan. One of these writers was the eminent author and editor Nishikawa Mitsuru [西川滿] (1908-1999), born in Taiwan, who tried to convey in words and images the culture of Taiwan and his experiences as a Japanese resident on the island. After a short stay in Japan during which he attended Waseda University (1927-1933), he decided to return to Taiwan and engage in what he called

²⁸⁴ Yang Ying was one of Koxinga's army officers and later his minister of finance on Taiwan.

“regionalist literature” [地方主義文学]²⁸⁵. He was active as a poet, novelist, editor, playwright and publisher. As the founder of the *Taiwanese Poetry Society* he even gained fame, yet, he is nowadays best known for his role as publisher of the journal *Literary Taiwan* [文芸台湾] (1940-1944), the official publication of the Taiwanese Writer Association. This journal was of wide influence in so far as the rapid spread of literacy during the Japanese occupation and the suppression of Chinese language in print facilitated the successful development of a Japanese-language press.

Nishikawa’s literary style can be characterized as romantic and exotic, as in the famous novel *Record of the Red Fort* [赤嵌記]²⁸⁶, an ambitious treatment of Taiwanese history and colonial politics. Though born and raised on Taiwan, Nishikawa’s interest in Taiwanese history arouse only after his return to Taiwan in 1933. He had become aware that he knew next to nothing about Taiwanese history: “When we were young, how much were we taught about the history of Taiwan before it came into our possession? Only about Hamada Yahei²⁸⁷, Zheng Chenggong, and Wu Feng.²⁸⁸ After that, it was nothing but Japanese history.”²⁸⁹

In the *Record of the Red Fort*, Nishikawa tries to tell the true story of Taiwanese history, but he fails by not only drawing on historic sources like the *Taiwan tongshi* [臺灣通史], the first systematic

²⁸⁵ See the *Abridged Biography of Nishikawa Mitsuru* [西川滿略歷], in: Nakajima Toshio and Kawahara Isao: 509-512 (Vol. II).

²⁸⁶ The Red Fort is nothing else as the Fort Provintia constructed by the Dutch in the 17th century. It should later be renamed *Chengtianfu* [承天府] by Koxinga, and is nowadays Tainan City. This story *Record of the Rede Fort* was later also awarded the Taiwanese Culture Award. It was for the first time published in December 1940 in the journal *Bungei Taiwan* [文芸台湾], p. 1-6.

²⁸⁷ Hamada Yahei [浜田弥兵衛], whose life dates are unknown, was the captain of Tokugawa Hideyoshi’s ship, which was captured by the Dutch for interfering with trade between Holland and Taiwan.

²⁸⁸ Wu Feng [吳鳳] was one of the model persons presented in the text books of elementary school during the time of Japanese occupation who was venerated for his fight for civilizing barbarian tribes (see also footnote 55).

²⁸⁹ Quotation follows Kleeman: 99.

history of Taiwan written by Lian Yatang [連雅堂] in 1920, but also on earlier, more anecdotal and less historically correct sources like the *Taiwan waiji* [臺灣外記] written by Jiang Risheng [江日昇] in 1704, which is often quoted in this novel *Record of the Red Fort*.²⁹⁰ The question is, what are his intentions here? His decision seems based on political premises, for the key issue in the novel is the question of the legitimate heir of Koxinga's son, Zheng Jing [鄭經]. Nishikawa doubts that it is Zheng Keshuang [鄭克塽] as stated in the *Taiwan tongshi*, and favors Zheng Kezang [鄭克藏] as claimed in the *Taiwan waiji*. He is thus arguing for the legitimacy of Kezang's plan to expand "Chinese" rule to Southeast Asia and the South Pacific – a plan which quite obviously parallels the Japanese military efforts in the 1930s and 1940s. These efforts were – at least according to the official rhetoric – not aimed at Japanese expansion, but at the creation of a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere, which would exclude the Europeans. This is apparent in a poem called *Attacking the Red Fort* written by Nishikawa in 1941. The final stanza reads:

“Attacking the Red Fort

East is East. West is West. We had driven those blue-eyed, red-haired urchins to the end of the West. Now the great enterprise of restoring the mandate has succeeded. He smiles, Koxinga.”

赤嵌攻略の歌

東は東. 西は西. 碧眼紅毛の奴輩を
西の果に追ひやれと. 今. 回天の大業に.
莞爾と微笑む. 国姓爺.²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ Nakajima Toshio and Kawahara Isao: 201-235 (Vol. 1-2).

²⁹¹ This poem was published in *Bungei Taiwan* [文芸台湾] 2 (6), September 1941. The translation follows Kleeman: 105

Here Zheng Chenggong becomes an icon for the resistance to Western colonialism. A Ming loyalist's act of capturing an island from which to resist the Manchus was refashioned into a triumph of East over West in the context of the 1940s Japanese colonial discourse.

At the same time, the use of Koxinga as a hero in the fight for liberation of European imperialism – the refutation of the European presence in Asia – may also be interpreted as a rejection of European modernity. This is due to the fact that exactly during the phase in which the Japanese national consciousness – existing prior to the formation of a Japanese national identity – rose and was at the same time endangered by the encroachment by European imperialism. Koxinga could thus serve as a model hero for formulating an identity within the Asian context directed against Europe. Thus, it may be concluded that the Chinese general Koxinga played a particular role in the modernization of Japan in Taishô and early Shôwa period, which was – in contrast to that of the early Meiji period – directed against the so-called “West”.

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