

# **How Willem van Lennep Became Liu Yuan-tao and Served the Republic of China**

A Microhistorical Biography

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## 1. Introduction

In January 2018, I stumbled on a book about idealistic Dutch nationals who had fought under foreign flags. The chance that readers had actually taken up arms to fight for their ideals, so the book's author Arnold Karskens makes clear, can only be expressed in permilles. Yet, the chance that the same readers had daydreamed of or considered fighting for what they believed to be right at some point in their lives, is 100%.<sup>1</sup> In the introduction, Karskens mentions several individuals who had not just dreamed and considered, but had actually gone to the front to realise their ideals. One of them was Willem van Lennep, or as he was known in Chinese, Liu Yuan-tao. As a staunch believer in Sun Yat-sen's three principles of the people, Liu had emigrated to the Republic of China (ROC), studied at the Whampoa Military Academy, and served the nation he had fallen in love with throughout the Second World War and afterwards. Liu was an anti-communist, partially for religious reasons. Therefore, when Mao Zedong came to power, he followed the Chinese Nationalists' relocation to Taiwan, where he would continue to serve, first as a sailor and then as an intelligence agent. Liu denied being an adventurer, insisting he fought for what he believed in.<sup>2</sup>

Being trained as a historian and as a Sinologist, especially interested in modern Taiwan, I equally felt fascinated by this story and embarrassed about having never heard of this man before. I started searching for literature about Liu Yuan-tao. It soon became clear why Karskens only briefly discussed Liu in the introduction. What Karskens wrote about Liu Yuan-tao was derived from one single newspaper report. All information about Liu from the academic literature, turned out to fit on half a sheet of paper. Still, I was determined to learn more about Liu. Fortunately, there were also signs that the limited amount of literature was not necessarily the consequence of a lack of source material. I managed to find several more news reports about Liu, as well as a number of Taiwanese websites about the community he was part of. Historical archives in the Netherlands as well as Taiwan also turned out to contain a considerable amount of documents relevant to the life of Liu Yuan-tao. I decided to study these primary sources in order to figure out how Willem van Lennep became Liu Yuan-tao and served the Republic of China after acquiring Chinese citizenship. This thesis is the result of that research.

This introductory chapter continues with an elucidation of the scholarly relevance of this biography of Liu Yuan-tao, and subsequently a discussion of the nature of the primary sources

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<sup>1</sup> Arnold Karskens, *Rebellen met een Reden: Idealistische Nederlanders Vechtend Onder Vreemde Vlag* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 2009), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Karskens, *Rebellen*, 17.

used for this project. Chapters 2 and 3 form the bulk of this thesis, and aim to answer the main research question of how Liu Yuan-tao served the ROC after obtaining Chinese citizenship. Both chapters break down into several sub-chapters. Chapters 2.1 to 2.3 describe Liu's childhood and student years, they mostly serve to explain how and especially why Willem van Lennep moved to China and became Liu Yuan-tao. Chapters 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 are about Liu's activities during the Second Sino-Japanese War, first as an officer on the Longhai railroad front, and then as an intelligence agent and liaison officer in the Chinese wartime capital of Chongqing. About the two subchapters set in Chongqing, it is important to note that the sources they are based on are not always clear about dates. Events described in these subchapters did not necessarily occur in the order I mention them. The chapter concludes with Liu's activities during the years directly following the Second Sino-Japanese War, leading up to his relocation to Taiwan.

Chapter 3 briefly breaks the chronological trend by starting out with a subchapter on the veteran village of Zuoying in southern Taiwan and how Liu was perceived and is remembered in this community. Chapter 3.2 is about the tumultuous time around the year 1950, when Liu worked as a sailor and inspector in the territories that remained under the ROC's control. Because of the nature of the primary sources, subsequent chapters leave more chronological gaps open, but are also more in-depth. Chapter 3.3 discusses Liu's return to the Netherlands in 1962. The following subchapter is about how Liu worked with a pro-ROC lobby in the Dutch parliament during the same year. Chapter 3.4 is about Liu's intelligence work in the second half of the 1960's. The last sub-chapter is about Liu's work in the Netherlands in the 1970s and the clash of personalities that resulted in Liu's departure. The chapter closes with a brief epilogue about what happened after Liu returned to Taiwan. This thesis focuses on how Liu served his adopted homeland, therefore, no detailed information is given about the period in Liu's life after he returned to Taiwan because he no longer worked for the government from that point onwards.

One of this project's strengths is that it sheds light on several different topics of scholarship. A consequence hereof is that readers primarily interested in one of these fields rather than in the life of Liu Yuan-tao as such, might not find every subchapter equally relevant or interesting. Chapter 2.2, 2.3, and 3.1 are the important ones for readers primarily interested in China as a destination of migration. Those who focus on the Second Sino-Japanese war will find chapters 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 the most salient. Readers interested in Sino-Dutch relations, Cold War anti-communist networks, or even Dutch post-war parliamentary history, will find chapters 3.2

through 3.6 the most important. Yet, since every subchapter builds on and refers back to earlier subchapters, this thesis is definitely best read as a whole.

## 1.1 Scholarly Relevance

From the earliest stage of this project onwards, it has not been hard to justify researching the life of Liu Yuan-tao. Liu's unique and adventurous life, about which many sources are available, certainly warrants a biography. Yet, it was often difficult to defend writing this biography as a master's thesis. Biographies, as the general public knows them, tend to be journalistic rather than scholarly in nature. They might appear in the form of commemorative and inspiring works about excellent individuals such as entrepreneurs or monarchs, or as cautionary tales, packed with salacious details, such as those about how notorious actors or sportspeople managed to sabotage their own careers. While both categories can make for good reading and commercial success, neither counts as academic writing.

On top of that, it is not obvious how a biography can make a contribution to a body of scholarly literature. In this thesis, I seek to answer the question of how Liu Yuan-tao served the Republic of China after acquiring Chinese citizenship. This question implies neither a theoretical basis for the research, nor a scholarly debate to which it provides new insight, and neither is there a testable hypothesis to be found. To make matters even worse, Liu Yuan-tao does not belong to the category of men and women of great significance in their days. He did not single-handedly change the course of history or leave a lasting cultural impact. When historians mention the name Liu Yuan-tao, they do so in small paragraphs or footnotes. These factors were enough for a brutally honest fellow student to ask me why I would even bother writing a thesis about a nobody.

My first answer to that question is that seemingly insignificant people are not necessarily unfit subjects for historical research. Take the heretics of Montailou for example; they were peasants living in a remote village in the Pyrenees around the turn of the fourteenth century, and adhered to a religious tradition that was already nearly extinct at that time. Nonetheless Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie found these marginal nobodies worthy of study. Having researched inquisition records on the Cathars of Montailou, Le Roy Ladurie managed to provide a rare insight into the life of medieval European peasants.<sup>3</sup> *Montailou* and this thesis belong to a genre of history

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<sup>3</sup> Matti Peltonen, "What is Micro in Microhistory" in *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory and Life Writing*, ed. Hans Renders and Binne de Haan (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 111.

known as microhistory. Historians Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and Szijártó István define microhistory as follows:

Microhistory is (...) the intensive historical investigation of a relatively well defined smaller object, most often a single event, or a ‘village community’, a group of families, even an individual person. Microhistorians hold a microscope and not a telescope in their hands. Focusing on certain cases, persons and circumstances, microhistory allows an intensive historical study of the subject, giving a completely different picture of the past from the investigations about nations, states or social groupings, stretching over decades, centuries, or whatever *longue durée*.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis is not only a work of microhistory about Liu Yuan-tao, it is also a biography of Liu Yuan-tao. Historians Hans Renders and Binne de Haan define biography as:

The study of the life of an individual, based on the methods of historical scholarship, with the goal of illuminating what is public, explained and interpreted in part from the perspective of the personal.<sup>5</sup>

Following these definitions, a microhistory is not necessarily a biography, but microhistory can certainly be written in the form of a biography. In fact, Renders and de Haan make the case for what they call a fruitful association between biography and microhistory. Microhistorical biographies, in their view, should not only represent a small and forgotten part of history, but also aim to place the broader historiography in proper perspective, and perhaps also to alter it a little.<sup>6</sup> Magnússon and Szijártó also argue that the strength of microhistory lies in its ability to present a diversity of contexts within the frame of a relatively limited investigation.<sup>7</sup> Presenting a diversity of contexts through a microhistorical biography in order to alter - or at least build on – the broader historiography, is exactly what I aim to do with this project.

This thesis does not merely tell an interesting life story, it also contributes to several fields of scholarship. The first of these fields is that of China as a destination of immigration. Pauline Leonard, Angela Lehmann, and Frank Pieke have studied immigration to China, but did not pay special attention to the republican era when doing so. Leonard and Lehman argue that

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<sup>4</sup> Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and Szijártó István, *What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2013), 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Renders and Binne de Haan, “The Challenges of Biography Studies” in *Theoretical Discussions of Biography: Approaches from History, Microhistory and Life Writing*, ed. Hans Renders and Binne de Haan (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Renders and De Haan, “Challenges”, 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> Magnússon and Szijártó, *Microhistory*, 76.

immigration to modern China started with reform and opening up.<sup>8</sup> Pieke only discusses imperialists as examples of migration to Republican China.<sup>9</sup> Although he rarely uses the term ‘immigration’, Robert Bickers has written extensively about settlers from all over the British empire in the territorial concessions of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century China. In Bickers’ words, these settlers “were not lovers of or experts on China – they were not Sinophiles – nor were they Sinologists. They were not led to China through any particular calling. The fact of empire led them there.”<sup>10</sup> Liu, by contrast, was a Sinophile who went to China driven by idealism. He also was a member of a political party that aimed to restore Chinese sovereignty over these imperialist enclaves, and eventually succeeded in doing so.<sup>11</sup>

In her work on migration to, from, and within China through the ages, Diana Lary distinguishes several groups of immigrants in Republican China. Apart from the foreign concession dwelling imperialists Bickers writes about, these include Jewish traders, mostly from the Middle East, as well as missionaries of all Christian denominations, who tended to acculturate to China much more than the typical foreigner. The White (anti-communist) Russian refugees were another major group of immigrants in Republican China. Unlike the stereotypical rich and powerful foreigner in China at the time, these desperate Russians lived and worked in precarious conditions. Lary also mentions the many Koreans and Japanese who came to Manchuria to settle in the 1930’s, under Japanese rule at the time.<sup>12</sup> Liu Yuan-tao does clearly not fit into any of these categories, which shows they are not yet complete. Therefore, this work can contribute to painting a more complete picture of immigration to Republican China.

This thesis also aims to add to the growing body of literature on Chongqing, China’s capital city during Second World War. The city of Chongqing, once known as the city of heroes and the last free city in the far east, received relatively little attention from historians in the post-war decades, despite being the wartime capital of the first ally to fight Japan and the country that had suffered losses in human life during the war surpassed only by those of the Soviet Union. A part of why this happened is that the American bloc during the Cold War had no

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<sup>8</sup> Pauline Leonard and Angela Lehmann, “International Migrants in China: Civility, Contradiction, and Confusion” in *Destination China: Immigration to China in the Post-Reform Era*, edited by Pauline Leonard and Angela Lehmann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 1-4.

<sup>9</sup> Frank Pieke, “Immigrant China” in *China Across the Divide: The Domestic and Global in Politics and Society*, ed. Rosemary Foot (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 99-100.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Bickers, *Empire Made Me: An Englishman Adrift in Shanghai* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Bickers, *Out of China: How the Chinese Ended the Era of Western Domination* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 101, 207-208.

<sup>12</sup> Diana Lary, *Chinese Migrations: The Movement of People, Goods and Ideas over Four Millennia* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 107-112.

interest in singing the praises of their former ally that had turned into a communist adversary. The Chinese Communists themselves added to the neglect of Chongqing's wartime history by spreading the fiction that they themselves had played a leading role in China's resistance against Japan, and that the Chinese Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek did not make any noteworthy contribution.<sup>13</sup> More important than who has been responsible for its omission is that Chongqing and the people who resided there during the war get the attention they deserve in historiography. This project will contribute to that.

The third context this thesis will contribute to is the history of Cold War Dutch foreign policy and Sino-Dutch relations. China has yet to be given its place in the historiography on Dutch Cold War foreign relations. Liu was an important figure for what was then called the Formosa lobby in Dutch politics and parliament. This lobby made several attempts to persuade the Dutch government to recognise the Republic of China instead of the People's Republic of China. Historian Madelon de Keizer has argued, in her work about journalist and politician Frans Goedhart, that biographies are especially suited to show how coincidence, uncertainty, and dynamics influenced the course of the Cold War.<sup>14</sup> I hope to do the same by writing about Goedhart's friend Liu Yuan-tao.

This is not the first microhistorical biography about a European who came to China in the interwar years. Bickers' 2003 biography of Maurice Tinkler tells the life story of a British Great War veteran who came to the international settlement of Shanghai to join its Municipal Police. Bickers describes *Empire Made Me* as a biography of a nobody which offers a window into an otherwise closed world.<sup>15</sup> This thesis about Liu Yuan-tao is also a biography that offers a window into otherwise closed worlds: the world of the forgotten 'city of heroes' that was wartime Chongqing, the world of the vanished veteran villages of post-war Taiwan, and the extant but ever hidden world of foreign actors attempting to influence Dutch politicians in the backrooms of the Hague.

It is also worth pointing out what this thesis is not. First of all, it is not what historians call life writing. Hans Renders describes life writing as the "study [of] individual lives on the basis of autobiographical documents with the ultimate aim to show that the authors of these

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<sup>13</sup> Rana Mitter, *China's War with Japan 1937-1945: the Struggle for Survival* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), 11.

<sup>14</sup> Madelon de Keizer, *Frans Goedhart: Journalist en Politicus (1904-1990)* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2012), 10.

<sup>15</sup> Bickers, *Empire Made Me*, 4-5.



autobiographical documents were victimized by their social context.”<sup>16</sup> Renders disapproves of this approach because “personal events and major social changes in public life do affect people, but they do not have the same effect on everyone. It is a relic of Marxist scholarship to think that every individual human being responds in the same manner to large social structures and events.”<sup>17</sup>

This thesis does not aim to argue that Liu was a victim of his social context. I also have no intention to imply the way Liu responded to the world around him was solely determined by his background. This work does not aim to make a point about racialisation or the class structure of any society. On the other hand, I cannot deny that Liu’s patrician background, geopolitical and economic developments, as well as racial views of Dutch, Chinese, and Americans alike greatly influenced his actions. Furthermore, this work contains anecdotes that life writers as Renders describes them might find interesting or relatable to such a thing as the immigrant experience.

This thesis is also not an attempt to psychoanalyse Liu Yuan-tao, or to describe his personal opinions about politics, art, and civilization in detail. I occasionally refer to Liu’s political ideology and use the rather Jungian term ‘personal myth’ to describe a certain episode of his life, but only do so because and when it helps explain Liu’s actions, and never as a goal itself.

## **1.2 Nature of the Primary Sources**

Because secondary literature is so scarce, there was no other choice than to base this thesis on primary source material. Fortunately, there is plenty to work with. The sources I cite when describing why and especially how Liu Yuan-tao served the Republic of China can be divided into five categories:

1. Archived journalistic reports.
2. ROC government documents.
3. Correspondence stored at the National Archives of the Netherlands.
4. Correspondence stored at the Amsterdam City Archives.

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<sup>16</sup> Hans Renders, “Biography in Academia and the Critical Frontier in Life Writing” in *Theoretical Discussions of Biography. Approaches from History, Microhistory and Life Writing*, ed. Hans Renders and Binne de Haan (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 169.

<sup>17</sup> Renders, “Life Writing”, 171.

## 5. Pictures.

The first sources on Liu' Yuan-tao's life I managed to find were journalistic reports. Newspaper articles about Liu appeared as early as 1951 and as late as 2001. Delpher, a keyword search engine for digitised newspaper and magazine articles in Dutch archives, was an especially useful tool for finding them. Other journalistic reports were referred to in other primary sources. Yet others I found stored in the same folders as the documents I searched for in archives I visited. This category contains not only reports about Liu Yuan-tao, but also a number of articles he mentioned in other primary sources, as well articles he (anonymously) wrote himself. Unfortunately, I only found one Taiwanese newspaper article on Liu. Besides written journalistic reports, I also cite a Dutch television broadcast containing an interview with Liu.

I conducted most of my fieldwork in Taiwan for this project in the Academia Historica (AH) in Taipei. Some of the documents containing information about Liu are public and accessible from any location, but most of them could only be viewed in the archive's reading room. The Academia Historica archive contains sources from both before and after the ROC's relocation to Taiwan. Sources from before the relocation include Whampoa Academy documents, documents about military decorations, and documents on how Liu lost his papers during the war and requested them back. Documents from after the relocation contain reports on the political situation in the Netherlands as well as reports about the Chinese diaspora in the Netherlands, and about pro-ROC Dutch politicians. Since many of these sources lack dates, titles, and names of authors, it is not practical to refer to them as advised by the Chicago manual of style. I refer to these sources by their digital collection number instead.

The National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague (NA) also contain useful source material on Liu's life, especially about the Cold War era. Most of the sources from this archive I cite in this work are correspondence between Liu and the Dutch anti-communist journalist and Labour Party (PvdA) politician Frans Goedhart. Goedhart and Liu informed each other about the political situation in China and the Netherlands during the 1960s and 1970s. This category also contains letters written by a Dutch intelligence agent in Chongqing during the Second World War, written for the government in exile.

The long-lasting correspondence between Liu and his Dutch relative Maurits Alexander van Lennep, stored at the Amsterdam City Archives (ACA), will not open to the public for decades to come. Fortunately, the archive's owner granted me permission to use them for this project. This correspondence contains a long series of letters, written in the 1990s, in which Liu tells

his life story. These letters are the backbone of this thesis, and their importance cannot be overstated, especially for the first half. Useful as these recollections are, it is important to note that they were written long after the events they describe actually happened. Therefore, it is important to critically evaluate the factual accuracy of Liu's recollections wherever possible.

Pictures are the fifth category of primary sources I have used. I made the pictures in this work of Liu's final resting place during my fieldwork in Taiwan. I also refer to pictures in the public domain of Liu's maternal relatives stored at the Rijksmuseum. The pictures themselves can be found in the appendix.

## 2. Pursuit of Destiny

### 2.1 A Patricians' Son

Willem Hendrik van Lennep was born in Amsterdam on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1911.<sup>18</sup> His father, a relative of the famous Dutch author Jacob van Lennep, was deputy manager of the Netherlands East Indies Agricultural Society. His mother Godfrida Johanna Jacoba van Braam also descended from a patrician family, one that played a prominent role in Dutch colonial history. When Willem was six years old, the family moved to Huis de Trompenburgh, a manor house in 's-Graveland near Hilversum.<sup>19</sup>

According to Liu's recollections, his religious piety was not rooted in his childhood. His parents were Lutheran, but moderately so, and never went to church. Willem's father often socialised with the Catholic priest from the church at the other side of the canal. When Willem asked his father why he did this despite being Lutheran, his father told him this was because Protestant pastors tended to be uncultivated people that could not be reasoned with. Willem's mother had more faith in the Lutheran clergy and attempted to get a Lutheran pastor to catechise him. This attempt failed for lack of willingness and enthusiasm from both Willem and the pastor.<sup>20</sup>

Willem's aunt Adeh, his mother's sister, was a Muslim, a follower of the Indian Sufi mystic Inayat Khan to be precise. She introduced her nephew to Khan when he was about twelve years old. Liu recalled the mystic briefly looking at him with a smile before turning his face away. Liu wrote that he assumed this was because Khan saw his future in the east coming, but refused to say anything about it.<sup>21</sup>

Because his strict father did not let him play with children of ordinary people, Willem's childhood was rather lonely.<sup>22</sup> He was not allowed to attend the village school either, and was instead tutored by the school principal until he had learned to ride his bike to a private school when he was about ten years old. Unfortunately, the teacher at this private school, in Liu's words, turned out to be a horrible and violent man that slapped his students around the ears for no reason. It was no surprise to Liu that this teacher turned out to be a member of the National Socialist Movement (NSB) in the war.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Appendix A (pictures).

<sup>19</sup> Henrick S. van Lennep, *Genealogie van de Familie van Lennep* (Naarden: Stichting van Lennep, 2007), 208.

<sup>20</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>21</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 29, 1992. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>22</sup> Floris-Jan van Luyn, "Een Hollandse Jonker bij de Kwomintang", *NRC Handelsblad*, March 3, 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 12, 1992. ACA 30491-253.

After his father passed away in 1921, Willem had more freedom to socialise with his peers. According to Henri Knap, Willem van Lennep, when he was about 14 years old, was an especially entrepreneurial boy, obsessed with aviation. Van Lennep managed to bluff himself into the phone book with an imaginary aviation bureau. Together with his friends, he raised enough money to buy a Spyker plane, one that was already antiquated by that time. The boys managed to make a decent amount of money by letting children and adults alike from their neighbourhood pose with the plane and charging money for the pictures. Decades later, Knap would nostalgically write about this and erroneously claim that one of his friends later became a fighter pilot serving Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>24</sup> Not long after the adventures with the old plane, Willem van Lennep learned a family secret that would change his life and set him on the path to become Liu Yuan-tao.

## 2.2 A Life-Changing Revelation

Liu Yuan-tao has given two main explanations of why he chose to emigrate to China. Since these two stories do not contradict and in fact complement each other, I will discuss them both here. The point of this is not to take them at face value. The point is rather to record these experiences as Liu's personal myth that motivated and gave meaning to his actions throughout his life. The same goes for his aforementioned encounter with Inayat Khan. There are reasons to doubt whether the events discussed here actually happened as Liu remembered them, but there is no reason to doubt they were fundamental to his behaviour, his values, and his identity.

The first explanation revolves around the Chinese artefacts surrounding Willem van Lennep during his youth at Huis de Trompenburgh. These artefacts were inherited from Andreas Everard van Braam Houckgeest, who collected them while working as an ambassador at the court of the Qianlong emperor during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> The young Willem was so captivated by these works of art that he decided to study Chinese.<sup>26</sup> This is what Liu Yuan-tao told several Dutch reporters in 1962.<sup>27</sup>

The second explanation has a component of ethnic heritage. Liu told this version of the story to Alfred van Sprang and two journalists who met him near the end of his life. It is also the main

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<sup>24</sup> Henri Knap, *Bent U ook van Gisteren* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1955), 102-107.

<sup>25</sup> "Student Chinese Talen Werd Officier van Tsiang Kai-sjek", *Het Parool*, January 24, 1962; Tristan Mostert and Jan van Campen, *Zijden Draad: China en Nederland Sinds 1600* (Nijmegen: Vanilt, 2015), 124.

<sup>26</sup> "W.H. van Lennep: De Man uit China", *Ons Zeewezen* 51, no. 5 (1962): 61-62.

<sup>27</sup> "Chinese Nederlander Bezoekt Den Helder", *Noordhollands Dagblad*, January 23, 1962; "Nieuwdiepse Notities", *Alle Hens*, March 1962.

motivation he refers to in his letters to Dutch relatives. After Willem van Lennep's father had passed away, his mother revealed to him the secret that the van Lennep family was against her marriage to his father. According to Liu, the van Lennep family thought of the Van Braam family as *zwartjes*, a pejorative term for people of mixed heritage roughly corresponding to 'darkies' in English.<sup>28</sup> After hearing this, Liu enthusiastically delved into his family history. In *het Blauwe Boekje* [the Blue Book], a book of reference for the genealogy of Dutch patrician families, he found that one van Braam had married a Chinese lady named Lauw Ah-nio. Suddenly, Willem understood where his mother and her sisters got their dark hair and single eyelids from. The confrontation with his mother's heritage and the racist disapproval of his father's relatives made him feel a deep connection with the Chinese people. Willem told his mother that he would move to China. She accepted this, but told him the Chinese would never accept him as an equal. Willem replied that he did not care, since he would never feel at home in the Netherlands anyway.<sup>29</sup>

I found no mention of Lauw Ah-nio in the editions of *het Blauwe Boekje* containing entries on the van Braam family.<sup>30</sup> Willem might have read about her somewhere else. The *Genealogy and History of the families van Braam and van Braam Houckgeest* does mention a Lau Kang-nio, who married a van Braam in 1853. This is most likely the person Liu referred to as Lauw Ah-nio, but he is not a descendant of hers.<sup>31</sup> Public domain pictures of Liu's mother, aunts, and maternal grandfather do show the Asian facial features he wrote about.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of where these features originated, both Willem and (at this point at least) his paternal relatives were convinced the van Braam family was of mixed heritage. This conviction motivated Willem van Lennep to pursue his destiny in China and become Liu Yuan-tao.

### 2.3 Student Years

After finishing middle school, Willem van Lennep went to a business school in Hilversum for two years before moving to Leiden to study Chinese.<sup>33</sup> Van Lennep was not technically enrolled

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<sup>28</sup> Detlev van Heest, "Spion voor Taiwan: Het Leven van de Patriciërszoon Willem van Lennep die Liu Yuan-tao werd en Zich in Dienst Stelde van het Vrije China", *Elsevier Weekblad*, June 14, 1997 ; Luyn, "Hollandse Jonker".

<sup>29</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 13, 1991. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>30</sup> Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, *Nederlands Patriciaat* 7 (The Hague: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, 1916), 65-71; Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, *Nederlands Patriciaat* 63 (The Hague: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, 1977), 38-78.

<sup>31</sup> J.P.W.A van Braam Houckgeest, *Genealogy and History of the families van Braam and van Braam Houckgeest* (The Hague: Stichting "van Braam Houckgeest", 1997), 55.

<sup>32</sup> Appendix A (pictures).

<sup>33</sup> AH 129000016661A-005.

at Leiden University since his school credentials did not allow him to do so. He was instead privately tutored by Chang Tien-se, an assistant of Sinologist Jan Duyvendak. While studying in Leiden, van Lennep befriended Robert van Gulik, who he would meet again years later in Chongqing.<sup>34</sup> After a year in Leiden he studied at the Parisian *Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises* for a year.<sup>35</sup> In Paris, Liu got acquainted with politically active Chinese students and became a member of the Kuomintang.

After studying in Paris, Willem van Lennep spent one last summer at his mother's house before travelling by train to Venice, and then by boat to Hong Kong. After a couple of days in Hong Kong, he took a train to Canton. Upon van Lennep's arrival in China, he was welcomed by relatives of Chinese friends he had met in Amsterdam and Paris.<sup>36</sup> The sources about Liu's student years in Europe – his own recollections and a ROC presidential office personnel survey containing a CV – contradict each other on when he actually studied where. Whichever one is accurate, he was certainly in China by 1933.

In Canton, former Parisian fellow students introduced van Lennep to Zhou Lu, the dean of Sun Yat-sen university. Zhou allowed van Lennep to study Chinese language and geography in Canton for two years. About two decades later, the two met again in Taipei. Zhou then admitted that he had never expected Liu to persevere with his decision to dedicate his life to China. During his second year in Canton, Liu met his wife, Liang Kwei-yen. Like Liu himself, Liang was from an upper class family of mixed heritage. Her great-grandmother was Italian, and had come to Canton after marrying a Chinese merchant.<sup>37</sup>

Having already followed voluntary military education in Canton and realising all-out war against Japan was drawing near, van Lennep moved to Nanjing to attend the Whampoa Military Academy.<sup>38</sup> In order to do so, he had to turn in his Dutch passport, become a Chinese citizen, and officially change his name to Liu Yuan-tao.<sup>39</sup> Liu chose his family name because his perceived Chinese ancestor was called Lauw Ah-nio, and Lauw is the Cantonese or Hokkien equivalent to the Mandarin name Liu.<sup>40</sup> Liu was also registered as the family name of his daughter, Liu Kai-shu, born in Nanjing before Willem acquired Chinese citizenship.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 12, 1992. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>35</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 3, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>36</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 13, 1991. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>37</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, January 1, 1991. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>38</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, January 1, 1991. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>39</sup> AH 026000012033A.

<sup>40</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 7, 1989. ACA 30491-252.

<sup>41</sup> Appendix A (pictures).

Although his height certainly made Liu stand out, he was not the only anomaly among the roughly 650 men who enrolled together with him. His batch contained several overseas ethnic Chinese from places such as Sumatra and Thailand, and even a full-blood Papuan.<sup>42</sup> In other words, Liu's year alone included several foreign volunteers who gave up their nationalities to become Chinese in order to attend the Whampoa Academy.

In the summer of 1937, while Liu was still undergoing military training, his mother came to visit him and lived together with Liu's wife and daughter. Unfortunately, this visit was cut short by the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Liu's mother was rushed back to Europe. His wife and daughter went to Hong Kong, to later reunite with him in Wuchang. Liu himself followed the Whampoa Academy in its relocation further inland, where both his graduation and his participation in the war were delayed by a near-lethal case of paratyphoid. After recovering from his illness, Liu passed his final exam at the relocated Whampoa Academy in Wuchang and graduated in the rank of first lieutenant on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1938.<sup>43</sup>

## 2.4 To Arms

After graduating from the Whampoa Academy, Huang Jingzhang, a friend of Liu's who had studied in Germany, introduced him to general Gui Yongqing. Gui had been educated by German officers. He had studied under general Alexander von Falkenhausen in Germany for several years. According to historian Hsi-huey Liang, Gui was especially amenable to German practical advice and came to understand the Germans well.<sup>44</sup> It was probably Gui's experience of cooperating with German noblemen that made it possible for him to fruitfully work with Liu for years to come. After all, Liu had a similar social background to Gui's German mentors, even though he attempted to escape from it. Liu offered Gui his services and was accepted into the 27<sup>th</sup> army, which had German equipment. Soon after, Liu sent his wife and daughter to Chongqing, where Huang Jingzhang found a house for them. Liu himself was sent to the Longhai front, where the Chinese were defending their main cross-country rail artery against a Japanese offensive.<sup>45</sup>

Liu did not have to wait long for his baptism of fire. Just after exiting the train in a town called Lanfeng near Kaifeng, his group was hit by a Japanese bombardment, and a soldier right next

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<sup>42</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 3, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>43</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 3, 1993. ACA 30491-253; AH 129000016661A-006.

<sup>44</sup> Liang Hsi-huey, *The Sino-German Connection* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1977), 58.

<sup>45</sup> Mitter, *China's War*, 143.



to Liu was hit with shrapnel in his skull.<sup>46</sup> Liu and his unit were supposed to be stationed in Lanfeng, but bombardments forced them to withdraw to a nearby forest. This place provided a degree of shelter, but was under heavy surveillance from a Japanese observation balloon. A dud shell hit the ground a few meters away from Liu when he left the woods once. The Chinese, for their part, kept the Japanese at bay with heavy German howitzers of their own.<sup>47</sup>

A surviving document from 1938 or perhaps 1939 mentions Liu as a translator.<sup>48</sup> It was probably in this function that Liu accompanied American journalist Jack Belden to the front. Other activities included leading groups scavenging battlefields for objects left behind by Japanese soldiers.<sup>49</sup> Around this time, Liu was also almost fired at by friendly troops who had never seen Japanese before. They assumed Liu must have been an enemy because of his different looks. Fortunately for Liu, he could talk himself out of the situation.<sup>50</sup>

Liu and his group escaped from their position at night and made their way back to Luoyang, where they took the last train back to Hankou. Soon after, the Chinese military breached the Yellow River dams, flooding the north of Henan province and thereby halting the Japanese advance to the west.<sup>51</sup> This breaching of the Yellow River dams has been highly controversial for its high cost in civilian lives. Historian Rana Mitter called it one of the grossest acts of violence the ROC government has committed against its own people, and for slight tactical gains at that.<sup>52</sup> Liu vehemently disagreed with this, calling it the “Chicom interpretation of historical facts”. In a letter to a Dutch relative, Liu strongly criticised journalist Willem van Kemenade, who wrote an article endorsing this view. Liu was convinced that the flooded area had mostly been evacuated, so not many people could have drowned. The flooding, in Liu’s view, halted the Japanese advance for at least four months. In Liu’s comments on van Kemenade’s article, he mentioned the Dutch engineers Bourdrez and van den Heuvel. The latter was a personal acquaintance of Liu’s, and was accused by the Japanese of being involved in breaching the Yellow River dams. According to Liu, both engineers had done China a great service, but the likes of van Kemenade would never admit that since it doesn’t fit in with the leftist world view they peddle.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 3, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>47</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 12, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>48</sup> AH 00801070300003001-004; 129000016661A-006.

<sup>49</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 12, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>50</sup> Heest, “Spion”.

<sup>51</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 12, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>52</sup> Mitter, *China’s War*, 157-163.

<sup>53</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 17, 1988. ACA 30491-252.

Another Dutchman in China at this time was the Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) serviceman and informant colonel De Fremery. De Fremery reported on the progression of the war in China and warned the KNIL that the Japanese military was far more competent and effective than previously assumed. It is unclear whether De Fremery and Liu were aware of each other's existence; in any event, the two do not mention each other in their writings. The closest De Fremery got to mentioning Liu was reporting on progression of hostilities in the Lanfeng area when Liu was serving there.<sup>54</sup>

In Hankou, Liu was reunited with his wife and daughter, who had travelled there by plane. Hankou was far from a safe place though, and it suffered from daily bombardments. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1938, Gui Yongqing and his following, which included Liu, escaped the city by boat. Near Yueyang in Hunan, Japanese bombers circled their boats. The people on board, hiding under rush mats, managed to fool the Japanese pilots into thinking the boats were empty. This same tactic later failed when Japanese planes fired their machine guns at them. On their way to Yuanling, the boats had to be stopped and lightened because the current became too strong. While Liu's group managed to do this without too much trouble, others were attacked by what he called coarse tribes, with no scruples about raiding on strangers. The brigands robbed the people on the boats that came after Liu of their belongings.<sup>55</sup>

About a week after the incident with the brigands, Liu and his family arrived safe and sound in Yuanling. In this riverside town, overflowing with refugees, Liu found a Roman Catholic mission of Redemptorists. One of the Redemptorists, a Dutch-born American citizen, baptised and catechised Liu and his daughter; his wife would soon follow.<sup>56</sup> Later in life, Liu would express his devout Catholic faith in many letters, but shared little of what motivated his change of heart on faith. Near the end of his life, Liu told Dutch journalist Floris-Jan van Luyn that the impression left by seeing many victims of war moved him to his faith. van Luyn mistakenly dated this event at the start of the war in 1937, instead of late 1938.<sup>57</sup>

Having lived in Yuanling for approximately three months, Liu received a telegram from Huang Jingzhang, inviting him to host Dutch language broadcasts for the Chongqing broadcasting station. With permission from general Gui, Liu heeded the call. He left for Guiyang and then travelled on to Chongqing, the city which would be China's capital for the remainder of the

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<sup>54</sup> Ger Teitler and Kurt W. Radke, *A Dutch Spy in China: Reports on the First Phase of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 190-195.

<sup>55</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 12, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>56</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 12, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>57</sup> Luyn, "Hollandse Jonker".

war.<sup>58</sup> To quote Hollington Tong, one of the many people who had come to this misty and mountainous city: “It was probably fortunate for our own sanity that when we moved there late 1938, none of us realised we would have to stay for over seven years.”<sup>59</sup>

## 2.5 Spying and Surviving in the City of Heroes

Before the war, Chongqing had been a relatively unimportant city in the far western province of Sichuan, then still on the fringes of Chinese civilisation. Its misty winters and mountainous surroundings made it a strategic location to set up a provisional capital after Nanjing and Wuhan had fallen in 1938. Yet, it was a rough place to live for the tens of thousands of middle class people who flocked to Chongqing from China’s east coast, which had fallen to the Japanese. Drinking water and electricity were scarce, but by far the worst part of living in wartime Chongqing were the relentless Japanese air raids.<sup>60</sup>

From 1938 to 1943, Chongqing was bombed at least 117 times. By 1943, bomb shelters in Chongqing had a total capacity of over 440.000, making Chongqing the city with the most bomb shelters in the world. Urban historian Tan Gang writes that “As the product of Japan’s massive bombing of Chongqing, bomb shelters also became an important part of the residents’ memories.”<sup>61</sup> Liu was certainly no exception to this rule, and recalled the shelters as having dangers of their own, especially the large ones. Such shelters had capacities of thousands, meaning that there would be a great lack of oxygen if the ventilation system broke down and the guards kept people from exiting the shelters until receiving an ‘all clear’ sign. Liu mentioned a case when hundreds of people choked this way.<sup>62</sup>

The situation above ground was even more morbid. One day, as Liu and his wife were inspecting what damage the bombings had done to the city centre, they saw limbs hanging from phone wires. As they made their way uphill in rickshaws near the old city gate, the sirens unexpectedly rang again. Three squadrons of Japanese bombers appeared in the blue sky. Liu and his wife barely had time to jump out of the rickshaws and hide in the city gate. Most people in the street hid in an alleyway instead, to be hit by fire bombs.<sup>63</sup> Liu would lose the house

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<sup>58</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 12, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>59</sup> Hollington Tong, *Dateline China: The beginning of China’s press relations with the world* (New York, Rockport Press, 1950), 108.

<sup>60</sup> Mitter, *China’s War*, 171-176.

<sup>61</sup> Tan Gang, “Living Underground: Bomb Shelters and Daily Lives in Wartime Chongqing (1937-1945)”, *Journal of Urban History* 43, no. 3 (2017): 384, 393.

<sup>62</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 4, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>63</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

Huang Jinzhang found for him as well as his papers during such bombings. He and his family lived in a loam hut in the years that followed.<sup>64</sup>

Despite these circumstances, the International Department of the Kuomintang government in Chongqing managed a radio broadcast that reached far beyond the borders of China, even though sounds of barking dogs and quacking ducks on the background of news reporting revealed its improvised nature.<sup>65</sup> Liu hosted the broadcasts in the Dutch and German languages and would continue to do so until shortly after the war.<sup>66</sup> The broadcasts did not fail to reach their target audience. When Liu returned to the Netherlands in 1962, he was approached by a cousin who had survived incarceration in a Japanese concentration camp. He recognised Liu's voice from when he and fellow inmates listened to their illegal radio.<sup>67</sup> Liu's broadcasting efforts were also noticed when the US *Collier's Weekly* mentioned Liu by name in a 1944 article as one of the eccentric reporters of Radio Free China.<sup>68</sup>

News of Dutch broadcasts from Chongqing reached the Dutch government in exile in London. The government in exile inquired with the embassy staff in Chongqing who made these broadcasts in late 1940. London received a response from the Dutch embassy interpreter H. Bos, who identified the host of the Dutch radio broadcast as captain Liu Yuan-tao, a former Dutch citizen and student at Leiden University. Bos wrongly stated that Liu was from The Hague, and that his mother still lived there, and confused the Whampoa Academy with the Sun Yat-sen University in Canton. The broadcasts, Bos wrote, mostly consisted of news from the Chinese front, seen through Chinese eyes, but not especially propagandistic. Bos also mentioned that Liu socialised a lot with Dutchmen and other foreigners despite being a loyal Chinese citizen, probably in order to gather intelligence. According to this report, Liu was a minor spy, and not bright enough to be evil.<sup>69</sup>

Bos would mention Liu again in a letter to the governor of the Dutch East Indies - on the brink of the Pacific War - after Liu had expressed his interest in being sent to Buitenzorg as a Chinese observer. Bos called Liu a total *persona non grata*, who spied on foreigners in Chongqing and spent a suspicious amount of time with Germans, implying Liu had nationalist

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<sup>64</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253; AH 026000012033A.

<sup>65</sup> Wei Shuge, *News Under Fire: China's Propaganda Against Japan in the English-Language Press, 1928-1941* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 230.

<sup>66</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 23, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>67</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253; "Student Chinese Talen".

<sup>68</sup> Harrison Forman, "The Voice of China". *Collier's Weekly*, June 17, 1944, 85.

<sup>69</sup> H. Bos, letter to Den Heere Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, tydelijk te Londen, December 3, 1940. NA 2.05.90-426.

sympathies. He added that the Chinese would not even agree to send Liu anyway.<sup>70</sup> Bos' insinuation that Liu had national socialist ties or sympathies was misplaced. The Germans Liu socialised with, including Bodo Freiherr von Stein, Erich Stölzner, and Horst Bärensprung, had in fact disobeyed the Führer's explicit orders to leave China.<sup>71</sup>

Bos was not wrong about Liu keeping an eye on foreigners in Chongqing; he even got a medal for it. Liu was awarded the Fifth Order of the Cloud and Banner award for his role in what he called the Hamburger affair. Rudolf Hamburger was a German architect, active in the foreign community of wartime Chongqing. According to Liu's recollections, Hamburger was notorious enough to silence any room he entered in Chongqing. Liu discovered Hamburger had a radio broadcasting system in his hotel room. Liu had Hamburger arrested on suspicion of being a Japanese spy, but he in fact turned out to be a spy for the Soviet Union. Liu recalled these events in first person plural and did not specify who he was working with.<sup>72</sup> Contemporary documents confirm that Liu Yuan-tao was awarded the fifth grade decoration of the Order of the Cloud and Banner in July 1940. These documents do not mention the Hamburger affair, in fact, they explicitly instruct against making public statements on Liu receiving his medal and why this happened.<sup>73</sup> The Communists in Chongqing were aware of Liu's monitoring of Soviet activity in the city. According to Frederic E. Wakeman, the Polish communist Israel Epstein knew of "a tall Dutchman with jug ears who had taken Chinese citizenship and renamed himself Liu" working as a member of a surveillance group keeping an eye on the Soviet embassy and trade delegation to Chongqing.<sup>74</sup>

As Liu hosted his broadcast and hunted for foreign spies, the Japanese bombings went on, but not during the winter months, when the city was shrouded in mist.<sup>75</sup> When the fog cleared up in 1942, far fewer bombers appeared. The war had entered a new phase in which the Japanese desperately needed their bombers to serve on the Pacific front.<sup>76</sup> A new phase of the conflict also meant a new task for Liu: to serve as a liaison officer with the Americans in Chongqing.

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<sup>70</sup> H. Bos, letter to Den Heere Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indië te Buitenzorg, March 26, 1941. NA 2.05.80-304.

<sup>71</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 12, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>72</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 23, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>73</sup> AH 001035100-00068066; 00103510000068067; 00103510000068069; 00103510000072000.

<sup>74</sup> Frederic E. Wakeman, *Spymaster Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 333, 520.

<sup>75</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 23, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>76</sup> Wei, *Under Fire*, 239.

## 2.6 Liaison Officer in Chongqing

The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, 1941. The months that followed were disastrous for the Allies in the Pacific: Hong Kong, Singapore, Batavia, Rangoon, and Manila all fell one by one. Chongqing was now the last free capital city in the Far East. What had been a backwards trading town a mere few years ago, was now famed as a lone beacon of freedom and democracy in Asia, and one of the four great wartime capitals along with London, Moscow, and Washington.<sup>77</sup> This, of course, was the (especially English-speaking) Allied interpretation of the situation. The accuracy of using the term democracy in Chongqing and whether the inhabitants of the colonies seized by Japan actually felt less free than they had before are different matters entirely.

China and the United States were now allies in a common struggle against Japan. A consequence of this development was an influx of American military personnel to Chongqing. Liu's language skills and international background made him an ideal candidate to facilitate communication and cooperation between the Chinese and American militaries in Chongqing. The ROC presidential office personnel survey lists Liu Yuan-tao as having performed several different tasks for the Military Commission Foreign Affairs Office.<sup>78</sup>

In his own recollections, Liu calls his position that of a liaison officer. Liu describes his relations with the Americans in this function as good and especially cooperative. Yet, he mostly recalls events that suggest otherwise, such as his meeting with US Army colonel Ilya Tolstoy. At this time, Chongqing was completely isolated from other Allied nations and could only be reached by plane. Tolstoy was charged with exploring the possibilities of constructing a highway from India to Tibet and Western China. When Liu asked Tolstoy how the Chinese military could assist him, the colonel lost his temper and snapped at Liu that this was a highly secret issue with which Liu had nothing to do. This argument between the American grandson of Leo Tolstoy and the Chinese great nephew of Jacob van Lennep, fittingly ended with a literary allusion: "As you like it and good luck to you, bye bye colonel."<sup>79</sup>

An American colleague of Liu's with whom relations were better, was a certain major Dotson. The two worked together on Sino-American cartographic exchange. In this capacity, Dotson and Liu travelled from Chongqing to Guiyang and Kunming, over mountain roads above the

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<sup>77</sup> Vincent Chang and Zhou Yong, "Redefining Wartime Chongqing: International Capital of a Global Power in the Making, 1938-1946", *Modern Asian Studies* 51, no 3 (2017): 579-580.

<sup>78</sup> AH 129000016661A-006.

<sup>79</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 30, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

clouds. On one of these roads, their jeep slipped and almost fell off the cliff. Fortunately, it got stuck even as its front wheels were already over the line. Liu and Dotson managed to get the car back on the road with the (paid) help of some local peasants.<sup>80</sup>

In Kunming, an American geographer called Dr. Crassey joined the company. Crassey disliked Liu, suspecting him of being a White Russian with a fake identity.<sup>81</sup> This suspicion was not completely baseless. As Bickers notes, acquiring Chinese citizenship had become a common way out of statelessness for White Russians in China.<sup>82</sup> Crassey behaved like a stereotypical foreign imperialist, with little regard for Chinese lives or laws. On the road, they passed a lorry carrying Chinese labourers, that had crashed into a shallow gorge. Many had serious injuries. One of the labourers requested to be taken to a nearby city in order to ask for help. Liu complied, but Crassey insisted on leaving the injured men behind as they would only slow the journey down. Because of Crassey's high position at the State Department, Dotson did not dare to contradict him, and the injured men were left behind. While Dotson was driving back from Guiyang to Chongqing, Crassey ordered him to stop at a strategically significant bridge. Crassey took out his camera to photograph the bridge, ignoring both Liu's warnings and a sign stating in Chinese as well as in English that taking pictures of the bridge was strictly prohibited. As armed guards approached the jeep, Crassey ordered Dotson to floor it. Liu refused to ever speak to Crassey again after their company had returned to Chongqing.<sup>83</sup>

Liu continued to work with Dotson until the latter was sent to India and replaced with majors Duur and Dexheimer. Liu remembered them as fuss buckets with civilian backgrounds, for whom every day of war was one too many. Their main activity was summing up names of US congressmen who would teach the Chinese a lesson if they did not work to please the Americans fast enough. When Liu lost his patience with their attitude, he complained to their superior, colonel Newcomer, a West Point graduate, the type of person Liu could talk to. Liu threatened to resign unless Duur and Dexheimer would be fired, and Dotson would return. Newcomer complied, which implies that Liu's work was valued by the American delegation in Chongqing. Liu would continue to work with the Americans until the end of the war.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>81</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>82</sup> Robert Bickers, *Britain in China: Community, Culture and Colonialism, 1900-1949* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 72.

<sup>83</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>84</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

The Americans were certainly not the only foreigners with a presence in Chongqing. The Dutch had set up a permanent representation in the Chinese capital in December 1941. At the time, the Dutch were a part of the American-British-Chinese-Dutch (ABCD) coalition against Japan. The Dutch position soon became marginalised as the Netherlands lost all colonial possessions in Asia and the ABCD coalition made way for that of the big four, including the Soviet Union instead of the Netherlands. Clashing opinions on the rights of the Chinese living in the Dutch colonies (including those in the Caribbean) also complicated Sino-Dutch cooperation in Chongqing.<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless, the Dutch maintained a military mission of their own in Chongqing.

The Chinese language interpreter serving the Dutch mission was Robert van Gulik, a friend from Liu's days as a student in Leiden. According to Vincent Chang and Zhou Yong, van Gulik was no mere interpreter and also likely served as an intelligence agent in Chongqing. Since Liu was also an intelligence agent by this time, this implies that the two might very well have been spying on each other.<sup>86</sup> Even if that were the case, I found no evidence of relations between Liu and his fellow Sinophile van Gulik going sour during their years in Chongqing. Liu was present when van Gulik got married to Shui Shifang in 1943. Another familiar face Liu saw at the Dutch mission was Gally Wu, a childhood friend from the family that had helped Liu move to Canton through Hong Kong.<sup>87</sup> Wu was a commercial illustrator by training. Liu convinced him to work for the Chinese propaganda office, which he did before joining the American mission and then the Dutch mission.<sup>88</sup>

Yet another Dutch-speaking friend of Liu's during his Chongqing days was Frédéric Vincent Lebbe, a Flemish missionary who had come to China before the war, and acquired Chinese citizenship. Liu recalled Lebbe as an enthusiastic supporter of the Chinese cause against Japan. Lebbe served the Chinese military as a medic in the mountains of southern Shanxi. Communist guerrillas were also active in this region and attacked and executed Lebbe's Chinese comrades. When they sent Lebbe back to Chongqing, he was starving and had been tortured, and died soon after.<sup>89</sup> This incident was probably a major contributing factor to Liu's lifelong hatred of communists.

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<sup>85</sup> Vincent Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy: The Modern Remaking of Dutch-Chinese Relations 1927-1950* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming), 156-157.

<sup>86</sup> Chang and Zhou, "Redefining Chongqing", 610.

<sup>87</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 30, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>88</sup> Yocklang Chong, *De Chinezen van de Binnen Bantammerstraat: Een Geschiedenis van drie Generaties*. (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005), 97-98.

<sup>89</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 27, 1993. ACA 30491-253.



By early 1944, the Japanese realised the tide of the Pacific War had turned against them. Their last hope of winning the war, so they thought, was to knock out China and then negotiate a settlement with the Americans, who were focused on Europe at this time. In order to achieve this, they prepared for their largest offensive yet: operation *Ichigo*. *Ichigo*'s aims were to connect all areas in China occupied by Japan, advance into central China, knock out the American air bases there, and connect central China to Indochina and Thailand.<sup>90</sup> In order to achieve these goals, the Japanese sent in their Manchurian army, which meant risking vulnerability to an attack by the Soviet Union from the North.<sup>91</sup>

Even though the Japanese did not manage to advance as far as Chongqing, they were able to cut the city's supply lines from the southeast. This worsened the already painful scarcity in Chongqing and caused hyperinflation. Liu served in four different capacities at this time, but he could barely live off his salary. In these desperate days, Liu depended on American handouts of dairy products and clothes. And yet, the tide of the war was turning, Liu recalled reinforcements arriving over the road he and Tolstoy had quarrelled over years earlier and pushing back the overstretched Japanese.<sup>92</sup>

While the Japanese offensive failed to take China out of the war, it succeeded in damaging Chiang Kai-shek's regime in ways it would never recover from. The hyperinflation made soldiers' wages worthless. Desertion was high and recruitment was low. Meanwhile, the Chinese peasants, who had endured unbearable hardships, turned on the army, especially in the province of Henan, which had suffered from the man-made flood years earlier.<sup>93</sup> From his base in the north-western Chinese city of Yan'an, Mao Zedong gloated at the Japanese successes, figuring that any weakening of Chiang's forces would benefit him, and seeing his chance to profit from the chaos to win support from the peasantry.<sup>94</sup> Mao launched an offensive of his own, a charm offensive to be precise. Journalists and other foreign influencers, disillusioned with the state of Chongqing and Chiang's regime, were invited to Yan'an. The impression they got of the Communist territories was as positive as it was superficial. The charm offensive achieved its goal of weakening American government and public opinion support for Chiang's China.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Mitter, *China's War*, 321-322.

<sup>91</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 2, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>92</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 2, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>93</sup> Mitter, *China's War*, 322-324.

<sup>94</sup> Mitter, *China's War*, 327.

<sup>95</sup> Mitter, *China's War*, 329-334; Chang and Zhou, "Redefining Chongqing", 617, 620.

The war ended in the summer of 1945 with the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the rout of the Japanese army in Manchuria and Korea by the Soviet Union. Liu does not recall the end of the war with many words and sentiments, writing little else about it than how he and his family returned to Nanjing through Hankou when his time in Chongqing was over.<sup>96</sup> It was probably because of what happened during the years directly after the war that there was not much space for fond memories.

## **2.7 An Unsettling and Most Difficult Time**

The end of the Second World War did not bring peace to Liu Yuan-tao and his country. Instead, it brought a resumption of the Chinese Civil War between the Communists and the Nationalists, which resulted in the Communist takeover of the Chinese Mainland and the founding of the People's Republic in late 1949. While Liu did not participate in combat during this period, he continued to serve the Republic of China in a military capacity. Liu recalled these years as an unsettling and most difficult time.<sup>97</sup>

When the war against Japan ended, Liu lost his positions at the Liaison Office and the Broadcasting Agency. While he had enough money to return to Nanjing and get by for a while, he had to look for a new position. Liu did not have to wait long. He was approached by a general called Zheng Wenxiu, whom Liu described as an enthusiastic but not especially practical person with no military background. Cheng invited Liu to work for the education office of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>98</sup> While Liu worked for the education office, he corresponded with the Ministry of the Interior about the re-issuing of his naturalisation certificate. In this correspondence, found at the Academia Historia archive in Taipei, Liu explains how he acquired Chinese citizenship and lost his papers during the bombing of Chongqing. Liu wrote to the ministry that his certificate was lost when a Japanese bombardment struck his house, located at fourth *Guofu Lu* in *Dadeli* in Chongqing on May during the 29<sup>th</sup> year of the Republic.<sup>99</sup> This confirms what Liu wrote decades later of having lived in a house on that road during his time in Chongqing. While the process took months, Liu's papers were eventually re-issued.

Liu's stint at the education office only lasted for three months and ended shortly after a work trip to Shanghai. Liu and Zheng were ordered to visit a large building in the former French

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<sup>96</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993; Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>97</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>98</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>99</sup> AH 026000012033A; Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 10, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

concession of Shanghai, which he recalled as brimming with far left authors and journalists, as well as a young lady that turned out to be a Korean spy. Liu and Zheng were looked at with extremely suspicious eyes. Liu clearly does not tell the whole story on this episode, and it is rather strange that he and his superior were expected to visit a place like this. It is unclear what Liu was doing there and how the Korean spy was identified and what made her so noteworthy. When Liu returned to Nanjing, he was invited by French Military attaché Jacques Guillermaz to help out as a French-Chinese interpreter at a reception. Liu did not realise his superiors suspected Guillermaz of harbouring Communist sympathies at this time. His superior Deng Wenyi then fired Liu for working together with this alleged Chicom sympathiser. Fortunately for Liu, Gui Yongqing had just returned to China after working as an attaché in Europe for several years. Gui had been appointed as vice-admiral of the navy and when he invited Liu to join his staff, he happily complied.<sup>100</sup>

Liu started his career in the navy as one of Gui's personal informants at the general affairs office of the navy headquarters. He reported to the vice-admiral about the content of the foreign press. For unmentioned reasons, the general affairs colonel had a problem with this, and transferred Liu to the navy education office. While working there, Liu managed to obtain former Japanese and British film projectors and used them to host weekly movie nights for Chinese sailors. According to Liu, Gui was very pleased with this project, but the jealous and spiteful head of office was not, and Liu was forced to transfer to a different department yet again. This time, he joined the communication (radio and telephone) office, where he was tasked with improving the electricity supply to the navy headquarters. In 1948 Liu got a chance to follow navigational training at the American Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Qingdao. The training was cut short after three weeks because Qingdao was already surrounded by Communist troops. The MAAG retreated to Shanghai and so did Liu, subsequently taking a train to Nanjing.<sup>101</sup>

From the train, Liu noticed the area was in a state of war panic, as civilians fled from the northern banks of the Yangtze river. When Liu arrived in Nanjing, he found out that his wife and daughter had already been evacuated to Zuoying in southern Taiwan. Liu would not follow them yet as he was first sent on an inspection mission to the Zhoushan archipelago, an island group near the coast of Zhejiang province. In Zhoushan, Liu was tasked with inspecting and

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<sup>100</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>101</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993; Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 23, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

reporting on the naval communication machinery. Perhaps there was more to it, since Liu noted that about a month before his own visit, a group of marines led by Gui put down a group of “brigands that terrorised the local communities”, so he learned from a French missionary in Zhosuhan. Considering the moment when this occurred, these brigands might very well have been Communist guerrillas. In Zhoushan, Liu was also confronted with one of his Dutch traits that he never managed to shake off, much to the frustration of his wife and daughter: his directness and lack of tact. When Liu visited the district head’s office, he noticed that the guard standing at the entrance suffered from untreated trachoma and could barely see anything. Liu complained about this. The district head replied that trachoma was a common disease on Zhoushan, the lack of manpower made it impossible to treat this man’s illness, and that such remarks were not very helpful during a duty visit.<sup>102</sup> When Liu returned to Nanjing, he was ordered to embark to Zuoying in Taiwan.<sup>103</sup> It would take decades for him to realise and admit it, but he would never set foot in Mainland China again.

In the years following the Second World War, Liu saw the country he had dedicated his life to collapse around him. Much has been written on how, as Liu put it, the Nationalist Chinese state, with ten times as much military force, including a navy and an air force, could have suffered such a disgraceful defeat.<sup>104</sup> This thesis is not the place to convincingly answer this question. It is, however, worth going over how Liu himself believed it was possible for things to end the way they did.

In Liu’s view, the Nationalist government’s first mistake was its refusal to cooperate with the Americans in reoccupying Manchuria. The situation in Manchuria, so Liu believed, was worsened when jealous colleagues stopped the competent Sun Liren from attacking the Communist bases in the region. Liu recalled how adequate and experienced generals were replaced by yes-men and ambitious careerists. This kind of petty quarrelling, constant reshuffling of positions, and the atmosphere of mutual suspicion, which features heavily in Liu’s memories of the Civil War years, plagued the Kuomintang at every level. The Nationalist in-fighting contrasted unfavourably with the solidarity and cooperation the Communists displayed. Liu also cites the hyperinflation, which he saw as being desired and caused by the Communists. The Chinese citizenry’s judgement was different, as it blamed the government for hyperinflation and lost faith in the authorities. To a Dutch journalist, Liu would also admit that

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<sup>102</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993; Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, December 30, 1994. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>103</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>104</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

the Nationalist government's own financial policy worsened this situation, noting forbidding the Japanese currency in zones previously occupied by Japan as a misplaced punishment measure that antagonised people against Chiang Kai-shek's regime.<sup>105</sup>

Another major blow for the Nationalists, according to Liu, was the death of his former boss, chief intelligence Dai Li, from a plane accident in 1946.<sup>106</sup> Corruption is notably absent as a factor for the defeat of the Kuomintang in Liu's recollections. When journalists asked Liu about this issue for which his party was notorious, he replied by downplaying the severity of corruption as a problem, and by appealing to hypocrisy with remarks about how corruption also exists in Europe.<sup>107</sup>

It is also worth asking why Liu remained loyal to the Kuomintang and did not join the Communists himself. One reason he mentioned for opposing the Communists was their religious intolerance. To use Liu's own words:

I have always been 100% anti-communist. Because they are against faith, because they are intolerant. In my opinion, the whole peasants and workers movement was one giant delusion against humanity.<sup>108</sup>

The other reason, which might seem like a repetition of the question, was that Liu was not a communist: he really did not believe in Marxism-Leninism. Instead, he was a lifelong believer in Sun Yat-sen's three principles of the people, these principles being democracy, nationalism and the people's livelihood. Democracy, according to Liu, is based on the will of the majority, but respects human rights, human dignity, and the wishes of minorities. Liu, unlike many critics of the viability of such principles in China, did not believe democracy and human rights were without precedent in Chinese history. Liu argued that in imperial China, the emperor's power did not reach lower than the district level, comparable to the French departments in his view. Most Chinese people, especially in remote regions, lived in villages with which the district head had little to do. The social order in such villages, was maintained by a village council, chosen by the villagers themselves. Liu saw such village councils as a basis for democracy.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Luyn, "Hollandse Jonker".

<sup>106</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>107</sup> Luyn, "Hollandse Jonker"; Sprang, Alfred van, "W. Liu Yuan-tao: Nederlander bij de Chinese Marine", *Nieuwe Leidse Courant*, February 21, 1952.

<sup>108</sup> Luyn, "Hollandse Jonker".

<sup>109</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 11, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

Liu's faith in the ROC's democracy also had precedents in his own lifetime. Liu's political ideals were shaped during what Frank Dikötter calls China's age of openness before Mao; the years in between the fall of the Qing dynasty and the foundation of the PRC. During these years, local elections were held from 1929 onwards. Since 1946, the ROC had a constitution that provided for protection of liberty, freedom of speech, religion, association and assembly, freedom to choose residence, and secrecy of correspondence, as well as the right to vote and to petition the government.<sup>110</sup> Democratic as the constitution was, it meant little under martial law, which was declared in 1949 and would not be lifted for decades. Authoritarian rule was the political reality of the ROC until the 1990's.

In 1993, Liu admitted that the ongoing crises in China had led to the over-emphasis of nationalism and negligence of the other principles of the people.<sup>111</sup> In 2001, Liu told a Dutch journalist that the Kuomintang's lack of respect for its own founding principles often frustrated him, but he allowed himself to be convinced the party was preparing the Chinese people for democracy time after time.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Frank, Dikötter, *The Age of Openness: China Before Mao*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 18-23.

<sup>111</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 11, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>112</sup> Luyn, "Hollandse Jonker".

### 3. To There and Never Back Again

#### 3.1 Life in Zuoying

When Liu Yuan-tao was reunited with his family in Zuoying in 1949, he did not know he would have to call this place home for the rest of his life. His stay in the military village was only intended to be temporary. In the decades that followed the relocation to Taiwan, Liu firmly believed the Republic of China would retake the Mainland, and he could return to Nanjing.<sup>113</sup>

Liu's family lived in Ziqiang New Village, a military dependents' village. Similar villages were hastily built all over Taiwan in the years following the Second World War to house the thousands of Chinese military servicemen who had come to Taiwan as well as their families. Ziqiang New Village was located near a former Japanese naval base. In the late stages of the Pacific War, the base in Zuoying had been used as a jumping-off point for *shinyo* suicide boats.<sup>114</sup>

The inhabitants of Ziqiang New Village came from every corner of China. In the village, cultures of many different Chinese regions blended together and all sorts of Chinese languages could be heard. Liu and his family spoke Cantonese at home.<sup>115</sup> Ziqiang New Village was also a forbidding and restrictive community, closed off from outsiders and patrolled day and night.<sup>116</sup> This highlights the realities of martial law and ethnic segregation between Taiwanese and Mainlanders in post-1947 Taiwan.

Liu lived in a single floor house with his wife, daughter, and son in law, who went by the name Su Mingde in Chinese and Benzin Shaw in other languages. Shaw was born in Medan in 1928. His father was the director of a publishing house, which was later run by Benzin Shaw's younger brother until at least the 1980s. Like his father-in-law Shaw was a naval officer. He married Liu Kai-shu in 1959.<sup>117</sup> In 1962, Liu Yuan-tao told a journalist that Shaw shared food with prisoners of Japanese concentration camps during the war.<sup>118</sup> The sources do not mention whether Shaw came to Taiwan before or after 1949, or whether his departure from Indonesia

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<sup>113</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, March 3, 1967. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>114</sup> 郭吉清 [Guo Jiqing] and 廖德宗 [Liao Dezhong], 左營二戰祕史：震洋特攻隊駐臺始末 [Zuoying Erzhan mishi: zhenyang tegongdui zhu Taiwan shimo] (Kaohsiung: 遠足文化 [Yuanzu Wehnua], 2018).

<sup>115</sup> Sprang, "W. Liu Yuan-tao".

<sup>116</sup> 眷戀-海軍眷村 [Juanlian - Haijun juancun] (Taipei: 國防部部長辦公室 [Guofangbu buzhang bangongshi], 2007), 82.

<sup>117</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, January 4, 1986. ACA 30491-252.

<sup>118</sup> "De man uit China".

had been voluntary or forced. He was certainly in Taiwan by 1952, when he represented the Republic of China at an international tennis match.<sup>119</sup>

Besides his activities for the navy, and later for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Liu worked as the vice-head of a movie theatre in Zuoying. Liu did not seem to think much of this movie theatre work, as he barely even mentioned it in his letters.<sup>120</sup> Yet, to the other inhabitants of Zuoying, Liu was, above all, the man of the movie theatre. An inhabitant of the village, who was interviewed in 2007, recalls the movie theatre as having been especially advanced for its day. He remembers the villagers mockingly referred to the vice-director of the movie theatre as a fake foreigner. Liu, according to this interviewee, was an especially strict director. People wearing sloppy clothes and shoes were not allowed into the movie theatre, and neither were people carrying snacks or betel nuts.<sup>121</sup> Howard Hu, a son of a friend of Liu's, wrote a blog post about his experiences in the movie theatre as a child. Hu wrote that Liu made the movie theatre attendees sing the national anthem and naval songs beforehand, and would scold them loudly if they disobeyed and played around. According to Hu, Liu's fearsomeness was famous in Zuoying. Children were afraid of him, but he added that this was mostly due to Liu's different appearance.<sup>122</sup> Liu himself admitted he directed the movie theatre with an iron fist and even claimed he had the admiral's orders to do so. According to Liu himself, his conduct at the movie theatre made him popular among the lower ranks and disliked among the higher ranks because he applied the rules to everyone equally.<sup>123</sup>

Jiang Aizhu also grew up in Zuoying and confirmed that the strict rules at the movie theatre applied to everyone, including Liu's own daughter. She called Liu a legendary figure, known by just about everyone in the village. Jiang also referred to Liu as the only foreign officer in the ROC navy.<sup>124</sup> Hans van Ketwich Verschuur, a Dutch acquaintance of Liu's, once referred to him as *plus Chinois que les Chinois*, more Chinese than the Chinese.<sup>125</sup> One of Jiang's anecdotes confirms this image. According to Jiang, Liu had the habit of inspecting whether people were flying the flag during national holidays. He would knock on the doors of people

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<sup>119</sup> 蘇嘉祥 [Su Jiexiang], “中華民國台灣網球史 (38) 民國 40 年代台灣網球西南飛” [Zhonghua Minguo Taiwan wangqiushi (38) Minguo 40 Niandai Taiwan Wangqiu Xinan fei], *Chinese Taipei Tennis Association*, August 29, 2010.

<sup>120</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, June 8, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>121</sup> 海軍眷村, 109.

<sup>122</sup> Howard Hu, ‘左營自助新村往事記遺’ [‘Zuoying Zizhu Xincun wangshi jiyi’], 濠叔隨筆 [Hao Shu Suibi], December 7, 2018.

<sup>123</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, June 8, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>124</sup> 海軍眷村, 273.

<sup>125</sup> H.P.J. van Ketwich Verschuur, Letter to Frans Goedhart, ≈January 1, 1976. NA 2.21.285-51.



who did not and admonish them, Jiang told her interviewer that many inhabitants of Ziqiang New Village had this experience.<sup>126</sup>

Liu also occasionally worked as a language tutor in Zuoying. Ma Xingye notes that he took Liu's classes to improve his English. Ma remembers that when asked about his ethnicity, Liu told him that he had a Chinese father and a Dutch mother, and he just happened to look more like his mother's side of the family. Ma found this explanation rather unconvincing.<sup>127</sup> I found no other instance of Liu claiming to have had a Chinese father. Therefore, either Ma's memory failed him here, or Liu refused to tell the whole story about his heritage to Ma.

Even though Jiang Aizhu praised Liu as a loyal patriot who dedicated his life to the Republic of China, she and the other villagers still thought of him as a foreigner, despite his insistence on being Chinese. Liu's mother's warning that the Chinese would never accept him as one of them turned out to be prophetic. Liu himself admitted as much when he wrote that his mother understood the Chinese mentality very well when she said that.<sup>128</sup>

During my field work in late 2018, I visited Zuoying to see what was left of the community Liu had been a part of for most of his life. The movie theatre Liu worked at was still standing, and in the process of being converted into a centre for traditional performing arts. The houses were mostly demolished, and yet to be replaced with new buildings. Part of the village remained intact as a historical monument. In this part, there is a museum dedicated to preserving the memory of what life in the veteran village was like, mostly aimed at the children and grandchildren of those who grew up there. The museum has a picture of Liu as a part of its collection, commemorating him as the movie theatre director.<sup>129</sup>

### 3.2 Sailor and Inspector

Upon his arrival to Taiwan, Liu was charged with inspecting all naval communication equipment on the island. After finishing this job, he and a former radio broadcasting colleague of his, were sent on missions to the Southern Chinese islands of Hainan, Xiamen, and Kinmen that were still under Nationalist control at the time.<sup>130</sup> Liu and his companion had to travel

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<sup>126</sup> 海軍眷村, 273; Lin I-ching, “「國民記憶庫·故事沙龍」邀您回味光陰故事” [‘Guomin Jiyi ku. Gushi shalong’ Yao nin huiwei guangyin gushi], *China Times*, June 6, 2016.

<sup>127</sup> 馬星野 [Ma Xingye], 我的留學生活 [Wo de liuxue shenghuo] (Taipei: 中華日報 [Zhonghua Ribao]), 8.

<sup>128</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 13, 1991. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>129</sup> Appendix A (pictures).

<sup>130</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, May 19, 1993; Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

around with large bags of silver coins. They had no other option because these areas still suffered from continuing hyperinflation of the standard Chinese currency. The New Taiwan Dollar, recently introduced to rein in inflation, was not accepted there yet. Shots fired by Communist guerrillas in the mountains of Hainan could already be heard from the naval base on the coast.<sup>131</sup> Hainan and Xiamen would soon fall to the Communists. The Communists also made an attempt to take Kinmen, but the remnants of the retreating Nationalist army managed to defeat the Communists and halt their advance. Subsequent intervention from the US Navy and the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950 shifted Mao's attention from Taiwan to Korea, giving the Chinese Nationalists a chance to breathe and regroup.

Liu's memories do not give the impression that the Kuomintang used this breathing space to put an end to the in-fighting and the corrupt practices that had plagued it in the preceding years. When Liu was on his mission to inspect naval equipment and especially misappropriation thereof around Taiwan he followed the rules and made a lot of enemies that way.<sup>132</sup> One suspect of handling stolen goods ran away as soon as Liu saw him, nowhere to be found afterwards. Liu later found a sailor selling naval equipment and confronted his captain, who refused to admit his men did such things, let alone hand them over, knowing they could face the death penalty. Later he witnessed corrupt practices among air force personnel. Liu followed the rules and reported this to the Ministry of Defence since private communication and reporting it to the air force were not allowed. The suspects were furious that Liu did not just try to strike a deal instead.<sup>133</sup>

Following the rules made Liu a lot of enemies and turned out to have little effect on reducing structural corruption, but it did strengthen the trust admiral Gui had in him. Gui placed Liu at the head of a unit charged with selection and transport of US navy surplus goods. Admiral Gui also intended to promote Liu to the rank of lieutenant-captain, but Liu refused because he interpreted this as a move against friend and colleague Lin Zhongguang.<sup>134</sup> About this event, Liu told a journalist that he "did not automatically approve of everything my superiors did. This went as far as refusing the rank of lieutenant-colonel because that promotion was aimed at a colleague I was supposed to push out."<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>132</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>133</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>134</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>135</sup> Heest, "Spion".

Despite refusing promotion, Liu did get a pay raise, but this raise opened him up to charges of corruption. After an investigation by the navy procurator-general, Liu was acquitted, but the accusers remained anonymous. Liu did admit that some of the contract labourers in his transport unit had embezzled goods, but it is not clear if anyone was punished for this. The raise took a long time to actually be paid to Liu, since the navy head of finance and his superior expected a kickback before doing the actual paperwork, which Liu refused to pay. As always when the subject of corruption comes up, Liu did not fail to mention that such practices should not surprise anyone, since such things happen in the Netherlands as well. According to Liu, the Dutch air force was, and possibly might still have been in the 1990s: “the most corrupt branch of the military. In my youth, I heard a lot about that from my classmate Henri Knap, whose father was judge advocate general at the air force base in Soesterberg. Every time he came there, a few sergeants were thrown into jail.”<sup>136</sup> This account of corruption at the Dutch air force shines a different light on the story of how the young Henri Knap and Willem van Lennep had managed to obtain an aeroplane.

The most dangerous corruption scandal Liu played a role in during these days involved an unnamed naval head of intelligence. This head had an eye on Liu and was especially weary of his special relationship of trust with admiral Gui. When Xiamen was being evacuated, this head had an innocent Taiwanese businesswoman who had been active on Xiamen arrested as a Communist spy. According to Liu, his scapegoating of an innocent Taiwanese led to outrage among the Taiwanese public. Liu warned the head that he should not do anything that could damage admiral Gui’s reputation. As Liu later learned, the head thought Liu was aware that he had an opium smuggler arrested, and tried to sell the opium for profit in Taiwan rather than turning it in. The head approached a merchant from Kaohsiung, who knew Liu well, to aid him in selling the opium. After the merchant refused, he was lured into a trap, murdered, and his body was dumped in a sugar cane field. When the authorities in Taipei heard about this, they arrested and executed the head. Soon after, the new head of naval intelligence summoned Liu to his office to ask Liu if he knew why the former head hated him so much. Liu replied that he merely recommended the former head not to do anything illegal. The new head stared at Liu in disbelief and told him: “How could you be so childish? He was after your blood and already requested admiral Gui to hand you over. Admiral Gui refused, otherwise, he would have just made you disappear.”<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>137</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

Around the time of these events, it was also Liu's job to interrogate captured sailors of foreign ships that had attempted to break the ROC's blockade of Communist-controlled ports. One of such ships was from Poland, whose Francophone sailors begged Liu not to extradite them to the United States.<sup>138</sup> Meanwhile, Dutch journalist Alfred van Sprang was in Taiwan, waiting for a chance to interview Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>139</sup> He was met with suspicion because the Dutch government had recognised the Communist government in Beijing as the legitimate government of China. Van Sprang managed to explain that this government decision did not mean that all Dutchmen were communists. The Kuomintang authorities also figured that good press about Taiwan in the Netherlands would not hurt and allowed van Sprang to explore Taiwan and eventually speak to Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>140</sup> Van Sprang visited several military bases with an interpreter. When he arrived in Zuoying by night train, he saw a tall and slim man among the welcome committee. The man looked van Sprang in the eye and handed over his business card. It read:

“Willem H. Liu Yuan-tao C.N

~~Assistant to the head of Communication Department Navy Headquarters”~~<sup>141</sup>

“How did you get a Dutch name?” Van Sprang asked

“I was born in the Netherlands” Liu replied

“So do you speak Dutch?”

“As well as you do” Liu laughingly replied in accent-less Dutch

“You serve in the Chinese navy?”

“Yes, I am Chinese”

“But you do not look Chinese” Van Sprang retorted

“No, my parents were not Chinese either”

Van Sprang admitted he did not understand it at all. Liu replied that he could imagine this to be the case and invited the journalist to his house for a cup of coffee and a calm conversation.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>139</sup> Alfred van Sprang, *Avonturen in Azië: Belevnissen van een Fotograferende Journalist in het Onrustige Verre Oosten* (Wageningen: Zomers & Keunings, 1956), 194-195.

<sup>140</sup> Sprang, *Avonturen*, 185.

<sup>141</sup> Sprang, *Avonturen*, 189.

<sup>142</sup> Sprang, *Avonturen*, 189-190.

Liu told van Sprang about how he had ended up in China and served the country for the past two decades. The journalist asked Liu if he wanted to return to the Netherlands. Liu told him that he might want to visit his mother, but had no interest in living there anymore. When van Sprang asked why, Liu made clear he believed that Europe's time was over, and unlike China, the continent had no future.<sup>143</sup> Liu would continue to hold such Spenglerian views about the downfall of Europe for the rest of his life, albeit in a more nuanced form after a visit to Europe in the 1990s.<sup>144</sup>

Van Sprang was clearly fascinated with Liu's story. He published a newspaper article about him and also gave a more elaborate account of their encounter in a book about his *Adventures in Asia* following the Second World War. These were Liu's first appearances in the Dutch press. On the other hand, van Sprang was not impressed by Liu's attempt to assimilate into Chinese culture. To Van Sprang, Liu's habits of drinking coffee and reading the Dutch newspapers his mother routinely sent to him made clear that he had not managed to let go of his Dutch heritage.<sup>145</sup>

Soon after the encounter with van Sprang, Liu told Gui that he was fed up with land duty and requested sea duty. Gui honoured this request. Liu would serve on a destroyer escort called Taizhao for half a year according to his own recollection, and four months according to a ROC presidential office personnel survey file.<sup>146</sup> Taizhao was a former US navy vessel known as the USS Carter.<sup>147</sup> Liu told a Dutch journalist that a ship under his command was fired at by the communists, causing the death of several sailors. Whether this ship was the Taizhao is unclear. This same journalist aptly describes Liu's subsequent departure from the navy as a tragicomic misunderstanding. Liu asked a befriended superior if he, theoretically, would be entitled to a pension if he were to retire early. The superior said "of course!" Assuming Liu's question was a hint, he wrote a letter stating Liu wished to retire to the Ministry of Defence. The ministry immediately agreed with the request. When Liu figured out that he had been retired against his will, it was already too late to reverse the decision.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Sprang, *Avonturen*, 190-194.

<sup>144</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 3, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>145</sup> Sprang, *Avonturen*, 194.

<sup>146</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 9, 1993. ACA 30491-253; AH 129000016661A-006, 129000016661A-007.

<sup>147</sup> "Carter (DE-122)", *Naval History and Heritage Command*, April 6, 2009.

<sup>148</sup> Heest, "Spion".

### 3.3 Liu Rides the Media

The sources reveal little about Liu's activities in between his mission on the Taizhao and his retirement from the navy in the late 1950s. The ROC presidential office personnel survey file containing a CV describing Liu's activities from his student years onwards was created in 1951 and ends with the mission on the Taizhao. Furthermore, the Liu lost part of his motivation to tell his life story in his letters to Maurits Alexander van Lennep. Liu felt he was not being taken seriously, and took offence when Maurits Alexander van Lennep called him an *oer-Hollander* (archetypical Dutchman).<sup>149</sup> The qualification of being an archetypical Dutchman was especially offensive to Liu because it was uttered by someone from the van Lennep family, the side of his family by whom he felt discriminated for his ethnic heritage earlier.<sup>150</sup> Maurits Alexander van Lennep replied that the perception that he did not take Liu's life story seriously was wrong, and had no intention to insult Liu by calling him an *oer-Hollander*.<sup>151</sup> The two continued to correspond, but no longer discussed Liu's life as extensively as they had before.

After retiring from the navy, Liu found employment at the Hawaiian Dredging Company in Zuoying. Liu worked as a chief time keeper and payroll clerk, and was also responsible for keeping the peace between Chinese servicemen and rowdy American dredgers.<sup>152</sup> Meanwhile, the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs and intelligence agency had begun pursuing not only support, but also official recognition from countries that had recognised Beijing. The ROC tried to convince Dutch politicians to support their cause. One such politician was Frans Goedhart, who travelled to Taiwan and published pro-ROC newspaper reports in 1958 and 1959.<sup>153</sup> Goedhart also corresponded with the ROC's ambassador in Belgium about the political situation in China. Parts of the questionnaires he sent and the long answers he received have been preserved in Taipei. In these answers, the ROC authorities attempted to convince Goedhart that overthrowing Chinese communism was not an isolated issue, but crucial for tipping the scales in favour of the free world.<sup>154</sup>

This international assertiveness reflected the ROC's newfound confidence. The American naval presence following increased US support for the ROC from the start of the Korean War

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<sup>149</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, July 28, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>150</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 3, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>151</sup> Maurits Alexander van Lennep, letter to Liu Yuan-tao, August 24, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>152</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 23, 1993; Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, January 29, 1994. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>153</sup> De Keizer, *Goedhart*, 430.

<sup>154</sup> AH 02004160200060070; 02004160200060071; 02004160200060081; 0204160200060082; 0204160200060083; 0204160200060084.

provided a degree of stability. As discussed in the previous sub-chapter, this did not immediately improve the situation in Taiwan, but by the late 1950's and early 1960's, the ROC's economy was growing. This economic growth was not only a consequence of American support, but also of the industrial base that was already in place in Taiwan since its era under Japanese rule, a successful land reform, and increasing investment from European and American industries.<sup>155</sup> Meanwhile, the PRC was going through the disastrous Great Leap Forward, which resulted in the Great Chinese Famine. Communist China's deteriorating relations with the Soviet Union had also undermined its international position.<sup>156</sup> From this relatively favourable position, the ROC made attempts to win back international support. These new circumstances would lead Liu Yuan-tao back to the country he had intended to leave behind for good, and completely change the way he served the ROC.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1961, shortly after Liu's dredging task ended, his mother passed away in Hilversum.<sup>157</sup> Liu returned to the Netherlands for the first time in 30 years in early 1962 to administer the inheritance. What took Liu so long to return to his country of birth was a bureaucratic process. Before Liu could leave the Republic of China, he first needed written recognition from the Netherlands for the necessity of the journey which in turn had to be approved by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee in Taiwan, only then was Liu allowed to request a travel document in order to return to the Netherlands.<sup>158</sup> The Dutch authorities made no issue of Liu's return to the Netherlands. Apparently, the declaration of Liu being *persona non grata* twenty years earlier had expired, or had been an overstatement to begin with.

When Liu arrived by plane in 1962, he was welcomed by a cousin from the van Braam family. To his surprise, Liu was also approached by Auguste van Lennep and introduced to several others of the van Lennep family. This was surprising to Liu because he had had very little contact with the van Lennep family before. Liu also visited and stayed over in Amsterdam and Hilversum with relatives from the van Braam family.<sup>159</sup>

Intentionally or otherwise, Liu's two-month return to the Netherlands also turned into somewhat of a press tour. More press reports about Liu Yuan-tao appeared in 1962 than in every other year combined. One of such reports appeared in the celebrity and high society page

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<sup>155</sup> 陳世昌 [Chen Shichang], 戰後 70 年台灣史[Zhanhou Taiwan 70 nian shi]: 1945-2015 (Taipei: 時報出版 [Shibao Chuban], 2015), 158-159.

<sup>156</sup> 陳世昌, 台灣史, 124.

<sup>157</sup> AH 12900016661A-008; "Familieberichten", *Algemeen Handelsblad*, April 20, 1961.

<sup>158</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, January 29, 1994. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>159</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, July 28, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

of *De Telegraaf* in 1962.<sup>160</sup> An extended version of the same report later appeared in the nautical magazine *Ons Zeewezen*.<sup>161</sup>

Liu was also reported on by *Het Parool* on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January. This report contains a picture of Willem van Lennep – as he was then still known – standing in front of the Spyker plane in 1927. It also mentions how Liu was approached by a cousin who recognised his voice from the radio during his time as a prisoner in a Japanese concentration camp.<sup>162</sup> Invited by Catholic People's Party (KVP) member of parliament and former naval officer Harry Moorman, Liu also visited the main base of the Dutch navy in Den Helder in January 1962.<sup>163</sup> At least two articles reported on this visit. One of these reports, in *Noordhollands Dagblad*, starts out as follows:

Chinese naval officer van Lennep, captain-lieutenant at sea at the Nationalist Chinese navy, visited Den Helder for a day. This is not necessarily that unusual, but it is remarkable when one realises that Mr. W.H. van Lennep is Dutch by birth.<sup>164</sup>

This implies either that Chinese visits to Den Helder were common, or that the reporter took liberties with the truth here. The latter also seems to be the case when the same reporter writes how he expressed his admiration for how Liu's Dutch did not have a trace of an accent after all those years, and Liu responded by shrugging and saying that one who loves his country does not renounce its language.<sup>165</sup> Such a response would have been out of character for Liu, since he referred to China as his country on every other occasion. If Liu actually said this, it certainly highlights his ambivalent feelings about his Dutch heritage. Furthermore, Liu complimented the Dutch navy for its actions in defence of New Guinea, still a Dutch colony at the time, against Indonesia, noting that the actions could count on the sympathy of many in Taiwan. This was not surprising in Liu's view, since so many Chinese fled to Taiwan from Indonesia.<sup>166</sup>

Naval trade journal *Alle Hens* also reported on Liu's visit to Den Helder, and as one might expect, it mostly emphasised matters of importance to sailors; such as Liu's ancestor Jan Pieter van Braam being a vice-captain in the Dutch navy, Kinmen being located as close to the Chinese

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<sup>160</sup> "Stan Huygens Journaal", *De Telegraaf*, January 19, 1962.

<sup>161</sup> "De man uit China".

<sup>162</sup> "Student Chinese Talen".

<sup>163</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 16, 1985. ACA 30491-252.

<sup>164</sup> "Chinese Nederlander".

<sup>165</sup> "Chinese Nederlander".

<sup>166</sup> "Chinese Nederlander".



mainland as the port of Den Helder is to Texel, and marines making up half of the Chinese navy.<sup>167</sup>

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 1962, Liu held a lecture about Taiwan and the situation in Communist China in Utrecht. The lecture was organised by the Netherlands-Free China Association, of which Liu would be an important member in the years to follow.<sup>168</sup> In Utrecht Liu favourably compared the successful land reform, democracy, and growing wealth in Taiwan to the poverty and forced labour at collective farms in the Chinese mainland.<sup>169</sup> Liu's comments about the economic situation of mainland China and Taiwan were fair, but his assertion that the Republic of China was democratic was certainly not, as he would later realise himself. Even at this time, pro-ROC voices in the Netherlands, when defending their position that Free China was a democratic country, had to resort to non-arguments such as Goedhart's assertion that Chiang Kai-shek was a democrat, just not by Western European standards.<sup>170</sup> Liu also spoke of the ROC's plans to retake the mainland during his lecture, and carefully dodged questions about the feasibility of this plan.<sup>171</sup>

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 1962, Liu was interviewed for a report about Taiwan by the Dutch current affairs programme *Brandpunt*. This interview, archived at the Dutch Institute for Sound and Vision, is probably the only extant audio-visual recording of Liu Yuan-tao. The interview starts with questions about Liu's background, and then cuts to a report about the military situation on Kinmen. Afterwards, Liu answered questions about this subject. When the interviewer told Liu that the Communists brag about how they can take Kinmen whenever they please, Liu replied that such bragging is idiotic, since the Nationalists "beat them back with bloody faces multiple times." Liu also told the interviewer that he was a military man by nature because he prefers to serve the community rather than doing business for himself. The report also mentions how the wealth and safety of Taiwan depend on American support, and cost the US 70 billion dollars per year.<sup>172</sup> According to Frans Goedhart, the latter was a common view of Taiwan at the time in the Netherlands, especially among politicians.<sup>173</sup> While factually correct, it was hypocritical for the Dutch to mock the Republic of China and not take it seriously for relying on foreign allies, because the wealth and integrity of the Netherlands also depended

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<sup>167</sup> "Nieuwdiepse Notities".

<sup>168</sup> "Lezing over Formosa", *Utrechtsch Nieuwsblad*, January 26, 1962.

<sup>169</sup> "Vrij China zal Vasteland Heroveren", *Utrechtsch Nieuwsblad*, February 1, 1962.

<sup>170</sup> De Keizer, *Goedhart*, 433.

<sup>171</sup> "Vasteland Heroveren".

<sup>172</sup> *Brandpunt*, directed by Aad van den Heuvel. Katholieke Radio Omroep (KRO), February 16, 1962.

<sup>173</sup> Frans Goedhart, letter to Liu Yuan-tao, April 18, 1962. NA 2.21.285-51.

on American support at the time. Liu himself had a deep distaste for what he considered a Dutch habit of wagging the Calvinist finger and criticising other countries, but meanwhile not allowing any criticism or self-reflection on the Netherlands.<sup>174</sup>

Copies of the Dutch articles about Liu Yuan-tao in 1962 made their way to the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of them, originally published in the Dutch newspaper *Het Vaderland*, eventually ended up in the Academia Historia Archive in Taipei. In this interview, Liu mentions his service at the Longhai railroad front and brags about the growth of Taiwanese agriculture and industry.<sup>175</sup>

In most of these articles, Liu not only praised the progress and prosperity of Taiwan, but also predicted the downfall of the Chinese Communist Party and the reclamation of the mainland by the Republic of China. Liu guaranteed to his Dutch readers that Chinese communism would collapse like a house of cards within five to six years.<sup>176</sup> Mao's communism, so Liu argued, was doomed to fail in China because the Chinese were natural individualists and cared deeply for their families. As the Communists attempted to rip families apart, resistance against them grew.<sup>177</sup> Liu predicted that when the People's Republic of China would start to crumble, the Nationalist forces would cross the Taiwan Strait and restore their sovereignty over all of China. This was the Kuomintang party line. Three years earlier, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had promised Frans Goedhart the same scenario would unfold.<sup>178</sup>

While Liu's predictions obviously turned out to be wrong, such comments, unlike those about how democratic the Republic of China was, were not completely nonsensical, but rather expressions of educated wishful thinking. Liu, and his party comrades in Taiwan, were correct to predict the PRC would soon degenerate into a state of civil war, as this is precisely what came to pass during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Liu was also correct to a certain extent when he argued that Mao's collectivist ideas were doomed to fail because of the value the Chinese attach to their families. The Chinese family has long since reclaimed its place as the cornerstone of society. The era in which the collectivist work unit championed by Mao took its place turned out to be a brief intermezzo at best. The greatest flaw in the prediction was that the Chinese Mainlanders, especially the military, would welcome the Chinese Nationalists back, especially after Chiang's own regime had crumbled in a civil war just two decades earlier.

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<sup>174</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 30, 1987. ACA 30491-252.

<sup>175</sup> AH 02004160200070064.

<sup>176</sup> "Chinese Nederlander"; "De man uit China", "Student Chinese Talen", "Vasteland Heroveren".

<sup>177</sup> "De man uit China".

<sup>178</sup> AH 0204160200060084.

Nonetheless, the Chinese Nationalists and their Dutch allies found this scenario convincing enough to keep predicting it well into the 1970's.

Liu's press tour was not over yet when he came back to Taiwan. A journalist was present when Liu arrived at Songshan Airport in Taipei in early March 1962. Liu joined the queue behind the desk for Chinese citizens at the passport controls. The customs official told him to move to the line for foreign tourists instead. "I am Chinese", Liu replied, "You can understand Chinese!", said the surprised officer, "yes, I speak Mandarin", Liu responded. When this led to a conversation about Liu's life and heritage, someone asked him if he really had not returned to the Netherlands in more than thirty years, Liu responded that said "you cannot say I returned to the Netherlands, because I am Chinese". "I am Chinese" is also the title of the only Taiwanese news report on Liu Yuan-tao written during his life I managed to find. The article accurately reports that Liu did not only come to the Netherlands for family affairs, but also to promote the cause of Free China, and told the people of the Netherlands about Taiwan's economic development and how the Republic of China would soon reclaim the Mainland. With a sense of overstatement, the report notes how long articles about Liu appeared in the Dutch press every day. The report also claims that Liu had spoken to Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns, who supposedly told Liu that the Dutch recognition of the *Communist bandits* was a mistake, and a deeply regrettable matter, which he would resolve in the near future.<sup>179</sup> It is likely that this meeting with Luns actually occurred, since Liu wrote about it in letters to his Dutch relatives. However, in these letters, he would admit to having been rhetorically outclassed by Luns, and left with no other choice but to say "yes and amen" to the Minister.<sup>180</sup> Liu's comments about Luns' promises were probably bluff on his part, or made up by the reporter who wrote the article.

### 3.4 The Formosa Lobby

As stated above, attempts to win over Dutch support for the ROC by influencing Dutch members of parliament started already before Liu's involvement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1960, the Dutch Moscow-aligned communist newspaper *De Waarheid* published two articles exposing what it called the Formosa lobby in Dutch parliament; a group of Cold War fanatics including Frans Goedhart, as well as Frits van de Wetering (Christian Historical Union), and Cees Berkhouwer (People's Party for Freedom and

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<sup>179</sup> "我是中國人" ["Wo shi Zhongguoren"], March 5, 1962.

<sup>180</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, September 30, 1987. ACA 30491-252.

Democracy [VVD]). Several members of this lobby, so *De Waarheid* pointed out, had recently visited Taiwan.<sup>181</sup>

The Dutch communists were on to something here. In fact, both the actions of the Formosa lobby and its appearances in the Dutch press, were being followed closely in Taipei. Copies of the articles in *De Waarheid* with added Chinese notes have been kept in a Taipei Academia Historia archival folder about promoting Sino-Dutch relations.<sup>182</sup> The same folder contains a report titled “An Analysis of the Political Situation in the Netherlands and the Opportunities for Improvement of Free China’s Relations with the Netherlands” written by a certain Teng Siang-tin. It is unknown when this report was written and why it is written in English, but it appeared no later than February 1961. It is worth discussing because it reflects the situation of the ROC’s policy regarding the Netherlands just before Liu came to play a role in the Formosa lobby. Teng indeed mentions Goedhart, van de Wetering and Berkhouwer as allies of Free China.<sup>183</sup> The Formosa lobby also included orthodox Calvinist Reformed Political Party (SGP) member of parliament Cornelis van Dis and VVD member of parliament Govert Ritmeester.<sup>184</sup>

Teng’s report argues that the Netherlands recognised the PRC in 1950 in order to safeguard Dutch business, investment, and missionary work in China.<sup>185</sup> The decision to recognise the PRC was made by then Minister of Foreign Affairs Dirk Stikker. In historian Jan Bank’s view, Stikker made this decision because not doing so would not align with Dutch interests. Bank does not explain what these interests were.<sup>186</sup> Vincent Chang provides a more elaborate explanation. According to Chang, Stikker had several reasons to recognise the PRC. Besides the business interests Teng mentions, Chang points out that Stikker had no strategic reasons to withhold recognition. Furthermore, recognising the PRC served to protect Dutch possessions in China, and to keep the door open for contacts between China and Western countries. Chang does not specifically mention protecting missionary work as a relevant factor.<sup>187</sup>

As Bank writes, Dutch foreign ministers face the dilemma of choosing to act either as a clergyman or as a merchant, and Stikker unequivocally chose the latter.<sup>188</sup> In Teng’s view,

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<sup>181</sup> “CPN Dringt aan op Zelfstandige Buitenlandse Politiek”, *De Waarheid*, February 3, 1960; “PVDA trekt één Lijn met Rechts in Buitenlandse Politiek”, *De Waarheid*, February 4, 1960.

<sup>182</sup> AH 02004160200010083.

<sup>183</sup> AH 02004160200010119; 0200460200010121.

<sup>184</sup> “De Heer G. Ritmeester Overleden”, *Vrij China*, March 1966.

<sup>185</sup> AH 02004160200010112.

<sup>186</sup> Jan Bank, “Overall een Ondernemer” in *De Nederlandse Ministers van Buitenlandse Zaken in de Twintigste Eeuw*, ed. Duco Hellema, Bert Zeeman and Bert van der Zwan (The Hague: Sdu, 1999), 189.

<sup>187</sup> Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 282-283.

<sup>188</sup> Bank, “Overall een Ondernemer”, 181.

Stikker had acted as a clergyman and as a merchant, but failed at both since Dutch missionary work in China had already been eliminated at this time, and Dutch trade relations with Beijing had proven disappointing.<sup>189</sup> Teng argued that recognition of Free China could be realised by promoting cultural and business ties between the Netherlands and the ROC. Deliberately straining Dutch relations with Beijing was another tactic Teng proposed.<sup>190</sup> For example, he planned to offer works of art to Dutch royalty as a gift from Free China, hoping to anger the PRC diplomats in the Hague by doing so<sup>191</sup>

According to Liu's recollections, he started working for the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1962.<sup>192</sup> The source record confirms this. Liu's correspondences with and about Dutch politicians seem to date back no earlier than 1962. According to Manon de Keizer, Liu and Goedhart had only just met by that year. The ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs probably introduced them to each other.<sup>193</sup> Liu did not disclose the exact date he started working as an intelligence agent in 1962, but the source record suggests he was already doing so in January when he came to the Netherlands. In fact, Liu's family visit and press tour seem to have been an intelligence operation as well. It can hardly be a coincidence that Liu wrote a report about the political situation in the Netherlands in regard to the Republic of China within two months after returning to Taiwan.<sup>194</sup>

When Liu was still in the Netherlands, he requested intel about the Dutch political situation from Frans Goedhart.<sup>195</sup> Soon after he returned to Taiwan, Liu informed Goedhart of Chinese involvement in the most important matter in Dutch politics at the time: the New Guinea issue. To summarise, the Indonesian authorities claimed sovereignty over the Dutch colony of New Guinea, and moved towards annexing it. The options on the table for the Dutch were attempting to hold on to New Guinea, ceding it to Indonesia, or supporting an independent New Guinea. The Dutch Second Chamber of parliament was deeply divided on the question of which of these options was preferable, and on what price was worth paying for them. According to Jan Willem Brouwer, only the Communist Party of the Netherlands and the SGP were consistent in their position throughout the dispute. Other parties were internally divided and changed their position

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<sup>189</sup> AH 02004160200010112.

<sup>190</sup> AH 02004160200010123.

<sup>191</sup> AH 02004160200010125.

<sup>192</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, March 23, 1993. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>193</sup> De Keizer, *Goedhart*, 470.

<sup>194</sup> AH 02004160200010266.

<sup>195</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, February 10, 1962. NA 2.21.285-51.

multiple times.<sup>196</sup> Such a divided house was an ideal space for lobbyists to exert influence, and Liu Yuan-tao certainly attempted to do so himself.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1962, Liu wrote to Goedhart that he knew from especially trustworthy sources that the Chinese Communists were paying for one hundred landing crafts to be shipped from Macau to Makassar in Southern Celebes (Sulawesi) on Scandinavian ships. Six of them had supposedly arrived in Makassar already. These landing crafts, according to Liu, could ship up to fifty people or a tank, and were to be used by the Indonesian military in New Guinea. Liu sent the same message to Harry Moorman, with Chinese newspaper clippings and pictures of the ship as proof.<sup>197</sup> Moorman likely forwarded the message to his party friend Karel van Rijckevoorsel, who spoke about it in the Lower House on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March.<sup>198</sup> Goedhart enthusiastically replied three days later that he had sent written questions about Mao's intervention in New Guinea to Foreign Minister Luns, and emphasised that every new fact about Mao's measures relating to this matter would be a new argument to end diplomatic relations between The Hague and Beijing. Goedhart also requested both Liu and the ROC ambassador in Brussels to supply all available information related to this matter.<sup>199</sup>

Goedhart was less enthusiastic on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, when Luns answered his questions simply by stating that he knew nothing about Mao's supposed shipments. Goedhart asked Liu for more details. Were the Chinese vessels ordered by Indonesia really being built in Portuguese docks? Which ships carried them to Makassar? When did they arrive? Goedhart told Liu he needed as precise facts as possible to convince the government.<sup>200</sup> Liu responded by noting the vessels had been shipped on the Kirsten Maersk to Makassar in March, and pointed out that he had already sent pictures of the shipment to Moorman.<sup>201</sup> This failed to convince Goedhart, who had already received a collection of Chinese news clippings full of anti-Dutch and pro-Soekarno propaganda. But since Goedhart realised Luns would certainly dismiss this as nothing but mere propaganda, he did not take any further action.<sup>202</sup> Regardless of whether Mao's shipment of landing crafts actually occurred or not, the Chinese intervention in the New Guinea affair has not been recorded in the annals of history. Jan Willem Brouwer's discussion of the New Guinea

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<sup>196</sup> Jan Willem Brouwer and Jan Ramakers, *Regeren Zonder Rood: Het Kabinet-De Quay, 1959-1963* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2007), 150.

<sup>197</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, April 9, 1962. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>198</sup> AH 02004160100020105; 02004160100020106.

<sup>199</sup> Frans Goedhart, letter to Liu Yuan-tao, April 12, 1962. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>200</sup> Frans Goedhart, letter to Liu Yuan-tao, April 16, 1962. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>201</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, April 22, 1962. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>202</sup> Frans Goedhart, letter to Liu Yuan-tao, April 18, 1962. NA 2.21.285-51.

affair, part of the authoritative *Parliamentary History of the Netherlands after 1945* series, does not mention Chinese intervention and discussion thereof in the Dutch parliament at all.<sup>203</sup>

As stated above, Liu's 1962 visit to the Netherlands was partially an intelligence operation. I found three reports on the political situation in the Netherlands written shortly after Liu's return to Taiwan in the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Two of these were written and signed by Liu Yuan-tao, the third is likely written by Liu and almost certainly produced using intelligence gathered by him. The report certainly written by Liu Yuan-tao was sent on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April 1962.<sup>204</sup> The letter starts with an overview of actions recently undertaken by Formosa lobby members of parliament. Liu mentions how Goedhart and Karel van Rijckevoorsel (KVP) had repeatedly interpellated Luns about breaking off relations with Beijing over the New Guinea affair. Earlier, Formosa lobby members of the CHU, VVD, and PvdA had managed to convince their party to vote for Dutch government permission to the Republic of China to post an honorary consul in The Hague. The problem was getting the KVP on board, since even its pro-ROC members of parliament did not dare to offend KVP member Luns. Liu remained optimistic on the prospects, stating that the above "shows that in certain circumstances and with some manoeuvring (sic), it is possible to get a majority in Dutch parliament in favour of us."<sup>205</sup>

To Liu, the biggest challenges facing the Formosa lobby were not pro-Communist attitudes, but the perception that the ROC would fall as soon as the US withdraw their support. Another challenge to overcome was the attitude of high functionaries within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Liu's view, these high functionaries were rather conservative and unwilling to attract public attention by making sudden drastic changes in policy. Liu also believed that Luns, who intended to be cautious, refused to cooperate with the Formosa lobby because of these reluctant conservatives. Liu (paraphrasing Goedhart's letter) suggested providing more concrete evidence on Chinese Communist interference in the New Guinea Issue, and inviting more Dutch parliamentarians to Taiwan might help change his mind.<sup>206</sup>

The report's appendix contains lists of Dutch members of parliament who had spoken out in favour of the Republic of China, as well as the attitudes of the current cabinet, party chairmen, and party leaders in the Second Chamber, including their addresses.<sup>207</sup> In this appendix, Liu also noted that "leadership of Minister President (sic) de Quay is not forceful, he has no

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<sup>203</sup> Brouwer, *Zonder Rood*, 149-246.

<sup>204</sup> AH 02004160200010272.

<sup>205</sup> AH 02004160200010266.

<sup>206</sup> AH 02004160200010267; 02004160200010268.

<sup>207</sup> AH 02004160200010269; 02004160200010270; 02004160200010271.

parliamentary experience, therefore is not able to direct his cabinet with a strong arm; the only strong ministers in his cabinet are Luns KVP (foreign affairs) and Zijlstra, ARP (finance). Prof. Oud, VVD party leader in parliament is the only member of parliament who knows how to push the cabinet.”<sup>208</sup> Since Oud had already spoken out in favour of the ROC and Zijlstra’s opinion was irrelevant, only Luns was standing in the way of re-establishing Dutch ties with the Republic of China. Goedhart and Liu would continue to try to change the Minister’s mind in the following years.<sup>209</sup> Liu’s assessment of the de Quay cabinet was accurate, or at least in accordance with what would later become the accepted view of historians. For example, in Brouwer’s view, the de Quay cabinet was plagued by internal division and inexperience, especially on the Prime Minister’s part.<sup>210</sup> In private, de Quay also admitted he felt out of place and unfit for the job as prime minister at the time.<sup>211</sup>

A different report on the political situation of the Netherlands, written in Chinese, appeared a few weeks earlier. No author is credited, but this report is likely written by Liu Yuan-tao because the author mentions having just only departed from the Netherlands and paraphrases Goedhart’s comments about what would sway Luns in the ROC’s favour.<sup>212</sup> This report pays special attention to Chinese Communist activities in the Netherlands. It contains a description of the PRC-embassy in The Hague and a list of Dutch Chicom-sympathisers. The report mentions that Chinese Communist propaganda films were being shown at the Binnen Bantammerstraat 17, just three doors away from the family that had helped Liu move to China.<sup>213</sup>

Another familiar name from the Chongqing days and before is that of Robert van Gulik. The report presents him as an example of a scholar who had lost faith in western culture because it had become too materialistic. The report states that van Gulik, who had been the Dutch ambassador to Malaysia until recently but returned to the Netherlands for health reasons, had expressed his sympathy for the Chinese Communists. Reportedly, this often led to heated altercations with his wife Shui Shifang, who wanted to travel to Taiwan to visit relatives and friends.<sup>214</sup> Like the one that comments on de Quay, this report’s judgement of van Gulik corresponds to a certain extent to that of later authors. In their biography *Een man van Drie*

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<sup>208</sup> AH 02004160200010270.

<sup>209</sup> Frans Goedhart, letter to Liu Yuan-tao, January 2, 1967. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>210</sup> Brouwer, *Zonder Rood*, 9.

<sup>211</sup> Cees Meijer, *Jan de Quay (1901-1985): Een Biografie* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2014), 263-285.

<sup>212</sup> AH 02004160100020092.

<sup>213</sup> AH 02004160100020093.

<sup>214</sup> AH 02004160100020094.



*Levens* [A Man of Three Lives], Barkman and van der Hoeven also write that van Gulik downplayed differences between Nationalist and Communist China and occasionally praised the Communists. But unlike the report, Barkman and van der Hoeven do not mention that van Gulik's pro-Communist attitudes brought him into conflict with his wife.<sup>215</sup>

The report ends with an assessment of the situation regarding ethnic Chinese in the Netherlands and the possibility of finding an ROC representative for Chinese diaspora affairs among them. The letter mentions most Chinese living in the Netherlands at the time being sailors by origin, many of them uneducated and unable to either write Chinese or speak proper Dutch. Others were married with children to Dutch wives, which also made them unfit for this position. The report concludes that a fit candidate must be found in Taiwan instead.<sup>216</sup> If this report was indeed written by Liu himself, which it probably was, then this might have been a tactful way to recommend himself for this position. In any case, Liu would keep an eye on the Chinese community in the Netherlands and its relations to the ROC on Taiwan in the following years. It should be noted that Liu was especially familiar with the Cantonese community in the Netherlands, and had been since the 1930's. He was not as well acquainted with the other major group of Chinese immigrants in the Netherlands, the Wenzhounese, which had closer ties to the PRC.

The third report on the political situation in the Netherlands was written in Chinese on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April in 1962. While this report is not as intelligible as the previously mentioned ones, it clearly mentions Luns' assertion of insufficient evidence for Chinese shipments of arms to Indonesia.<sup>217</sup> Unique to this report is that it also discusses the domestic political situation in Indonesia. Liu mentions the names of Sjahrir, Anak Agung, and Mohammed Rum, Indonesian politicians who had recently fallen victim to a political purge.<sup>218</sup>

On the same day Liu told Goedhart about the shipment of Chinese vessels to Makassar, Liu also wrote a report in Chinese on the visit of former diplomat and head of the Netherlands-Free China Association A.J. Schrikker to Taiwan. Only the first page of this report is intelligible.<sup>219</sup> No year after 1962 produced as many (extant) sources written by or about Liu Yuan-tao's activities, but his work as an intelligence agent for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued.

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<sup>215</sup> Barkman, C.D and H. de Vries-van der Hoeven, *Een Man van drie Levens: Biografie van Diplomaat-Schrijver-Geleerde Robert van Gulik* (Amsterdam: Forum, 1995), 250-251.

<sup>216</sup> AH 0200416010020095; 0200416010020096.

<sup>217</sup> AH 02004160100020114.

<sup>218</sup> AH 02004160100020115.

<sup>219</sup> AH 02004160200070068.

### 3.5 Cooperation and Conspiracy

According to Liu's recollections, he worked at the ROC embassy in Brussels from 1963 until 1966. To a relative, Liu described his position as that of a tracing officer of some sorts, but did not explain what this entailed.<sup>220</sup> He later told a Dutch journalist his task in Belgium was to keep an eye on Communist Chinese shipping to and from Antwerp.<sup>221</sup> Wang Kuijiu recalled having met Liu at the ROC embassy in 1964. Since Wang was working for the port of Keelung at the time, this further confirms that Liu's work at the time was related to shipping.<sup>222</sup> Liu claimed to have had special permission from the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Paul-Henri Spaak to serve in this capacity, but only if he obfuscated his Dutch roots and pretended to have been born in Canton.<sup>223</sup>

Sources from archives in Taipei and The Hague confirm that Liu worked as an agent in Belgium, but do suggest he only arrived in Brussels in late 1963.<sup>224</sup> For example, in May 1963, Liu was still working from Zuoying, forwarding names of Chinese Communist front organisations in the Netherlands to the European Desk of the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and sharing the good news of the re-election of van Rijckevorsel, Moorman, Berkhouwer, and Goedhart.<sup>225</sup> A 1997 news report notes that Liu thought his time in Brussels was awful, and marked by petty intrigue and squabbling. He thought the Belgian intelligence agencies were plagued by infighting and the habit of arresting fellow agents, suggesting the situation was much like that of Taiwan around 1950.<sup>226</sup> Whether Liu actually said this is uncertain, since the journalist himself apologised to Liu for the article because other editors had sensationalised the parts about intelligence work.<sup>227</sup>

When Liu left Brussels in 1966, the Netherlands became his region of focus yet again. In the years that followed, Liu would work together with the Netherlands-Free China Association. This organisation was rather small, but included a couple of prominent members, such as industrialist Frits Philips. The association was founded and first published its journal *Vrij China* (Free China) in 1958. *Vrij China* aimed to educate the Dutch public about the situation in China and Taiwan, cultivate support for the ROC in the Netherlands, and provide moral support to the

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<sup>220</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, January 29, 1994. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>221</sup> Heest, "Spion".

<sup>222</sup> 王達九 [Wang Kuijiu], "基隆港務局十七年" [Jilong Gangwuju Qishinian], 中外雜誌 [Zhongwai Zazhi] 78, no. 2 (2005): 105.

<sup>223</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, January 29, 1994. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>224</sup> AH 0209906000192; Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, January 10, 1964. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>225</sup> AH 0204160200010282.

<sup>226</sup> Heest, "Spion".

<sup>227</sup> Liu Yuan tao, letter to the widow of Maurits Alexander van Lennep, July 2, 1997. ACA 30491-253.

Chinese living in the Netherlands.<sup>228</sup> A typical edition of *Vrij China* started out with a quote from Chiang Kai-shek, followed by (partisan but not necessarily incorrect) reports of scandals and struggles in the People's Republic of China and good economic news about Taiwan. Besides publishing its journal, the Netherlands-Free China association also promoted the ROC's cause by organising cultural events and media appearances. It was through one of such media appearances that Liu first came into contact with the association. His 1962 television interview was arranged by the association's secretary Agatha Ebell.<sup>229</sup> In 1966, Frits Philips recommended the new chairman of the association, businessman and former Red Cross director Hans van Ketwich Verschuur.<sup>230</sup>

One of Verschuur's first actions as chairman of the Netherlands-Free China Association, in cooperation with the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was to invite Dutch general and head of the Netherlands National Defence Institute M. Broekmeijer to Taiwan. When this visit was being organised, relations between Verschuur and Liu still seem to have been good since they addressed each other as friends and Verschuur insisted Liu accompanied Broekmeijer during his visit to Taiwan.<sup>231</sup> In the end, however, Broekmeijer could not visit Taiwan at all. Luns vetoed his visit last-minute. Goedhart wrote to Liu that he, Verschuur, and Broekmeijer were all outraged by the Minister's sudden decision. Luns claimed he had opposed the Broekmeijer visit from the start. However, he had also given Broekmeijer a regular passport instead of a diplomatic one especially for this visit, which suggests Luns approved of the visit at one point and then changed his mind.<sup>232</sup> Perhaps Luns did so because he did not want to risk a diplomatic crisis over Broekmeijer's sojourn. In any case, he blocked the Formosa lobby's efforts yet again.

The failure to arrange Broekmeijer's visit was certainly no reason for Verschuur to give up. In early 1968, he wrote to the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs about recent activities of the Netherlands-Free China Association and its plans for the future. Verschuur mentioned a series of good articles on Taiwan written by the social-democratic but fiercely anti-communist cold warrior Jacques de Kadat, to be translated by Liu Yuan-tao. In the same letter, Verschuur made critical remarks on a week-end meeting on China where two British speakers with commercial

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<sup>228</sup> "Waarom een Vereniging Nederland-Vrij China", *Vrij China*, December 1, 1958; "Wat wil de Vereniging Nederland-Vrij China", *Vrij China*, December 15, 1958.

<sup>229</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, February 12, 1992. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>230</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, February 13, 1995. ACA 30491-253; Giles Scott-Smith, *Western Anti-communism and the Interdoc Network: Cold War Internationale* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 198; "Vechten voor China van Morgen", *De Telegraaf*, December 16, 1966.

<sup>231</sup> AH 02004160200080008.

<sup>232</sup> Frans Goedhart, letter to Liu Yuan-tao, January 2, 1967. NA 2.21.285-51.

interests in Communist China painted a rather rosy picture of the People's Republic. About this matter, Verschuur asked an apt rhetorical question, still relevant for China scholars today: "How can one expect an objective scientific approach by individuals who are entirely dependent on the goodwill of communist governments for successful operations?"<sup>233</sup>

Verschuur was not himself above the kind of actions he accused communist fellow travellers of, suggesting to organise a small but representative industrial exhibition of Dutch manufacturers in Taiwan, in order to strengthen business ties between the ROC and the Netherlands. Another suggestion Verschuur made was to arrange for a group of Dutch students to visit Taiwan in order to counteract the considerable Maoist influence on them. Verschuur also had some positive news about the Dutch government's China policy to report on. Goedhart had managed to gain support from Luns for the idea of establishing reciprocal honorary consulates in Taiwan and the Netherlands. Meanwhile, Frits Philips expressed his support for the same initiative to Dutch Prime Minister Piet de Jong.<sup>234</sup> This plan would eventually be executed in 1979 when the ROC government opened an unofficial representative office in The Hague.<sup>235</sup>

Verschuur had a direct line of communication with Dutch royalty as well. In a 1968 letter, Liu notes that Verschuur had discussed the situation in the Far East during a lunch with Prince Claus and Prince Bernhard, and found that there was great ignorance about the ROC (and thus room for influence) amongst these high people.<sup>236</sup> Liu was also still in the habit of reporting on the state of Dutch politics to the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His report on the de Jong cabinet contains a name list and a rather factual discussion of the aims and challenges facing the cabinet, without the explicit judgements and discussions of opportunities for the ROC seen in his reports on the de Quay cabinet.<sup>237</sup> This could have been a consequence of how the escalating situation in Eastern Europe and the Vietnam War took the spotlight of Dutch politics when it came to foreign policy. China was even more of an afterthought to the Dutch government than it had been before.<sup>238</sup> It could also have been a consequence of a change of strategy. The primary sources suggest that the Formosa lobby had abandoned the strategy of exploiting crises and attempting to stir up scandals, and now attempted to win over the Dutch authorities through

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<sup>233</sup> AH 02004160200020086; 02004160200020087.

<sup>234</sup> AH 02004106200020085.

<sup>235</sup> Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 294.

<sup>236</sup> AH 02004162000020136.

<sup>237</sup> AH 02004160100020189; 02004160100020190; 0204160100020191.

<sup>238</sup> Johan van Merriënboer and Carla van Baalen, *Polarisatie en Hoogconjunctuur: Het Kabinet-De Jong 1967-1971* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2013), 165-199.

business ties instead. This new strategy bore fruit, as to this day the Netherlands remains the largest investor in Taiwan within the European Union, as well as Taiwan's number one investment destination and second-largest trade partner in the European Union.<sup>239</sup>

In the early months of 1969, a new visit of Dutch parliamentarians to Taiwan was being planned. Meanwhile, *De Telegraaf* reported on a mysterious event at Schiphol Airport. A Taiwanese businessman called Zheng Jinzhui and his family were being deported to Taiwan after going bankrupt. The sensational report stated that an anonymous Dutch friend of Zheng did everything in his power to prevent the deportation since Zheng might have had Communist sympathies, and the horrors that were waiting for him after being outed as such in Taiwan would be unimaginable.<sup>240</sup>

The horrors Zheng's anonymous friend expected did not materialise. After Zheng had been deported to Taiwan, Liu Yuan-tao, worked together with Verschuur as well as ROC Government Information Office (GIO) chief James Wei and Institute East-West member H.J.M. Mennes to plead for Zheng's innocence. Together, they managed to convince *De Telegraaf* to rectify the report and investigate the matter more thoroughly.<sup>241</sup> On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, *De Telegraaf* reported that Zheng had been deported despite Amsterdam mayor Ivo Samkalden stating his innocence. The investigation of the Zheng affair had led to the arrest of an aliens police officer who had allegedly been influenced by individuals within the Chinese community in the Netherlands to get Zheng deported.<sup>242</sup> The following day, *De Telegraaf* reported that the police officer had not benefited financially. He would face only disciplinary action and no prosecution. The report also revealed how and why Zheng was framed. Zheng had come to the Netherlands with Dutch f100,000 of capital, which he lent out to Chinese restaurant owners. The debtors refused to pay Zheng back and instead extorted Zheng by demanding more money, or else they would report him to the aliens police as a Communist and get him arrested. Zheng gave his last money to the restaurant owners, but he was reported nonetheless.<sup>243</sup>

Liu knew more about the affair, having spoken with Zheng personally. According to Liu, Zheng had come to the Netherlands to join an enterprise that turned out to be on the brink of bankruptcy. Liu stated that:

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<sup>239</sup> Chang, *Forgotten Diplomacy*, 294.

<sup>240</sup> "Momentopname van Menselijk Drama", *De Telegraaf*, February 8, 1969.

<sup>241</sup> AH 02004160200080151.

<sup>242</sup> "Justitie Bezweek voor Chinese Lastercampagne", *De Telegraaf*, March 11, 1969.

<sup>243</sup> "Onderzoek Justitie: Ambtenaren Omgekocht door Chinezen?", *De Telegraaf*, March 12, 1969.

After six months living in a hotel in Hilversum he started to look around for other business opportunities. He however was so naïve to tell all and sundry in the Oversea Chinese community in Holland how much money he had in the Dutch bank. According to his statements he lost in the course of time \$60,000 to Chang Tao-yung in Amsterdam (張道鏞), to Tcheng Tso-shu and his nephew Chang Kai-chi (張開志). Knowing the very bad business reputation of Chang Tao-yung, the very dubious reputation of Tcheng Tso-shu and the very much political unreliability of Chang Kai-chi, I personally think the statements of Zheng are not very far from the truth.<sup>244</sup>

Chang Kai-chi allegedly had taken Zheng to a Chinese sailor club to watch a film screening that turned out to be a Communist propaganda piece about Xinjiang. Tcheng Tso-shu, known to Liu as the owner of Tchekiang Restaurant in The Hague, subsequently extorted Zheng by threatening to have him arrested as a Chicom sympathiser. Having lost all his money and having been reported on as a Communist spy, the Dutch aliens service started a procedure to expel him. The desperate Zheng, who feared a penniless return to Taiwan and damage to his reputation, then pleaded to Verschuur for help.<sup>245</sup> This letter shows that Liu, even when working from Zuoying, was deeply familiar with what was happening and who was who in the Chinese community in the Netherlands.

According to Liu, Zheng lost a lot of sympathy by throwing around wild accusations against innocent people in the Dutch Ministry of Justice and the Chinese diaspora in the Netherlands. Liu therefore strongly advised him to stop making allegations that could not be thoroughly substantiated. Liu had a creative explanation for Zheng's wild accusations of a grand conspiracy against him where there was in fact only a simple conflict about money. In Liu's view, this was the result of a concussion Zheng had suffered after a motorcycle accident. Liu went on to claim that the extortion tactics used against Zheng had been effective because Zheng had grown up when Taiwan was under Japanese rule, which was especially repressive against political suspects. The ROC's government, on the other hand, so Liu wrote, was democratic and would never use improper measures against anybody, because that was strictly forbidden by law.<sup>246</sup>

The last statement is rather baffling, considering the post-war repression of political opponents by the Kuomintang and the state of martial law that had been in place for nearly two decades at this point. To a certain extent, Liu was likely keeping up appearances when writing this, since

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<sup>244</sup> AH 02004160200080153.

<sup>245</sup> AH 02004160200080152; 02004160200080153.

<sup>246</sup> AH 02004160200080153.

he wrote the letter in English, which probably meant he expected a non-Chinese third party to read it. Meanwhile, Liu was naïve about how democratic the ROC's system was at the time and wilfully blind to its repressive tendencies, an attitude admitted in his last interview in 2001.<sup>247</sup>

By the time Liu wrote this letter, Zheng had already found employment at the Taiwan Travel Service and had not faced any charges. The problem was that he still had an axe to grind against the Dutch authorities, writing letters full of wild accusations to Verschuur almost daily. Meanwhile, the Taiwan Travel Service had been asked to organise the upcoming visit of Dutch parliamentarians. Liu suggested that “without prejudice to the job of Mr. Zheng at the travel agency, proper security measures be taken so that Mr. Zheng nor any of his friends at the travel agency can approach neither in person nor by writing letters to the Dutch parliamentarians during their stay in the Republic of China.”<sup>248</sup> Liu's advice seems to have been heeded as the parliamentary mission proceeded without major embarrassments.<sup>249</sup>

### 3.6 Clashing Personalities

Since his return to Taiwan in 1966, Liu worked to supply news outlets in Dutch, German and English with stories about the state of affairs on the Chinese Mainland. Liu was not credited with these articles. Instead, he only supplied background materials, which were later edited by others. One of these articles produced this way, about the Sino-Soviet border crisis, was published in *Elsevier* in January 1970.<sup>250</sup> GIO chief James Wei was satisfied with Liu's work and therefore planned to send him to the Netherlands to work as a correspondent. Liu requested a visa at the Belgian embassy in Taipei. Verschuur and Ebell were to vouch for him. At first, Verschuur promised Liu he would cooperate, but then he kept coming up with new reasons for why he could not do so yet, and eventually stopped communicating with Liu. Liu got the impression that Verschuur was trying to delay or hinder Liu's arrival to the Netherlands and asked Goedhart to figure out what was going on.<sup>251</sup>

Goedhart managed to get the ball rolling, although it is unclear how. Verschuur was still utterly silent, but Liu managed to obtain his visa and return to the Netherlands in March 1971.<sup>252</sup> He would stay in the Netherlands with brief returns to Taiwan for five years, having obtained

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<sup>247</sup> Luyn, “Hollandse Jonker”.

<sup>248</sup> AH 02004160200080154.

<sup>249</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 9, 1993.

<sup>250</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, October 18, 1970. NA 2.21.285-51; “China Bereidt Zich Voor op Oorlog”, *Elsevier Weekblad*, January 24, 1970.

<sup>251</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, October 18, 1970. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>252</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, January 14, 1971. NA 2.21.285-51.

special permission to do so by Justice Minister Dries van Agt.<sup>253</sup> According to Liu, he caused a bit of an uproar when he arrived in The Hague. He was questioned by the staff of the city hall, and told them he had changed his name from W.H. van Lennep to Liu Yuan-tao. The staff interrogated Liu on why he had gone to China and changed his name and barked at him that he needed permission from the queen to do so.<sup>254</sup>

Scarce source material makes it challenging to pinpoint what Liu's activities in The Hague in the 1970s exactly were. What is clear is that he continued his previously mentioned journalistic (or rather propagandistic) activities, and helped organise cultural exchanges between the Netherlands and the ROC. Complaints to Goedhart suggest that Verschuur obstructed Liu when doing so.<sup>255</sup> In any case, Liu also worked as an informant of the ROC Government Information Office. When vice president Yen Chia-kan visited Europe in August 1973, he also had a meeting with Liu.<sup>256</sup> Less than a month later, Liu was present at a discussion forum in the Executive Yuan about the state of affairs in Europe.<sup>257</sup> He mentioned preparing to attend another of such meetings in January 1975.<sup>258</sup>

Signs of the of Liu's relationship with Verschuur deteriorating start appearing in source material from when Liu was planning his return to the Netherlands. Things got progressively worse in the years after his arrival. Liu and Verschuur habitually vented their opinions about each other to Goedhart, both claiming the authorities in Taipei were on their side. According to Verschuur, the animosity between the two reached a boiling point in late 1975, shortly before Liu was recalled to Taiwan. According to Verschuur, Liu behaved most impolitely at the celebration of the anniversary of the 1911 Chinese Revolution that year, especially to Verschuur's wife. When Liu introduced the new "man from Taipei" to take his place to his colleagues in the Netherlands, Liu also used the opportunity to vent his frustrations about Verschuur. A scathing open letter, addressed to both Goedhart and Verschuur soon followed.<sup>259</sup>

I did not manage to find a copy of the open letter, but comments on it make clear that Liu complained about Verschuur's obstruction and absenteeism. Verschuur partially conceded the latter point, admitting he did not do enough for the Netherlands-Free China Association.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, January 29, 1994. ACA 30491-253.

<sup>254</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, April 3, 1971. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>255</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, January 3, 1975. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>256</sup> AH 00601070400028002.

<sup>257</sup> AH 00601070400028003.

<sup>258</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, January 3, 1975. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>259</sup> H.P.J. van Ketwisch Verschuur, letter to Frans Goedhart, ≈January 1, 1976. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>260</sup> H.P.J. van Ketwisch Verschuur, letter to Frans Goedhart, ≈January 1, 1976. NA 2.21.285-51.



Perhaps he just combined too many activities at once. For example, he was also the head of the Dutch Shareholders Association.<sup>261</sup> Verschuur defended his obstruction of Liu's activities, citing Liu's lack of tact and his constant seeking of intel for which he had little to offer in return. Verschuur also argued that he was justified in barring Liu from the International Journalist Union and not cooperating with his journalistic activities because Liu was simply not a journalist.<sup>262</sup> Verschuur made this remark in a letter to Frans Goedhart, written after Liu had left the Netherlands. Goedhart called this letter an unfair written philippic, showing Verschuur's obsession with Liu.<sup>263</sup>

Unbeknownst to Verschuur, Goedhart forwarded the written philippic to Liu. Liu responded with the understatement that Verschuur was apparently not especially fond of him, adding the rather mysterious remark that he was well aware that Verschuur's problem with Liu was more than a mere *incompatibilité des humeurs*.<sup>264</sup> Whatever else might have been going on, the personalities of Liu and Verschuur certainly clashed. Verschuur was a well-spoken, diplomatic and subtle man of words. Liu, on the other hand, was a dour, military and direct man of deeds. It is not hard to imagine why they found it difficult to cooperate despite their shared ideals.

Liu's return to Taiwan did not mean an end to Liu's communication with his Dutch friends. His correspondences with Goedhart and Philips continued, well into at least the 1980's in the case of Philips.<sup>265</sup> The 1980's also saw the start of a long-lasting correspondence between Liu and the van Lennep family; first with Maurits Alexander van Lennep and then with the widow of Maurits Alexander van Lennep, and later Henrick S. van Lennep. Liu continued to work throughout the 1980's, not only as a movie theatre director in Zuoying, but also as an interpreter. About the latter activity, he wrote the following words that would be no less appropriate in describing his state of mind during any work he had done for his country since his days in Chongqing:

They call me a bridge between East and West, but I see myself as more of a bridgehead, on which traffic from both directions comes together at once, and because nobody wants to grant the right of way to the other, the entire traffic eventually becomes congested, and I am expected to impel this whole mess back into flowing traffic. Man, it makes me

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<sup>261</sup> Ketwich Verschuur, H.P.J., van, *Aspecten van Effecten* (Rotterdam: Universitaire Pers, 1974), V.

<sup>262</sup> H.P.J. van Ketwich Verschuur, letter to Frans Goedhart, ≈January 1, 1976. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>263</sup> Goedhart, Frans, letter to H.P.J. van Ketwich Verschuur, January 8, 1976. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>264</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, January 25, 1976. NA 2.21.285-51.

<sup>265</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Frans Goedhart, September 15, 1977. NA 2.21.285-51; Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, April 1, 1984. ACA 30491-252.

dead tired sometimes, because they also expect me to attend their dinners, lunches, and working breakfasts with a tidy face.<sup>266</sup>

Liu Yuan-tao passed away in Kaohsiung on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2001. He was buried at Siaogang Catholic Cemetery, where Liang Kwei-yen had lain since 1997. Liu Kai-shu passed away in 2016, survived by two sons.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> Liu Yuan-tao, letter to Maurits Alexander van Lennep, October 5, 1987. ACA 30491-252.

<sup>267</sup> Appendix A (pictures).

#### 4. Conclusion

A fascination with Chinese culture, perceived Chinese heritage, and alienation from his family, set Willem van Lennep on a path to become Liu Yuan-tao. After studying Chinese in Leiden, mingling with the Chinese community in the Netherlands, and becoming a member of the Kuomintang in Paris, van Lennep travelled to Canton to pursue his destiny in China. In Canton, he studied at Sun Yat-sen University and married Liang Kwei-yen. As all-out war against Japan drew near, van Lennep officially changed his name to Liu Yuan-tao and rescinded his Dutch citizenship to enrol at the Whampoa Military Academy. In the early stages of the war, Liu served at the Longhai railroad front under the command of general Gui Yongqing. From 1939 onwards, Liu worked as an intelligence agent in the Chinese wartime capital of Chongqing, where he produced Dutch broadcasts for Radio Free China. From the breakout of the Pacific War until the conflict's end, Liu served as a liaison officer with the Americans in Chongqing.

After the war, Liu briefly worked for the ROC Ministry of Defence's education office and then joined the navy, serving under Gui Yongqing once again. Around the time of the Communist takeover of the Chinese Mainland in 1949, Liu worked as a naval inspector in the territories still controlled by the ROC, and got tangled up in many corruption cases of the sort that plagued the imploding regime at the time. When the Nationalists lost control of the Chinese mainland, Liu Yuan-tao moved to Zuoying in southern Taiwan. In Zuoying, Liu was approached by a Dutch journalist for the first time since leaving China and entertained the veterans of Ziqiang New Village by running a movie theatre. After Gui Yongqing had granted Liu's request for sea duty, Liu served his country as a sailor for several years. Liu's career at the navy ended with a tragicomic misunderstanding about the possibility of retiring early. Soon after, Liu came to serve his adopted homeland in a new capacity.

The next chapter of Liu's career marked the great irony of his life. Liu had left the Netherlands because he felt he would never feel at home there, and felt a deep connection to the Chinese people. In the war years, even though he produced broadcasts in Dutch, Liu had left his Dutch identity behind and responded only when called by his Chinese name. Even the dramatic loss of the mainland did not sway his determination to stay in and serve the ROC. Yet, as the 1960's came around, the ROC authorities decided that Liu would serve China best by going back to the Netherlands and getting involved with the politics of the country he had meant to leave behind forever.

The change was a consequence of economic and geopolitical developments. By this time, the PRC was undergoing the disastrous Great Leap Forward and the meltdown of its relations with the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the ROC experienced economic growth under newfound stability. From this relatively favourable position, the Nationalist regime attempted to regain the international recognition it had lost since the founding of the PRC. Liu was recruited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taipei for operations aimed at promoting and formally restoring ties between the ROC and the Netherlands.

In 1962, Liu returned to the Netherlands for the first time in almost thirty years. The official reason for his return was to administer his late mother's inheritance. In reality, Liu's visit was also a press tour to promote the cause of the ROC, he appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines and even on Dutch television. The visit was also an intelligence operation. Upon his return to Taiwan, Liu wrote several reports on the political situation in the Netherlands and how to improve its ties with the ROC. In 1962, Liu also worked together with a number of members of Dutch parliament – a group called the Formosa lobby including Frans Goedhart – to attempt to use the New Guinea question to convince Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns to break off ties with the PRC. Even though the plan failed, the activities of the Formosa lobby, and Liu's involvement in it, persisted for years. Liu's work in the low countries continued in Brussels, from where he conducted intelligence work and, among other activities monitored Chinese shipping to Europe.

After his return to Taiwan in 1966, Liu kept an eye on the Chinese community in the Netherlands from a distance. He also continued his efforts to strengthen ties between the ROC and the Netherlands, in cooperation with Netherlands-Free China Association chairman Hans van Ketwich Verschuur. The two worked together during the Zheng affair, first to plead for the extortion victim's innocence, and then to keep the rancorous Zheng from turning a visit of Dutch parliamentarians to Taiwan into an embarrassment.

Liu returned to the Netherlands in 1971. In the 1970's, Liu continued to work as an intelligence officer, and also worked to organise cultural events and to produce propagandistic news reports about China. At this point, Liu and Verschuur had grown to dislike each other, and Liu felt Verschuur was intentionally sabotaging his efforts. Hostilities between Liu and Verschuur reached a climax in 1975, when a series of incidents resulting in a scathing open letter led to Liu's recall to Taiwan. Liu Yuan-tao's service of the Republic of China authorities ended then, but he would continue to work for Dutch businesses in Taiwan.

While the goal of Liu Yuan-tao and his allies in the Formosa lobby and the Netherlands-Free China Association to re-establish diplomatic ties between the Netherlands and the ROC was not realised, it goes too far to call their work a complete failure. The goal of establishing reciprocal honorary consulates in Taiwan and the Netherlands would be realised in 1979. Efforts to improve business ties between the ROC and the Netherlands also bore fruit. Trade and investment between Taiwan and the Netherlands still flourish to this day.

The power of the microhistorical approach lies in its ability to present and contribute to a variety of contexts in a relatively limited investigation. By following Liu's actions serving the ROC, from the battlefield of Lanfeng, to the bomb shelters of Chongqing, to the veteran village of Zuoying, to the backrooms of Benelux capitals in the Cold War, this thesis has contributed to several topics of scholarship. Immigration to China is one of them. Liu is a clear example of a category of immigrants to the ROC overlooked by scholarship on migration to China: those who came not for empire, refuge, business or faith, but for China itself.

While Liu made a firm choice to become Chinese and serve his adopted homeland, he could never completely let go of his foreign roots. Liu disdained the flippant attitudes towards Chinese laws and lives of imperialists in China, exemplified by Crassey. Nonetheless, Liu's foreign language skills made it his lot to work with foreigners with such attitudes during the Chongqing years. Liu's loyalty to the nation was never in doubt, and the other inhabitants of Ziqiang New Village praised Liu's patriotism, but still thought of him as a foreigner nonetheless. In the 1950's, when Liu's work had little to do with international communication, Liu still read Dutch news publications to keep up with what was happening in the country he had left behind. Even before political and economic realities drove Liu back to the Netherlands, emigration to China had not meant total assimilation.

The chapters about Chongqing provide a personal perspective on what it was like to live through the brutal bombardments of the city of heroes. They also highlight how the cooperation between the Americans and Chinese in the wartime capital worked on the ground. Through their discussion of the Hamburger affair, for which Liu earned a medal, they contribute to the image of how intelligence operations in wartime China worked. Unanswered questions worthy of further research yet remain. To name one, who was Liu cooperating with during the Hamburger affair? Liu's Dutch radio broadcasts are also worth researching further. While the broadcasts certainly had their listeners, including a relative of Liu's, little is still known about their content and the scope of their audience.

This thesis' contribution to academic literature on the topics of Dutch Cold War history and the history of Sino-Dutch relations, is its discussion of the Formosa lobby. Liu played an important role in this multi-partisan group of members of parliament and industrialists, for he made communication between The Hague and Taipei possible, and was familiar with both Dutch and ROC politics. That I stumbled upon this lobby also highlights the value of the micro-historical perspectives, as it has not been committed to the annals of parliamentary history. Researchers looking for material on Cold War history or Sino-Dutch relations as such might very well have overlooked the Formosa lobby, for having seemingly bigger, more obvious fish to fry. The point here is not that there is anything wrong with historical research that focuses on the bigger picture or tackles more obvious choices of subject matter. The point is rather that both general histories, and microhistories, are necessary and have something to contribute to each other.

While my work has shone a light on the Formosa lobby, more research is needed to provide a complete image of how the lobby operated and who was involved in it. Useful source material for such research can certainly be found in the Academia Historia Archives. During my fieldwork, I selected Academia Historia documents that were signed by Liu or possibly written by him, and sources that explicitly mentioned Liu, Verschuur, or Goedhart. While doing so, I weeded out a lot of material that did not seem relevant as source material for a work on Liu's life at first glance, but is most certainly useful when the Formosa lobby and ROC-Dutch cooperation in the Cold War era in general are the main focus. Going through the minutes of Dutch parliament to look for mentions of Taiwan and China should also contribute to a more complete understanding of the Formosa lobby's activities.

The goal of this thesis is to show how Liu Yuan-tao served the Republic of China after acquiring Chinese citizenship, but that is certainly not all there is to be written about his life. Much more information is left to be gained and shared about his family life, his work in the private sector, as well as the development of his thoughts on faith, culture, politics, and his own identity over the years. I plan to do so in a popular historical biography, to be written in Dutch, and richly filled with quotes from Liu's letters. This biography would not only serve to tell Liu's fascinating life story, but will also help introduce Dutch readers to the tumultuous history of China and Taiwan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Fighting for ideals is something many of us dream of, but few make the choice act on such dreams. Liu did make that choice. With his well-to-do background, he could have chosen a relatively comfortable life. Instead, he heeded his heart's call to pursue his destiny in China. Liu's life was filled with hardships, and in many ways, the Republic of China did not develop

into the country Liu must have had in mind when he became a member of the Kuomintang while studying in Paris. Liu's values, romantic as they might have been, gave meaning to his life, and led him to battlefields, bomb shelters, war ships, and offices of mighty statesmen. Although these values did not all come to fruition in the way Liu hoped they would, his faith in China and his role in it did not waver. A life dedicated to ideals is a life worth living and remembering. Such a life, is the life Liu Yuan-tao chose.

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Appendix A (Pictures)

Liu's final resting place at Siaogang Catholic Cemetery:





Childhood portrait of Liu's mother (centre) and aunts Adeh (left) and Kitty (right).



Liu's grandfather as a young man.



The former movie theatre in Zuoying.



Pictures of a typical veteran village living room and Liu's family in the veteran village museum.



