

The Formosa Catholic Mission, 1626–1895

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The first contact of Taiwan with Christianity took place in the context of the Jesuit missions to Japan, when the yearly galleon from Macao to Japan was shipwrecked in northern Taiwan in 1582. The 300 persons on board had to stay in Taiwan from July 16 to September 30 until they managed to get back to Macao in a smaller ship they had constructed themselves. Among them were five Jesuits, four priests and one brother. One of the priests was the Spaniard, Pedro Gómez, who was on his way to Japan to serve there as Vice-Provincial of the Society of Jesus. Another one was Alonso Sánchez, but from the mission in the Philippines, who after an official trip from Manila to Macao tried to go back to the Philippines by way of Japan. The other Jesuits were Portuguese, Frs. Alvaro Días and Christovão Moreira and Brother Francisco Pirez. We know many details of their two and a half months stay thanks to the reports written by Gómez, Sánchez and Pirez describing the island and its inhabitants (SIT,¹ 2–15). But regarding the propagation of the faith among the natives, nothing is recorded since this alien group and the natives mistrusted each other. Besides, the Portuguese sailors were working at preparing their way back to Macao. All the same, the first Christian ceremonies ever held in Taiwan

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were conducted at that time when the Jesuits celebrated mass in their camp, erected a big cross on the top of a nearby mountain and administered the sacraments (SIT, 7).

THE DOMINICANS ESTABLISHED THE FIRST MISSION IN FORMOSA (TAIWAN) (1626–1642)

One of the reasons why the Dominicans entered Formosa in 1626 was because it represented for them an area for natural expansion from their Cagayan province in northern Luzon and a convenient jumping board for their way to China and Japan. Since the end of the sixteenth century, some Dominicans had been assigned to the *parián* (or Chinese quarter) of Manila where they learned the language of the Chinese emigrants, mainly from northern Guangdong or from Fujian. In fact, they had translated some religious materials into Chinese in readiness for their move to the mainland. Their route from Manila to Macao had failed several times because of Portuguese and Jesuit opposition, so they changed direction and managed to enter Fujian from Formosa in 1632 (Borao 2010). On the other hand, the way to Japan, which had been open for them from the end of the sixteenth century, became totally inaccessible after the Japanese closed-door policy of the *Sakoku* was implemented from 1633. This means that their commitment to Formosa became more serious after this year.

Regarding the process of their settling in Formosa, first, they moved northward to the Babuyanes Islands (between Formosa and the Philippines), and in 1626 they reached Quelang (present area of Keelung) on board the two galleys commanded by Carreño de Valdés. At the entrance of Keelung harbor, on the present Heping Island, the Spanish soldiers established the fort and city of San Salvador, where the Dominicans began construction of the church of Todos los Santos, but it was not until 1627 that the bishop of Manila granted them permission to administer the sacraments (SIT, 95).

Among the most significant missionaries who came to Formosa, we can mention first Francisco Vázquez who was one of the four Dominican missionaries who arrived there at the very beginning. Vázquez was a Portuguese whose ten-year residence in Formosa (1626–1636) was one of the longest, a term that ended when he was killed at the hands of the natives of Tamchui (Tanshui). He was probably the first to compile materials on the language of the natives for the purpose of evangelization. In all likelihood however, the most active missionary in writing reports was Jacinto

Esquivel, whose two-year stay in Formosa (1631–1633) was very important to understand both the missionary activity on the island and the native manner of life. He arrived in San Salvador in the summer of 1631. From there, he went to the nearby indigenous village of Taparri, where he remained until October. Then he moved to Tanshui* and stayed there for about ten months, initially near the Santo Domingo fortress—from October 1631 to February 1632—later moving around the nearby area of Senar dealing closely with its natives whom he describes in detail. At the end of that summer, he returned to Keelung* where he met up with Aduarte, the bishop of Nueva Segovia (northern Luzon) who was then visiting the island. It must have been at the instance of the second governor, Alcarazo, and of Aduarte that Esquivel wrote two reports, the first focusing more on civil concerns (SIT, 162–168) while the second one was on ecclesiastical matters (SIT, 179–188). We know little of him afterward because he was busy finishing the manuscripts of his grammar, dictionary and the catechism in the native tongue of the aborigines of the Tanshui River area, before he joined the fateful voyage to Japan sometime in the spring of 1633, being killed just after departure.

We should also mention Teodoro Quirós, a missionary who stood out, not only for his ten-year stay (the same as that of Francisco Váez) 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)*. Most probably, these books were made by updating those of Esquivel, while, at the same time, he might also have updated those of Francisco Váez.

After six years in San Salvador, the missionaries could still claim little success. In 1631, when Esquivel arrived, only two missions had been founded from Todos los Santos: Saint Joseph of Quimaurri and Saint John the Baptist of Taparri. Esquivel consolidated this one and created a new one near Tanshui, Our Lady of the Rosary, near Senar. After this success, Esquivel became optimistic, and—according to the “missionary division land” method experimented in the Philippines—he made, in 1632, a draft plan for the division of northern Formosa into 12 ministries (SIT, 183–187), foreseeing that other religious orders might come, as had happened with the Franciscans in 1633. His plan was based on his own interest in the Tanshui area; thus he proposed that the Dominicans take the ministries in Tanshui and Senar. He showed no interest at that moment in the natives of Keelung and only paid attention to the two ministries in San

Salvador—the small Chinese quarter and a hospital. He also proposed to transfer the *curato* (the official chaplaincy offering religious service to the Spanish soldiers) to a different religious order because, at that time, the work of the chaplaincy was giving a lot of trouble to the Dominican in charge. He was very determined to do it, regardless of the fact that this official appointment had a salary attached to it. He concluded:

We lay claim to the better ministries. It will be good to distribute what remains to the other Orders. The Recollects can take care of Pantao, as well as the area beyond ... occupied by natives of Pulauan, and the Spaniards of the fort of Tamchuy which is in front of Pantao, with the parish of the island ... The Jesuits and the Augustinians can divide the territory of Lichoco, which is five leagues away from Taparri [between Keelung and Tanshui]; they can also take care of Taparri, Quimaurri [in the bay of Keelung, modern Dashawan] and Santiago [modern Fulong beach, near Sandiao Cap] because these areas are all close to each other. (SIT, 188)

Among these listed places, the Tanshui River area seemed very promising thanks to the achievements of Jacinto Esquivel and later Teodoro Quirós, who baptized “320 persons in the year of the smallpox epidemic (probably 1635)” (SIT, 456). In 1632, Esquivel still presents the future of the missions in the Tanshui area in a very optimistic way: the natives of Pantao were asking for a priest; others in the Quimazon River area said that they would also request a priest after seeing that his presence in Senar was not harmful; and, finally, the elders of Lichoco were also asking for a priest after learning how Esquivel had liberated from the Spaniards some natives who had been unjustly taken as prisoners (SIT, 181–182). This optimistic view changed abruptly in 1636 when natives of Senar murdered Frs. Francisco Vázquez and Luis Muro. Additionally, the Spanish garrison withdrew in the same year; the mission of Tanshui was discontinued, and those promising communities received no further mention in Dominican sources.

Another interesting place was Caquiuanuan (Santiago), on the way from Keelung to the populated area of Cavalan. This mission probably started after the visit of the Dominican provincial, Domingo González, in 1634, and the cooperation of Governor García Romero. Quirós wrote that this governor “had the natives under control and that they esteem him very much” (SIT, 456). He allowed Fr. Quirós to baptize 141 children in five days in the year of the smallpox epidemic in Caquiuanuan (SIT, 456). The Santiago mission was formally established in 1635 because in that year the provincial chapter of the Dominicans assigned Fr. Miguel

Corona as minister of a church dedicated to St. Dominic. Similarly, the Dominican chapter of 1637 referred to Fr. Francisco Díaz as being given the same assignment, while the one of 1641 designates Fr. Pedro Chaves. Chaves, at that time residing in China, was unable to take over his post because the Dutch captured and imprisoned him in the same year while he was on his way to Isla Hermosa (Formosa).

Besides the churches, a project of Fr. Esquivel deserves mention, set up in cooperation with Governor Juan de Alcarazo, namely the creation of the Confraternity of the Misericordia (Holy Mercy). This was an association of laypeople for charitable works, formally constituted with the bishop's approval. The governing body was called Santa Mesa (Holy Table). It administered money and properties with which to cover the needs of the institution. It was very well developed in the Portuguese colonies and some Portuguese residents of Manila contributed to create another one there. The project of the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa was inspired by this pattern but featured in different ways (Borao 2005a). The idea took shape in the spring of 1632, and the Mesa was provisionally established in the summer of that year with the support of Governor Juan de Alcarazo, a few months before his definitive return to Manila. The governor agreed with Esquivel that the Mesa should start establishing a hospital in Keelung for Spanish soldiers and their wives, under the care of the crown and financed by commercial control over some products such as liana crafts or deer-skeen (SIT, 175). That hospital should be followed later by another three, one in Keelung for servants and slaves; another, also in Keelung, for Chinese, Japanese and natives, financed by the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa (SIT, 185); and a third one in Tanshui, also for Sangleys [Chinese merchants], Japanese and natives, financed by the sister hospital of the Dominicans in Manila (SIT, 185). The foundation of the first hospital was the fruit of regular conversations between Alcarazo and Esquivel:

They talked and decided that a Misericordia be established on that same island. To this, Don Juan later donated 4,000 pesos, and Fr. Jacinto, 2,000 pesos worth of alms that some people in Manila gave him to distribute among the pious works that were to be established in that new conversion. The 6,000 pesos gave rise to the Misericordia. (SIT, 209)

Upon the return of Bishop Aduarte and Governor Alcarazo to the Philippines, the statutes were presented by one of the members of the Mesa, Captain Juan Baquedano (SIT, 195), and finally approved in Manila

in the autumn of 1632. Baquedano went back to Isla Hermosa in the regular spring relief ship (SIT, 211), just to attend the first formal meeting of the Mesa in April 1633.

Regarding the goal of building a hospital, it can only be said that during the 16 years of Spanish presence in Formosa, the existence of just one hospital was registered and that one mainly for official needs. There is no certainty that this hospital was the one intended by the Misericordia or just the continuation and development of a pre-existing medical service inside the fortress. In the last years of Spanish presence, we have more details. For example, the official certificates of His Majesty's fiscal officer, Simón de Toro, stated that from 1634 to 1642, a "box of medicines" arrived in every relief ship that reached Keelung. The certificates give additional information; for example, in March of 1642, the vessel "San Nicolás Tolentino" brought Francisco Casta Vengala, surgeon and slave of His Majesty, who reported to Captain Andrés de Aguiar, caretaker of the Royal Hospital of the city of Manila. He brought surgical instruments, such as a pair of scissors, three razors and one lancet.

Esquivel had in mind another endeavor that the Mesa should carry out: a missionary school cofinanced by the Dominicans. In that meeting of April 1633, Esquivel pushed the Mesa for the creation of the school. They agreed to the idea and made a proposal that was signed by its members. The signatures show how this institution was supported by the most prominent Spaniards in San Salvador: Governor Bartolomé Díaz Barrera, as the elder brother of the Santa Mesa; the father procurator, Francisco Bravo, Superior and Vicar of the convent of Todos los Santos; Captains Luis de Guzmán, Juan Baquedano, Matías de Olaso and Miguel Sáez de Alcaraz; the royal accountant Francisco de Vivero; and the paymaster of the Royal Treasury Juan Pérez de Rueda.

The school project of Esquivel was a kind of seminary school for Chinese and Japanese, probably inspired by the Jesuit School of Sao Paulo in Macao, or the one in Manila, founded by the priest Juan Fernández León in 1594 to attend to the needs of orphans and the poor of the city, for whom he tried later to establish a seminary school (Molina 1984, 93). No doubt this project was intended also to counterbalance the Japanese government pressure against Catholics and the isolation policy which started precisely in this year of 1633. But later there is no reference in any of the documents to this projected school. One of the reasons may be that its main promoter, Esquivel, had just engaged in his long-awaited missionary expedition to Japan, maybe with the additional idea of finding students for his project but, as was mentioned earlier, he was killed upon his departure.

The Misericordia also experienced some changes. Firstly, the Dominicans had to support their increasingly frequent trips to China. Secondly, the governor's need to borrow money was increasing, and the Misericordia—as happened in other places—was the only available financial institution. So, the original figure of the governor as elder brother and/or “proveedor” was little by little blurred by the fact that the Misericordia was the one granting him loans. The clearest reference indicating this comes from the arrival of the last governor, Gonzalo Portillo. In his first report to Governor General Corcuera, Portillo wrote that as soon as he arrived in Formosa, “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 Santa Mesa, since they have lent it” (SIT, 316). Likewise, he states in another report, “Of the 4,000 pesos that came, I paid 2,000 to the Santa Mesa. It will be necessary to ask again, even when I know that I will have a big argument with the priests about it” (SIT, 335). All the same, the financial situation of the Misericordia, before the Spaniards left Formosa, after being defeated by the Dutch, seems to have been one of solvency, at least according to the testimony of the scribe and key keeper of 1642, Juan Pérez de Rueda, who in 1644 declared that the Dutch seized all its belongings, namely “8,000 pesos in reals, 10 plates of ordinary silver, two large plates and merchandise worth 1,000 pesos” (SIT, 518). Certainly this data is consistent with the Spanish Fortress inventory that the Dutch made after their conquest (SIT, 394–397).

NATIVE OPPOSITION IN TANSHUI (1636)

When Esquivel left for Japan in 1633, he had great hopes for the missions in the Tanshui River area that he had founded. It must have been hard for him to imagine the crisis they would encounter just three years later when two Dominicans were killed on different occasions, Francisco Vázquez and Luis Muro, the first a veteran of the mission, while the second had been on the island for only one year (SIT, 457).

According to the Dominican sources, especially the *History* of Aduarte, Francisco Vázquez was very confident in his dealing with the natives; he was even able to free from prison one of the troublemakers from Senar, Pila, who was later the one who took his life. Thinking that the missionary situation in Senar was consolidated, he tried in January 1636 to achieve the same in the rival village of Pantao, located on the other side of the Tanshui River. He told the elders of Senar his plans and found no opposition, so he decided to proceed. Nevertheless, during the evening of that day, the elders gathered to

discuss the matter again and disapproved it. Fr. Vázquez learned somehow of this change of mind, but he went to Pantao as planned to proceed with the foundation of a new mission and was killed on his way by the Senar natives.

The case of Luis Muro was different. Due to a daunting scarcity of food in April of the same year, the governor in San Salvador commissioned the captain in Tanshui to buy rice along the river. A group of soldiers went accompanied by Fr. Muro; but after some days they received news that six sampans from China had brought rice to San Salvador so there was no need to buy more. One group of Spaniards went to Santo Domingo to deliver half the grain they had bought, while four of them, including Fr. Muro, remained by the river where they were guarding the other half. The captain of Santo Domingo was concerned about the security of this small group and sent some reinforcements (20 soldiers and 40 laborers), but on their way back to the fort, the whole group was ambushed by 300 native warriors, who killed some soldiers, laborers and Fr. Muro.

It is difficult to know the real reason why the natives did this. Was it total opposition to the presence of foreigners in their territory? Of course, initial opposition is natural; and, if it were too dangerous to oppose the intruders, they could accommodate them as a temporary measure or even take advantage of their presence. Therefore, were these killings the way the natives responded to concrete (cultural or material) grievances believed to come from the Spaniards? This might have been the case in Senar and the reason behind the killing of Fr. Vázquez. The elders of Senar may have seen in the missionary presence three assets: a protection against the Spaniards of Santo Domingo; a mediator in asking the help of the Spaniards when confronted with any problem, for example, the attack from the Cavalans or those of Pantao; and finally a sign of prestige, because not every village had a missionary. In that case, it makes sense to think that the people of Senar might have considered Fr. Vázquez as a traitor, for planning to extend the mission to Pantao, on the other side of the river, opposite Tanshui.

Possibly the same can be suspected in the case of the killing of Fr. Muro, who may have been considered a mediator for the soldiers that went to buy rice. According to a Dutch report, this action might have been associated with the demand of a yearly contribution of “three *gantas* of rice and two chickens for every married couple” that the Spaniards asked from the natives (SIT, 249). But this reference seems a kind of solipsism since Spanish sources do not mention at any moment that taxes were levied upon the natives.² After this success, the natives later continued their offensive against the fortress forcing the withdrawal of the garrison

to Keelung. As a result, Governor General Corcuera became pessimistic in his approach to Formosa (SIT, 256) and ordered the new San Salvador governor, Francisco Hernández, to burn down the Santo Domingo fort and punish the natives of Tanshui (SIT, 272). Peter Kang commenting on those deaths argued that early modern missionaries—unlike their nineteenth-century counterparts—sometimes overestimated their religious progress and ignored their fragile position in the native context. That might be why, when the missionaries moved to other villages for preaching purposes, they were considered as traitors by their earlier converts (Kang 2006, 209–222).

THE RESULTS AT THE END OF THE MING DYNASTY

To measure the success or failure of a mission, we must consider two aspects, the number of converts and the degree of acceptance of the new faith. In normal circumstances this can be known by using the registers of baptism, marriage and so on. But in our case, these were not kept, contrary to the case of the church in Taoyuan that has preserved part of them (Heyns 2005).

For the Spanish mission, figures such as the number of native converts are difficult to evaluate. We have only a general appreciation. People in favor of the mission would try to exaggerate the number of converts, while those against it would be very strict and selective in counting them. For example, in the *junta* (formal meeting) held in Manila in January 1637 summoned by Governor General Corcuera to discuss the situation of Formosa, he regretted the lack of success, saying that only 100 adults were converted. He added, “The Dominicans offered the argument regarding the conversion of the natives to the Catholic faith and about the fruit that they could gather in Japan if trade were to be established there. All these reasons and many others that are greatly related to His Majesty’s service have been disproved in the said eleven years” (SIT, 263). On the other hand, García Romero, who had been governor in Formosa, claimed in the same *junta* that there were 800 converts (SIT, 269); and the Dominican Quirós credited to himself the growth of Christians, during the time of García Romero (SIT, 456). But, in fact, this way of baptizing seems to prove Corcuera right when he said that the Dominicans were baptizing “left and right.” The most optimistic figure was given by one officer that stayed the 16 years of the Spanish presence, Pérez de Rueda. When he was interrogated in 1644, he claimed that in 1642 the number of converts in the friendly towns of Quimaurri, Tapparri and Santiago was 1,000 only.

Maybe, the degree of acceptance of the faith was one of the reasons for the disagreement between both figures in the *junta* of 1637. Corcuera was right in being skeptical because the conversions had been made very recently. But looking at the year 1642, the comments of Pérez de Rueda and of the Second Lieutenant Diego Tamargo were more positive in evaluating the success of the mission.

The acceptance of religious faith by the natives is the most difficult to evaluate. Sometimes the missionaries were not satisfied, and they regretted the low level of understanding of their converts, while other times—especially when they had to justify their work—they presented it with very promising results. In measurable terms, was a thousand converts in 16 years too many or too few? If we compare this with the Dutch results of 5000 converts during 40 years, it is possible to say that the figures were similar, since they usually grow along the time in exponential terms. Another way to see it is that both groups claimed the total conversion of the villagers near their headquarters.

Part of the results of their mission is the accomplishment or not of their goal of entering Japan (Borao 2005b) and China (Borao 2010). The Christians in Japan still enjoyed a sense of freedom at the end of the sixteenth century, especially in the southern island of Shikoku because some *daimyos* (nobles) were Christians. But in 1597, the first great persecution of Christians³ took place in Nagasaki on the basis of fearing an invasion from the Philippines. The atmosphere became less tense after the death of Hideyoshi in the same year. Later things calmed down a little and some Franciscans returned to Japan and the Dominicans entered as well. But everything came to an end in 1614 when the shogun Ieyasu, a pious Buddhist, initiated a persecution against Christians, forcing many of them into exile to Macao or Manila. The martyrdoms, not only of missionaries but also of Japanese Christians, continued in Japan, reaching into the hundreds.

The first of the two Japanese Dominicans departing from Formosa to Japan was Hioji Rokuzayemon who had been exiled in Manila since 1614 and became a Dominican in that city. In 1629 he left Formosa and managed to reach Japan. His initial success might have encouraged the second Japanese Dominican, Gorobioye Tomonaga, to try to sneak into Japan. He had also had the same exile experience of Rokuzayemon. He arrived in Formosa in 1627 and left for Japan in 1632, eventually reaching his destination. The hopes of recovering the Japanese mission were reawakened in the Dominicans of Formosa, but they were short-lived. The new shogun,

Tokugawa Iemitsu (1632–1651), was even more radical than his predecessor and laid down the Sakoku policy (1633–1639), which, in addition to some economic dispositions, forbade Japanese to leave the country, isolated Japan and tried to eradicate Christianity. With Gorobioye and Rokuzayemon back in their country, things look timely for Esquivel, and he decided to try his luck, probably unaware of the new Sakoku policy. But the year proved to be fatal. Esquivel was killed just upon his departure and Gorobioye was captured and also killed. To make things worse, Rokuzayemon also underwent martyrdom the following year (1634). Another Japanese, Felipe del Espíritu Santo, stayed in Keelung from 1634 to 1636 most probably waiting for an opportunity but was recalled to Manila (*SIT*, 238). The Dominicans tried again, but now without passing through Formosa. In the summer of 1636, a group of six (four priests and two laymen) left from Manila without the consent of the governor (*SIT*, 275). Two were Japanese, the priest Vicente Shiwozuka de la Cruz and the laymen Lázaro of Kyoto, a leper. They reached Okinawa where they were taken prisoners, and were brought to Nagasaki where they suffered martyrdom in September 1637.

As for the entrance of the Dominicans into China and the resumption of the Franciscan missions in that country, that is another event in the history of the Catholic Church in Taiwan, since it was done via the two bases of Tanshui and Keelung that served as missionary bridges to China. The first one to enter China was an Italian Dominican from Florence, Angelo Cocci, who left Formosa on the last day of 1631 and arrived in China on January 1, 1632. He established a first mission in Fu'an, Fujian Province, and stayed there until his death in 1633. Four months earlier, the Dominican Juan Bautista Morales and the Franciscan Antonio Caballero also entered on the same boat. During those years, other missionaries began entering Fujian from Formosa. For example, the Franciscan Francisco Bermúdez and the Dominican Francisco Díaz went in 1634. In the spring of 1637, the Franciscan Gaspar Alenda arrived in China. Not long after, Francisco Díaz—who had returned to Taiwan for a while—resumed his work in 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 also attempted a trip to Japan in 1634, but when they neared Lequios, they were forced to return to Formosa because of inclement weather.

In any case, in 1637, ten mendicant missionaries were in Fujian having arrived from Formosa, but this situation did not last long because in 1638

a persecution began in China that forced most of the missionaries to leave the country.⁴ This was a period of uncertainty that caused the priests to shuttle back and forth from Formosa. During ten months, between 1640 and 1641, there were no missionaries in Fujian, because the only one remaining, Juan García, had gone back to Formosa with health problems. Certainly, the whole situation changed after their Manila-Quelang lifeline was cut off by the conquest of San Salvador in Quelang by the Dutch in 1642 because the missionaries had to leave the island along with the Spanish forces.⁵

Was it possible for the Dominicans to remain as hidden missionaries to take care of their converted natives as they had tried to do in Japan and were doing at that moment in China? It is difficult to answer this question, because, although Teodoro Quirós had this in mind, either the Spanish officers or his confreres persuaded him not to do it. Probably there were three reasons for abandoning Formosa: first, the fatal experience of what they tried to do in Japan just a few years earlier that only created martyrs; second, the fact that they were already risking it in China where no actual persecution was going on in that particular year, and China was a more populated and vast area than Formosa for hiding; and the third reason might have been that if they remained in Formosa, they would be easily captured by the Dutch, hostile to Catholicism, since the northern area had little in the way of native population.

TWO CENTURIES WITH FEW MISSIONARY ATTEMPTS (1662–1859)

When the Spaniards left the island in 1642 and the Dutch reduced their presence in the China Sea area after 1662, Christianity began to disappear in northern Formosa and then in the whole island. The new attempts of Dominicans in Formosa were two. The first one, in 1666, was coincidental and made by the Italian Victorio Ricci. The second was a formal missionary attempt from Manila in 1673–1674 that subsequently failed.

The Victorio Ricci episode is more an anecdote of an adventurous Dominican priest than a personal plan of establishing a mission. Victorio had a checkered, errant and colorful career “dictated by an inscrutable fate,” as he recalled in his memoirs during his final retirement in Manila (SIT, 581–627). He left Manila for Xiamen in 1655, staying there for seven years, watching the movements of Koxinga* and hearing about the conquest of Dutch Formosa. Up to 1662, Ricci was just a passive spectator

of events, devoted to his mission. Soon after that, however, he got drawn into Chinese events, when he received a personal notification from Koxinga ordering him to go to Anping (modern Tainan in southern Taiwan) for a special mission. He arrived in April 1662. Unexpectedly he found himself appointed as ambassador of Koxinga to the Philippines, something that brought him to different places around the China Sea. Finally, in January 1666, he boarded a ship to Manila which passed first by Keelung, a post that the Dutch had recovered two years earlier. His presence there was providential for the Dutch because he helped them as translator in a negotiation with some Zheng Jing* envoys from Anping. Ricci claimed that this enabled him to regain contact with natives baptized by the Dominicans 20 years earlier before continuing to Manila (Borao 1997).

The Dominicans, as an institution, formally organized an attempt to return to Formosa after 30 years of expulsion. On August 1, 1673, four missionaries set sail for Formosa to explore if it could still be used as a way into China. They were Pedro de Alarcón, who spoke Chinese after several years in the *parián* of Manila, Arcadio del Rosario, Pedro de Alcalá and Alonso de Córdoba. This is mainly based on a short narrative in the official history of the Dominicans, but it refers neither to the places they landed nor to where they stayed. The documents mainly indicate that they were not welcomed by the Chinese, probably because they were based in Tainan and had tried to meet Zheng Jing* (the son of Koxinga*) without success. Since at that moment the Zheng regime enjoyed peaceful relations with Manila, even though the missionaries were regarded by the Chinese as spies, they were tolerated, and granted lodging outside the city, a kind of house arrest. During that time they worked with Christian natives, probably baptized by Calvinist Dutch pastors, as well as with some pagans that had been baptized. Finally, Zheng Jing did not offer them passage to China so they decided to go back to the Philippines in April 1674.⁶

A new, brief and unexpected Catholic presence in Formosa took place at the very beginning of the eighteenth century when a Jesuit led a Chinese team of cartographers there. From 1709 to 1718, a team of Jesuit scholars was commissioned to draw maps of all the provinces of the Empire, and a certain Fr. Mailla was in charge of the province of Fujian and the nearby islands. According to Mateos: “On the third of April in the year 1714, the team sailed from Amoy, escorted by fifteen junks of war with 755 soldiers and 75 officers.” Mailla described minutely the Jesuit expedition to Formosa in a long letter of 85 pages, published in the widely read “*Lettres édifiantes et curieuses* of the Jesuit Missionaries” (Mateos 1998). This was

the last recorded Christian presence on the island until the Dominicans resumed their mission in 1859 after 150 years, creating the last Christian wave on Formosa.

The final return of the Dominicans was due to two main developments in mainland China, missionary and political ones, in the first half of the nineteenth century (Fernández 1958, 419–421). First, Pope Gregory XVI reorganized the ecclesiastical administration in China creating Apostolic Vicariates and Apostolic Prefectures. As a consequence, the Dominicans who were in Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangxi concentrated their apostolate in Fujian, under the governance of Miguel Calderón, who was appointed apostolic vicar and later ordained bishop in 1840.

Secondly, a new scenario was created by the Opium Wars and the succeeding encroachment of colonial powers in China. After the Whampoa Treaty (1844), which legalized the practice of Christianity in China, the French ambassador, Joseph Théodore de Lagrené, managed to transfer the old Portuguese Protectorate of the Catholic missions in China (the so-called *Padroado*) to France who accepted the responsibility of protecting the missionaries holding French passports as if they were French citizens. From then on, the Catholic Church began to expand and consolidate, as it had done in Fujian, where the Dominicans created several churches along the coastal area of the province, and soon after in Fuzhou and near Xiamen, in Houban (Aupoa) and in the island of Gulangyu. It is worth mentioning, in relation to Formosa, that the church of Gulangyu was erected by Fr. Angel Bofurull, who had been living there since 1852 and seven years later started the mission of Formosa.

Later on, the Tianjin Treaty (1860) opened several Chinese harbors, including those in Tanshui and Dagou (actual Kaohsiung), opening up the possibility of going to Formosa. But, this time the initiative did not come from the Dominicans, but from Propaganda Fide, the Vatican institution promoting missions, that suggested the Dominicans go once again to the island to reestablish missionary work. They prepared the mission for 1859 even though no French consul had arrived in Formosa who might offer some protection. Moreover, it was a real challenge, because at that moment the Beijing agreement ratifying the Tianjin Treaty had not been signed. This treaty, signed in 1860, added that the emperor should return the buildings confiscated from the Church a century earlier and that the missionaries should have the faculty of renting or buying land to build their churches (Fernández 1958, 420).

THE DOMINICANS IN FORMOSA AT THE END OF THE QING DYNASTY (1859–1895)

The final arrival of the Dominicans in Formosa certainly took place in 1859 and laid the foundation of the present Catholic Church there. The missionaries came from Xiamen, and were received amid suspicion and hostility, similar to those in China during the seventeenth century, as, for example, when Cocci went to Fuan in 1630. As was mentioned earlier, the leader was Angel Bofurull, accompanied by the young missionary, Fernando Sáinz, and a few laypeople. The Dominican archives keep vivid accounts of the difficulties of the landing and the first problems they encountered. These were so strong that Bofurull after a few weeks in Formosa decided to go back to Xiamen, entrusting the mission to Sáinz. This Argonian priest was appointed one year later as vicar of the Dominicans, and remained in southern Formosa for ten years, crediting him as the founder of the early mission stations, most of which still exist as regular churches.

Sáinz followed traditional ways of establishing missions. He bought land not only to erect a church but to arrange some lodgings in the surrounding areas for the laymen coming with him. Such dwellings could also host the first converts, giving them the opportunity to till the neighboring rice fields and additionally creating some provisions for the mission. In this way the community of Qianjin (Chienchin) in Dagou (Kaohsiung) was created, with a big church according to the style of a huge Chinese house, surrounded by other buildings for an orphanage, residents, catechists and others. It became a very prominent building in the area, transformed in 1930, during the Japanese colonial times, into neo-gothic style, becoming a real landmark in the nascent city, and 20 years later the cathedral of Kaohsiung.

Sáinz should be also credited for the work among indigenous people, whom he considered more receptive than the Chinese, an opinion also shared by the Protestant missionaries who came a few years later to the south of the island. Sáinz went particularly to the area of current Pingtung, near the mountains, where he founded the mission of Wanjin, a place located two days walking distance from Qianjin, and for security reasons communicated through an intermediate station, facilitating the trips in two nights. In Wanjin, Sáinz established a pious institution called *Socorro de Vivos y Difuntos* (Provisions for Dead and Living Christians), to offer

some land to the natives, not only to solve their economic needs and those of the church but also to prevent the Christians emigrating out of difficulties threatened by their neighbors.⁷

From his letters to the Provincial of the Philippines, some of them published in the *Correo Sinoannamita* (CSA), a clear picture emerges of the social and racial groups he had to deal with in his missionary journeys: the Chinese, either of Fujian or Guangdong ancestry (normally Hakka), usually unfriendly to him, and even hostile to his early success; secondly, the “igorots” in the mountains, difficult to deal with; and finally the natives of the plain areas, or pingpuzu, located in between the previous groups, and very friendly and receptive. Precisely, in the pingpuzu village of Wanjin (later classified by Japanese anthropologists as belonging to the Paiwan tribe), the year after Sáinz went back to Manila, 1870, a huge Philippine style church was built, with strong walls that remain until today, and two magnificent bell towers erected in 1884, being, at the present time, one of the most relevant historical sites in Taiwan.

Sáinz made other missionary attempts, first in Tainan, the capital of the prefecture, and in Keelung, expecting to find some remaining Christianity from the seventeenth century, as had happened few years earlier in Nagasaki, where the happy and auspicious event of regaining contact with clandestine Catholics who had survived the ban of Christianity was reported around the Christian world. But both attempts of Sáinz ended in failure, especially the second one, where the missions did not return until 50 years later. The case of Tainan was difficult, but still a little continuity can be claimed.

Once the southern missions were consolidated in the 1970s, there was a decade of peace and prosperity (1874–1884) that led to the expansion in the central plains of the island. A first wave of churches took place, Shalunzi (Soa-lun-a)⁸ in 1874, Luocuo (Lo-chhu-chug) in 1875 and Douliu (Taulak, Toroku) in 1882. Besides, in 1883, the Apostolic Vicariate of Fujian, based on Xiamen, was divided between the one of northern Fujian (capital in Fuzhou) and the one of southern Fujian (capital in Xiamen), in which the Dominican missions of Formosa continued to be included, but now becoming more relevant for the reduction of the territory. A second wave of expansion in central Formosa arrived in the decade before the arrival of the Japanese, Francisco Giner being one of the main promoters. First, the church of Puqianglun (Po-kiuu-lun) was erected in 1887, Shuzaijiao (Chiu-a-kha) followed in 1889, Taliwu (Talibu) in 1890, Linzaijie (Na-a-ke) and Yuanlin (Oan-lin) in 1893, Luliao (Lok-liau) in 1893 and finally Tienzhong (Chhang-liong) in 1895.

Parallel to this expansion was the interest in the north of Formosa, which was indirectly induced by the French invasion of Keelung and Tanshui (1884–1885), and the reaction of the Governor Liu Mingchuan*. This governor, the one that faced the French troops, requested from the Qing government that Formosa change its status of prefecture depending from the province of Fujian and become an independent province, divided in three prefectures, something that became effective in 1887. Then, the capital of the island became Taipei (Taipak), a newly designed city between the old Menjia* (Banka) and the most recent Dadaocheng* (Taotiutia). The Dominicans thought that they would establish a church there, but when the moment arrived through an invitation it was cursed by Chinese from Zhounai (present Luzhou) claiming that their ancestors had been baptized in Fujian and that it was they who landed in that place in northern Formosa, establishing in 1887 a church (the present church of Saint Joseph), near the Protestant one. The final endeavor was entrusted to Celedonio Arranz, who also looked immediately for the possibility of opening a new church in Dadaocheng, where after many difficulties he established the one of Saint Peter (the current cathedral of Taipei).⁹

Arranz had to deal with the local authorities, even with Liu Mingchuan, to negotiate for a church based on the favorable legislation of the treaties with China. In fact, these negotiations, incidents or confrontations, as well as the previous ones, were also recorded in Chinese sources as “missionary cases” and well studied by Ku Weiyang (2000) and Shih Li-lan (2000).

CHINESE OPPOSITION: THE MISSIONARY CASES

The missionary cases are usually caused by Chinese suspicions and misunderstandings about the role of the missionaries. Usually they are regarded as foreign government agents, who bring a foreign religion, and whose actions can contribute to social instability. At other times, they are seen as an opportunity to make easy money by kidnapping them, or using them as scapegoat of local conflicts. Usually all these reasons appear—as it was the case for the seventeenth century—mixed in different combinations, making it difficult to categorize the actual cases in a simple classification; that is why we will present them chronologically. The first relevant missionary case happened in 1867, in Wandan, a place between Quianjing and Wanjin where Sáinz was kidnapped by Hakkas who requested a high ransom.¹⁰ The Dominicans went to talk to the magistrate in Tainan, who sent some

soldiers, who did not make any use of force. To reduce hostility, the kidnapers decided to decrease the amount of the ransom to which Sáinz agreed.

In 1868 took place one of the most serious cases, known as the Fengshan incident that happened in relation to a dispute over the British trade of camphor in Tainan. The case is quite complex because different issues in the southern part of Formosa were mixed in at the same time. Summarizing we can say that, first, in Wuqi, a harbor not included in the port treaties, a local magistrate confiscated a cargo of camphor—a product monopolized by the Qing government (Ku 2000, 18)—that had been bought by the British. They complained to the British consul in Tainan, Gibson, who started threatening the Chinese authorities. At the same time it happened that the taotai, or prefect of Formosa, Liang Yuangui, refused to recognize the legality of the purchase of some properties in Tainan by the Dominicans. Simultaneously, similar rumors to those circulating in the mainland were spread against the Catholics, as people that poisoned the water of the wells and some food. This ended in the burning of the provisional church of Saint Joseph of Gouziqian (Kao-a-khi), on April 18, 1868. Three days later, the Presbyterian catechist Gao Zhang, working near Fengshan, was accused in Tainan, where he was passing by, of poisoning his wife and acting like the Catholics. He was beaten and almost died, and his church was burned down.¹¹ At the same time, the Dominican, Herce, who went also to the yamen (the magistrate office) of Tainan, unaware of what had happened to Gao, experienced similar pressure from the people, until he was able to take refuge in the yamen, where he left few days later in the early morning. In this hostile climate, two catechists, one Catholic and other Protestant, were interrogated and put into jail, and soon after the Protestant pastor Zhuang Qingfeng was killed. The British consul talked to the local authorities to restore peace, even with the taotai Liang Yuangui, but without success. Then, he decided to make use of force under his own responsibility and attacked Anping on October 26, 1868, forcing the Chinese authorities to accept his petitions. These included the payment to compensate the military expenses for the loss of the British trading company and for the rebuilding of the two churches. Additionally, it stated the right of residence and work of the missionaries along the whole island and the right of foreigners to travel along any part of the island. Naturally, the imposition of this ruling was not well accepted by the common people, making the missionary work in the south maybe more secure, but less receptive among Chinese, especially after the arrival of the news of the Tianjin massacre, on June 1870.

A new missionary incident can be registered in Wanjin in 1872, while the missionary, Herce, was absent, but this time it was of another kind, more of an intellectual discussion. The Temple of Just, Faithful and Humanitarian Cantonese tried to redeem the Christian converts and bring them back to the ancestral practices. Basically, they said that nothing worthwhile could be found among Catholics and the only interest of missionaries was to take the heart and other parts of the defunct converts in exchange for carrying out their funeral. They even placed a libelous notification in front of the church explaining these ideas. When Herce returned he removed the notification and brought it to the British consul in Dagao (later Kaohsiung); then they went to see the magistrate in Fengshan, who wrote an edict praising the Christian religion to be posted in the same place where the notification had been initially hung. In fact, Catholics of those years could have considered themselves fortunate if they compared their fate with that of other Christians in Fujian, where the pressure was stronger, and sometimes led by the magistrates themselves.

A new incident happened in Laopi, near Wanjin, where some Christians refused to contribute to the *han shi*, the food offered to common ancestors. The pagan relatives opposed the Christian ones, creating two groups ready to fight. Since the mediation of the priest and other Christians failed, they engaged in a preliminary skirmish. Even the local magistrate declared to Clemente, the missionary, that he was helpless, because the people from Laopi were uncivilized. Eventually the skirmish came to nothing but the Catholics fled temporarily from the town, the church was vandalized and the situation became so confused that even the British consul intervened to restore order. The situation calmed down after restoration of some of the stolen property.¹²

We have already mentioned, in 1887, how Arranz's difficulties when establishing his mission in Taipei became almost another missionary case. In this instance, the discussion was more juridical in terms, namely whether the missionary residence accorded or not with the specification of the treaties.¹³ But, in fact, Arranz's main complaint was the lack of personal willingness of the governor of Formosa to grant him permission, justified in different ways, of interpreting the treaties. Examples which illustrate are the validity of his passport (valid in the south of Formosa, but not in the north) and other technical and legal excuses that in the same circumstances applied to him but not to the Protestants. The situation was resolved as were many other similar incidents. Arranz disappeared for a while from Taipei, going to Keelung and Ilan, and after few months beginning his

work again as if nothing had happened. This time he met with success. He bought land in a place that after many years became the site of the cathedral of Taipei.

Before the arrival of the Japanese in 1895, two more missionary cases in central Formosa are worthy of mention. The first happened in 1893 in Changhua, and its main protagonist was the young missionary Nemesio Fernández, who probably, due to his youthfulness and lack of experience, was the most representative of a Europeocentric view. He decided to assume the representation of his Christians in public affairs when and if they did not receive justice. The situation became such that after a short time in Formosa, he appeared to be the leader of a civil militia of catechumens (at least in theory), a situation in which he felt comfortable, in spite of the disapproval of his immediate superiors. A crisis erupted in 1887 and in 1880 when a member of a Chang family tried to burn down a Catholic chapel. The situation developed into ugly opposition to Christianity. Fernández was leading his group hoping to defuse the tension in the area. The case came to the magistrate in Changhua, later to the taotai (circuit military attendant) of Formosa, and even to the Chungli yamen (the Chinese office for foreign affairs), who sent a note to the Spanish ambassador in Beijing, José Delavart, telling him that Fernández was accompanied by 15–20 armed persons.¹⁴ The situation was becoming increasingly serious but was eventually solved through diplomacy when the Chungli yamen requested Delavart to engineer the removal of Fernández from Changhua, an action that was carried out by Perignat, the French consul in Xiamen. In May 1894, both diplomatic sides considered the problem solved.

The last mission case during the Qing dynasty occurred in 1894, in Yuanlin. It was at the moment of registration of the properties for the *baojia* (a community-based system of law enforcement and civil control). The officers in charge of this job when they arrived at the house of the Christian, Zhang Ming, stuck a paper strip on the door of his house saying “believer in a foreign religion.” Everything was done amid so many difficulties, some of which were new for the missionaries, like being accused of being enemies of Formosa, associated with colonial powers, or considered by the Hakkas as intruders in their relation with the natives. On the other hand, this relationship of the missionaries with two different social groups recalls the very problems they encountered with the natives of Tanshui in the seventeenth century, when they crossed the river to preach to the natives in Pantao. Even more, some comments by the nineteenth-century missionaries about aborigines or Chinese were similar to those of the missionaries of the

seventeenth century. Regarding missionary method, some differences can be established in these two periods, like the system of Sáinz of bringing lay missionaries from Xiamen and the idea of buying and providing farming lands for the new converts under an advantageous rental system.

Finally, a way of measuring the results achieved in this second period by the missionaries is the statistical one. This data is clearly recorded in the last pages of every yearly issue of the *Correo Sinoannamita*, and during these years of the end of the Qing dynasty in Formosa, growth was very slow, especially if we compare it with the simultaneous progress made by the Dominicans of the same religious province in Fujian or Vietnam. In the first 25 years of the mission (until 1885), there were a thousand converts (1,052) and in 1901 the figure only reached 1,327. In other words, the growth was reduced to a half, something that might be explained by the upheaval created by the arrival of the Japanese that decimated the Catholics in central Formosa, as we will see in the following chapter, until the “pax japonica” allowed a faster growth.

NOTES

1. The letters *SIT* refer to the collection of documents *Spaniards in Taiwan* (see the bibliography).
2. In 1644, the Dutch asked the chieftain of Quimaurri, Teodoro, if they had paid taxes to the Spaniards. The Dutch recorded: “They did not pay tribute to the Spaniards and this was also never demanded by the latter. They only paid for the candles that were used in the churches. And he, the one who was interrogated, was responsible for the receipts and expenditures of the candles” (*SIT*, 477).
3. This persecution can be traced back to the famous incident of the galleon “San Felipe” (1596). This galleon was going from Manila to Acapulco but suffered a misfortune in Japanese waters. Misunderstandings produced by this incident caused Hideyoshi to suspect the ultimate intention of the Spanish missionaries, which eventually led to the persecution (*SIT*, 24, 26, 35).
4. The same persecution applied to Giulio Aleni, who in 1625, five years before the Dominicans, established the Jesuit mission in Fujian and in 1639 was expelled to Macao.
5. The Dominican presence in Fujian was able to continue notwithstanding some misfortunes, like the deaths of Francisco Díaz in 1646 and Francisco Capillas in 1648. The latter case happened as a result of the disorder created in Fuan by the arrival of the Qing soldiers. In any case, those years of

- Spanish presence in Taiwan consolidated a Dominican missionary network in Fujian, solid enough to be supported from Manila after 1642. A new revival in China came in 1649 when Morales arrived back from a trip to Rome, in the context of the Rites Controversy.
6. Arcadio del Rosario tried again to go to China on 1676, accompanied with another Dominican and two Franciscans, and this time with success, but it is not clear if he used or not the Formosa route.
 7. Letter of Fernando Sáinz, on April 6, 1869. Dominican archives of Kaohsiung.
 8. When citing these churches, we mostly use the pinyin system, followed within the parenthesis by the Roman phonetization used by the missionaries of the Taiwanese pronunciation.
 9. The vivid narration of these episodes can be found in the “Carta de Celedonio Arranz al P. Provincial, en Tam-súi, Toa-tiu-tia, a 10 Agosto de 1887,” *CSA*, XXII (1888), 23–46.
 10. About this incident Ku (2000, 17) consulted Chinese sources, while the Spanish ones can be found in Fernández (1959, 91).
 11. This incident and the previous one can be traced in the “Carta de Andrés Chinchón al Provincial, 5 de enero de 1868,” *CSA*, III (1868): 47–48, as well as the Chinese sources consulted by Ku (2000, 19), basically *Jiaowu jiao'an dang* [教務教案檔] (JAD, 1272, 1279). Substantially Spanish and Chinese sources coincide.
 12. The whole story in the long “Carta del P. Isidoro Clemente al P. Provincial; Ban-Kim, a 1 de agosto de 1885,” *CSA*, 1885, 209–226.
 13. The detailed version of Arranz in *CSA*, 1887, 23–46.
 14. Spanish Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMAE), H-2537.

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