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THE PHILIPPINE COLONIAL ELITE AND THE EVANGELIZATION OF JAPAN

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We are currently witnessing an unprecedented level of interest in the field of researching the Spanish presence in Asia, although there are many who would opine that it still continues to be far from sufficient. However, despite this surge of interest, there is still a long way to go. One must acknowledge that the theme of the relations between the Japanese and the Castilians in the later decades of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, in which the Philippine enclave played a pivotal role, has generated more interest than other aspects, although there is still scope to further expound upon this subject. Thus, taking into consideration its duration and importance, one comes across a relatively large number of works related to this theme, both in terms of analytical works as well as with regard to the publication of primary source material. I believe that one can affirm that the most studied issues are the events that unfolded commencing with Rodrigo Vivero de Velasco's visit to Japan (1609-1610), his subsequent voyage accompanying a Japanese Embassy that set off for New Spain, and his sojourn in that country, (including a translation by Miguel León Portilla of a text written by Chimalpahin in the Nahuatl language which speaks of these exotic visitors), along with the Embassy of Vizcaíno to Japan and the so called

1 In addition to the well known works by C.R. Boxer, one can cite, amongst other works: M. León Portilla, "La Embajada de los Japoneses. El testimonio en náhuatl del cronista Chimalpahin", in *El Galeón del Pacífico* by V. Armella de Aspe et al., *Gobierno Constitucional del Estado de Guerrero*, Mexico, 1992; J. Gil, *Hidalgos y samuráis. España y el Japón en los siglos XVI y XVII*, *Alianza Universidad*, Madrid, 1991; L. Knauth, *Confrontación transpacífica. El Japón y el nuevo mundo hispánico, 1542-1639*, Mexico, *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, 1972.; W. M. Mathes, *Sebastián Vizcaíno y la expansión española en el Océano Pacífico. 1580-1630*, Mexico, *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, 1973; the articles by J.F. Schütte, "Don Rodrigo Vivero de Velasco y Sebastián Vizcaíno en el Japón", and A. Schwade, "Las primeras relaciones entre Japón y México, 1609-1615", in E. de La Torre Villar (co-ordination), *La expansión hispanoamericana en Asia. Siglos XVI y XVII*, Mexico, *Fondo de Cultura Económica*, 1980, pp. 96-122 and 123-133 respectively. One of the best published source material is the well known book of Don António de Morga, *Oidor of the Manila Audiencia*, and interim Governor of the Philippines between 1595 and 1596: *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*. Published for the first time in 1609, there have been several later editions and the work has been annotated by Rizal and by Retana. One can find an excellent new edition published by

Hasekura mission¹. The period prior to the departure of Vivero de Velasco from Manila has been studied in somewhat lesser detail. Owing to space constraints, I shall demarcate precisely these years of 1609-1610 as the final limit of my study, in which I have sought to shed light upon the attitude of the Philippine governments in the process of the development of the evangelization of Japan - an evangelization that was realized by Jesuits functioning under Portuguese directives - within the context of other, far vaster, issues that affected the Spanish colony.

With regard to the desire to intervene in the process of evangelization that was being carried out in their backyard, for the moment, one can affirm that there is apparently no doubt that the Spanish wanted to do so, in large part spurred by their rivalry with the Portuguese, who had overwhelmingly surpassed them in this field. In the words of Gil, "In the last decades of the 16th century, the evangelization of the Japanese islands had begun to wound the honour of the Spaniards"². Both Gil as well as Knauth consider that within these more or less intense aspirations of the Spaniards in their eagerness to spread the reach of the missions throughout the confines of Asia there were, however, other territories that attracted them even more. In the first place, China. However, for some, Japan and other areas were held to be of more interest than the Philippines, a region which they considered to be populated by uncouth people, who did not have great accomplishments, neither in terms of riches, nor in sophistication³. In reality, these were years of great disappointment for those who arrived at these beautiful islands, as they rapidly revealed themselves to be far from immediately productive or exploitable in the short term and, furthermore, were frontier territories with a notorious level of conflict. I believe that much of the attitude of the Spanish authorities in Asia was the result of precisely these specific tensions that continuously arose, unabated, in that remote outpost of the Empire.

One aspect that stands out in the documentation and the bibliography is the combination of factors that are intertwined within the theme pertaining to the manner in which the evangelization of Japan was envisaged, as seen from

by Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera that incorporates the commentaries by both of the abovementioned authors and includes hitherto unpublished texts by Morga, *Polifemo*, Madrid, 1997. This is the edition that I shall be utilizing for the purposes of this article, and I shall be referring to the detailed information provided by Retana, and the citations are according to the pages that are to be found in the volume prepared by P. Hidalgo.

² "En los últimos decenios del siglo XVI, la evangelización de las islas niponas, comenzó a picar la negra honrilla de los españoles" J. Gil, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

³ W. E. Retana, Notes to Morga, Nos. 62 and 63, pp. 102-104. L. Knauth, *op. cit.* pp. 42-47; J. Gil, *op. cit.*, Note 14, pp. 27.

the Philippine perspective, given that the sources that one comes across are an amalgamation of several distinct types of relations with this nation. These include: economic (mainly commercial) relations, technological co-operation, diplomatic, geopolitical and religious relations, and also include other aspects such as migration, the rivalry with the Portuguese, struggles with power groups, the war with the Dutch, etc. All these aspects, in their own way, had an impact upon the problematic process of the organization of a new colony, a process that was set in motion with the arrival of the Legazpi-Urdaneta expedition on the island of Cebu in 1565. However, in my opinion, this process really began with the conquest of Maynila or Maynilad from the Muslims in 1571, with the subjugation of the three Rajas who controlled this area in the Tagala region, and the installation of the Castilian government in the enclave situated in the bay, along with the subsequent erection of what would, from then on, be the capital and principal Spanish city of the colony, with its characteristic division of districts, both within and outside the city walls⁴.

It is interesting to note the relatively short duration of the successive governments that held sway in the Philippines between 1565 and 1616. In this period, spanning over fifty years, there were a total of fifteen Governors, including the interim Governors and a period in which the *Audiencia* assumed control of public affairs. Thus, the average government lasted three years and four months, which is not really very much when one takes into consideration the fact that the individuals nominated to the post of Governor and Captain General often arrived from Spain (or from Mexico in the case of the interim Governor, Don Rodrigo Vivero de Velasco) and were not very experienced or knowledgeable about the art of managing local affairs.

In effect, there was no dearth of difficulties that beset the new Asian possession. The territory undoubtedly represented a scenario that was very different from that which men who had generally been forged in the European and American context were used to dealing with. Even though one can affirm that the conquest of the Philippines - and the establishment of the round trip route from South East Asia to the coasts of North America - had been preceded by various failed attempts that provided valuable experience to some of the *conquistadores* who took part in the initial phase of the process of the annexation of these islands, it is equally true that, in terms of importance, they did not constitute a very significant number.

⁴ W. H. Scott, *Barangay. Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society*, Manila, *Ateneo de Manila University Press*, 1995, pp. 192-193; J. Montero y Vidal, *Historia General de Filipinas*, Tome I, Madrid, *Imprenta de Manuel Tello*, 1894.

The much sought after installation of the Spanish presence in the South China Sea implied interaction and relations with a complex series of neighbouring countries and peoples, a circumstance that would undoubtedly greatly influence the scenario in the context of the Hispano-American world.

Here, it was not a question of dominating vast territories between two immense oceans. On the contrary, in the Philippines, trade with neighbouring entities was, on the one hand, inevitable and, on the other, evidently very much desired by the Spaniards who, in large measure, finally organized their *modus vivendi* thanks to external trade and the transformation of the port complex of Manila-Cavite into an *entrepôt*, or an establishment that greatly resembled a Phoenician factory, as Díaz Trechuelo⁵ has pointed out. Trade relations with neighbouring regions acquired many different hues that one can perhaps, rather drastically, briefly sum up in three problematic vertices:

1) The real and presumed ambitions of expansion, conquest and annexation of additional territories apart from the Philippines. This is an area in which one must tread carefully, in order to avoid controversial statements and, likewise, avoid distortions of reality. However, nor can one avoid this aspect.

2) Dealing with a far less controversial subject, one can speak of the search for some diplomatic bases that were sufficiently firm and stable enough to achieve a framework of relations on an equal footing with the coastal territories of the South China Sea. This may well appear to be contradictory to what I have just finished mentioning in the first point, however, it is true that in these aspects, throughout these decades, there were a series of contradictions, which were both real and apparent.

3) The overwhelming necessity to procure certain products that could only be obtained by an exchange was responsible for ensuring that great attention was paid to commercial relations, not only to supply the Philippines but also to ensure supplies for the cargoes that the trans-Pacific galleons would carry to the territories of New Spain. This was of paramount importance due to the fact that the *conquistadores* and initial pioneers, amongst

⁵ M. L. Díaz – Trechuelo Spínola, *Historia económica de Filipinas en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII*, Manila, Cuadernos del Centro Cultural, MDB Printing Co., 1978, pp. 5-13.

whom Legazpi had distributed *encomiendas*, soon abandoned the rural areas and preferred to reside in Manila or in the surrounding areas. This was to result in the emergence of the characteristic phenomenon by which the greater part of the agriculture of the Philippines continued to be in the hands of the natives (although there were considerable changes due to the Spanish and also, perhaps, Chinese influence). This also resulted in another characteristic that was equally decisive in the history of this country: the power that the missionaries acquired at the very outset and the important positions that men of the cloth later held at the helm of the parishes in the rural areas.

Along with public offices, the trans-Pacific trade transformed itself into virtually the sole economic stimulus for the small Spanish community based in the capital - a community that included a group of American Creoles that formed part of the mercantile elite. This commerce was initially not sufficient to attract very many inhabitants of European origin but was, however, sufficient to attract the interest of a minority that prospered with a relatively high profit margin, a margin that was sufficient to compensate for the characteristically high risks that were an inevitable part of this trade, as well as to ensure the indispensable protection of the various power groups.

It is obvious that there was a manifest interest in maintaining commercial contact with Japan although, by no means should one exaggerate the role of the products originating from this country in the cargoes of the trans-Pacific ships. Amongst the wreckage of the "San Diego", a galleon that sank in Philippine waters in 1600 in the course of a naval battle with Dutch forces, one finds not just Japanese objects, but also evidence of the presence of people of Japanese origin⁶. Nevertheless, the relations between Japan and the galleons that plied the Manila-Acapulco route, fundamentally, had a dual purpose, incorporating both the importance of the Japanese articles as well as the desire to establish a platform to support the trans-Pacific traffic in those islands.

The former was represented by the purchase of a series of products in that neighbouring country, some of which were necessary for the shipbuilding industry. These requirements were very large in the Philippines, given that the turbulent nature of the colony soon manifested itself. Far from both the European homeland as well as from the American base of the empire, the

6 E. Veyrat, "Chronique d'une vie oubliée"; C. Delacour, "Des guerriers japonais", both articles from *Le San Diego. Un trésor sous la mer*, Paris, *Association Française d'Action Artistique/Réunion des Musées Nationaux*, 1994, pp. 160-183 and 214-219 respectively.

precarious situation of the new colony was very soon evident. These difficulties did not diminish with the consolidation of the New Spain axis and the development of Castilian relations with Asia, owing to the fact that the journey was exceedingly long and was, in effect, reduced to a single trans-Pacific voyage per year as a general rule, without taking into account the shipwrecks, emergency digressions and other situations that hampered the positive outcome of the crossing. The Spaniards were quick to make the most of the possibilities that the Philippines offered, and the overwhelming necessity to construct ships was soon evident. In rapid succession, a system of shipyards was established, where almost all the galleons of the trans-Pacific fleet were constructed. Even though the Spanish possession abounded in wood, cotton and resistant fibres it did, however, lack some of the other raw materials that were equally essential. Some of these did exist within the Philippines but were not exploited by the Castilians, primarily because they did not know where these deposits were to be found, but also because they were unable to reach them or utilize them to their advantage.

It is fairly clear that both parties, Japan as well as the Philippines, were interested in maintaining commercial relations. Juan Gil has published a substantial amount of information pertaining to the merchants, traffic, commodities and capital of this trade, which clearly shows us that the commercial exchange was considerable and rose steadily during the course of several years. The principal products that were of interest to the Spaniards included copper, nails, gunpowder, sulphur, flour etc, while the Japanese apparently constituted a good market for the re-export of Chinese silks etc.

Commercial relations with the Philippines existed prior to the conquest of the islands, however the Spanish presence undoubtedly stimulated the development and growth of trade. One outcome was the consequent establishment of a Japanese community, which was apparently based mainly in Luzon. By the end of the 16th century Manila, which had also created a special quarter for its Chinese residents in 1581 known as the "Parián de los Sangleyes"⁷, demarcated an area for their northern neighbours, a quarter which was to be known as the "Parián de los Japones". Don Antonio Morga, in his celebrated work affirms that, at the end of the 16th century, there were some five hundred Japanese resident in this quarter. However, for more or less the same chronological period, some authors opine that the number of Japanese resident in the country was considerably higher, placing the figure at fifteen hundred or even more individ-

7 A. M. Molina, *Historia de Filipinas*. Tome I, Madrid, *Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana*, 1984, p. 79; M. L. Díaz – Trechuelo Spínola, *Arquitectura española en Filipinas (1565-1800)*, Seville, *EEHA*, 1959, pp. 23-26.

uals⁸. If we compare this with the number of resident Spaniards, the Japanese constitute a significant percentage of the population. The greater part of this community consisted of merchants or individuals linked to mercantile traffic in a greater or lesser degree, however, when the anti-Christian persecution in Japan intensified there were also many Japanese Catholics who took refuge in the Philippines. For some of them, perhaps, these islands may have been a much desired and idealized land, due to the official character of the Catholic religion. Neither should one forget that the first centre to offer refuge to women in the Philippines was not established by the Spaniards, but rather, was founded by a Japanese nun, Sister Julia Nyato, a little known and interesting fact of Philippine history. This centre, which existed between 1614 and 1656, was known as the “Beaterio de Miyako”⁹.

The second vertex mentioned above was realized with the intention of strengthening amicable relations with the Japanese authorities sufficiently, in order to be able to count on a support base in Japan and, thus, resolve the problems posed by the crossing between Manila and Acapulco. It is well known that it was necessary to utilize the route in that direction to avail of the anti trade winds of the North Pacific. For part of the way, the galleons navigated along the Kuro Siwo current and sailed relatively close to the Japanese coastline. This fact resulted in several phenomena, amongst which was the very logical desire on the part of the Spanish to obtain the assistance of Japanese ports along a route in which they had no bases, so that the Japanese coastline could provide sites for stopovers during the first phase of a sea voyage that lasted approximately six months, if not even more, and did not touch land at all apart from the extreme southern tip of Baja California, that too only on some voyages. In this initial part of the voyage, when they headed North-North East from the Philippines, the ships could suffer serious damage or reveal malfunctions that needed to be repaired, as well as the fact that it could be necessary to re-stock the ships with various provisions. For this purpose, the Japanese ports were not only ideal but were, perhaps, the only ports that could serve Spanish interests. This fact is sufficiently borne out by the history of the various shipwrecks, which was linked to the fortunes of relations between the Spaniards and Japanese during this period. During one point of time, it seemed that this ambition was to become reality, owing to the interest manifested by Ieyasu with regard to trade with New Spain. This aspect

8 A. de Morga, *op. cit.* pp. 321-322; I. Alva, *Vida municipal en Manila (Siglos XVI-XVII)*, Córdoba, *Universidad de Córdoba*, 1997, p.34; C. Delacour, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-219.

9 There exists a Doctoral thesis about this nunnery by Ignacia Kataoka, which I was unable to consult. I thank Father Jesús López Gay for the information.

has often been highlighted, both with reference to the exchange of commodities, men and technology, as also the possibility of being able to intervene directly in this trade and navigation¹⁰.

And was it possible for the Philippine authorities to realize relations on an equal footing with neighbouring nations? There were many obstacles even if one were to assume that there was sufficient goodwill on the part of all entities involved, a fact that seems rather improbable given that the presence of the newly arrived Spaniards generated a suspicious reaction and caused apprehensions all around. There were fears that the Castilians would attempt some kind of armed aggression, even more so due to the fact that the Spaniards made no attempt to conceal their interventionist intentions and, likewise, by their open avowal to evangelize and defend the Catholic faith, which they considered to be the only true religion. In this remote outpost, the Spaniards soon felt that they were surrounded by an overwhelmingly hostile environment and feared that their neighbours could be plotting to conquer this new possession. The Castilians feared that the establishment of their presence in the Philippines would fire the ambitions of other powers with sufficient military might to try and expel the Spanish population from the archipelago, a community that was, in general, always very conscious of the fact that they lacked sufficient military resources to defend themselves against any serious threat. Coupled with external attacks such as those by Li Ma Hong, Tay Fusa and the war in the Southern Philippines, these apprehensions were further compounded by the Dutch presence in the area, which took the European conflict to the very doorstep of Manila, and posed an additional menace.

The phenomenon of piracy was at the same time both a source of worry but also a form of contact between Japan and the Spanish colony. Shortly after the Castilians had established themselves in Manila, there occurred an event that had a great impact upon the psyche of the recent settlers and created a precedent that would influence the course of the colony's future: an attempted invasion, or at least a serious attack on a large scale, perpetrated by a group of Chinese under the command of an individual known as Li Ma Hong, who had been classified as an outlaw by both the Spanish and continental Chinese authorities. Montero y Vidal stresses that the Spanish establishment was on the verge of being lost in the face of an attack by an

10 This has been mentioned several times in the articles by Schwade and Schütte which I have cited above, as also in V. Coutinho, *O fim da presença portuguesa no Japão*, Lisbon, *Sociedade Histórica da Independência de Portugal*, 1999, p. 30; T. Nakamae, "Primeros contactos de la Nueva España con Japón", in C. Barrón - R. Rodríguez Ponga, *La presencia novohispana en el Pacífico insular*, Mexico, *Universidad Iberoamericana/Embajada de España etc.*, 1990, pp. 187-193.

armed force consisting of sixty two *sampans*, with four thousand men, one thousand five hundred women etc. The greater part of the invading forces consisted of Chinese, although there was also a significant Japanese participation, personified by no less than the so called General Sicco, the lieutenant of the main leader, who was the mastermind of the attacks against Manila. He later succumbed in one of the attacks of the campaign¹¹.

The Northern regions of the island of Luzon were frequented by Japanese. In 1582, a “pirate” of Japanese origin, known as Tay Fusa, Taifuzu or Zaizufu in the Spanish sources, attacked the coastal areas of Ilocos and Cagayán. The then Governor General of the Philippines, Don Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa (1580-1583), sent an expedition commanded by Juan Pablo de Carrión to combat the growing number of Japanese marauders who had entrenched themselves in that area, and from then on, the region was incorporated into the Spanish territories. However, the “pirate attacks” did not end there, and were to repeat themselves on successive occasions. So much so that, when the Castilians intensified relations with Ieyasu, one of the Spanish petitions requested that he control the activities of the pirates, a request upon which the Shogun apparently did act, at least up to a certain point, as the sources comment upon this with some satisfaction¹².

Likewise, the internal situation within the Philippines was no less difficult in these turbulent decades. This was due to the forms in which the conquest was realized, and also to the presence of Asian minorities in the Philippines such as, for example, the Chinese and Japanese communities. Members of both these ethnic communities, as well as groups of Malays, played a prominent role in insurrections against the colonial authorities. Even though, as far as we know, these individuals did not act in conjunction with one another, in the context of pre-existing suspicions, fears, and rumours these actions heightened the prevailing atmosphere of paranoia. One of the first internal threats was related with precisely one such attempt at intervention by the Japanese. This incident took place during the tenure of the Governor Don Santiago de Vera (1584-1590) - according to the Philippine historian Antonio M. Molina - when a rebellion suddenly broke out, headed by the erstwhile *Rajas* who had formerly ruled the Manila area and had been displaced by the Spaniards. One of them, to seal the pact of friendship that had been made in the initial phase of contact with the Spaniards, had assumed the name of Agustín Legazpi:

11 J. Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-76

12 A. de Morga, *op. cit.*, p.58; W. E. Retana, notes nos. 43, 44, 62 to Morga, pp. 61-62 and 102; L. Knauth, *op. cit.*, p. 49; J. Gil, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

“In effect, the new order of affairs could not but irk some of the erstwhile native rulers, who sorely missed their former power and authority and their slaves, who had now been emancipated. Amongst these chiefs, the figure of Agustín Legazpi stands out who, as his name indicates, is a new convert. He is the nephew of Lakandula and the son-in-law of the Sultan of Borneo. Along with assistance from Mágat Salámat, son of the late *Raja* Lakandula, and from Martín Panga, the native Governor of Tondo, who was also a cousin of both of them, he conspired to overthrow the Government established by the Spaniards and to either kill them or expel them from the country. In 1587, a Japanese ship anchored in Manila. Agustín Legazpi struck up a friendship with the Captain, inviting him to his house in Tondo on several occasions. Through an interpreter, Dionisio Fernández, the group of conspirators, which included Mágat Salámat, Agustín Manúguit, Felipe Salila and Gerónimo Bassi, made a deal with the Japanese Captain, called Gayo, by which the latter would return with arms and soldiers and would covertly assist them in assassinating the Spaniards. Agustín Legazpi would subsequently be proclaimed the new monarch of the kingdom and the tributes and spoils would be divided into equal shares, amongst Agustín Legazpi and his Japanese allies. The pact was sealed with some ritual ceremonies”¹³.

The conspiracy met with much success and gained numerous new allies until it was discovered and put to an end with harsh measures by the Castilian authorities. Retana considers this movement to be the “first separatist conspiracy planned by the Filipinos against Spanish domination”. Amongst the conspirators condemned in “that *katipunan*” one comes across

13 “En efecto, el nuevo orden de cosas no deja de molestar a algunos anteriores régulos, que echan de menos su autoridad de mando y sus esclavos, ahora emancipados. Entre estos jefes, destaca Agustín Legazpi, recién converso, como su nombre indica. Es sobrino de Lakandula y yerno del sultán de Borneo. Con la colaboración solicitada de Mágat Salámat, hijo del difunto rajá Lakandula, y de Martín Panga, gobernador nativo de Tondo, también primo de ambos, juntos conspiran para derrocar al Gobierno establecido por los españoles y matarlos o expulsarlos del país. En 1587 un buque japonés atraca en Manila. Agustín Legazpi traba amistad con su capitán, invitándole a varias reuniones en su casa de Tondo. Por medio del intérprete, Dionisio Fernández, los conspiradores, entre ellos Mágat Salámat, Agustín Manúguit, Felipe Salalila, y Gerónimo Bassi, convienen con el capitán japonés, de nombre Gayo, en que éste volvería con soldados y armas, y solapadamente les ayudarían a asesinar a los españoles, proclamarían a Agustín Legazpi nuevo monarca del reino y dividirían los tributos a cobrar por partes iguales, entre Agustín Legazpi y los aliados japoneses. Se sella el convenio con unas ceremonias rituales.”, A. M. Molina, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

mention of “Dionisio Fernández, Japanese: interpreter of Agustín Legazpi’s dealings with the Japanese Captain, Juan Gayo”¹⁴. Several years later, the Philippines were to witness uprisings by Japanese who had settled in Luzón. Morga mentions one such uprising and Juan Gil speaks of the existence of another in 1608. This heightened the fears of the Castilians, even though they did not, however, proceed to expel all the Japanese residents, nor did they close the doors of the country to merchants of Japanese origin¹⁵.

The already unstable atmosphere was further heightened in this period due to another event. There is no need to explain the importance of trans-Pacific relations for the Spaniards based in the Philippines. Although the world’s largest ocean has been referred to as “the Spanish lake”¹⁶, I do not really subscribe to this view. However, it is necessary to take into consideration the events that began with incursions by other powers, initially by the British, and later, by the Dutch. Even though these incursions were sporadic as compared to the regularity of the Spanish voyages, they caused much anxiety and fear, even more so when this direct “knowledge” of the Pacific by powers considered to be enemies was linked with attacks on the colonies in America and the Philippines.

In 1576-1577, John Oxenham arrived in Panama and subsequently traversed the isthmus, continuing westwards until he reached the Pacific whence forth he proceeded to raid and pillage for quite some time before he was finally captured by the Spanish and brought to justice in Lima. He had the distinction of being the first to reach the South Seas, but was soon followed by the more well known voyage of Sir Francis Drake (1577-1579), who entered these waters by the Straits of Magellan, and subsequently traversed the Pacific, inspiring great enthusiasm and much ostentatious propaganda upon his return to England. Ten years later, Cavendish (1587) captured the first of the four Manila galleons that fell into enemy hands, during the course of the history of this maritime route. The galleon in question was the “Santa Ana”, a ship with a capacity of six hundred tons according to Schurz, that the English, who had been lying in wait in Cape San Lucas, sighted during the final leg of the crossing from Manila to Acapulco. The booty captured by the English was substantial, giving rise to the legend of the Galleon from Manila, and the ship’s loss caused considerable heartache to the Spanish¹⁷.

14 W. E. Retana, note no. 49 to Morga, p. 72

15 A. de Morga, *op.cit.*, pp. 197-212; Ch. H. Cunningham, *The Audiencia in the Spanish Colonies as Illustrated by the Audiencia of Manila*, New York, Gordian Press, 1971, p. 318.

16 The Pacific Ocean was termed the “Spanish lake” by W. L. Schurz in the title of a chapter in his book *The Manila Galleon*, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1939, as well as in the title of one of his articles. Later, O. H. K. Spate published a book by the same name: *The Spanish Lake*, Australia, University of Minnesota Press, 1979.

17 O. H. Spate, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-264; S. Bernabeu, *El Pacífico ilustrado; del lago español a las grandes expediciones*, Madrid, Mapfre, 1992, pp. 57-90.

The Dutch also made several incursions into the Pacific by the Straits of Magellan, i.e. via the westward route and the southernmost regions of America. The first instance was the expedition initially headed by Jacob Mahu and Simon de Cordes that set sail from Rotterdam in 1598. One of the ships of this expedition, the “Liedfe”, would later reach Japanese shores, carrying on board William Adams, the Englishman who was to play such an important role (or at least to whom this importance has been attributed) in some aspects of the relations between the Spaniards and the Japanese. In the same year, another expedition, commanded by Olivier Van Noort, set sail from Holland and proceeded to carry out many raids in the vicinity of Manila, resulting in the famous naval battle of 1600. Díaz Trechuelo has provided us with an excellent summary of the conflicts that epitomized the Dutch presence in the Philippines, whose waters served as an extended theatre of battle for the war of independence being waged by the Netherlands. Despite the prevailing atmosphere of insecurity and woe, the Spanish possession proceeded to make great investments in its defenses and made an extraordinary effort to protect itself¹⁸.

What the Spaniards would, for a long time, term “the poverty of the country” was soon patently obvious to the colonizers. As early as 1583, the first Bishop of the colony, Friar Domingo de Salazar, commented upon the lamentable state of the economy¹⁹, the same year in which a devastating fire broke out that destroyed much of Manila, a city that had initially been constructed with the traditional Filipino building materials, i.e. “reeds and palms”²⁰. In the aftermath of this contretemps, the capital was rebuilt, this time with stone edifices, and its rebirth from the ashes was symbolic of the Spanish aspirations for the new colony. The Castilian authorities sought to organize the territory along the pattern of the American colonies, which presented them with the conundrum of maintaining, at least in the judicial aspect, a degree of dependence with regard to New Spain, that is to say - as was to finally happen - to create their own *Audiencia* in the Philippines²¹. In the midst of debates, controversies, acrimony and internal tensions, the first steps towards the institutionalization of the colony were made. The territory would subsequently acquire the trappings of a Spanish colony in its administrative, religious and judicial aspects but, at the same time, was also to have many distinct and unique characteristics.

18 M. L. Díaz – Trechuelo Spínola, “Las Filipinas en su aislamiento bajo el continuo acoso”, in *Historia General de España y América...*, Madrid, Rialp, 1984, Tome IX, 2, pp. 129-153; A. de Morga, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-187; *Le San Diego. Un trésor sous la mer*.

19 W. E. Retana, Note no. 47 to Morga, p. 65.

20 “De caña y nipa”, J. Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, p. 87; M. L. Díaz – Trechuelo Spínola, *Arquitectura...*, pp. 10-11.

21 Ch. H. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-82.

The ecclesiastical administration was also organized at this juncture. As is obvious, this process began with the foundation of missions. The first friars to arrive in the Philippines were the Augustinians, who set forth with the Legazpi expedition. The number of missionaries was always far from sufficient, but despite this handicap they laid the primary foundations for later evangelical achievements and the conversion to Christianity of the vast majority of the inhabitants of this country. When the Franciscans arrived in 1577, the Augustinian missionaries had already established several missions and would, from then on, have to share the territory with members of other Orders.

From 1581 onwards, ecclesiastical authority was centred upon the Episcopal personage, as has been highlighted by Gaspar de San Agustín. The same year was to witness the arrival of the first Jesuits. The Dominicans arrived in 1587, having been preceded by an eminent member of their Order, Friar Domingo de Salazar, who was the first Bishop of the Asian colony. Later, the seat was elevated to an independent Archbishopric of New Spain, with four dioceses: Manila, Camarines-Nueva Cáceres, Ilocos-Nueva Segovia and Cebú. After the arrival of the Augustinian friars, these broad guidelines of the spiritual geography of the islands continued uninterrupted until the moment in which the Jesuits were expelled in the second half of the 18th century²².

There was no dearth of tensions between the missionaries and the lay authorities in the course of the history of the Spanish Philippines. However, one of the greatest controversies erupted in the final decades of the 16th century, when both Bishop Salazar as well as a large number of missionaries denounced the abuses perpetrated by the *encomenderos* and other individuals with regard to the native inhabitants. They were, likewise, very critical of the system of exacting tributes, realized by a complicated process that was based upon models which had been developed years ago in Spanish America. This set of diatribes, which questioned the very basis of the rights of sovereignty, is considered to be a later reflection of these tensions²³. But would this situation have had much weight in the pressure that the missionaries exercised upon the lay authorities with regard to the delicate issue of sending missionary friars to Japan and the dispute between Jesuits and members of other Orders?

There is no doubt that the Philippines lived in the midst of turbulent times and its strife ridden social environment only served to further complicate the already difficult relations with the Asian minorities based in the

22 M. F. G. de Los Arcos, *Estado y clero en las Filipinas del siglo XVIII*. Mexico, *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana*, 1989, pp. 48-51.

23 J. Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, p. 42; P. Hidalgo Nuchera, *Encomiendas, tributos y trabajo en Filipinas (1570-1608)*, Madrid, *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid/Polifemo*, 1995, pp. 155-218.

islands as well as hindered contacts - which were not necessarily always peaceful - with neighbouring nations. Did the Spanish colonizers nurture ambitions of expanding into other Asian territories? Although the response to this question is undoubtedly affirmative, it is also necessary, however, to balance all the aspects of this answer²⁴. It is a well known fact that some Spaniards considered the possibility of conquering China. The most famous of these projects was the proposal that the Philippine Governor Don Francisco de Sande sent to Phillip II in 1576, which was soundly rejected by the Spanish monarch. Nevertheless, other opinions continued to circulate, including the suggestion that it might suit Spanish purposes to form an alliance with the Japanese, who were notoriously hostile to the Heavenly Empire, in order to attack China²⁵. However, despite these proposals no concrete attempt to realize these plans ever materialized, and neither did Japan make any overtures, although, as is well known, there were numerous suggestions and fears on their part.

On the contrary, the arrival of Spanish friars from the Philippines in Japan was initially the result of chance events, as happened with Friar Juan Pobre and his three companions. The internal situation in Japan afforded them a valuable contact in the form of Matsuura Takanobu, the lord of Hirado. Probably, this warlord was interested in the Franciscan and Augustinian presence because his enemies maintained relations with the Jesuits and with the Portuguese²⁶. The long sought after participation in the missions in Japan was clearly a watershed event in the Hispano-Portuguese rivalry as well as in the dispute between Jesuits and missionaries belonging to other Orders²⁷. In fact, from what we can gather from the documentation that has been published to date²⁸, the presence of the friars from Manila presented the authorities with a situation in which their apostolic activity was very welcome and well received in Japan, but these missionaries were, however, unable to realize their activities because the Jesuits would not permit intrusions into what they considered to be their domain. Nevertheless, contacts were esta-

24 F. Rodao, *Espanoles en Siam (1540-1939). Una aportación al estudio de la presencia hispana en Asia*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1997, pp. 8-10.

25 J. Gil, *op. cit.*, note no. 3, p. 32

26 *Ibidem*, p. 34; L. Knauth, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

27 J. P. Oliveira e Costa, "A rivaldade luso-espanhola no Extremo Oriente e a querela missionalógica no Japão", in R. Carneiro - A. T. de Matos, Eds., *O Século Cristão do Japão. Actas do Coloquio Internacional Comemorativo dos 450 anos de amizade Portugal-Japão (1543-1993)*, Lisbon, Centro de Estudos dos Povos e Culturas de Expressão Portuguesa da Universidade Católica Portuguesa/Instituto de História de Além-Mar da Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 1994, pp. 477-524.

28 J. Gil, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-34.

blished before the final decade of the 16th century, that preceded later contacts, which would, in the words of Juan Gil, greatly enthuse the missionaries. Gil is of the opinion that there were no lasting results of great importance, neither in the diplomatic context nor in the commercial scenario²⁹.

In 1592, events took a very different turn, as the Spanish felt themselves to have been seriously violated and threatened by the missive that Hideyoshi sent them through an “embassy”. It was feared that the Japanese were planning a military attack on Manila or an invasion of the Philippines. The Japanese were considered to be formidable warriors and the Spanish authorities feared that the Japanese interest in invading Korea could, instead, target the islands situated to the South of the Japanese archipelago. It was even suggested that the Spanish capture Formosa to establish a vanguard that would enable Spanish forces to repel any attacks coming from the North. The Japanese community resident in Manila was considered to be highly suspect, as it was possible that these individuals could have been employed as spies or conspirators by Hideyoshi. There were proposals made to the effect that the authorities should insist upon their vassalage and submission, an act which, according to Morga, had widespread consequences upon the commercial relations and peaceful co-existence that the Spaniards maintained with the Japanese³⁰.

Retana has published a letter penned by Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas dated May, 1592 and addressed to the King, in which he speaks of the damage caused by some Japanese corsairs in the coastal areas of Ilocos and the disputes that had taken place with the natives. His inquietude is clearly evident, owing to the fact that some Chinese merchants who had arrived in the Philippines from Japan, had reported that each Japanese province had been ordered to construct three ships and, given that there were more than sixty provinces, this figure could translate into one hundred and eighty ships in which more than a hundred thousand men could set sail for the Philippines³¹. In another letter dated 12th June of the same year, Dasmariñas proposed an alliance with either Japan or China to the Spanish monarch. He was apparently more inclined to an alliance with the latter, because even though he greatly lauded the Japanese spirit and capacity for work, he also considered that they were not to be trusted and had expelled the Jesuits from their country, decreeing that Christianity was not to be preached in their kingdom - a reference to the edict of 1587³² which was not complied with.

²⁹ *Ibidem* p. 35.

³⁰ A. de Morga, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-108.

³¹ W. E. Retana, Note to Morga no. 62, p. 102.

³² *Ibidem*.

Nor did a new embassy sent by Hideyoshi manage to calm these fears. That very year, Dasmariñas sent a group of Franciscans to Japan, a group which included Friar Pedro Bautista who confirmed Hideyoshi's aggressive intentions, and subsequently there was much diplomatic activity on the part of the authorities in Manila. Initially, Hideyoshi treated the Franciscans well, even arranging a site for them to build a convent in Miyako and, in 1595, five brothers of this order were resident there. However, the situation would change dramatically in the wake of the shipwreck of the "San Felipe". As is well known, after the ill-fortuned Spanish ship was obliged to come ashore on the Japanese coast, its cargo was confiscated by the authorities of the *Taycosama*. As this incident took place just before the martyrdom of 1587, Morga is of the opinion that the fact that the friars requested the devolution of the ship's cargo, presumably of a fairly high value, had much to do with the terrible verdict. He also highlights that the inopportune opinions expressed by the pilot, Francisco de Landa, provoked great irritation, as he bragged that the arrival of the Spanish missionaries was but a preparatory manoeuvre for a subsequent Castilian conquest of Japan. Likewise, Hideyoshi's religious policy, which sought to control religious practices and beliefs, has been cited as another possible cause. The necessity to put up a show of force to deter the Spaniards was, perhaps, also another consideration. Before the executions decreed by Hideyoshi were carried out, Friar Martin de Aguirre wrote to Morga and emphatically stressed upon Hideyoshi's ambitions of capturing Manila³³.

However, events took such a turn that it became necessary to seek other explanations. Retana states that Morga was more explicit in a letter to the King, "insinuating that the martyrdom of the six Franciscan friars was due to the adroit manoeuvres of the Portuguese and the Jesuits, both of whom wanted to maintain a monopoly of the conversions in Japan"³⁴. Friar Miguel de Benavides, the Bishop elect of New Segovia, said exactly the same thing. Hidalgo has published the letter penned by Morga which Retana has mentioned, in which it is stated that the "King" of Japan was a deceitful and arrogant barbarian, who was not to be trusted to keep his word:

33 A. de Morga, *op. cit.*, p.123; F. Goddio, "Le début d'une aventure", in *Le San Diego. Un trésor sous la mer*, p. 46. In the same volume, also see the articles mentioned above by E. Veyrat and C. Delacour; W. L. Schurz, *op. cit.*, pp.102-103, a more complete interpretation is offered by P. Nosco's study presented at the same conference.

34 "Insinuando que el martirio que sufrieron los seis franciscanos debióse a los manejos de los portugueses y de los jesuitas los cuales querian tener en el Japón el monopolio de las conversiones", W. E. Retana, Note to Morga no. 79, p. 188.

“and that the Portuguese who are working in that Kingdom wish to see us banished from there and did not work in our favour during the shipwreck of the said ship; and neither did the missionaries, in what was done to them [the friars] who, shortly prior to this, had been treated very badly by the missionaries of the Society and by their Bishops who were there to see us evicted from that Kingdom, as came to pass, leaving them alone with those conversions, to do as they willed.....”³⁵

Retana is of the opinion that both the Japanese and the Spaniards were interested in maintaining a good relationship and that this would have been possible:

“And with some skillful politics this would have been possible. However, on the one hand, the missionaries dabbled in areas where they were not welcome, and on the other, a truly vicious schism took place between the friars and the Jesuits. As a result, Spain lost its goodwill and commercial privileges with a country with which it was of great importance to maintain friendly relations”³⁶.

Retana even goes so far as to affirm that Hideyoshi was right to order the martyrdom of the six Franciscan and eighteen Japanese Christians (the friars were Fr. Pedro Bautista, Fr. Martin de Aguirre, Fr. Felipe de las Casas, Fr. Gonzalo Garcia, Fr. Francisco Blanco and Fr. Francisco de San Miguel) given that the friars had violated the law of the land, had disobeyed the authorities and had created a serious antagonism between the rulers and their subjects³⁷.

The Philippine authorities were influenced by the Mendicant Orders and when they came to know of the martyrdom of 1597, the Spaniards were greatly moved by the news. The impact was felt not just by the Spaniards resident in the Philippines but also those in Spain, the Americas and the entire

35 “Y que los portugueses que asisten en aquel Reyno nos desean ver desterrados de allí y no hicieron buen tercio en el subceso de la dicha nao; y aunque los religiosos tampoco lo tuvieron en lo que ellos se hizo y poco antes habían recibido grandes molestias de los religiosos de la Compañía y de sus Obispos que allí estaban para verlos hechar de aquel Reyno, como se a hecho, quedándose ellos solos en aquella conversión, como quedan muy a su contento...”, letter from Don Antonio de Morga to the King, Manila, 30th June, 1597, in the same volume in which the *Sucesos...* has been published, p. 514.

36 “Y con una política hábil se hubiera conseguido. Pero de una parte los predicadores se metían donde nadie les llamaba y de otra que entre frailes y jesuitas sobrevino una escisión, verdaderamente odiosa, el resultado fue que España perdió sus tratos amistosos y comerciales con un país que como el Japón tanto nos convenía tenerlo como amigo”, W. E. Retana, Note to Morga no. 80, p. 189.

37 *Ibidem*. Note no. 81, p. 189.

Hispanic world in general when they came to know of the incident. Carletti, who arrived in Nagasaki in June in that very year, felt himself obliged to pen an eyewitness account to the events that had unfolded a few months ago, when he wrote his famous book³⁸. Apart from this rather interesting anecdote, one would do well to bear in mind the importance of San Felipe de Jesús, “The first Creole saint”, in the hearts of the faithful in Mexico³⁹. In a prominent place in the interior of the walls of the cathedral in Cuernavaca one finds, albeit in a lamentable state of conservation, a set of murals in which is depicted a historic version of the presence of the friars in the dominions of the *Taycosama* and the crucifixion of the Christians by his decree. However, in the Philippines, the fear and sense of hostility that the Spanish felt on the part of the Japanese authorities was considerably heightened. The version that the Jesuits had strongly opposed the Franciscan presence and even forbidden the Japanese from attending the services of the Franciscan friars or from having any dealings with them, once Hideyoshi had authorized the permanence of the Franciscans (since 1594), soon gained currency. Father Bautista wrote to Manila in this regard. A second reunion of theologians was convened, which decided in favour of the Franciscans. Montero y Vidal stresses that amongst the causes and conditioning factors in the decision to proceed with the death sentences and subsequent executions was the fact that, in 1596, a terrible earthquake rocked Japan, an event that created an atmosphere which was ripe for gaining new souls, when the shipwrecked galleon “San Felipe”, bound for New Spain at the behest of Don Matias de Landecho, appeared on the Japanese coast. The same author further recounts how solemn honours were prepared in Manila, even reaching a point of requesting the canonization of the martyrs. It was decided to send an embassy to Hideyoshi to present a complaint about his conduct and demand the bodies of the executed martyrs along with the value of the goods that had been peremptorily confiscated. The embassy was headed by Don Luis Navarrete Fajardo accompanied by the Portuguese nobleman Dom Diego de Sousa. They were well received. Navarrete Fajardo died and Sousa dispatched the relics to Manila in a box that was lost *en route*. Montero y Vidal refers to Fr. Francisco de San Antonio as well as the excuses proffered by Hideyoshi⁴⁰.

Morga deals with Hideyoshi’s death and the subsequent events that unfolded. The danger of an offensive against Manila receded as it appeared that

38 F. Carletti, *Razonamientos de mi viaje alrededor del mundo (1594-1606)*. I have used the edition published by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1976, pp. 110-112.

39 R. Kawata, “La carrera política del Santo Criollo”, in *La presencia...*, pp. 157-185.

40 J. Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-131.

Farandqueimon no longer had any intentions “of making an attack upon Manila, and no more was spoken of it”. No doubt, “as the affairs of Japan are never stable, and there is always confusion, the situation in which the *Tayco* had left matters could not continue in that manner for very long”. This obviously referred to the political problems that emerged during the process of succession and the assumption of power by “Yeyasudono”, who “changing his name (as the lords of Japan customarily do), took the name of Daifusama for greater dignity”⁴¹.

An interview took place between Ieyasu and Friar Jerónimo de Jesús. The missionary had been a companion of the martyrs of 1597 and had gone underground to avoid Hideyoshi’s persecution. He spoke of the accomplishments of the mendicant missionaries in Japan to the *Daifusama*, as well as of the numbers of converts and the building of hospitals. He, likewise, spoke about the poverty of the friars and of their contacts with the needy. They also discussed issues, which were of interest to the Shogun, pertaining to commerce with the Philippines and with New Spain. Ieyasu was more interested in an exchange of merchandise and less inclined to learn more about the Catholic religion. He envisaged that merchants could come to Japan from these territories and that Japanese merchants could travel to New Spain. The necessity of having European style ships was no impediment to this plan, given that it was possible to construct these vessels in Japan itself, if “the Governor of Manila would send him officials and master craftsmen who could construct these ships”. They also spoke about the silver mines. Ieyasu revealed himself to be very favourably inclined to commercial and naval co-operation with the Philippines⁴². However, it was also claimed that the Shogun had given his permission for missionaries to go to Japan and establish churches and monasteries, a fact that Morga vehemently denies:

“Friar Geronimo added this to the matters that the Daifu had actually dealt with, and he said this with deceit and cunning; in order to move the missionaries from the Philippines, so that each one would exert themselves in their responsibilities, the request for commerce made to the Governor and Audiencia, so that one could reach an agreement with more facilities, and also not lose the progress that Friar Geronimo claimed had been achieved”⁴³.

41 “Y mudando el nombre (como hacen los señores del Japón) se llamó Daifusama por más dignidad”, A. de Morga, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-164.

42 *Ibidem*, pp. 165-166.

43 “Esto añadió fray Gerónimo, a lo que Daifu avía tratado, y lo dijo con artificio y maña; para mover a los religiosos de Filipinas, a que todos tomasen de mejor gana a su cargo, la solicitud de negocio con el gobernador y audiencia, para que con mas facilidades se viniese en todo a ello, por no perder lo mucho que fray Gerónimo decía que tenía andado”, *Ibidem*, p. 167.

However, even though commercial and diplomatic relations did improve, it was also apparent that the missionary presence was not altogether agreeable in the eyes of the new Japanese authorities. Takahiro Nakamae stresses that when, at that juncture, Ieyasu had sought trade and co-operation in the mining sector, with every passing moment in which this failed to materialize, he became more and more perturbed, more so when he saw missionaries arriving in Japan instead of merchants. “This unilateral attitude would give rise to a new cycle in the history of bad relations with Japan”⁴⁴. It is said that Don Francisco Tello de Guzmán, who was Governor of the Philippines between 1596 and 1602, was rather hesitant when it came to taking relevant action to intensify commercial ties, but the flow of missionaries, however, continued unabated and Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians continued to arrive on the shores of Japan. Even though the missions were combined with the transport of articles for trade, Ieyasu soon manifested his displeasure and sent a missive to Manila, where the new Governor, Don Pedro de Acuña (1602-1606), had just assumed office. The Governor proceeded to send a ship to Japan which carried more friars and gifts on board, before Ieyasu could make it clear that the pacts were conditional upon the fact that Japan would be able to establish mercantile relations with New Spain. Takahiro Nakamae emphasizes that Acuña sent ships to Japan in 1603 and 1604, but instead of anchoring at the ports of Kanto, they docked in Kyushu, an act that displeased the Shogun⁴⁵.

It has been said that as early as the period in which Vivero de Velasco was the interim Governor of the Philippines, given the interest shown by Ieyasu, William Adams travelled to Manila with the intention of pressurizing the authorities to intensify commercial contacts⁴⁶. Juan Gil, however, refutes this claim:

“The letter that Vivero wrote to the Shogun with regard to this matter, dated 9th July, 1608, is preserved in the Japanese archives. In this, Don Rodrigo informs him of his desire to continue with the trade, despite the recent disturbances that had taken place, events that greatly saddened him; and at the same time he indicated that he had given the *anjin* orders to anchor in Quantó. The first editor, Lera, believed that, in reality, the title of *anjin* (pilot) was a veiled reference to the Englishman William Adams. However, such a claim is not supported by any known facts and

44 “Esta actitud unilateral daría lugar a un nuevo ciclo de malas relaciones con Japón”, T. Nakamae, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

45 *Ibidem*; J. Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, 138-139.

46 T. Nakamae, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

one has to discard the possibility as unfounded: the *anjin* of the “San Ildefonso” turned out to be Juan Bautista de Nole⁴⁷.

But were these contacts linked in any manner, in a sort of cause and effect relationship, with Vivero’s visit to Japan the following year? Was his arrival really fortuitous or, on the contrary, was the shipwrecking of the “San Francisco” much more than just an accident and, rather, a pretext to justify a sojourn in Japan where he could have discussions with Hidetada and Ieyasu? In this regard, Gil notes that:

“The first thing that one must note is that it could well have been that the “San Francisco” was accidentally washed ashore on the Japanese coast due to a storm. However, its proximity to the islands prior to this does not appear to have been a matter of chance. In Mexico, the causes of the disaster were debated in great detail and Hernando de los Ríos Coronel, like Vivero himself, attributed it to be due to the ignorance of the experts. The ship had seven pilots on board, of whom none knew how to accurately calculate their latitude, “because, as is known, they were sailing at 35 degrees, and believed they were sailing at 33”. It is possible that the navigators were not really so skilled and they went off course, by a more or less significant degree. Be that as it may, the incident had very tragic and lamentable consequences. However, Cevicos’ testimony indicates, discarding the more charitable interpretations, that the lead ship was sailing for Japan, undoubtedly to make the most of the *Daifusama*’s benevolent words, to sell their silks and make hay while the sun shone, and the “Santa Ana” soon found itself to be very well received in Usique, the preferred port of call for all the ships that carried the annual embassy: a very opportune choice that would appear to be rather suspicious⁴⁸.

47 “Se guarda en los archivos japoneses la carta que Vivero dirigió con este motivo al shogun, escrita el 9 de julio de 1608. En ella le daba noticia D. Rodrigo de sus deseos de continuar el trato, a pesar de los últimos disturbios acaecidos, por los que él estaba muy pesaroso; y asimismo le indicaba que había dado al *anjin* orden de tomar puerto en el Quantó. El primer editor, Lera, supuso que bajo el título de *anjin* (piloto) se ocultaba en realidad el inglés Guillermo Adams; pero tal hipótesis no se apoya en indicio alguno, y hay que descartarla por infundada: el *anjin* del “San Ildefonso” siguió siendo Juan Bautista de Nole”, J. Gil, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

48 “Y lo primero que hay que hacer observar es que bien pudo ser que el “San Francisco” diera incidentalmente de través en la costa de Japón a causa de una tormenta, pero lo que no parece tan casual es su previa cercanía a las islas. En México se discutió mucho sobre las causas del desastre, que

Vivero has left his own version of the events for posterity, in several written accounts. One such work, specifically dedicated to his visit to Japan, is the “*Relazi3n que hace Don Rodrigo Vivero y Velasco que se halla en diferentes cuadernos y papeles sueltos de lo que le sucedi3 bolviendo de Gobernador y Capitan General de las Philippinas y arribada que tuvo en el Jap3n donde se hallan cosas muy particulares...*”. Another of his works that has been given the title of “*Abisos y proyectos para el buen gobierno de la Monarchia espa3ola*” deals with very different themes and the problems facing all the Castilian possessions. However, here too one finds ample references to his ten month sojourn in Japan, as well as a wealth of information and opinions derived from his experiences in Asia. Monbeig emphasizes that both works were apparently edited, in an epoch subsequent to that in which they were originally written. On the other hand, during his first stop on American soil on his return from Japan, he wrote a letter to the King, dated Matanchel, 27th October, 1610, in which he gives a succinct account of the greater part of the events that took place⁴⁹. In addition, Gil, in his turn, published a memoir written during his stay in Bungo which is dated 3rd May, 1610⁵⁰.

In his letter from Matanchel, Vivero makes mention of two of Ieyasu’s and Hidetada’s interests: co-operation in the mining sector and first hand knowledge of direct navigation between Japan and New Spain. With regard to the former he states that “Consecundono, the secretary to the Emperor” (a term that he utilizes when he refers to the *Daifusama*), had proposed to him that he communicate to Phillip III the advantages of sending some mining experts (at another juncture, he mentions the number to be fifty), who were veterans of the Mexican deposits, an act which would be “a very great favour and gift” for Japan, “because they were unable to exploit many rich mines as they did not know how to advantageously extract the metals from them...”. He further requested that they be sent with all possible haste, in “the first ships”⁵¹. Vivero

Hernando de los R3os Coronel, como el propio Vivero, atribuy3 sin m3s a la ignorancia de los expertos; iban a bordo de la nao siete pilotos, de los cuales ninguno supo tomar la altura con certeza “pues ven3an por 35 grados, como se vio, y de3an ven3an por 33”. Es posible que los pr3cticos no lo fueron tanto y que sufrieran un despiste m3s o menos morrocotudo, en todo caso de consecuencias muy tr3gicas y lamentables. Mas el testimonio de Cevicos indica, descartando al parecer m3s ben3volas interpretaciones, que la nao capitana se dirigi3 a Jap3n, sin duda dispuesta a aprovechar las buenas palabras de Daifusama para hacer su agosto vendiendo sus sedas a los tonos; y desde luego la “Santa Ana” supo recogerse muy bien en Usique, el puerto de recalada fija para todos los barcos que llevaban la embajada anual: oportun3sima elecci3n que tambi3n mueve a sospechas”, *Ibidem*. p. 151.

⁴⁹ I have used the bilingual edition, prepared by Juliette Monbeig, from the manuscripts in the British Museum: Rodrigo de Vivero, *Du Japon et du bon gouvernement de l’Espagne et des Indes*, Paris, SEVPEN, 1972. The only changes that I have made to these texts has been the addition of accents.

⁵⁰ J. Gil, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-218.

⁵¹ R. Vivero, letter from Matanchel, in the edition by J. Monbeig, p. 135.

cites many reasons to justify that the proposals made by the Japanese authorities to make the crossing to New Spain in a ship outfitted by Ieyasu himself, that would carry on board an embassy sent by the Shogun, at a cost of four thousand ducats, be accepted. Amongst these, in the first place, he points out the benefits that the Spanish Crown would reap and the defence of the expansion of the faith, so much so that, “and if were necessary that I remain a captive [for this purpose] as I have said many times before, I would”⁵², given that the advanced process of Christianization truly did merit this:

“It is clear that the first and most important concern is the spiritual well being of so many souls by means of the ministration of the Holy Gospel, that has been gaining so many adepts, that when all hope was lost for the future preservation of the three hundred thousand Christians in Japan and the risk of apostasy of so many churches and faithful without [the protection of] the Catholic church”⁵³.

Ieyasu’s interest in sending a ship to New Spain would bestow other benefits “because the expertise and dispatch of the ship has borne fruit in the form of what they call *chapas* and royal orders that missionaries be sent to the islands and be widely dispersed throughout all the regions of Japan”⁵⁴. He calculated that, in this manner, one could further expand the numbers of Catholics souls, a figure that was already fairly large despite the fact that “until now, the Holy Gospel has been preached surreptitiously with great caution”⁵⁵. This would be precisely the way in which one could begin to exercise political influence:

“because given that armed might could not accomplish in Japan, that which it had achieved in other parts [of the world] by means of the valour of the Spaniards as, in effect, it would not result due to the profusion of militant and valiant people and due to the fortifications of the sites, some of which are truly impregnable.

52 “Y si fuera menester quedar por cautivo como lo dije muchas vezes quedara”, *Ibidem*, p. 137.

53 “El primero y de más hondos fundamentos está claro que es el bien espiritual de tantas almas por medios de los ministros del Santo Evangelio que las ban ganando tan apriesa, que quando se cerraron las esperanzas para lo de adelante la conservazi3n de trescientos mil cristianos que ai en el Jap3n y el riesgo de la apostasia desamparados de tantas iglesias y religiones”, *Ibidem*.

54 “Porque el saver y despacho de la nao ha dado las que llamaban chapas y provisiones reales para que vengan religiosos y se pueblen estendidamente por todas partes del Jap3n”, *Ibidem*.

55 “Hasta aqui se ha predicado el Sancto Evangelio a urto y a escondidas...”, *Ibidem*.

That which is difficult by these [military] means, in the first instance, shall be facilitated by these gentiles receiving the faith, by which they shall open their eyes and perceive the deception which they are living and not having a natural King, because they do not have one, as all who rule do so by tyranny, and seeing that they are subject to so much oppression, and both the rich and the poor live in servitude....”⁵⁶.

He subsequently emphasizes how easy it would be for the King of Spain to conquer the kingdom of Korea, once the numbers of Christians in the Japanese archipelago had grown to sizable proportions, as such an undertaking would require not even a hundred thousand men and render returns that would be equal to those obtained from all the other kingdoms⁵⁷.

He also gives an account of military might with regard to the military resources of both China and Japan in his *Abisos....*: “It is impossible to conquer Greater China by the force of arms due to its vastness and large population....”⁵⁸. “And Japan, too, is also unconquerable, and thus the examples of Hernando Cortés in Mexico are disproportionate and remote, because it was only a very small area of New Spain in comparison with these kingdoms and, in terms of bravery and spirit, one Japanese is worth a hundred native Indians, so that one should desist in the idea propounded by some ill advised individual in putting this into practice, attributing it all to the valour of the Spaniards and underestimating the factor of such unequal forces”⁵⁹.

On the other hand, in his memoirs written in Bungo, Vivero de Velasco strongly emphasized a possible annexation of Japan, probably with a view to laud the Spanish monarch, taking into consideration the three hundred thousand Christians in this country, and the fact that the kings were elected and those individuals who were fortunate to be lords exploited the situation,

56 “Porque ia que la fuerza de las armas no pueden [sic] obrar en el Japón lo que en otras partes ha obrado mediante el valor de los españoles como en efecto no puede por la multitud de gente velicosa y valiente y por la fortaleza de los sitios que algunos son ynexpugnables, lo que por este medio se dificulta se ba facilitando por el primero recibiendo la fee estos gentiles con que abrirán los ojos al engaño en que viven y no teniendo rei natural como no le tienen porque todos lo son por tiranía y biendose en tanta opresión y servidumbre los pobres y los ricos....”, *Ibidem*.

57 *Ibidem*, p. 138.

58 “La gran China es inconquistable por la fuerza de armas por su grandeza y multitud de gente”, R. Vivero, *Abisos....*, in the edition by J. Monbeig, p. 103.

59 “Y también es ynconquistable el Japón con que los exemplos de Hernando Cortés en México son remotos y despropositados porque era un puntto muy pequeño de la Nueva España en comparación de estes reinos y vale un hombre de los japones en valentia y ánimo por ciento de los yndios, con que queda cerrada la puerta a cualquier pensamiento que algun hombre mal adbertido aya tenido de mover semeiante plática sujetándolo todo al valor de los españoles y desestimando fuerzas tan desiguales”, *Ibidem*, p. 104.

mistreating and oppressing the people, “one could consider that, when this King or another dies, as it is necessary to nominate a new King from amongst those who levy tributes, they raise your Majesty’s name”⁶⁰. In Vivero de Velasco’s opinion, the advantage of co-operation in the mining sector was that it would entail sending Spanish experts who would have their own chaplain and “the possibility of using this method to populate the country with missionaries and faithful is but obvious”⁶¹.

Vivero de Velasco was opposed to trade between the Philippines and New Spain⁶², and at certain junctures tilted so much in favour of Japan, as to be almost willing to see the Philippines lost:

“I did not exert myself that he [the Shogun] send a ship to New Spain, prior to this I had discarded the [ship] that he was giving me, it appeared to oblige me to reciprocate at great expense. It is now known that he has ordered it to be prepared and equipped by a Spanish pilot and sailors in order for them to sail to New Spain with an Ambassador to the Viceroy in Your Majesty’s name, by which the doors of this new world, which I hope by our Lord’s grace to see in Your Majesty’s possession, in a few years time; and to whom I humbly beg not to be perturbed by such small matters as the allegations of the people of the Philippines, that this [territory], if it were not for the risk of apostasy and the souls who would be lost, was that which should be dismantled, because neither land, nor temples, nor people, nor riches oblige its continued preservation; and in these aspects Japan manifests all the opposite reasons”⁶³.

60 “Se podría pensar que, muerto este emperador u otro, como han de apellidar nuevo rei de los que conosidamente los agravian, alcen a Vuestra Magestad por tal”, R. Vivero, “Memorial de Bungo”, in J. Gil, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

61 “No pongo el blanco sino en usar de este medio para poblar la tierra de religiones y religiosos”, *Ibidem*, p. 61

62 R. Vivero, *Abisos...*, p. 104.

63 “Yo no traté de que embiase [el shogun] nao a la Nueva España, antes deseche la que me dava, paresiendome que me obligaba a una costosa correspondencia. Ahora he savido que la a mandado aderesar y que a embiado por un piloto español y marineros para que vayan en ella a la Nueva España con un embajador al virrey en Nombre de Vuestra Magestad con que se abrirán las puertas de este nuevo mundo en cuya posesión espero en Nuestro Señor ver a Vuestra Magestad, dentro de pocos años. A quien suplico humillemente que no se lo estorven tropesones tan pequeños como los que alegarán la gente de Philippinas, que aquello, si no fuera por el riesgo de la apostacia y de las almas que se perderían, era lo que se avía de dismantelar, porque ni tierra, ni temple ni gente ni riqueza obliga a su conservación; y en éstas del Japón militan las raçones contrarias”, R. Vivero, “Memorial de Bungo”.in J. Gil, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

The proposals made by Vivero de Velasco were strongly opposed by the Jesuits, given that he clearly took the part of the Mendicants, especially the Franciscans, in the dispute that pitted some missionaries against others. He was not the only one who spoke of the benefits of abandoning the Philippines; there were others who also espoused the same idea more vehemently than he, at precisely the same juncture, particularly a representative of the merchants based in Seville by the name of Avendaño Villela. The outfitters of the trans-Pacific galleon, as well as the Portuguese and the Philippine authorities were also opposed to these ideas and opinions, each one motivated by their own particular reasons and interests. In such moments, the elite clashed once again, in a process whose origins could be traced to the missionary activities of the Jesuits in Japan and the commercial presence of the Portuguese in these islands⁶⁴.

In the Philippines, the matter got so embroiled that the interests of the Spaniards in the archipelago ended up uniting with the interests of the Portuguese in Asia, in such a manner that a question mark hung over the very existence of the Spanish colony and its continued presence as part of the overseas empire. This was a very critical juncture, and a very important factor in this period, at the beginning of the 17th century, was that it was a point in time when the prolonged series of reverses that would put an end to Spanish hegemony in Europe and to the euphoria of a seemingly limitless expansion, was just beginning to make itself felt. Relations with Japan, including the eagerness of the missionaries and the phenomenon that one could term a long tradition of disputing jurisdictions with the Portuguese, where the latter were to be found, was merely part of the problem. Other aspects included the disillusionment caused by the failure to get rich rapidly due to the form of colonization that had been adopted in the Philippines, the conflicting elements of the strategic situation of this fragmented insular territory, the war that had erupted at that very inopportune juncture in Philippine waters, the difficulties of long distance supplies and the combination of difficulties arising from its communication with the principal bases of the Hispanic world, irresolvable for the moment and which was to prove to be a continued impediment for a much longer time span, as is known, and, finally, the “failure” that, for many, lay in the fact of not having been able to motivate a larger number of Spanish colonizers to settle in that country, despite all efforts to the contrary.

⁶⁴ Account that Pedro de Avendaño Villela wrote to His Majesty, Madrid, 14th April 1608. The document does not give any indication of where it was printed. *Tracts 1608-1789*, British Library, 1324 i. 10 (15); M.F.G. de Los Arcos, “Una propuesta de reestructuración del Imperio español en el siglo XVII”, *REVISTA “A”*, Mexico, *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana*, No. 29, 1992, pp. 24-32.

Abstract

The dawn of the Spanish presence in the Philippines also marked the beginning of relations with an almost unknown geographical and political space. Moreover, the Portuguese had arrived in East Asia long before the Spaniards. The Spanish authorities in Manila took several steps to develop and promote their interests in Japan and in this regard, three aspects stand out:

1) The desire to have equal, friendly and fruitful relations with their Northern neighbours;

2) Spanish efforts to ensure the support of Japanese harbours to assist Spanish vessels during their voyages in the Pacific Ocean; and

3) In the same way as the Portuguese, to have a missionary presence in Japan.

This article attempts to examine how the Spanish political authorities in Manila reacted when their plans came up against several difficulties, giving rise to delicate and, undoubtedly, quite unexpected situations.

Resumo

O início da instalação dos Espanhóis nas Filipinas foi, também, o principio das relações com um espaço geográfico e político quase totalmente novo, no qual haviam sido amplamente precedidos pelos Portugueses. As autoridades de Manila desenvolveram numa série de acções o conjunto de interesses que tinham no Japão, dos quais se podem destacar três:

1) a intenção e o desejo de ter relações igualitárias, cordiais e cooperativas com os seus vizinhos ao Norte;

2) contar com o apoio dos portos japoneses para resolver algumas das necessidades da navegação trans-pacífica;

3) tal como os Portugueses, contar com uma presença missionária no país. Nesta comunicação procuramos fazer uma análise crítica das atitudes assumidas pelos líderes políticos das Filipinas quando esses projectos ou tentativas depararam com dificuldades, originando situações delicadas e, certamente, inesperadas.