

## THE CATHOLIC DOMINICAN MISSIONARIES IN TAIWAN (1626-1642)

José Eugenio Borao

### Introduction

Missionary activity in the sixteenth century meant something more than preaching the Christian faith. At that period, the missionary was expected to render additional services, such as supplying rare information and submitting descriptions of exotic far-off lands. Furthermore, their reports usually contained an element of adventure, as though this naturally came with the act of propagating Christianity. Such adventures easily acquired a more "epic" proportion in the Orient. The task of evangelization often proved to be more complex there than in South America, because of the special characteristics of the oriental societies where the missionaries worked. Conversions *en masse* proved to be difficult, especially in Japan and China. The missionary had to fend for himself, which made the task more difficult but somehow more appealing to the Renaissance mentality. At the same time, by the end of the sixteenth century, it was clear that the methods for evangelization had to become more persuasive in character: the missionaries had to show moral and cultural superiority to the errors and superstitions within the local religions. This tendency became more prevalent throughout the seventeenth century.

The first documented Christian activity that occurred in Taiwan came about through an accident. It dates back to the period of exploration at the end of the sixteenth century. The source of information was eye-witness reports of the missionaries and their descriptions of the oriental milieu. It was a actually fortuitous coming. In 1582 a Portuguese ship sank on its way to Japan. The survivors stayed on the island of Taiwan for two months until they managed to build a smaller boat from the wreckage of the old one, and eventually returned to Macao. Four Jesuit priests - two of whom were Spaniards (Alonso Sánchez and Pedro Gómez) and two who were Portuguese (Cristobal Moreira and Alvaro de Toro) - boarded the ship, thus spearheading the first Christian activity on Taiwan. Pedro Gómez wrote an exhaustive letter that was published in 1597. His letter was included in a collection of letters written by the Jesuits and published in Portugal for propagandist motives either within the Order itself or among their readers in Europe. The letter of Gómez gave an account of the Masses, processions, and veneration of a "relic" of St. Ursula that Gómez had brought for Japan. The group of nearly three hundred

survivors, which consisted of Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese was on "stopover" in Taiwan. Moreover, their attempted contact with the natives, trading objects and wood from the boat for sacks of rice lasted only briefly because of the growing suspicion among the natives. "This lasted a few days because the natives were so scandalized by the confusion that happened, that they no longer brought us aid as friends, but shot arrows at us and spied on us like enemies." Consequently, there was no attempt at all to establish missionary contact with the natives.<sup>1</sup>

In 1592, Juan Cobo, a Dominican was murdered in or within the vicinity of Taiwan. Cobo was in charge of the Church of the Chinese *parian* in Manila. He was on his way back (from where? Japan) after a meeting with Hideyoshi, on behalf of the governor of the Philippines. The exact place where the incident occurred is not precisely known but, according to the account of that time, his ship ran aground in Taiwan,

in such a way, that few people were able to reach the coast, yet they did so after a great effort. They arrived there without weapons and the barbarians appeared, killing most of them. Among those who were killed was Fr. Juan Cobo. His death was reported in the Philippines in 1595 by the natives of the Philippines and China who escaped from the cruelty of those from Isla Hermosa."<sup>2</sup>

The Dominican, Bartolomé Martínez, on the other hand, visited the island in 1619, when he left Manila for Macao. The winds that drove the ship toward Isla Hermosa, did not cause it to sink, but rather helped it to sail along the coast. As a result, Fr. Martínez wrote a very extensive memoir of the island, with the conclusion justifying its conquest by the Spanish armed forces. The account hardly referred to the natives, much less whether he had had dealings with them or not. His report was preserved in the archives of the University of Santo Tomás in Manila, and later in the archives of the Santo Tomás Convent in Avila, the two places

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<sup>1</sup> See José Eugenio Borao, *Primer documento occidental sobre Taiwan: La narración del naufragio del jesuita Pedro Gómez, en la costa de Taiwan el 16 de julio de 1582*, Sinapia, no. 8, 1996, First Semester, pp. 106-111. This article contains the Spanish translation of Pedro Gómez's letter that was published in the collection *Cartas que os Padres e Irmaos da Companhia de Jesus escreverao dos Reynos de Japao & China aos damasma Compania da India & Europa desde anno de 1549 ate o de 1580* (Letters written by the Priests of the Company of Jesus to the Two Kingdoms of Japan and China, and to India and Europe from 1549 to 1580), vol. I, Em Evora, by Manuel de Lyra, MDXCVII. An original copy of this book may be found in the Rare Books Section of the National Library of Taiwan.

<sup>2</sup> See Alberto Santamaría, O.P. "Juan Cobo: misionero y embajador", en *Shih Lu*, edited by Fidel Villarreal, University of Santo Tomás, (Manila, 1986), pp. 1-37.

that carry the majority of archive documents regarding the Province of the Holy Rosary of the Dominican Order. This religious order was entrusted with the missionary work in Taiwan all through the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

### **The matter and scope of this study**

The stable presence of the Catholic Church in Taiwan was not achieved until the Spaniards arrived in 1626. That lasted for only sixteen years, until 1642, when the Spaniards had to abandon the island when the the Dutch expelled them.

Regarding sources that exist for the study of the presence of the Catholic Church in Taiwan, I present a previous work of mine that deals not only with the stated sources, but also with everything that has relevance to the Spanish presence in seventeenth century Taiwan.<sup>4</sup> These sources are being translated with annotations, into Spanish and English.

For the present, everything that has been said about the Spanish presence in Taiwan has been based on the accounts of the Dominicans, particularly Jacinto Esquivel and Diego Aduarte. The Sino-Annamita Post outlined these, more or less systematically in the nineteenth century. Finally, the work of another Dominican, José María Alvarez, *Formosa Geográfica e históricamente considerada*, (Formosa From the Geographical and Historical Perspective, 2 vols., Barcelona, 1931) offered a more organized version that is, within the context of the Spanish military presence. The Jesuit, Joseph Dehergne,<sup>5</sup> offers a more modern narrative style, however, it did not add any significant details. Both works appear to be summaries of the same documents, but are lacking sufficient analysis or research of related papers, especially those that are civil in nature.

José María González, also a Dominican, later worked on the

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<sup>3</sup> Blessed Luis Flores, O.P. and Blessed Pedro de Zuniga, O.S.A. passed by Taiwan in June of 1620. They were on their way to Japan, where they were later martyred. The Dominicans stayed there from 1626 to 1642, the year the Dutch drove the Spaniards away from the island. After two aborted attempts, they returned in 1859 and have remained there since then.

<sup>4</sup> See José Eugenio Borao. *Spanish Sources for the History of Taiwan*. "International Congress on Taiwan Historical and Colonial Sources", National Taiwan University, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> See J. Dehergne, S.J. *L'île Formose au XVIIe siècle. Essais éphémères d'expansion Européenne*, Monumenta Nipponica, Vol. IV, part. 1, 1941.

biographies<sup>6</sup> of the various missionaries who went to China and who passed by Isla Hermosa. Therefore, a systematic study of the Catholic Church in Isla Hermosa, the central theme of this study, still remains to be done. This paper is a first attempt and offers a provisional synthesis of the topic.

To accomplish this, I shall deal with the following basic points: first, the role of the Dominicans in fostering an expedition to Taiwan; second, the theological arguments regarding the moral justification of the expedition; third, the prosopography of the missionaries who lived on the island; fourth, the relationship with the Royal Council; fifth, the relationship with the local authorities; sixth, the school and hospital projects; and seventh, the two main achievements, which are conversions which were cut short by the coming of the Dutch and the increasing negligence of the Spanish governors in Manila, and the opening of a missionary route to China.

### **The arrival of the Spaniards**

#### *a) The men behind it*

It is not yet clear who really initiated the arrival of the Spaniards on Taiwan. We know that Fernando de Silva armed their squadron of two galleys and other small boats. At that time, de Silva had just arrived from Acapulco to sit as interim governor general of the Philippines. Since he was to stay in the Philippines for only a year, he thought that the move might easily add a feather to his cap, before turning over his powers to the designated governor, Juan Niño de Tavora, whose arrival was imminent.<sup>7</sup> In any case, it is certain that for strategic reasons, Manila considered that it was justifiable to establish a port in Taiwan. Thus, from 1624, the year the Dutch arrived in Taiwan, both the officials of the Royal Treasury and the Dominican archbishop of Manila, Miguel Benavides, started to inform the king of the decline of trade with China. The archbishop himself wrote the king another letter on July 25, 1626, just when the two governors held

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<sup>6</sup> See *Biografía del primer obispo chino, Excmo. Sr. Don Fray Gregorio Lo o Lopez, O.P.* (Manila: UST, 1946); Joaquín Recoder, *The protomartyr of China. Bl. Francisco Capillas* (Manila: UST, 1948); *Galería de varones ilustres. Vidas y Hechos de los 36 misioneros dominicos de China del siglo XVII* (Manila: UST, 1951).

<sup>7</sup> The official takeover took place on May 16, 1626, the document of which was issued in Manila on July 18. On the 30th of that same month, Fernando de Silva wrote the King to thank him for sending his successor, Juan Niño de Tavora.

their official transition. In this letter, he first praised the brief rule of Fernando de Silva, saying that he had occupied "the best port in Isla Hermosa, an act that His Majesty Philip II, grandfather of Your Majesty, commanded in the instruction he had sent to the Governor, Francisco Tello."<sup>8</sup> Secondly, he identified the Dominicans, particularly Bartolomé Martínez, as the principal promoters of the conquest.

"The conquest or the settlement of this Island has been carried out through the efforts of Fray Bartolomé Martínez, Dominican, [our] present provincial, to whom credit is due for the good management that has been going on, since he, along with three or four companions<sup>9</sup> - not from any other Order - personally went to explore the island and stayed there, sending one priest to Manila to give an account of what had been done and to bring back orders from the Governor as to what they were to do next."<sup>10</sup>

In his letter, he next requested a larger number of Dominicans, because the eighteen or twenty who had arrived were dispersed all through the islands, and no more could be sent to Taiwan; and it was the Order's task to send priests, for "they had taken on the mission of conquest." We do not know of an existing account, but in 1627, the veteran Fr. Aduarte arrived in the Philippines with a boatful of priests, among whom was Teodoro Quirós, who, in the end, remained in Taiwan for ten years (1632-1642). He would later be credited as the Dominican who stayed the longest on the island.

The Dominicans certainly came with long-sustained hopes and ambitions of entering China. They wanted a passage different from the route via Macao, because this had caused them many problems. Isla Hermosa was not only a better alternative, but it was also a clandestine passage to Japan, whose doors were then absolutely shut to missionaries.

In other words, it may be concluded that the double zeal of the Spanish crown and the Dominicans converged and climaxed in 1626. It was a zeal that was shared by the then-newly installed Dominican provincial, Bartolomé Martínez, and the provisional governor, Fernando de Silva. Martínez helped in the acquisition of the post, even if he later returned, not

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<sup>8</sup> AGI, *Filipinas* 71. Philip II issued the first real authorization to Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, when he took over as Governor. Tello's name might have been confused with Dasmariñas.

<sup>9</sup> AGI, *Filipinas* 20. According to the act that established the port in San Salvador, there were three friars more: Domingo de la Borda, Francisco Vázquez de Santo Domingo and Jerónimo Morer.

<sup>10</sup> AGI, *Filipinas* 74.

only to make a report -as Benavides states - but to terminate his service as provincial. When this was completed in 1629, he once again left for Taiwan.

Nevertheless, protests were raised against the conquest of Isla Hermosa. Juan Cevicos, a sailor-turned-priest was the most vocal about the issue. He learned about the seizure when he was in Madrid in 1627. On December 20 of that same year, as a reaction, he wrote a long discourse against maintaining military forces on the island. His reasons were primarily political and strategic in nature. He also cited that the island was a poor choice even as an entry point for the missions in China: the Chinese would get suspicious about the establishment of this post, and the Dutch would discredit them to the Chinese:

"Neither have the Dutch failed to publish (as they did in Japan), that it is the custom of the king of Spain to conquer kingdoms under the pretext of religion. That report, according to the religious of Japan themselves has been one of the chief causes for the instigation of so terrible a persecution against Christians..." (He concluded that the king was under no obligation whatsoever to be in Isla Hermosa, because) "...in the Philippines not a few Indians who pay tribute, but who do not have sufficient ministers to instruct them. Also there are many heathen, who, because their country is not yet conquered, are without any knowledge at all of the holy gospel."<sup>11</sup>

*b) Justification of the conquest of Isla Hermosa*

A moral analysis of the correctness of an act frequently preceded Spanish military moves, particularly those at the end of the sixteenth century. Two documents merit special interest, because they clearly show the ideological spirit behind the arrival of the Spaniards in Taiwan. These are Domingo González's *Resoluciones morales*<sup>12</sup> (Moral Resolutions), dated February 7, 1626, and the *Acta de la conquista*<sup>13</sup> (The Record of the Conquest), dated May 16 of the same year.

In fact, to better understand why these documents were published, we would have to review medieval trends and customs regarding territorial rights that justify Spanish territorial expansion. Although this is not within

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<sup>11</sup> AGI, *Filipinas 20*.

<sup>12</sup> Archives de la Provincia del Santo Rosario [APSR] (Avila), *Resoluciones morales de Fray Domingo González*, pp. 304 vto.-308 vto.

<sup>13</sup> *Acta de la toma de posesión de Isla Hermosa*, AGI, *Filipinas, 20*.

the scope of our paper, we can point out that Spanish universities have been discussing the validity of the said customs since the sixteenth century. It was concluded that they no longer hold. This is why they pose the problem: Even if such practices are no longer valid, can some other "territorial right" be invoked to justify armed conquest?

The theological-juridical school of Spain, whose principal center was the University of Salamanca, disagreed with the bulls that Pope Alexander VI issued in 1493. These had to do with the divided spheres of influence of Spain and Portugal. Even the master of Salamanca, Francisco Vitoria, OP, in his famous *Relección sobre los indios* (1538-39), rejected the thesis that the discovery granted the right of ownership of the inhabited territories. Thus, the school of Salamanca came to recognize that the bulls of Alexander VI might have been more of a spiritual mission entrusted to the monarchs of Spain in the West Indies - a mission that naturally would have political repercussions.

As regards the second problem, whether evangelization justified armed conquest or not, the Spanish authorities believed that the conquest was just. They based this on two reasons: The first is that of the humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, who dedicated himself to defending the said theory in his *Democrates Alter* (1511) and in his *Democrates Secundus* (1545). In the former, he developed a concept from Aristotle's *Politics*, which stated that unlettered men and barbarians were born to serve those gifted with reason. In the latter, he justified the aptness of war against the natives as a preliminary measure to evangelization. The school of Salamanca, specifically Francisco Vitoria, offered another argument. In his interpretation of the *ius gentium*, a right based on natural law, from which spring seven<sup>14</sup> illegitimate and eight<sup>15</sup> legitimate reasons for the conquest,

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<sup>14</sup> (1) The sovereignty of the emperor over the whole world; (2) the authority of the Pope, who had entrusted the Indies to the Spaniards; (3) the right derived from the discovery of the land; (4) the missionaries' indefatigable preaching, despite the natives' stubborn resistance to the Christian faith; (5) God's special gift, as when he gave the Promised Land to the Israelites; (6) the sins the natives committed against nature; (7) the natives' choice to do evil.

<sup>15</sup> (1) the violation of the Spaniards' right to freely explore the lands that they discover; (2) the Spaniards' right to propagate Christianity in the Americas; (3) the protection of the native converts who suffer persecution from their pagan countrymen; (4) if a portion of the native community decides to embrace the Catholic faith, then the Pope, for a just cause, may assign them a Christian ruler to substitute the pagan one; (5) the tyranny of the native leaders who impose inhuman laws; (6) a true and voluntary choice on the part of the natives; (7) the friendship or alliance of the natives with the other aborigines; (8) the natives' poor sense of "civilization and order" (a matter which he doubts).

Vitoria established the concept of the global community, which obliged all nations to maintain reciprocal relations. They ought to allow settlement and commerce, which can always take place and when the immigrant does not infringe the rights of the natives. Now, if the natives prevent the Spaniards from exercising this right, then the Spaniards may invoke their own rights based on the task the Pope entrusted to the monarchs of Spain: the evangelization of the infidels. It is this theory that Domingo González applied to the letter in order to justify the conquest of Isla Hermosa, as reflected in the document of February 7, 1626.

However, González wrote the 1626 document almost a century after Vitoria's *Relecciones*. Furthermore, new reasons had arisen. Fourteen years before González wrote his justification, the Jesuit, Francisco Suárez had published his *Tractatus de legibus ac Deo legislatore* in Coimbra (1612). Suárez's work definitively solved the problem that went back to Vitoria's time: whether the *ius gentium* was based on Natural Law or not. The *Tractatus* turned out to be the most complete theorization about rights and laws in the modern age. It shows that even if the entire *ius gentium* is based on the realities of human nature, it remains a product of the human will; therefore, it is always a right that proceeds from human nature.<sup>16</sup>

It is also interesting to point out what *The Record of the Conquest* indicates about the conquest of Isla Hermosa. The conquest was formally carried out by order of the interim governor, Fernando de Silva. At the same time, it tried to outwardly respect the proceedings that Vitoria pointed out. These included giving the natives four days to show their approval or disapproval of the Spaniards' presence on the island. At the same time, the island came to be considered a "patrimony and possession" of the king of Spain. In other words, the theoretical justification of the conquest of Taiwan - reinforced by documents that seemed private in character - was not done in accordance with the recent developments in international law of that period. Rather, the action was based on "obsolete" postulates that were mechanically repeated. Moreover, its actual execution was based on medieval criteria that did not respect - but parodied - the spirit of the law that the perpetrators claimed to invoke.

As has been said, doubts about whether the taking of Isla Hermosa was lawful or not arose within the Dominican sources. They had to seek

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<sup>16</sup> See Carlos Larrainzar, *An Introduction to Francisco Suárez* (Eunsa, Pamplona, 1977). For Spanish scholasticism, see the two works of Brien Tierney: *Religion, Law, and the Growth of Constitutional Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), pp. 1150-1650, and *The Idea of Natural Rights. Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law and Church Law*, (Atlanta: Scholar's Peter Ed., 1997), pp. 1150-1625.



directives from Fr. González, who issued them in 1633. He answered that they had acted lawfully; however, some soldiers had committed offenses for which they had to answer to the natives. Nevertheless, the natives' impatience and ensuing behavior deserved their being warred upon.<sup>17</sup>

### The Missionaries on the Island

We must mention that the first Spanish missionaries arrived in Taiwan in 1626, two years after the arrival of the Dutch, who were the first to do missionary work in a stable manner on the island. The first Protestant pastor, George Candidius, did not arrive until 1627; but it is certain that some Protestant catechists had been around since 1624.<sup>18</sup>

The history of the presence of Catholic missionaries on the island is something difficult to reconstruct. A table in the appendix of this study presents a schematic rundown of the said missionaries, but there are gaps in several parts. However, a closer look at the table reveals that among the first four who came, it was the Portuguese Francisco Váez whose residence there was the most permanent. He remained for seven years, until his death at the hands of the natives.

It may be said that those first moments were ones of great expectation. In a long letter to the king, the procurator general of the Dominicans, Fr. Melchor del Manzano pointed out the strategic edge that Isla Hermosa posed for the Spanish Crown:

"The post is the master key that will open the doors of the kingdoms of China to the Gospel. From afternoon till morning, the religious

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<sup>17</sup> "Resoluciones morales de Fray Domingo González". APSR, *Consultas del P. González, tomo 6º, pp 98-103 y 104-123*; and in Archives University of Santo Tomás [AUST], *Sección microfilms, rollo 100.6*.

<sup>18</sup> "At first only a couple of catechists were sent; and the first to arrive there seems to have been Michiel Theodori; who came with Mr. Reyerszoon or Mr. Sonk in 1624. But as he did not get on well, Dirk Lauwrenszoen was sent in his place, while Mr. Theodori was sent to Batavia, without an appointment. Mr. Lauwrenszoen remained at Taiwan from 17 July 1625 till May 1626. A certain Cornelis Jacobszoen de Jong was there also in 1625, who went to Batavia on 3 December. On 3 December 1616 Herman Bruyning, who was a catechist in Batavia, came over to Taiwan with Mr. de With. The first minister called to Formosa was the pious George Candidius, who arrived on 4 May 1627. He, brought with him as catechist Jan Janszoen van Fekkeren, and among this rough uncivilized people laid the foundation of that church which afterwards – according to accounts sent by letter from Formosa and from Batavia – flourished so greatly." See Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch* (SMC, 1987), p. 78.

orders can pass through the rivers of China aboard small boats. We left Spain, driven by this intense desire, and sailed 5000 leagues."<sup>19</sup>

We can show that the flow of missionaries into Taiwan – as a means to enter Japan and China, or for the purpose of inspection or settling - intensified in the first half of the 1630s. Besides the Dominicans, eight Franciscans arrived in 1633 with their sights set on entering China. By that time, the Dominicans already had surpassed them in the Mainland. However, from 1635 onwards, the political stance of the governor of the Philippines turned hostile to the idea of having Spaniards in Isla Hermosa. Thus, the missionary assignments declined and with them, the Spanish presence itself.

The table likewise reflects the fact that the missionaries did not directly go to Taiwan, but first went to the Philippines to acclimatize themselves and to gather experience. For example, Jacinto Esquivel stayed in the Philippines for four years; Teodoro de la Madre de Dios and Angel Cocchi, stayed five years; Francisco Fernández Capillas, nine years; and Morales, eleven years.

### **The Spanish Crown as Guardian of the Missions**

#### *a) The missions and the Royal Patronage.*

In accordance with the Council's then-existing formula, it was the Crown that took charge of the travel and sustenance of priests going "to the Indies." In this sense, one can say the missionaries were royal officials who, in turn, received a commensurate salary. Still, the Dominicans themselves declared that they received compensation only for their services as parish priests. This meant that they attended to the parish needs of those people living in the fortress. Moreover, they declared that "this ministry gave them more headaches than benefits, because of: (1) the immoral behavior of the Spaniards; (2) having to oversee that the soldiers consistently receive the sacraments; (3) having to settle irregular marital situations; and (4) having to take part in arguments with merchants who contest the royal authority:

The fifth is, because this miserable benefit ("curato") by which we support ourselves, besides being alien to our Constitutions, is extremely hard to take care of, because it deals with court cases; furthermore it is very harmful for the observance of our Rule. Harmful indeed was it in the case of Father Francisco Mola: because

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<sup>19</sup> AGI, *Filipinas* 20, R. 20, N 136

all of us are aware that he had to be taken out of here to avoid his being charged by those Spaniards; Father Fray Angel was concerned with him, and, he would have returned to Manila if he [Father Mola] had not been removed; even Father Francisco Bravo is constantly going around saying that he will end up leaving because he cannot take this kind of life; he has been so worried about so many people living in concubinage that were driving him crazy... because neither warnings nor punishments were sufficient to put an end to the situation. And those people were going around calumniating him and saying in public that he was punishing them because of the things he had heard in their confessions.

Other people were brought before him by false witnesses, (who even if they were aware of the other's innocence, were moved by rancor and passions) and accused of their crime... When, as a result of quarrels or crimes, they looked for shelter in his [Mola's] church, (since the king did not feed them because they had run away from his jurisdiction to that of the Pope's), the father had no other solution but to keep them there and feed them until the whole issue was settled.

On the other hand, we have not had problems with the authorities of the kind that question jurisdiction: for example: this or that other feast should not be celebrated so that the Indians or the black slaves could work; because the General is very good and agrees to whatever the Father said. I am certain that no other person different from him would have gone through all of that [trouble]. He was forced to enter into the houses of the wretched [native] women, trying to fix their marriages; he tried to avoid circumstances where their miserable husbands would kill them; he had to solve many matrimonial conflicts. For these things the [religious] habit helped little. Besides, he had to listen to the complaints of those who had been punished for their concubinage, who were constantly repeating that their punishment had been unfair; above all, he had to find out what the trouble was in order to bring to the Sacrament [of marriage] these unmarried soldiers who were filled with frailty and miseries.

To this must be added [the problem] of the merchants who always tried to defraud the king of his taxes and rights, [to the point of] not being willing to load even a piece of cloth unless the inspectors were out of the ship: this is what happened last time to the point of paralyzing the loading of the ship for more than 15 days; until the General agreed to remove the inspector, the ship could not be

dispatched."<sup>20</sup>

This situation should have been the reason behind the Dominicans' refusal to take care of the said parish in 1635. Also, they formally requested the new governor of the Philippines to assign the task to a secular priest so that they could concentrate on missionary work. Naturally, the petition would be taken more seriously if it were routed through the governor of Isla Hermosa. On October 8, 1635, Corcuera received a letter from the governor of Isla Hermosa, containing a brief request for a chaplain for the forts.<sup>21</sup> That same day, Corcuera wrote the provisor, Pedro Monroy, telling him to accept the task:

"In the service of His Majesty, it is fitting that your Grace be the Senior Chaplain and Vicar of those forts, with a yearly salary of 300 pesos, plus Mass stipends, and the dues from the confraternity of soldiers, that will be constituted anew. This extra income, plus the salary, will allow you to live decently, thus you will be spared the unavoidable inconvenience that will most likely happen should you turn down this position in His Majesty's service."

This episode brings to light the struggle between the Crown and the Church to defend their spheres of influence. On the one hand, Monroy declined for health reasons, and because his bishop needed him. (He would not have considered this task if he were healthier.) On the other hand, the archbishop, Fr. Hernando, wrote to Corcuera to justify his need for the provisor. However, he went even further and took advantage of the occasion to remind the governor of their respective "turf."

"I am not ignorant that to approve ecclesiastics for the administration of the sacraments belongs to the prelates; but it belongs to the Governor, by right of Royal Patronage, to appoint them, just in the same way that His Majesty appointed your Grace as Bishop and Archbishop. His Holiness approved and confirmed it. Therefore I cannot abstain, although your Grace orders me so, from appointing parish priests and vicars, choosing from among these people, that your Grace must nominate, the one I deem most suitable. For the appointment of canons, dignitaries of the Holy Church, interim administrators of vacant Bishop seats, major and minor military chaplains for the armed forces, fortresses and galleons of His Majesty, I don't need the nomination by your Grace. They [the appointees] certainly need to receive the approval your

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<sup>20</sup> AUST, *Libros*, tomo 49, ff. 317-324.

<sup>21</sup> The letters between Corcuera, Monroy and the Archbishop found in AGI, *Filipinas* 8, 103, N 40 a.

Grace writes to me about [i.e., ecclesiastical approval for administering the sacraments], citing in your favor the opinion of the Bishop of Cebu and of the religious orders, for me to be aware that your Grace is not moved by personal opinion but by reason and justice. I do have both when I command that the vassals of the King, whatever their condition, who came to these Islands at His expense or on His galleons must serve the King. And when I say that this [i.e., the appointment to ecclesiastical post by the privilege of Royal Patronage] is done in keeping with my service to the King, only His Majesty can ask me an account of it.”

It seems that Corcuera also took advantage of this situation to discredit Pedro Monroy. His letter to the Archbishop begins with these words:

"Your Grace's need for him may be filled in by many [persons] who are more upright and better educated. This is what His Majesty commands in his Royal Certificate. In fact, Fr. Pedro de Monroy is superfluous to your Grace for the peace and good governance of your Church."

Perhaps, these were not just harsh words but a manifestation of other underlying intentions: Monroy found himself at the center of a greater dispute<sup>22</sup>. In any case, we do not know exactly if he did go to Isla Hermosa or whether or not he assumed the task. He most probably did not. The one who went as Provisor, although the date is uncertain was the cleric, Juan de Balcázar, who, according to Juan de los Angeles "stayed there for a while and returned to Manila."<sup>23</sup> We also know that the office existed and that it offered a corresponding salary. For example, the ledger of accounts of the Royal Treasury recorded that the chaplain of the camp received one hundred pesos on December 31, 1637,<sup>24</sup> however, it did not state the name of the recipient. Four years later, in November 1641, the name of Fr. Gaspar Alenda figured in the list of wage earners in Isla

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<sup>22</sup> In fact, a different kind of political attitude was brewing with de Corcuera's arrival in the Philippines. His predecessor, Juan Cerezo de Salamanca, was against maintaining the forts in Isla Hermosa. He believed that these entailed an unnecessary expense and, moreover, diverted the resources that could have been more useful elsewhere. Nevertheless, he never really voiced this. Corcuera did not order the dismantling of the forts, but he subjected them to progressive rationing. The Dominicans accused him of being indifferent to the cause of Isla Hermosa and of favoring other initiatives, like that of Jolo, that might have indirectly supported the Jesuit missions. Of course, no one could really point a finger at anyone, but the course of events had certainly taken on a strange twist.

<sup>23</sup> AUST, *Tomo IX, Fols. 620-638, film 74.*

<sup>24</sup> AGI, *Filipinas, Escribanía de Cámara 409-B.*

Hermosa. He was a Franciscan who arrived in 1633 and who received a monthly salary of fifteen pesos.<sup>25</sup>

*b) Relations with the Sergeant Major*

The defense of the island from the Dutch was another source of contention. Governor Corcuera had given up interest in Spain's presence on the island; and the religious orders took it upon themselves to suggest political-defense moves, defying the orders coming from Manila. As a consequence, it was the governor, Pedro Palomino, who had to argue it out with the Dominicans. A rift arose regarding the advisability of keeping a defense post on the dry land, at the island's entrance. The orders from the Philippines indicated its withdrawal, but Palomino gave in to pressure from the Dominicans. In the end, they were right about turning the island into an impregnable zone.

Another argument arose when, for the above reason, the governor thought about discontinuing the Dominican church-convent fronting the island in Quimaurri. If the Dutch were to seize the area, the convent could become a strategic base from which they could defend themselves and launch an offensive. For this reason he decided to dismantle it. The Dominicans objected, of course, but in this case, Governor Portillo - a man who esteemed the Dominicans - supported the decision of his predecessor, Palomino—"the master builder and the Sangley masons declared the house to be useless."<sup>26</sup>

Other problems arose from the sudden decision of several soldiers to join the religious Order, but their reasons were vague and the results were disappointing. The last governor, Gonzalo Portillo, witnessed one case. In a letter to the governor of the Philippines dated October 11, 1641, he requested that the Dominican and Franciscan provincials in Manila exercise prudence in accepting novices from among the soldiers. For one thing, he already had very few men to defend the land; also, he doubted the sincerity of the prospective vocations. As for "a soldier who became a friar," he writes, "he has already left the convent, or they have thrown him out. I do not know the truth of the matter, but I have him in the post again."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Letter of Portillo to Corcuera, AGI, *Filipinas, Indiferente General*, 1874.

<sup>27</sup> AGI, *Filipinas, Indiferente General* 1874.

## Missionary Activity

### *a) The districts with churches*

The missionary Jacinto Esquivel wrote about the conditions of the island some time during 1633. He remarked on the scarcity of priests in contrast to the natives' strong interest to have a church of their own. Five churches were built between 1633 and 1635, a two-year period that saw an apparent peak in missionary zeal. Esquivel narrates that Taparri had a church and a priest one of whom was the author [Esquivel] himself. He lived among the natives for eight months and enjoyed their great esteem. He also says that at Santiago, a place where a Japanese Christian had lived for almost forty years, the Christian "asked for a priest." The Christians of Quimaurri, which was closest to the fort, had a church built and dedicated to St. Louie Beltrán, but they had no priest. Last of all there was Parian, which also had a church and a house, but no priest.

The area of Tamsui seemed promising, thanks to the achievements of Jacinto Esquivel and Teodoro Quirós. Esquivel left the island for Japan in 1633, his real destination. He never reached there because along the way he was murdered. Quirós, on the other hand, baptized "320 persons in the year of the smallpox epidemic (1635?)." The people of Senar also expressed interest in having a priest.

### *b) Plans to divide the island among the other Orders for apostolic purposes.*

Esquivel's 1633 document recommends an increase in the number of churches, as well as that arrival of more religious orders. The Dominicans proposed the best zones for themselves on the grounds that they were the first to have arrived. These zone areas were at the port of Hoping Island, and the right border of the mouth of the Tamsui. The main reason behind their interest in the latter area was that its inhabitants, mostly farmers, were docile and friendly. The author of this document also proposed the establishment of a ministry in Senar, and another in Quipatao, as well as a hospital principally for the sangley parian that was establishing itself in Tamsui. They had to give up the area of the port of Jilong because its natives were very "hostile." However, they wished to maintain the convent they had at the side of the fort, and convert it into a school for the children of the leaders of the nearby kingdoms.

Esquivel also indicates that the other border of Tamsui - that is, Pantao plus the whole of the affluent but little-explored area of Pulauan (now, Taipei) - could be given to a poor or mendicant order, such as the

Recollects.

The rest of the Order's ministries would be in Lichoco. This area, located halfway between the two Spanish forts, as not welcomed them because of its inaccessibility. According to their explanation, the two ministries wherein they had been working from the start – at Quimaurri and Taparri in the port of Jilong, and that of the Church of Santiago, are not far from these two places. The same document indicates that these four areas should have been divided between the Jesuits and Augustinians in any way they wished.

Very few of these plans actually went through. The Jesuits and the Augustinians tried to arrive with the naval fleet in 1627 but did not attempt it again after its failure to reach Taiwan. Only the vessel of Lázaro de Torres, managed to reach the island; one passenger on board was the Augustinian, Lucas de Atienza, who departed at the first opportunity because of the numerous troubles that beset this trip<sup>28</sup>. Seven Franciscans arrived in 1633: Francisco de Jesus Escalona, Antonio María Caballero, Gaspar Alenda, Francisco Bermúdez, Domingo Urquicio, Onofre Pelleja, and a brother, Juan de San Marcos<sup>29</sup>. Their sole purpose was to learn Mandarin and prepare themselves to enter China.

The Church of Santiago was established because of the good dispositions of the natives and, as said earlier, because a Japanese Christian lived in that place. The Church probably opened around 1635 during the visit of Governor García Romero. Quirós writes that this governor "had the natives under control" and that "they esteem him very much," a fact that allowed Quirós to baptize one hundred forty-one children in five days in the "year of the smallpox epidemic (1635?)" in Santiago. In that same year, Fr. Juan García went south to the province of Cabarán (Ilan) to administer more baptisms. Quirós himself later went to Cabarán to baptize one hundred eighty-six children in eight days. These achievements most likely led them to think of putting up the actual church. This church must have been established, at the very least, by 1635 because in that year the provincial chapter assigned Fr. Miguel Corona to that area

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<sup>28</sup> Blair & Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXIV, pp. 149-154. El texto añade: "He (Captain Lázaro de Torres) went outside, relieved the fort, gave what food he had, and then - having nothing to do, and suspecting that the governor had put back into port - he returned with our religious. The latter (Fr. Lucas de Atienza) came near dying on account of his great hardships; and indeed death overcame him after he returned to the land of Manila - where because of those sufferings he never again raised his head in health".

<sup>29</sup> See Mateos, Fernando. "La primera escuela de mandarín para extranjeros en Taiwan", *Encuentros en Catay* 4 (1990), pp. 13-22.



to take care of a church dedicated to St Dominic. Similarly, the chapter of 1637 refers to the assignment of Fr. Francisco Diaz, while the one of 1641 designates one Fr. Pedro Chaves. Chaves was unable to assume his post because the Dutch captured and imprisoned him as he left for the island from China.

Lichoco never had a church. The "promising" communities of Tamsui during the time of Esquivel languished during the ensuing five years, after the murder in 1636 of the two Portuguese priests: Francisco Váez and Fr. Luis Muro by the natives. The final blow came after the Spanish fort withdrew in 1638.

### **The Brotherhood of the Holy Table of Mercy**

The brotherhoods were associations whose aim was to carry out some form of social work. They were comprised mainly of laymen, and were not necessarily moved by clerics or members of religious orders. When they sought to carry out important projects, like a hospital or a school, they usually formed a "holy table." This was a sub-organization that operated more or less like a business: it raised and managed funds for the benefit and maintenance of its own projects or of some other charitable activities.

It is clear that such a brotherhood called the Holy Table of Mercy existed in the "city of San Salvador" in 1633<sup>30</sup>. It had its own statues and committees to carry out the various tasks. Sgt. Major Bartolomé Díez Barrera, governor of the post, was its president; the Dominican, Fr. Francisco Bravo, chaplain, superior and vicar of the convent of All Saints, was the provisor of the brotherhood. Its members included other military dignitaries and officers: Luis de Guzmán, Juan Baquedano, Matías de Olaso, and Miguel Sáez de Alcaraz. The last was garrison commander of the fort of Santo Domingo in Tamsui; Second Lieutenant Juan de Vivero was the accountant and keeper of supplies, while Second Lieutenant -----acted as paymaster of the Treasury.

We know very little about this brotherhood, neither the details of their statutes, nor how they operated. They certainly must have had an office and some archives, because there is evidence that on February 17, 1637, a

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<sup>30</sup> This brotherhood might have imitated a similar group that existed in Manila. This group was formed by the priest Juan Fernández Leon in 1594 to attend to the orphans and the poor of the city. Later, this same Brotherhood of Mercy in Manila tried to establish a seminary-school. See Antonio M. Molina, *Historia de Filipinas* (The History of the Philippines), (Madrid, 1984), p. 93.

notary public, Duarte Rendón, issued a copy of the document that declared its foundation. Rendón stated that this was the official copy of "the original that is kept in the house of the Holy Mercy." One can surmise correctly that the Dominicans pushed for the formation of the brotherhood to solve their financial troubles, and to sustain their apostolic projects in and outside of Taiwan. Of special interest were the establishment and maintenance of a hospital and a school, following the plans that Esquivel mapped out in 1633 - the same year the brotherhood was founded. In order to understand its effectiveness as a funding institution, we must look at the outcome of its main projects.

*a) The project of the school for the children of the leaders of neighboring kingdoms*

Esquivel documented one of the plans that the Dominicans had in mind for the spread of the apostolate. This was the founding of a school, not only for the natives of Taiwan, but principally for those of the neighboring kingdoms. Esquivel undoubtedly had a direct hand in this enterprise. This is not surprising because he was actually enroute to Japan, obviously one of the 'neighboring kingdoms'. (He even published a Spanish-Japanese dictionary in Manila, basing it on one previously made by the Jesuits.) At that time, the gates of Japan were closed to missionaries; therefore, evangelizing in that kingdom was considered a "long-term" project. In the meantime, the best option was to establish contact with the kingdoms near Lequios.

To do this, on April 10, 1633 Esquivel proposed that the Holy Table of Mercy grant him economic aid to found a school for

"...Chinese and Japanese children, as well as the Koreans and those from the Islands of Lequios (as both islands form part of the said empires), have a school of their own to educate them in the holy way and to instruct them on the mysteries of our holy faith through reading, writing, singing, and the teaching of moral theology. In this way, the more gifted among them may be later ordained as priests; and the less keen serve as catechists or preachers in their kingdoms, most specially in times of persecution since they are able to mingle among their own kind - something which our own priests cannot do" ... "Moreover, this project has many other advantages. The European ministers can learn the language directly from the natives, making it easier for them to come and live in these lands. They will enjoy the favor of the parents and relatives of the students and thus open doors to the preaching of the Gospel. Likewise, they

will partake of incomparable wealth, safety, friendship, and trade with the two powerful kingdoms because we shall have 'captured' their children."<sup>31</sup>

He proposed to raise 2,000 pesos, which together with the capital and property of the Holy Table, would cover the expenses of setting up and maintaining the school. The petition reached Fr. Pedro de Arce who, at that time was the provisional archbishop of Manila. He approved the proposal on June 2, 1633. We do not know if the project finally materialized. Most probably, it was not even founded because its principal promoter, Jacinto Esquivel, died at sea that very year. He was murdered while traveling to Japan or another nearby kingdom, in search of students for the school. Our available sources are silent on this matter.

*b) The hospital projects*

After visiting the island in 1632, Bishop Aduarte issued a report<sup>32</sup> on the situation of the missions, including some references to the unstable condition of hospital. He pointed out that a doctor had been present from the beginning, but he had just left the island. His substitute, a Dominican friar, was also leaving. Aduarte suggested that the Franciscans might want to undertake the hospital ministry as they prepared to go to China. Then, he remarked on the items the hospital needed at that time, since everything had to come from Manila.

"There was one surgeon [there], but being a married man, and having stayed there for a long time, he left this year for Spain. He must be replaced soon because [the men] cannot manage in their positions without one. The only person there who is knowledgeable in this field is a friar who may be forced to go to Manila because he is suffering from poor health himself. His superior had already granted him permission for this. For want of volunteers, the Franciscans may be requested to send two brothers there, veterans of their infirmaries and who are experienced in curing [illnesses]. They may be assigned to man the hospitals there, rendering great service to God. Moreover, if the said order desires to send ministers to attend to the natives of that island, just like the Dominicans who are already working there, pray that they may do so. A doctor to prescribe and a pharmacist to dispense the prescription are indispensable in any place where people live. It is useless to have

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<sup>31</sup> AUST, *Libros, tomo 49, ff. 325-326.*

<sup>32</sup> AUST, *Libros, tomo 49, ff. 302-305v.*

one without the other. There is also a need for preserves and gifts for the sick, and more than just chicken with some income for their sustenance. Since there is no hospital there, up till now, everything has had to come from here, but in scarcer quantities than what is needed. Thus it is necessary to send them everything, in kind, or in the designated amount of money until God wills that the land yield [their needs], since it is capable of doing so. The land clamors - without pretext - for 'fracadas' from Castile and woolen mattresses for the sick, as it can get very cold in winter."<sup>33</sup>

The document attributed to Esquivel mentions two intended hospital projects. One was on the island of San Salvador which "the Holy Table has to build, where Sangleys, natives and Japanese, if there are any, can go. This hospital is to be given to the order that wants to take it." These last words infer that Esquivel, like Aduarte, considered giving the hospital to the Franciscans.

The second hospital that he was planning was to be located in Tamsui:

"Moreover, a small hospital is needed to treat the sick Sangleys, Japanese - if any - and natives who are fed up with the futile medications of their old women. They go to the priests and to the Spaniards in the fort to be cured. We cannot always send them to the island because they refuse to travel everyday under such distressing conditions. It seems that the third ministry that may be carried out here is a hospital near the fortress, close to the port near the Tamchuy river where two other religious brothers are based to attend to both Japanese and Sangley patients. The hospital will help the Order by attending to Sangleys who can no longer be accommodated in the Manila hospital. A constant friendship with the Chinese and Japanese will soon move them to help us send ministers to their lands."<sup>34</sup>

We do not know if both hospitals were erected in the above-mentioned places, and in accordance with the original ends of the Dominicans. However, there is no doubt that the military hospital on the Island of San Salvador continued to operate. The official certificates that Simon de Toro, His Majesty's fiscal officer, issued in Manila in 1644 state that every year from 1634 to 1642, a "box of medicine" always came in every shipment of aid that reached Taiwan. In March of 1642 — the year that Spain finally withdrew from Taiwan — the vessel San Nicolás Tolentino

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> AUST, *Libros, tomo 49, ff. 317-324.*

brought more people and goods to the island, de Toro declared.

"Francisco Casta Vengala, surgeon and slave of His Majesty, who will report to Captain Andrés de Aguiar, caretaker of the Royal Hospital of the city of Manila. He bears the following surgical instruments: a pair of scissors, three razors, one lancet".<sup>35</sup>

c) *The Santa Mesa (Holy Table) and its loans to the governor of Isla Hermosa*

It seems that the Holy Table, the association that shouldered all of the Dominicans' accounts, sometimes had to lend money to governors who were financially hard-put. In a report that was submitted to Corcuera, governor of the Philippines by Gonzalo Portillo, the island's last governor, he said that as soon as he arrived in Taiwan, "the Priests of the order of St Dominic asked me to pay them the 2,000 pesos that Your Majesty owes the cash box of the Holy Table, since they lent ..."<sup>36</sup> Likewise, he states in another report: "Of the 4,000 pesos that came, I paid 2,000 to the Holy Table. It will be necessary to ask again, even when I know that I will have a big argument with the priests about it."<sup>37</sup>

## The Results

a) *Evangelization*

The evangelization proceeded slowly at the start. Bishop Diego Aduarte, who was there in 1632, six years after the Spaniards first came, offers some information about it. In his *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China* he speaks of the first baptisms, which refer to the two daughters of a Japanese Christian who lived there. In the *Report* that he wrote after the his trip he said: "Many children have been baptized. Their parents have [wanted this] without our forcing them. There have been few adult baptisms, most of which have been done at a person's deathbed." Nevertheless, churches started to increase in number Jilong and in Tamsui. According to Aduarte, it was a slow path of evangelization:

"The reason is that for adults, bad habits - inherited from their ancestors - must first be uprooted before the goods of Christianity

<sup>35</sup> AGI, *Filipinas, Escribanía de Cara, 409-B, cd<sup>o</sup> 15, folios 29-49.*

<sup>36</sup> Letter of Portillo to Corcuera. AGI, *Filipinas, Escribanía de Cara, 409-B.*

<sup>37</sup> AGI, *Filipinas, Indiferente General 1874.*

are planted, a mission not unlike what God had entrusted to Jeremiah when he asked him to preach. The worst [of these customs] is that of headhunting, [victimizing their own kind] in the different villages, as well as the shipwrecked foreigners who are washed onto their shores. This [practice] is a mark of courage among them. Although the majority [still practice this vile custom] throughout the island's 30-league span, we also hear from Spaniards, priests and natives that, thanks be to God, it is being [gradually] abandoned, along with their propensity to drunkenness and superstition."<sup>38</sup>

The language problem also slowed down the spread of Christianity; conversion was going to be impossible if the missionaries did not learn to speak the native tongue. This is probably why Jacinto Esquivel arrived some time during 1630. By then, his facility for learning languages was tried and proven. He had just published a dictionary of the Japanese language based on the original Jesuit version published in Nagasaki in 1603.<sup>39</sup> Esquivel produced this dictionary because he was really going to Japan. However, he had to wait for the best time to enter the country, which was why he lived in Isla Hermosa for two to three years. He worked in Tamsui and, in 1632 or earlier, finished his *Vocabulario muy copioso de la lengua de los indios de Tanchui en la Isla Hermosa* (An Extensive Vocabulary of the Language of the Natives of Tamsui in Isla Hermosa).<sup>40</sup> Esquivel's apostolic energy must have swept the land from 1630 to 1633; unfortunately, it ended with his fateful trip to Japan.

In summary, the missionary approach of Diego Aduarte was based on a steady but deep action, whose results will be harvested in few years: to give formation to the young people and improve communications with them. The latter must be done in a two-pronged manner: to know the native language and to teach Spanish to the natives. In 1632, the fruits still were minimal, but Aduarte was optimistic:

<sup>38</sup> AUST, *Libros*, tomo 49, ff. 302-305v.

<sup>39</sup> *Vocabulario de Iapon, declarado primero en portugves por los padres de la Compañía de Iesvs...* Colegio de Santo Tomás de Manila, 1630. See W.E. Retana, *Orígenes de la Imprenta Filipina* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1910), pp. 114-115.

<sup>40</sup> The authors frequently cited to these works. To cite one: J.T. Medina, *Bibliografía española de la Islas Filipinas* (The Spanish Bibliography of the Philippines, 1523-1810), Imprenta Cervantes, Santiago de Chile, 1898, nos. 41 and 42. This author believes that the said works were never published. Jose María González, who wrote *Historio de la misiones dominicanas en China* (The History of the Dominican Missions in China, vol. V: bibliographies, p. 362) attributes to him the book *Arte de la lengua de Formosa* (The Art of the Language of Formosa).

"Through the 30-league distance that separates Tamsui and the port of San Salvador, where the main Spanish encampment is found, and even in the surrounding areas, a priest can walk among the natives unmolested; in fact, many towns ask them to stay. In the end, their conversion will be similar to that of the rest of the indios [that is, the ones of the Philippines]: the adults who have long fed on their old rituals make little progress; but as for the newly baptized children who have been nurtured on the milk of the faith, at the breasts of their ministers, they will grow like them in age. Thus these natives' progress cannot be slower than that of the other colonies who have ministers attending to them. Their progress will be greater because their capacity [for understanding] is great, as observed in the children's exceptional facility to grasp [Christian] doctrine and even our language, and everything on which they set their minds to do."<sup>41</sup>

By 1634, things were ready to ripen. On August 10, the governor of the Philippines, Juan Cerezo de Salamanca, wrote the king to say that the upkeep of Isla Hermosa was without fruit and too costly for the Crown:

"The climate is mild, at 25 degrees, the land is abundant, but the natives are so averse to dealings that they do not allow us to enjoy the fruits [of the land]. The members of religious orders up to now have not brought a single mature person to Baptism; and they are such a treacherous people that when it seems that they are peaceful, it is when they suddenly turn around and kill those whom they catch offguard."<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, Cerezo de Salamanca did not know that the missions were just starting to spread. This was, perhaps, as a consequence of the visit in 1634 of the provincial, Domingo González:

"More than two thousand received baptism. Six churches were built: two in the province of River Tanchuy (one for the use of the Indians, another for Spaniards); one in the village of Santiago, situated towards the East, close to the province of Cabarán; another one, dedicated to All the Saints, on the Islet of the main Spanish garrison; still other, dedicated to St. Joseph, in the village of Taparri, at the other side of the bay; and close by, in the village of Quimaurri, another was built in honor of Our Lady."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> AUST, *Libros*, tomo 49, ff. 302-305v.

<sup>42</sup> AGI, *Filipinas*, 8.

<sup>43</sup> AUST, *Tomo IX*, fols. 620-638, film 74.

In 1635, the Dominicans requested the assistance of a secular priest (Monroy) to care for the needs of the Spaniards on the island. This was, perhaps, a result of the Provincial's directives and for the development of the missionary work. The new governor of Isla Hermosa, Alonso García Romero (1635-37), must have interceded for them in this matter. The Dominicans held him in high regard, considering him the best governor the island ever had:

"He was a good Christian who sought the salvation of the poor people and the growth of his King's Crown. Thus, he was the first to face dangers, being together with his soldiers in everything, without paying any attention to the fact that he had a young wife who would be left alone [should he die], that he already had a position as a member of a military order, and a fortune at risk. He showered the Indians with attention, performing the deeds of a father towards them and whenever necessary, the deeds of a judge as well; thus they always remember him."<sup>44</sup>

Upon his return to Manila, Romero immediately accounted for the services he rendered the King. Among other things, he said:

"I served in that post for two years and subjected the indios in the vicinity to our power, an accomplishment that my predecessors had not achieved in eight years. Over a thousand converted to Christianity; the other towns asked for priests because the scarcity had meant that they receive nothing more apart from the waters of Baptism."<sup>45</sup>

For his part, Teodoro de la Madre de Dios reviewed the partial count of the thousand individuals who were baptized:

"During his time our Lord also started the conversion of the natives, which did not happen until then; many were baptized. Myself alone, being the most wretched of all people there, in eight days baptized three hundred and twenty persons in the river Tamchui, when they got sick of smallpox that year; and around the feast of St. James, in just five days, I baptized one hundred and forty one; and I moved about the villages alone, with only the company of two Indian boys, saying masses, without fear of the enemies, who were under control by the fear they had of the Governor" ... "They remained so fearful that Fr. Juan García could go inland and baptize many souls during the smallpox epidemic. I was able to make a

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<sup>44</sup> Letter of Quirós, AUST.

<sup>45</sup> AHN, *Diversos*, 34, Doc. 39.



tour and, in eight days, I baptized 186 children six years of age and younger; when I wanted to continue with my functions, I received a letter from our garrison, to the effect that the Governor of the Philippines was seeking to withdraw the Spaniards from that island; for that reason I did not baptize anybody else" ... "From then on, everything started to collapse, both in spiritual and in temporal matters, except for two villages of Christians which the regular clergy had subdued simply with the word of God, and were as meek as lambs."<sup>46</sup>

It is hard to make a precise count of the baptisms that took place. If the figures represent the number of baptisms in 1634, and if the figures from 1635 to 1636 do not overlap, then one would find an average of over 3,000 baptisms in the 10 years of Spanish presence in Taiwan. Later missionary activity, like that of Fr. Luis Muro (who arrived in 1635 and was murdered there in 1636), provided further reinforcement. Quirós writes: "Thanks (to Fr. Luis), there were many more Christians in Pulauan, Camaco, Maupe, Parakucho and other towns where this holy martyr worked."<sup>47</sup>

Quirós's first account has a chilling element to it. One can better understand this by looking at the table of missionaries in the appendix: each time the missions seemed to reach a vital stage, and five new priests arrived to help the two veterans, Juan García and Quirós, one of the group would be murdered. This must have frightened the other four in that boat, because none of their names appear in the succeeding lists. "Since then, everything (certainly) began to tumble." Quirós, in particular, stood out, not only for his ten year stay (the longest of them all), but also for his unflinching spirit of perseverance in the mission. To him we owe the grammar book, *Arte de la lengua de Formosa* (The Art of Language in Formosa) and the dictionary *Vocabulario en la misma lengua* (Vocabulary in the Native Tongue). This brings one to suspect that both books could be versions of Esquivel's possible works. Also, it would seem - as we think about the works of Esquivel - that these works of Quirós were not published, and their manuscripts may have been lost a long time ago.<sup>48</sup>

What happened after 1642? The Dutch presence was far-away and

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<sup>46</sup> Letter of Quirós, AUST.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> This grammar book has been cited many times by authors like Jose Maria Gonzalez in his *Historia de la misiones dominicanas* (The History of the Dominican Missions), pp. 363-364. This work, pp. 321-381 contains a detailed account of the bibliography by all the Dominicans in Taiwan, including those who came after 1859.

short-lived. Thus, it does not seem likely that the Catholic natives from Quimaurri and Taparri, could have converted to Protestantism (which would be a mere assumption). On the other hand, they might have conserved certain Christian elements within a growing syncretism.

The first missionary to return to Taiwan was Victorio Ricci. This occurred in 1662. He found the natives had remained fervent, and some went to him for confession. However, this source is somewhat doubtful because he refers to the place as Tainan, where Koxinga stayed<sup>49</sup>. In this case, the Spaniards could never have set foot on the land. In 1673 and again in 1694, the Dominicans attempted to reestablish contact with the missions that they had been forced to abandon. Both attempts failed. Bishop Pallu made a brief visit in 1683, but was unable to report about it. The Jesuit, Fr. de Mailla left Xiamen April 3, 1714 in order to draft a map of Taiwan. This priest, who was commissioned for the project by the Chinese emperor, recounted having seen the remains of a beautiful mission that might have yielded abundant fruit had there been apostolic laborers to cultivate it<sup>50</sup>. The Dominicans finally returned in 1859. Their letters sometimes describe the vestiges of the first evangelization (rites, ceremonies, etc.), but they also acknowledge that their observations may be motivated more by preconceived wishes than by reality.

#### b) *The missionaries enter China*

The passage of the Spanish Dominican and Franciscan missionaries to China is a long chapter in the history of the China mission. Here, I will only try to mention a little in order to highlight the importance of the Spanish presence in northern Taiwan that served as a missionary bridge to China.

If the Dominicans had arrived in Taiwan and collaborated in its evangelization, it was chiefly because they were looking for an important foothold on their dangerous route to Japan and because they sought to enter China through an independent route. At that time, Macao, the obligatory route, was under Portuguese control. No one among the first wave of missionaries succeeded in opening this desired route. The first one to achieve it was an Italian Dominican from Florence, Angelo Cocchi,

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<sup>49</sup> What is certain is that he also passed by Jilung. He may have confused the places because he wrote his account *a posteriori*. See Jose Eugenio Borao, "Consideraciones en torno a la imagen de Koxinga vertida por Victorio Ricci en Occidente" (Victorio Ricci's Reflections About the Figure of Koxinga), *Encuentros en Catay* 10 (Fujen University, 1996).

<sup>50</sup> Dehergne, *L'île Formose au XVIIe siècle*, p. 176.

who left Taiwan the last day of 1631 and arrived in China on 1 January 1632. He established a first mission in Fuan and stayed there until his death in 1633. Four months before he died, the Dominican, Juan Bautista Morales and the Franciscan, Antonio Caballero de Santa María arrived on the same boat. The arrival of latter resumed the Franciscan presence in China after many years.

During those years, other missionaries started going to Fujian from Taiwan. For example, the Franciscan, Francisco Bermúdez and the Dominican, Francisco Díez went in 1634. In the Spring of 1637, (the year when the missions in Japan can be regarded as a "lost mission"), the Franciscan Gaspar Alenda arrived in China. And soon after, Francisco Díez, (who came to Taiwan for a while) went back to China with two new Dominicans, Pedro Chaves and Juan García; some Franciscans also went: Francisco Escalona, Onofre Pelleja and Domingo Urquicio. In fact, these three Franciscan missionaries attempted a trip to Japan in 1634, but when they neared Lequios, they were forced to return to Taiwan because of inclement weather. Hence, in 1637 there were ten missionaries in Fujian who had come from Taiwan. But this situation didnot last for long. Morales went to Rome - passing by Macao - to discuss the matter of the Chinese Rites, and didn't go back to China until 1649. On the other hand, in 1638 a persecution began that forced most of the missionaries to leave the country. This was a period of uncertainty, that caused the priests to shuttle to and from Taiwan. Only for ten months, between 1640 and 1641, were no Spanish missionaries in China, because Juan García, the only remaining missionary, went back to Taiwan for health problems. But things were getting difficult for the Spanish authorities in Taiwan due to continuous pressure from the Dutch. For example, Pedro Chaves, after returning to China knew that he was assigned to the church of Santiago. He went back again to Taiwan to take charge of a new ministry, but his boat was captured by the Dutch, who sent him to Batavia. There were, however, some more favorable turn of events. Shortly before the Dutch victory over the Spaniards, one ship that sailed from Jilong to China carried the Dominicans, Díez and Francisco Capillas (the newest recruit to the missions). They reached the continent and were reunited with García.

The Spaniards finally departed Taiwan after suffering defeat at the hands of the Dutch. The whole picture changed after their lifeline to the Philippines was cut off. Nevertheless, the missionary presence in Fujian was able to continue notwithstanding great misfortunes: the deaths of Francisco Díez in 1646 and Francisco Capillas on 15 January 1648. The last happened as a result of the disorder created in Fuan at the arrival of the Tartars. Nevertheless, those years of Spanish presence in Taiwan created a foundation, solid enough to be supported from Manila. In fact, in

1649, after Morales' trip to Europe, he reestablished himself this time in China. For the Dominicans, this signaled a new impetus for future evangelization.