

## King of Taiwan in *Sincan*: Disputes over Taiwan's Sovereign Rights in 17th Century

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### ABSTRACT

This paper first analyzes disputes over Taiwan's sovereign rights in the seventeenth century. It then points out that during its early reign, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) did not make any public claim of its sovereignty of Taiwan. It was not until the Hamada Yahyoue Incident, a trade dispute between the Dutch and Japanese, did VOC start to proclaim its governance of Taiwan. It is worthy to note that the indigenous Dika's title "coninck van Formosa" (King of Taiwan) prevalent at that time did not refer to a real aboriginal king of the whole island, it was just a linguistic term used in diplomatic negotiation. However, one should not neglect the fact that there existed the prime tribal chief or elder in traditional indigenous society of Taiwan. This paper also reveals that the tax collected in Taiwan by the Zheng family was in fact the East and West Ocean tax collected to finance the pay of the naval officers. (*Check if this is what you mean.*) Finally, this paper highlights that aborigines in Taiwan did not play a silent role in disputes over Taiwan's sovereign rights. During the Dutch reign, they had the choice of entering into alliance with the powers or to refuse cooperation, and maintained to some extent their cultural and political autonomy. When the Koxinga Zheng Cheng-gong invaded Taiwan, the Siraya people chose to remain neutral while other indigenous tribes opted for defiance and fought bravely against the invaders.

**Keywords:** Dutch East India Company (VOC), Hamada Yahyoue Incident, Koxinga, East and West Ocean tax, Siraya