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## **Taiwan's Appearance in the 18th Century Travelogue: Taking the Text of *Histoire générale des voyages* by Prévost**

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### **Abstract**

There are a total of 15 volumes of *Histoire générale des voyages* written by Antoine François Prévost (1693–1763), which were published between 1746 and 1759. The 6th volume introduced China, in Section 4 of Chapter 1, the part of Fujian Province specially introduced geographic travelogues of Penghu and Taiwan. This thesis is an attempt to probe and criticize the historical European travelogue literature about China and Taiwan, specifically in terms of this Prévost's travelogue volumes. What are the points of view presented, based on the reports of Jesuits and Protestants from Holland and England? What aspects of different traditional books did Prévost base his work on? Why? What kind of outlook on Taiwan was presented in their reports?

**Keywords:** 18th century, travelogue, Taiwan image, François Prévost, writing

### **Izveček**

Skupno obstaja 15 knjig zbirke *Histoire générale des voyages* avtorja Antoine François Prévost (1693–1763), ki so bile izdane med leti 1746 in 1759. V šesti knjigi, ki predstavi Kitajsko, je v četrtem odstavku prvega poglavja, ki se nanaša na provinco Fujian, predstavljen geografski potopis otočja Penghu in Tajvana. Pričujoč članek skuša raziskati in kritizirati predhodne evropske potopise Kitajske in Tajvana na osnovi te zbirke. Kakšna so bila njihova stališča, ki so temeljila na zapisih jezuitov in protestantov iz Nizozemske in

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Anglije? Na katerih vidikih različnih tradicionalnih zapisov je Prévost gradil svojo zbirko? Zakaj? Kakšen pogled so imeli njihovi zapisi na Tajvan?

**Ključne besede:** 18. stoletje, popotniški dnevnik, podoba Tajvana, François Prévost, pisanje

## 1 Constructing the Geography, Cultures, Customs and Knowledge of Various Continents in the World

*Histoire générale des voyages* written by Prévost (1693–1763)<sup>1</sup> was published in 15 volumes, from 1746 to 1759, by the publisher Didot. It became the most important collection of encyclopedia-type world travelogues published in French in the Age of Enlightenment. This is a body of literature upon which there has been little academic research devoted, until now. The series was commissioned by Aguesseau, the Chancellor, and Marquis Maurepas, France's Minister of Navy, and published officially. Its main purpose was to encourage French merchants to go abroad for purposes of investment and in business, hence, Prévost was commissioned to compile and translate *A New general Collection of Voyages* (Londres, T. Astley, 1745–1747)<sup>2</sup> published in London, England, by John Green in order to compile information about the geography and history of countries in the world at that time. Green adopted the maps of the Chinese coast included in the books written by the latest scholars at that time, such as J.B. Du Halde and J.B. d'Anville of France, while omitting the parts of previous travelogues which had nothing to do with the main journeys themselves, rendering the whole series more streamlined, and in the process completing a text on world maritime geography based on pre-existing travelogues. The book was divided into 4 volumes in total and after 1747, was further translated into a German version and published in

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<sup>1</sup> A.-F. Prévost born in Picardie was fond of poetry and fictions when he was young. He had been educated in the school of the Society of Jesus which he later applied to join, however, he was rejected. Later, he entered the Bénédictine order and became the abbot of the monastery in 1726. In 1728 he left the Bénédictine order, and resumed secular life to start travelling. His novel, *Manon Lescaut* was very successful in 1733, and one year later, the Catholic Pope forgave him, and readmitted him as a Bénédictine monk. In 1754, he wrote the history of the royal family for Prince Conti. He passed away in 1763.

<sup>2</sup> From 1745 to 1747, London publisher, Thomas Astley accepted the young geographer John Green's suggestions to recompile a series of *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels* by way of text-image interaction, for publication. The version collected in National Museum of Taiwan History is just the 5th volume in the German version of 1749. (Cheng 2006, 224 )

seven volumes.<sup>3</sup> Even though the period of publication in England was ended in 1747, Prévost still completed eight follow-up volumes, conducting the analysis and commentary on the latest travelogues published at that time. This is a great work, first published in France, and was comprised of a broad range of collected travelogues about the whole world.

Beautiful illustrations also increased the sales of this book. Naval engineer, Charles Nicolas Bellin (1703–1772) was in charge of map production; the illustration was carried out by Charles Nicolas Cochin (1713–1790), the French Royal Court's print engraver. Cochin and 27 print engravers produced 347 print illustrations for this book, collecting all the European image illustrations in the whole world. Henri Roddier considered the book with a certain degree of academic rigor, and deemed it to be a combined bibliography of all travelogues, which also included the first-hand information which had not been published previously; it could therefore be referred to as a dictionary (Roddier 1955, 177). Sylviane Alberban-Coppola considered that the academic features of this book consisted of its approach in handling of words, and the comparison and criticism of image materials, with universal ideals of knowledge (Alberban-Coppola 1995, 81–98). Henri Roddier mentioned, in studying Prévost's biography, that Meusnier de Querlon, a reviewer at that time had addressed the reputation of the series as being far superior to other travelogues. The reason for its success, apart from its beautiful prints, was the elegant style of the writings. In this respect, critic Michèle Duchet opined that what made Prévost's work attractive was that reading this series was just like reading a novel. Prévost's work was continuously republished until 19th century, and was translated into Dutch, German, Spanish, and many other languages for publication (Duchet 1965, 154). From Prévost, Voltaire's republication of *L'Essai sur le moeur* (1756) absorbed material and subject matter, and Rousseau's 2nd edition of *Discours* (1755) primarily obtained materials and drew on Prévost's visions of primitive human nature. The concept of the noble savage popular in the 18th century, was used by Prévost to discuss the issue of primitive Utopia more deeply in this series. The series itself was originally published because France's ruling dynasty was engaged in overseas commerce and pursued a colonial policy; overseas investment in business was the hope of the country's future economy, and this drove French expansion overseas.

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<sup>3</sup> German version was published by Arktee and Merkus Publisher in Leipzig, and renamed as *Allgemeine Historie der Reisen zu Wasser und Lande oder Sammlung aller Reisebeschreibungen*. Notes as ditto.

The 6th volume of this series introduced the geography, history, and natural science of Asia and China.<sup>4</sup> Chapter 1 introduced the geography of fifteen provinces of China, including North Zhili, Jiangnan, Jiangxi, Fujian, etc., and a section on Fujian, Penghu and Taiwan (Formosa) was also included. (Prévost 1748, viii–x) Basically this series inherited the tradition of the Society of Jesus in describing geography of China in the 17th and 18th centuries, Holland and England, however, adopted the Protestant view of China, and Penghu and Taiwan occupied nine pages in these travelogues. The standard by which travelogue literature was judged at the time was based on the credibility of information, along with whether or not the field survey was actually made in China, with the spirit of positivism.

This thesis is an attempt to probe and criticize the historical European travelogue literature about China and Taiwan, specifically in terms of this Prévost's travelogue literature book. What are the points of view presented, based on the reports of Jesuits and Protestants from Holland and England? What are the differences between Dutch and English authors, adherents of Catholicism, the Society of Jesus, and Protestantism, in interpreting China and Taiwan? What aspects of different traditional books did Prévost base his work on? Why? In addition, what role did the maps play in travelogues as an introduction to East-West cultural exchanges? What was the role of the religion in authors deliberately omitting political background at that time? What kind of outlook on Taiwan was presented in their reports?

## **2 Jesuit and Protestant Travelogues Reporting on China**

This book, in its introduction, first referred to its source materials and undertook criticism of literature in terms of European travelogues about China from the 17th century until the time Prévost's series was written. Although Prévost did not experience China firsthand, he could still comprehensively arrange some first-hand witness accounts and other literature to write creditable materials, and therefore, we should be able to understand the historical contexts of the Jesuit and Protestant traditions in 17th and 18th century reports on China.

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<sup>4</sup> Original title was "Description de la Chine, Contenant la Géographie, et L'histoire Civile et Naturelle du Pays".

## 2.1 The Jesuit Writing Traditions

According to Watler Demel's research, although Portugal was the first European country to have contact with China, Portugal, unlike other European countries, lacked widespread information on the subject of China, because there was no publication of correspondences between Portuguese Jesuits and their families. On the other hand, the Roman Curia ruled in "the Rites Controversy", that those who did not accept the interpretation of Catholic Jesuits and who accepted ancestor worship were only following a kind of custom in China. For European Catholics, China was no longer seen as a positive model of the ideal of the 18th century. Italy and France were still two important centers for spreading information about China. The core of the Society of Jesus was in Rome, where the Vatican kept and published the correspondences of the Church's missionaries. Even the correspondences written by the Spanish and Portuguese missionaries, was translated into French. In Europe, Italy became the most important center for spreading information about China in the 17th century; subsequently, Italy was slowly replaced by France, which caught up and became the European hub for spreading knowledge about China in the 18th century (Demel 1995, 85–125).

The first edition of Matteo Ricci's writing was published in Augsburg in 1615. In 1747, Italian political parties took the outstanding achievements of China in terms of practical economy as a model through which to illustrate the image of China as a peaceful, highly educated nation with highly developed agricultural technology. From 1570 to 1575, there were no important exchanges between China and France; for France, China was a closed country. Up until 1685, Louis XIV had dispatched six missionaries to China. Among them was the priest Joachim Bouvet, who returned to France from Beijing in 1697, with 49 Chinese books of the Kangxi, and Emperor Louis XIV reciprocated with a large series of prints, starting to build the so-called Sino-French commercial relationship in 1698. The Society of Jesus also sent a lot of information about China back to France. A priest named Foucquet brought a large series of books containing wide-ranging knowledge about China. In the first half of 18th century, France and England were about the same in terms of the prevalence of Chinoiserie. In addition, "the Rites Controversy" allowed the French to become more familiar with China, with Paris becoming the center of French interest in China. Since the series of books written by A.-F. Prévost was published in Paris, the author could easily access to the voluminous travelogue materials about China which had already been published.

## 2.2 View and Description of Protestant Countries' Travelogues on China

As for travelogues appearing in Protestant countries such as Holland and England, because the authors mostly had contact and traded with the middle and lower classes of China, they mostly described the common people, and conveyed a negative image of China. Since the Dutch sailors did not understand the correct etiquette for communication with the Chinese, they made a very bad impression on the Chinese. Generally, both parties' experience of the contact and exchange between their cultures was a failure. "Eyes like a cat" and "red hair" were demeaning terms which the Chinese used to describe the Dutch. In 1620, the Dutch set a fire to burn Chinese houses and raped local women. As a result, the Kangxi Emperor did not want to approve the trade privileges of the Dutch East India Company. This could probably explain why Nieuhoff's work *L'Ambassade de la Compagnie Orientale des Provinces Unies vers l'Empereur de la Chine*<sup>5</sup> written in the mid-17th century, contained demeaning criticism of the Chinese, and cast suspicion upon the Society of Jesus for having described a positive image of China. Even so, Holland was a country without a book censorship system; hence, Voltaire's works were published in Holland to evade the book censorship system of France.

Even Queen Elizabeth I demonstrated her interest in China. In the 17th century, England accepted the Dutchman Nieuhoff's view in describing China; compared to Spanish and Portuguese Jesuits' writings, we can find that the Protestant merchant's travelogues enjoyed wider circulation in England. In the mid-18th century, the upper class in England showed a deep interest in Du Halde's writing and the Rites Controversy; however, the credibility of many missionaries' writing was doubted, and readers considered the Jesuit's reports as excessively praising China without truthful reporting of factual information.

In terms of the Jesuit's writings, their being originally published in Catholic countries and then later appearing in translated versions of which in Protestant countries meant that the content of these subsequent versions would be different from the originals, reflecting the competing ideologies. By comparing the originals to different translation versions, various interpretations can be found. For example, Nieuhoff's works are written from the viewpoint of the Dutch Republic, and

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<sup>5</sup> Jean Nieuhoff's work *L'Ambassade de la Compagnie Orientale des Provinces Unies vers l'Empereur de la Chine* was published in 1665 in Leyde (Leiden) by Jacob de Meurs, merchant bookseller and engraver of Amsterdam, done in French by Jean le Carpentier.

describe the Tartars as being a barbaric nation, which destroyed Chinese cities. However, when we read the translated German version, the Tartars were not portrayed as cruel barbaric nation, but rather one that liberated cities that the Chinese had enslaved, governed cities with a centralized approach; the Tartars could actually be seen as heroes for liberating these cities.<sup>6</sup> Since the main point of contact for Jesuits was the palace of the Qing Dynasty, the Jesuits presented an elegant image of the upper class in China, and appraised Chinese politics. In contrast, because Dutch merchants were from a Protestant country and had contact with the middle and lower classes in China, the Dutch expressed a part of more negative image of China.

Apart from Nieuhoff and Du Halde's *Description de l'Empire de la Chine*, Dutch books about China were not widely read, nor did they produce a great effect on the rest of Europe.

European illustrations and books about China were developed rapidly in the 17th century. According to Lothar Ledderose's research, up until the 16th century, most travelogues about China contained few illustrations, and the written materials contained in books were not comprehensive enough to be considered authoritative. However, this started to change after 1660, as two important books, Nieuhoff's *L'Ambassade de la Compagnie Orientale des Provinces Unies vers l'Empereur de la Chine*, and A. Kircher's *La Chine Illustrée* gave widespread dissemination to images of China throughout Europe. These works introduced the crafts, ceramics, and lacquers of China, spreading an exotic image of China throughout Europe. In Spain and Portugal, in contrast, travelogues about China were not so widespread. France and Italy were the important countries for publishing the information about China in Europe (Ledderose 1991, 224).

### 2.3 Prévost's Geography Travelogue about China

Prévost's geography travelogue about China was primarily based on the Society of Jesus' descriptions of the tradition of China, and on the Protestant writers; Nieuhoff's *L'Ambassade de la Compagnie Orientale des Provinces Unies vers l'Empereur de la Chine*, and Du Halde's *Description de l'Empire de la Chine*.

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<sup>6</sup> Nieuhoff I, p. 59 (dat ruwe wolck), p.74 (wreetand verwoed), p. 57 (De Sineezen worden jammerlijk geplaagt); Nieuff, p. 71 (recht grawsames Barbarisches Volck), p. 87 (grawsahm untyrannisch), p. 69 (harte Schlaverey), in Demel 1995, 88–89.

In the beginning of the 6th volume of *Histoire générale des voyages*, published by Prévost, it is pointed out that travelogues about China were taken from Nieuhof, Montanus, Navarette, Le Comte, Gemelli, and Du Halde, who were the important authors of travelogues at that time, in addition to works by Nicolas Frigaut, Alvarez Samedo, Magathaens, and Martino Martini.

Prévost who had been educated by the Society of Jesus, and was the abbot of a religious order, basically recognized the Jesuit's view of reporting, and most of his reports about China originated from Martini's collection of China maps, as well as his followed-up travelogues copied basic structure of Martini's works. This book introduced 15 provinces of China, along with races, climate, customs, clothing, agricultural products, and the natural science of each province, and was the source of China travelogues. Comparing this book to Du Halde's *Description de l'Empire de la Chine*, in terms of maps, Du Halde's maps adopted were more accurate, whereas in terms of cities described in the text, Martini's description was more detailed and diversified with pertinent reviews.

In part of the 6th volume, Prévost, from the beginning, criticized the existent geographic travelogue literature on China, and particularly singled out Martino Martini's book *Le Novus Atlas Sinensis*, published in a large format in Amsterdam in 1655, which was presented to Leopold Guillaume, the governor of Holland and the head of Bourgogne. Martino Martini was a Jesuit who had experienced many places in China firsthand, as he said himself, "I stayed in China many years just for responding to the call of God, and experienced most provinces of China." (Martini 1655, préface) In his Asia map and the geography books describing China, Martini described 15 provinces, cities and rivers, and attached one map for each province, including decorations, and used the local geographical environment as its characteristics. The lower right corner of the map of North Zhili Province contains a representation of the Emperor and Empress, adopting the left and right rows of a canopy and using phoenix as the decoration pattern. This is the first book about geographical cultures of China which was based on materials from direct witnesses. It became the most important reference for future generations, expressing the richness of the geographical environment, and displaying an encyclopedic knowledge about writings on China.

In preface of *Description de l'Empire de la Chine*, Du Halde criticized past works, from Marco Polo to his day, complaining about travelogues without selecting important things. Those four volumes repeated some icons which had



existed; as for the manuscripts sent from the missionaries in China, they included introduction, and 64 pieces of pictures (maps). Their copperplate engraving was made by current famous engravers, including De Lahaye and Lucas. As for maps, Du Halde drew the decoration in Chinese style at the right corner, and the integration of maps was made by Bourguignon d'Anville, a royal geographer. This writing was subject to the original annal ways of China and its various translations had become the important literatures in 18th century, which can be compared favorably with *La Chine illustrée* of the 17th century (Foss 1991, 153–189).

Those China travelogue authors were almost all Jesuits, like Martini, A. Kircher, and Du Halde; or accompanied with an ambassador representing their country's government on a commercial exchange, such as Nieuhoff. Either way, this meant that all authors had a certain relationship with China in terms of politics, commerce and religion. Otherwise, the dedicated subject was the king according to the first manuscript sent by missionaries, and the publication type was very expensive. There were two ways to edit a travelogue book: one involved the author describing the world according to his own observations, based on what he saw; the other involved the editor basing his writings on the content of Jesuit's letters which were sent back to Europe. Such works included the particularities of geography books and encyclopedias, and introduced cities, climate, customs and races. The first of these books about China was *Novus Atlas Sinensis* written by Martini. A. Kircher's *La Chine Iillustrée* inherited the style of geography books, but added the topic of religion, *L'Ambassade de la Compagnie Orientale des Provinces Unies vers l'Empereur de la Chine* was a navigation book introducing ports and cities. In Du Halde's *Description de l'Empire de la Chine*, the first and fourth volumes specifically highlighted geography, and the maps included a correct and complete China map drawn by missionaries, in addition to a Chinese-style map of North Zhili. Maps, rare at the time, became the most important feature in driving sales of this book. Their inclusion, along with the accompanying histories and descriptions, caused this book to be expensive. However, it still had its readers among the upper class.

Prévost, in his introduction to the 6th volume, specially focused on Du Halde's map materials, which added considerable academic value to this book. What made Prévost's book special was the addition of these maps and descriptions of a number of Pacific islands. As for the illustrations, the majority were Du Halde's illustrations of Chinese ladies' clothing, Nieuhoff's port sketch, and renderings of animals and plants. Absent was any introduction to religious idols or strange

customs: what was presented was merely an objective atlas, and included “positive” imagery.

### **3 The Geography and Travelogue of Penghu Island and Taiwan—the Jesuit's view of reporting**

The *Histoire générale des voyages* published by Prévost contained a part on Taiwan, “Description des îles de Pong-hue et de Tay-wan ou Formose”, comprised of nine pages (Prévost 1748, 56–64) which primarily described geography and customs. It first introduced the literature it had borrowed from, including the newest materials, and then described the geography and administration of Penghu and Taiwan, as well as different ethnic, vegetables, fruits, cities and ports in eastern and western Taiwan.

The introduction of the maps and geography were primarily adopted from *Description de l'Empire de la Chine* written by Du Halde of the Society of Jesus, because this work's maps were drawn according to the correct versions of the maps of Taiwan and Penghu which had been measured and drawn by Moyriac de Mailla. As for the part on Taiwan, Prévost mentioned the materials and authors he had drawn on, pointing out the view of obtaining geographic materials and maps from missionaries of the Society of Jesus from the very beginning. His description of aborigines originated from the report of Pastor Candidians of the Protestant Reform Church. Prévost also pointed out that Psalmanaazar's view that the whole island belonged to Japan was wrong. In Prévost's view, the western part of Taiwan belonged to China, and the east belonged to the aborigines. His comments were as follows:

We published many travelogues about Taiwan, obtaining materials from different authors, Georges Candidius (Dutch Minister), the Irish David Wright, and Georges Psalmanaazar; they all wrote the travelogues about Taiwan, however, they did not agree with each other's points of view. The books by Candidius and Wright were written in the 18th century. The one by Psalmanaazar was written at the beginning of 18th century, and published with illustrations in English in 1704. Candidius translated important collected English literary works for his publication, among which there were 6 to 7 written pages concerning local aborigines, as seen by Dutch in every city of Taiwan. The following description came from missionaries who took part in making Fujian map. Under Chinese system, the west of the island was part of China, though Psalmanaazar claimed the whole island belonged to Japan. (Prévost 1748, 56)

Prévost's book highlighted credibility of academic maps which originated from the materials collected by Du Halde, and which contained measurements and hand-drawn maps by missionaries on the spot and enclosed the information of Pacific islands along the China's coast.

Since the publication in 1720 of the 14th volume of the French version of *Letters Edifiantes et Curieuses, Ecrites Des Missions Etrangères Mémoires de La Chine* which collected the replied letters of some Jesuits who went to Taiwan for the purpose of measuring and drawing maps, both the King of France and Emperor Kangxi of China liked to draw maps of China. The reason why the king of France dispatched French missionaries to China was actually to carry out the correction of world maps by means of the latest developments in astronomical observation techniques. According to the letter sent by Priest Fontaney in 1703 when he returned to France, Emperor Kangxi, in his spare time, personally indulged in the use of trigonometric tables for such scientific activities as actual measurement. In 1708, Emperor Kangxi ordered the Jesuits to measure the internal and external dimensions of Beijing. The Jesuits subsequently acted as the imperial messengers of the Manchu Emperor going everywhere to conduct their measurement and drawing activities. The whole measurement and drawing completed in 1717, and the compiled results became the famous *Royal Map of China* (Cheng 2006, 267).

In order to measure and draw a complete map of Qing empire, three Jesuits, Jean Baptiste Regis, Joseph-Francois-Marie-Anne de Moyriac de Mailla, and Romain Hinderer cut short their measurement and drawing work in Fujian to go to Taiwan for the same purpose during the period from April 18th to May 20th, 1714. (Fang in Cheng 2006, 267) Attached with the letter sent by Moyriac de Mailla, "the map made according to the order of Emperor Kangxi of China to actually measure Taiwan", as it was titled, this was just the part devoted to Taiwan in the *Royal Map of China*. Since the location of the prime meridian in the *Royal Map of China* was designated by the Imperial Astronomer as passing through Beijing, located as meridian zero, therefore, Taiwan was therefore located between three and five degrees of east longitude. This Taiwan map marked Tchulo-hien below the Tropic of Cancer, and two other cities, Tayouan-fou and Fangan-hien. As for the northern Taiwan, the map only marked the place where troops were stationed, such as Tanxoui-tehin and Kilong-tehai. The navigation mark at the southern Taiwan, E-luan-bi's Xiama Kiteou, was also shown.

The end of Prévost's travelogue concluded with six cities of Taiwan, along with their longitude and latitude: Island of Pong-hu, Tay-wan-fu, Fong-cha-hyen, Cha-ma-hi-teu, Chu-lo-hyen, Tan-chui-ching, and Ki-long-chay (Prévost 1748, 64). That was enough to prove that Prévost had at least reviewed a Taiwan map. As for the map, since so little was known eastern Taiwan, three islands were drawn; the west side was correct. On the whole, that confirmed that they had visited Tainan and passed Penghu to draw Island of Pong-Hu by the way.

Just as in the statements of Moyriac de Mailla, we see Prévost making the assertion that "China did not comprehensively rule over the entirety of Formosa; rather, Formosa was divided into east and west, with the two parts being divided by a series of high mountains. The southernmost point of this mountain range began from Cha-ma-hi-teu, and the northern point ended at, as Chinese called it, Ki-long-chay. Only the west side belonged to China, and savages lived in the east ..." (van der Aslsvoort in Cheng 2006, 270) Moyriac de Mailla considered Pingpu people with pure heat who disagreed with the idea that Hans wanted to educate and civilize them.

Prévost particularly emphasized this point of view because he had special passion for aboriginal customs, as we see in his comments:

Formosa was divided into two parts by a series of mountains, from the southern (Jianan plain) to the northern coast. The only part which belonged to China was west of the mountains, the area between 22°8' and 25°20' North latitude. Although the people in the east were claimed to be Chinese, they were rather more primitive tribes much like the primitive people in America. They were more passionate, and milder in disposition. They continued to make war with the Chinese. Those eastern residents helped one another; they did not know what it was to be selfish, stingy and cunning; they had no idea about gold, but even the common people knew they had rich minerals. The residents there did not know how to defend themselves, they had no laws, nor any governmental organizations; their daily diet depended on sea fish, and hunting animal flesh. They did not have any religious rituals, nor any idea of religion. (Prévost 1748, 57)

According to Prévost, Formosa was divided into two races along the east-west geographical split, and the original character and organization of eastern aborigines were highlighted against the Han's society in the west. This was done, in part, to refute George Psalmanaazaar's description of the history and geography of Formosa in *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa: the religion, customs, and rituals of residents written by an islander who subjected to*

*the Emperor of Japan* which was written in 1704, referring to Taiwan belonged to Japan and the nonsense talked by missionaries, especially Candidius et al.

In addition, Prévost used the subject of panning for gold to talk about the race relations between the east and the west, described how the Han Chinese seized the gold resources of the aborigines; however, this description was not found in history. He described the situation as follows:

Chinese did not find gold in the west, and therefore dispatched a small party to the east in a boat. Local aborigines who already mined there warmly received those people, but perhaps this was just because they feared their force. In any case, they did not tell these Chinese about minerals. As it was, the Chinese only found a boat which the aborigines, who live in wooden homes, did not care about. The aborigines helped the Chinese to repair their boat, and helped them to carry lead bars on board. Then these terrible Chinese started to use force in the east. Those aborigines went to the west to set fire to Chinese houses; even women and children were not spared. They started wars frequently. (Prévost 1748, 57)

Comparing to India and China, Prévost's book geographically illustrated Taiwan's rural countryside, with its fruits, vegetables, animals and plants. Among the many rich products, it particularly mentioned watermelon and painted a picture of a peaceful and quiet place of abundant resources, highly advanced farming and fostering of poultry, and virtually unlimited supplies, and then presented the differences between civilized society in the west and the primitive tribes.

Prévost described the Jianan Plain in the southwestern part as having rich products, prosperous cities and ports with ordered construction, and good cultural life.

#### **4 Introduction of Taiwan Aboriginal Customs**

The descriptive points of this book focused on illustrating the Pingpu among the Taiwan aborigines, including very detailed introduction to their ethnicity, dress, customs, food, housing, and social organization, especially illustrating the housing and living spaces of the Pingpu people in southern Taiwan. Candidius made the following observation:

The residents in Taiwan Island could be divided into two kinds: one was Chinese, and the other was primitive people. In Tainan, there were still Zhangpu people of Fujian, China, of whom the primitive people were slaves.

In Anping Town, there were a total of 2,000 people, divided into about 400 to 500 families. There were no differences between Chinese in Taiwan and Chinese in Mainland in terms of politics. Primitive people submitted to them (Chinese). About 45 places were called "Che" among which 35 were in the north and 9 in the south. The Che in the south consisted mainly of wooden houses constructed on the platform about 15 to 20 scales (1 scale=33.33 mm) distant from the floor. Some of these abodes were segmented by walls, but no tables, chairs, beds, or furniture were found in other parts. In the center of the house, there was a 2-scale chimney mainly used for cooking and a kitchen. The staple food for local residents was rice, and other seeds. They hunted birds with weapons. They were very brisk, with shoulder-length hair. In addition, there was a kind of spear that could be thrown to distances of 60 to 80 steps. Their tableware did not include plates, napkins, spoons, knives or forks. Food was put on a board and people used their hands to take food into their mouths; they ate half-cooked meat and sat around in front of the fire. Their bed was on the ground padded with leaves. (Prévost 1748, 59)

The above materials were obtained from Pastor Candidus Georgius<sup>7</sup>; as a matter of fact, *Discourse ende cort verhael van't eylant Formosa* was written by a German pastor. After graduation from university, he was employed by the East India Company, and went to the Southeast Asian region by ship. He originally intended to work in his specialized field of rendering the world as a means by which to advance the cause of Calvinist (the Reformed Church in Netherland). Hence, even if the Company's arrangement was hoping he would not worry himself about the affairs of missionary work, he ended up causing himself a lot of trouble. This East India Company was there for a strictly business purpose, yet he still looked for the missionary opportunities wholeheartedly; however, he found his efforts being rebuffed everywhere. The local Islamic monarchy cooperated with the Dutch East India Company against the Portuguese. Since the Dutch cooperated with the Islamic monarchy, although the pastor could preach, he could not baptize the converted.<sup>8</sup> Coming to Taiwan in 1627, he met Taiwan aborigines;

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<sup>7</sup> Pastor Candidus was born in the Paladin area of the Rhine valley in southwestern Germany, namely, at the east side of Yaersasi-Lorraine, the junction of Germany and France, in 1597 (just a difference of one year with the publication of *Itinerario*). The place was located at the junction of various political powers; Christian powers in south Germany, and Catholic powers in France and Italy eyed it covetously. Although the Dutch wanted to help Calvinists there, they were unable even to fend for themselves because of the place too far away. The outbreak of the thirty-year war of the Germanic region in 1618 was just because the leader of Paladin was unwilling to yield to such two powers. Of course, this region was completely involved in the war and ravaged; the displaced people were removed under a tragic situation. Later, pastor Candidus was appointed by the Dutch East India Company to carry out the mission in Asia. (Cheng 2006, 65)

<sup>8</sup> Written by W. Campbell, *Formosa under Dutch* (translated by Hsiung-Hui Lee), (Taipei: Avanguard Publisher, 2003). Cited from Cheng 2006, 66.

without understanding his words, he found his dreamland that 120 people still listened to his preaching.

By the time Wright visited Taiwan, it had been nearly three decades since Pastor Candidius Georgius had written his report. However, what he had recorded was still mainly about the aborigines near Sinckan. And Olfert Dapper who compiled those records into *Gedenkwaardig bedryf der Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Maetschappye, op de kuste en in het keizerrijk van Taising of Sina*, requested someone to make prints to show Formosa according to Wright's descriptions. For example, we read Wright's detailed description of aboriginal dress:

They wore what was almost a cotton dress in the summer—the upper part was like a wide sheet, with two corners joined up over their arms, and crossing over the chest, so that one side of the body was usually covered up, and the other side would be exposed. A cinch was in the middle, and there were leggings tied on their lower legs. They wore neither shoes, nor socks; however, some would wear rough shoes which were made of goat skin and tied with a small rope.

Before the Spanish and the Dutch arrived, residents there were naked in their daily activities. Mountain residents were naked, but would cover their private parts with a small cloth.

Most women dressed like the men did; the only difference was that the women used cloth to cover and tie around their legs; they wore full-length skirts, but the length would not often exceed the half of their height. Inside of the skirt was a small cotton dress, long to the knees. They wrapped their heads with pieces of silk or flannelette cloth with two Dutch yards long, and two ends of the cloth met on the forehead, projecting toward. They never wore shoes. Behind every woman, a pig often followed like her child.

Half of the men had decorations on the skin of their chest, back, and arms which were painted on with some pigments, which would be left on the skin and would not fade. (Note: i.e. tattoo) Around their necks and wrists, they wore glass-bead necklace and bracelets and there were iron rings, locked up tight, worn from the forearm to the elbow with almost no gap, so it was not possible to expose the arms. Similarly, on each side of the legs, there were many white shells. (*Gedenkwaardig* in Cheng 2006, 76)

Prévost's travelogue, in comparison, had much less description that would allow readers to imagine the appearance of Taiwan aborigines, but he did record and illustrate weaving, and decorations in an anthropological way objectively, and he

devoted a lot of space to introducing the customs of Taiwan aborigines in particular, as shown in the following extract:

Local residents had invented a kind of fabric about 2 to 3 steps long with which to wrap their bodies from the waist to the knees. Some residents' bodies were marked with images of animals, trees or flowers (tattoos), but only hunters were entitled to this. Most people dyed their teeth black, and wore ear rings, small necklaces, and neck decorations. On their heads, they wore ring-like bands with poultry feathers inserted into them. The people in the north wore hats made of deer skin and sleeveless dresses. They also wore a kind of hat made of banana leaves, circular, small bands of many layers and with different colors, with feathers added, as a head decoration. If an adult wants to get married, he needed to go to the home where the woman he loved lived to continuously play musical instruments. If this woman agreed to the proposal, she would appear in front of him and started to talk about the conditions. Then, they told their parents, and start to prepare their wedding ceremony. The wedding ceremony was mainly celebrated at the bride's father's home, which was also the place where the future husband would live; therefore, fathers would pray for God to give them a daughter instead of a son, because a daughter would bring a son-in-law to become a pillar for their old age. (Prévost 1748, 60)

Prévost's description showed that he did not have an ironic or stereotypical image of Taiwan aborigines, but instead presented aboriginal kindness and customs with objective description.

## **5 Conclusions**

This thesis relates to Prévost's travelogue about Taiwan which inherited the travel geography of the Society of Jesus, and introduced the island's geography, races, animals, plant, customs, and history. Correct geographic maps were combined with objective book arguments, rather than free writing and mere compilation, and incorporated the materials closest to the reality, local witnesses, historical materials of China, and accounts representing both Protestant and Catholic viewpoints.

In addition, Prévost described Taiwan as two different countries, east and west; the west, populated by Han Chinese was prosperous and civilized, while the east owned rich minerals. The east and the west became a contrast of civilized cultures and primitive cultures; the west had rich products with well-regulated cities; the east was mainly based on primitive fishing and hunting activities. Aboriginal



clothing, customs and housing were strange and interesting. In addition, Prévost expressed the point of view that aborigines were noble savages, and praised them for being kind without being cunning. To describe aboriginal customs and races observed in the east appeared to be one of Prévost's personal interests. His records of their original customs in every place become the principle source materials for later generations of writers, and comprised part of Rousseau's education. Basically, Prévost inherited the way of the Society of Jesus when it came to describing China, illustrating Taiwan as having different cultures in the east and the west. He was not, however, intentionally critical or derogatory, but presented Taiwan as being multi-faceted, with a complicated history and distinct island cultural characteristics.

He did not mention any local religion for fear of bringing up the associations with pagan idols. Within the historical context of the Rites Controversy, as a religious person who was fond of literature, Prévost avoided the contentious issue as much as he possibly could.

As for the island's history, Prévost did not describe the relationship between Han Chinese and aborigines from the viewpoint of the Manchu Dynasty. On the whole, he stood in the position of sympathizing with the aborigines, so the Han Chinese were more often described as the cunning ones. In addition, he depicted the advanced sailing cultures of Taiwan found among the Japanese, the Dutch, the aborigines and the Manchu Dynasty. In his book, Prévost treated the island's complex political and diplomatic status in an objective way, rather than adopting the curious tone found in travelogues prepared by writers from different cultures. Much of the source materials he used were written by author members of the Society of Jesus and the Reform Church, a group which included both missionaries and explorers. The first-hand knowledge was obtained from personal visits to Taiwan. Moreover, Prévost took Dutch books (published by East India Company) for mutual support, making an arrangement of Taiwan's history at that time. As for the part of ethnic groups, when he wrote about aborigines in the east of Taiwan and Austronesian, Prévost applied a deeper anthropological research methodology to probe tatoos, clothing, housing and customs, making for profound discussion, which was in short supply in previous writings.

As for Taiwan, Prévost's introduction was very detailed, and the image section was referred to Du Halde's travelogue. Prévost's book integrated other authors from four different continents which made it one of the most important writing in

the 18th century. Prévost's text about the travelogue of Taiwan is based on various materials, including the travelogue of the Society of Jesus, the works of Protestant authors, and missionaries' and traders' personal visits to Taiwan. In 1748, it represented a consolidated compendium of accurate and specific information about Taiwan. What made it unique was the author describing Taiwan as diverse and rich, with good and kind people. Prévost wrote in a positive manner and from an objective angle, in terms of describing the civilized Han Chinese in the west and the primitive society of the aborigines in the east, painting a realistic picture of Taiwan as a beautiful Utopia existing in the 18th century.

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