
The Dutch East India Company and the Chinese Tea Trade Before 1757

Widaratih Kamiso

MA in History, Leiden University

Abstract

This article points out the development of the Dutch East India Company in China tea trade. As this article shows, the Dutch had the superior role to supply Asian product in Europe in the seventeenth century. They held the Spice Island in the archipelago. On the other hand the product from Spice Island was not so fashionable in the eighteenth century. The British took over a leading position in the world market by having a direct route to China. In Europe, China tea became popular. The Dutch wanted to compete with the British in tea trade. To explain the dynamics of the Dutch in China tea trade, the Chinese character became important to understand. The Dutch strategies to deal with the tea trade in China showed that they longed to get back to their glorious day in Europe as a leader.

Keywords: *The Dutch East India Company, the British East India Company, China tea trade, China character*

Abstrak

Artikel ini membahas perkembangan perdagangan teh Cina oleh Perusahaan Dagang Belanda. Beberapa poin yang penting mengenai perdagangan teh Cina adalah Belanda memimpin perdagangan global di abad ketujuhbelas dengan menguasai pulau rempah di nusantara. Kemudian, teh muncul menjadi produk yang populer di Eropa pada abad kedelapanbelas. Belanda berkeinginan untuk menyaingi kemampuan dagang Inggris di Cina. Penjelasan mengenai karakter bangsa Cina penting untuk memahami perjuangan Belanda dalam menguasai perdagangan teh. Strategi Belanda dalam usaha menguasai perdagangan the di Cina menunjukkan keinginan Belanda untuk merebut kembali kejayaannya di abad tujuhbelas.

Kata Kunci: *Perusahaan Dagang Hindia Timur Belanda, Perusahaan Dagang Hindia Timur Inggris, perdagangan teh Cina, karakter Cina*

Introduction

The journey to the east by Vasco Da Gama and Columbus opened the global network. Although Columbus ended up in the New World, that 'discovery' made the global network even wider. The glorious days of the Iberian Peninsula in Asia started when Estado da India was established in Goa, India in 1498. The Portuguese arrived in the Spice Islands, the Moluccas, in 1512. They became the only Europeans who distributed spices from the Moluccas to the European market. Later, the demand for spices increased. The incapability of the Portuguese to fulfill the increasing demand was the chance for other countries to compete in chasing the Asian goods.

In 1595, the Dutch, the British, the French and many other Europeans entered the race of exploration. The second exploration by the Europeans was marked by the involvement of a permanent capital and stock. They came to the East as companies. The Dutch East India Company (the *Vereniging Oost-Indische Compagnie*-VOC) was established in 1602. Two years earlier, the British East India Company (the EIC) was established. The French East India Company joined in the race of exploration in 1664. Many companies came and went in the popular product trade but they did not survive in the long run.

The Dutch took over the Spice Islands from the Portuguese in 1604. It stepped in the ready island. By making a deal with the Sultan of Ternate and Tidore, they monopolized the Spice Islands' products. Basically, they imitated the Portuguese way to join the Intra-Asian trade. The well-balanced and highly profitable Asian trade made the Company the biggest trading company in the world. The British were competing with the Dutch by concentrating on India. They were interested in the Indian textile (Marks, 2007). And later, the French joined the British in India in the late seventeenth century. In India, their interests clashed.

The competition between the Dutch and the British continued in the Far East trade. It related to the tea trade. In the late eighteenth century, tea became popular in Europe (Yong Liu, 2007). China was the only country that could provide the product. The companies took the opportunity to distribute the tea to Europe. It was not easy to trade with the Han people (Roberts, 1999). The Chinese Emperor maintained his throne by keeping out the foreigners.

The combination of the Chinese, the Dutch and the European competitors in tea trade was complicated. The character of the Chinese made the companies do all things possible to purchase the tea product. The competition between the companies in the tea trade was related to and stimulated the events in Europe, such as the Anglo-Dutch War (1780-1784). There was also a time that the VOC and the EIC worked together to get rid of the Ostend Company in the tea trade (Wills, Jr., 1974).

The VOC was the first European that distributed tea in Europe. The VOC got the tea supply from Chinese junks in Batavia trade. In the 1660s, the EIC tried to join in the tea business in China. When the EIC started to joined the tea business, the competition between the VOC and the EIC started. The EIC managed to do direct trade in 1717. The Dutch were behind the British by not joining the tea trade in China. In a very short time since it got first contact in 1729, the Dutch was managing to be success in the direct China trade. The Golden Age of the VOC's Chinese tea trade started in 1757. In 1781, the Anglo-Dutch IV War began. It became the end of the competition because of the VOC had no power and money because of the war.

The frame of time in this paper explains the VOC effort in the tea trade of China before its golden age in tea trade. Based on these statements, the research question of this paper would be what were the problems that the VOC had to deal with in Chinese tea trade in 1655-

1757? By doing the research, I hope that I can find out the fitting answer to this question. My focus is in the effort of the VOC to get a foothold in China to purchase tea before 1757. However, the explanation about the Chinese character is important to support my focus.

There are two supporting questions to finding the answer of the main research question. The first supporting question leads us to the explanation about the Chinese character. Chinese tended to exclude themselves from the world and refused the foreigners. What were Chinese characters that could hamper the foreigners in Chinese tea trade? The explanation of Chinese character is related to how the refuse the foreigners in their territory. This refusal became one of the obstacles that the Dutch had to learn and tried hard to find another way to get a foothold in China.

The second description is about the VOC's trial and error in Chinese tea trade before 1757. Why did the VOC not give the best effort to purchase the tea that was so popular in Europe? Logically, the tea product should give profit when many people want it. What took the Dutch so long to try to reach the popular product by direct trade? The fact was that the Dutch can surpassed its competitors in a very short time after they got a foothold in China.

The Chinese and the VOC

The Chinese were the inventors of many creations in the world for centuries (Landes, 1998: 45-59). But this creativity stopped in a certain time. The innovation of the European blasted and left the Chinese behind in the nineteenth century. The changing of the world domination was related to the Industrial Revolution. Many theories show the characteristics of a defensive China, such as oriental despotism and hydraulic system (Landes, 1998: 26-8). These theories lead to the explanations of the Chinese character. The explanation of Chinese characters is related to

the reluctance of the Han people to welcome the foreigners in their land. The reluctance of the Chinese to accept foreigner guests was shown by complex and expensive requirements. The foreigners found that the requirements were strange. The VOC had to be well-prepared before doing direct trade in China, either in culture knowledge or capital. The sending of ambassadors to China in 1655-1657 was fail to get a foothold in Chinese territory because the lack of the knowledge about the Chinese's culture and the limited capital (Rahusen-de Bruyn Kops, 2002).

The Dutch were the first tea importers to Europe. They introduced tea to the French in 1638, the British in 1645, the Germans in 1650, and the Americans in the mid of the seventeenth century. They also formed the biggest company in the trading world in the early seventeenth century. They also were known as 'the unquestioned masters of the European bullion trade'(Chauduri, 1978: 5). They united as a company and started with the big capital, six million guilders. The Golden Age of the Dutch showed us that they undoubtedly were great in dealing with the global market. Many historians have written this statement, such as F. S. Gaastra, E. M. Jacobs and J. E. Wills Jr. (Gaastra, 2003: 171; Jacob, 2006: 5; Wills Jr., 1974: 17). On the other hand, when all the Europeans tried to purchase tea directly in China, the Dutch hesitated. The VOC even reached the triumph of tea in 1757-1781(Yong Liu, 2007). E. M. Jacobs writes that the capability of the *Heeren XVII* to predict the market was not a problem (Jacobs, 2006: 290). Then, what took the VOC so long to get a foothold in China? In this paper, I divide the attempt of the Dutch to get a foothold in China into two part (Yong Liu, 2007: 4). They are the indirect and direct trade. First, the indirect trade including the sending of the ambassadors in China in 1655-1657 and Chinese-Batavia trade until 1729. The second is the direct trade with the changing of the route two times. The

first route was in 1729-1734, Netherlands-China-Netherlands. The route changed in 1734-1756, Netherlands-Batavia-China-Batavia-Netherlands.

The Chinese Character

The Emperors of China never give a chance to foreigners to control his region. The Chinese always think that they were the center of the world (Yong Liu, 2007: 1). It related to the word meaning of China in Chinese. China in Chinese is called *Zhongguo*, 'zhong' means middle and 'guo' means country. Usually *Zhongguo* is translated as the Middle Kingdom, i.e. the centre of the world. The meaning of China shows the pride of the empire as the principal of the world. It leads to a certain attitude.

We can try to understand China's attitude by understand the Oriental despotism and hydraulics theory. These theories explain the attitude of the emperor that try to control the empire under one ruler. There were several examples to show how China tried control the relation with its vassals, such as tribute trade, kowtow ritual, and canton system.

China was the world's longest tradition of empire. China was the centre of a tribute trade system (Marks, 2007: 69). Most of East Asia included in this system. Vietnam, Korea, Java, Japan paid tribute to the Chinese Emperor by sending periodic missions to the capital in Beijing. By this system, China became the dominant position within East Asia and integrated almost the Southeast Asia region. China provided lucrative official and private trade opportunities linking China and the tributary states. The power of the Chinese Emperor made the intra-Asian trade became the well-balanced and highly profitable Asian trade (Yong Liu, 2007: 4).

In Imperial Chinese protocol, the kowtow was performed before the Emperor of China (Yong Liu, 2007: 1). The kowtow was a ritual that the guest had to show the deep respect.

The guest had to kneel and bow so low as to have one's head touching the ground. In Chinese culture, the kowtow is the highest sign of reverence. By doing kowtow, the power of the emperor of China was recognized. Not all foreigners understood this cultural matter. Some of them refused to do it and some of them did it just to get the economy access.

The last example of the system in Chinese tea trade was the Canton System. There were five important points of Canton System (Zhuang Guotu, 1994: 6-9). They were the rule of a single port opened to foreign trade in Canton, the control on the commodities of exports and imports, regulations concerning communication between foreigners and Chinese officials, regulations on foreigners' trade and residence in Canton, and limitations on Chinese merchants in Canton.

The purpose of the Canton System was to separate foreigners, especially European, from China, and guard the security of South East Asia Coast of China (Zhuang Guotu, 1994: 12-20). The system also tried to concentrate the profit from foreign trade in the assets of the government and Mandarins. To keep the principle of Sino-foreign relation and the dignity of China as a superiority country to others was one of the purposes.

There were Hong merchants who ran the Canton System and responsible of security. (Zhuang Guotu, 1994: 9-11). The Hong merchants held the position for life. They were the medium of communication between mandarins and foreign merchant. They had a responsibility to monopolize the import and export of main commodities with Western merchants with the exception of articles of inferior importance in which the outside merchant are allowed to deal. In some books, it is written that the Canton System's purpose was to give the Chinese middlemen profit as much as possible. In fact, the middlemen in Chinese tea trade always ended up in bankruptcy (Zhuang Guotu, 1994: 46). In the

end, the Chinese emperor was the only person who got all the profit. On the other hand, the Canton system is not well understood until nowadays (Dyke, in: Cai Hongseng and Blussé [eds], 2004: 45).

The Chinese tried to keep the foreigners out by applying so many rules. The Tribute system, the Kowtow ritual, and the Canton system were the examples of the things that the European had to deal with in Chinese tea trade. These systems were applied to all the foreigners. The fact that the Chinese did not give a special treatment to a particular European gave the chance to all the European traders to compete in Chinese tea trade in the same level (Jacobs, 2006: 181).

Indirect Trade before 1729

The VOC (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) was established in 1602. The Company tried to supply the European market because the Portuguese were no longer able to provide Asian commodity for Europe. To do the trading, the Company was granted the monopoly over the Asian trade. This company had the privilege to monopolize the trading to maintain their business. F. S. Gaastra in *The Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline* writes that the monopoly system was the most essential point in the 'charter for the foundation of a company'. It was also written in the charter that it was allowed to bring military power to secure its economy activities in Asia. Military power was used to win over the Asian market from its European competitors.

The VOC tried to construct trade activities in Asia because European products were too expensive or not in demand in Asia. The construction was made by bartering the product from all around Asia. One of the products was tea. The VOC made the Spice Island became the main product to get profit from the selling in Europe so tea was treated as byproduct. In 1613, the VOC realized the importances of

direct trade with China because of the relation with Japan diminished. The only source to purchase tea was China. On the other hand, the closest position that it can get was in Taiwan (Rahusen-de Bruyn Kops, 2002: 539).

The First Moves

Until 1619, the intra-Asian trade considered as a secondary importance. The VOC focused on the commercial needs of the home front. J. P. Coen had a thought about how the intra-Asian trade was important (Rahusen-de Bruyn Kops, 2002: 537). The intra-Asian profit in 1630-1640 increased. This profit reduced the shipment of bullion from the Dutch Republic to Asia. It decreased in 1640 because of the Zheng Chenggong's maritime and military power. The transition from Ming-Qing gave an advantage to the Dutch because Zheng was under the Ming. The Dutch offered security assistance to the Qing as an alliance to against Zheng in 1655.

The Dutch tried to send two ambassadors, Pieter de Goyer and Jacob de Keyser, to get a diplomatic relation with China in 1655-1657 (Rahusen-de Bruyn Kops, 2002: 544). The delegation waited for six week to hear the response from the capital. The intention of the Dutch was not delivered to the emperor. The Emperor accepted the Dutch as one of his vassals. But the Dutch did not get the permission to do economy activities. Political favoritism, nepotism, and corruption made it harder for the Dutch. It was hard to understand the difficulty of Chinese culture in trade, imperial diplomacy, local rulers networks, and translation the language. Foreigners were not allowed to learn Chinese and the other way around (Haneda Masashi, in: Groenendijk, Evert, Cynthia Vialle and Leonard Blussé [eds], 2009: 23). There was also a belief that the emperor got the influence from Jesuit, such as anti-Dutch and anti-Protestant propaganda and to accept the Dutch in China could ruin

the image of China abroad (Rahusen-de Bruyn Kops, 2002: 553-5). Based on the VOC's track record in Java, the Moluccas and elsewhere, it was danger to grant economy access to it. This was the Dutch's first diplomatic effort and it did not last very long because of Chinese domestic politics. The other reason was the dead of Zheng in 1662 made the China did not need the assistance from the Dutch anymore.

Chinese Junks in Batavia

Batavia trade was attended by the Chinese junks in the early seventeenth century. The Dutch sold to the Chinese pepper, cinnamon, ember, lead, sandal wood, red coral, bird's nest and the Dutch manufactures (Glamann, 1958: 216). Pepper was the most important product in the China-Batavia trade. The VOC got an exclusive contract with the rulers in Aceh, Jambi, Palembang, and Bantam (Jacobs, 2006: 3). In 1700, the pepper in Bantam and Palembang had resulted in surplus (Glamann, 1958: 216; Zhuang Guotu, 1994: 107). In the Batavia trade, pepper was sold in a price that in purpose to spend the pepper stock. The *Heeren XVII* disagreed to the decision without a profit thought. They set the higher price of pepper in 1715. This decision showed us that the *Heeren XVII* gave order only in purpose to get more profit but did not consider about the situation in Batavia.

In 1717, the Governor General and Council tried to control the price of tea because the demand of tea in Europe increased. They lowered the price of tea. They insisted to the fixed price. The VOC even let the Chinese junks go if they did not agree with the price. The Chinese junks seemed not agree with the price that the Dutch offered and went away. The decision to control the price of tea in a low range was an insult for the Chinese Emperor. He made a rule that no Chinese junks were join in the Batavia trade (Glamann, 1958: 217).

Soon after the Chinese Emperor prohibition, the Dutch realized that they made a mistake to not make a better deal with the Chinese junks. On the hand, the demand on tea increased and the Dutch had no distributor from China. The Dutch had to buy Chinese tea from the Portuguese traders. The Portuguese traders had a foothold in Macao, China. During this time, The Dutch suffered deficit because the Portuguese sold in a high price. This situation shows us that the Dutch did not consider about the Chinese character with high pride. Miscalculation had very bad consequences. The Dutch could not fulfill the European demand and got expensive price from the Portuguese. The Portuguese tried to get profit from this situation. They also tried to persuade the Chinese Emperor to keep the prohibition of his people to join the Batavia trade.

While the Dutch had to deal with the problem about the indirect trade with China, the European company saw an opportunity to join the tea trade in China. The failure of the Dutch to fill the demand of tea in Europe was one of the reasons. The EIC who were expelled from Bantam got a chance to do direct trade of Chinese tea trade in Canton. It got a foothold in Canton in 1717. There was another significance competitor in Chinese tea trade. It was the Ostend Company.¹ The *Heeren XVII* saw a bad result in the tea trade compared with the VOC's competitors in Canton. In 1718, Mr. Decquer, one of the EIC directors, came to the *Heeren XVII* to discuss the means which might be used by the two companies to prevent the trade from Ostend. This action show us how ambitious the English to win the tea trade. Relating to transportation, the Dutch did not need to spend much on tea got a cheaper price by not having a foothold in China and tea was not the VOC's main product.

1 The Ostend Company was established in 1722. The Austrian Emperor, Charles V, granted it a charter to join the global trade. The Ostenders consist of a group of traders from all around Europe.

The VOC tried to turn the situation upside down by stimulating the Chinese junks to Batavia. It did not work. In 1719, there was an order from the *Heeren XVII* to double the quantities of tea. This decision was stimulated by their competitor who did a direct trade in Canton. Another order was to get a better quality tea because there were complaints about the bad quality of the tea. The Dutch in Batavia did not see the advantages by join direct trade in China. According to them, it needed more preparation than the *Heeren XVII* thought.

Chinese junks had again made their appearance at Batavia in 1722. This appearance related to the Emperor Kan-hi's death. This appearance could not solve the quality tea problem. The tea that brought by Chinese junks to Batavia was left after the Europeans in Canton. Another problem came in 1720, there was a great fall in prices in Europe. The price of tea was not stable. There was going happened another turning point in 1730s.

Silver became one problem for the Dutch to do direct trade in China. China preferred silver to pay the tea. Because of that reason, the direct trade to China needed more than merchandise to pay. Silver was necessity and the VOC had not enough. On the other hand, the EIC had silver from its colonies in America. Once again, the EIC was one step ahead than the Dutch.

The Dutch was the first distributor of tea in Europe. Technically, the VOC was so conventional about the packaging of tea. The EIC and the Ostend had a better way to pack their product. It was important to keep the freshness and flavor of tea. The good quality of tea gave them more profit than the Dutch. They had to imitate their competitors in this field.

The company was again in serious situation. It reached the lowest price in 1725-1730. The competitor that granted by the Austrian Emperor, The Ostend company, was importing large quantities of tea. The Dutch was bothered by this fact. The EIC also felt the same way

about the Ostend Company. Based on the second Treaty of Vienna on March 1731, the Ostend Company was put an end under by the English, Dutch, France, and Prussian governments (Zhuang Guotu, 1994: 122).²

Finally, The *Heeren XVII* opened the direct route from Nederland to Canton in 1728. They gave an order to buy large quantities of tea. There was a report on the market in the Republic about the change of taste from Bohea tea to Green tea. This gave the Dutch a trouble because they concentrated on this kind of tea. On the other hand, it pleased the English who concentrated in Green tea. In 1727, the price of green tea rose further. There was a psychological effect of the Emperor Charles VI's decision about the suspension of the Ostend company in 1727 (Glamann, 1958: 226). An English correspondent to the Ostend Company commented on the Dutch decision to start a direct trade to China.

The Direct Trade 1729-1756

Based on Yong Liu, route of Chinese tea trade was divided into three period (Yong Liu, 2007: 4). The first route was the Republic-China-the Republic. It started in 1729 and ended in 1734. The second route was the Republic-Batavia-China-Batavia-the Republic. It began in 1735 and had to change in 1756. The last route was the Republic-Batavia-China-the Republic. This route became the most suitable route for the VOC. The Chinese tea trade of the VOC was in the golden age. This was last until the Anglo-Dutch War IV. While Yong Liu explained the years of the golden age, this paper will try explaining the first and second route.

The First Route

In 1729, the Dutch's ship shored at Macao. They began the trading within the rule that

² There were political circumstances in Austria. The Austria Emperor needed a support from the English, Dutch, France, and Prussian governments to maintain the throne.

was set up for the Europeans by Chinese authorities. In the same year, the Dutch made the first contract for tea. Around 1731-1735, the VOC sent eleven ships to purchase tea in Canton. The Dutch imports beat the English. The VOC's purpose was to increase supplies of the tea to the northwest European market. Then the supplies became greater than the consumption. It made the prices fall. The fall in prices promoted smuggling to England because England was the biggest market of tea in Europe. In 1733 there was a report about smuggling. All companies watched each other and together kept an eye in bad years of the selling of tea.

The first route to Canton needed an adjustment. The *Heeren XVII* took care of this. The VOC's ships from the Netherlands could not bring the goods that the Chinese wanted. While the Chinese wanted tropical goods, the Dutch brought textiles from the Republic, home goods. Based on this, the *Heeren XVII* changed the route. The ships had to depart from the Republic and stop by in Batavia to take the tropical products. This pattern began in 1735.

The Second Route

The direct trade from Europe to Canton was discontinued. The China trade in 1734 was reorganized under the Governor-General and Council at Batavia. The Dutch could not compete with the English's silver from the New World. By this way, they hoped that tropical goods in China could reduce the pressure on the company's resources of silver. The result was good. In 1735, the direct trade to China related to the shortage of money at Batavia. The EIC had the same problem. China did not need Indian goods that it offered. It became the reason for the increase of the trade of opium.

In 1750, the *Heeren XVII* gave a critique to the Batavia government that related to the tea trade. The *Heeren XVII* always put the Batavia governments under pressure to do tea trade.

They only saw that there was an opportunity to get more profit from tea trade. But the Batavia government saw that, in some stages, silver was not enough to purchase tea. It needed the support of silver, while the VOC had not much silver (Jacobs, 2006: 191).

The second route was the Republic-Batavia-China-Batavia-the Republic. It took more time than the first route. It was not good because tea will lose its freshness and flavor. Bad quality tea was not good for profit. Another problem was the result of tea trade was not good in the 1750s (Jacobs, 2006: 192). The Dutch had to change the route for the last time. In 1755, the *Heeren XVII* had the China committee to take care of the tea trade. In 1756, the China Committee was formed. It held its first meeting and sent the ship to China with a new route.

Conclusion

Chinese tea was a magnet for European companies in the late eighteenth century. They competed to each other to get more profit than the other. It was not easy to get a foothold in China. China had a big influence in Asia. Its capability to control the intra-Asian trade by tribute trade was proven. China's character dominated the intra-Asian trade. Its domination was shown in the Asian region. Despotism and hydraulic system were able to make China become the biggest power in Asia. China wanted to get a special treatment from others to show its domination. Canton system, kowtow ritual, and tribute trade system were applied to maintain the superiority of China in Asia.

Many people did not satisfy by the system in China. In the long run, by the end of the imperial period, there were movements that change China into republic. These events show us that the system in China was no longer matched in the modern world. Especially, the coming of the European companies brought a trade system that more fair in the capitalism system in the

nineteenth century. Even the Dutch had to join the system that the Chinese built, the English defeated the system and monopolized Chinese tea trade in 1784-1833.

Within the China's system, corruption was happened. In 1655, the VOC had to pay much money to get a foothold in China because of the bribe system. Unfortunately, the Emperor did not give permission to the VOC to join the trade in Canton. Other problem was the first ambassadors were not well-prepared about Chinese language and culture. The translation was depended on the limited understanding. The Chinese was meticulous about the rule to welcome the foreigners in their land. China character became an external factor for the difficulties of the VOC to join tea trade in China.

The internal factor came from the initiative of the VOC. From the very first time, the Dutch was only interested in Spice Island product. The VOC was blinded by the glorious of spice island product. It did not see other way to get profit. In some times, the Spice Island's product was high profitable. The VOC treated tea as a byproduct. The market demand was changed in the late of eighteenth century. The European wealthy society wished tea for more than the decade before.

The European companies competed to each other to get profit by distributing tea to Europe. The Dutch was the first tea importer. While the other European companies tried to do direct trade in China, the Dutch got tea from the Chinese junks in Batavia trade. Then there was a problem with the surplus of pepper and the China's emperor decision to prohibit Chinese junks to do the trade in Batavia. Because of this situation, the VOC had to buy tea from the Portuguese with expensive price. The VOC started to deficit.

The shifting power from Ming to Qing made the Chinese junks appear in Batavia trade. The VOC could get a good quality of tea. The VOC lost the chance to get a good quality of tea to its competitors in China. The *Heeren XVII* gave

order to do the direct Chinese tea trade in 1728. In 1729-1734, the VOC had the Netherlands-China-the Netherlands route. The VOC tried to sell 'home goods' in China. Unfortunately, Chinese did not want the home goods. They preferred to get 'Batavia goods'. At the same time, the EIC had American silver that China accepted as the payment for tea. The Dutch had no bullion to offer. The Dutch tried to pay tea with the spice that China want. The route of Chinese tea trade changed in 1735. The route was The Netherlands-Batavia-China-Batavia-the Netherlands. It took longer time to arrive in the Netherlands and it made the freshness of the fade away. In the end, the VOC found a solution to provide Chinese demand and to keep the tea fresh by the time arrived in the Netherlands. The solution was to change the route became The Netherlands-Batavia-China-the Netherlands.

It needed a hundred years for the VOC to achieve the golden age of Chinese tea trade. The VOC had to deal with many problems in the way to reach the golden age. It was too bad that the golden age of Chinese tea trade had ended in 1781. It was because of the Dutch was defeated by the English in Anglo Dutch IV War. The VOC never had a chance to continue Chinese tea trade. The VOC was defunct in 1799.

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