Spain, China, and Japan in Manila, 1571-1644

Tremml-Werner, Birgit

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6 Local-Central Tensions

Geopolitical Strategies, Intelligence, and Information Gathering

Geopolitical Shifts

Over the course of the seventeenth century, politics and geopolitical motivations overshadowed functioning mercantile patterns in Manila. Yet, such unrest was certainly not an exclusive European import to Asia; nor was it the result of local Asian reaction to foreign intrusion. On a political level, the most outstanding accomplishment of the Manila system was Chinese and Japanese emancipation from aggressive European advances in the China Seas to that effect that the Japanese eventually dictated terms to the Europeans. Yet only those who could live with the new rules survived relatively unharmed. The Spaniards were not among them. Thus, the first part of this chapter tackles the impact of these shifts on Manila. The second part, in turn, pinpoints information flows within the broader Manila system and seeks to provide answers to the question as to what extent pre-modern states managed to benefit from the availability of knowledge.

China: Taiwan and the Zheng

Whereas changes in the China Seas and especially along the Fujianese coast and in Japan have been discussed in detail, Taiwan as a ‘backup Luzon’ will receive more attention below. Needless to say, explaining Spanish interest in Taiwan with typical conquest ideology would create a rather misleading picture. From the very beginning, Spanish advances were but economic-strategic reactions: First, to the pressure felt by Japanese advances under Hideyoshi and later, by the Dutch intrusion. As early as 1596, Spanish authorities suggested taking over Taiwan as a countermeasure against a suspected Japanese takeover.1 By that time, Taiwan (la Isla Hermosa, sp., or la Isla Formosa, pt., as the Iberians called it) was still outside the Chinese sphere of political influence.2 Manileños accused the Japanese

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2 Ng (1997), ‘Maritime Frontiers’, p. 238, states that Taiwan was ‘beyond the reach’ for the Ming.
envoy Harada Kiyemon (原田喜右衛門) of planning to conquer Taiwan and feared that such a scenario would bring an end to Chinese trade in the Philippines. Spanish mistrust was strong after word of Harada’s participation in plundering Cagayan several years earlier, spread in Manila. Governor Tello (spurred on by Luis Pérez Dasmariñas’s Sino-phobic expansion mentality) feared an enforcement of the Cagayan-Taiwan axis and demanded support for a Spanish invasion of Taiwan in 1597. With Hideyoshi’s death the following year, the project became superfluous and Taiwan remained off the Spanish radar for more than 20 years.

The second period of Spanish Taiwan policies was even further economically motivated. In the year 1619, policymakers in Manila expressed their wish to circumvent Chinese taxes and to make trade with Fujian more profitable by establishing a trading outpost in Taiwan. Spanish commercial interest and a desire to expel the Dutch from Asia were the two strongest motivations behind investing in the Taiwan project. Evangelisation of the natives came third despite various determined endeavours. Members of the Dominican Order, who hoped to use Taiwan as gateway to China first and foremost pushed the ambivalent matter. Once the Dutch had built a small fortress on Taiwan and Japanese traders frequented Taiwanese ports, Spanish concerns about their position in the China Seas increased even further. Licenciado and Procurador General Hernando de los Ríos Coronel and the Archbishop of Manila, Don Miguel García Serrano, voiced the necessity of taking military steps. Not long after, in 1622, the Dutch built a fortress on the Pescadores (Penghu) with the aim of receiving official permission to trade with the Fujianese. The Fujianese Grand Coordinator negotiated a Dutch withdrawal from Penghu to Taiwan in 1624 in exchange for better trade opportunities within trade between China-Japan. This happening straight after the peak of Hispano-Dutch naval clashes in the China Seas the Spaniards could not afford to lose time. The King first nominated Juan de Zamudio, who had been sent to Canton by Tello in 1598, for the

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5 Kuno (1940), *Japanese Expansion*; Pinto (2008), ‘Enemy at the Gates’, p. 27.
7 Their attempts were harshly criticised by the Augustinians Medina (1630), *Historia*; cf. Borao et al. (2001), *Spaniards in Taiwan*, vol. 1, pp. 79, 84, 95, 114-115, 153.
expedition to Hermosa. The arrival of Spanish armed forces in Jilong (基隆, also Keelung) in 1626 initiated the Spanish colonisation of Taiwan. Soldiers, missionaries, and a few civilians were sent to Taiwan and founded Santo Domingo and Jilong as Spanish settlements, administered and financed by Manila. Conversion of the indigenous and Chinese populations was left to a small number of Dominican and Franciscan missionaries. Both Christian and non-Christian sangleyes from Manila were involved in constructing the rectangular, stone-built Fort San Salvador. Their services fell into the category of paid labour, as was the case with Fujianese mariners and pilots who were employed for their local knowledge.

Although the Spaniards had high hopes to channel Chinese and Japanese traders to their bases in Taiwan, such trade prospects proved to be disappointing. Moreover, the location of the Spanish fortress in Jilong was all but ideal to attract traders from Fujian. Initial hopes to lure silk-hungry Japanese merchants into the port eventually turned into fears of attack. The first cargo of silk and provisions brought back to Manila in 1628 was of inferior quality. What was more: Spanish merchants were forced to pay almojarifazgo for their shipments to Manila, while the Council of the Royal Treasury (Junta de Real Hacienda) even discussed additional transport duties. Regardless of its eventual failure and decreasing returns, the period until 1642 integrated Spanish Manila closer into networks of the China Seas: As a consequence information flows and widespread connections to Goa, Melaka, and Cambodia increased significantly. Eventually, however,

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10 Borao et al. (2001), Spaniards in Taiwan, vol. 1, pp. xxvii-xxxii.
12 For the period of this study and in particular the years of trade with the Zheng, sangleys infieles, sangleyes cristianos, and mestizos de sangleyes were recorded in large numbers. See AGI Contaduría 1230-1237, cf. Gil (2011), Chinos, pp. 715-723.
13 AGI Filipinas 21, r. 10, n. 47, ‘Carta al Rey de D. Fernando de Silva, gobernador de las Islas Filipinas, dando cuenta de la jornada que D. Antonio Carreño de Valdés hizo a la Isla Hermosa’, 30 June 1626. Cf. Borao et al. (2001), Spaniards in Taiwan, vol. 1, p. 82.
fierce Dutch harassment and the Zheng's well-organised maritime violence forced the Spaniards to surrender. 17

The first Chinese proposal for the systematic colonisation of Taiwan came from privateers, namely from the above-mentioned Zheng Zhilong in 1628. 18 Based in Fujian province, the Zheng clan controlled large parts of East Asian maritime trade from around 1627 to 1683. In addition to collaborations with the Dutch in the 1620s, Zheng Zhilong aimed at increasing his power by cooperating with Manila Chinese under his pseudonym Nicholás Gaspar, the Christian name he received at his baptism in Macao. 19 As supreme commander of Fujianese military forces he worked as a translator for the VOC in Taiwan and after having been involved in long-distance trade in Manila and Nagasaki, he eventually became the new pirate chief in 1624. 20

Over the course of the Ming-Qing transition of 1644, after the capture of Beijing by the Manchu, the Southern Ming (1644-1662) closely collaborated with the Zheng. In the first half of the 1640s, Zheng Zhilong even planned a formal alliance with Japan and sent his naval generals equipped with a letter to the Shogun. The letter was rejected by the Council of Elders (老中, jp. rōjū). 21 A further attempt with a personal letter to the tennō and the Shogun was also rejected. Attempts by the Zheng to project sovereign power to Luzon by extending their control over the South China Sea brought a real change to Sino-Spanish relations and the rise to the power of Zheng Zhilong’s son, Zheng Chenggong (鄭成功, a.k.a. Koxinga or sp. Cogsen/-ia). The Zheng claimed the right to govern and administer justice over the Fujianese trading population in Manila. Consequent events led to various direct negotiations between the two parties. In 1656 two Spanish captains, Andrés de Ceuto and Pedro de Vera Villavicencio, reportedly even signed a peace treaty with a Zheng representative for which the mestizo sangley Miguel de Legazpi served as the interpreter. 22 In 1662, shortly after Koxinga had ultimately defeated the Dutch, he dispatched Vittorio Riccio,

17 Andrade (2011), Lost Colony, pp. 30-31; Andrade (2006), How Taiwan Became Chinese; For the Zheng maritime empire, see Hang (2010), Between Trade and Legitimacy.
20 For Zhilong and the Dutch, see Blussé (1981), ‘Sorcerer’s’, pp. 95-99.
O.P. (1621-1685) with a letter to Manila. Varying relations with Zheng rulers had determined Riccio’s seven years in Xiamen, before being selected as Chenggong’s ambassador to Manila. The bold message reminds us of Hideyoshi’s diplomatic strategies. By asking for tribute and submission to their sovereignty, both Hideyoshi from Japan, Zheng Chenggong and later his son Zheng Jing (鄭經) from Fujian/Taiwan applied a model of Sino-centred foreign relations to strengthen their position against internal and external forces. What is more, both Juan Cobo and Vittorio Riccio employed Dominican friars as linguists and cultural mediators.

During the Zheng’s embargo on Fujianese trade with the Philippines, frightened Spaniards quickly assembled military support from Mindanao and the Spice Islands and even improved the city walls of Manila, by means of forced Chinese labour. Together with the general strain, these rushed actions fuelled mutual ill-feelings between Spanish and Chinese settlers in 1662, ultimately causing the third big ‘massacre of Chinese’ in Manila. Although, this time the colonial government gave the Chinese some time to leave the island before they took up arms. As a result, the Zheng showed a directness and determination in foreign relations that was unknown to both the Ming and the Qing. Unlike the Ming authorities after the 1603 mutiny (tackled in detail in the final chapter), the Zheng vowed to avenge the expulsion of their vassals. Nonetheless, similar to previous clashes, peaceful relations were re-established the following year. After Chenggong’s death Vittorio Riccio was sent to Manila a second time, yet upon his

23 Riccio assured the Spaniards that Zheng Chenggong was indeed interested in friendly relations and claimed that all military forces were prepared against the Tartars and not against Manila: AGI Filipinas 331, l. 7, ff. 178v-179v. Riccio’s biographical data has comprehensively been presented by Eugenio Menegon http://ricci.rt.usfca.edu/biography/view.aspx?biographyID=1377 (accessed 7 February 2014). See also González (1955), Misionero Diplomático. The Florentine Dominican Vittorio Riccio was designated for the Dominican Province Holy Rosary in the Philippines. He reached Manila in the year 1648 and was assigned work in the Chinese hospital of the parish of St Gabriel in Binondo between 1652 and 1654, where he learnt the dialect of Xiamen. The following year, Riccio arrived as part of a Dominican mission with four brothers in Fujian and settled in Xiamen, where he took care of Fujianese returnees from the Philippines.


25 AGI Filipinas 201, 1, ‘ Expediente sobre el restablecimiento del presidio de Zamboanga’, 1665/1686 (fols. 109r-111v), 30 July 1663.

26 Referring to the 1762 edition of the Hai-ch’eng hsien chih, Van der Loon stated that 80 per cent of those killed were from Haicheng. See Van der Loon (1966), ‘Manila Incunabula’, p. 1; However, Zhang Xie’s Dongxi yangkao (1618, 5.5b) does not imply that a large proportion of the 25,000 victims came from that region.

return to China, Zheng leadership had changed again and constant pressure from the Qing troops caused turbulent years for Riccio. When he ultimately landed on a Dutch ship in Manila, colonial authorities accused him of treason and banished him to life in isolation in a convent outside Manila.

After a short break in the China-Manila trade, following Zheng Jing’s occupation of Xiamen, the flow of goods and people between Manila and Fujian increased again. After hearing rumours about an invasion, Governor Manuel de León (1669–1677) sent General Francisco Enríquez de Losada together with two interpreters (Francisco de Mendoza and Santiago de Vera) to Taiwan to settle things peacefully. Maritime commerce recovered only for a short period before being restricted by the Manchu regime.

Japanese Advances in New Spain

Just as economic and geopolitical considerations motivated the Spaniards and the Zheng clan to improve their positions in the China Seas, certain Japanese parties tried to expand further into the Pacific. One local actor with a peculiar interest in the Pacific was Date Masamune (伊達政宗), daimyō of Sendai. Being one of the few non-Kyushu-based foreign players, he only became active in a period that marked the beginning of irreparable tensions between Overseas Spain and Tokugawa Japan. Date Masamune clearly aspired to increase the political power of his realm with the help of Mexican merchants and Franciscan friars. With Ieyasu’s permission, he sent an embassy to Mexico, Spain, and Rome. The project marked both the beginning and the end of entirely new Hispano-Japanese relations. For the first time negotiations were spearheaded by the Mexican government and Spain (represented by the Duke of Lerma and the Council of the Indies) and not the Governor of the Philippines. A Franciscan missionary by the name of Luis Sotelo (1575–1624) played a leading role in this plot. Driven by a strong desire to establish a Franciscan diocese as a stronghold against the Jesuits in Nagasaki he allied with Date Masamune (1566–1646). Date Masamune’s collaboration with Luis Sotelo resembles Ieyasu’s earliest official foreign policies. Although neither of their sovereigns was largely willing to support

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30 Gonoi (2003), Hasekura Tsunenaga. For the Hasekura mission to Spain, see also Torres-Lanzas (1928), Catálogo, pp. clxxxi-cxxv. Original records of Hasekura’s embassy were published in Spain in 2012: Oizumi, Gil (eds) (2012), Historia de la Embajada.
their projects a short-time fortune favoured Sotelo’s and Masamune’s debut in foreign affairs.\(^{31}\)

As fierce critics of the Jesuits, the Franciscan friars had been mocking the Jesuit method of ‘cultural compromise’ and dubious morality (due to their direct involvement in trade with Macao since the 1590s). But the frailes idiotas, as they were polemically called in disputes on Japanese soil, were in fact the only mendicants in Japan who imitated the Jesuit model: in order to get support from the influential elite and to protect their stronghold on Honshu, they offered help in securing trade with Manila, promised assistance for similar arrangements with New Spain, and even brought gifts. Luis Sotelo, who was introduced to Date Masamune in Kyoto in 1603 by the Christian daimyō Gotō Joao, was the most calculating figure in this regard: Close collaboration between the lord of Sendai and the Franciscan friar culminated in official permission to proselytise in Oshu in 1611 in exchange for carrying Date Masamune’s letters campaigning for a trade agreement with New Spain across the Pacific and the Atlantic.\(^{32}\) Historians have stressed Sotelo’s self interest in what looked like a highly professional act of trans-oceanic diplomacy. He ignored, for instance, a call from his superiors in Manila following rumours of Ieyasu’s serious resentment.\(^{33}\) As a matter of fact the first anti-Christians edicts, introduced in chapter 4, were drafted at the very time of Sotelo’s scheming.

Even if the Date/Sotelo collaboration sounds like the utopia of two minor players, it hit the sore spots of both the Japanese and the Spanish central governments. In a way it served as follow-up mission to the delegation of the Franciscan Alonso Muñoz as the Bakufu’s ambassador to New Spain and the court of Philip III in Madrid. Sending Muñoz with state letters to the King and Viceroy was the Bakufu’s last serious attempt to establish permanent relations with New Spain. We have heard that Viceroy Luis de Velasco arranged a mission as a token of gratitude for assisting Vivero, by appointing the Spanish military merchant Sebastián Vizcaíno, a famous explorer of the Californian Coast, as ambassador to the Tokugawa court. Curiously, Velasco also assigned Vizcaíno to explore the legendary ‘gold islands’ (Islas Rica de Oro y Rica de Plata) north of Japan.\(^{34}\)

\(^{31}\) Torres-Lanzas (1928), *Catálogo*, pp. clxxxii-clxxxiii: The authorities in New Spain and Vizcaíno mistrusted Luis Sotelo profoundly.

\(^{32}\) Sotelo’s efforts to establish a Catholic mission in Sendai are summarised by Scipione Amati. Amati (1615), *Historia*.


\(^{34}\) The strange mission was not unnoticed by other European traders in Japan. Cocks (1883), *Diary*, p. 283. For the Spanish initiative that began with a cédula real to the Viceroy of Mexico,
Vizcaíno and his crew landed in Uraga on 10 June 1611. A first audience with Hidetada followed less than two weeks later. Visiting Ieyasu in Sunpu at the end of August, Vizcaíno received an opportunity to discuss certain matters directly. Matters addressed included the future of Christian missionaries in Japan as well as a trade agreement based on friendly relations, which implied a trade prohibition for the Dutch. Sebastián Vizcaíno was probably the worst candidate for the audiences with Hidetada and Ieyasu. Much in the style of Lord McCartney in Qing China 180 years later, he was unwilling to follow Japanese diplomatic protocol and insisted on meeting face to face as was the custom in Spain. Although irritated by such presumptuous behaviour, the Japanese eventually acceded to Vizcaíno’s request.

In November the delegation from New Spain continued their journey from Kanto to Sendai, from where they started their coastal expedition after an audience with Date Masamune. After a lengthy but unsuccessful expedition, Vizcaíno received word from Hidetada in September 1612: the Tokugawa ultimately rejected Vizcaíno’s demands and the latter was forced to seal a deal with Date Masamune and Luis Sotelo. Date Masamune’s vassal Hasekura Tsunenaga would accompany Vizcaíno and continue his journey as the official envoy to Madrid and Rome. Vizcaíno’s expedition was a failure from the point of view of the viceregal government. Not only did they not find the Islas Rica de Oro y Rica de Plata, they also failed to adhere to Viceroy Velasco’s express order not to bring any Japanese to New Spain. The letters from the Bakufu were also a disappointment: While Hidetada only reconfirmed interest in direct trade with New Spain, Ieyasu’s did not beat about the bush regarding Japanese aversion to Christianity.

When the Hasekura embassy reached Seville in 1614, its mayor was the first to receive gifts and a letter from the ‘king of Sendai’ (also referred to as...
‘Rey of Boxu’). Further recipients of letters from Date Masamune included Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas (1553-1625), as the most important advisor of King Philip III and the Pope, who all received the ‘exotic’ envoy in audience. Although Date Masamune promised the conversion of his entire realm under the condition that direct trade was established between Sendai and New Spain, the King showed little interest. Spanish authorities were intimidated by the unexpected arrival of the Japanese delegation and wished for its speedy departure. Tensions grew along with financial concerns. Disputes about who would come up with the funding for the mission’s expenses soon dominated everything. After a journey to Rome, where the Japanese envoy received all possible ambassadorial honour from the Pope and other high-ranking church officials, the delegation could finally be persuaded to return to Mexico in 1617. Their onward journey brought them to Manila where Sotelo’s hopes for the necessary support were ultimately dashed.

One may argue that the whole episode had nothing to do with Manila. But it did, quite simply by avoiding it. Spanish policymakers, such as Francisco Gómez Sandoval de Rojas, first Duke of Lerma, would have gone as far as trading the Philippines in exchange for complete peace between the Netherlands and Spain and direct trade between Mexico and Japan. We can only speculate about the incentives behind this ‘betrayal’ of the Philippines. While Hasekura solicited closer connections between Sendai and New Spain and Lerma negotiated with the enemy, Governor Juan de Silva received the last official letters from the Tokugawa Bakufu in 1612 and 1613 in Manila. In the autumn of 1615, New Spain sent one final mission under

39 Gonoi (2003), Hasekura Tsunenaga, pp. 103-107; AGI Filipinas 1, n. 172, ‘Consulta sobre regalo y carta para el rey de Boxi’, 1616.
40 See, for example, AGI Contratación 5352, n. 21, ‘Francisco de San Martín’, 23 June 1616. AGI México 28, n. 46, ‘Cartas del Virrey Marqués de Guadalcazar’, 1 December 1616; AGI Filipinas 37, n. 13, ‘Petición de Mariana de Espina de los gastos del embajador de Japón’, 20 May 1615; See also Rodríguez-García (2005), Armas Japoneses, p. 46.
41 Gonoi (2003), Hasekura Tsunenaga, pp. 200-209.
Father Diego de Santa Catalina to the Tokugawa court. Yet the mission was no longer received by the Tokugawa in Edo; the humiliated Spaniards had no choice but to return to New Spain in autumn 1616, despite a viceregal order not to come back before meeting the Shogun. An impatient Date Masamune left the political stage after speculations of his involvement in a plot against the Bakufu in 1618. When Hasekura Tsunenaga returned to Japan in 1620 there was no longer mention of friendly trade relations. The tables had turned and the Tokugawa, as most powerful lords of the tenka, set the terms for diplomatic exchange. An age of more systematic foreign relations that left no space for improvising – one that intimidated the Spaniards – had begun.

Japan and the Philippines: Alienation and Its Consequences

Without doubt, Hispano-Japanese estrangement was closely connected to the anti-Christian propaganda and gradual restrictions on missionary activities. On 12 April 1612 Ieyasu forbade Japanese nationals from being Christians. Further regulations followed in 1614 and 1616. By that time, William Adams and EIC representatives such as John Saris and Richard Cocks had already successfully established an identity of an ‘anti-Catholic’ kingdom and explicitly fuelled anti-Iberian sentiments of the Bakufu. When William Adams was interviewed by Hidetada after the Dutch had taken a Portuguese ship on the Japanese coast in 1615, he gave a detailed account of European affairs, claiming that

[the King of] Spaine did think hym selfe to have more right [in these] partes of the world then any other Christian prince, by [reason] of the footing he had gotten in the Phillippinas and in other partes of the Indies, and thereafter per force ment to keepe all other nations from trading into these partes.

The Shogun naturally disagreed and on the same occasion publicly contradicted the policy of enslavement upon military victory that was not only common among the Dutch and the Iberians but also in South East Asia.  

45 Hayashi et al. (eds) (1967), Tsūkō ichiran, 185/54.
46 Zaide (1949), Philippines, p. 356.
47 The original treatise is recorded in the Sunpu ki 駿府記.
48 Cocks (1883), Diary, p. 281.
When in 1616 VOC merchants suggested an attack on Luzon from Taiwan to expel the Spaniards from Asia, Hidetada was not ‘unwilling to listen’. 49

The Spanish envoy Diego de Santa Catalina already noticed changes in foreign policies, and they doubtless worsened after Ieyasu’s death in 1616. Although trade was in theory not affected by anti-Christian propaganda, the Bakufu’s restricted European trade to Hirado and Nagasaki and hostility towards the Iberians increased. 50 The early 1620s saw drastic confiscation and persecution of Catholic friars and their Japanese accomplices as result of centralising efforts. 51 In particular, captains carrying Spaniards to Japan were severely punished. 52 In 1621, the Bakufu prohibited the export of weapons and the voyage of Japanese on foreign ships. Other provisions were not immediately affected: In 1621 Japanese exports to Manila included 947 bags of wheat flour (for 10,705 pesos) as well as 49,900 pieces of biscuit (for 12,554 pesos), soy beans, oil, and pig’s trotters. 53 Yet when a Spanish intrigue against the Bakufu was reported in 1624, the Shogun closed all Japanese ports to Spanish ships. 54 The last four shuinsen called into the port of Manila that year, while the Spanish made a last attempt in 1625. 55

The significant decrease in trade showed the Spaniards how dependent they were on supply from Japan. The King and his councils belatedly called for maintaining secular trade relations with Japan for the sake of the islands’ welfare, while high-ranking Spaniards in the Philippines even displayed a new economic spirit by suggesting to adopt a system of port-to-port intermediary trade with Japan, carrying Chinese silk there and exchanging it for Japanese silver, a strategy that would decrease the necessity of silver cargoes from the Americas. 56 For the sake of reviving friendly relations with Japan Fernando de Ayala, a military officer who had fought back maritime attacks of the Dutch for many years, was chosen as ambassador to Japan. Equipped

49 Cocks (1883), Diary, pp. 283-284.  
50 Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai (2006), Nihonshi shiryō, p. 130.  
51 Cocks (1883), Diary, p. 334.  
52 Cocks (1883), Diary, pp. 248-249. On 11 March 1622 he wrote: ‘Torazemon Dono sent for Capt. Camps and me to com to hym, for that he had something to tell us from Oyen Dono, themperours secretary. Soe we went to his howse, where we mett Cacazemor Dono, Stroyemon Dono, and Jentero Donos secretary. And they tould us that, tuching the priz goodes ir the friggot, the Japons, said it was theirs, and not the Spaniardes or Portingales, but themperour would not beleev them, for that we had proved them tretors in bringing padres into Japon, contrary to his comandement.’  
53 Iwao (1937), Nanyō, p. 338.  
54 Shimizu (2012), Kinsei nihon, pp. 253-256; Nagazumi (2001), Shuinsen, p. 120.  
55 Shimizu (2012), Kinsei nihon, pp. 234-236.  
56 AGI Filipinas 85, n. 34 and Filipinas 20 (1618).
with a proper cargo and almost 300 passengers Captain Antonio de Arceo guided them to Satsuma in August 1623. A delegation continued the journey from Nagasaki to Edo in February 1624, but ultimately did not meet the Shogun, since Bakufu authorities forced them to return to Manila.\footnote{Pastells (1925), \textit{Historia General}, vol. 5/6.} Being denied access to Edo, they left empty-handed and blamed the failure on the false accusations (made by the Dutch) that covert missionaries were sneaking onto the islands.\footnote{Medina (1630), \textit{Historia}, p. 264; Zaide, \textit{Philippines}, 356.} Governor Tavora (r. 1626-1632), knight of the Order of Calatrava, concluded that a trade prohibition equalled a conscious Japanese choice to be an enemy of the Castilians.\footnote{AGI Filipinas 8, r. 1, n. 6, ‘Carta de Niño de Távora sobre materias de gobierno’, 1 August 1629.} But he also promised King Philip IV that he would do everything to promote friendly relations.\footnote{AGI Filipinas 8, r. 1, n. 17, ‘Carta de Niño de Távora sobre materias de gobierno’, 8 July 1632.}

Facing cold Bakufu authority and opposition from the Dutch welded Spanish and Portuguese relations in the East. In 1628 Spanish forces sent by Governor Don Fernando de Silva, assisted the Portuguese in retaliating against the actions of the Japanese merchant Takagi Sakuemon (高木作右衛門). The maritime battle ended with Juan de Alcarajo burning Takagi’s vermilion-seal ship (according to Spanish accounts it carried a cargo of about 25,000 pesos) in Ayutthaya.\footnote{See AGI Filipinas 8, r. 1, n. 6, ‘Carta de Niño de Távora sobre materias de gobierno’, 1 August 1629. Medina (1930), \textit{Historia}, pp. 263-264.} Strengthening the Catholic alliance ultimately had negative consequences for the Iberian foothold in Japan and moreover reflects a general downturn of Spanish foreign policies in the East.\footnote{Spate, \textit{Spanish Lake}, p. 227, based on BR 23, pp. 112, 114; BR 24, pp. 218-220.} As news of the incident reached Japan a furious public (spurred on by the Dutch) called for revenge for this major offence against the Bakufu’s maritime sovereign rights, represented by the \textit{shuinjō}.\footnote{Schurz (1985), \textit{Manila Galleon}, p. 96.} Japanese authorities remained hesitant. The Portuguese, who still had access to Japan, were punished when their merchant vessel \textit{Trinidad} was seized at Nagasaki in retaliation in 1630.\footnote{BR 23, pp. 93-94; Nagazumi (2001), \textit{Shuinsen}, pp. 83; 121; Schurz (1985), \textit{Manila Galleon}, p. 97.} With regard to Luzon, once more local agents were used for a half-hearted diplomatic solution: Iemitsu and the Governor of Nagasaki dispatched the lord of Hizen, Shimabara Matsukura (松倉重政) to Manila.\footnote{Iwao (1958), \textit{Shuinsen}; Pastells (1925), \textit{Historia General}, vol. 1, pp. 240-241.} Thus an apparently well-meaning mission and the invitation to revive trade in Nagasaki surprised the Spaniards in Manila, who had been ill at ease learning about increased shipbuilding activity in Japan in
the aftermath of the Siam affair. Yet, while Matsukura sent merchant ships to Manila, Taiwan, and Macao during his reign the Shogun and his senior council (rōjū) strongly opposed his plea for continuing trade, still fearing a clandestine return of the Catholic missionaries. His suggestion to prepare an invasion of Manila, on the other hand, was apparently well received. In Manila Matsukura’s second embassy was received with far less pretensions: Governor Juan Niño de Tavora although accusing the embassy of a hidden agenda of a potential invasion discussed the burning of the vessel in Siam with his Japanese visitors, who reportedly aimed at soothing hard feelings with rich presents. When Matsukura Shigemasa died soon afterwards his dubious mission left no replacement for organising and executing an attack on Manila.

Although Spaniards from Manila had been accommodating the altered relations with Japan in the 1630s, they suspected the Dutch of promoting a strike against Manila among Bakufu authorities. In fact it was the other way around. In the second half of 1637, officials in Nagasaki began to hint that the Dutch should volunteer to attack Manila and styled it as righteous punishment for the 1628 sinking of the shuinsen in Thailand. Apparently, the Nagasaki governors had learned from captured Dominican friars ‘that the colonial government in Manila was planning to send a steady flow of missionaries into Japan’. After the petition had been discussed among the VOC factory council in Hirado, the Dutch eventually assured support for a potential invasion of the Philippines. However, the outbreak of a violent peasant rebellion in Kyushu interrupted the Manila campaign.

In the meantime, licences for foreign trade had been restricted to a select group of seven families or individuals, each with personal connections to the Tokugawa. The hoshō or guarantee system inaugurated in 1631

66 Nagazumi (1990), Kinsei shoki, p. 54.
67 San Agustin (1698), Conquistas, pp. 263-265.
69 Nagazumi (1990), Kinsei shoki, pp. 81-82.
71 Clulow (2014), Company, p. 123. Under these circumstances Japanese authorities tried to persuade the Dutch to attack Manila as a faithful act to the shogun. Although VOC officials remained hesitant because of Manila’s strong fortification, Nicolaes Coukebacker, captain of the Hirado factory, reported on the current circumstances in Manila in detail.
72 The episode is also surrounded by debates. Assumptions are based on Murdoch’s speculations and a scholarly debate between a certain Watanabe and a certain Prof. Tugi in the 1920s. Watanabe (1929), ‘Japan Did Plan’. The VOC’s struggle is recorded in the company’s Japan Dagregisters. cf. Clulow (2014), Company, pp. 123-125.
73 Jansen (2002), Making, p. 75.
tightened the reins further. A shipowner now needed specific authorisation from the rōjū, as well as from the Nagasaki bugyō, to leave the country. In a critical analysis of Bakufu laws, Matsui Yōko has shown that laws regarding the treatment of foreigners in Japan between the years 1633 and 1634 contain the provision that ‘those who have resided abroad for unavoidable reasons and return to Japan within five years will be allowed to stay, but those who wish to leave again will be executed’.74 She further showed that the following order of 1635, when shuinsen trade eventually ended, no longer included this passage because no more Japanese travelled abroad. Macro-regionally speaking, it is important to re-emphasise that Japan’s maritime trade, by volume, reached its peak between 1636 and 1639 despite severe maritime controls.75

In 1638 the Portuguese experienced a similar fate as the Spaniards, which they were equally unwilling to accept. After having been banned from Japan in 1635 and officially expelled in 1639, when peasants of Shimabara (島原) and Amakusa (天草) initiated an uprising against their new lords Matsukura Katsuie (松倉勝家) of Shimabara and Terasawa Katataka (寺沢堅高) of Amakusa. The social rebellion against high taxes and religious persecution shocked the Tokugawa, who found it hard to curb the unsuspected domestic opposition. In fact they only succeeded with the help of the Dutch, who provided gunpowder, cannon, and vessels.76 This demonstrative strike against Catholic peasants convinced the Bakufu of the Dutchmen’s commitment and granted them permission to stay in Japan, in a period when the third Shogun Iemitsu even broke off mercantile ties with Tonkin and Siam fearing they would transport Spanish or Portuguese missionaries.77 The issue of taking over Luzon was brought up again in the 1640s, when Tokugawa Iemitsu and Itakura Shigemune clandestinely planned to send troops to China in 1646.78 Although none of these projects ever materialised, Japan’s geopolitical interest in the Philippines remained, as works published on Luzon and the Bakufu’s obsession with updates on political circumstances in Manila and Macao, as part of a new intelligence service, indicate.79

75 Von Glahn (1996), Fountain, p. 137.
76 Tsuruta (ed.) (2005), Amakusa Shimabara. The Bakufu’s troops of about 125,000 soldiers only managed to besiege the 27,000 rebels thanks to the Dutch support with canons.
77 Nagazumi (1990), Kinsei shoki, p. 61.
79 For instance, Kawabuchi (1671), Ruson oboegaki (Memoirs of Luzon) or the eighteenth-century compilation Gaiban tsūsho by Kondō Morishige.
Due to the strong Catholic dimension of the Shimabara/Amakusa events, the Portuguese were ordered to leave the country and never to return; disobedience would be punished with death. An ambassador sent from Macao in 1640 was killed, while the new King’s diplomatic intervention of sending an official ambassador from Lisbon (Captain Gonçalo de Siqueira de Souza) in 1644 failed.80

Early Modern ‘Capacity Building’: Transfer via Manila

Next to geopolitical tensions and strategic intelligence building, the elites’ pursuit of useful knowledge – sometimes referred to as empire building – frequently reflected central-local dualism. In many cases cultural and technological exchange happened much faster within merchant networks.81 Information gathering from below, in turn, is closely linked to cultural transfer and as such includes elements of adapting knowledge to existing worldviews. In recent years a growing number of studies has focused theoretically on the various aspects of the relationship between knowledge and power within information-based governing systems. Some scholars studied the systematic collection and documentation of knowledge and the question of how information was dealt with and communicated.82 It goes without saying that the closer a study is located to the age of information the more fruitful the indicators for the power of knowledge and dissemination will be. Yet examples from the early modern period show that information spread rapidly despite less advanced means of transport, printing techniques, or media. Yet it followed different patterns and served limited purposes. Around 1600 Manila-related information transfer targeted primarily maritime and military technology. Political facts for diplomatic relations, business strategies, and arts and crafts were of great interest to the ruling elites and their advisors. Spanish bureaucratic governing tools, including the image of a knowledgeable ruler (Philip II as ‘paper king’, sp. rey papelero), have been studied in detail in previous years.83 Around 1600, Japan’s elite was more receptive to foreign know-how than their Chinese counterparts. After the introduction of maritime restriction policies in the

80 Boxer (1979), Portuguese Embassy.
81 Kerry (2009), Networks of Empire, p. 64.
82 For information transfer through mobility, see Friedrich (2010), Lange Arm. For a more general study of the conception and spread of knowledge, see Burke (2000), Social History of Knowledge, vol. 1.
83 Brendecke (2009), Imperium und Empirie.
1630s, the Tokugawa regime was particularly keen to gather information from Chinese and Dutch traders in Nagasaki.

Ming China and Information Gathering

The Ming dynasty, unlike the Qing, was infamous for taking few initiatives to learn about the world outside the Sino-centric cosmos. However, it would be wrong to label Ming China totally ignorant of the outside world. The Ming not only shaped security policies and information gathering but also encouraged interest in territories within the Middle Kingdom (zhonghua), which were traditionally of more concern than other regions. In contrast to certain emperors’ and literati’s fascination with Western science, knowledge about Europe – be it of a political or ideological nature – was not sought actively in the Middle Kingdom. A lively interest in classical knowledge, science, and arts are vividly reflected in a long tradition of translation. The first institution for studying foreign languages was established in 1276, as the Office of Interpreters (會通館) which was followed by an Office of Translators (四夷館) in 1407. These offices prepared Chinese/Barbarian-language dictionaries (華夷譯語) for neighbouring languages such as Mongolian, Tibetan Sanskrit, Persian, and Siamese. Knowledge of Japan increased further with the constant wokou/wakō threat during the sixteenth century.

The Chinese reaction to friars coming from Manila indicates an awareness of Luzon and the new settlers in the Southern Sea. Mendoza’s report (based on Martín de Rada’s observations) includes references to several friars from the Philippines being accused as spies by Chinese officials. In more economic terms, the Ming court’s attitude towards trade between Fujianese and Japanese traders in Manila is a further source for the official understanding of the outside world. Cheng Wei-chung quotes a reference to the Dongxi yangkao of a Ming coastal defence officer, Han Chung-yung, who implied in 1610 that business deals within the proximity of offshore China

84 For Emperor Kangxi’s initiatives to modify China’s foreign trade system by using information from abroad, see Gang (2013), Qing Opening; For the spread of information in early modern China, see Ge (2000), Zhong guo de zhi shi.
85 Brook (2009), ‘Europaelogy?’, pp. 269-294; Blussé (2003), ‘Kongkoan’, p. 98: ‘China’s official and dynastic histories have never shown much interest in overseas trade or commercial records unless the latter happened to impinge on some political or ideological concern of the imperial administration.’
were not illegal, if the Chinese involved happened to be living abroad. With reference to the annual licensed 16 junks for Manila he wondered whether it was 'really possible that such large amounts of Chinese goods [were] all consumed by the limited population [of Manila]?'

Dispatching spies abroad was the most famous Ming intelligence strategy applied both in European dominions in Asia, including Manila, and in Japan during Hideyoshi’s Korea invasion. Spying on a foreign country’s political situation was for the Ming one of the very few plausible reasons to send people (disguised as merchants or monks) abroad. In light of the Ming’s concerns with national security there can be little doubt that for official China, information gathering had a different value and followed different purposes. The efficiency of the system and the constant availability of potential candidates partially explains why China did not see any need for direct contact with foreigners for information gathering, an attitude that can again be linked to the question of building trust. Paranoia was the flipside of these foreign policies: Chinese officials used to suspect every private merchant of being a political spy, who would take Chinese military secrets back to their native country.

In light of Chinese information gathering, maritime issues are of particular interest. Against a popular narrative of Ming China’s nautical passiveness and weak coastal defence, Fujianese seagoing merchants were widely known for their navigating expertise and solid knowledge of sea routes. In this regard it can be helpful to try and understand the Chinese case from a comparative perspective: Unlike in Europe, where rulers, the educated class, and adventurers often collaborated in maritime enterprises, Chinese maritime people were coastal settlers, whose networks did not reach out to the governing elite. The bulk of seafaring traditions were clearly rooted

89 Cocks (1883), Diary, p. 285: ‘But, howsoever, these men [Chinese merchants] follow the matter hardly, and tell me that the Emperour of China hath sent espies into all partes wheere the Spaniardes, Portingales, Hollanders, and we do trade, in these partes of the world, only to see our behaveours on towards an other, as also how we behave our sevles towardes strangers, especially towardes Chinas. And som have byn in this place and brought by our frendes to the English howse, where I used them in the best sort I could, as I have advized to Bantam, Pattania and Syam to doe the lyke to all Chinas.’
91 Leonard Blussé has stressed the notable lack of Chinese shipping accounts because Chinese sailors did no leave any travel writings behind. Blussé (2011), 'Junks to Java', p. 222: ‘Chinese sailors themselves may have been accustomed to life at sea that they saw little use in writing up experiences that they took for granted, assuming that they could write at all.’
in information gathering at the local level; Out of habit and for reasons of illiteracy they left only a faint written imprint.

A fascinating example of Chinese maritime awareness is John Selden’s map of China, located today in the Bodleian Library. Historians believe that it was created and used by a mercantile network of Fujianese traders between 1618 and 1622. Printed in China, the map displays both the waters surrounding China and late Ming Fujian cartographic tradition without the usual European touch in map-making. Both Luzon and Nagasaki are marked on the map. The map offers useful insights regarding Sino-Spanish relations: The Spanish are indicated as huaren (ch., 花人) and the author of the map is likely to have taken his reference from the Dongxi yangkao. The map provides detailed information on the route of the Manila Galleon, as well as on silver and gold mines in Japan and thus stresses the importance of bullion trade for Fujian. Since some of the information is reminiscent of a pilot manual the map was clearly used in private merchant shipping and is not the result of governmental information gathering.

Technological Transfer: Case Studies from Japan

Historians have called for a re-examination of the long-held standard argument that Japan was backward in shipping technology until the early seventeenth century. In particular, unwritten seafaring knowledge and the wakō’s accomplishments in controlling the sea encourage overthrowing misinterpretations of Japan’s ‘nautical backwardness’. This is not an easy task because these myths have a long history. The Chinese geographer Zheng Ruozeng (鄭若曾, 1503-1570) described the differences between Chinese junks and traditional Japanese ships in 1563, in the military treatise Chouhai tubian (ch., 筹海圖編, Illustrated Book on Maritime Defence). Zheng Ruozeng concluded that Japanese ships were not qualified for offshore journeys because their hulls were too flat. His evaluation reflects the

93 Batchelor (2014), Selden Map; Brook (2013), Mr. Selden’s Map of China.
95 Ge (2010), Zhai zi zhongguo, pp. 91-94. Ge analysed the power discourse in imperial China based on the Chinese understanding of the outside world as illustrated in historical studies, maps and worldviews.
97 Zheng (2007), Chouhai tubian. These famous accounts on the wakō during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in 13 scrolls describe their routes and weapons, and include comments on the poor navigation skills of the Japanese.
common understanding that Japanese mariners were only able to sail under the conditions of a favourable wind.\textsuperscript{98} Another Chinese source, the \textit{Riben kao} 日本考 (Thoughts on Japan), published around 1593, stated that the Japanese received assistance from Chinese carpenters to build large ships for several thousand taels.\textsuperscript{99} A Korean who accompanied a vermillion-seal ship recorded: ‘Japanese possess only small ships incapable of traversing the great ocean. So with 80 pieces of silver, they purchase passage on Chinese ships.’\textsuperscript{100} Such understanding spread to European observers, who liked to underestimate early modern Japanese shipbuilding efforts and navigation skills. Pablo Pastells quoted a Spanish account that claimed in 1592 that because of the small size and capacity of Japanese ships – most of them being simple constructions for rowing crews – a journey from Japan to the Philippines was very unlikely.\textsuperscript{101} Given that in the same year the Japanese had transferred thousands of soldiers and battleships to Korea, while the Spaniards prepared for a possible invasion, the bias of the record is striking. Other accounts hint at Japanese collaborations with Fujinaese seafarers. In 1605 a Spaniard praised the ‘vessels built after the fashion of China and Japon are very good with both oar and sail, and have greater capacity and accommodation for carrying provisions than any other kind.’\textsuperscript{102} Already in the 1590s a Castilian seafarer who visited Japan noted that the ‘emperor’ of the islands commanded over two hundred ships and a huge artillery.\textsuperscript{103}

During the sixteenth century, it was indeed common Japanese practice to enlist Chinese and Ryukyuan assistance in order to reach ports in South East Asia. Hence many Japanese merchants calling at Manila came on foreign ships.\textsuperscript{104} They often employed Portuguese pilots, for instance Vasco Diaz, who regularly directed Japanese vessels to Manila in the 1590s.\textsuperscript{105} At the same time, Japanese ships coming to Manila before 1600 were described as being of rather big size, each carrying a cargo of 1500 to 2000 picos of wheat flour.\textsuperscript{106} In 1592, Juan Cobo reported of three newly built sea-going vessels and Harada’s ship to Manila of the same year was described as having

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{99} See Nakajima (2008), ‘Invasion of Korea’, p. 150.
\item \textsuperscript{100} Shapinsky (2006), ‘Polyvocal Portolans’, pp. 17-18.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Pastells (1925), Historia General, vol. 1, pp. 50-51.
\item \textsuperscript{102} BR 14, p. 69.
\item \textsuperscript{103} AGI Filipinas 6, r. 7. n. 110, ‘Carta de Pedro González de Carvajal sobre su viaje a Japón’, 1594.
\item \textsuperscript{104} For a history of pre-modern Japanese navigation, see Iida (1980), Nihon kōkai jutsushi.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Cabezas (1995), Siglo Ibérico, pp. 267-268. He listed Bartolomé Vez Landeiro (‘namban-king’), Sebastián Jorge Maxar, Pedro González de Carvajal (who took Pedro Bautista back to Japan), Manuel Luis, Pedro Camello, Jorge Pinto Barbosa, Domingo Peres.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Pastells (1925), Historia General, vol. 1, p. 50.
\end{itemize}
carried 150 people. Such observations match Iwao Seiichi's explanation of a boom in the construction of offshore ships during Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea. While ship technology, with certain regional variations, had improved during the battles of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, increasing maritime trade led to adaptations for cargo ships and the construction of hybrid-style vessels, including indigenous Japanese, Chinese, and European elements, of about 500 tons around 1600. Regarding ship design, the earliest shuinsen (ship used for the overseas vermilion-seal trade) showed similar characteristics as the Chinese junk. Over the following decades, European shipbuilding knowledge entered Japan and a hybrid type with Chinese, Mediterranean, and indigenous Japanese elements was developed.

Hideyoshi displayed an outspoken interest in Iberian shipbuilders. From his reign onwards, Japanese deficits in offshore navigation and maritime technology played a crucial role in their interactions with the Spaniards. Desire to catch up and make Japan competitive was not limited to maritime technology. Japanese rulers moreover insisted on mining experts to be sent from New Spain. After being denied help by the Spaniards, the Japanese sought assistance from other Europeans. Two European-style trading ships were built under the supervision of William Adams in 1604 and 1605 in Uraga. He pointed out that good quality timber, hemp, and iron made it possible. Ironically, the Spaniards were to buy one of them several times.

107 AGI Patronato 25, r. 50, 'Trato del embajador del Japón con Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas', 1593. See also AGI Filipinas 6, r. 7, n. 107, 'Testimonio sobre embajador de Japón, Faranda y Juan Cobo', 1 June 1593: 'El portador de esta es Faranda Quiemo Xapon el qual va en un navio nuevo pintadas unas ojas coloradas en la popa es navio seguro y llevo ciento y veinte hombres chinos y japoneses.'

108 Iwao (1958), Shuinsen, pp. 24-27.


110 Prominent elements came from the Chinese junk and the Iberian galleon. Vivid examples include the Suetsugu ship and the Araki ship. For the fascinating story of the Hakata-based Suetsugu clan's involvement in Japanese overseas trade in the 1630s, see Oka (2001), 'Great Merchant', pp. 37-56.

111 Vivero (1988), Relaciones, pp. 149-157; 165; Morga (2008), Sucesos, p. 143; See also Massarella (1990), World Elsewhere, p. 79.

112 Gomi et al. (1998), Shôsetsu nihonshi, pp. 216-219.

113 For shuinsen constructions in the context of nautical developments, see Nakamura (1965), Goshuinsen kôkaisui; Murai (1997), Umi kara, p. 165; Japanese ships sojourning to China and Korea, laden with silver, where referred to as soma-sen by early Europeans. These ships are sometimes considered Chinese constructions of 500 to 600 tons.

114 Private ventures even date back to the 1580s, as was the case in Bungo.

115 Adams (1850), Memorials, p. 71.
years later and admitted its robustness. It was around the same time that interim Governor Vivero y Velasco proposed buying Japanese vessels for local use, arguing that the construction costs in the Philippines were intolerable. Spanish officials are reported to have made similar suggestion once again in 1623.

The need to construct a ship in Japan was only one of the many irritating elements of Sebastián Vizcaíno’s stay in Japan and his controversial collaboration with Date Masamune. After Vizcaíno’s ship had been destroyed by the Keichō Sanriku earthquake (慶長三陸地震) of 1611, Tokugawa Hidetada offered to build a ship at his own expense, on the condition that Vizcaíno would lend him ship carpenters and take some Japanese merchants to New Spain. Yet the Spanish general could neither agree to Hidetada’s offer nor afford the highly priced material. Eventually he accepted Date Masamune’s offer. The story of Date Masamune’s 500-ton Western-style vessel, named San Juan Bautista, is thought-provoking: 180 Japanese carpenters built a Western-style ship in only 45 days in the port of Tsuki-no-ura (月の浦) far from the usual foreign maritime interaction centres. In a way the episode highlights the unpredictable dynamics of technology and knowledge transfer.

Other examples point at knowledge exchange as part of everyday maritime life around Manila, a Mecca for shipbuilders. A certain Ikeda Yoemon (池田与右衛門) from Nagasaki visited Manila as part of a shuinsen crew in 1616 and 1617 before drafting the Genna kōkaiki or kōkaisho (元和航海書) (1618/23). His navigational treatise included explanations on the quadrant and astrolabe, a guide for using solar and nautical calendars, instructions on how to determine positions at sea by the sun and the stars, as well as navigational charts of the waters between Japan and South East Asia. In addition, maritime charts and hybrid maps featured reciprocal maritime collaborations. Namban cartography and Matteo Ricci’s ‘Chinese’ maps of
four seas and six continents strongly influenced Tokugawa maps with a small and large Eastern Sea. 124

Japan's information gathering from above changed during the 70 years of the Manila system. I have argued earlier that encounters with the Europeans encouraged the Japanese to pull away from a China-centred cosmos that would eventually lead to the creation of a Japan-centred world system modelled on the traditional Chinese ka’i order. 125 Tessa Morris-Suzuki has stressed the steady decline of Chinese hegemonic power as the main reason for this development. 126 Ethnographical charts illustrate how Japan's worldview, although based on a Chinese model, altered thanks to knowledge accomplished from the Europeans. A particularly interesting example is the Chart of All Nations (万国人物図, jp. bankoku jinbutsuzu) printed and published in Nagasaki in 1645, demonstrating Japan's place in a wider world. 127 As illustrations of Japan's newly defined position in the world they contributed to a sense of nationality. 128 Yet, despite the newly implemented seclusion policies in Japan, symbolism was clearly inspired by a European perspective. 129 Japan was placed on top of all nations but not in a classic hierarchical composition. Significantly, European peoples were painted with white skin; each 'ethnic representative' was equipped with characteristic cultural objects of his country. This chart also gives insights into the Philippines' position in Japan's geopolitics after 1639. While the Spaniards were illustrated together with Italians in the chart's penultimate section, just before the giants and the dwarfs, the inhabitants of Luzon were

125 Morris-Suzuki (1996), ‘Frontiers of Japanese Identity’, pp. 46-65; 50: The Japanese perception changed by two forces. ‘The first was the force of Japan's changing relationship with China; the second, the force of the encounter with the European powers.’
127 Morris-Suzuki (1996), ‘Frontiers of Japanese Identity’, p. 46; Toby (2008), ‘Sakoku’, pp. 196-198: Later similar charts were printed in Edo and Kyoto. Only in the second half of the seventeenth century would larger parts of the society learn about the bankoku concept. Toby also showed that East Asia remained the centre of the earth in these global illustrations.
129 The Kyushu University Museum presents the masterpiece on its homepage and gives a fairly substantial description of the 40 nationalities displayed. See http://record.museum.kyushu-u.ac.jp/bankoku (accessed 11 December 2013). Depicted in a table of several lines and columns are 40 nations beginning with Japan, followed by Ming China, the Tartars, Taiwan, and other South East Asian nations. Only further down in the chart we find European nations known in Japan, beginning with England.
tackled as an independent ethnic group. The Luzon male was dressed in European style trousers, while the Luzon female covered her hair casually with a long scarf reminiscent of the common image of the Virgin Mary.\textsuperscript{130} China held a prominent position right next to Japan and was explicitly labelled Ming, the name of the dynasty that ironically had been replaced just one year before the first publication of the chart. While Ronald Toby remarked that ethnic categorisation charts existed in China in the form of \textit{ruisho},\textsuperscript{131} I am reminded of similar cartographic designs published in Europe,\textsuperscript{132} as well as parallels with the illustrations in the Boxer Codex printed with Chinese help in late-sixteenth-century Manila.\textsuperscript{133}

**Concluding Remarks: Local-Central Dualism in Foreign Relations**

An appropriate starting point in summarising the essence of the last three chapters is a consideration of the general nature of diplomatic exchange in East Asia. Official commercial exchange was initially restricted to tributary trade. This practice was inseparably linked to diplomatic duties, which were a necessary precondition prior to the take-off of triangular relations. In light of evidence already mentioned with regard to the take-off of triangular trade relations, the augmentation of exchange at an ‘unorthodox’ or ‘unofficial’ level marked a significant turning point in both trading and diplomatic relations. Consequently, after the 1570s only a minor percentage of exchange (be it of an economic or political nature) fell into the category of tribute exchange. Of course, reflecting analytically on the nature of diplomatic exchange in sixteenth-century East Asia is not a simple task. There has been a contradictory binary concept of hierarchical and \textit{inter pares} foreign relations associated with this field of study which rather adds an element of confusion.

The key question on the impact of local-central competition on Manila’s long-term development has brought to light the intervention of external factors which caused a political overhaul in Manila. Key economic processes

\textsuperscript{130} What is most striking about the chart is the image of Native Americans with stereotypical ‘Indian’ symbolism including feathered headdress, bow, and arrow.

\textsuperscript{131} Toby (2008), ‘Sakoku’, p. 198.

\textsuperscript{132} See Blaeu (1644), \textit{Nova Totius Terrarum}.

\textsuperscript{133} The Boxer Codex is an ethnicity chart found in the Philippines. It is believed that Governor Gómez Pérez Dasmarinas commissioned the project, which probably built upon the studies of Miguel de Loarca and the Franciscan friar Juan de Plasencia of the 1580s. For the illustrations, see http://www.filipeanut.com/2011/09/the-boxer-codex (accessed 11 May 2014).
shifted from influential actors on the ground to various other stakeholders. Thus, there was a change of ‘connectors’ to ‘dis-connectors’ in the 1620s and 1630s. It was the beginning of a new age of which the consequences for Manila were threefold. Japanese trade with Manila ended, there was a steep decline of Fujianese shipping to Manila and the Union of Crowns between Portugal and Spain ceased to exist after 1640. Such change to Manila’s economic development stood as a microcosm for wider change in the whole macro region during the years of intense power shifts in the South China Sea, arguably against the background of Dutch maritime aggression and operations of the Zheng Empire. It was now more lucrative for Fujianese traders to head straight to Japan, Taiwan, or other fledgling Southeast Asian ports.

Comparing operations of the local and the central shows how triangular histories connected predominantly in peripheral regions, where functioning cross-cultural operations developed parallel to encounters on official levels. While local initiatives rarely represented official policies, they often indirectly pushed the ruling elites in their monopolising efforts. The needs of the central government in Spain and those of the colonial officers in the Philippines were very often incompatible and more than once caused imperial dilemma. Likewise, Ming China should not be considered a backward anti-foreign trade empire. What characterises early modern China’s foreign trade is a disconnection between official views in the capital and local reality and a very complex diplomatic protocol that left no space for double-edged inter pares relations, to which both the Spanish and the Japanese aspired.

It goes without saying that the central governments of Ming China and Imperial Spain faced different constraints than the local merchants in Fujian and Manila. While the lack of government support encouraged private Chinese traders to create a distinguished mercantile network spanning from Japan via the Philippines and Indonesia to the Southeast Asian mainland, local Spanish merchants in Manila often had to give in to government demands aiming at maintaining hegemony in and outside Europe. By the time of intensified Japanese participation in the Manila trade, the newly established military-aristocratic government was occupied with building a stable pre-modern state. For that project the Bakufu competed with local landlords and merchants for the favour of foreign merchants. At the end of the day, sovereignty on the Japanese archipelago proved to be more important than overseas expansion. Edo managed to turn economic drives into political benefits for the central government. The Bakufu monopolised foreign trade by means of the vermilion-seal system. This can be regarded
as a major difference to the other two pre-modern states where competition between local and central levels was never overcome.

During the early decades of trans-Pacific trade, both Chinese and Japanese merchants had incentives to meet and trade in Manila. Japan’s withdrawal and her rigorous foreign policies, including a self-imposed maritime embargo after 1639, served to obscure the ability of historians to see its relevance to early modern economic history. When reassessing Manila’s role in global history, however, we must not overlook that as a consequence of successful state formation and economic restructuring, Japan’s aspired position in East Asia was redefined. Through interactions with Spain and China in the decades prior to her ‘closure’, Japan managed to become an independent economic player and what one may label the first real pre-modern state in East Asia in the seventeenth century, all thanks to efficient institutions.

Having said that, all other cases described suggest the predominance of local agency in the Manila system. Fujian, for instance, unlike the Ming court in Beijing generally acted as a state. Similarities can be found in late-sixteenth-century Japan, when peripheral players from Kyushu made similar advances as would be demonstrated in later decades with the example of Zheng rulers ruling from their bases in Xiamen and Taiwan. What is crucial in all of this is the Spanish reaction: their giving-in to and obedience to non-sovereigns.