

**Masarykova univerzita  
Filozofická fakulta**

**Ústav religionistiky  
Seminář čínských studií**

Martin Kovář

**The relationship between the Zheng family  
and the Ming and Qing imperial dynasties**

Bakalářská diplomová práce

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Táňa Dluhošová

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*Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracoval  
samostatně s využitím uvedených pramenů a literatury.*

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Podpis autora práce

I would like to thank Mgr. Táňa Dluhošová for her patience and the careful guidance she provided as a supervisor of my work. I would also like to thank miss Luo Xianfang and my parents for their help and support, without which this work could never be completed.

## Anotace

Práce *Vztah rodiny Zheng k dynastiím Ming a Qing* se zabývá událostmi provázejícími svržení čínské císařské dynastie Ming způsobené vpádem mandžuských vojsk na čínské území počátkem 17. století. Práce se zaměřuje na rodinu Zheng — mocný rod obchodníků a pirátů, který měl velký vliv na vývoj těchto dějinných událostí. Cílem práce je popsat vztahy této rodiny a císařských dvorů obou následujících dynastií.

V úvodu práce budou nejprve představena základní historická fakta spojená s daným obdobím, pro vytvoření rámce pro následující výklad. Poté budou postupně představeni čelní představitelé tří klíčových generací rodiny Zheng: Zheng Zhilong, Zheng Chenggong a Zheng Jing, budou popsány jejich styky s císařskými dvory a dalšími relevantními subjekty.

Účelem práce je, na základě rozboru komunikace mezi zúčastněnými subjekty, vysvětlit klíčové proměny loajality rodiny Zheng k císařskému trůnu a přinést tak nový pohled na její vývoj.

## Annotation

The work *The relationship between the Zheng family and the Ming and Qing imperial dynasties* concerns the events connected to the fall of the Chinese Ming imperial dynasty caused by the invasion of the Manchurian armies into the Chinese territories in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The main focus of the work is on the Zheng family — a powerful clan of naval traders and pirates, which affected the development of these historical events. The main goal of this work is to describe the relations of the family and the imperial courts of both the consecutive dynasties.

In the initial part of the work the basic historical facts connected to the era will be presented, in order to create a basis for further discussion. The leading figures of the three key generations of the Zheng family — Zheng Zhilong, Zheng Chenggong and Zheng Jing — will then be presented and their relations to the imperial court and another relevant subjects will be described.

The purpose of the work is, based on the analysis of the communication between the subjects involved, to explain the key changes in the loyalty of the Zheng family to the imperial throne and thus bring a new view on its development.

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## Introduction

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, China has undergone great cataclysm, as the old imperial regime of the Ming dynasty (明) was overthrown by enemy forces and replaced by a new dynasty established by the leaders of the invading Manchurian armies — the Qing dynasty (清). An important role in the events, connected to fall of the old dynasty was played by the Zheng family(鄭) — a wealthy and influential clan of naval merchants and pirates, based on the southeast coast of China. This family was one of the most powerful sources of the anti-Qing resistance, while in the same time it was one of the members of the clan, whose defection was one of the key reasons for the fall of one of the last emperors of the Ming dynasty and therefore a contributor to the eventual failure of the whole resistance movement.

This topic has become the subject of many works. Most of these works, including the very sources on which this study is based — the publications *Coxinga and the fall of the Ming dynasty* by Jonathan Clements and *The last warrior : the life of Cheng Ch'eng-kung, the lord of the "Terrace Bay" : a study on the T'ai-wan wai-chih by Chiang Jih-sheng (1704)* by Gabriele Foccardi — seem to present a kind of general description of the historical events. Another sort of works, considering these historical events, analyzes their secondary impact on the development of political situation and society, as is the case of the book *Koxinga and Chinese nationalism: history, myth, and the hero* by Ralph C. Croizier, in which the image of Zheng Chenggong and its interpretation in different ideological environments is discussed.

This work intends to focus on the exterior elements of the activity, constituting this struggle, and especially on the communication between the various sides of the conflict, in order to create a new point of view on the historical events, the relationships between the subjects involved and the motivation for their actions and hopefully bring a new explanation for the development of the situation and reconstruct the evolution of the loyalty of the different Zheng family members.

Three key members of the Zheng family will be discussed in this work — Zheng Zhilong(鄭芝龍), the founder of the Zheng naval trading empire and also the traitor of the Ming emperor; Zheng Chenggong (鄭成功), the famous loyalist leader and conqueror of the Taiwan; and finally Zheng Jing (鄭經) the last member of the family to considerably contribute to the resistance efforts. The main focus of this work will be put on Zheng Chenggong, for he is the most important figure of the three, in concern to the restorationist cause, and also the most discussed and well-known member of the family.

The main sources of information for this work represent varied approaches to the description of historical topics. The publication *Coxinga and the fall of the Ming dynasty* by Jonathan Clements is a book of a rather popular nature. It sometimes tends to present a little too loose interpretation of some facts, or reach rather speculative conclusions<sup>1</sup> and also seems to contain some mistakes<sup>2</sup>. This book however quotes a large scale of respectable sources and describes the matters in the most detailed way and when compared to the primary sources, it seems to depict certain historical events(e.g. the negotiations between Zheng Chenggong and the Qing imperial court) very accurately and will therefore be used as the main source of general historical information.

*The last warrior: the life of Cheng Ch'eng-kung, the lord of the 'Terrace Bay' : a study on the T'ai-wan wai-chih by Chiang Jih-sheng* by Gabriele Foccardi a respected and often consulted scientific publication, based on the Taiwan Waizhi(臺灣外志) — Historical Novel of Taiwan, an often quoted, however not completely veritable 17<sup>th</sup> century description of the life of the great pirate leaders of the area. However the book often tends to describe certain matters in a too brief or unclear manner(for instance, the negotiations between Zheng Chenggong and the Qing imperial court are only described briefly with very little details presented). This book will also be used as a source of general historical information and for verification of the description of the events and the conclusions made.<sup>3</sup>

*Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers' Jaws* by Lynn Struve is a compendium of commented translations of contemporary historical records. It's main focus it's not activity of the Zheng family itself, it however contains a large quantity of documents related to some of the events discussed in this work (especially the communication between Zheng Chenggong and the Qing court). This book will serve as a source of evidence for the interpretation of the historical facts and as basis for the comparison of different approaches to the topic.

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<sup>1</sup> For example on page 133, where an imperial edict in which Zheng Chenggong is offered official function and considerable responsibility for controlling the naval traffic is discussed, the author concludes, that this was a clear sign that Zheng Chenggong was being offered a "supreme pardon", which doesn't seem very obvious.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. the probable confusion of Zheng Chenggong and Zheng Zhilong, shown on page 19 of this work.

<sup>3</sup> All the quotations of Foccardi in this work are taken from the part *The last warrior:the life of Cheng Ch'eng-kung, the lord of the "Terrace Bay"*.

## Historical background

The purpose of this chapter is to present the key events connected to the process of the changing of the imperial dynasties, to the development of the resistance movement and the history of the Zheng family itself, in order to construct a complete overview of the historical era, the subjects involved and the relations between them, and thus establish a basis for a detailed discussion of the questions, that are of primary concern of this work.

By the time of the Manchu invasion<sup>4</sup> the old regime had already been showing signs of heavy corruption and its political position and power had been seriously undermined. This state of the governmental affairs was the result of a prolonged period of low economical prosperity, caused by unfavourable natural circumstances, and of a bad security situation inflicted by the actions of numerous rebellious warlords, who became out of control of the imperial government. When one of these warlords, Li Zicheng<sup>5</sup> 李自成 (1605-1645) arrived at the gates of Beijing with his armed forces in 1644, the morale of the inhabitants and their willingness to defend the city and preserve the rule of the current regime was on the verge of breakdown, as can be clearly seen from the memoirs of one of the government officials present at the time in the capital city:

After Taiyuan [in central Shanxi] fell [on March 16, 1644 to the roving rebel forces of Li Zicheng], the bandits set their sights on what then seemed to be easy prey—Beijing. Discussions at court, however, were as confused as tangled silk threads, and battlefield defence plans were as feeble as trying to dredge the moon from the water. Our Sacred Ruler above frayed by work and worry, and his assembled ministers below said yes, yes, just hoping to survive somehow and rarely taking any responsibility. The money addiction grew worse by the day, and selfish factionalism was hard to stop. The minister of revenues [Ni Yuanlu] served fruitlessly by staring at the ceiling and nothing was done to raise the money for military provisions. The minister of war [Zheng Jinyan] aimlessly responded to official memoranda with empty prose; he proffered no real plan for the military situation.<sup>6</sup>

It is not surprising, that under such circumstances, the city defences proved to be inefficient and the capital city fell into the hands of the attackers after just a few days of siege. When faced with the fact, that the seizure of the city by the enemy forces was inevitable, the emperor Chongzhen 崇禎 (reign 1628-1644) had his heir secretly taken away and killed the rest of his own family, with only one of his daughters escaping. The emperor himself then wrote a suicide note and ended his own life by hanging himself in the imperial palace outer premises. The leader of the invading forces Li Zicheng then proclaimed the establishing of a new imperial dynasty — the Shun 順— the Dynasty of Obedience.

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<sup>4</sup> The fall of the government in Beijing is described in Clements 2005, 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> Leader of a rebellion, started by impoverished peasants and military personnel. According to Clements(2005, 2) the army under his command totaled to 100 000 soldiers upon it's arrival to Beijing.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted according to Struve 1998, 8-10.

The rule of the new dynasty<sup>7</sup>, however was fated to be short-lived. In the north, just several hundred kilometres away from the capital city, there was an army of 40 000 soldiers guarding the Shanhai pass — one of the main gateways into the territory of the Chinese empire. General Wu Sangui 吳三桂 (1612 - 1678), the leader of this army had not responded the request for aid from the emperor in Beijing, because abandoning his post would leave the northern border open for the Manchu invasion. After Wu Sangui received the news of the emperor's death, he was now facing a double threat, as he still had to remain prepared for a Manchu attack, while in the same time he was given an ultimatum to either join the rebel forces or face an attack during which no mercy was to be shown.

The general remained hesitant for a while, but finally, presumably because of the maltreatment of his closest ones, who were held hostages in Beijing, he contacted the leadership of the Manchurian forces and asked for assistance in avenging the death of his emperor. It seemed to be one of the key strategies of the Manchu leaders, to grant any defectors not only to have their lives spared, but also to award them with rich monetary rewards and official titles, under the condition, that they accept a traditional Manchu hairstyle<sup>8</sup> and swear allegiance to their new masters. The general had been made offers of collaboration in the past, so the proposition was accepted happily and in short time the combined forces of the Manchus and general Wu stood at the gates of Beijing.

It seems<sup>9</sup>, that another important strategy of the Manchus was to put the turncoat forces into the first waves of attack, as their forces merely kept waiting in the rear and only joined the battle when the defeat of Wu Sangui seemed imminent and they crushed the forces of Li Zicheng, who then fled the city with what remained of his army and left it to its own fate. Beijing, the former capital city of the Ming empire, had thus with no further resistance fallen into the hands of the Manchurian invaders.

After the fall of Beijing, a shadow government in Nanjing, the previous seat of the imperial court, took charge of further defence of the remaining territories. As the heir of the recently deceased emperor went missing after the capture of Beijing, one of the first tasks of the officials was to appoint a new successor to the throne. After quite a lengthy discussion, the son of a disfavoured heir of the emperor Wanli 萬曆(1573-1619) , the grandfather of the last Ming ruler, was chosen to become the new emperor Hongguang 弘光 (1607- 1646).

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<sup>7</sup> The treason of Wu Sangui is described in Clements 2005, 87-93.

<sup>8</sup> All Manchu subjects had to accept a traditional hairstyle, with shaven front of the head and a queue on its back, as a token of loyalty to the new masters.

<sup>9</sup> The source of information about the seizure of Beijing by Manchu forces is Clements 2005, 93-96.

While Wu Sangui had been sent southwest to chase the remaining forces of Li Zicheng, the Manchu generals in Beijing launched a southward expedition to conquer the rest of territories still governed by the Ming. On their way they encountered only a little resistance, with probably the best-known of the rather scarce exceptions being the battle for the Yangzhou city<sup>10</sup> 揚州, where the forces under the command by Shi Kefa 史可法 (1601 - 1645), a loyal Ming official, made a brave stand and inflicted heavy losses on the attackers, however the city was eventually captured and made a horrifying example of what expected anyone who would dare to oppose the Manchus.

Meanwhile in Nanjing<sup>11</sup> a new problem arose, when the already weak authority of the new emperor had been seriously undermined by appearance of a person, who claimed to be the lost heir of the Chongzhen emperor. Although he was later hesitantly proclaimed to be an impostor and confined, the already dwindling public support for the Hongguang emperor sustained a substantial blow, from which it was never to recover, as “By that time people of Nanjing were in mood to declare Hongguang emperor bogus instead”<sup>12</sup>. In short time the situation got even worse, when the emperor, having heard of the enemy forces approaching the city, fled Nanjing, without even informing any of the officials. The court officials led by the famous scholar Qian Qianyi 錢謙益(1582—1664), demoralized by the cowardly escape of the emperor and frightened by the fate of Yangzhou, agreed to give up fighting and hand the city to the invaders peacefully. Soon after the fall of Nanjing the emperor was captured, and after being held prisoner for some time, was later beheaded.

The existence of the Ming rule<sup>13</sup> had not yet quite come to an end after the capture of Nanjing however, as the centre of the resistance moved to the capital city of Fujian — the city of Fuzhou 福州 — and a new candidate from the more distant relatives of the former emperor was chosen to become the new successor to the Ming throne and become known as the emperor Longwu 隆武 (1602 - 1646). One of the key figures of the new court was Zheng Zhilong<sup>14</sup> 鄭芝龍 — an owner of a vast fleet of ships, who had, through the means of piracy, smuggling and naval trade, acquired an astonishing wealth and power, which he used to obtain an official rank.

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<sup>10</sup> The battle of Yangzhou is described in Struve 1998, 28-30.

<sup>11</sup> The dispute over the succession is discussed in Clements 2005,100-102.

<sup>12</sup> Struve 1998, 56.

<sup>13</sup> The relocation of the court to Fujian is described in Clements 2005, 107-110.

<sup>14</sup> Further biographical information presented in the introduction of the respective chapter.

The emperor made serious efforts to organise<sup>15</sup> a counteroffensive against the invaders and even had to be persuaded by his ministers to abstain from leading it personally, however it was hard to gather the resources necessary for successful undertaking of such an enormous endeavour from the relatively small, demoralized and war-ridden land as the following memorial suggests:

[...] The people regard their ruler lightly, and subordinates reject their superiors. Things look half gone, without any vital cohesion. This servant embarked on a military mission with no supplies twenty days ago. He has asked in every locale but has not received a single arrowhead, piece of armor, knife, or soldier. Donations from gentry do not suffice to supply a thousand men for a month [...]<sup>16</sup>

Soon the emperor decided to leave Fuzhou and move the court to Yanping and a military expedition headed for Nanjing was launched without reaching any major success. In the summer of 1646, the enemy forces stood at the borders of Fujian. As the invaders were approaching, many high officials were secretly made offers of collaboration. One of those officials was Zheng Zhilong, who decided to accept the offer and surrendered the city of Fuzhou into the enemy hands. The invaders then hunted down the emperor and on their way destroyed a fortress of the Zheng family at Anping, in which Miss Tagawa 田川 (1601 - 1646), the mother of Zheng Zhilong's son Zheng Chenggong<sup>17</sup> 鄭成功 had been lodged at the time, and prior to the capture of the fortress, after slaying numerous enemies, Miss Tagawa ended her own life to avoid falling into the enemy hands — an action which brought Chenggong to the state of a great rage and grief.

Following the death of the emperor Longwu<sup>18</sup>, two significant claimants appeared in the southern regions — the younger brother of the recently deceased emperor Longwu had been enthroned as the emperor Shaowu 紹武 (? - 1647), while shortly afterward a grandson of the emperor Wanli claimed the succession as the emperor Yongli 永曆 (1623 - 1662). The two loyalist factions started warring, until the latter Yongli emperor was forced to flee westwards. The Shaowu emperor, however, fell into a trap of Manchu forces, who, deceiving him by spreading false news of temporary armistice, taken his capital city of Canton by surprise attack.

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<sup>15</sup> The activity of the Longwu court is described in Clements 2005,109-112.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted according to Struve 1998, 128.

<sup>17</sup> Detailed biographic information in the introduction of the chapter dedicated to Zheng Chenggong.

<sup>18</sup> The infighting among the loyalists is explained in Clements 2004, 119-120.

Zheng Chenggong<sup>19</sup> devoted his loyalty to the Yongli emperor and after the main Fujian area had been taken by the invaders, Zheng Chenggong and the rest of the family took refuge in the Amoy<sup>20</sup> and Quemoy<sup>21</sup> bases of the Zheng family trading empire and kept leading an attrition warfare, based on occasional raids into the enemy territory, while consolidating the forces for an counterattack, taking advantage of the continuing overseas trade as means of gathering financial and material resources. His efforts were however set back by two events: first of them was the defection of two of his leading officers — Shi Lang<sup>22</sup>施琅 (1621-1696) and Huang Wu, caused by fear of punishment for insubordination in the case of the former and the unsuccessful defence of the city of Haicheng<sup>23</sup>海澄 in the case of the latter; while the second unfavourable event being the capture and plundering of Amoy, which occurred in the time of Zheng Chenggong's absence.

In a few years the necessary forces had been gathered and in 1657 a waterborne expedition of approximately 170 warships and 60 smaller supply vessels carrying an army of about 70 000 soldiers was launched to attack the Qing forces.

The fleet was supposed to navigate along the coast<sup>24</sup> to enter the mouth of the Yangtze river, then travel upstream to the Grand Canal and finally reach Beijing itself and try to capture the cities along the way. After a long journey troubled by several accidents, for instance the big storm near the Sheep Mountain island, in which a part of the fleet was destroyed and many lives including some of the closest relatives of Zheng Chenggong were lost, the expedition found the entrance of the Yangtze river heavily fortified. The loyalist forces held a rite mourning the fallen dynasty and then commenced a daring attack, during which they not only successfully overcame the defences, but also managed to capture the nearby cities of Guazhou and Zhenjiang and thus secure a beachhead for further offensive in the Grand Canal. Following a lengthy discussion it was decided, that the next step the army should take would be a march towards Nanjing.

The leader of the city garrison supposedly dispatched an envoy to Zheng Chenggong informing him, that the city would voluntarily surrender after a one month's nominal resistance, so the military elite couldn't be accused of giving in without a fight. Zheng Chenggong surprisingly accepted the proposal and established a steady siege, waiting for the city to capitulate.

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<sup>19</sup> The preparations for the inland campaign and the treason of the two generals are described in Clements 2005, 122-123, 141-143.

<sup>20</sup> A city on the southern coast of Fujian, nowadays known as Xiamen 廈門.

<sup>21</sup> A group of islets off the southern coast of Fujian. Its modern name is Jinmen (Kinmen) 金門.

<sup>22</sup> Shi Lang was according to Foccardi (1986, 46) “[...]undoubtedly the greatest naval strategist of the time, and moreover, he was an extraordinary inventor of naval warfare equipment”.

<sup>23</sup> Nowadays a part of Longhai city 龍海 in southern Fujian.

<sup>24</sup> The progress of the counteroffensive campaign is described in Clements 2005, 143-157.

The defenders, however used the time thus obtained to consolidate their forces and organise a surprise attack, which broke the siege, repelled the attackers and inflicted them heavy losses<sup>25</sup>.

The loyalists retreated to their base at the Yangtze river and, to the great surprise and dismay of the local allies, the decision was taken to leave the area for the moment and capture the island of Chongming, located in the mouth of the Yangtze river, in order to establish a base further from the reach of Manchurian forces, where they could prepare to reinforce their armies and resume their offensive again. The attack on the island failed however, and the fleet was left with little choice, but to head back for Amoy and actually had to repel a naval Manchu counterattack.

In reaction to these occurrences<sup>26</sup> the Manchu government adopted a series of draconic measures to cut the Zheng sympathisers off any support from the mainland, hoping the organisation would collapse because of shortage of resources: it had been strictly forbidden to maintain contacts with the loyalists or even engage in any naval activities. The punishment for disobedience of these laws was severe, as can be seen from the edict concerning the matter:

[...]it is strictly forbidden for merchants to set out to sea on their own, anyone who is found to trade foodstuffs or goods with the rebels will be brought to Our attention and sentenced to decapitation. The goods will be confiscated, and their private fortunes will go to those who denounce them.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, a thirty-mile-wide zone of the coastline was to be devoided of any civil presence with whatever remaining property destroyed, leaving only military patrols with orders to attack and repulse any ship landing on the coast and to punish anyone trespassing the forbidden zone.

The Zheng forces didn't rely on the trade with the mainland as the sole mean of obtaining supplies, however it had been decided, that acquiring a new territory to become a source of the necessary provisions would be beneficiary for the organization and the island of Taiwan seemed to be the ideal candidate for the function. At the time however, the island had been under the control of the Dutch East India Company<sup>28</sup>, which had been maintaining a trading outpost on the island since 1624, so in the April of 1661 an attack fleet of 900 warships carrying about 25 000 soldiers was gathered to set off for Taiwan, while Zheng Tai(鄭泰) was left in Quemoy in charge of providing supplies for the remote attack forces and Zheng Jing<sup>29</sup> — Zheng Chenggong's eldest son was to exercise supreme control of the coastal bases from Amoy. After a stop at Pescadores and enduring unfavourable weather conditions in the strait, the armada arrived to Taiwan.

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<sup>25</sup> Clements 2005, 156.

<sup>26</sup> The introduction of the coastal prohibition is discussed in Clements 2005, 161.

<sup>27</sup> A Qing imperial edict introducing the coastal prohibition, quoted in Cheng 1990, 239.

<sup>28</sup> A Dutch trading company, which trading operations in the area were based in the city of Batavia (modern days' Jakarta).

<sup>29</sup> Detailed biographical information in the introduction of the respective chapter.

The Dutch settlement was guarded by two forts<sup>30</sup> — the smaller fort Provintia and fort Zeelandia, poorly garrisoned and equipped<sup>31</sup>, as “The number of the people in the castle was about one thousand one hundred, and [there were] forty fully armed men.[...]practised war-officers, able constables, grenadiers, and engineers were few”<sup>32</sup> and two warships, accompanied by two smaller vessels, were at the disposal of the Dutch. After a quick battle one of the vastly outnumbered Dutch ships was destroyed, while the other three, severely damaged, fled the coast. The attackers then established a siege separating the two forts. The smaller fort Provintia running short of supplies, without chance for reinforcements, soon surrendered with its inhabitants taken hostages and following the refusal of the remaining Dutch forces to surrender, all the male captives were killed.

In July 1661 the Dutch received unexpected reinforcements of ten ships bearing 700 soldiers and soon organised another attempt on counterattack—a joint attack of naval and ground forces was planned, however chiefly because of inauspicious weather conditions the attack failed and the Dutch lost over one hundred men and several ships. On the opposite side however, Zheng Chenggong also had his own issues to deal with—the supply route, that was supposed to be run by Zheng Tai proved to be unreliable and the troops had been exposed to severe starvation, which caused infighting among the various units.

In the meantime, the Dutch were made an unexpected offer of alliance — the Manchus invited the Dutch naval forces to support their attack on the bases on the Chinese coast. Surprisingly the Dutch welcomed the offer, presumably in hope, that such attack will further cripple the ability of the enemy to support his own troops and that their cooperation might help to promote the trading interests of the Dutch East India Company in the new Qing dynasty empire. The Dutch therefore dispatched five of their ships to engage in attack on the coastal bases, however on the way the expedition leader deserted with two ships and the rest of the fleet returned to Taiwan.

The morale of the weakened garrison of fort Zeelandia started to dwindle and soon several men defected to the enemy. Probably it was one of those defectors, who informed Zheng Chenggong of a weak spot in the fort’s defences—a small fortified outpost called Utrecht, which guarded a higher ground near the fort and when this post was captured, the Zheng forces gained a position, from which they could maintain direct bombardment of fort’s inner premises. Confronted with this situation, the governor Peter Coyett offered to restore the negotiations and “a mutual truce was entered upon, and after five or six days of deliberation, [an eighteen-article] agreement was drawn up”<sup>33</sup>, eventually allowing the Dutch to leave Taiwan in peace.

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<sup>30</sup> The progress of the siege of Taiwan is described in Clements 2005, 167-201.

<sup>31</sup> The accounts of the exact numbers vary—for example in Foccardi 1986, 86 the number amounts to 1400.

<sup>32</sup> Struve 1998, 212.

<sup>33</sup> Struve 1998, 233.

Zheng Chenggong however<sup>34</sup>, could not enjoy his victory for a long time, as soon afterwards he was stricken by a series of bad news. First of them came in winter of 1661, when his father, who had long been held prisoner in Beijing, was brutally executed together with two of his sons. Only shortly afterwards Zheng Chenggong learned his son Zheng Jing conceived a child with a wet-nurse of the Zheng family, which was considered an act deeply against the morality of proper family relations, therefore he sent orders to Zheng Tai to execute Zheng Jing and everyone involved in the infraction, including Cuiying — Zheng Jing's mother and Zheng Chenggong's own principal wife. After the order had been ignored by Zheng Tai, one of the most loyal and fervorous military leaders, Zhou Quanbin, who had already been on a punitive mission against defecting military leaders, was therefore to be deployed to fulfil the orders, together with punishing Zheng Tai for his disobedience, however these orders failed to reach him and the general fell in captivity by Zheng Tai<sup>35</sup>. Zheng Chenggong meanwhile send a missive to the Spanish headquarters in Manila<sup>36</sup> demanding regular tributes, in order for the Spanish to avoid being attacked by the Zheng forces, only to be given a defiant refusal and having caused mass expulsion and prosecution of the Chinese inhabitants in Philippines. One final blow for Zheng Chenggong were the news, that emperor Yongli, the master Zheng Chenggong still held his allegiance to, on his flight westwards eventually fell into the enemy hands in Burma and was executed by Wu Sangui, the defector general who let Manchu forces enter China many years ago. Distraught by misfortune and failing health, Zheng Chenggong succumbed to disease in 1662 and was succeeded by his son Zheng Jing.

In 1663 the Dutch East India Company and Manchu armies<sup>37</sup>, led by the Zheng defectors Huang Wu and Shi Lang, organised a joint attack and managed to capture the bases in Amoy and Quemoy and after the remaining outposts were evacuated, the presence of the Zheng forces in the Chinese coastal waters had been extinguished.

Zheng Jing established a trading relations with English East India Company in 1670, thus obtaining a source of western military technology and was soon given one last chance to make a stand against the Qing regime — in 1673 Wu Sangui, supposedly out of fear his office would be dismissed after the opposition to the Qing dynasty was silenced, rose against his ruler and announced the resuming of the Ming resistance, thus starting a rebellion, known as 'Sanfan zhi luan' 三藩之亂 (Rebellion of the three feudatories).<sup>38</sup> In 1674 Geng Jinzhong, the governor of Fujian proclaimed his allegiance to the rebels and made Zheng Jing on Taiwan an offer to join

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<sup>34</sup> The accounts of Zheng Chenggong's last days are presented in Clements 2005, 205-214.

<sup>35</sup> Clements 2005, 205-206.

<sup>36</sup> Clements 2005, 206-210.

<sup>37</sup> Clements 2005, 208.

<sup>38</sup> The rebellion is described in Foccardi 1986, 111.

their military efforts in exchange of territorial rewards, which Zheng Jing accepted. The alliance however fell apart<sup>39</sup> and after Wu Sangui died of disease 1678, the movement was finally defeated in 1681, despite the efforts by his grandson.

Zheng Jing<sup>40</sup> withdrew his forces from mainland and returned to Taiwan, where he died in March 1681, choosing Zheng Kegang, who had been in charge of running the government on Taiwan in the ruler's absence. After the departure of Zheng Jing a clique formed around one of the prominent military leaders, general Feng Xifan, and Cuiying, the widow after Zheng Chenggong; and Zheng Kegang was murdered to be replaced by his younger brother Keshuang — an eleven-year-old boy at the time—under the regency by Zheng Cong, one of Zheng Chenggong's sons.

In 1683 a Qing fleet of 300 warships carrying 20 000 soldiers, led by Shi Lang was launched against Taiwan and met Zheng forces of equal strength at Pescadores and were repelled after a bloody battle. The fleet regrouped and six days later they repeated the attack achieving a victory this time. After the defeat of the armed forces Zheng Keshuang along with his regent surrendered and proclaimed allegiance to the Qing throne and was granted the title of the duke by the emperor. Taiwan became a part of the Qing empire and the rest of the armed forces were incorporated into the imperial armies. The Ming resistance was finally broken.

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<sup>39</sup> The reason of the failure of the uprising will be further discussed in the chapter, dedicated to Zheng Jing on page 29-30.

<sup>40</sup> The dispute over succession after Zheng Jing and the end of the rule of the Zheng family over Taiwan is described in Clements 2005, 224-229.

## Zheng Zhilong

Zheng Zhilong<sup>41</sup> was born in 1604 in a family of a minor official Zheng Shaozu in Fujian. His mother was a member of the Huang family of traders. In his teenage years he left for Macao, together with his mother, to join his maternal family. In Macao he accepted baptism and was given a Christian name Nicholas Gaspard Iquan. In short time he entered the services of Li Dan (李旦 ?-1625) — a wealthy senior naval merchant. He started his career in Japan and soon was given a post of business agent and translator maintaining contact with the Dutch. It was him and his master, who introduced the Dutch to Taiwan after they were expelled from Pescadores by the Chinese forces in 1624. Zheng Zhilong was advancing his carrier in the trading company of Li Dan and was even married to a daughter of one of the high officials — lady Yan, although during his stay in Japan he had already conceived a child with a Japanese woman — miss Tagawa. This child was Zheng Chenggong.

It is not entirely clear, how Zheng Zhilong managed to become his own master — Foccardi<sup>42</sup> claims, that before his death caused by disease, combat injury or a murderous plot, Li Dan chose Zheng Zhilong to inherit the leadership of his naval forces. Clements (2005, 49) asserts, that after the death of his master in 1625 Zheng Zhilong managed to take possession of two ships, of which he happened to be in command at the time, by forging the last will of his master, and after selling the valuable goods onboard those ships, he used the wealth thus obtained to enlarge the numbers of his fleet and then decided to strengthen his position against the other naval leaders in the region by entering the service of the Dutch East India Company as a privateer. This latter explanation seems to be eventually also supported by Foccardi, as it was noted “His ships and weapons were tall and sharp, and are manufactured by the ‘distant barbarians’(the Dutch)”<sup>43</sup>

Calanca describes the position of Zheng Zhilong as follows:

Beginning in the 1620s, he slowly built up a vast network that included not only his fellow countrymen and relatives, but also European and Japanese merchants and officials. Eliminating his rivals one by one, he developed a huge piratical empire that controlled the sea lanes and trade throughout the China Seas region.<sup>44</sup>

The author furthermore describes the nature of Zheng Zhilong’s business strategies:

On the other hand, he aided the poor and destitute by providing them with food and jobs, thereby acquiring a reputation as a beneficent man. As the Grand Coordinator of Fujian, Zhu Yifeng, emphasized, this latter tactic proved undeniably effective and people flocked to his service[...]<sup>45</sup>

From these accounts it can clearly be inferred, that Zheng Zhilong managed to obtain an enormous wealth, power and popular support.

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<sup>41</sup> Main source of basic biographic information is Clements 2005.

<sup>42</sup> Foccardi 1986, 9-10.

<sup>43</sup> Note about the appearance of the Zheng army in Foccardi 1986,14.

<sup>44</sup> The account of Zheng Zhilong’s rise to power in Calanca 2010, 87.

<sup>45</sup> The explanation of the origins of Zheng Zhilong’s public support in Calanca 2010, 88.

## Entering official service

In this part, the circumstances of Zheng Zhilong's entering the official service will be described, in order to find the practical advantages, gained by taking such step, and try to establish, whether these advantages might have been the only reason for his accepting the official function, or whether any proofs of true willingness to support the Ming dynasty can be found.

Any international naval trading activity, not to mention piracy, was against the law, which the coastal officials only very inefficiently enforced, as can clearly be seen in a memorial, which Zhu Yifeng prepared for the information of imperial court<sup>46</sup>:

The Fujian military allows the situation to deteriorate and does not know what it means to reprimand the [sea] bandits. [...]the officers have no desire to fight, and let themselves be tricked by the bandits, mistakenly believing that they will not come, but when they do [those same officers ] are perplexed and lose their heads.[...]The Fujian commanders fear[sea] bandits more than they do the law, [while] the people follow bandits more willingly than they do officials.[...]

As Zheng Zhilong was the commander of the most formidable naval force in the area he would be a perfect candidate to become an efficient agent of extinguishing the illegal activities related to naval transportation, while in the same time, it presented a great danger for the stability and authority of the government to keep such a considerable force and a potential source of unrest out of the control of the law. It therefore seemed as an ideal solution to both of these concerns, to offer Zheng Zhilong to enter the service of the government and become an official in charge of maintaining the safety in the coastal waters, while as Foccardi<sup>47</sup> asserts he also might have been counted upon by the imperial court as an additional source of military power in case of attack of the Manchu forces. For these reasons, in 1627 the governor Cai Shanzhi was ordered to contact Zheng Zhilong and offer him an official pardon of all his past infractions in exchange of his submission to the Ming government authority and assuming an official function.

Clements states<sup>48</sup>, that the main task Zheng Zhilong was to undertake in his new capacity, would be to fight the next leading pirate in the area — Xu Xinsu — also a former associate of Li Dan. The author claims, that Xu Xinsu had been made a similar offer in the same time, encouraging him time to attack his concurrent and even suggests, that Zheng Zhilong might have been aware of the fact.

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<sup>46</sup> Calanca 2010, 88.

<sup>47</sup> Foccardi 1986, 13.

<sup>48</sup> Clements 2005, 50.

Although the other sources provide no support for these claims, both Foccardi<sup>49</sup> and Clements agree, it was due to a pressure of Zheng Zhilong's brother Zhihu (who, according to Clements, could have been afraid of endangering the family's relationship with the Dutch), that the offer had initially been refused, however attractive could it be, when the Zheng family would be "[...] allowed to 'eliminate' the competition of merchants and of pirates. Besides this, they had the permission to request tolls and percentages from all traders who cruised along the Chinese coasts"<sup>50</sup> and it was only in 1628 Zheng Zhilong entered the official service.

The facts presented seem to clearly demonstrate, that the main cause of Zheng Zhilong's accepting the authority of the Ming regime was the opportunity to gain a stronger position for eliminating the concurrency of other pirate leaders. There seems to be no evidence of concern by Zheng Zhilong for the Ming cause and if the statement by Clements were to be believed, that Zheng Zhilong was aware of the fact, that the very same government he was serving, issued secret orders for his destruction by Xu Xinsu, it can hardly be found possible, that there could be any real loyalty shown for such government.

### **Serving the emperor**

The purpose of this part will be to describe the activity of Zheng Zhilong during the time of his official service in behalf of the Ming imperial court and his influence on the decisions of the emperor and on the events connected to the fall of the imperial power. The description will be used as a basis of a discussion trying to determine, whether Zheng Zhilong really tried to serve the restorationist cause, or what was the real goal of his actions.

After accepting his allegiance to the Ming dynasty regime, Zheng Zhilong was bestowed with the title of "Patrolling Admiral" (遊擊將軍 Youji Jiangjun) and assumed the responsibility for pacifying of the south-eastern coastal region. He fought a number of battles and among the foes he defeated were pirate leaders Li Kuiqi(李魁奇— a deserter of his own forces) in 1630<sup>51</sup>, Liu Xiang (劉香) in 1635 and also the Dutch forces in the battle of Liaoluo(料羅) in 1634<sup>52</sup>.

Zheng Zhilong doesn't seem to have been involved in any action aimed to prevent the fall of the imperial court in Beijing, he did however join the Ming loyalists in Nanjing, after the court of the Hongguang emperor had been established there, and was presented with the title of Earl of Nanan(南安伯爵 Nanan bojue)<sup>53</sup> for the support thus shown.

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<sup>49</sup> Foccardi 1986, 14.

<sup>50</sup> Foccardi 1986, 14.

<sup>51</sup> Clements 2005, 59-61.

<sup>52</sup> Foccardi 1986, 20-21.

<sup>53</sup> Foccardi 1986, 27.

As the invading forces were approaching Nanjing, voices arose suggesting the seat of the court were moved southward to an area, that could be better protected and Fujian seemed to be a good choice for such undertaking. According to Clements<sup>54</sup> among the most vocal supporters of the idea was Qian Qianyi — one of the leading officials in the city, however the idea was suppressed by the officials opposing Zheng Zhilong, who were afraid he could excessively expand his influence over the emperor. Furthermore the author even speculates, that Zheng Zhilong might have been inciting his brother, who had been in command of the defences of Zhenjiang to shirk his duties and leave the city after putting up only a nominal resistance, in order to put further pressure on the emperor to move to Fujian<sup>55</sup>, however there seems to be no evidence for these claims. Anyway the matter was soon to be solved by external circumstances as the emperor unexpectedly fled Nanjing and the city fell in the hands of the invaders and after a new successor was enthroned, Fuzhou — the capital of Fujian had indeed become the new seat of the imperial government.

Despite the opposition by some of the court members, like for instance Huang Daozhou(黃道周), Zheng Zhilong seemed to be enjoying the favour of the emperor as he was bestowed with numerous titles(together many of his family members) and thus became marquis of Pinglu and duke of Pingguo<sup>56</sup>(Clements refers to this latter title as “Duke of national pacification”<sup>57</sup>).

According to Clements, Zheng Zhilong was greatly depended upon by the emperor to become one of the main moving forces of the military activities, as he was entrusted with a great portion of responsibility for the martial efforts. Concerning the function of Zheng Zhilong in the imperial government, the author rather unspecifically states that he was “given control of three ministries that related most directly to martial matters”<sup>58</sup>.

Despite all the honours granted to him by the emperor, Zheng Zhilong didn't prove to be willing to make any effort to support any military operation and instead remained in passivity. Struve summarizes the situation as follows<sup>59</sup>:

To a certain extent, the Zhengs welcomed the establishment of the Longwu court in their home territory as a means of augmenting their power. Zheng Zhilong, his relatives and his associates were immediately elevated in positions, ranks and official prerogatives — which naturally expanded their unofficial prerogatives. But when it came to sacrificing the resources of the Zheng organizations to carry the restorationist cause of the Longwu court out of Fujian and back into the political heartland of China, the Zhengs demurred, sometimes citing unfavourable conditions but also making excuses for inaction.

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<sup>54</sup> Clements 2005, 100.

<sup>55</sup> Clements 2005, 106.

<sup>56</sup> Foccardi 1986, 29-30.

<sup>57</sup> Clements 2005, 110.

<sup>58</sup> Clements 2005, 109.

<sup>59</sup> Struve 1998, 123.

While Clements describes the reluctant character of Zheng Zhilong's nominal support for the resistance in similar manner, mentioning several attempts to postpone any counter-offensive, the author further adds, that Zheng Zhilong used his influence on the emperor to persuade him, that a good way to increase the revenues and therefore raise the funds necessary to sustain a complex military expedition, while in the same time efficient means of obtaining the indispensable material resources, would be lifting the former Ming ban on the overseas trade<sup>60</sup>. Clements further speculates whether the rationale behind suggesting such policy was a matter of profit, as it was highly beneficiary for the business operations of the Zheng family, or whether it was a genuine effort to improve the situation of the court. The author however seems to be gravely mistaken in his reasoning, as the very source, he bases his argument on — the article *Cheng Chengkung's Maritime Expansion and Early Ch'ing coastal prohibition* by K'o-Ch'eng Cheng clearly states it was “[...]Zheng Chenggong, seeing his father's wait and see attitude towards the anti-Qing struggle, once encouraged this emperor [Longwu] ‘to establish contacts overseas and enrich the state’, which would, on the one hand, ‘gather the people together in order to strengthen the basis [of his state]’; on the other, he should ‘open up the sea lanes, stimulate trade in each port, in order to satisfy his material needs’[...]”<sup>61</sup>.

No evidence has been found, of any efficient attempts by Zheng Zhilong to contribute to the resistance efforts nor the defence of the imperial court against the invaders. However the suggestions by Clements, that Zheng Zhilong intended to use his influence on the emperor to help his trading interests by opening the overseas trade seem to be incorrect, it can be concluded, that Zheng Zhilong probably only hoped for the situation to produce some profit for his family and never really intended to sacrifice considerable sources nor efforts to the restorationist cause.

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<sup>60</sup> Clements 2005, 111.

<sup>61</sup> Cheng 1990, 232.

## Defecting to Manchus

The circumstances of the defection of Zheng Zhilong to the Manchus will be described in this part of the work, in order to try to explain the rationale behind this decision.

As mentioned before, despite the lack of support by the Zheng family, an expedition, led by Huang Daozhou, was launched, with the goal to counter-attack the Manchu forces and retake Nanjing and after this counter-offensive failed and the Manchu forces were advancing towards Fujian, many of the high officials were made offers of collaboration.

Both Foccardi<sup>62</sup> and Clements<sup>63</sup> state, that Zheng Zhilong was offered the post of viceroy of Fujian and Canton in exchange for his abandoning the Ming cause, accepting the Manchu hairstyle and swearing allegiance to the Qing dynasty and he decided to accept this offer.

Zheng Zhilong explained his decision in a letter addressed to his son Zheng Chenggong:

While in Fuzhou, I have been informed that the troops of general Bolo are waiting for reinforcements in order to invade Fujian and eliminate the resistance of the loyalists. I think that unfortunately there is no hope for the emperor to restore the Ming to the Dragon's Seat. I lack courage in assembling our troops because of the vain attempt in resisting Manchus: it was an useless heroic deed. I prefer to negotiate with Bolo in order to obtain favourable treatment for all families of the clan. Therefore I invite you to lay down your arms, with the hope you will benefit by this action.<sup>64</sup>

He surrendered the city of Fuzhou (which was, according to Clements, at the time already seriously damaged by fire, which started after an explosion in the arsenal of the Zheng forces), but failed to bring his naval forces or any of the significant members of his family under the command of the Manchu, and it had been decided, to Zheng Zhilong 's great discontent that he would be taken to Beijing.

Contrary to what Zheng Chenggong wrote in a letter reacting to the offer of his father to join the Qing cause, where he asks him "[...]what trust can be given to the Qing barbarians who invaded our empire?"<sup>65</sup>, it seems many of the defectors (for example Wu Sangui, who had been made warlord of Yunnan<sup>66</sup>) were indeed given important official posts.

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<sup>62</sup> Foccardi 1986, 31.

<sup>63</sup> Clements 2005, 113.

<sup>64</sup> Foccardi 1986, 31-32.

<sup>65</sup> Foccardi 1986, 34.

<sup>66</sup> Clements 2005, 222.

Zhen Zhilong however, although Clements suggests it was not uncommon for the defectors to be at first taken to Beijing<sup>67</sup> for further examination, never received any official power and was instead eventually taken in captivity, which can be explained not only by the disappointment at his failure to persuade more members of the Zheng family to join the Qing forces, but, as the following events suggest also by his presumed potential to be used as means to pressure the remaining Zheng forces to surrender.

Considering the facts presented, it can be noted, that Zheng Zhilong, in case he was aware of the fate of the previous defectors and on the other hand, of the cruel treatment of the defeated loyalists, could in fact really trust the offers made by the Qing officials and had very definite reasons to fear their retribution in case he refused to cooperate. If the conclusions, that Zheng Zhilong never genuinely supported the resistance efforts, made in previous parts of this work are taken into account, his decision can be seen as simple, and quite justified, attempt to take the most safe course of actions.

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<sup>67</sup> Clements 2005, 116.

## Zheng Chenggong

Zheng Chenggong was born in August 28, 1624 in Japan to miss Tagawa<sup>68</sup> — a woman, whom Zhen Zhilong met during his stay in Japan. He was given name Fukumatsu (福松) by his mother. In 1630 he was sent to China, where his father received him in the Zheng family residence in Anhai (安海) and changed his name to Zheng Sen (鄭森) and gave him a new public name Da mu (大木). Unlike his father, he received classical education in the Imperial School of Nanjing academy in the years 1638-1644. He was said to be skilled poet and calligrapher and be adept in martial arts. He married his first wife, lady Dong Cuiying in 1641.

### In the court of the Longwu emperor

In this chapter Zheng Chenggong's relationship to the Longwu emperor, his activity in the imperial court and his role in the events, that led to the fall of this court, will be described, in order to find what influence this episode had on the development of his loyalty to the Ming dynasty and the restorationist cause.

When Zheng Zhilong introduced his son to the Longwu emperor in 1645, "The emperor was fascinated by the intelligence and personality of the young man. He changed the name of Sen to Chenggong and allowed him to use the name of the imperial family"<sup>69</sup>. From this honour originates the name Koxinga/Coxinga, by which is Zheng Chenggong usually referred to in western literature — it is the distorted form of the expression Guoxingye (國姓爺) — the lord of the imperial surname. Clements states the right to use the imperial surname "amounted to a symbolic adoption" and that emperor even "commented that he was disappointed not to have a daughter he could offer to Coxinga in marriage"<sup>70</sup>. Furthermore, in 1646, Zheng Chenggong was bestowed by the emperor with the title of earl of Zhongxiao<sup>71</sup> and assumed the rank of "Field Marshal of the punitive expedition"<sup>72</sup>. He was then put in command of the forces guarding the Xianxia pass (仙霞關), which was a gateway to the territory of Fujian. After the treason of his father, without hope for reinforcements, he was forced to withdraw from the position and eventually found shelter in Quemoy, where he learned about the unfortunate fate of his mother.

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<sup>68</sup> Main source of basic biographic information is Foccardi 1986.

<sup>69</sup> Foccardi 1986, 34.

<sup>70</sup> Clements 2005, 110.

<sup>71</sup> Clements 2005, refers to this title as "Count of loyalty" and adds it was awarded, together with the military rank, after Zheng Chenggong "presented the emperor with a plan for strengthening his position".

<sup>72</sup> Foccardi 1986, 29.

The loyalty of Zheng Chenggong to his emperor was much deeper, than that of his father, as the letter he wrote to Zheng Zhilong in response to the treason, suggests:

How is this possible that my father, who has always inculcated to me the virtue of loyalty, can contemplate such a dishonest surrender? How can my father pretend that his son would be called a traitor? Moreover, what trust can be given to the Qing barbarians who invaded our Empire? Even if my father's feelings, if indeed You have feelings, change toward the Emperor, I will be faithful to the Ming until death.<sup>73</sup>

As the facts presented seem to demonstrate, Zheng Chenggong was a loyal servant of the Longwu emperor, who bestowed him with many honours and whose personality probably impressed him to a considerable extent, and was deeply disappointed by the decision his father made to abandon the cause of defending the falling Ming dynasty and defect to the Manchus, which eventually forced Zheng Chenggong to temporarily forsake his duties to the imperial court, that he seemed to be truly determined to defend. He actively performed his duties as a military commander, until the treason of Zheng Zhilong forced him to retreat.

### Resisting the Qing offers

In this part, the progress of the peace negotiations between Zheng Chenggong and the Qing imperial court will be analysed. The tactics used by both sides will be described, in order to establish, whether there was any will to reach a consent at the side of Zheng Chenggong. Another goal of this part of the work will be to find the motivation behind maintaining these negotiations and also the reason, why he didn't follow his father in his defection.

The Qing officials made serious efforts to gain the support of Zheng Chenggong to their cause. The first attempt to achieve a peaceful solution to the situation was made between the years 1651 and 1652, when Liu Qintai (劉清泰), a governor of Fujian was ordered to contact Zheng Chenggong and offer him to discuss the terms of surrender. The answer was laconic and resolute:

It is impossible for me, to believe the words of barbarians. Besides this, how can I rely on a Chinese who is collaborating with the invaders?<sup>74</sup>

The Qing then decided to change their tactic and used Zheng Zhilong who had been at the time transferred to Beijing, where he was "free but closely watched"<sup>75</sup> and supposedly "lived like a prince, although his luxurious palace in Beijing was merely a very luxurious jail".<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Foccardi 1986, 33-34.

<sup>74</sup> Foccardi 1986, 50.

<sup>75</sup> Foccardi 1986, 50.

<sup>76</sup> Clements 2005, 128.

A manuscript found in Shijing in 1927, which was according to Struve (1998, 184) a primary record of events connected to the resistance activity of Zheng Chenggong, written by one of his revenue officials by the name of Yang Ying, provides a good insight into these negotiations between Zheng Chenggong and the Qing government mediated by Zheng Zhilong:

[1st month (February) of 1653]. Zhou Jiwu — having been deputed by Grand Preceptor and Duke of Pingguo [Zheng Zhilong] arrived at Xiamen from Beijing and transmitted a message from Zhilong informing the prince [Zheng Chenggong] that the Qing court wished to talk peace and ordering him to engage in such talks. The prince deputed Li De with a return letter to the Grand Preceptor, which said in part: “It has been several years since your son went southward, and he has already become the person beyond the pale. Zhang Xuesheng [the former governor of Fujian] had no reason to start trouble arbitrarily [in the raids of 1651]. Your son could not respond in kind. Now that he is riding a tiger, it’s hard to get off ; troops that have been gathered are hard to disperse.”<sup>77</sup>

In this message, Zheng Chenggong is referring to the atrocities (the raids of 1651) the Qing forces committed in the Zheng territories in Amoy when he was absent attending a military campaign on behalf of the loyalists. Clements concludes that he was “advising his father that his recent actions in the south [siege of Zhangzhou (漳州) and capture of Haicheng city] had merely been in response to Manchu aggression”<sup>78</sup> and therefore renounces responsibility for initiating the hostilities. Following this unsuccessful attempt Zheng Zhilong was compelled to write another letter offering a permission to keep the conquered territories and a title of duke in exchange for surrender:

[8th month (September-October)]. Li De, Zhou Jiwu, and others, having been deputed by the Grand Preceptor, the Duke of Pingguo, to present a letter in the duke’s own hand to the Prince, arrived and stated: “the Qing court wishes to confer land in exchange for peace. They wish to depute two high officials to present the seal of, and the documents bestowing the title of Duke of Haicheng, authorizing the settlement of your followers in the lands of [Haicheng] Prefecture. The mission would be guaranteed by [the current viceroy of Zhejiang and Fujian] Liu Qingtai. They have sent us in advance to ascertain your willingness. After we report back, they will order the court envoys to come and make their presentation.” The prince said, “The Qing court wants to trick me, eh? One way or another we’ll use the situation to extract plenty of supplies to feed the troops.”<sup>79</sup>

This last sentence refers to a campaign Zheng Chenggong had launched in the area, which according to Clements<sup>80</sup> aimed at establishing whether, the people of the region still supported the Zheng family and its loyalist cause by collecting monetary contributions or as Struve (1998, 191) comments extorting moneys and goods from well-to-do local families.

Then he [Zheng Chenggong] wrote a return missive to the Duke of Pingguo and ordered Li De to gallop [day and] night to the Qing capital to report. The missive said: “For eight years now I have failed to serve at my father’s knee. But then, since my father no longer regarded his son as such, I did not presume to consider myself a son. Consequently our inquiries after one another utterly ceased; not one word has gone between us. Circumstances have been so extraordinary as to alienate even flesh and blood.

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<sup>77</sup> Struve 1998, 184.

<sup>78</sup> Clements 2005, 131.

<sup>79</sup> Struve 1998, 184.

<sup>80</sup> Clements 2005, 134.

Since the ancient times, the principle that the greater righteousness [in serving one's ruler and state] extinguishes one's duty to his family has been the instruction of men in sensible, not unstable, states of mind. When your son first learned to read, he straightaway respected this meaning of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. I had been contemplating that principle for some time when, in the winter of 1646, Father's carriage entered the Qing capital and committed me to acting on it.

This part of the letter concerns an important point in the development of the situation — the importance of Zheng Chenggong's obligations to his father. In this concern it must not be forgotten, that while the submission to the authority of the Qing government would accord to the filial duty to his father, it would also mean a cooperation with a regime whose armed forces were responsible for the death of his mother<sup>81</sup>.

Wang 2002, 46 also stresses the influence the different educational backgrounds had on the ideological dissension between the father and son, pointing out that Zheng Zhilong, unlike his son, didn't have the opportunity to embrace the Confucian virtues of loyalty and patriotism through a systematic education:

The anti-Qing attitude towards the Ming restoration Zheng Chenggong and his son Zheng Jing possessed, was no coincidence — it stemmed from their personalities being formed by extensive Confucian education. Zheng Zhilong had not received this kind of education, as he was born maritime trader and pirate and although he entered the official service of the Ming dynasty, the loyalty to his ruler nor patriotism were not among his most cherished values and the personal profit was still of the greatest importance to him.<sup>82</sup>

The effect of the deployment of Zheng Zhilong as an agent of the negotiations is only in the moral appeal a father's plea should have on obedient son, as it has been already shown, that the defection of Zheng Zhilong was not supported by all the members of the Zheng family<sup>83</sup> and, as Zheng Zhilong was held in isolation in Beijing, it can be asserted, that he could hardly exercise any real influence on the decisions taken by his son.

The letter Zheng Chenggong wrote to his father then continues discussing the offers of cooperation and bestowal of official titles the Qing imperial court made:

Out of the blue I have received your stern directive that your son's capacity for loyalty be brought to reinforce filiality. As before, you transmit the oral edict of the Qing court, including talk about my having been an earl and a marquis [under the Ming, which would be warrant] an expeditious elevation in rank. But if the Qing have lost credence with the father, how can the father's words bear credence with the son? When the Manchu prince [Bolo] entered the pass [to Fujian], my father had long since retreated home to avoid the situation. They then used ingratiating phrases and clever language delivered by envoys who came to woo you in entourages of horses and carriages that went back and forth not fewer than ten times. They went as far as to bait my father with a princely title and control over the three provinces. Now it's been several years. Let's not speak of

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<sup>81</sup> As described in the historical introduction on page 10.

<sup>82</sup> Translated from Chinese "鄭成功、鄭經父子具有反清復明的價值觀並非偶然，乃來自人格成長期的儒家教育。鄭芝龍沒受這種教育，故出身海商兼海寇之餘，雖降明為官，其價值觀並無忠君愛國之念，仍以私利為重".

<sup>83</sup> See page 22.

the princely title or the assumption of command — now even if you wanted to pass through your old neighbourhood, you couldn't. How can their words be believed? <sup>84</sup>

This paragraph clearly shows the doubts Zheng Chenggong had of the credibility of the promises the Qing court made of the rewards awaiting him after his surrender, which seem to be justified by the treatment his father received after his defection.

When my father was in the Ming court, was he not the exalted duke of Pingguo? Now that he's serving the Qing court, how is it that he's behind others? But it is that way even for those who went over to the Qing first. How much more so for the last to submit? Also laughable was that early on, your son sent Wang Yu to enter Beijing only because he had heard rumours about your circumstances and thought to have someone look into them. But Wang was abruptly put into prison and subjected to extremely cruel floggings. What could one Wang Yu have perpetrated? But seeing how they barked at shadows like that, the rest could be known.[...]

This last note might seem to bear a hint of what Foccardi suggests on multiple occasions: “that as soon as the Qing captured him, his head would no longer remain on his shoulders”<sup>85</sup>. According to the author Zheng Chenggong's worries were articulated in a letter written in ??? to his father: “You surrendered while things were not at such extent and they have treated you as prisoner. What can I expect if I would surrender? For you there were empty promises, for me there will be death”.<sup>86</sup> These concerns, however, don't seem to be openly expressed anywhere in the contemporary records quoted in this work, nor do other sources seem to provide any support for the fact, that Zheng Chenggong could have been motivated in his resistance by a fear of capital punishment that should follow in the case of his surrender. In the very end of his letter, he however expresses worries, that if he “were to display an empty meaningless title while acquiescing in what actually was a disaster, then people's minds would tend to revolt against such falsity, and Jiangnan, too, would be hard to keep secure for long.”<sup>87</sup>

Considering the fact, that in the rest of his letter to his father, after justifying his actions against the Qing as a retaliation for the crimes committed by the Qing forces, suggesting his cause had supporters from another countries, such as Japan<sup>88</sup>, depicting the difficulties, which the Qing military trying to organise an expedition to the southern regions would have to face; he makes a demand to be given control of three provinces<sup>89</sup> in exchange for his cooperation with the Qing<sup>90</sup>, which according to Clements<sup>91</sup> is a bold provocation or even “a slap in the face for

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<sup>84</sup> A continuation of the letter in Struve 1998, 186.

<sup>85</sup> Foccardi 1986, 55.

<sup>86</sup> A passage of a letter Zheng Chenggong according to Foccardi (1986, 51) privately wrote to his father in response to his appeal for Zheng Chenggong to start negotiations with the Qing imperial court.

<sup>87</sup> Struve 1998, 184.

<sup>88</sup> Struve 1998, 186.

<sup>89</sup> According to Struve(1998, 188) Zheng Chenggong demands to be given control of Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi—the provinces his father controlled as official of the Ming regime. He justifies his demands by the need to raise provisions to support an army powerful enough to maintain peace in the area.

<sup>90</sup> Struve 1998, 188.

<sup>91</sup> Clements 2005, 132.

Iquan[Zheng Zhilong] and the Manchus". It might be therefore suggested, that the concerns about insecurity of the region resulting from Zheng Chenggong's abandoning of the Ming cause, might as well only be a part of this provocation.

The claims that the demands of the territorial rewards were a mere provocation and therefore Zheng Chenggong had no real intentions to start cooperation with the Qing regime also seem to be supported by the instructions Zheng Chenggong was reported to have given to his emissary, who was in charge of establishing the diplomatic contact with the Qing officials. According to Struve he gave the envoy the following orders:

On the matter of peace negotiations, my will is already set, and you are not to discuss the matter. Your responses to the Qing emissaries should be just a show of decorum; you are not to detract from our dynasty's integrity. [...] <sup>92</sup>

The Qing court ignored this demand and issued an official edict, where it is reiterating their former offer, but also pointing out, that the service of the Zheng family, would still be needed after the surrender:

Even if maritime sector is pacified, our defence command will need talent. Rather than choosing someone else, would it not be better to employ you? [...] All measures for defending against or eradicating the pirates of Fujian coast shall be at your discretion. All seagoing vessels shall be subject to your management, inspection and collection of taxes. <sup>93</sup>

It is probably from this fact, that Clements (2005, 133) concludes the officials were suggesting, that Zheng Chenggong would really be granted pardon for his infractions.

Zheng Chenggong then launched a punitive expedition against cities in the Haitan Island area, the inhabitants of which were suspected of attacking the Zheng ships and then again contacted Liu Qingtai repeating his demands to be given the control of three provinces in exchange for his collaboration <sup>94</sup>. The statements both by Clements, that in this time "Koxinga continued to ignore the Manchus" <sup>95</sup> and by Foccardi, that "Koxinga's only answer [to the offer of the title] was the renewal of a retaliation campaign along the coast of Fujian[...]" <sup>96</sup> do not seem to be very precise.

The governor Liu Qingtai refused these demands in a derisive and disdainful manner replying that: "[...] As for presenting you with three provinces, where did that preposterous talk come from? [...] There must be no more useless, unrepeatable claptrap about impossible things, which only foments controversy. In the end you will lose this opportunity by failing to act properly." and made numerous remarks about the Zheng family members in captivity and even Zheng

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<sup>92</sup> An account of the events quoted from Struve 1998, 190.

<sup>93</sup> Struve 1998, 190.

<sup>94</sup> Struve 1998, 192.

<sup>95</sup> Clements 2005, 134.

<sup>96</sup> Foccardi 1986, 52.

family tombs and the fear that “[...]Your Honour’s military actions in such a small area might bring injury to their surface[...]<sup>97</sup>, which eventually happened<sup>98</sup>.

The draft imperial edict on the matter seems to be bearing a similar undertone of impatience, with the high demands made during the negotiations:

[...]You look forward to being delegated authority over all of Fujian, and on the pretext of undertaking military actions, you also speak of colonising Zhoushan Island and drawing supplementary revenues from nearby prefectures like Wenzhou, Taizhou, Ningbo, and Shaoxing. These words are ridiculous; your demands are insatiable.[...]

The edict then urges Zheng Chenggong to continue in the peace negotiations and accept the offered terms of surrender:

[...]if you honour Our original edict and act in accord with what it requires, that means you accept the decree and seal, shave your head, and come to submission — the matter is finished. Should you fail to submit, then think and plan very carefully to avoid future regrets.

As the records quoted in Struve (1998, 195-196) further inform, Zheng Chenggong then resumed his military operations and in a few months’ time he received a missive informing him, that new emissaries of the Qing court have arrived to Fuzhou — among them were his younger brothers Zheng Du and Zheng Yin, who had followed his father into the captivity in Beijing. The emissaries asked to have an envoy sent to accompany them further to the Zheng territory. The response to these demands was openly sarcastic:

[...]He [a lowly wanderer of the seaboard<sup>99</sup>] never expected that after the family tombs were desecrated, grand injunctions would arrive one upon another, reinforced with the silken missives of an emperor ‘treating him with heartfelt sincerity.’<sup>100</sup> [...]

however, with a similar undertone, he agreed to accept the envoy :

[...]By rights, how could I refuse? With humble gifts in hand, I wait expectantly for your vehicle. Some inner feelings have not yet been fully disclosed and require face-to-face discussions.<sup>101</sup>[...]

The official emissaries impatiently refused to continue the negotiations, unless Zheng Chenggong were to agree to surrender, stating, that “If you do not shave your head<sup>102</sup>, then you cannot receive the proclamation. If your head is not shaven then we need not even meet”<sup>103</sup>

The chronicle Struve(1995, 196) quotes, then informs, that “the two emissaries ordered the inner imperial master [Shi]Du [Chenggong’s first younger brother] and Master Yin[Chenggong’s fourth younger brother] to visit the prince” — although Clements (2005, 135) states, it was Shidu, who “broke the protocol and went to see Coxinga in person” both sources agree, that

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<sup>97</sup> Struve 1998, 190.

<sup>98</sup> Clements 2005, 134.

<sup>99</sup> An overly polite form of self-addressing Zheng Chenggong used in this letter.

<sup>100</sup> A mocking reference to earlier imperial edict concerning the matter introduced in Struve 1998, 190.

<sup>101</sup> A letter of invitation for the emissaries recorded in the chronicles in Struve 1995, 196.

<sup>102</sup> Accepting the Manchu hairstyle was a token of submission to the Qing authority.

<sup>103</sup> A message from the officials waiting in Fuzhou as quoted by Struve 1995, 196.

upon seeing his older brother, Shidu weeping begged him on his knees to accept the offers of the Manchus, expressing his fears, that if the cooperation was refused again, the whole family in Beijing might be in danger.

However emotional the pleas of his brothers might have been, Zheng Chenggong still kept refusing to surrender. His answer bears marks of sympathy and concern for the distress of his relatives, while in the same time expresses further mistrust of the Qing, reflected in his suspicion, that the security of Zheng Zhilong and other members of Zheng family, who followed him in captivity, would be in even greater jeopardy after they were no longer needed as hostages in the process of the negotiations:

You ordinary sons have never understood affairs of the world.[...]For every day I don't accept the proclamation, Father has one day of glory at the court. Were I to feebly accept the proclamation and shave my head, then the fates of father and sons alike would be hard to predict. Don't say any more. Am I so inhuman as to forget our father? This sort of thing is not easy — not easy!<sup>104</sup>

After several days of keeping his brothers as guests, Zheng Chenggong dispatched them to go back to the official emissaries and present them with gifts and an invitation for another personal meeting, however was denied further negotiations, unless he was willing to provide a definite answer, as the envoy had been instructed to return to Beijing and report the results of their mission. One last attempt was made by the younger Zheng brothers to persuade Zheng Chenggong to accept the offer of the cooperation with the Qing openly expressing fears, that the lives of all the family members in Beijing would be in danger unless he submitted. They received a harsh and resolute answer: "No matter how much is said or how things change, my mind is made up. Say no more!"<sup>105</sup>

Not even a request from Zheng Zhilong to his younger brother Zheng Hongkui (鄭鴻逵) to help to persuade Zheng Chenggong to change his mind bore any positive outcome, as the only answer to these efforts was "The greater righteousness lies in extinguishing concern for one's kin. Since early on, I've pursued this principle, and my plans to realize it are decided"<sup>106</sup>.

In 1665 Zheng Zhilong was stripped of all titles, that had been bestowed on him by the Qing and imprisoned together with the family members, who were held in Beijing. According to Clements (2005, 137) the arrest was not a direct result of the failure of the negotiations, but punishment after a secret letter, Zheng Zhilong wrote to his son, in which he was expressing support of his actions, was captured by the Manchus. Foccardi seems to be supporting this claim, suggesting that he was arrested after being "charged with traitorous connivance with pirates"<sup>107</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> The answer to the supplication by Zheng Shidu, recorded in the chronicles in Struve 1995, 196.

<sup>105</sup> This paragraph summarizes historical records in Struve 1995, 197-198.

<sup>106</sup> Struve 1995, 199-200.

<sup>107</sup> Explanation of the circumstances of the arrest of Zheng Zhilong in Foccardi 1986, 54.

Zheng Chenggong never surrendered to the Qing. Based on the development of the peace negotiations, the contemporary accounts of the events and the statements made by Zheng Chenggong himself, it can be judged, he disapproved of his father's defection to the Manchus, distrusted the willingness of the Manchus to honour their promises and considered the loyalty to his ruler more important, than the loyalty to his family. For these reasons he had never intended to abandon the restorationist cause, nor break his loyalty to the Ming dynasty, not even when the welfare and security of his closest relatives was used as a means of extortion aiming at forcing him into cooperation. It can be concluded, that an offer of truce, which according to Clements (2005, 158) Zheng Chenggong made, when retreating from the unsuccessful inland campaign later in 1659 was the only sincere effort to establish any kind of cooperation. From the fact that a fundraising military campaign was underway<sup>108</sup> in the time of the negotiations and from the suspicion Zheng Chenggong expressed, that the lives of his relatives in Beijing might be in danger after the threat of his military opposition was extinguished, it seems, that all the negotiations and pretence of willingness to find a peaceful solution was only a ploy designed to gain more time to prepare for the commencement of open hostilities.

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<sup>108</sup> As explained on page 27.

## A loyal king

As mentioned before, after the death of the Longwu emperor in 1646 Zheng Chenggong decided to continue his fight for the restorationist cause under the allegiance to the newly enthroned Yongli emperor and he retreated to the Zheng family coastal bases to reconsolidate his forces and commence preparations for a decisive military counterattack. In this chapter the activities connected to these efforts will be described in order to establish, what their nature was — whether it was closer to piracy or an attrition warfare, led in pursuing a honourable cause. The responses of the exile Ming court, in form of bestowal of official titles, as well as reactions of the Qing officials will also be taken into account, in order to support any conclusions made.

Except for the tribute-collecting campaign mentioned in previous chapter, naval trade and piracy on the ships, passing along the Chinese coast, raids against cities held by the Manchus seemed to be the among the main sources of the Zheng family income<sup>109</sup>.

One of the most important of these raids and also one of the first major successes in the anti-Qing campaign was the capture of the Tongan city in 1648. The Yongli emperor was said to be greatly pleased by this victory and awarded Zheng Chenggong the title of Marquis of Weiyuan and later Duke of Changguo<sup>110</sup>.

The purpose of these attacks was to quickly gather monetary resources and inflict losses among the Manchu forces. According to Clements this kind of military activities was controversial and one of these raids brought serious discord into the very nearest circles around Zheng Chenggong, when one of his highest officials, Shi Lang, stated, that “in his opinion, it made Zhen Coxinga ‘little better than a thief’, an accusation that managed to insult Coxinga’s ancestors, family, father and sense of duty all at once”<sup>111</sup>, which was, as the author implies, the reason, why Shi Lang escaped and defected to the Manchus. These raids, however cannot be considered mere acts of piracy as they were directed against the towns, which were in the enemy hands and it was a strictly enforced part of the policy of the Zheng forces to avoid inflicting harm to ordinary citizens and their property<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>109</sup>As described in Clements 2005, 120-121.

<sup>110</sup>According to Foccardi 1986, 42.

<sup>111</sup> As described in Clements 2005, 124.

<sup>112</sup> As Foccardi states in 1986, 47.

The attrition warfare, led by Zheng Chenggong in the coastal area caused heavy losses to the Manchus and after the peace negotiations had failed, numerous military operations against the Zheng forces were organised. Among the most prominent was the attack led in 1655 by prince Jidu (濟度), that deprived Zheng of a large amount of territory, as they were forced to retreat to Amoy, however in the fights considerable losses were inflicted to the Manchu army, for which Zheng Chenggong was rewarded by the emperor by the bestowing of the title of prince of Yanping<sup>113</sup> (延平王 Yangping Wang<sup>114</sup>). None of the attempts on direct military confrontation seemed to achieve the desired goal of wiping the Zheng presence off the coast and, as mentioned before<sup>115</sup>, following the inland expedition of 1657, the ultimate measure of evacuating all civil presence in the coastal area had been taken. This desperate measure however, according to Cheng (1990, 240-241), did more harm than benefit to the Qing cause as it had not severed the connections between Zheng and their mainland sympathisers entirely, while gravely damaging the economics of the coastal provinces and making many of the refugees from the affected area flee to Taiwan to join the Zheng forces.

Although the means of gathering resources, Zheng Chenggong used to fund his resistance endeavours, might not seem to be a commonly found practice in leading a resistance warfare, they, however harmful innocent civilians<sup>116</sup>, cannot be simply considered criminal activity, and given the fact, that the need for the resources was eventually justified by launching a vast military expedition, the fact, that Zheng Chenggong kept displaying loyalty to the Ming court<sup>117</sup> and never completely lost the popular support<sup>118</sup> seem to prove, that all the military operations were meant to serve the restorationist cause.

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<sup>113</sup> Account of the events in Foccardi 1986, 58.

<sup>114</sup> Clements (2005, 137) notes, that the title bestowed can also be translated as “king” and that “Coxinga was still subordinate to the emperor, but he was acknowledged as the ruler of his own domain in the emperor’s name”.

<sup>115</sup> See the pages 9-10.

<sup>116</sup> A very shocking example of harm caused by the military activities led by Zheng Chenggong is the case of the siege of the Zhangzhou city, where the inhabitants were left with no choice, but to resort to cannibalism due to the shortage of provisions, as described in Foccardi (1986, 49).

<sup>117</sup> One very salient token of the continued loyalty is described in Clements (2005, 124) the renaming of Amoy to 思明 Siming, which the author translates as “Think Ming”.

<sup>118</sup> The presence of popular support seems to be demonstrated by the facts, that many people still remained willing to maintain contact with the Zheng, even after the harsh prohibition of any coastal activity and that many of the inhabitants of the coastal areas preferred to flee to Zheng base on Taiwan to moving inland, as discussed in Cheng (1990, 241-242).

## Zheng Jing

Zheng Jing was born in 1642 to lady Cuiying, the principal wife of Zheng Chenggong. Few is known about his early life in a Zheng family base in Anhai and from 1650 in Amoy under the supervision of his mother. Although he had fallen in disfavour of his father, after he begot a child with a wet-nurse of the family and Zheng Chenggong even issued orders for his son to be executed, however because of the sudden death of his father Zheng Jing eventually avoided the punishment<sup>119</sup>. Following Zheng Chenggong's death a dispute broke out over his succession<sup>120</sup> — the leadership had been claimed concurrently by Zheng Jing in Amoy and by his uncle Zheng Shixi(鄭世襲) in Taiwan. Zheng Jing made use of the vast military experience and reputation of Zhou Quanbin and put him in the command of a military expedition against Taiwan. After he notified the resident military leaders of his planned invasion, only a handful of them remained in opposition against his succession and they were soon defeated in a quick battle, that ensued upon the arrival of Zheng Jing's forces.

### Following in father's footsteps

In this part, the resistance activities Zheng Jing undertook against the Qing regime will be described, in order to establish, whether he was determined to continue pursuing the restorationist cause, or find any other respective sources of motivation for the actions taken.

According to Clements (2005, 216) was offered, like before his father and grandfather, a pardon and an official title in exchange for his accepting the Manchu authority, to which he responded with demands to be given a status of a ruler of independent tributary state. The author states, that these demands were merely means of gaining more time for the fight with over the Zheng Chenggong's legacy.

Clements(2005, 223) states, that Zheng Jing had been made an offer in 1674 to join the Rebellion of the three feudatories by Geng Jinzhong and in exchange for his cooperation he was to be rewarded by the returning of Amoy and Quemoy<sup>121</sup> along with providing two new prefectures in Fujian<sup>122</sup>. Zheng Jing accepted the offer and according to Clements (2205, 224), he could contribute to the rebel army by a force of 200 000 soldiers. As Foccardi (1986, 111-112) describes, the rebellion achieved success in its beginning, when the rebels managed to capture ten provinces, however the alliance soon started to weaken, due to mutual mistrust, which the author accounts to the exaggerated self-confidence of Geng Jinzhong,

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<sup>119</sup> As described before on page 12.

<sup>120</sup> The fight for Zheng Chenggong's legacy is described in Clements 2005, 216.

<sup>121</sup> Lost to the Dutch-Qing attack in 1663, as described on page 12.

<sup>122</sup> As to the amount of the territory to be awarded Foccardi (1986, 111) only speaks of granting "suzerainty over some cities in the mainland as Dongan and Haicheng".

who emboldened by the victories achieved, supposedly deemed the participation of Zheng Jing in the campaign unnecessary and revoked the promises given. Clements (2005, 223-224) adds Zheng Jing also started to doubt the sincerity<sup>123</sup> of the loyalty of the rebels to the Ming cause.

As the description of the events by Foccardi (1986, 112-114) continues, after the breakage of the alliance Zheng Jing captured the two towns by force and started a military campaign from the bases thus acquired. According to the author, the Zheng forces captured the cities of Quanzhou(泉州) and Zhangzhou in 1674 and by 1676 controlled eight provinces in Fujian and Guandong and in the May of 1676 even had a fleet near Zhoushan(舟山) prepared for a large-scale inland attack, the efforts were however seriously set back when Geng Jinzhong surrendered to Manchus in the same year and the Qing forces were free to focus on counter-offensive against Zheng.

The rebellion started to lose momentum, and after the recapture of the cities of Quanzhou and Haicheng by the Manchu forces in 1677, Zheng Jing was made an offer to surrender by the Qing, which he refused. Despite further minor victories<sup>124</sup> the Zheng forces were eventually expelled from the mainland to Taiwan and one year later, in 1681, Zheng Jing died on Taiwan.

The authors disagree on the matter, whether Zheng Jing kept his loyalty to the Ming dynasty cause — while Foccardi claims that “there is no doubt that Zheng Jing had intention of pursuing his father’s line”<sup>125</sup>, Clements states, that Zheng Jing “gave up most pretences of loyalty to the dead dynasty”<sup>126</sup> and notes there was a suitable candidate for succession to the Ming imperial throne — a distant relative of the founder of the Ming dynasty Zhu Shugui(朱術桂 1617 - 1683) — whom Zheng Jing made no effort to enthrone and instead kept him in seclusion in a luxurious mansion in Taiwan, out of the center of the decision-making process.

If this last statement is taken into account, the answer to the question, whether the motivation of actions taken by Zheng Jing was loyalty to the Ming dynasty or extending the power of the Zheng family, seems to remain unclear. It cannot be denied however, that he made serious efforts to establish a military opposition capable of directly challenging the authority of the Qing dynasty over the Chinese territory.

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<sup>123</sup> After Wu Sangui started the Rebellion of the three feudatories in 1673, he, according to Clements (2005, 223), proclaimed his allegiance to the ambiguous figure of prince of Zhou, whose existence was, as the author states, suspected to just be a subterfuge devised by Wu Sangui to mask his own ambitions to seize the throne. These suspicions proved to be justified in 1678, when Wu Sangui proclaimed himself the first emperor of a new Zhou dynasty(周).

<sup>124</sup> Foccardi (1986, 114) informs, that between the years 1677 - 1678 managed to capture several smaller towns on the coast and temporarily retake Quanzhou and Haicheng, slaughtering 30 000 Manchu soldiers

<sup>125</sup> Conclusion made by Foccardi (1986, 108).

<sup>126</sup> Quotation and information about Zhu Shugui is taken from Clements 2005, 217.

## Conclusion

From all the accounts of the process of the fall of the Ming dynasty and the raise of the government established by the Manchus, it is obvious that this era encompasses a vast procession of events, including extraordinary acts of heroism, treason, grave mistakes and alternations of chance, connected by a complicated network of relations based on loyalty, enmity and practical calculation. Due to the numerous different points of view and varied level of reliability of the sources, it can be hardly ever completely explained or understood in its entirety.

The Zheng family seems to have had a deep impact on the development of the situation. The role of the family in the historical events starts with the figure of Zheng Zhilong, who seems to have entered the service of the falling Ming imperial dynasty in pursuing of his own practical goals of gaining a more powerful basis to eliminate his competitors. He didn't seem to ever be willing to undertake any real effort in order to protect the ruler, he swore his allegiance to. When the circumstances seemed to have become terminally unfavourable for the Ming restorationist cause, Zheng Zhilong abandoned his emperor and surrendered to the incoming Qing military forces. His treason however didn't bring him the expected benefits and although the Manchu officials seemed to treat the military and civil officials, who defected to them, favourably and award them with high ranks, Zheng Zhilong himself fell into disfavour and became a mere prisoner.

Zheng Chenggong, who was introduced by his father to one of the last of the rulers of the Ming dynasty — the Longwu emperor — was bestowed with many official honours and became a faithful servant of the Ming imperial court and an ardent of the restorationist efforts. Although he had established diplomatic contacts with the Qing imperial court, he seems to never have had any real intentions of following his father into the Qing service. He seems to have used the peace negotiations only as a subterfuge to gain more time to prepare a large-scale military campaign against the Qing regime. Although the means, he used to gather the resources to fund his military efforts sometimes could have included some methods, that could be considered a criminal activity, he indeed managed to launch an attack of considerable strength on Chinese inland territories. Despite the fact, that the attack was repelled and Zheng Chenggong was forced by radical coastal regulations, made by the Qing government, to seek a refuge at Taiwan, he never gave up the effort, aiming at expulsion of the Manchus and restoring the Ming dynasty to the throne, and was only prevented from organising further offensive against the Chinese mainland by his sudden death.

Zheng Jing, despise falling in disfavour shortly before the death of his father, inherited the Zheng family empire. Although the true motivation of his actions seems to remain questionable, given the fact, that he supposedly reopened the negotiations with the Qing regime, demanding to be given a status of a semi-dependent ruler, and didn't try to instate a new claimant to the imperial throne, he undeniably made serious efforts to undermine the stability of the Qing regime and thus continue in the mission of his father at least in the respect of trying to damage the power of the Qing dynasty. After losing the territories on the coast of mainland China his prospects on finally overthrowing the new dynasty became even more illusory, than those of Zheng Chenggong and it can be concluded, that the last chances for a reversal of the fall of the Ming dynasty died with Zheng Jing.

The Zheng family seems to have deeply affected the process of the fall of the Ming dynasty in a negative way by the treason of Zheng Zhilong and also in a positive way by the extraordinary efforts of the other family members to support the restorationist cause. Even as the struggle to reinstate the Ming emperor to the rulership of the Chinese empire eventually didn't achieve success, the case of the Zheng family nevertheless remains a remarkable example of what an extensive impact a contribution of a few exceptional personalities can have on the course of history.

## Footnotes

### Transcription

In this work pinyin is used exclusively for the transcription of Chinese expressions. Where a different transcription is used in the original source, in order to maintain the integrity of the work, it is converted to pinyin in the quotations, with the exception of names of literary sources and of the authors.

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