INTERPRETING ZHENG CHENGGONG: THE POLITICS OF DRAMATIZING
A HISTORICAL FIGURE IN JAPAN, CHINA, AND TAIWAN (1700-1963)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

THEATRE

AUGUST 2007

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to give my warmest thanks to my family for their strong support. I also want to give my sincere thanks to Dr. Julie Iezzi for her careful guidance and tremendous patience during each stage of the writing process. Finally, I want to thank my proofreaders, Takenouchi Kaori and Vance McCoy, without whom this thesis could not have been completed.
ABSTRACT

Zheng Chenggong (1624 - 1662) was sired by Chinese merchant-pirate in Hirado, Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan. A general at the end of the Chinese Ming Dynasty, he was a prominent leader of the movement opposing the Manchu Qing Dynasty, and in recovering Taiwan from Dutch colonial occupation in 1661. Honored as a hero in Japan, China, and Taiwan, he has been dramatized in many plays in various theatre forms in Japan (since about 1700), China (since 1906), and Taiwan (since the 1920s). Yet his portrayals in these plays are drastically different, depending on the dramatists' intention of writing, view of history, and artistic tools.

This research, in order to demonstrate the cultural and political construction of this historical figure, examines the history of the dramatization of Zheng, by comparing selected texts from Japan, China, and Taiwan, written between 1700 and the 1960s, with regard to the historical contexts.
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Chapter I: Introduction

Justification

In order to demonstrate the cultural and political construction of the historical figure, Zheng Chenggong (1624 - 1662), this research examines the history of his dramatization, by comparing texts from Japan, China, and Taiwan, written between 1700 and the 1960s, with regard to the historical contexts.

More than ten works about him were written in Japanese between 1700 and the 1960s; more than ten works were also written in Chinese between 1906 to the 1960s. Donald Keene's dissertation The Battles of Coxinga, Ishihara Michihiro's book Tei Seiko, and Nishimura Hiroko's article "The Battles of Kokusenya - from Osanai Kaoru to Noda Hideki" have introduced the Japanese works about Zheng. I have found information about the Chinese ones primarily through the Internet.

Eight texts that are readily available to me and thus be the basis for my analysis and comparison. From Japan are Chikamatsu Monzaemon's 1715 puppet play, The Battles of Kokusenya (Kokusenya Kassen), and Kubo Sakae's 1930 realist play, The New Story of Kokusenya (Shinsetsu Kokusenya); the six Chinese plays include Yu Risheng's 1906 play, The Record of a Maritime National Hero (Haiguo Yingxiong Ji); an anonymous storytelling short play titled Zheng Chenggong, published by Jiangxi Province House for People's Education in 1937; A Ying's 1941 play, The Maritime National Hero (Haiguo ...
Yingxiong); Zhang Ying's 1951 play, Zheng Chenggong, produced in Taiwan; Zhu Xie's play Zheng Chenggong, published in 1956; and Guo Moruo's never-produced 1963 movie script also titled Zheng Chenggong. Chikamatsu, Kubo, A Ying, and Guo Moruo are all prominent playwrights of their times. In addition, two important pioneer directors of Japanese modern theatre, Osanai Kaoru and Hijikata Yoshi, and their Chinese counterpart, Ouyang Yuqian, also have staged dramas on Zheng. So many prominent artists' choice of Zheng hardly seems coincidental, and in my eyes demonstrates his importance in their historical times and thus warrants further scrutiny. Accounts about other dramatic works are also invoked, so that the discussion can be expanded to cover the periods in between the plays I have texts for, and continual trends in Japan and China can be drawn.

American scholar Donald Keene's highly accomplished translation of and research on Chikamatsu's 1715 play The Battles of Kokusenya is the most, if not the only, influential English scholarship on Zheng's portrayals. Japanese scholarship on the dramatization of Zheng in Japan is plentiful. Scholarly writings on the classic, The Battles of Kokusenya, are many; Ishihara Michihiro's "Eight History Plays on Kokusenya in Chinese – the Three Hundredth Anniversary of Zheng Chenggong's Death" and Nishimura Hiroko's "The Battles of Kokusenya – from Osanai Kaoru to Noda Hideki" are two articles on plays written during the 20th century. However, due to limited access to
scholarship, my analysis in the Japanese section of this thesis will be based on the two available plays and second-hand writings, such as Keene’s research and Osanai’s biography. Surprisingly enough, Chinese scholarship on Zheng’s dramatic portrayals is rare, if indeed ever existed, although Zheng is much more well-known and important in the Chinese world, in general, than in Japan and the West. The lack of Chinese scholarship has resulted in a similar lack of scholarly investigation in English on the dramatization of Zheng in China. Consequently, I will base my study of the Chinese plays on the six aforementioned dramatic texts and written accounts, such as records of performances.

**Note on the Text**

All quotes and play titles in this thesis, except those from English sources, are translated by myself from Chinese or Japanese. Also, Zheng Chenggong will be referred to as Zheng, whereas full names will be given when referring to his relatives.

**Background on Zheng**

Many of the playwrights, especially those of the twentieth century, claimed to have written their plays in accordance with historical facts about Zheng Chenggong. Those earlier playwrights, who did not ground their works strictly on the facts, for instance
Chikamatsu Monzaemon, nevertheless based their dramatizations partially on historical accounts. So it is necessary to examine Zheng’s personal history before discussing the history plays about him.

There are four important stages in Zheng’s historical presence: birth and early years in Japan, anti-Manchu activities, recovery of Taiwan from Dutch occupation, and his death and his son and grandson’s rule in Taiwan. Since historians have held fundamental disagreements on each of the four stages, it is crucial to examine them carefully here one by one.

In 1624, Zheng was born to a Chinese merchant-pirate, Zheng Zhilong, and a Japanese woman, Tagawa, in Hirado, Nagasaki Prefecture, Japan. The fact that his mother was Japanese is widely accepted and unarguably proven by the three versions of Zheng’s pedigrees and other sources such as four biographies written during the Qing Dynasty, although some ungrounded speculation suggests that she was half-Chinese. Without citing the source, Chinese scholar Zheng Wanjin claims Zheng’s maternal grandfather is Weng Yihuang, a Chinese man who married a Japanese woman with the surname Tagawa, after whom Zheng’s mother was named (352). He also quotes comments from Zheng’s brother’s alleged descendent in Japan: “In Taiwan the inclination of worshipping Zheng is very strong, and specifically, people want to overemphasize his pure Chinese blood, so they eliminated his Japanese mother Lady Tagawa from history.” (356) On the other hand,

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1 Zheng Zhilong was baptized in Macau and given a Christian name Nicholas Iquan, by which he is better known in the West.
Tagawa's father is said to be either a blacksmith, a lower samurai, or even a warlord, which certainly is to connect Zheng with the Japanese upper class. Whether the statements are true or not, they show how important Zheng's kinship could be in establishing his identity. In the following chapters, we will see how playwrights carefully dramatize his kinship in their plays.

Zheng Zhilong was a powerful figure, granted a Fujian-based official position by the weakening Ming Dynasty in 1628. In 1630, when Zheng was six, he was taken to join his father. He never went back to Japan, although later he repeatedly requested military and financial aid from the Tokugawa shogunate (Ishihara 76-114).

Zheng was educated in the central Confucian school, Taixue, where he is said to have been deeply immersed in Confucian thought, in which loyalty to the emperor is the central principle. In 1645, when the Manchu army threatened to take China from the Ming, Zheng was not only appointed to an official military position, but also granted the royal name, Zhu, by the emperor, as well as Chenggong (literally “success”). His new given name is most frequently used in present day China. From that time on, he was called Lord with the Royal Surname, or Guoxingye (pronounced as Kokusenya in Japanese), from which the Dutch romanization, Koxinga or Coxinga, is derived.

Despite Zheng's dissuasion, however, his father Zheng Zhilong surrendered to the Qing in 1646 after a short resistance. Thereafter, Zheng's Japanese mother, who had been in China for only one year, either committed suicide or was killed by the Manchu army. In the same year, Zheng raised his father's original armies around him. He gradually
became one of the major forces of the Southern Ming resistance and fought against the Manchu armies from 1645 to 1661. During this period Zheng launched three northern campaigns to counterattack the invading Manchu forces - the last of which is the most striking one, the Nanjing Campaign. In 1658, after years of preparation, Zheng could finally launch a major attack on Nanjing. Nanjing is located north of Fujian and was the former capital of the Southern Ming, on the lower Yangzi River. However, the Nanjing campaign turned out to be a devastating failure due to Zheng's mistakes in commanding (Ishihara 156-189).

For this stage of Zheng's life, the major question raised by historians is: did he struggle for the Ming or for himself? Scholars who hold the conventional view often use Zheng's rejection of the Manchus and his father's attempts to persuade him to surrender, his support for the Southern Ming court, and his northern expeditions, as examples to argue that Zheng was a loyal national hero. Yet a Taiwanese historian, Wu Zhenglong in Negotiations between Zheng Chenggong and the Qing Government (2000) reveals evidence that he was not so enthusiastic about helping the distant Southern Ming court. Zheng actively negotiated with the Qing (Manchu), and he was likely more willing to submit if he could be assured his power would be maintained. This argument, coupled with American historian Lynn Struve's skeptical view from his book The Southern Ming, which considers Zheng merely a self-serving warlord, effectively challenges the formerly dominant Chinese historiography that stresses Chinese nationalism in Zheng's motives.

A similar skeptical question could also be asked about Zheng's purpose of forcing the
Dutch away from Taiwan: did he do it for China or to expand his own power? Having been defeated in the Nanjing campaign, his forces still had a powerful navy but the problem was that his troops were confined to the Xiamen and Jinmen islands off the southeast coast of China (Croizier 15-16). Historian Ralph Croizier, whose deconstruction of Chinese nationalism has inspired many later scholars, especially non-Chinese ones, has made this interpretation: "(His) solution to this problem was the invasion of Taiwan which could serve as a safe, rear base and source of food supply."

(Croizier 16) Croizier uses the word "invasion," taking the view that Taiwan had never been Chinese territory. It surprisingly deviates from Chinese scholars’ consensus that Zheng’s primary concern was to recover Taiwan, simply because "Taiwan is Chinese land," as Zheng wrote to the Dutch (Chen 219). This debate over Zheng’s purpose is actually about whether nationalism and anti-imperialism really were his motives, which is a crucial point in many plays dramatizing Zheng.

No matter what his purpose was, in 1661 Zheng led 25,000 soldiers to attack the two Dutch forts in Taiwan, where less than 2000 soldiers defended. After ten months of battles and siege, the Dutch decided to entreat for peace and retreat to Jakarta.

Zheng ruled Taiwan for only four months before he died in 1662, but there are totally opposite opinions of Zheng’s relationship to the Taiwanese aborigines and his taxation policy in Taiwan, which directly relate to the legitimacy of his rule. Chinese historian Chen Guoqiang, in Zheng Chenggong and the Taiwanese Aborigines (1982), describes how the Taiwanese compatriots supported Zheng’s military actions and how Zheng
helped them with agriculture and trading. However, Taiwanese historian Pu Zhongcheng reinterprets basically the same historical records and argues that Zheng took away some of aboriginal land to distribute to his military immigrants and increased the taxes (Pu 214-215).

Zheng’s death was to be dramatized in playwrights’ imaginations. He died in Taiwan in 1662, only 38 years old. The reason is not clear, although there are numerous speculations, each as disputable as the next. First, he was sick in the 1650s and refused a European missionary’s treatment, which might indicate the presence of some chronic illness. Second, in 1661, his father’s execution by the Qing because of his failure to persuade his son to surrender might have brought him great sorrow. Third, the adultery of his elder son, Zheng Jing, with his younger son’s wet nurse made him extremely angry. Fourth, he sent an European missionary to the Spanish leader in Manila to claim Luzon, but it only resulted in a massacre of Chinese on the island, which he got news of just a couple of days before his death.

Zheng’s elder son, Zheng Jing, and grandson, Zheng Keshuang, continued his rule in Taiwan until finally surrendering to the Qing navy in 1683.

Based on these disputable accounts, it is hard to say one historical narrative is absolutely false and another unquestionably true. They are all products of certain ideologies. Generally speaking, Chinese historians hold the conventional view, considering Zheng a selfless Chinese national hero, whereas Western scholarship has strongly challenged this view by examining how his image has been gradually
constructed as Chinese nationalism rose beginning in the late 19th century. Recent Chinese scholarship in Taiwan has been influenced by this skeptical view.

Playwrights from different countries, time periods, or political factions had drastically different views of Zheng, which resulted in various portrayals of him. Different playwrights included and emphasized the historical records that seemed to be real and useful for them, while they excluded or downplayed other records as unreal or useless. The reality and belief in Zheng of the respective playwrights were based on the knowledge produced by contemporary or earlier historians. It is true to a certain extent that each playwright's dramatization of Zheng is a reflection of the historiography in the playwright's time and different aims of the playwrights.

However, different historians could have had biased views too. Their views of Zheng were inevitably influenced by their political standings and the ideologies in the society, such as nationalism and anti-imperialism. These ideologies, often motives of playwriting, got extended and dramatized vividly in the plays portraying Zheng. Because his identity and activities are internationally relevant to the Japanese, Chinese, Manchu, Taiwanese, and Dutch peoples, playwrights have shown strong interest in him.
Chapter II: Zheng's Portrayals in Japanese Theatre

**Chikamatsu Monzaemon's The Battles of Kokusenya and its Influence**

The first staging of Zheng's story came from Japan rather than China. About 1700, Nishiki Bunryu wrote the initial play on Zheng, *A Diary of Kokusenya's Achievements (Kokusenya Tegara Nikki)* (Keene 6). Little is known about this play. In 1715, the most important playwright of the time, Chikamatsu Monzaemon, wrote a puppet play titled *The Battles of Kokusenya (Kokusenya Kassen)* for Takemoto Gidayu's *ningyō jōruri* theatre in Osaka. He was probably inspired by the former play (Keene 6). The show was extremely successful; it ran with full houses for seventeen months (1715-1717), still the record for *ningyō jōruri*.

Chikamatsu's primary source is said to be a semi-fictional history book written by Maezono Jinzaemon around 1665, *Account of the Battles of the Ming and the Qing (Minshin Tōshi)* (Keene 76). Chikamatsu freely chose some fictional and non-fictional elements from the book and other sources in shaping his own play, which wildly departs from actual history.

In Chikamatsu's play, Zheng is portrayed as a Japanese hero who fictionally restores the Ming dynasty by defeating the Tartars (Manchus). He is given a fictional Japanese wife and a Japanese name, Watōnai, by the playwright. *Wa* literally means Japan, *to* means China and *nai* means inside or between. The playwright attempts to draw parallels between China and Japan through the protagonist not only from his name, but also
through the plot. Though Chinese characters offer strategy to Watōnai, he “prefers to dash in against the enemy with no other weapons than his bare hands” (Keene 3). This indicates the braveness and directness of the Japanese is at least the equal of Chinese wisdom.

In this rendering, Japanese gods are most responsible for the fictionally successful restoration of the Ming dynasty. Keene describes:

The most spectacular demonstration of the power of the gods is saved for the fourth act. The imperial party, in dire straits, seeks divine assistance. Go Sankei and the boy prince pray to the spirit of the first Ming emperor without apparent effect. Komutsu (Watōnai’s Japanese wife) and Princess Sendan, who had already been helped by the god Sumiyoshi to cross from Japan to China, pray to him for assistance. At once a miraculous cloud bridge spans the abyss, permitting the loyal supporters of the emperor to cross safely. When the villainous Tartars attempt to follow them over the bridge, it disintegrates, plunging them to their deaths below. The Japanese gods were evidently behind the restoration of the Ming! (Keene 4-5)

Here the playwright is trying to illustrate the superiority of Japanese gods. Not only does the local Shinto god work miraculously even in China, but the Chinese princess also believes in it.

Keene points out that the subject of the play is the relationship between Japanese and Chinese civilization. In history, Japan was deeply influenced by Chinese culture, science, religion and political theory. Subject to China for a long time, the Japanese tended to treasure their indigenous culture (e.g. Shintoism and the spiritual nature of Japanese people). It was natural to admit China had advanced knowledge and technology, but as a corollary the Japanese were proud of their spirits. This is the function of gods, braveness
and directness in the play (Keene 2).

At the end of Act II, after conquering the Chinese soldiers, Watōnai gives them Japanese names that start with exotic place names, such as “Changchowzaemon, Cambodiaemon,” and “Englandbei,” after having conquered them. This, however, is just for fun and not so much putting down the Chinese. There are also several admirable Chinese heroes depicted in the play, such as Kan Ki (Gan Hui as pronounced in Chinese). At the time, China, the most important “other” for Japan, was still commendable. Keene’s summary is valuable: “The play is a celebration of the marriage of the two countries, and not a shout of triumph.” (5)

As a result of the great success of The Battles of Kokusenya, not only did Chikamatsu write a sequel, The Later Battles of Kokusenya (Kokusenya Gonichi Kassen) (Keene 162), but also many other playwrights who intended to copy his success wrote plays on Zheng. Some simply included Kokusenya in the titles, but the play contents were not related to Zheng’s story.² It is clear that The Battles of Kokusenya made Zheng popular in Japan.

In the following centuries, there are numerous Japanese works on Zheng: ningyō jōruri and kabuki plays, novels, and biographies. A partial fictional biography titled The Life of Lord with the Royal Surname (Kokusenya Ichidaiki) was written in 1855 by Kanagaki Robun. In the play a youthful Watōnai defeats three armed Dutchmen with his bare hands. I speculate that this might be the first rendering that dramatizes Zheng’s battle

² For instance, Chikamatsu himself wrote a play titled The Latest Story about Kokusenya’s Chinese Ship (Tosenbanashi Ima Kokusenya) that dramatizes the 1721 rebellion of Zhu Yigui, a Taiwanese, against Manchu rule in Taiwan (Keene 162).
with the Dutch. I assume its emergence was probably one reaction to the emerging Japan-U.S. dynamic, as in 1854 a U.S. fleet led by Matthew Perry forced Japan to open its ports, ending its 200-year policy of seclusion. Although Japan kept trading with the Dutch during its self-seclusion, now another “other,” besides Chinese and the Dutch, became unprecedently significant to Japan due to its military power.

After the consequent Meiji Restoration, 1866 to 1869, Japan began to accelerate its process of modernization. Western culture became more and more prevalent in Japan. This trend can be noted in *The Magic Lantern Picture of Kokusenya (Kokusenya Sugata no Utsushie)*, a kabuki play written by Kawatake Mokuami in 1872. The play tells this story: after a geisha is rescued by a foreign ship, she becomes an Englishman’s mistress. Seven years later, her Japanese husband comes from Japan to meet her in London, but because she has to take care of her sick English benefactor, and he has to go back to Japan to see his dying father, the two say goodbye forever (Keene 81). This play reflects the tastes of Japanese audiences in the Meiji period, when the West became a new object of exoticization. Based on an abstract of this play, I read the loss of a wife as symbolizing, loss of Japanese property, and the death of the father as symbolizing loss of Japanese tradition, both implying the crisis of Japanese society and tradition in the face of the Western or modern world. Where is Watōnai or Kokusenya? I suppose he must be absent from the play, for it was set in contemporary times and irrelevant to China or Taiwan. The absence may indicate the transformation of his name from an entity to merely a metaphor of international reference.
Osanai Kaoru’s Adaptation

The late 19th century and the turn of the 20th century saw the start of importing Western modern theatre in Japan. In order to establish modern theatre arts, Japanese artists introduced the latest European practices and undertook two major experiments: shinpa (new style), a combination of Western theatre and the indigenous theatre form, kabuki; and shingeki (new drama), largely influenced by realism. Ibsen’s problem plays and Stanislavsky’s method, favored by the Japanese pioneers, were translated, taught, and used as models, while Shakespeare, German expressionism, and symbolism were also staged and imitated. At the same time, playwrights began to write in a realistic style and even experimented in adapting plays from the repertory of traditional theatre forms.

Chikamatsu’s The Battles of Kokusenya, perhaps a canonical one in ningyō jōruri and kabuki repertoires (especially the former), was to be chosen by the artists who intended to modernize Japanese traditional theatre by experimenting with new styles and inserting modern thought into the play.

In 1924 Osanai Kaoru, a leading pioneer of Japanese modern theatre and co-founder of the Tsukiji Little Theatre (Tsukiji Shogekiô) in Tokyo, was the first one who adapted Chikamatsu’s The Battles of Kokusenya for shingeki, the “new drama.” The works he directed for the theatre were mainly translated modern European plays. However, he adapted Chikamatsu’s The Battles of Kokusenya in 1928 for the fourth anniversary of the foundation of the Tsukiji Little Theatre. Exceptionally, it is the only play staged in the
Tsukiji Little Theatre that was adapted from traditional theatre repertory.\(^3\)

When talking about the historical context of the adaptation, Kubo Saka, editor of the official journal of the Tsukiji Little Theatre, in his article “The Adaptation of The Battles of Kokusenya,” begins by first reviewing kabuki’s first international tour, led by Ichikawa Sadanji II to Moscow and Leningrad in the same year. He cites Soviet critics’ consensus that the content of kabuki was worthless, while the performing style was unique. Then Kubo speculates that although kabuki is Japanese people’s valuable treasure, now there is nothing fresh and exciting on its banal stage, and that a new adaptation of The Battles of Kokusenya is something that can bring this worldly unique theatre form (kabuki) back to life. Kubo also praises Osanai, without reservation, as the only person who can achieve this goal, because he, who has the deepest understanding of Japanese classical theatre as well as the best knowledge of theatre arts abroad, can examine Chikamatsu’s play through ‘eyes the same as foreigners,’ so that the play can be revived without losing its original essence (Kubo 166).

From Kubo’s reasoning, it is clear that the purpose of this adaptation is artistically charged. He thought, at this point, The Battles of Kokusenya was picked as a classic, in which “both the content and form are to be modernized.” Kubo’s point of view, which also represented that of some contemporary Japanese intellectuals, was that the modernization of the play along with the ongoing modernization of the theatre, Japanese culture, and

\(^3\) See the complete list of productions by the Tsukiji Little Theatre in Allyn 121-130, over 80% of the productions were translated European plays. The others were primarily works by contemporary Japanese playwrights.
society in general meant the Westernization of Japanese tradition, in which "eyes the same as foreigners" were certainly necessary and significant.

The play is said to have been "staged in a spectacular combination of Meyerhold and traditional kabuki styles" (Allyn 87) under the direction of Osanai’s companion, another key figure in Japanese modern theatre, Hijikata Yoshi (Nishimura 345). Hijikata once expressed his desire of staging the play and the significance of "modernizing" and "reforming old plays." (Allyn 98) The performance, as described by Kubo, successfully combined various Eastern forms, including "sanshin," dancing, sword fighting, puppetry, Chinese music, Chinese dance, acrobatics, American Indian tom-tom, and Javanese shadow puppetry;" while tsuke, an indispensable element of kabuki was eliminated (Kubo V, 166). Considering that Japan was expanding into various parts of Asia at the time, there might possibly be some political motivation for the choice and use of certain Asian theatre forms. Such research is beyond the scope of this study, but may yield some telling results.

Interest in Meyerhold’s bio-mechanics had been shared by Osanai and Hijikata for years. In December 1927, Osanai, despite his illness, returned to Moscow to witness post-revolutionary Russian theatre. During his ten-day stay, he twice visited Meyerhold, whose dramas were considered by Osanai “the best nowadays,” and saw Meyerhold’s The Inspector General and The Forest. Even before this trip, Meyerhold’s influence on Osanai

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4 Three-stringed Okinawan instrument.
5 The mention of tsuke indicates the adaptation was probably based on kabuki version of Chikamatsu’s The Battles of Kokusenya.
had already helped him shape the idea that highly stylized kabuki acting parallels acrobatics in bio-mechanics, which frees acting technique from "the slavery of naturalism." (Osanai 239) Although it is impossible to picture the actual acting style in Osanai and Hijikata's The Battles of Kokusenya, their attempt to create an anti-realist performance by practicing Meyerhold's idea and "combining various performing techniques is distinctive.

In terms of the content, the imitative scene of reading the subscription list and most of Princess Sendan's michiyuki (travel scene) seem to have been significantly cut. The cut is a part of Osanai's bold experimentation because the traditional scenes were important in both ningyō jōruri and kabuki. Although Kubo does not mention specifically how Osanai's adaptation added a modern message to the old play, he does quote Osanai's criticism of Chikamatsu's "childish interests" and "low humor." According to John Allyn, "as always Osanai sought a poetic quality in his productions and the play was found wanting by the ultra-left" (Allyn 87), which is not surprising because Osanai, when discussing the direction of the troupe with Hijikata in December 1928, stated clearly that he thought the Tsukiji Little Theatre "has to preserve academic and artistic freedom," which meant to him that it was "not allowed in political theatre. (Osanai 243)

The 1920s saw the militarization of the rightist government and rise of the leftist movement. As a result, leftist plays, including those staged in the Tsukiji Little Theatre, were often banned or modified under government censorship. While Osanai stressed artistic aspects of theatre at the discussion on December 25, 1928, the other leader of the
theatre, Hijikata, intended to stage more proletarian playwrights’ works in the following year. (Allyn 89) After Osanai’s sudden death due to a heart attack in the same night, the Tsukiji Little Theatre split in early 1929. Hijikata with six other leftist members formed the New Tsukiji Troupe (Shin Tsukiji Gekidan), where another important Japanese play on Zheng’s story was to be produced.

Osanai Kaoru’s modern adaptation deviates drastically from not only Chikamatsu’s commercially successful classic, but also the other plays that had been written for ningyō jōruri and kabuki. All the former plays were for a general audience of popular theatre and primarily driven by a motivation to make profit, whereas Osanai’s production was exclusively a result of his and Hijikata’s desire to modernize the traditional play for a modern audience - mostly intellectuals. Like many other plays produced by the Tsukiji Little Theatre, this production brought a considerable deficit. Although it had the largest audience among the five Tsukiji productions in the second half of 1928 (278 spectators, more than half house), it caused the greatest deficit among the five (multi-millions in yen as estimated in today’s value, or hundreds of thousands of U.S. dollars) (Osanai 257). In fact, it was Hijikata’s personal patronage that supported the theatre for years, as it was common that shingeki was not self-supporting because of its limited audience, primarily intellectuals. The number of spectators and influence of the performance cannot be compared with kabuki in the same time period, not to mention the seventeen-month-long record run with full houses of Chikamatsu’s original show. Osanai, in what happened to be his last message to his audience, claimed that in spite of the deficit of the five
productions, since the Tsukiji Little Theatre was not a profitable theatre, he only hoped there would be 300 audience members every night (Osanai 257). From Osanai’s adaptation of *The Battles of Kokusenya*, the high cost of developing Japanese modern theatre is clearly shown.

**Kubo Sakae’s New Story of the Battles of Kokusenya**

From March 21 to 30, 1930, the New Tsukiji Troupe performed Kubo Sakae’s maiden dramatic work, *New Story of the Battles of Kokusenya (Shinsetsu Kokusenya Kassen)*, also directed by Hijikata Yoshi.

In late 1928, when Osanai’s adaptation was being produced, Kubo wrote two articles, one on the history, titled “Zheng Zhilong and Zheng Chenggong,” the other, the aforementioned article on Osanai’s work, titled “The Adaptation of *The Battles of Kokusenya*.“ It is probably around the same time that Kubo, a member of the literary department of the Tsukiji Little Theatre since 1926 (Kubo, 1986, 7), began to shape his own play, for he had done detailed research on the history as shown in the former article, and more importantly, in the latter article, he relentlessly criticized the lack of historical accuracy in Chikamatsu’s play and the way he “tampers with history” by “mounting absurdly fantastic ideas.” (Kubo, 1962, V-165) Kubo’s emphasis on historical accuracy reflects the new development of *shingeki*. He mentions that “(s)ome people claim that if no change of value, for instance, a modification from anti-militarist perspective, is given to the content of the work, it would lack modern meaning.” (This claim is not referring to
any particular production.) Considering Osanai's views on the divergent places of art and politics, his *Kokusenya* adaptation, though highly complimented by Kubo, was likely apolitical and void of explicit ideologies such as anti-militarism and leftism that were to be fully embraced by Kubo in his play.

Kubo's play is unique among all the works on Zheng written by either Japanese or Chinese playwrights in the sense that Zheng, instead of being a hero, is nothing more than a member of the wicked ruling class. In the play, when Zheng is studying in Nanjing, he is sympathetic to the proletariat, giving the cash Zheng Zhilong offers to him to his poor classmates and making money as a manual worker. But after he is forced by his pirate father to join him in Act I, he changes. In Act II Scene i, he does not take action when his former poor classmate and coworker come to him for military aid for Nanjing, resulting in them being killed by Zheng Zhilong. In Act II Scene ii, influenced by his selfish mother and wife, in order to win over his newly born younger brother in the familial power struggle, he secretly forces the emperor at blade point to entitle him with the royal surname and power. In Act III Scene i in the court meeting, he condemns his father's crimes and takes over his power and wealth. Later, in Act III Scene ii, he gives the only sedan to his wife and flees, leaving his mother behind to be raped by a Manchu general. When he recruits troops in his "colony" of Taiwan in Act IV Scene i, a Taiwanese man attempts to assassinate him but fails. Finally, in the epilogue, Zheng's wife mercilessly accuses Zheng's fifteen-year fight against the Manchus as being his own ambition rather than his loyalty, summarizing all the evil deeds that he has done in his life. Finally,
because his bribery is revealed by his uncle and political rival, he commits suicide by poisoning himself.

Basically, almost all the other ruling class characters are also negatively portrayed. Zheng Zhilong is not Rōikkan, the refined and loyal old man of Chikamatsu’s play, but simply a rough and violent pirate; Zheng’s mother, no more the self-sacrificing heroin, is a power and wealth oriented, selfish, ambitious, and daring woman; Zheng’s wife is similar to his mother and commits adultery with his teenage younger brother; the ministers in the Ming court are only interested in political struggle; the Chinese emperor and the shogun are both concupiscent; Zheng’s general Gan Hui (Kan Ki), who in Chikamatsu’s play is manful and tactful, becomes a crazy fighter.

It is clear that Kubo dramatizes Zheng’s story from the perspective of Marxism and anti-militarism. Generally speaking, the proletarian characters are positively portrayed: Zheng’s former classmate and coworker try to persuade him to fight the Manchus after Nanjing is seized; Weird Man, a character created by Kubo, attempts to assassinate Zheng, the colonizer; and some of the Taiwanese sailors refuse to join Zheng’s army because he is “colonizing Taiwan.” Some others, seemingly more internationalistic, are willing to join, considering it a chance to liberate other “comrades” in China and Manchuria.

However, the proletarian characters are not all portrayed ideally. Two of the Taiwanese sailors go to Zheng and ask for reward, for they are willing to persuade their fellow sailors to join the army. The two then try to persuade those who refuse to join by employing Marxist thought. The debate in Act IV Scene iii is similar to a discussion of a
modern labor union, in the sense that some sailors think they can boycott the war by not joining Zheng’s army, and that the two sailors are paid to persuade others to be recruited. One possible interpretation of the complexity of the proletarian group is as a reflection of the actual situation and struggles within labor unions in Japan in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Despite the fact that Kubo has denigrated the historical inaccuracy in Chikamatsu’s work, and in his own work correctly dramatize a large number of historical figures in terms of their names, relationships, and official positions, such as the Japanese official Ii Naotaka and the pirate Yang Tiansheng, his dramatization deviates from real history to a great extent. He makes up a conspiracy theory that it was Zheng who forced the emperor to entitle him the royal surname. In order to create the colonial conflict between Zheng and the Taiwanese people, Kubo fabricates a trip to Taiwan for Zheng to recruit before his Nanjing campaign. Furthermore, historically Gan Hui (Kan Ki) was captured and killed by the Manchus, but Kubo makes a soldier in his troop kill him, in order to represent the conflict between the proletariat and their “real enemy,” the ruling class warlords. Also, Zheng commits suicide in Xiamen without even fighting the Dutch in Taiwan because his bribery is recovered. Here, Kubo coins another conspiracy theory: Zheng asks his servant to bribe the coroner so that his suicide will not be known. The way Kubo fictionalizes Zheng’s story is closer to actual history than Chikamatsu’s, but his play still drastically differs from what really happened in history.

Kubo intended to point out Japan’s role in East Asia in the early 1900s through the
portrayal of Zheng as a colonizer. Although Zheng’s identity as Japanese is not as strong as Watōnai in *The Battles of Kokusenya*, he still represents Japanese, for he acknowledges his “military blood of divine Japan” in the Ming court (Kubo I, 67), using the words his Japanese mother teaches him (Kubo I, 36). The playwright goes on to use Zheng’s activities to allude to Japan’s increasing expansion in East Asia. In 1895, Taiwan was ceded by the Qing dynasty to Japan as the result of the First Sino-Japanese War; since the 1890s, Japan had a military presence in Manchuria and tried to colonize it for decades; in 1909, when Japan was colonizing Korea, the Japanese resident general of Korea, Ito Hirobumi, was assassinated by Korean independence activist An Jung-geun in Manchuria; in 1910 Korea was annexed by Japan; and Japan occupied the Chinese coastal city Qingdao from 1914 to 1922. These historical events are all seen in Kubo’s play. Zheng’s colonization of Taiwan paralleled Japan’s colonization of Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria. Weird Man’s attempted assassination of Zheng paralleled An Jung-geun’s assassination of Ito Hirobumi; and the Taiwanese sailors’ desire to liberate China and Manchuria reflected Kubo’s internationalist view that proletariat should aim at liberating people in other countries. Probably due to heavy government censorship, Kubo could only deliver his anti-militarist and anti-colonialist thoughts through a history play.

The historification in *New Story of the Battles of Kokusenya* can be largely explained by Kubo’s statements in his treatise “Issues of History Plays,” in which he fully expresses his understanding of history plays. In his opinion, playwrights of classical history plays held a supernaturally fatalistic worldview. Ideally, their characters are not influenced by
the society at all; realist and naturalist playwrights try to separate their characters in a limited environment, such as a living room, from the flow of world history. Kubo claims that he and his companions, following "the method of authentic social sciences," adopt a Marxist and materialistic view of history and regard any historical event as a phase of the development of world history, instead of a past age (Kubo 1962, V-376). Chikamatsu's dramatization is clearly full of "the supernaturally fatalistic worldview," and thus not favored by Kubo; realist and naturalist playwriting, from Kubo's view, is irrelevant to world history and thus not favored either. Consequently, Kubo chose to use an episodic structure, setting scenes across a vast time span and in different locations in China, Taiwan, and Japan, and portraying characters from different countries and classes, so that "the development of world history" can be fully represented on stage. In order to apply Marxist theory of history, Kubo stressed conflicts between the ruling class and the proletariat, and between the colonizers and the colonized. Kubo's Zheng is a good example of a psychologically developed character, whereas Kokusenya is a stereotyped heroic fighter in ningyō jōruri and kabuki plays. Influenced by his father, mother, and wife, he changes from a leftist student to a self-serving warlord, who at the end of the play is laughed at fiercely by the hundreds of thousands of dead people whose deaths he is responsible for.

1940s and On

Just over a decade after Kubo's play, in 1940, two of the three remaining leftist
shingeki troupes, one of which was the New Tsukiji Troupe, were dissolved and some members, including Kubo, were arrested for “thought crimes,” leaving only one apolitical shigeki troupe, Bungakuza, in Japan until the end of war in 1945 (Ortolani 252).

Kubo’s anti-militarist play was soon to be overshadowed by the outbreak of the Pacific War. In 1941, a film titled The Battles of Kokusenya was made by the Kyōdō Film Studio of Shinkō Cinema. Although the film has been lost to us, film historian Keiko McDonald speculates that:

One may reasonably surmise that it followed Chikamatsu’s spectacle of the hero’s combat in China in celebrating collective devotion to country and sovereign. Filmmakers could do no less at a time when national wartime policy was directly dictated to the film studio (McDonald 60).

The filmmakers, driven by the military government, must have found Zheng’s role as a half Japanese that saved Chinese people from the alien Manchus quite useful. This role closely parallels Japan’s stated goals in the so-called Great East Asian War, in which Japan was allegedly “saving” East Asia by driving Western colonizers out of those countries. The film most likely glorifies Zheng’s, and also Japan’s, goodwill and military triumph.

On the post-war Japanese stage, Chikamatsu’s ningyō jōruri play The Battles of Kokusenya continued to be one of the most frequently staged in the repertory. Perhaps the most noteworthy recent work on Zheng is Noda’s Version – The Battles of Kokusenya (Nodaban – Kokusenya Kassen), a postmodern play written and staged by the renowned playwright/director Noda Hideki for his troupe, Dream Wanderers (Yume no Yūminsha), in 1989. In the play, written after the emperor’s death and Seoul Olympics in 1988, Noda
is said to use Kokusenya to express his anxiety about the uncertainty of Japanese identity (Nishimura 365).

Chikamatsu’s *The Battles of Kokusenya*, a classic written in 1715, until today has been the cornerstone of Japanese works on Zheng. The works examined here show that subsequent plays were either imitations of or reactions to it. Clearly it was extremely popular and influential, and served well the apparent need for new interpretations of Japan’s relationship to China, other Asian countries, and the West.

The next chapter will examine Chinese works on Zheng, which, in contrast to Japan, did not appear until the 20th century.
Chapter III: Portrayals of Zheng in Chinese Theatre\(^6\)

Yu Risheng’s *The Record of a Maritime National Hero*

In China, after the submission of Taiwan by Zheng’s grandson to the Qing Dynasty in 1683, Zheng was officially defined as a rebel due to his resistance to the Qing, yet scholarly debate over whether he should be praised as an exemplary loyalist was allowed to occur. This might be the reason why even though theatre continued to thrive throughout the Qing period, there were no plays written about him before the 20\(^{th}\) century. But since the mid-1800s, as the Qing Dynasty became weaker and lowered its head to Western powers, Zheng was gradually and successfully incorporated into the Confucian pantheon for his loyalty, and more importantly, his victory over the alien Dutch force (Croizier 50).

In the late 1800s, as Chinese nationalism began to rise, the nationalists quickly labeled Zheng as a nationalist and anti-Manchu hero (Croizier 51-56). This led to the first Chinese play about Zheng, Yu Risheng’s *The Record of a Maritime National Hero* (*Haiguo Yingxiong Ji*). In 1906, the preface and first six acts were published in the Tokyo-based nationalist journal, *People* (*Minbao*). *People* was circulated in Japan, and secretly in China, and was the official publication of the Chinese United League.

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\(^6\) I discuss China and Taiwan in one chapter because: 1) historically, China and Taiwan have been largely interconnected, with the exception of the fifty-year Japanese occupation; 2) most plays on Zheng in Taiwan are written in Chinese; 3) most plays on Zheng in China are relevant to Taiwan.
(Zhongguo Tongmeng Hui). This Tokyo-based anti-Manchu organization later successfully overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and became the ruling Nationalist Party.

The articles in People, written by the Chinese diaspora revolutionaries in Japan, such as the renowned scholar Zhang Taiyan, were mostly political treatises and blueprints for establishing a republic - a Chinese nation-state. It was in this context the first dramatic piece about Zheng in Chinese appeared.

In the preface to The Record of a Maritime National Hero, Yu Risheng introduces how the inspiration of writing the play came to him. When he was on the coast in Japan, a Japanese passerby, after learning he was from China, said he knew Zheng was a Chinese hero whose mother was Japanese; then Yu Risheng became sorrowful, thinking that Zheng had heroically fought the Manchus and occupied Taiwan, but now Chinese people were suffering as slaves. It was national grief that motivated Yu Risheng to summon Zheng in his play.

The preface and first three acts were published in July 1906, and the following three acts four months later. But Acts VII thru XV of The Record of a Maritime National Hero were never printed. It is possible that the whole play had been finished but had no opportunity to be published, as People was banned by the Japanese government in 1908. However, it is also possible that Yu Risheng never completed the play. In the preface he listed the titles of all fifteen acts, where Act V was “Welcome Mother,” and Act VI was “Surrender to Villain.” It can be inferred that Act V would originally be about the arrival of Zheng’s mother, Lady Tagawa, in China, and Act VI Zheng Zhilong’s surrender to the
Qing. But the actual published Act V, "Return," is about Zheng’s move from Japan to
China, and Act VI, "Sitting in the Court," is about Zheng’s conversation with the emperor.
The distinction between the original list in July 1906 and the actual product in November
indicates that Yu Risheng was writing or rewriting at least Act V and VI between the two
issues. So it is possible that the playwright never went beyond conceiving the other nine
acts. Nevertheless, based on the six available acts and the nine titles for Acts VI to XV,
we can still speculate about the content and overall structure of the whole play, at least as
Yu Risheng had originally outlined.

Lady Tagawa falls in love with her new neighbor, Zheng Zhilong; then through
introduction by a matchmaker, they get married. In Act III, "Farewell," Zheng Zhilong
discusses with Lady Tagawa and decides to join a pirate group. In Act IV, "Submission,"
Zheng Zhilong, having become a successful pirate leader, submits to the local
government and gets appointed to an official position. In Act V, "Return," Zheng leaves
his mother, Lady Tagawa, and his younger brother to join Zheng Zhilong, now the head
official of Fujian. In Act VI, "Sitting in the Court," the emperor privately talks to Zheng,
now a young general, and Zheng sets his mind on restoring and repaying the country with
his life. Act VII, "Mass Pledge," as outlined, would most likely be about Zheng’s pledge
of resolution of victory before leading his troupes to battle. Act VIII, "Crusade Against
the Villains," could possibly be about Zheng’s battle with the Qing. Act IX, "Conquer
Taiwan," could possibly be about Zheng’s restoration of Taiwan from the Dutch armies.

The nationalist message in the existing acts is delivered through the portrayals of three major characters: Zheng Zhilong, Lady Tagawa, and Zheng. Zheng Zhilong is simply an ambitious, selfish, traitorous man pursuing “wealth, fame, sons, daughters, jades, and silks that can never be enjoyed and consumed completely in my whole life.” Because he is “not recognized by the court as a hero,” he decides to “join the pirate group, harry the border, and see what your court can do.” (People 1363) In Act IV, he has become the rich leader of the pirate group, but he surrenders to the government in order to “serve as a powerful official.” (People 2238)

In contrast to him, Lady Tagawa and Zheng are both portrayed as patriots and loyalists. Lady Tagawa, though a Japanese, is portrayed as any representative Chinese exemplary woman would be. A samurai’s daughter that “average men cannot match,” she falls in love with Zheng Zhilong from “the Great Chinese Empire.” (1360) This exaggerated phrase indicates the Japanese high lady’s admiration for China. In Act III,

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7 There is no stage direction or any suggestion for costume that visualize her Japaneseess.
Lady Tagawa, in contrast to Zheng Zhilong’s selfish concerns, sings “In the court the Son of Heaven of the Great Ming sits. Yet savage are bandits, wild are Tartars. The court and orders have to be saved.” (1363) She is portrayed as caring about China more than her Chinese husband. He replies that to join bandits or Tartars would be a fine way to achieve his practical goals. Lady Tagawa angrily disagrees with him, saying that to be loyal to the emperor and love the country is what should be done, and that bandits are always merely rebellious hungry civilians, whereas Tartars are a despicable, inhumane, and unbearably stinky species that he by all means must not associate with. Zheng, still a kid, asks if despicable, inhumane, and unbearably stinky Tartars are dogs or wolves, and if Zheng Zhilong can buy one for him as a pet. Here the playwright skillfully and vividly insults the Manchu Tartars by exploiting the kid’s ignorance. Then, after little Zheng is told Tartars are annoying the Great Ming, he

jumps and bursts into anger: How could this happen! The Great Ming is my home country, how can those Tartars be savaging around? I hate being unable to transform into an adult immediately and destroy all the cattle-and-sheep-like Tartars with my treasured sword. (1364)

Zheng, though a child, is quite clear about his national identity and responsibility as a Chinese. It is notable that it was no later than 1625, only one year after Zheng’s birth, when Zheng Zhilong historically became a pirate leader. But the playwright deliberately reorganizes history in order to create this scene in which Zheng is able to patriotically confront his pirate-to-be father. In Act VI, when Zheng, now a general, confesses to the emperor his loyalty and determination to save the country, the phrases he uses, “the major principles of righteousness about Chinese and barbarians” and “the disease of becoming
an extinct species and slaves,” manifest the anti-Manchuiism of both Zheng and the playwright. That if the Manchus rule China, Chinese people would be slaves on the road to extinction, is exactly what was happening in the view of the late Qing nationalists.

_The Record of a Maritime National Hero_ is a _chuanqi_ (legend or marvel tales), a genre of traditional drama, and shows typical traits of the genre. First, _chuanqi_ usually have a large number of acts, and this one was structured in fifteen acts. Second, the play is written in elaborate verse, containing both rhythmic and non-rhythmic poems, as well as allusions to classical poetry. Third, the lyrics in the play employ several melodic patterns (_qupai_), indicating Yu Risheng’s basic knowledge of Chinese traditional theatre (_xiqu_). Fourth, the playwright has carefully taken advantage of theatrical conventions of _xiqu_. For instance, in Act V, immediately following the stage direction “Each sheds tears and takes farewell” (in Japan), Zheng is absorbed in the landscape of China, praising the greatness of Mount Tai (_Taishan_) and the Yellow River (_Huanghe_), indicating he has already arrived in China. Yu Risheng was evidently familiar with the stage convention that transition to distant locations may only require performers to walk in a circle. Another example is the frequent use of self-introduction. When characters come onto stage, they address audience directly and introduce themselves.

However, _The Record of a Maritime National Hero_ is merely a closet play (_antouju_); there is no account showing that the play has ever been staged, and the incomplete script was first published in a political journal in the “novel” (_xiaoshuo_) section. In fact, _chuanqi_ during the Ming and the Qing periods could either be a text for performance or a
closet play for reading as a novel. It was not uncommon for intellectuals to write closet plays as pure literature just to express their ideas and pedantize.

Nothing is known about the playwright's life, except that she/he, possibly a student, must have been an advocate of anti-Manchuism and have lived in Japan, which can be inferred from the play's preface. The name Yu Risheng is probably a pen name, for the Chinese character Yu is rarely used as a surname, and Risheng, literally meaning "born to the sun" or "born in Japan," is very likely a self-labeled name. There is no account showing that Yu Risheng ever wrote any other plays or articles, even though *The Record of a Maritime National Hero* has been frequently mentioned by later theatre scholars. This closet play may be the product of an intellectual's once-in-a-lifetime playwriting for the purpose of promoting nationalism and anti-Manchuism.

In fact, it is an important historical phenomenon in the late Qing period that there were many closet plays written in the same period that dramatize Chinese national heroes such as Yue Fei, Liang Hongyu, and Zheng's contemporary, Shi Kefa, who memorably struggled with the invaders in history (Wang 77). Among them, another notable *chuanqi*, *The Solitary Official's Tears (Guchen Lei)*, written by Liu Yishu, probably has Zheng as a supporting character, for the play's protagonist, Liu Yingrui, in the play unites with Zheng to fight the Manchus (Wang 76).

As Chinese elites did not start spoken drama (*huaju*) until 1907, when Yu Risheng was dramatizing Zheng's story to propagate nationalism and anti-Manchuism, he utilized the traditional theatre form of *chuanqi* to its best advantage.
After Western drama was imported, however, Zheng was not favored by dramatists until the late 1930s. I propose two major reasons for this: first, the Qing Dynasty was soon overthrown by the nationalist revolution in 1912, which made nationalism not as pressing as before, and second, problem plays dealing with contemporary controversial social issues dominated the spoken drama stage. As a result, the historical figure of Zheng was temporarily irrelevant to the society.

However, Zheng was never forgotten. His story was carried on in other forms. In 1929, a silent movie titled Zheng Chenggong was produced by Fudan Film Company (Wosouwang URL), although I am unable to find any details about it. More likely than not, the movie reached general audiences because the market-driven film companies would not waste money on “closet movies.” Even if it was not actually shown in theatres, however, the meaning of the movie production differed fundamentally from the closet play printed on the Tokyo-based elite journal that could not circulate in China openly. By 1929, the number of movies that had been produced numbered only in hundreds, and many were about contemporary life. The production of a movie entitled Zheng Chenggong can be seen as a sign indicating that Zheng would become more popular and influential in performing arts as movies were to become the most popular form of entertainment in urban areas. I assume that the movie might be a reaction to both Western and Japanese presence in China, or possibly simply a Confucianist moral lesson of the type that was popular in this period (Zheng could be praised for his loyalty).
The Storytelling Play, Zheng Chenggong

The 1930s saw an event as crucial to the country as the anti-Manchu movement—the Second Sino-Japanese War. Without major battles, Japan had seized the large area in northeastern China by 1937. Japanese invasion, begun in 1931, resulted in the National Defense Drama Movement (Guofang Xiju Yundong), as Chinese people began to realize the threat, and Chinese nationalism rose once again. The plays written as part of the movement were direct depictions of anti-Japan characters and activities. In addition to such plays in the movement, a short storytelling text about Zheng was published in March 1937.

The anonymous text, titled Zheng Chenggong, was printed as “improved storytelling material” by the Jiangxi Province House for People’s Education. Storytelling (shuoshu) is a traditional popular art form. The word “improved” suggests that the story was printed for the grass-roots storytellers as a better model according to governmental norms. Such “improved storytelling material” could either be originally developed by storytellers and later revised by officials, or wholly written by educated writers. If indeed this story was actually performed, it would be significant as possibly the first live performance of Zheng’s story in China, especially in the context of popular culture.

The text consists of only six and a half pages. Page one gives historical background of the late Ming Dynasty and introduces Zheng’s name; page two is about Zheng Zhilong’s adventures and Zheng’s childhood; page three is about the Manchu invasion and the resistance of Zheng’s contemporary, Shi Kefa; page four is about how Zheng was
entitled the royal surname and his determination to avenge his parents and the country against the Tartars; page five and six are about his Nanjing campaign, which ended in defeat, and his subsequent possession of Taiwan; the last half page is about the Qing conquering Taiwan after Zheng’s death, the later Japanese occupation, and the wish that Chinese would fight the enemies and restore the lost lands in accordance with Zheng’s will. This vernacular text is much more accessible than Yu Risheng’s poetic writing, but because of its brevity, it lacks well-established characters and appealing verbal exchanges.

It is clear that the text is a collage put together under Zheng’s name. The structural characteristic to be noted is that almost one third of the concise text is about the fall of the Ming Dynasty and not directly related to Zheng. In the second paragraph, after Shi Kefa and Zheng are introduced, it says, “now I will only represent Zheng’s extraordinarily amazing deeds.” The fifth paragraph, however, turns to Shi Kefa’s resistance and failure in detail, contradicting the previous statement. Likewise, the two sentences about the emperor’s death and Manchu initial invasion as a result of Wu Sangui’s betrayal in the first paragraph are paraphrased in the second paragraph. One likely reason for the structural incongruence, contradiction, and unnecessary repetition, is that the original story was about the history of the late Ming’s resistance on a larger scale rather than a close-up on Zheng.

The storytelling text follows actual history, differing from Yu Risheng’s bold fiction. The order of historical events and the details, such as Zheng’s gullibility in the Nanjing
campaign that resulted in his failure, show that the creator or the “improver” of the text had read some history books about him, though they might have been inaccurate as well (The time and place that Zheng Zhilong is executed is obscure in the text). On the other hand, however, the text does not dramatize the story by adding details and verbal exchanges as Yu Risheng masterfully did.

In the very limited direct depiction, Zheng is portrayed as a loyalist who has to give up filial piety in order to give allegiance to the emperor when Zheng Zhilong betrays the Ming. The sharp contrast between Zheng and his materialist father, and Zheng’s dilemma between filial piety and loyalty, a popular dramatic device in xiqu, play an important part in both The Record of a Maritime National Hero and the storytelling text, and are to be exploited in the future texts.

**A Ying’s The Maritime National Hero**

After the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, Japanese invasion became the national crisis that every Chinese had to face. Chinese dramatists reacted strongly to the war by actively writing and staging plays that propagated nationalism and encouraged resistance. In Shanghai, from December 1937 to December 1941, Japanese troops were occupying the city with the exception of the Western colony. Within this area, called “the isolated island,” Chinese dramatists were able to continue their theatre activities. Plays promoting nationalism, but not directly depicting anti-Japan activities thrived. In 1940, A Ying wrote a spoken drama entitled, The Maritime National Hero (Haiguo Yingxiong),
which I assess to be the most influential Chinese play on Zheng to date.

A Ying (1900-1977) is Qian Defu's most well known pen name (he wrote *The Maritime National Hero* under another pen name, Wei Ruhui). The Shanghai-based playwright and scholar joined the Communist Party in 1926 and was one of the founders of the League of the Left-Wing Dramatists in 1930. A Ying specialized in history plays. *The Maritime National Hero* is the second in his trilogy of Southern Ming history plays, which was originally planned as a tetralogy. The three plays, all tragedies, are *Ge Nenniang* (variant titles: *Mingmo Yihen* and *Bixuehua*), *The Maritime National Hero* (variant title: *Zheng Chenggong*), and *Yang'e Zhuan*, plus the unwritten fourth play, *Zhang Cangshui* (Zheng's ally in the Nanjing campaign) (A Ying 8). Each play centers on a historical figure that fought the Manchus in the last years of the falling Ming Dynasty.

*Ge Nenniang*, in which Zheng is a supporting character, was written and performed by Theatre Arts Troupe (Juyi She) in Shanghai in 1939 and turned out to be a hit. The show was so successful that it continued playing to full house audience for thirty-five days (Hong 157). The play was soon adapted as a movie in the same year. Later it was staged by other nationally prominent troupes in other cities, such as Chinese Traveling Troupe (*Zhongguo Lǔxing Jutuan*) and National Defense Art Troupe (*Guofang Yishu She*) (directed by Jiao Juyin in 1940) (Ge Yihong 255, 242). In the play, when the protagonist Ge Nenniang asks for military aid from Zheng Zhilong, who is about to betray the Ming and so does not offer help, Zheng, in support of Ge Nenniang, conflicts with his father and decides to break away from him. This rendering was to be fully expanded in *The
Maritime National Hero, the second play in the trilogy.

Succeeding Ge Nenniang’s success, The Maritime National Hero was written and premiered in 1940. Its popularity is shown by the fact that it ran for nearly thirty days and received “about a hundred positive critiques” in newspapers (A Ying 13).

One cannot but notice the similarity in titles between Yu Risheng’s The Record of a Maritime National Hero and A Ying’s The Maritime National Hero. By 1940, A Ying had edited a bibliography of xiqu in the Late Qing, which includes Yu Risheng’s play (A Ying 1954: 4-5). Although A Ying borrows the title from it, there seems to be no other interconnection between the two plays in terms of the content.

In the preface to the play, A Ying quoted words by critic Ying Weimin, who he thought “really objectively understood my efforts in my writing”: “[t]he theme of the play [is] the responsibility, the responsibility of struggle to be placed on the young generation’s shoulders.” (A Ying 10, 11) A Ying also wrote “Zheng Chenggong is the Chinese national hero who has the most persistent spirit of fighting.” (A Ying 10) He clearly intended to write the play to encourage resistance against the Japanese invasion, the common goal of the leftist writers during the war.

Structurally, Yu Risheng’s chuanqi unrestrictedly covers about eighty years with fifteen acts, from Zheng Zhilong’s adventure to Zheng’s grandson’s submission of Taiwan, whereas A Ying’s play focuses on four “major pivotal moments in Zheng’s life” (A Ying 13). The play has four acts. Act I takes place in the Ming court on a night in August 1646, depicting Zheng and the emperor’s negotiation with Zheng Zhilong; Act II takes place in
Zheng Zhilong’s mansion in the following month, depicting Zheng’s unsuccessful persuasion of his father when he is surrendering; Act III takes place in Zheng’s headquarter in the Nanjing campaign, on the night of July 14 to the morning of July 16, 1659, rendering Zheng’s military failure; Act IV takes place in Zheng’s official residence in Taiwan in April 1662, dramatizing Zheng’s military preparation and founding of the anti-Manchu Heaven and Earth Society.

Different from Yu Risheng’s dramatic license in time and location, A Ying not only specifies the precise time of each act but also quotes history books for the setting descriptions and footnotes in the script. Furthermore, he certainly did ample research, for he owned approximately three hundred history books about the Southern Ming, and carefully wrote an appendix of characters’ historical origins as well as an article on Zheng as the byproduct of playwriting (A Ying 3, 8-9).

The characters’ in Yu Risheng’s chuanqi are simplistic and easily recognizable: the self-serving Zheng Zhilong, the ideal and didactic wife and mother Lady Tagawa, and the loyalist hero Zheng. In A Ying’s play, however, there is a wider range of characters and, specifically, Zheng becomes a psychologically complex character. A Ying heightens the pathos of the tragic hero’s life by showing the psychological costs of losing the emperor and the queen (Act II), his mother (Act II) and father (Act IV), uncles (Act IV), and generals (Act III).

He also includes Zheng’s inner conflict—the classic conflict between filial piety and loyalty—in his psychological complexity. In Act I, as adopted son of the emperor, Zheng
has to conflict with his blood father. Although facing two opposing fathers, Zheng Zhilong and the emperor, is a difficult situation, Zheng certainly makes the righteous choice from the beginning. When Zheng Zhilong insultingly snaps his fan in front of the emperor, Zheng utters, “(Out’of tolerance) Duke Pingguo be polite! (Realizing his own rudeness, rapidly kneels down to the emperor) Please forgive your son’s criminal rudeness, I should die ten thousand deaths.” (A Ying 30) By calling Zheng Zhilong by his official title of Duke, clearly Zheng identifies himself as son of the emperor more than as the son of his blood father. Yet later in Act I and Act II, Zheng does suffer emotionally for not being able to persuade Zheng Zhilong, as his son, not to surrender. Especially in Act II, Zheng’s “anguish” time and again appears in stage directions (A Ying 52-53). Compared to A Ying’s depiction of Zheng, Yu Risheng’s Zheng seems to have no difficulty at all in abandoning his blood father.

It is noteworthy that A Ying represents several female figures in the play: Queen Zeng, Zheng’s wife Lady Dong, his daughter Zheng Yu, and the fighter Ma Jinzi. All of them share one laudable virtue: they work diligently for their beloved country. Queen Zeng works with the emperor into the night in Act I; Lady Dong and Zheng Yu accompany Zheng to the battlefront as relatives in Act III - which is unthinkable; Lady Dong makes battledress for soldiers and directs servant girls to make armor in Act IV; Ma Jinzi, originally a fictional character in Ge Nenniang, is a female fighter who “has no fear of death and dares to kill Tartars.” Perhaps because of the current resentment towards Japanese, Lady Tagawa does not appear in A Ying’s play, but the four characters form a
spectrum of female heroines, from high ladies to little girls and unlettered commoners.

In A Ying’s time, it was common to exploit female heroines in dramatic literature, especially under such a nationalist theme (not to forget the other two in his trilogy of Southern Ming history plays are stories of heroines). In fact, among all thirteen historical biographic films produced in Shanghai between 1938 and 1941, nine of them, mostly adapted from huaju, are stories of heroines. These plays and films convey the nationalist message that women are not inferior to men in repaying the country in a national crisis. The Maritime National Hero is no exception. In Act IV, Zheng compares Zheng Yu to her elder brother in their “everlasting willingness to restore the Ming,” and Ma Jinzi says people parallel her bravery with Zheng’s. The pattern of portraying female heroines, preceded by Yu Risheng’s Lady Tagawa and A Ying’s Ge Nenniang, was to be a recurring one in later plays on Zheng. It is not surprising that women were becoming heroines, because during the war, female labor was needed by the nation in both agriculture and industry, as male laborers joined the army.

The differences in overall structure, historical accuracy, and characterization in Yu Risheng’s and A Ying’s plays are results of playwriting in the two different forms of chuanqi and huaju. The change of didactical artistic medium, from chuanqi to huaju, expanded Zheng’s influence effectively. He used to lie on the page in Yu Risheng’s closet play, but thirty-four years later, was reaching a considerable audience. That said, The Maritime National Hero was created for the urban elite and by the urban elite. In the autumn of 1943, the nationally renowned group New China Theatre Troupe (Xin
Zhongguo Jushe) performed the play in Guilin, a city in southwestern China. After all, however, huaju’s popularity was still restricted to the lettered urban audience.⁸

After Japan took over Taiwan from the Qing Dynasty in 1895, the Japanese government began to take advantage of the well-dramatized hero to establish Japanese identity in Taiwan, to replace Chinese identity. In 1915, a play titled The Last Days of Kokusenya was written by Kashima Oto for the Taiwan branch of the (Japanese) Patriotic Women’s Association. Since Zheng had been a local hero in Taiwan for his loyalty and his victory over the Dutch colonizers, the Japanization of him validated and reinforced the Japanization process of Taiwan, as well as Taiwan’s separateness from China. After the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, Japan immediately launched the Japanese Imperialization Movement, a campaign in Taiwan that aimed to turn the Taiwanese into loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor by forbidding Chinese language, culture and religion. As a result, in 1941, the Imperial Committee of Public Service officially banned all Chinese historical plays and performances in Mandarin or Taiwanese. In the next year, an adapted version of Chikamatsu’s The Battles of Kokusenya became one of the two model plays for the reform of the Taiwanese local puppet form, budaixi. Until the end of the war, The Battles of Kokusenya (in Japanese) was one of the plays officially allowed to be performed in Taiwan (Lü 418-420).

The end of World War II in August 1945 ended the Japanese fifty-year-long

⁸ Traveling troupes such as Chinese Traveling Troupe primarily traveled in the major cities.
occupation of Taiwan. After the war, the Chinese government soon found Zheng’s usefulness in connecting this lost island to its motherland. Zheng’s temple in Taiwan, once modified by the Japanese into a Shinto shrine, now was reinvigorated (Minbao, June 10, 1946); the newly arrived Chinese currency was named “Zheng Chenggong Currency” (Minbao, February 17, 1946); and Zheng’s history was reinterpreted in local media (Minbao, March 17, 1946).

In order to achieve this remaking of Zheng, his theatrical image as Japanese also had to be replaced. In December 1946, the aforementioned New China Theatre Troupe was invited and funded by the Taiwan Governor’s Office to perform four plays. Zheng Chenggong was the first of them. The production was directed by Ouyang Yuqian, one of the most important key figures in early huaju history. The importance of this performance is indicated by the fact that the local newspaper Minbao enthusiastically reported the upcoming event five times in twenty days, without mentioning the other three plays.

This same troupe once performed A Ying’s The Maritime National Hero in 1943 in Guilin, and the theatre scholar Jiao Tong later claimed that this December 1946 performance of Zheng Chenggong in Taiwan was A Ying’s The Maritime National Hero (Jiao 157), under its variant title Zheng Chenggong. The newspaper never mentioned the playwright’s name, if it was A Ying’s play, this could be due to the fact that he had joined the Red Army. However, one newspaper report of the play contradicts Jiao Tong’s assertion, for it writes:

“the content of the drama is glorification of the heroic epic that Taiwan was
restored by the Lord with the royal surname. There are a few local landscapes, such as the fierce battle on the Taiwan Strait and the acceptance of submission in the suburb of Anping City which will place the audience in the great scene three hundred years ago." (Minbao, December 30, 1946)

If the report is trustworthy, then the play is obviously not A Ying’s The Maritime National Hero, which does not even mention the process of taking Taiwan from the Dutch. Very likely, it is a newly written play, evidently intended to theatrically legitimize China’s current restoration of Taiwan by representing Zheng’s seizure of the island.

The production cost the troupe four hundred thousand Old Taiwanese dollars to build its “magnificent and elaborate” settings, making the tickets inaccessibly expensive for the commoners. However, the successful performance provoked local artists to form theatre troupes (Jiao 43-44).

Zhang Ying’s Zheng Chenggong

The political map of China was to change drastically once again very soon. 1949 was a watershed year in both modern Chinese history and in the dramatization of Zheng. In this year, the Communist Party won the civil war and established the People’s Republic of China (PRC), while the defeated Nationalist Party and its Republic of China (ROC) government fled to Taiwan.

In 1950, a newly written play, Zheng Chenggong, was performed in Taiwan by the Third Theatre Group of the Department of Defense (Jiao 193). This four-act drama

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9 Anping City was the major city in Taiwan, where the Dutch surrendered to Zheng. Its Dutch name was Zeelandia.
represents Zheng’s life from his father’s betrayal of the Ming to his own victory over the Dutch.

The next year, to celebrate the birthday of the nation’s father, Sun Zhongshan (Sun Yat-sen), Zhang Ying (b. 1919), one of the most important theatre and movie directors in Taiwan, wrote and directed his four-act huaju, Zheng Chenggong. The performance was a government-organized event, thus important performers were cast. Due to its success, the play was soon adapted by Lü Shushang into a Taiwanese local form, gezaixi.

Zhang Ying’s play was clearly influenced by A Ying’s. First, similar to A Ying’s play, Zheng’s pathos is shown through his internal conflict between filial piety and loyalty throughout the play, as well as the psychic costs of losing family members. He bursts into tears after having to execute his uncle, who as the general has fled when the Manchus attack (Zhang 81). As in A Ying’s play, he weeps after hearing of Zheng Zhilong’s death. Second, Zhang Ying interweaves Ge Nenniang’s request for military aid from Zheng Zhilong, which is originally dramatized in Act II of A Ying’s Ge Nenniang, into Zheng’s story. His portrayals of Ge Nenniang and Lady Tagawa also carry on the patriotism exhibited in A Ying’s female characters. Third, Zhang Ying includes four choral songs in the play, using two of them to conclude the epilogue, while A Ying concludes his play with one. Singing songs may seem to break the realistic contract, but in such a heroic and tragic story, it is emotionally moving for audience. Fourth, Zhang Ying borrows A

Possibly influenced by xiqu, some huaju plays written in this period contain songs that may break the realistic contract.
Ying’s character, Xie Biao, a semi-fictional old servant, who serves as Zheng Zhilong’s messenger.

Despite the influence, there is a fundamental difference between the two texts: the current political needs weigh heavily in Zhang Ying’s play. Zhang Ying, rendering Zheng’s Confucianist background, makes him recite Confucian philosopher Meng Zi’s idea as his own belief several times: “’Under-the-heaven is stabilized by one,’ it is said that there can be no two suns in the heaven, no two emperors in a country; one country cannot have two leading centers, making common people not know what course to take.” (Zhang 83) The line directly refers to the current political situation that the PRC on the mainland and the ROC on Taiwan both claimed themselves as China, “the leading center,” denying the other’s validity. He also includes the current political discourse “counterattack the mainland” explicitly in the play. In Act IV, the phrase is repeated by Zheng and his generals an amazing six times. The act concludes:

ZHENG CHENGGONG: Generals, let me tell you one thing: the Dutch in Taiwan intend to trade with us, and they are willing to give us five thousand taels, one hundred thousand arrows, and one thousand piculs of sulfur every year, which are all beneficial for us to counterattack the mainland. And his majesty also orders us to dispatch troops to the southern part of the lowest reaches of the Yangtze River and counterattack the mainland immediately, stimulating our soldiers so much; it is the time to counterattack. Generals, please inform the navy and land forces. Be prepared to go. Counterattack the mainland!

ALL GENERALS: We obey!

(Unceasing cheers outside.) (118)

One can imagine the atmosphere in the theatre when the actual performance reached its
climax.

It would not be surprising if the audience, probably mostly government and military officials attending the special event, identified with Zheng by echoing the slogan. The directness of delivering political slogans such as “counterattack the mainland” is in the nature of the anti-communist and anti-Soviet dramas (Fangong Kang’e Ju) in Taiwan, common in a campaign that reached its zenith in 1950 and 1951. In the quote, there is also a parallel between past support from the Dutch and contemporary support from the U.S., or, in a broader sense, from the capitalist Western world. Zheng particularly claims to the envoy sent by the Dutch that in order to make him approve the trading treaty, “they must not trade with the Manchus.” (Zhang 116) This paralleled the opposing governments’ requests for exclusive recognition during the Cold War.

Because the central concern in this play is counterattacking the mainland rather than restoring Taiwan, the play ends before Zheng’s failed Nanjing campaign in 1659, so that it obtains a soul-stirring climax at the end, permitting Zheng to accept support from the West and acquiesce to their occupation of Taiwan. Zhang Ying wisely sets Act IV on Jinmen, an island close to the mainland but under the ROC’s control. The setting coincided with the latest military map and made it possible for Zhang Ying to contradict/invent history and have Zheng claim “counterattacking the mainland” instead of “northern expedition,” the historically accurate action that occurred when Zheng had control of Jinmen, as well as Xiamen and some surrounding area on the mainland. A Ying makes use of history in his play to show a reality in line with the political aims of China
in 1940, whereas Zhang Ying uses certain facts to create a different reality more in line with the political aims of the ROC.

In the epilogue, common people along the Changjiang River welcome Zheng's fleet with a song that goes "fathers and brothers giggle; wives, children, and sisters chuckle." Historically, Zheng's soldiers were mostly from Fujian—not from the Changjiang River area. However, many of the ROC government officials and troops that fled to Taiwan after the civil war did have relatives in that area, where the ROC's capital city of Nanjing had been located, as well as the economic center Shanghai. The song would certainly have been effective in evoking nostalgia of the audience, primarily the aforementioned officials, as the production was government-sponsored.

**Zhu Xie's Zheng Chenggong and Guo Moruo's Zheng Chenggong**

Interestingly enough, on the other side of the Taiwan Strait, the playwrights' focus was also shifting to Taiwan and the imperialist power present on the island. In 1956, a huaju play titled Zheng Chenggong, the sole work of historian Zhu Xie (1907-1968), was published in Shanghai.

The play has fifty-two characters and seven acts, but its length is less than a half of either A Ying's *The Maritime National Hero* or Zhang Ying's *Zheng Chenggong*, leading one to draw the conclusion that the plot is straightforward and all the characters are uncomplicated, if not overtly simplistic. Zheng, by losing the complexity of previous huaju plays, becomes a perfect person without internal conflicts. What he needs to face
are merely external problems, such as the difficulty of capturing the Dutch castles. It is also noteworthy that with the exception of the mention of Zheng Zhilong’s brief former rule in Taiwan, Zheng’s relatives are absent in this play. Zhu Xie’s Zheng has no personal feeling, in contrast to A Ying’s and Zhang Ying’s Zheng, who constantly suffers the loss of family members. The simplicity in the portrayal of Zheng and other characters portrayals could possibly be attributed to Zhu Xie’s inexperience in playwriting, or to the influence of Soviet socialist realism, which tended to clear-cut positive or negative characters.

Similar to the political concern demonstrated in Zhang Ying’s play, Zhu Xie’s play focuses on Zheng’s victory over the Dutch colonizers, from his planning in 1659 to the victory in 1661, making its time span the shortest of any other plays featuring Zheng. His political agenda is clearly stated in the introduction:

This play is based on the historical fact that Zheng Chenggong led his troops to Taiwan in 1661 and 1662, giving an introduction to the campaign of the first-time restoration of Taiwan in our country’s history. Here, we can see the Taiwanese people’s determination to resist the invaders, the patriotic hero Zheng Chenggong’s indomitable will, and the Western colonialists’ inglorious end. The play illuminates Taiwan as an indispensable part of Chinese territory. All the invaders deserve the same end as the Dutch colonialists. (Zhu Xie 1)

The play is a dramatized expansion of this explicit introduction. Zhu Xie is not reluctant at all to use contemporary political phrases such as “motherland’s compatriots,” “restore motherland’s territory,” and “celebrate the liberation” (Zhu Xie 9, 18, 49). As Zhang Ying’s Zheng repeats “counterattack the mainland,” Zhu Xie’s Zheng repeatedly states “Taiwan is Chinese territory” and “restore motherland’s territory” about ten times
throughout the play. This determination is not seen in Zhang Ying’s play, where Zheng is not so definite on the reason for restoring Taiwan. He sometimes is willing to trade with the Dutch peacefully, sometimes wants to negotiate with the Dutch on Taiwan’s dominion because of “Taiwanese people’s intention” (Zhang Ying 117). In contrast, Zhu Xie’s Zheng is determined to restore Taiwan without reservation.

Zhu Xie introduces two new kinds of characters into Zheng’s dramatic text: “Taiwanese people” and “Dutch colonialists.” There are twelve characters who are commoners in Taiwan, two of whom are Taiwanese aborigines, the other Chinese. Zhu Xie follows the popular and politically correct dramaturgy of the PRC of the time, which stated the mass should be represented on stage. That the Taiwanese people are exploited heavily by Dutch tax collectors so they cannot wait to welcome Zheng validates Zheng, while at the same time invalidates the Dutch rule. Zhu Xie’s Zheng also has eighteen generals and five civil officials on stage, all together representing the power of the collective.

The seven Dutch characters in the play are portrayed negatively. First, they violently collect a heavy tax from Taiwanese people, both Chinese and aborigines. Second, they have flawed personalities. Maonanshiding (Jacobus Valentijn) and his wife are cowards; the viceroy Kuiyi (Frederic Coyett) is irritable. Third, in following the official attitude of the communist government, Zhu Xie is relentless in denigrating Christianity. In his play, the Dutch “force men to work for church, force women to go to service, and force everybody to buy a...whatever...bible, even children are forced to read the devils’
books.” Dutch missionaries even force a girl to stay overnight and rape her. (Zhu 5-6)

Fourth, Zheng and other Chinese characters use insulting words such as “red-haired devil” (Zhu 5, 28, 49) and “red-haired country” (Zhu 12) when referring to Dutch. Compared to the Dutch colonizers, Zheng is portrayed as perfect: he is righteous, unmoved, without fear of difficulties, forgiving, and brave, representing the perfect Chinese person.

Zhu Xie’s play was staged at least once during the 1950s, possibly produced by the government, for he was a local official when writing it. In this sense, it parallels Zhang Ying’s government-sponsored production. The fact that Zhu Xie included twenty generals on stage to form a spectacle in Act I Scene ii, points to the likelihood of plentiful support for the production. This was unthinkable for A Ying’s box-office-supported production.

In 1963 a movie script, also titled Zheng Chenggong, was published in Beijing by another historian, Guo Moruo. It is the only screenplay that he wrote in his life. Guo Moruo is a scholar, playwright, and writer, erected by the PRC government as a model intellectual. His history plays were staged by prominent artists, receiving praise from critics and officials.

The never-produced screenplay is similar to Zhu Xie’s play in many aspects, although it is unknown if Guo Moruo ever read the play. The episodically structured screenplay has ten chapters, covering the years from 1657 to 1662, and mainly focuses on Zheng’s restoration of Taiwan. Although his Nanjing campaign and defense of Xiamen are given considerable treatment, the Taiwan issue and the Dutch are introduced in
Chapter One. Guo Moruo carries on Zhu Xie’s depiction of Zheng and the Dutch. Zheng has a helpful wife in Guo Moruo’s screenplay, but she is left home when he goes to Taiwan. When he loses his generals and comrades, he is emotionally engaged, but the mood is to be replaced soon in the next scene.

In depicting the villainous Dutch, Guo Moruo outdoes Zhu Xie. In the screenplay, they burn Zheng’s old comrades Shen Shuan and Chang Ning to death and kill the aborigines’ chieftain. Advised by the wicked missionary Hanbuluke (Hambrock), they also blast the church, killing numerous civilians. Guo Moruo even creates a private brothel, shared by the viceroy and the missionary. In the brothel, kissing, hugging, and nudity, all inappropriate for the righteous characters, show the audience despicable yet attractive spectacles.

What Guo Moruo adds is an atheistic view. In the screenplay, Zheng, historically Confucianist, is an antitheist who denies the superstition of worshipping river gods. In addition to the Dutch missionary Hanbuluke being portrayed as the most evil schemer, the Islamic believers are also destroyed by their religion.

There are several possible reasons why Guo Moruo’s screenplay was never produced: first, it is overly lengthy for a film; second, the many spectacular battles, especially the sea battles, would require a great budget; third, the Great Cultural Revolution started in 1966, soon after it was written, and history plays were heavily slashed and banned for their emphasis on the ruling class.
Chinese Works on Zheng After the 1960s

After the ten-year chaos of the Great Cultural Revolution, the theatre and film industries in China soon recovered from the disorder. Dramatization of Zheng began to emerge again in the 1980s in China and thrived between 1996 and 2001. Noteworthy works include an award-winning spoken drama, Racing on the Deep Blue Sea (Canghai Zhengliu), an award-winning film and two TV dramas, all titled Zheng Chenggong. These works exclusively focus on Zheng’s Taiwan campaign, reflecting the concerns of the Chinese government and its people.

In Taiwan, the late 1990s and early 2000s also saw several theatre productions about Zheng, including a jingju (Beijing opera) and an opera, both titled Zheng Chenggong, a heluo gezaixi (Holo Taiwanese opera) titled The Dongning Kingdom (Dongning Wangguo), and a multi-media performance titled Iquan’s Legend (Yiguan Fengbo). The Dongning Kingdom dramatizes Zheng’s son and grandson’s rule in Taiwan, while Iquan’s Legend is primarily about Zheng Zhilong’s stateless pirate adventures. The two works coincidentally shift away from Zheng, implying the recently thriving idea of Taiwan independence.

The dramas on Zheng in China and Taiwan have a clear trend: the theme changes from Yu Risheng’s anti-Manchuism in 1906 to A Ying’s encouraging resistance against Japanese invasion in the late 1930s and early 1940, after which the Taiwan issue has dominated the plays. The Japanese dramas on Zheng transformed from popular forms,
*kabuki* and *ningyō jōruri*, to the elite form, *shingeki*, whereas the Chinese ones shifted from a closet *chuanqi* play to the more popular film and storytelling, and even A Ying's *huaju* enjoyed commercial success to certain extent. However, since the late 1940s, the government-sponsored productions and playwriting are less popular, probably because the Taiwan issue is not as pressing and relevant to general audiences as the Second Sino-Japanese War.
Chapter V: Conclusion

Dramatists in Japan, China, and Taiwan have held great interest in Zheng's legendary life. They have created various portrayals of him in various genres and for various purposes.

In Japan, in 1715, Chikamatsu Monzaemon dramatized Zheng's dramatic life with his extremely successful commercial ningyō jōruri play, The Battles of Kokusenya. This play established and popularized Zheng's image (Watonai) in Japan as a heroic Japanese fighter. Several playwrights and writers in the next two centuries borrowed Zheng in their works. This practice continued even after the appearance of Westerners in Japan, when its more than 200-year policy of seclusion was ended by the U.S. fleet in 1854. However, the nature? Purpose? of plays featuring Zheng, changed. Hijikata Yoshi's staging of Osanai Kaoru's adaptation of Chikamatsu's The Battles of Kokusenya at the Tsukiji Little Theatre in 1928, which combined elements from kabuki and other Eastern forms with Meyerhold's method, was an important experiment in the development of modern theatre. Furthermore, their audience was not for the commoner, as was Chikamatsu's, but for an elite. Two years later, Kubo Sakae's anti-militarist Marxist play was directed by Hijikata for his newly founded leftist troupe the New Tsukiji Troupe, making a statement in reaction to the actions of the militaristic government. However, after Kubo was imprisoned and leftist troupes dissolved by the government in 1940, Chikamatsu's play soon appeared, this time used as a pro-war film. In post-WII Japan, Chikamatsu's ningyō
jōruri classic continues to be staged, though without the political overtones.

In China, the use of Zheng in drama has had political overtones from the start. The first Chinese play on Zheng, *The Record of a Maritime National Hero* by Yu Risheng, was published in a Tokyo-based Chinese political journal in 1906, before Chinese dramatists began to learn modern Western theatre. The purpose of this incomplete closet play, in the form of *chuanqi*, was to promote Chinese nationalism and anti-Manchuism among the elite readers, at a time when the Qing Dynasty was weakening. Chinese nationalism was again important when Zheng’s story was recalled in 1937 as a short storytelling text, when Japanese invasion threatened the whole nation. A Ying’s plays, *Ge Nenniang* in 1939 and *The Maritime National Hero* in 1940, encouraged resistance against the invaders and both enjoyed commercial success and positive reviews in Shanghai.

After the end of WWII, in order to establish Chinese identity in the newly returned Taiwan, Ouyang Yuqian led his troupe to Taipei and performed A Ying’s play in 1946. After the defeated Nationalist Party fled to Taiwan in 1949, new plays, sponsored by the government, including Zhang Ying’s *Zheng Chenggong*, were written and produced to propagate the idea of counterattacking the mainland. In 1955 and 1963, Zhu Xie’s play and Guo Moruo’s screenplay, both explicitly centering on the Taiwan issue and anti-imperialism, were published in Shanghai and Beijing, respectively. As the tension between China and Taiwan is not to be relieved, Chinese dramatization of Zheng will probably continue to appear.

As shown in the plays discussed in this thesis, Zheng’s history always has a strong
connection to the contemporary time, his deeds being made relevant to the international relationships between China and Japan, Chinese and invaders, the East and the West, China and Taiwan, and Japan and Taiwan. The possibilities of different interpretations of his activities and intentions provoke the dramatists’ creativity. This is especially true for the politically charged plays, where Zheng’s story is retold to suit current political needs.

The trends of Zheng’s portrayals in Japan, China, and Taiwan show us how the historical figure has been exploited for commercial, artistic, and most significantly, various political purposes. The trends also reflect the development of theatre arts in Japan and China. Finally, in a broader sense, they demonstrate how dramatists from different eras constructed their history plays with quite contrasting Zheng characters, plot focus, and even outcomes, yet based on the “same” history.

This thesis may serve as a starting point for further research, for several questions still need to be answered: 1) How does Zheng’s portrayal change after the 1960s; 2) How is he dramatized in the extant texts that are not available for me, such as the 1941 pro-war Japanese screenplay The Battles of Kokusenya; 3) How were the plays discussed in this research interpreted by the contemporary and later audience and critics? More texts and accounts are needed in order to answer these questions. Furthermore, as new plays about Zheng emerge and are analyzed and compared with former works, a more comprehensive picture of the dramatic, artistic and political permutations of Zheng will emerge.
Appendix: A List of Major Works Discussed in This Thesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Playwright</th>
<th>Location of Production</th>
<th>Genre</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1715</td>
<td><em>The Battles of Kokusenya</em></td>
<td>Chikamatsu Monzaemon</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
<td>Ningyō jōruri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td><em>The Battles of Kokusenya</em></td>
<td>Osanai Kaoru</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Shingeki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td><em>The New Story of Kokusenya</em></td>
<td>Kubo Sakae</td>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Shingeki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td><em>The Record of a Maritime National Hero</em></td>
<td>Yu Risheng</td>
<td>Published in Tokyo</td>
<td>Chuanqi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Zheng Chenggong</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Published in Jiangxi</td>
<td>Shuoshu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td><em>The Maritime National Hero</em></td>
<td>A Ying</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>Huaju</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>Zheng Chenggong</td>
<td>Zhang Ying</td>
<td>Taipei</td>
<td>Huaju</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Zheng Chenggong</td>
<td>Zhu Xie</td>
<td>Published in Shanghai</td>
<td>Huaju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Zheng Chenggong</td>
<td>Guo Moruo</td>
<td>Published in Beijing</td>
<td>Screenplay</td>
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