

ARTICLES

The "Affair" of China at the End of the Sixteenth Century: Armed Conquest or Peaceful Evangelization?

This study will analyze the attempt at armed conquest and peaceful penetration of the Gospel in China carried out by the Spaniards at the end of the XVI century.

What came to be known as the "affair" —*negocio*— of China excited the imagination of the Spaniards living in the Philippines. Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of the islands, was very much involved in this affair. The study of this topic is important to see the ideas and feelings of the Spaniards who settled in the Philippines and the role played by Salazar in this enterprise. This importance is not diminished due to the distance in time of the events studied here. China has been, for the Western man, a mystery which he has always wanted to unravel.

Thus it causes little surprise to know that as soon as the Spaniards felt secure in the Philippines, at the end of the XVI century, they started the plan to break open that mystery.

For the Spaniards of the XVI century nothing seemed impossible. They had an unlimited trust in their own power and in the resources of their nation. No undertaking, no matter how unattainable it might seem, was beyond their capabilities. This may

seem preposterous and naive, and indeed it is, but back in the XVI century, nothing stopped the Spaniards from attempting endeavors that defy human imagination. The Spaniards had conquered the Aztec empire of Mexico and the Inca empire of Peru, with a handful of conquistadores, soldiers and adventurers. The Spanish soldier was convinced of his own invincibility.

When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines in 1565 they had behind them three quarters of a century of conquering impetus and experience. By that date, the Spanish flag was flying from Cape Mendocino to Patagonia. The Spaniards had crossed the deserts of America, climbed the highest mountains, sailed along the mightiest rivers, explored impenetrable forests and navigated the vast expanse of the South Seas. For the conquerors of the Philippines, heirs and successors of the conquerors of America, the chance to conquer China was something unparalleled in the history of the world. It was a golden opportunity to surpass the greatest exploits of the most famous captains of the past. Salazar, in a letter to Philip II, said that not even Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar encountered a similar opportunity as the Spaniards of the Philippines had at that moment. What could the conquest of Flanders have in comparison to that of China? From the spiritual point of view, the attempt to evangelize China was the greatest challenge since the time of the Apostles.

What were the reasons behind the attempt of the Spaniards to penetrate China? What did they hope to attain? What exercised a greater pull in them, the reported wealth of the Grand Cathay of Marco Polo, or the sincere hope of evangelical preaching? Could not that intelligent and highly civilized nation be incorporated into the fold of the Catholic Church?

These are questions that hopefully will find an answer in the process of this study. But they have to be asked at the early stage of this research so that, at the outset, we can trace down the moving forces that pushed the Spaniards, and other Europeans, to face so many dangers, cross uncharted seas, and go far from their native lands. These dynamic forces were the ones responsible for the revolutionary discoveries that took place during the XV, XVI and XVII centuries. They accelerated the exploratory

process of mankind and brought new worlds into the sphere of European history, and into contact with Christian civilization and religion. Perhaps Vasco de Gama gives us a hint as to the reasons for these discoveries. Asked by a native of India what he was looking for, he answered: "Christians and spices". Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a soldier companion of Cortes in the conquest of Mexico, wrote about the motives of the Spaniards' expansion to the Indies: "They had gone to serve God and his Majesty, the king, to help those who are in darkness and the shadow of death, and to become rich, as all people desire".¹

It must be recalled that the XV and XVI centuries were the centuries of Faith. Indeed, the search for new lands was there. The explorers and conquerors were moved by the desire to grow rich and leave behind an imperishable fame and glory. But the evangelical injunction "go out into the world and preach the Good News to all creation" was most operative. To make the age of discovery and exploration an age dominated by economic motives is false. These economic motives were there, but in the XV and XVI centuries, religion impelled the Europeans to go into unknown worlds. The Europeans were convinced of the greatness of their religion. They wanted other people to share in its blessings. Mercantilism is a development of the XVII century and took place mainly in Holland and England, not in Spain and Portugal, pioneering nations in the age of discovery. The Spaniards of the XVI century were convinced of the possibility of reconciling the antithesis of Christian penetration with commercial expansion. Religion and commerce were not, in their view, incompatible. The Spaniards who crossed the Atlantic to the Americas, and the South Seas to the Philippines, shared this view. They believed in the synthesis of religion and trade.

1. *The search for the Grand Cathay. The Arrival of the Portuguese through the Eastern Route*

For the European, China has always been an enigma. In spite of the enormous progress experienced in today's world, of discoveries beyond our planet, China still remains a mystery to the

¹ Cfr. CARLO M. CIPOLLA, *European Culture and Overseas Expansion*, Pelikan Book, p. 98.

European, and to the rest of the world. This mystery has not yet been revealed.

The first Christian contacts with China are wrapped in darkness. It is probable that Christianity entered China from Mesopotamia, across the vast expanses of Central Asia, under the form of Nestorianism. The Nestorian activity in China is something well accepted today. During the T'ang dynasty, (618-907) which held sway over China, and partially over India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Java and Central Asia, Nestorians spread out through these territories. For years, this Nestorian influence in China was seriously debated among historians. Today however few people will be ready to contest such claim. The discovery of the so-called HSIANFU stone, at the beginning of the XVI century, and its scientific study by the Jesuit missionaries in China, prove the existence of a strong and influential Nestorian community in China. The HSIANFU stone was erected in 781. It is a history of Nestorianism in China from its early beginnings, and an explanation of its doctrines and religious practices. From the year 635, under the emperor T'ai Tsung (626-649), Nestorianism spread over China. Although there were some persecutions, the influence of Nestorianism was felt up to the end of the T'ang dynasty. With the fall of the dynasty, Nestorianism's influence also faded away.²

With the appearance of the Mongol empire of Genghis Khan (1167-1227) and his successors, the Nestorian Christians started once again to spread out in China. In fact, the period from 1250 to 1350 is, without any doubt, the most glorious in the history of the Nestorian Church. It cannot be denied that, during this time, —a short period indeed— Nestorianism came to be a dominant factor in the history of mankind. According to Christopher Dawson³ it enjoyed the favor not only of Hulagu⁴ and his successors,

² Cfr. KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, London, 1929, 50-53.

³ *The Mongol Mission. Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the thirteenth and fourteenth century*, New York, 1955.

⁴ Hulagu was the founder of the Il Khan dynasty in Persia. He was a brother of the Great Khan, Kublai. Hulagu reigned in Tabriz from 1258 to 1565. His wife, the Kerait princess Dokuz Khatum was a devout Christian and her influence on him was felt throughout his reign.

Abaga⁵ and Argun,⁶ the Khans of Persia, but also of their suzerain Kublai and his successors in China and the Far East. Under the Patriarchate of Mar Denha (1265-1281) its hierarchy was organized and extended from the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean to the Caspian and the Pacific.⁷

Kublai Khan, (1256-1294) the most powerful of all Mongol Khans, the friend of Marco Polo, and conqueror of China, welcomed Nestorian Christians in his court of Cambaluc, Peking. In 1275, in his very court of Peking, the Nestorians established an archbishopric and some Christian officials of the Mongol empire — very numerous and influential in the court — established many churches in Chinese cities subject to the imperial power of the Mongols.⁸

The Nestorians disappeared from China with the fall of the Mongol dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese Ming dynasty (1368-1644). With the Mongols they came and with the Mongols they left.⁹

The havoc and destruction caused by the Mongols of Genghis Khan and his successors in their westward move towards Europe were catastrophic indeed. In 1240-1241, the Mongols set themselves on the conquest of the West. Russia, with its capital Kiev, was overran and destroyed.¹⁰ A Mongol army crossed the south of Russia, Galizia and Poland and annihilated a Christian army of Poles and Germans in Silesia, in April of 1241. Another more numerous and powerful Mongol army was galloping rapidly across the steppes of Moravia and Hungary. The Christian army of the Magyars was completely destroyed near Buda, also in April of

⁵ Abaga's wife, Maria Palaeologina, was also a Nestorian Christian. Abaga's reign extended from 1265 to 1282.

⁶ Argun's reign was a short one, from 1284 to 1291.

⁷ Cfr. CHRISTOPHER DAWSON, *op. cit.*, pp. XXVI-XXVIII.

⁸ For the history of the Nestorian influence in the Mongol empire, read *History of the Life and Travels of Rabban Sawma, Envoy of the Mongol Khans to the Kings of Europe, and Markos, Patriarch of the Nestorian Church in Asia*. Translated from the Syriac by Sir E. Z. WALLIS BUDGE, 1928. For Christianity in the Mongol Empire during Kublai's time, read E. A. W. BUDGE, *The Monks of Kublai Khan: Life and Travels of Rabban Sawma and Markos*, Trans. from the Syriac by —, 1928; A. C. MOULE, *Christians in China before 1550*, London, 1930.

⁹ Cfr. K. S. LATOURETTE, *op. cit.*, 61 and ff.

¹⁰ For a description of the tragedy that befell Christian Russia, see the *Chronicle of Novgorod*. English translation by R. MITCHELL and N. FORBES, with Introduction by C. R. Beazly, Camden Society, 1914.

1241. Different Mongol detachments came, in their victorious advance, to look at the Adriatic sea. Italy was at their feet. Their advance became unstoppable. Christian Europe seemed to be unaware of the Mongol danger. Distracted by petty wars among Christian princes, and divided by the old rivalry between Papacy and Empire, Europe was easy victim for the fast galloping Mongol hordes. The Moslem danger faded away in the face of the Mongol hurricane.

Fortunately for Christian Europe, the death of the great Khan Ugedey (1229-1241), and the dissensions that followed his death, compelled the Mongols to withdraw their victorious armies from Europe to Central and East Asia.

But the Mongols could start again their victorious march to Europe. What could the Christian world oppose against them? In view of the gravity of the situation, and the danger that layed ahead, Pope Innocent IV (1243-1256) organized various embassies to the Great Khan, searching for understanding for the Christian cause. The Pope also asked the Great Khan for help against the Moslem danger in the Middle East. In the Prologue to Dawson's *History of the Mongols* we read:

"When by command of the Apostolic See we went to the tartars and other oriental nations, knowing the desire of the Lord Pope and the venerable Cardinals, we chose first to make our way to the tartars, for we were afraid that in the near future the Church of God would be threatened by danger from that quarter".¹¹

This was the beginning of friendly contacts between Western Christianity and the Mongols, and the first direct contacts between the West and China. The most important embassy was the one under John Plano Carpini,¹² sent to the Khakan or Great Khan in 1245.¹³ John Plano Carpini crossed Poland, Russia, Central Asia and reached Kara-Korum, the capital of Kuyuk, the great Khan, in July of 1246. By 1247 he was back in Rome to inform the pope.

¹¹ *Ibidem* p. 3.

¹² Cfr. ANASTASIUS VAN DEN WYNGAERT, *Sinica Franciscana*, Vol. I: *Itinera et Relationes Fratrum Minorum Saec. XIII et XIV* (Quaracchi-Firenze, 1929); Cfr. LHOTTE, CELINE, *Dame pauvreté chez les mongols. L'épopée franciscaine de Jean de Plan Carpin et de Guillaume de Roubrouk au XIII siècle*, Paris, Editions franciscaines, 1938.

¹³ Cfr. PERCY SYKES, *The Quest for Cathay*, London 1936, p. 93.

This was the fearful message he brought back from Kuyuk:

"God has commanded my ancestors and myself to send our people to exterminate the wicked nations. You ask if I am a Christian. God knows, and if the Pope also wishes to know he had better come and see."¹⁴

John Plano Carpini's embassy was a failure, but his *Historia Mongolorum*¹⁵ opened, for the first time to the European people, an oriental world totally unknown to them. He inaugurated a century of direct contacts between the West and the East. It was a very distinct world from the one known in Europe. John Plano Carpini shattered the belief that Europe, the heartland of Christianity, was also the heartland of the universe. There were other worlds richer and more developed than Europe.

While the Mongol empire lasted, the contacts between West and East continued. John Plano Capini never entered China, but he left behind precise news about it.¹⁶ The fortune to enter China was reserved to a Venetian merchant: Marco Polo the Younger. During the rule of Kublai Khan, Marco Polo stayed in China for over fifteen years. The intrepid and intelligent Marco Polo described the marvels of Kublai's empire.¹⁷ He always calls it the *Grand Cathay*. Marco Polo describes the Grand Cathay as the richest, most beautiful, developed and civilized kingdom on earth. The description of his travels were naturally read with incredulity by a confident Europe.¹⁸ In the empire of Grand Cathay everything was superlative and fabulous. The discovery of so many and so large cities, filled with palaces and beautiful homes, and the existence of so high and refined civilization, sounded to European ears as a fairy tale. By establishing commercial links with Grand Cathay, Europe could hope to attain the most advantageous trade

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 96.

¹⁵ FRIEDRICH RISCH, *Johan de Plano Carpini: Geschichte der Mongolen und Reise Bericht 1245-1247*, übersetzt und erläutert von—Leipzig, 1930.

¹⁶ GIOVANNI DAL PIANO DEI CARPINI, O.F.M., *Viaggio a' Tartari di Fratre Giovanni da Pian del Carpinì (Historia Mongolorum)*, a cura di Giorgio Pulle, con prefazione, note, bibliografia, carte e incisioni, Milan, 1929.

¹⁷ Cfr. MARCO POLO, *Il Milione*, Milan, 1973. HENRY YULE, *The Book of Marco Polo*, ed. Cordier, 2 vols., London, 1929, ed. Murray; HENRY CORDIER, *Ser Marco Polo*, notes and addenda to Sir Henry Yule's edition, containing the result of recent research and discovery, London, Ed. Murray, 1920.

¹⁸ For early accounts of China, its people and its commerce, see HENRY YULE's *Cathay and the Way Thither* (Hakluyt Society) London, 1913-1916.

in the world. Was it, then strange that Europeans started to think that there, or nearby, the lost Garden of Eden was to be found? Marco Polo's descriptions influenced subsequent explorers and discoverers. Vasco de Gama, Christopher Columbus and others were pushed into their voyages of discovery in the hope of finding the Grand Cathay of Marco Polo.¹⁹

At the time of the Mongols there was another famous visitor from the West: the Franciscan John of Monte Corvino, the first European missionary to enter China.²⁰ He travelled to China in 1291, reaching Peking shortly after Kublai's death. In an interesting letter from Peking, he described his superhuman efforts to plant the Catholic faith in the capital of the most powerful empire then known. He built a few churches and converted some influential people to Christianity. He started to establish the Church on a solid basis. When these news reached Europe, the Christian world felt awed. As he was alone, far from the center of Christianity, without permanent collaborators, and without official support, his superhuman efforts did not last long. All came to an end with the expulsion of the Mongol dynasty and the establishment of the Chinese Ming dynasty.²¹

John of Monte Corvino was the last European of renown to visit China during the Middle Ages. Once the Mongol empire disappeared, the contacts with China faded away. China became again a name. The fabulous Grand Cathay of Marco Polo vanished in the haze of European history. Marco Polo's descriptions seemed to be only a dream.

Following the African coast, the Portuguese mariners discovered more and more territories for the Europeans. Henry the Navigator, the most outstanding Portuguese explorer of the late Middle Ages, Bartolome Diaz, the first to double the Cape of Good Hope, and Vasco de Gama, the discoverer of India, proved that it was possible to reach the Orient by sailing east.

The arrival of Vasco de Gama to Calicut, the most important port in India, in 1498, was an exploit as great as Christopher Co-

¹⁹ Cfr. PERCY SYKES, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

²⁰ ANASTASIUS VAN DEN WYNGAERT, *Jean de Monte Corvin, O.F.M., premier Eveque de Khanbalig (1247-1328)*, Lille, 1924.

²¹ Cfr. K. S. LATOURETTE, *op. cit.*, p. 73; PERCY SYKES, *op. cit.*, 206.

lumbus' discovery of America. By then, the Portuguese explorers were near the coast of China. Alfonso de Albuquerque, another famous Portuguese mariner and discoverer, took Malacca in 1511. Malacca, at that time, was the emporium of commerce and trade in the east and Chinese merchants used to go there for business purposes. The first relations between Portuguese and Chinese in Malacca were friendly. The Chinese traders were thankful to Albuquerque for the good reception they had in Malacca. In the words of Joao de Barros, the great conquistador

"was delighted to speak with them, because of the reputed power of their King, vastness of their country, and the government and riches thereof, which reports he could verify to some extent from their manner and behavior"²²

Up to 1519 commercial and trade relations between Portuguese and Chinese merchants continued in Malacca. And as early as 1514 some Portuguese traders had reached the coast of China.

Andres Corsalis, writing to Lorenzo de Medici in 1514, described the wealth of China. He noted, however, that the Chinese did not allow them to disembark, because there was a law prohibiting foreigners from entering their land.²³

The exploration of China by the Portuguese started in 1517 when Fernando Perez de Andrade arrived from Portugal with seven big ships. This ushered a direct contact between the Europeans and the Chinese. Perez de Andrade, following the command of Don Juan Manuel, the king of Portugal, observed an exemplary conduct. He was always the perfect Christian gentleman. In his visit to Canton in 1517 he was welcomed by the Chinese authorities and foreign merchants found there. The Portuguese were instructed to refrain from any unprovoked offensive action against the natives. Their relations must be established on mutual trust and good faith. And this principle was to be main-spring of their actions.²⁴

²² Cfr. C. R. BOXER, *The Christian Century in Japan, 1540-1660*, 1951, p. 5.

²³ Cfr. PERCY SYKES, *op. cit.*, 253.

²⁴ Cfr. C. R. BOXER, *op. cit.*, 5.

The Chinese of the continent very soon began to feel apprehensive. Who were these foreigners — *Folangki* —²⁵ who sailed in very powerful ships and who had recently conquered Malacca? This and the bad conduct of some Portuguese turned the initial friendly contact into a sour and bitter relationship. This happened with the brother and successor of Fernando Perez de Andrade, Simon de Andrade, an arrogant and ill-tempered man, who was always ready to use violence to achieve his aims. In 1519 there was a bloody encounter in the coasts of China vividly described by the Chinese chronicler:

"Sometime near the end of Ching-Tê's reign (1506-1522) a people not recognized as tributary to China known as the Ferringhis [Folanki] together with a crown of riff-raff filtered into the harbours between T'un Mun and Kwai Ch'ung and set up barracks and a fort, mounted many cannons to make war, captured islands, killed people, robbed ships and terrorized the population by their fierce dominion over the coast. Their ambition being to annex territory they made a survey and set up boundary stones and tried to dominate the various other foreign traders in this area".²⁶

In 1520 and 1522 the Portuguese engaged in various sea battles with the Chinese in Kwantung and were badly beaten by them. By then, East and West were at war. The period of friendly contacts had come to an end and had given way to hatred and enmity. However, the history of the contacts between Chinese and Portuguese during the third and fourth decades of the XVI century are still to be studied. Little is known about them. The Portuguese historian Mendez Pinto writes that the Chinese, due to the serious

²⁵ The term *Folangki* was derived by the Chinese from the Arab-Persian *Forange* or *Fisingi*, meaning "Franks". Cfr. C. H. BOXER, *op. cit.*, 452, footnote 7. During the period under study the term *Folangki* — Franks — has to be found in the Crusades, when most of the Christian crusaders were Frank cavaliers. Hence also the name *lingua franca*, or universal language, for the language, for the language of the Franks.

²⁶ Quoted by C. R. BOXER, *op. cit.*, 16-17.

FERNAO MENDES PINTO, *La Peregrination... La Chine et le Japon au XVIe siècle vue par un portugais*. Presentation de A. J. V. Saraiva, Tempts et continents, Paris, Calman-Leiy, 1968.

abuses they had received from the Portuguese, destroyed by sword and fire the incipient Portuguese colonies in the east²⁷

However, since with their powerful ships the Portuguese defended the coasts of China against the pirates, the Chinese allowed them to establish themselves in Macao, a little port not far from Canton. This became the permanent point of contact between the two people.

Following in the wake of the Portuguese, and under the shadow of their mighty ships, the missionaries arrived. In 1534 Goa, seat of the Portuguese Viceroy of India, became a diocese. Its jurisdiction reached as far as China.

The great dreamer and missionary, St. Francis Xavier, was convinced that once China became Christian the rest of the East

²⁷ In his *Anacephalaeosis*, Mendez Pinto tells about two tragic clashes between Chinese and Portuguese. One happened in the following manner: a Portuguese merchant, Lanzarote Pereira, was deceived by some Chinese traders. In retaliation, Pereira assassinated some Chinese from a neighboring town. In revenge for this, the Chinese gathered an army of sixty thousand men and passed by the sword more than 800 Portuguese. The city was razed to the ground. Mendez Pinto comments sadly: "Certe imprudentia summa est, etiam appellabo impudentia in alieno regno velle per fas et nefas injurias vindicare, cumtales in caput redundaturos nemo dubitet.

Non solum hoc sumus malum passi, eversa civitate, quam fundaveramus opulentam, sed alius maius experti sumus. Pessime coepit audire Lusitanum nomen adeo, et ubique probris, et maledictis proscinderemus, nullusque esset in Sina portus, a quo non reficeremus tamquam suspecti; infidi, cacodoemonnes, et si quod aliud malum nomen est, id nobis accommodarent omnes illi vicini, latius disseminata infamia", Quoted in COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor Evangélica de los Obreros de la Compañía de Jesús en las Islas Filipinas*, I, Barcelona, 1903, p.304, note 3. Hereinafter to be quoted as *Labor*.

When Mendez Pinto visited the city in 1555, in the company of Fr. Melchor Núñez, he still found a cross with the sign INRI, underneath the name Duarte Coello.

The second case happened in Chincheo, where the Portuguese had established themselves. Another Portuguese trader, Arias Botello, did not want to pay to the Chinese traders a certain amount owed to them by a Christian Armenian trader. He even took forcefully something from them. The Chinese became furious and with the approval of the Chinese officials, and with a small army, destroyed the whole city. Bitterly, Mendez Pinto laments:

"Certe civitatem et portum amissimus. et, (quod magnum damnum accepimus) nomen bonum pretiosius multis divitiis", In: *Labor*, I, 264-265, note 3.

Cfr. GEORG S. SCHURHAMMER, S.J., *Fernao Mendez Pinto und seine "Peregrinacao" und "O descobrimento de Japao pelos Portugueses no ano de 1543*, in: *Anais da Academia Portuguesa da Historia* (AAHP) 2nd. ser., Vol. I (1946), 1-172; LAGOA, VISCONDE DE, *A Peregrinacao de Fernao Mendez Pinto, Tentativa de Reconstitucao geografica*, Lisbon, 1947; LE GENTIL, *Fernao Mendez Pinto, un precurseur de l'exotisme au XVI siècle*, Paris, 1947; COLLIS, MAURICE, *The Grand Peregrination. Being the Life and Adventures of Fernao Mendez Pinto*, London, 1969.

would follow suit. He had noticed Japan's cultural affinity and dependency upon China. He tried earnestly to enter that hidden kingdom. He died at the doorstep of China, in the little island of Shan-Chuan in 1552.²⁸

After St. Francis Xavier, many missionaries tried to enter China. Melchor Nuñez Barreto, Jesuit provincial of India and Japan, and the Portuguese Dominican, Gaspar de Santa Cruz, spent a few months in Canton in 1555. Due to the terrible difficulties the missionaries faced in entering China, they decided to establish Macao as a station where they could wait for the best opportunity to enter China. This chance presented itself in 1573 with Alejandro Valignano, Miguel Ruggieri, Francisco Pasio and later on Mateo Ricci. This topic, however, escapes the purpose of the study. Precisely during these years the Spaniards of the Philippines were trying to establish commercial and religious contacts with China.

2. *The Spaniards and China: a meeting through the western route*

The Portuguese had arrived to China by sailing east. In the second half of the XVI century the Spaniards reached the same destination by sailing west and crossing the Pacific Ocean. One can never stress enough the spell China cast on the European mind, due especially to the descriptions of Marco Polo. These fabulous narratives of rich and exotic towns and cities captivated the imagination of the Europeans. The Spaniards, as soon as they arrived to the Philippines in 1565, tried to enter into contact with the fabulous Grand Cathay of Marco Polo.

The adelantado, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, conqueror of the Philippines, wrote to Philip II²⁹ in 1567 announcing the possi-

²⁸ Cfr. K. S. LATOURETTE, *op. cit.*, 86.

²⁹ Cfr. PEDRO TORRES LANZAS - PABLO PASTELIS, S.J., *Catálogo de los documentos relativos a las Islas Filipinas existentes en el Archivo de Indias. Historia General de Filipinas*, I, Barcelona, 1926, pp. CCXCIII-CCXCIV; *Letter of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi to Philip II*, Cebu, July 23, 1567, in: *Archivo General de Indias (AGI), Filipinas 6*; English Translation of the letter, in: E. H. BLAIR - J. A. ROBERTSON, *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*, (55 vols.), Cleveland, 1905-1909, Vol. II, 234-239. The work will be hereinafter quoted as BRPI. The letter is also found in: *Colonization and Conquest of the Philippine by Spain*, FBG, Manila 1965, 122-125; *Letter of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi to Philip II*, June 26, 1568, in: BRPI, 239-243; also in: *Colonization and Conquest*, p. 127; *Letter of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi to Philip II*, Cebu, July 8, 1569 in: ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia de la Provincia Augustiniana del SSmo. Nombre de Jesús de Filipinas*, Vol. XIV, *Historia Augustiniana*, Manila, 1978, pp. 30-31; F. J. MONTALBAN, S.J. *El Patronato español y la conquista de Filipinas*, Burgos, 1930, 104.

bility of going to China and trying to enter that closed realm. He did not want to move by himself, without first obtaining the permission of the King. In the hope of a positive answer, Legaspi started the construction of some galleys and ships to be used in a possible attempt to conquer China.

In 1570, waiting for the King's decision to tell the Spaniards where to go, Legaspi again wrote to the King³⁰ that if the royal decision was for the Moluccas and the possession of the Spice Islands, then Cebu was the best port. If, on the other hand, the king decided to go north and to China, as all people in the Philippines desired, then Manila was the most convenient location of a port.

The royal officials of the Philippines also wrote to the King praising and giving thanks because a great door was being opened for them.³¹

In 1572 the King, in an answer to the Viceroy of Mexico, endorsed Legaspi's plan. As soon as Legaspi received the news from the viceroy, he set things in motion to achieve the plan. Death overtook him in 1572, without having achieved much.³² With Legaspi's death, all came to a stop. Francisco de Ortega, the Augustinian missionary, writes about this:

"The voyage of exploration to China was not put into execution because of the death of governor, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, who was very obedient to God's and your Excellency's command. After his death, there was little

³⁰ *Letter of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi to Philip II*, Panay, July 25, 1570, in: BRPI III, 108-112; Spanish original in: AGI, Patronato 24. Also in: ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, 50, where we read: "I would like to be sure whether your Majesty wants us to go to Maluco and surrounding lands. To achieve this, Cebu is better than any other part, for it is a good and spacious port. If your Majesty's will is to go north, to the coast of China, it is better to settle down in the island of Luzon, wherefrom the Maese de Campo just arrived. He discovered a small port, good enough for six ships, one and a half league away from Manila, the capital of that whole province"; Cfr. COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, II, 662.

³¹ Cfr. *Letter of the royal officials to Philip II*, Panay July 25, 1570 in AGI, Filipinas 29; Cfr. ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, 46.

³² Cfr. *Letter of Francisco de Ortega to the Viceroy of Mexico*, Manila, June 6, 1573, in: ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, p. 146. The letter is also in: TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, p. XI; in BRPI, 34, 269-370; in: *Colonization and Conquest*, 221-222. Cfr. JESUS GAYO ARAGON, O.P., *Ideas Jurídico-Teológicas de los religiosos de Filipinas en el siglo XVI sobre la conquista de las islas*, Manila, 1950, p. 31.

good will in him who had the power to execute this command. He and other captains tried to hinder it from the very beginning. Hence, they decided against it, in order not to push through with it. The governor, may he rest in peace, was determined to carry out what your excellency had commanded... What I am able to say from the little I know... is that it is a very desirable thing and a very important matter, out of which great service might be rendered to Our Lord, to your Majesty, profit to the Royal Exchequer and increase to the royal estate. And this could have been done lawfully and in accordance with Christian laws, as his Majesty so wishes and orders..."³³

Ortega accuses Guido de Lavezaris, Legaspi's successor, of hindering the voyage to China. This is true, but Lavezaris did so for the simple reason that the Spaniards were few in the Philippines, and they were without a solid base of operation in the East. He was not opposed to the general plan, but an attempt at the conquest of China under those circumstances was tantamount to failure. What the Spaniards needed most were military reinforcement and supplies. Only then could they carry with a hope of success the voyage of exploration.³⁴

The geographical knowledge of China and its coast was minimal. The conquest of so vast an empire could not be attempted before its coasts could be reconnoitered. In 1574 governor Lavezaris sent to Philip II two maps of China. In the letter accompanying the maps, he wrote:

"I trust in God that from this small beginning your Majesty will extend your kingdoms and seigniories in greater numbers, bringing to the knowledge of the holy Catholic faith so many blinded and barbarian people who are found in these regions, among them is to be included the vast kingdom of China and many others. This treasure, heaven has in store for your Majesty to acquire during your happy reign"³⁵

³³ Ibidem, in: ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, 146. Translation mine. Cfr. Archivo Histórico Hispano-Americano, (AHHA), IV, Madrid, 1915, pp. 134-135.

³⁴ Cfr. *Letter of Governor Guido de Lavezaris to Philip II*, Manila, June 29, 1573, in: ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, 148-155; in BRPI III, 180-181. Cfr. *Letter of Governor Guido de Lavezaris to Philip II*, Manila, July 30, 1574, in: BRPI, III, 284.

³⁵ *Letter of Governor Guido de Lavezaris to Philip II*, Manila, July 30, 1574, in: ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, 204, translation mine. Cfr. BRPI, 3, 283-284. Cfr. *Colonization and Conquest*, 284. Cfr. TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, p. XXII.

It is, then, clear that Lavezaris also cherished the dream of conquering China.

Captain Diego de Artieda, in a report sent from the Philippines³⁶ wondered at the fabulous wealth of China and its high civilization. He declared himself ready to explore the coast of China and cross the whole country if need be. Artieda writes:

"This [China] is a vast country — so much so that, as we are assured, it extends as far as Tartary; for merchants who have traded there say that the two nations are at war with each other. The Chinese are highly civilized. They work iron with tools. I have seen iron inlaid with gold and silver, as cunningly and skillfully wrought as they could be in any part of the world. In like manner, they work in wood and all other materials. The Portuguese say that the Chinese are good people, that they possess something of the light of the world, but they see it with one eye . . . The people dress well . . . the women are very beautiful, except that they all have small eyes. They wear long shirts and robes, reaching to the ground. They dye and dress their hair carefully, and it is even said that they rouge and color their faces . . . the country is so fertile and well provisioned, that it is believed to be the best in the world . . .

"If your Majesty desires to have this land explored I am at your service, provided I be given two ships about two hundred and fifty tons each, with forty soldiers to each vessel, and all the artillery, ammunition, and provisions that will be necessary. Then, with our Lord's help, and bearing some power of ambassador to the lord of the land, I will enter the country myself, returning by way of Nueva España after having explored the coast. I will ascertain how both trade and conquest must be carried on there . . .³⁷

The viceroy of Mexico shared the same view. If the "affair" of China were to be seriously considered, there was a need to reconnoiter the land and study the country in order to obtain better information. Above all, there was a need to send more and better

³⁶ Cfr. *Relation of the Islands of the West called the Philippines*, in: *Colección de Documentos inéditos de ultramar*, Tomo 2, Filipinas 24; Cfr. BRPI, III, 204-206; *Colonization and Conquest*, 250; Cfr. *Letter of Andres de Mirandaola to Philip II*, Cebu, June 8, 1569; in: BRPI, III, 41-42.

³⁷ Cfr. BRPI, III, 205-206.

soldiers than those ordinarily sent from Mexico. Only good soldiers could attempt the conquest of China, when that moment arrived. The soldiers born in Mexico, due to the climate and soft way of life, could never participate in that enterprise. The harsh life and the heat of the Philippines made them unfit for the task.³⁸

During the first twenty years of the Spanish dominion in the Philippines, nothing concrete was ever done regarding the "affair" of China. But the pull and attraction of that Kingdom, and the hope of final conquest, were always there. The reported wealth of China, its fabulous cities and fortresses, were still the daily talk of soldiers and conquerors.³⁹ China was the biggest and mightiest kingdom on earth, but a handful of brave Spanish soldiers could conquer if any time they wanted.⁴⁰

One of the most romantic persons, continuously dominated by the thought of conquering China, was the governor don Francisco de Sande (1575-1580). In his astonishing simplicity and lack of real knowledge of China, he thought of the "affair" not only as a project, but as a very easy enterprise. It was an obligation the Spaniards had contracted with history. He wrote to Philip II:

³⁸ Cfr. *Letter of the Viceroy of Mexico to Philip II*, Mexico, December 5, 1573, in: BRPI, III, 211-212. Cfr. *Colonization and Conquest*, 256. The original letter is published in: *Cartas de Indias*, Madrid, 1877, 290-296. Regarding the need for more and better soldiers he writes: "As for the mainland of China, it is so large a land and so thickly settled that one of its hundred divisions, according to report, is as big as half the world itself. It is learned from the Chinese that they admit strangers only with reluctance to their land. For this reason more and better soldiers would be needful than those who could go from this land for those born here are but little used to hardship — although it is also understood that the people of China, in spite of possessing weapons, horses and artillery, are but little superior in valour to the Indians", pp. 211-212. About the need for exploration, we read: "I had given orders that, when any ship should come from the islands, it should reconnoiter the coast of China on the way, in order that more information of the land and its commerce might be obtained. I give your Majesty an account of this before the step was taken; and I likewise enclosed the instructions concerning the procedure, which I thought should be observed. General Miguel Lopez had ordered that it should be adhered to, but when he died it appeared to Guido de Labezaris to be a dangerous enterprise on account of the coast being unfamiliar and unknown, as well as a region where our ships might fall in with the Portuguese or other people", pp. 215.

³⁹ Cfr. *Letter from Andres de Mirandaola to Philip II*, Mexico, January 8, 1574, in: BRPI, III, 225-229.

⁴⁰ Cfr. *News from the Western Islands by Hernando Riquel and others*, Mexico, January 11, 1574, in: BRPI, 244. They wrote: "There are many very populous cities on the way, but if his Majesty would be pleased so to command, they could be subdivided and conquered with less than sixty good Spanish soldiers".

"This enterprise would be easy of execution and of little expense as the Spanish people would go without pay, and armed at their own cost. They will be chosen from the provinces, and will be glad to pay the expenses. The only cost will be for the agents, officers for the construction and command of galleys, artillerymen, smiths and engineers and the ammunitions and artillery. Food can be supplied to them here, and the troops are energetic, healthy and young. This is the empire and the greatest glory which remains for the king of the world, the interest which surpass all other and the greatest to God.

"I think that I have drawn a true picture of the people as they are the best in the world for tributaries. They have waged war against the King of Tartaria. If they made war on this coast, his occupation and even that of both, God helping, would soon be over. They have made enemies in this archipelago, who are more valiant than they and who will be of great help. I beseech your Majesty to provide what is most fitting, that the power and laws of so just and great a king may encircle the world".⁴¹

What titles could governor Sande adduce to justify the conquest of China? Was he convinced it fell under the Spanish demarcation line?

The conquest of China seemed good and convenient to secure the future of the Philippines and the subsistence of the Spaniards in the Far East. The Philippines was not worthy the expenses incurred by the Spanish Royal Exchequer.⁴² There was an urgent need to look for other sources of income to defray the royal expenses and get sure profit in return.

In any cause could be found to declare war on the rulers of China, it was one given by Sande himself: the vices of the Chinese.

⁴¹ *Letter of Governor Francisco Sande to Philip II*, Manila, June 2, 1576, in: BRPI, III, pp. 312-313. Original Spanish Relation in TORRES-PASTELLS, Catálogo, III, XLIII; Also in: W. E. RETANA, *Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino*, II, Madrid, 1896, 49-50.

⁴² Cfr. *Relation of Governor don Francisco Sande*, Manila, June 7, 1576, in: BRPI, IV, 73.

Letter of Governor Ronquillo de Peñalosa to Philip II, Manila, June 16, 1582, in: BRPI, V, 25-26.

In the view of Sande they were cowards, thieves, sodomites, evil doers, ready to sell even their honor for anything.⁴³

It can be recalled that Sepulveda,⁴⁴ who had defended the justice of the wars in America against the Indians due to their own vices, had many sympathizers and followers in the vast Spanish overseas dominions. Sande had a terribly low opinion of the Chinese. In the same report to the King he said that it was an evil race. If the Chinese were today the masters of the whole world, they still would commit tomorrow a thousand treasons to obtain one penny.⁴⁵

The prohibition against foreigners to enter China played a great role in smouldering the crusade spirit of the Spaniards in the Philippines.⁴⁶

The *sangleyes*, Chinese merchants from China, had complete freedom to come to the Philippines. They were allowed to settle down, if they so desired. Against the *Ius Gentium*, the Chinese authorities did not allow the Spaniards to enter China, prohibiting under most severe penalties any type of intercourse. The

⁴³ "The war with this nation is most just, for it gives freedom to poor, wretched people who are killed, whose children are ravished by strangers, and whom judges, rulers and King treat with unheard-of-tyranny. Each speaks ill of his neighbor; and almost all of them are pirates, when any occasion arises, so that none are faithful to their king. Moreover a war could be waged against them because they prohibit people from entering their country. Besides, I do not know, nor have I heard of, any wickedness that they do not practice; for they are idolators, sodomites, robbers and pirates both by land and sea. And in fact the sea, which ought to be free according to the law of nations, is not so, as far as the Chinese are concerned; for whosoever navigates within their reach is killed and robbed, if they can do it... It is safe to say that no matter what good we might do them they will always give us a thousand causes for a just war. Now, my opinion is, may it please your Majesty, that it would be an advantage to have a sufficient force of soldiers, so that, under any circumstances whatsoever, they may find us ready", *Relation of the Philippine Islands by Governor Francisco de Sande*, Manila, June 7, 1576 ni: BRPI, 4, 59-60.

⁴⁴ JUAN GINES DE SEPULVEDA, *Democrates segundo o de las justas causas de la guerra contra los indios*, ed. Angel Losada, Madrid, 1951, pp. 84-85.

⁴⁵ *Relation of the Philippine Islands*, *ibidem*, 89-90. "This is so evil a race that if today the whole world were given them, tomorrow they would commit a thousand treasons to steal one single real"

⁴⁶ Cfr. *Letter of Andres de Mirandaola to Philip II*, Mexico, January 8, 1574, in: BRPI, III, 228. "It seemed that there was no way of getting there because as we are told, a law had been passed that no foreigner whatever might enter the mainland under the penalty of losing his life; and those who convey them thither should receive the same punishment. Accordingly, no one dared to take foreigners thither".

Spaniards of the Philippines, particularly governor Francisco de Sande, considered this a *casus belli*.

What was the final result of all these "plans" about the conquest of China? Did the Spaniards of the Philippines really set things in motion to carry out the "affair" of China? Was this plan ever taken seriously, or was it interpreted as something crazy? Did the new settlers of the islands ever suspect the enormous difficulties implied in the realization of this plan? Were there no other means to establish contacts between the Spaniards and the Chinese in the manner achieved by the Portuguese at Macao? What other means, outside the military ones, could be essayed to force the entry into China?

The Spanish authorities in Madrid decided against the plan. A military attempt was totally out of the question. The Royal officials in Madrid hoped that trade relations between the two people should really be started. The Council of Indies and the Spanish King rejected any type of military plan. The greatness and vastness of China, without cowing the Spanish crown, helped the Council and the King to think twice about any plan for military conquest. The crown and the king opted for diplomatic means. To cut from the root any possibility of continuing with the plan, and to shatter the imperialistic dreams of the Spaniards in the Philippines, especially of the romantic governor Francisco de Sande, the King forbade even the discussion of the plan. A new political way was adopted which was more friendly and diplomatic, with the hope that China would open its doors to trade and to what all people so highly desired, the entry of Christian missionaries and the preaching of the Gospel. The maintenance of friendship with China was recommended. The marginal notes to the Relation of Sande were formally incorporated into the body of a royal cedula addressed to the governor. The royal cedula reads thus:

"As regards the conquest of China, that you think should be attempted, surely here we think it should not be discussed at the moment. Rather you have to try to establish good friendship with the Chinese. You ought not to become friendly to corsairs who are enemies of the Chinese or give for the Chinese to have a just cause for indignation against us. You have to act well, in accord-

ance with our decree; furthermore you have to inform us of the development of everything. In the future, once affairs of that land will become clearer, we may come to see that something new may be attempted, you shall be ordered as regards what ought to be done. In the meanwhile, you shall try to govern what is under your care in such manner that our Lord and we shall be served.⁴⁷

3. *Missionary penetration into China from the Philippines*

All attempts to establish commercial and diplomatic relations with the Chinese government were in vain. The entry of foreigners into China and the preaching and acceptance of foreign religions, were offenses punished with capital punishment.⁴⁸ Commerce and trade took place in Manila. Thousands of Chinese merchants flocked to Manila to look for the Mexican silver in exchange for silks, porcelains, flour, iron and other articles highly appreciated in the Philippines. The Spaniards could not get near China. To do so was very risky and dangerous. The Chinese were not hindered to trade with the Philippines, on the contrary they were heartily welcomed to the islands.

a. *The Augustinians in China*

The Spanish missionaries who had come to the Philippines did not let time pass without attempting to go into that hidden realm. The missionary opportunities in the Philippines were vast and enormous, but the cultural level of the Chinese, their religion and philosophy, exercised such a powerful pull that the missionaries felt obliged to leave the Philippines and go to China. Most of them yearned for the day when they would be able to abandon the Philippines and enter that mysterious realm. The Philippines, for most of them, was but a jumping-pad. The natives of the Philippines, compared to the Chinese, were well behind in culture and civilization.

⁴⁷ *Royal Cedula to Governor don Francisco de Sande*, San Martín de la Vega, April 29, 1579, in: AGI, Filipinas 339, Lib. I, fr. 80. Cfr. BRPI, IV, p. 94.

⁴⁸ *Letter of Andrés de Mirandaola to Philip II*, México, January 8, 1574, in: BRPI, III, 228. JUAN GONZALEZ DE MENDOZA, O.S.A., *Historia del Gran Reino de la China*, in: BRPI, VI, 124-125.

The Augustinians, the pioneers in the work of evangelization in the Philippines, under the leadership of Urdaneta, Rada and Herrera, would have liked to go to China. They were waiting for the pertinent orders from Philip II to do so.⁴⁹

These religious adopted, at times, a contradictory attitude. While they denied to the Spaniards the right of conquest of the Philippines, we find that Martin de Rada, the most representative of all the Augustinians, did not see anything wrong to advice the conquest of China, since it fell under the Spanish jurisdiction.⁵⁰

These dreams of conquest of Martin de Rada, if ever they had seriously been entertained by him, soon gave way to the earnest efforts towards the spiritual and evangelical conquest of China. The project of armed entry ran counter to the ideals of the Augustinians and those of Martin de Rada himself. Thus, they did not let a single chance pass without attempting to enter China to bring there the liberating Gospel of Christ. When in 1572, Miguel Lopez de Legaspi set things in motion to send an envoy from the Philippines to the governor of Chincheo, with the hope of establishing commercial and diplomatic relations with China,

⁴⁹ Fr. Diego de Herrera was hoping for that. He wrote to the Spanish King: "As regards the conversion of these natives, we have not yet started in earnest, waiting to see what your Majesty's will shall be, because since near Cebu there are so large and rich countries that belong to your Majesty, such as China, Lequios, Javas, Japan, we understood we would be sent to them and abandon this country. For although they have many mines and rivers of gold, they are little when compared to other lands. People are very barbarian, without lords. Now, since we know what your Majesty's will is, we shall start in earnest, because up to now no more than one hundred people have been baptized": *Letter of Fr. Diego de Herrera, O.S.A. to Philip II, México, January 16, 1570, in: ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, Historia, XIV, p. 40. Cfr. TORRES-PASTELLS, Catálogo, II, p. CCXCVIII.*

⁵⁰ Cfr. *Letter of Fr. Martin de Rada O.S.A. to the Viceroy of Mexico, Cebu, July 8, 1569, in: BRPI, XXXIV, pp. 227.* We read: "If his Majesty wishes to get hold of China, which we know to be a very large and rich land and of high civilization, with cities, forts, and walls much greater than those of Europe, he must first have a settlement in these islands; first, because we cannot pass safely among so many islands and shoals that lie along the coast of China with ships of high freeboard, but must use oared vessels; secondly also, because in order to conquer a country so large and that has so vast population, one must have refuge near at hand, for any contingency that might arise. However, as I have been informed both by Portuguese and by Indians who trade with the Chinese, as well as by a Chinese who was captured a while ago in a junk, the people of China are not at all warlike. They rely entirely on numbers and on the fortification of their walls. It would decapitate them, if any of their forts were taken. Consequently, I believe God helping, that they can be subdued easily and with few forces". Cfr. MERINO, M., O.S.A. *Provincia Agustiniiana, in: AHHA, LIV, Valladolid, 1960, 245.*

Fr. Rada asked the Viceroy of Mexico to send with the embassy two Augustinians, always with the hope of entering the realm and there be given the freedom to preach the Gospel of Christ.⁵¹

Quite unexpectedly, and for the Augustinians very providentially, a chance was presented to them to enter China. For some years already, a Chinese pirate called Li-ma-hong was ravaging the coasts of China. The emperor became alarmed; powerful fleets were prepared against him. Feeling himself threatened, the pirate turned his eyes to other lands. By this time Li-ma-hong had come to know of the presence of the Spaniards in Manila and the Philippines. Chinese merchants and traders, captured by him, had told him of Manila and the weak defenses of the city. He then, decided to strike a blow against the new Spanish colonists, hoping to find them unprepared. He had come to know that the Spaniards were few because most of them had gone to the Moluccas. He envisioned the capture of Manila as something easy. In 1574 he laid siege to the city.⁵² Luckily for both Spaniards and Filipinos, his attack failed. Beaten in Manila, he fled to Pangasinan where the Spaniards pressed him. It was at this moment, when Li-ma-hong was being attacked by the Spaniards, that an imperial envoy called Omoncon, came to the Philippines, asking the whereabouts of the pirate. Seeing that Li-ma-hong's end was near, and hoping to reap for him the glory of his capture, he volunteered to take some

⁵¹ Rada informs us: "Apart from the possibility of opening the door to the gospel and render a great service to our Lord, it will also help us to attain a better understanding of what happens there; these [Fathers] will declare to the Chinese the greatness of our King, and how useful it would be to them to have his friendship; if perchance the Chinese will receive the Faith, the fathers will make them understand the duty they have to serve his Majesty, for at his expense and under his command he sends them ministers to teach them. Only if it were to act as interpreters, and thus be able to deal with them, the trip there will not be small. If I were ordered, I would accept it as a great gift and would do it with the greatest will", In: AGI, Patronato 24, ramo 22. Cfr. ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XIV, 112-112; Cfr. *Memorial of the Augustinians to be presented by Diego de Herrera to Philip II, Manila (1572)*, in: BRPI, XXIV, 273-285.

⁵² Cfr. JUAN G. DE MENDOZA, *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran Reino de la China*, ed. FELIX GARCIA, Madrid, 1944, 35-97. Cfr. BRPI, VI, 96-124. *Letter of Agustín de Albuquerque, O.S.A. about the Chinese pirate Limahong*, Pangasinan, June 5, 1579, in: AGI, Patronato 24, ramo, 30. Cfr. COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 137-138; AHHA, XIII, Madrid, 1920, 46-72. *Copy of a letter written by the city of Manila*, June 2, 1576, in: *Ciudad de Dios*, XVIII, Valladolid, 1889, 232-240. *Letter of Francisco de Sando to Philip II*, Manila, June 7, 1576, in: W. E. RETANA, *Archivo*, II, 1-76, Cfr. BRPI, IV, 21-93. *Relation of the coming of the Chinese pirate Limahong against Manila*, Manila, in: *Ciudad de Dios*, XXXV, Madrid, 1894, 426-443. JUAN CARO Y MORA, *Ataque de Limahong a Manila en 1574*, Manila, 1894; re-edited in Manila, 1898.

missionaries to China. Martin de Rada took as a companion fray Jeronimo Marin and four Spanish soldiers.⁵³ Once everything was arranged, full of emotion and joy, they left Manila on June 12, 1575 in the company of Omoncon towards the mysterious China.⁵⁴ The reception accorded to Rada and companions was extraordinary. About the possibilities of establishing commercial relations with China and opening the door to the Gospel of Christ nothing was done. After two or three months there, Rada and his companions returned empty-handed to Manila in the company of Omoncon. True, the knowledge acquired was enormous, but the dream of being able to preach the Gospel of Jesus was not fulfilled.⁵⁵ When Omoncon came to know that Li-ma-hong had escaped the net of the Spaniards, and the hope of delivering him dead or alive to the emperor was gone, he lost interest in bringing more missionaries to China. Yet, pressed by the Spanish authorities, in 1576 he took with him Rada for the second time and Father Albuquerque, but tragedy befell them and his companions. They were abandoned in an isolated island in northern Pangasinan where, fortunately for them, some Spaniards who were returning from the Ilocos region, rescued them and brought them to Manila.⁵⁶

⁵³ Cfr. *Letter of Francisco de Sande to Philip II*, Manila June 7, 1576, in: RBPI, IV, 46-47. The soldiers who accompanied Rada were Miguel de Loarca, Pedro Sarmiento, Nicolas Cuenca and Juan de Triana. Cfr. BRPI, VI, 116-117.

⁵⁴ Cfr. *Relación del Viage a la tierra de la china de 1575 años*, in: I. R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia XIV*, 262-280. This is a first class description of China's religion, culture and geography. It contributed greatly to increase Europe's knowledge about China. This relation is found in an English translation in: C. R. BOXER, *South China in the XVIth Century*, 1953, Hackluyt Society, 263-310.

⁵⁵ Cfr. J. GONZALEZ DE MENDOZA, *Historia*, ed. F. Garcia, Madrid 1944, 35-97. Cfr. *De lo que sucedió a los Padres Fray Martin de Rada y Fray Geronimo Marin en su embajada de la China, hasta que volvieron a Manila con los Capitanes españoles que los acompañaron*, in: I. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia XIV*, 330-361.

⁵⁶ Cfr. COLIN-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, I. 161. Some writers state that the two religious were scourged, robbed and abandoned as dead in Bolinao. Some of their companions were killed by the Chinese. Cfr. GASPARD DE SAN AGUSTIN, *Conquistas de los Islas Filipinas*, Vol. I, Madrid, 1698, p. 327. Cfr. J. F. DE SAN ANTONIO, *Crónicas de la Apostólica provincia de religiosos descalzos de N. P. S. Francisco en las Islas Filipinas, China, Japón*, Vol. I, Sampaloc, 1738, p. 123. It seems, however, that Rada and Albuquerque were not tormented or physically abused by the Chinese, as the two writers tell us. For the treatment meted out to the two and their companions see Rada's *Letter to Fr. Alonso de la Veracruz, O.S.A.*, Manila, June 3, 1576, in: *Revista Agustiniana*, I., Valladolid, 1881, pp. 55-56. Cfr. ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, O.S.A., *Historia*, I. pp. 204-207. Cfr. *Relation of the Philippine Islands by Governor Francisco Sande*, Manila, June 7, 1576, BRPI, VI, 89.

It is true that by this time the Europeans had become more acquainted with China. The Spaniards had been in daily contact with traders from Southern China since they established themselves in Manila in 1571. The Portuguese had a trading post at Macao, not too far from the populous city of Canton, a small window to look out into China. The knowledge about the realm was not based any more on the sensational revelations of Marco Polo. Yet nobody had a complete picture. The immense and vast empire was still a mystery and an enigma. Who would be able to penetrate its closed doors?

The Augustinians hoped to break the Chinese resistance towards foreigners by the sending of a special embassy. It was hoped, furthermore, that through these means, the missionaries would be allowed to go into China and start the preaching of the Gospel. This diplomatic way was being taken very seriously by all, as it was peaceful and in accordance with international law.

The man behind this new attempt was the Augustinian Diego de Herrera who had gone to Spain from the Philippines in 1573, reaching the court of Madrid in 1574. Philip II gladly accepted Herrera's suggestion. He was commissioned to prepare the embassy but, taken up with the burdensome and tiresome task of preparing a large mission of Augustinians for the Philippines, he did little for the embassy. He left Spain for the Philippines as leader of the mission, leaving behind, as his representative for speeding up the embassy, Fr. Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza. Things moved too slowly at the court. When the new bishop of the Philippines, Domingo de Salazar, found himself at the court of Madrid in 1579-1580 he pressed the king to hurry up with the embassy.⁵⁷

Gonzalez de Mendoza was able to leave for Mexico in February of 1581.⁵⁸ By that time serious difficulties had been raised against the feasibility and prudence of the embassy. At about the same time, the ex-governor of the Philippines, Don Francisco de Sande, (1575-1580) and Gabriel de Rivera, the procurator of the Spaniards of the Philippines, arrived in Mexico. These two persons were

⁵⁷ Cfr. *Letter of Fr. Domingo de Salazar, O.P. to Philip II*, Manila, July 18, 1583, in: AGI, Filipinas 74: Patronato 25.

⁵⁸ In the AGI of Sevilla we have many documents dealing with the proposed embassy to China, TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, NN. 2772; 2381; 2586; 2387; 2389; 2397; 2041; 2405; 2401; 2483.

more knowledgeable than most other people about the situation in the Philippines and China. The two of them, especially don Francisco de Sande, declared themselves against the continuation of the embassy. The embassy would be useless, they said, and the Portuguese would feel threatened in their little enclave of Macao. The viceroy of Mexico, conde de Coruña, having listened to the information of Sande and Rivera, sent it to Spain in January of 1582. When things were weighed in Spain, the crown opted for the cancellation of the embassy.⁵⁹

Another door was closed to the possible penetration of the Gospel in China. Upon knowing its cancellation, Fr. Francisco Ortega, who had placed all his trust in the sending of the embassy, put himself at the disposal of the King in order to go there. Since all means had failed, although he still believed in the feasibility and efficacy of the embassy, he offered his services for the task. Why not use the evangelical method of sending a few missionaries without the support soldiers?⁶⁰ But now new people come into the picture: the Franciscans.

b. *The Franciscans in China*

The Franciscans arrived in the Philippines in 1578. As soon as they settled down they tried to set things in motion to go to China. This had been their main aim in coming to the Far East and they pressed the authorities to be allowed to fulfil their dream. The Augustinians who, as can be seen above, tried different ways to be able to enter China, resented the attitude of the Franciscans. This is reflected by Ortega when he wrote to the King:

"so serious an enterprise as this should be given to the religions I had mentioned in the Memorial because they are theologians and they know the language and customs of China".⁶¹

⁵⁹ Cfr. TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, p. LV and ff.

⁶⁰ We read: "It is convenient to God's service to try this enterprise by peaceful means, by sending some religious. Nothing would be risked by this, for if his Majesty would grant this, he offered himself to go there with two or three companions, with only a letter of recommendation from his Majesty for the King of China, without paying any attention to the length and the danger of the trip" TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, CCXXVI.

⁶¹ Letter of Fr. Francisco de Ortega, O.S.A. to Philip II, August 6, 1580, in: TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, CIX.

The Franciscans repeatedly asked the governor, don Francisco de Sande, (1575-1580) to let them leave the Philippines to start the preaching of the Gospel in China. They would preach it *modo apostolico*, alone, without the help of soldiers to protect them from possible dangers. As many times as the Franciscans asked the governor as many did the latter turned down their requests. His answer was clear: they had been sent by the Spanish King to the Philippines and not to China. The doors remained as closed as ever. For the governor, the time was not yet ripe.

The Franciscans became restless. Tired of waiting, and seeing that there was no way to convince the governor, they decided to leave the islands secretly. Under the guidance and leadership of Pedro de Alfaro, who was the commissary, some Franciscans stealthily sailed out of the Philippines, in June of 1579 on their way to start the spiritual conquest of China.⁶² As soon as they reached the coast they were seized by the imperial coastguards and taken to prison in Canton. All that Alfaro and his companions obtained in China, after spending a few months there, was to be caned, despised and deceived by their own interpreter. They were forced to sell their chalices and ornaments in order to survive and later, they had to beg their daily food.⁶³ In their extreme necessity, the bishop of Macao and a pious Portuguese priest sent them some help in Canton.⁶⁴ Finally they were expelled from China. Pedro de Alfaro and Lucharelli went to Macao; the

⁶² Cfr. J. GONZALEZ DE MENDOZA, *Historia*, Felix Garcia ed., p. 352 ff.; in: BRPI, VI, 127 and ff.; Cfr. HORACIO LA COSTA, *The Jesuits in the Philippines 1581-1768*, 1961, p. 39.

⁶³ Fr. Alonso Sanchez wrote regarding this trip of the Franciscans: "During the time of Governor Francisco de Sande some discalzed Franciscan friars sailed secretly from the Philippines to China. A Chinese guided them and at night took them to Canton, where they stayed in a frigate in an estero for seven months, without any house and unable to enter Canton. Here they sold the chalices and ornaments for food brought to them by a Chinese who had been a Christian and who later on became our interpreter. After that time, without giving them leave to enter the city, some of them were expelled and others returned to Manila. This was told to me by a father who had gone there with them". in: *Apuntamientos breves de algunas cosas de la China*, in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 365 and ff., footnote 1.

⁶⁴ Cfr. *Letter of Pedro de Alfaro*, Canton, October 13, 1579, in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, p. 306, footnote 1. This is how Alfaro himself narrates everything: "The bishop and another priest wrote to us. We exchanged frequent letters and surely we were favored and helped through their alms. Without this succour some of us might have died."

rest returned to Manila.⁶⁵ In view of the attitude of the Franciscans, the governor, don Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa, (1580-1583) passed a strict ordinance prohibiting these secret trips to China. The Franciscans did not give up. Around March of 1582, without the leave of the governor or the bishop, eight Franciscans, under Fr. Pablo de Jesus, sailed out of Manila on their way to China.⁶⁶

Governor Ronquillo gave strict orders to Sanchez, (who was sent by him to Macao, to bring the Portuguese to accept Philip II as their king), that upon reaching Pangasinan, if he were to find Franciscans still there, he had to send them back to Manila. Sanchez was further instructed that he could take two Franciscan friars to accompany him to China. At the same time, Ronquillo wrote to the governor of Pangasinan to stop the Franciscans.

Ronquillo guessed rightly. Sanchez still caught up with them in Pangasinan. He took the Franciscan Fr. Juan Pobre with him, together with a companion, and the rest were delivered back to Manila, not without a certain show of force from the governor of Pangasinan. Ronquillo, once more, enjoined on them the prohibition of leaving the Philippines and the offense they committed in abandoning the natives of the islands. However, all seemed to fall on deaf ears. The Franciscans were bent on going to China. The governor was forced to grant permission to the commissary Jeronimo de Burgos, who had come with a large group of 18 Franciscans in June of 1582, to go to Macao and Cochinchina with four companions.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Cfr. COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, p. 305. Fr. Pedro de Alfaro wrote to the governor of the Philippines from Macao, in 1579; "The couriers, Fr. Agustin, as an eye-witness, and as co-witnesses brothers Francisco de Dueñas and Juan Diaz Pardo and Villaroel can testify before the King or the Pope, if need be, that everything that could be done from our part was done. It did not please the Lord that this door should be opened now. When He alone knows. These brothers of ours go with certain fear that your Lordship might give them punishment or trouble, because they came to this trip without license... Everything was due to me, for I was the cause for their following me... May your lordship remember me and your chaplain, Fr. Juan Bautista. We are staying behind ready to suffer great labor".

⁶⁶ Cfr. *Letter of Governor Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa to Philip II*, Manila, June 16, 1582, in: COLIN PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 305-306.

⁶⁷ Cfr. *Letter of Governor Diego Ronquillo de Peñalosa to Philip II*, Manila, June 20, 1583. in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, p. 306.

A bitter complaint of don Gonzalo's successor, Diego Ronquillo, against these trips of the Franciscans, is reflected in a letter of 1583:

"The discalzed friars of St. Francis have gone sometimes to China without orders of the governor. This has been done to the prejudice and unhappiness of this land. Although the bishop and I, and the whole commonwealth, intimated to the superiors of this order the evil that followed . . . and asked them to feel happy to teach the Christian doctrine to thousands of Indians who are here without doctrine, and some of them are already baptized by them, we were unable to make them change their resolution. They have taken this too seriously, and they have difference with the bishop of Malacca over the jurisdiction of the custody of Macao. Thus this month of May some of them took a frigate and very secretly left these islands, among them the one who spoke the language of these islands best."⁶⁸

Which were the results of these trips to China? Little good was achieved and instead they increased the suspicions of the Chinese and the Portuguese of Macao. The Chinese looked at foreigners with derision and distrust. In the opinion of some missionaries from the West, the Chinese closed their frontiers out of pure fear and cowardice.⁶⁹ Whenever the missionaries asked the Chinese traders to take them to China, they refused and said that it was punished with capital punishment.⁷⁰

The suspicions of the Chinese had certain basis, though. In their relations with the Portuguese, especially during the early stage of the contact between East and West, the Chinese had received some abuses from the Portuguese. The latter had given the Chinese the impression that the Spaniards were conquerors of other nations. They told the Chinese to be watchful about them, for their main design in coming to the East was to conquer their nation.

⁶⁸ *Letter of Diego Ronquillo de Peñalosa to Philip II, Manila, June 20, 1583*, in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 306.

⁶⁹ "It is proper of coward people to be suspicious and distrustful. The people of this nation are extremely suspicious; the contrary is true of their neighbors, the tartars, who since they are valiant and warriors, they have no suspicion of any other nation", *Letter of don Leonardo de Saa to the bishop of the Philippines, Macao, July 2, 1583* in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, p. 285.

⁷⁰ Cfr. GONZALEZ DE MENDOZA, in: BRPI, VI, 124-125, *Letter of Andres de Mirandala to Philip II, Mexico, January 8, 1574*, in: BRPI, III, 228.

Due to these secret trips, the Portuguese of Macao found themselves in an embarrassing situation and subjected to great vexations from the part of the Chinese authorities.⁷¹ Fr. Jeronimo de Burgos and his companions, responsible for this third trip to China in May of 1583, were taken to prison in Canton. Only the intervention of the Portuguese Matias Panela, a very influential man among the Chinese, saved them from the Chinese authorities and from the possibility of greater harm.⁷²

It sounds unbelievable that, in those circumstances, the Franciscans were unable to realize the difficulties that the entry into China implied. The Spanish authorities of the Philippines showed a greater sense of reality than the missionaries who left behind a very fruitful field of action in the Philippines and jumped blindly into the Chinese adventure. All their attempts failed miserably. One is inclined to think that those men were either saints or fanatics. In any case, they lacked a certain sense of reality. What is also strange is the fact that these missionaries tried to enter China without knowing their history, and even without the most elementary rudiments of the Chinese language. Rada and the Augustinians, Pedro de Alfaro and the Franciscans, knew practically nothing of Chinese. On account of this, they saw themselves involved in difficult situations, deceived by the perfidious translators who rarely told them the truth, or entirely falsified the answers of the Chinese authorities.

The yearning to go over to China and abandon the Philippines, became more intense as the years went by. It cannot be denied, though, that behind this authentic and sincere zeal to bring to the Chinese the Good News of Salvation, a zeal that sprang from their hearts, there was also certain religious corporate pride.

In the question at hand, one finds the typical case of falling into the temptation of picking up our neighbor's fruit as more attractive and appetizing. The pastures of China were greener than those of the Philippines.

c. *Fr. Alonso Sanchez, S.J. in China*

The trips just reviewed were not the last attempts at peaceful penetration from the Philippines into China. In 1582 a new

⁷¹ Cfr. COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 307.

⁷² Cfr. *Letter of Matias Panela to the Governor of the Philippines, Macao*, February 10, 1584, in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 301.

chance presented itself to try once more the entry into China. This time it was done with the permission of the governor, the bishop and the whole commonwealth of the Philippines.

The reason for this new trip to China is connected with Philip II's succession and accession to the throne of Portugal. Once the dynastic question was clarified, King Philip was accepted as King of Portugal in 1581 by the Cortes of Thomar.⁷³ The Portuguese overseas dominions, with their centers in Goa, Malacca, and Moluccas, were at this time incorporated into the immense Spanish empire. The King, in a letter addressed to the Spanish governor of the Philippines⁷⁴ notified him the fact of his succession and acceptance as King of Portugal and the need to convey to the Portuguese officials of Macao and Moluccas the new political fact. To carry out such a delicate mission there was a need to select a man of prudence, tact and knowledge of human affairs. The choice fell on Alonso Sanchez, a Jesuit who had reached the Philippines with bishop Salazar. He was perhaps the most influential man in the Philippines. Salazar relied too heavily on Sanchez' judgment, to the prejudice many times of his personal theological and juridical convictions. Sanchez was chosen as the special envoy of the governor to the Portuguese of Macao and as ambassador of Salazar to the governor of Canton. Could this be the time when the mystery surrounding China would be unravelled? Could he be the first one to break the silence of the Celestial empire? Above all, could he be the new Francis Xavier, an ambassador of Jesus Christ to the East, sent there to give light to those in darkness and share with them the salvific message of Christ?

The mission of Sanchez to Macao was successfully achieved, due to the excellent services of the Portuguese officials, of the bishop of Macao, don Leonardo de Saa, and of Melchor Carneiro, bishop elect of Japan and patriarch of Ethiopia. His embassy to China, however, was a fiasco. Initially he was welcomed by the Chinese authorities, with banquets, dances and other signs of joy, but Sanchez was never given the chance to truly preach the Gos-

⁷³ Cfr. RAFAEL ALTAMIRA Y CREVEA, *Historia de España y la civilización europea*, (4 vols.) Barcelona, 1900-1930, Vol. III, 96-98; Cfr. ANTONIO BALLESTEROS Y BERETTA, *Historia de España*, VI, I, Barcelona, 1950, 366-389.

⁷⁴ Cfr. *Royal Cedula of Philip II to the Governor of the Philippines*, Tomar, April 4, 1581, in: TORRES-PASTELLS, *Labor*, II, pp. CXLVII.

pel, although he tried earnestly to do so, especially through some interpreters.⁷⁵ Sanchez was privileged to meet on Chinese soil two other Jesuits, Fr. Francisco Pasio and Fr. Michael Ruggeri, both Italians who had come to China by sailing east. The great encounter of the three European Jesuits, who had come to China by sailing in opposite directions, could be transcendental and meaningful. But at the moment nothing could be said about its positive evangelical results.⁷⁶

Once Sanchez fulfilled the purpose of the embassy, which was to bring the Portuguese to the obedience of Philip II, he tried to return to Manila. His trip via Japan was catastrophic.⁷⁷ Shipwrecked and forced by a storm to return to Macao, he finally sailed in a Portuguese ship and reached Manila in March of 1583, almost one year after his departure.

Sanchez stayed in Manila for a very short while. Once again the Spanish authorities had recourse to him for another extraordinary trip to China. This time to accompany the factor Juan Bautista Roman to Macao, to exact obedience from some officers and crew of a galleon that had mutinied against the King.⁷⁸ Once this

⁷⁵ A long description of the trip of Sanchez to China is found in TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, pp. CXLVIII and ff.; COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 265 ff.

⁷⁶ "The Chinese are so arrogant that they consider themselves the creme of the world and think no other minds can be compared to theirs, or can have better political laws and customs than they have. Thus they despise all other nations and consider them barbarians...." COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 282.

The nations surrounding China, or those the Chinese had come into contact with, were indeed more savage and less civilized than the Chinese. Even those nations which had become victorious and conquered China, finally surrendered to Chinese civilization, accepted Chinese mores and customs, and were "sinicized". They rendered the best tribute by becoming "culturally" Chinese. In the last analysis they lost their own national identity. The Chinese, out of historical experience, had come to realize that their civilization, when confronted with all the others they knew, could stand high above all of them. They could not imagine that these white people, with cats' eyes, were different from any other nation they had known in history.

⁷⁷ Near *Formosa*, due to the inexperience of the pilot and surprised by a terrible storm, they were shipwrecked. For months, they were forced to fight the savages of the island, still untouched by civilization. *Formosa* was *terra incognita* and its inhabitants headhunters, akin by race to the Igorots of the Mountain province of the island of Luzon, in the Philippines.

⁷⁸ This was the galleon *San Martin* that had sailed from Manila to *Acapulco* but it went to Macao to sell merchandise, put in some more goods and sail to Peru. The governor of the Philippines wanted to reduce the crew and administer swift justice. Factor Roman did so, by hanging the leaders of the revolt. With better officers, the galleon sailed from Macao to *Acapulco*.

problem was solved, Sanchez tried to enter China once again.⁷⁹ He was eager to meet his brothers Ruggieri and Pasio, who had written him in 1583 from Xauquin, giving him the good news that the door of China was being opened to the Gospel of Christ. The Chinese authorities however, did not allow Sanchez to enter China. Ruggieri had to come from Xauquin to Macao, where Sanchez was staying.⁸⁰

The door of China remained still closed to any contact from the Philippines. The Augustinians, the Franciscans and now the Jesuits had tried to start the contacts with China. All had come to nothing. These failures had a great importance in the change of attitude and approach of many missionaries and laymen towards the problem of China. The civil authorities hardened their opinion. Many of them became convinced that the door of China had to be forcefully opened. They had tried all means: diplomatic, commercial and evangelical. All to no avail. There was an urgent need to do something militarily to force the issue. Sanchez, while at the court of Madrid in 1590, defended in public, and in the presence of the King, the lawfulness of the conquest of China. He wrote down, for the information of the King, of the members of the Council of Indies, and many other scholars, theologians and jurists, some brief notes. He firmly and emphatically stated that the Spaniards had tried to enter China peacefully. He could recall at least nine times, but always with negative results.⁸¹

4. *Salazar's idea on China at the time of his arrival to Philippines*

The previous pages were written to set Salazar in the proper historical perspective. The problem of China was older than Salazar and the early missionaries, who had come before him, tried to find ways and means to give a solution to it. When Salazar came, with his own ideas, the problem was still there, but it had been discussed at certain length by Augustinians and Franciscans.

⁷⁹ Letter of Juan Bautista Roman to Philip II, Macao, June 25, 1584, in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, II, 520-521; *Labor* I, 313, note 1; Cfr. HORACIO DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 52-54.

⁸⁰ COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 315; H. DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits*, 54.

⁸¹ Cfr. ALONSO SANCHEZ, *Apuntamientos breves de algunas cosas de la China. Diligencias que se han hecho para esta entrada por parte de las Islas y Castellanos*, in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, p. 365 and ff., note 1.

What was Salazar's opinion about China? What methods did he recommend to bring the Gospel of Jesus to China? Did he opt for evangelical means, or was he in favour, in the spirit of the Jesuit Sanchez, of military means?

Salazar came to the Philippines in September of 1581. He had accepted his episcopal office in so far away a land, the farthest and most isolated within the Spanish empire, because he had come to know it was very near China. As he tells us:

"For a long time I had an ardent desire of the conversion of that realm. With that desire I came to this land. One of the reasons that moved me to accept this bishopric was to know that these islands were very near China, and that many natives from this realm had come to these islands and had settled down in them..."⁸²

Salazar came to the Philippines with his own ideas about the Chinese opposition to the entry of foreigners into their kingdom. He tells us in the same letter:

"Before I came to these islands I had been told that, in the kingdom of China, no foreigners could enter without danger of death, unless they carried a license from the rulers of that realm. If any Chinese took any foreigner to China without license from the rulers he was condemned to death and the foreigner was sent to prison, wherefrom he never came out".⁸³

In another letter of 1583 Salazar writes about his and the governor's efforts to send Sanchez to China, to let the Chinese authorities allow the Spaniards to trade with them and visit them in their ports, as they were privileged to do in Spanish territories. We read:

"In the letters I sent your Majesty last year, I mentioned how the governor don Gonzalo Ronquillo sent Fr. Alonso Sanchez, of the Society of Jesus, to China, to make the Portuguese of Macao aware of the succession of your Majesty to the state of Portugal and to discuss with the

⁸² *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 24, 1590, in: AGI, Filipinas 74. Also in W. E. RETANA, Archivo del Bibliófilo Filipino, III, Madrid, 1892, pp. 502 ff.: Cfr. BRPI, VII, p. 213.*

⁸³ *Ibidem: BRPI, VII p. 213.*

governor of Canton the possibility of allowing our people to trade in their ports, as their people come to trade in ours."⁸⁴

5. *Salazar defends the lawfulness of the conquest of China*

The embassy of Sanchez of 1582-1583 had no positive results as far as the opening of China to the preaching of Christianity, and the possibility of establishing commercial relations with the Chinese on Chinese soil are concerned. The Spaniards adopted more radical attitudes.

a. *Sanchez convinces Salazar of the lawfulness of the conquest of China*

The public report of Sanchez to the Spanish colony of Manila, especially to the ecclesiastics gathered again in the synod of Manila after his first embassy of 1582-1583, had a transcendental importance. Most people, among them bishop Salazar, manifested their opposition to the adoption of military methods in order to establish relations with China. They were not fully convinced of their juridicity, legality and morality. Furthermore, they ran counter to the opinions of the best universities of Spain.⁸⁵ Salazar, and many of the Augustinians, could not justify such an enterprise. To start the war against China, even if only to remove the obstacles for the preaching of the Gospel, was something repellent to Salazar. For 23 years, the time of his missionary labors in Mexico and Florida, he had defended the unlawfulness of any war to remove the obstacles to the Gospel. He had even written a book about it. His theological and juridical formation, acquired in the aulas of the university of Salamanca, were incompatible with these ideas of Sanchez. His identification with the method of Las Casas and Vitoria was complete and total.

⁸⁴ *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 18, 1583, in: AGI, Patronato 25*

⁸⁵ Sanchez is the best witness of the change brought about in some religious of the Philippines in relation to the lawfulness of the conquest of China: "In a meeting, convoked by the bishop, the problem about his Majesty's right to that empire was discussed. All were of the same opinion, even the bishop, who had maintained the contrary opinion for 23 years, and even had written a book about it", in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, II, CLXXII.

The Jesuit defended with such vigor the lawfulness of the conquest of China, due precisely to the Chinese opposition to the opening of commercial relation to the Spaniards and the prohibition to the preaching of the Gospel, (as he had experienced in China), that he brought over to his side even those who initially had been opposed to him. Salazar, though it may sound strange to our ears, and paradoxical and contradictory to his theological and juridical formation, embraced also the method of Sanchez. In a letter of his, of 1583, he wrote:

"Your Majesty knows how scrupulously the affairs of the Indies must be dealt with, and how almost all the scholars of Spain, and even those of the Indies, condemn the conquest made against the Indians, obliging all those who organized and took part in them to restitution for the evils, deaths and robberies inflicted on the victims of these conquests. I shared this view myself for some time, because I was educated in the doctrine of the bishop of Chiapas, and I shared this opinion for over 23 years that I was in New Spain. Soon after I came to these islands, with the appointment your Majesty knows about, although I may be unworthy of it, after having consulted first with learned and God-fearing people, God has made us understand what we must hold about this. Due to this, many consciences have become peaceful, which were most unhappy and afflicted before, because they could not find any person to hear their confessions; and before, I would have never heard their confession for anything in this world".⁸⁶

This may sound strange, no doubt, and even shocking, but here it is. A turnabout occurred in Salazar, and in many other missionaries of the Philippines. Moved by the convincing power and arguments of Sanchez, they accepted his views regarding the affair of China. They embraced Sanchez' plan and, as far as correspondence for those years shows, they embraced it heartily and totally. Salazar once more writes:

"Once Fr. Sanchez gave the report of his embassy, through which we came to know the state of affairs of China, it was discussed right away that it was good to give an account to your Majesty, for it was necessary for the

⁸⁶ *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 18, 1583, in. AGI, Patronato 25*

royal service to know them. It was determined by all who were there that no one else could give a better account than the one who had made the embassy. Thus, from the part of the governor and mine, and the whole cabildo, we pleaded with the rector of the Society here, to order that father to accept the legacy."⁸⁷

The interim governor of the Philippines, don Diego Ronquillo de Peñalosa, successor and cousin of don Gonzalo, who had paid so much attention to the problem of China, also wrote to the King, supporting the plan of conquest and Sanchez' selection as his own delegate to Spain. In a letter dated June 20, 1583, we read:

"Since the bishop of these islands, and all the scholars of these parts, say that they have found reasons and causes by whom your Majesty can go ahead with the conquest of China, and possess that land, and that all the other kingdoms of the Indies can be possessed without any scruple, I begged Fr. Alonso Sanchez to go to Spain, to make a report to your Majesty about all the things he saw in China, and the theological basis for this affair, for I thought this was good to your Majesty's service. I asked the Fr. Rector of the Society to let him go. Alonso Sanchez retorted that for so grave a matter his voyage would help little unless the bishop would also go, since he was more venerable. On account of this, I had some meetings. Since it seemed to me that both of them should go, it was so resolved."⁸⁸

Salazar did not surrender easily to the arguments of Sanchez. It took him some time to be convinced. Before doing so, he wanted to conduct his own personal investigation. He started this information with some Portuguese citizens, residents of long stay in the East, who had been in contact with the Chinese for many years. These people, knowledgeable in Chinese affairs, and perhaps with less passion than Sanchez, could give some vital information about the attitude of Chinese rulers towards foreigners and strangers. Salazar writes regarding this:

"Since it pained me that, due to the opposition to the entry of foreigners into China, the preaching of the Gospel of Christ was hindered, I gathered vital information

⁸⁷ *Ibidem.*

⁸⁸ *Letter of Governor don Diego Ronquillo de Peñalosa to Philip II, Manila, June 20, 1583, in: TORRES-PASTELLS, Catálogo, II, CLXXXIII-*

from many Portuguese witnesses from Macao and India who happened to be here. I sent that information to your Majesty which shows that the rulers of China, called *mandarines*, do not allow anyone to enter into their kingdom without their permission. For this they have great fleets to guard their coasts. They kill or seize anyone who happens to go there. Based on this information, which I came to know through some Portuguese, I wrote your Majesty stating that, with just title, your Majesty could send your army into that kingdom. If the King were not to allow the preachers to go in, your Majesty could force him by compulsion to open the way to receive the preachers, having understood that this impediment was put only by the *mandarines*, not by ordinary people from whom there was no opposition, but would rather welcome the missionaries."⁸⁹

b. *Proposed Embassy to Spain by Salazar and Sanchez regarding the "affair" of China*

Sanchez was fully convinced of the soundness of his doctrine, yet he did not want to go alone to Spain. He was pretty sure that since his opinion was contrary to the opinions of most scholars in Spain, he had very little chance of convincing those opponents. He needed the support of a person who could defend the same opinion as a scholar and as a man of authority. This man was bishop Salazar. If the bishop were not ready to go to Spain with him, Sanchez would also abandon his embassy. In the words of Salazar:

"At the beginning, it was very hard for Sanchez to accept the legacy. In the end he said yes, but with one condition: this condition destroyed the whole plan. And the condition was this: since the affair he wanted to discuss was the most important ever to have happened, even since the time of the Apostles, and he did not feel sure enough to see it through, there was a need to send a person with him, who would support his opinion, and to whom due credit be given, a person who would have deep knowledge of the problem, and who would be able to find the basis for his Majesty's right, and give an answer to

⁸⁹ Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 24, 1590, in: AGI, Filipinas 74.

those who would contradict it. It came to be agreed that I had to go, for this was the best''⁹⁰

It was agreed by all that, in view of the importance of the problem, the possible implications of the enterprise, and the difficulty of the affair, the bishop had to go with Sanchez to Spain. His authority as bishop, his experience as a shepherd and pastor, his expertise as a theologian and canonist made him the person best fitted for the task. Theologians and jurists in Spain, who had been opposed to similar enterprises, would perhaps see the truth of the problem. In order to judge the problems of the Indies, there was a need for knowledge and experience, science and conscience (*ciencia y conciencia*) of the problem at hand. Salazar and Sanchez would try to prove their opinion and convince their opponents of the soundness of their view. And what was important, convince Philip II of the justification of the conquest of China.

In view of this agreement of the Spanish citizens, both civil and ecclesiastical, Salazar gave in to their desires and accepted the task of going to Spain together with Sanchez.

Quite soon again Salazar changed his mind and decided against the trip. In his opinion, he did not want and could not abandon his bishopric and flock. He had no permission from the Spanish King to go home to Spain to report to him and to the Council of Indies. Although he saw the need for the trip, (that is why he decided to accept the decision of the members of the synod) yet he was not ready, in such an early part of pastoral ministry, to abandon his flock. Deep inside him he wanted to leave and face the theologians and jurists of Spain who might be ready to contradict him. These would be many and learned, but he would try to convince them of the justification of his opinion. It was only the lack of permission from the King that hindered the trip. Salazar thought thus:

"In Spain, and outside Spain, there will be people who, in good zeal, will contradict this truth. Because of this fear, Fr. Sanchez decided not to go alone and I accepted the plan to go with him. If your Majesty wishes this truth to come out into the open, you must also wish

⁹⁰ Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 18, 1583, in: AGI, Patronato 25.

to give us permission to go to Spain, for the lack of this permission was the reason that moved me to give up the trip . . . This truth is the one I defend, and if anyone will contradict it, or will entertain any doubts about it, and nobody there will dare to come out to defend it, I shall go and defend it with your Majesty's permission. And without any fear of being vanquished, without trust in me but rather in God's mercy and in the truth that I defend, even if the opponents will be many, I shall go there. Let not your Majesty pay attention to my age, nor to the distance of the voyage, for I realized all this when I said yes. None of these things, or of bigger ones, were enough for me to say no. Only if I had the permission from your Majesty would I now go personally, instead of this letter of mine".⁹¹

It is not difficult to imagine the reactions of Salazar's classmates and fellow religious, especially those from Salamanca. What would have they thought had the bishop made his trip to Spain with the intention and aim of defending in public, in front of any group of scholars and jurists, the justification of the conquest of China? Most probably, they would have never understood the change that had taken place in him. And this in a matter of a few years! They would have recalled with admiration that just some years before, when he had come from Mexico to Spain in 1576, to plead the cause of the Amerindians, he had defended in public that war was foolish, that to conquer in order to remove the obstacles to the Gospel was more akin to the religion of Mohammed than to the Christian religion. He had manifested himself there as a close disciple and follower of his pacifist teachers, both Dominicans, Las Casas and Vitoria. Some of his classmates and friends might have been compelled to say that he was not the same person.

c. Salazar and the "affair" of China: military conquest or peaceful exangelization?

The principal aim of the legation to Spain, had it really taken place, is manifested to us in a letter of Salazar:

"The part we were going to discuss with your Majesty was that, supposing the title and right your Majesty has

⁹¹ *Ibidem.*

in all the Indies, and as King of Portugal the right he has to China, and adjacent kingdoms, and the whole of East India, your Majesty can send an army big enough not to be destroyed by China. This army can enter into that kingdom and through those domains of China in spite of any opposition, and counsel the king or governors of said kingdom to allow the preaching of the gospel, and ensure the preachers from evils that might be inflicted upon them. Also compel the citizens of that kingdom to pay your Majesty all the expenses incurred. If they do not want to pay, to take them by force, always keeping the equity and moderation demanded by the aim we go there, which is the conversion and not the destruction of those natives. Also, your Majesty can impose taxes upon those domains and give part of them to the soldiers who go there to preach, and reserve for yourself what would be pleasing, always keeping the equity and Christian moderation. Also, if the King of China were so proud as not to be induced to let the Gospel be preached, having made all the necessary efforts with him, your Majesty can take away his kingdom..."⁹²

These propositions are an application to the case of China of the principles of Spanish theologians and jurists. It is not too difficult to find these ideas in Francisco de Vitoria's *Relectio de Indis*. Salazar says that King of Spain can

"compel the King and governors of that kingdom to let the gospel be preached and be sure that the preachers will not receive injuries from them... always keeping the equity and moderation demanded by the aim that brings us there: the conversion of those natives".⁹³

In order to see how this is inspired by Vitoria, his *Relectio de Indis* must first be glimpsed:

"If the barbarians, both their leaders and the people, impede the Spaniards, the preaching of the Gospel, having asked them before to avoid the scandal, these can preach to them even against their will and give themselves to the conversion of those people; if it were necessary for this reason to declare or accept war, they can do so, until they will give opportunity and security for the preaching of the Gospel... always keeping measure and judgment not to go beyond what is necessary (for it is

⁹² *Ibidem*

⁹³ *Ibidem*

better to renounce one own's right than to make violence to the neighbor's), and always ordaining everything more to the welfare and advantage of the barbarians than to our own interest".⁹⁴

According to Vitoria, it was lawful to depose barbarian kings or rulers, and declare war on them, if they opposed the peaceful preaching of the Gospel. Salazar was not far from that view when he wrote:

"If the King of China were so proud as not to be induced to let the Gospel be preached, having made all the necessary efforts with him, your Majesty can take away his kingdom..."⁹⁵

d. *Salazar's 'Information' about the military conquest of China*

Salazar, in order to update the king of Spain and the pope of what they were planning in the Philippines, decided to open up an *Information* of seven witnesses, experts on Chinese matters, regarding the "affair" of China. The *Information* begins thus:

"It is convenient to the service of God, and increase of our holy faith and Christian religion, that our most holy father and our King don Felipe, our Lord, be informed of the state in which the Kingdom of China is found, and of the impediments that the rulers of those domains have placed and put to the citizens and natives to hinder them from becoming converts or receive our holy faith, or hear the preaching of the Holy Gospel... Because of this, he [Salazar] wanted to command, and in fact he commanded, that this information be made, so that once it is seen by his Holiness and his Majesty, and the truth comes to be known by them, they will put the most convenient remedy for the service of our Lord and theirs, and for the welfare of so many souls, who in that kingdom lack the light of the Gospel. With this light, and

⁹⁴ FRANCISCO DE VITORIA, *Relectio de Indis o Libertad de los Indios*, Ed. L. Peña y J. M. Perez Prendes, Madrid, 1969, I, 3, 11 pp. 89-90. Hereinafter to be quoted as DE INDIS.

⁹⁵ *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, June 18, 1583, in: AGI, Patronato 25.

with the removal of impediments, these souls would attain salvation".⁹⁶

The main aim of Salazar's *Information* was to prove the opposition of the Chinese authorities to the preaching of the Gospel. Based on this, to declare war against them was lawful.

Once the *Information* was finished, and the opposition by the rulers of China to the preaching of the Gospel proven, could war be declared on these rulers? Salazar's answer is negative, because

"to make war, as St. Thomas says, is like to execute the sentence in a suit between two persons, as if between two litigants. Thus, before war is started, it is necessary to justify the cause for which war is to be declared, and once the cause is known to be just, to intimate to the opposite party to present its justification. If the part does not want to do so, then, war can be declared. If one of these two things is lacking, war would be unjust..."⁹⁷

Has this been done in the case of China? In other words, have the Spanish authorities intimated to the Chinese authorities the permission to preach the Gospel? Salazar convinced himself of

"the hindrance put by the rulers of China to the preaching of the Gospel. This is the most legitimate title your Majesty has to enter with armed hand into that Kingdom..."⁹⁸

Francisco de Vitoria, Salazar's master, would not raise any objection. The opposition to the preaching of the Gospel, which for Salazar "is the most legitimate reason which should impel his Majesty to enter with armed hand into that kingdom", would jus-

⁹⁶ *Information made by bishop Salazar about the impediments put by the Chinese authorities to the preaching of the Gospel. Información hecha por el obispo Salazar sobre los impedimentos que las autoridades de China ponen a la predicación del Evangelio.* To this information a *Letter of Salazar* is attached, dated Manila, June 18, 1583, in: AGI, Patronato 25. Duplicate in AGI, Filipinas 74; Cfr. COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor* I, 309.

⁹⁷ *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, June 18, 1583, in: AGI, Patronato 25; Filipinas 74 Cfr. TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, p. CXXXXVI.

⁹⁸ *Ibidem*

tify a declaration of war, if and only after having intimated this to the rulers of China. Salazar, in the development and exposition of his doctrine, as can be seen from the *Information* sent to the king, went beyond Vitoria's doctrine. The *Information* is of great interest and value, not only because of the importance of the affair, for it deals with the conquest of China and its justification to the rest of the world, but also in order to understand the ideas and views of Salazar regarding this matter. Salazar mentions five reasons to justify the conquest:

"The first, as the witness say, and is proven by public voice here, the rulers of China have the door so closed to the preaching of the Gospel in that Kingdom that no preacher can enter or will ever be allowed to enter, even if he would try to do so."

"The second, in view of the previous proposition, your Majesty must not send preachers to China nor must they go there without enough number of people to protect them and give them security, so that those barbarians will not kill them, or inflict evil on them. The reason is because, although the preaching of the Gospel must not be abandoned, even if there is a clear danger of death, as the apostles and martyrs did, yet seeing that going alone to that kingdom, as far as we can humanly speaking judge, has no other effect but to kill the one going there, or put him into perpetual prison, or, at most, after having scourged and caned him, expel him from that kingdom, it would not be virtue but pure temerity to go alone to such a clear danger, without hope of any fruit."

"The third, supposing the obligation your Majesty has to send preachers to all the Indies, and, as it is clear from this information, that to send them alone would be temerity or at least, something futile and of no effect, your Majesty can, and is even obliged to, send the preachers accompanied by enough armed people so as to defend them from any danger from those who want to kill them, or inflict evil upon them, or hinder them in their preaching.

"The fourth, once the preachers are in China, accompanied in the manner specified above, and the Chinese, either due to fear of the people who go with them, or because truly they want to become converts drop their opposition, in spite of this your Majesty does not loose his right of demanding and compelling them to pay the

expenses and costs and salaries of soldiers and dangers of ships and everything that usually goes with this. This could not be demanded, or at least, it is not so clear it could be demanded, in case there would be no resistance and unless your majesty did not have the certitude, or great probability that the Chinese could kill or would ill-treat the preachers if they were sent alone. In order to have this probability, it is enough the public voice we have of this, as it is proven in this information by the eight trustworthy witnesses sent here."

"The fifth, in view of the precedent proposition, if the Chinese rulers, seeing the power with which his majesty comes into their Kingdom, would not make any resistance, and would request the armed people to go back home, that they would give security to the preachers, and would pay all the expenses as far incurred, your majesty is not obliged to bring out people on account of this and in fact your Majesty ought not to do that; rather your majesty can order your people to settle in that kingdom, to achieve the effect above specified. The Chinese must recognize your Majesty as their supreme lord by paying the taxes..."⁹⁹

It seems unbelievable that Salazar, disciple and admirer of Las Casas and Vitoria, would have written what we have just quoted above. His change of ideas, and indeed a change of ideas there is, at least externally, can be understood if we consider the concrete historical situation the Philippines was passing through, the anxiety of the whole colony and the state of mind and spirit of Salazar himself, especially after having heard from the very lips of Sanchez the tremendous opposition to the preaching and entry of the Gospel into China, and even the establishment of any type of commercial relations with the Philippines.

Was Salazar entirely sure that the Chinese were opposed to the preaching of the Gospel? Father Sanchez and the Portuguese told him so. But there was another point forgotten by Salazar. Had the Spaniards ever asked the Chinese highest authorities to allow the missionaries freedom to preach the Gospel of Christ? Salazar accepted that the testimony of the witnesses about the opposition to the preaching of the Gospel, or the establishment of any kind of contact, were not enough. In order to start the war

⁹⁹ *Ibidem.*

it is necessary to fulfill a second condition: to intimate to these authorities the permission to preach. This would mean, the sending of ambassadors and the allowance of enough time for the message to reach them and be heard by the supreme authorities. Had this really happened?

What were the real reasons of the Chinese to prohibit entry of foreigners, even missionaries and merchants, into their kingdom: Suspicion? Pride? Self-sufficiency? Cowardice? Real fear of commercial penetration leading on to political domination? Religious bigotry?¹⁰⁰

It cannot be denied that some of the reasons adduced by Salazar, especially the second and the third, are taken from Vitoria. The doctrine of the Acts of the Synod of Manila is the same as the doctrine exposed here by Salazar. If it could be proven that the Chinese, through their rulers, closed the door to the preaching of the faith, in such a manner that the preachers were not allowed to enter China, then, in the view of Vitoria, it would be lawful to declare war to protect the preachers, and defend them against the dangers and evils that could be inflicted upon them. But Vitoria added:

“up to the moment they will give the opportunity and grant protection for the preaching of the Gospel”.¹⁰¹

The humanistic principle of Vitoria was adopted by Salazar, but in the fifth title Salazar goes well beyond the master, when he writes:

“In view of the precedent proposition, if the Chinese rulers, seeing the power with which his Majesty comes into their kingdom, would not make any resistance, and would say that the armed people should go back home, that they would give security to the preachers, and would pay all the expenses so far incurred, your Majesty is not obliged to bring out your people, on account of this, and in fact you ought not to do that: rather your Majesty can order your people to settle in that kingdom to achieve the

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. *Letter of Diego Ronquillo to Philip II*, Manila, June 20, 1583, in: TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, CLXXXI-

¹⁰¹ DE INDIS, I, 3, 11, 89-90.

effect above specified. The Chinese must recognize your Majesty as their supreme lord, by paying the taxes . . ."¹⁰²

No disciple of Vitoria could subscribe to this, unless he abandoned the master's teaching. And this happened to Salazar who had followed Vitoria, and even had confessed himself a disciple and follower of Las Casas, and had defended all his life that this manner of preaching the Gospel was more in consonance with the teaching of Mohammed than with Christ's own teaching. He had even written an unfortunately lost book,¹⁰³ on which he defended the contrary thesis to the one he exposed in the *Information*. Up to 1582 Salazar defended that the apostolic method of preaching was the most viable and the true Christian one. There was no need for soldiers to accompany the missionaries in their apostolic endeavors!

In order to complete the picture of Salazar's intellectual frame, one has to mention another deception under which, as he tells us, he had lived up to 1583. He refers to the uselessness of sending an embassy to the emperor of China in the hope of establishing commercial relations and allowing the entry of missionaries into China. Precisely, around 1579-1580 when the embassy was being prepared, and the rich gifts were being bought in Spain, Salazar found himself at the Spanish court. He urged the royal officials to hurry up with the embassy. At that time, he tells us, he was convinced that method was essential, dignified, diplomatic and Christian. If pushed through, it could be the beginning of establishing Christian relations with the Chinese rulers. However, at the moment, when they were at the very threshold of China, with one foot, as it were, already inside, he realized that even the sending of an embassy would be useless and unworthy of the Spanish King. The Chinese emperor would receive the embassy and the precious gifts as from a tributary not from an equal ruler. Perhaps the emperor might not even dare to welcome and receive the embassy! The only argument he would listen to was war.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 18, 1583, in: AGI, Patronato 25.

¹⁰³ Here is the title: *De Modo quo Rex Hispaniarum et eius locumtenentes habere teneantur in Regimine Indiarum* (Ca. 1575-1576); Cfr. ALONSO DE ZORITA, *Historia de la Nueva España*, Madrid, 1909, ed. Manuel Serrano y Sanz, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁴ Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 18, 1583, in: AGI, Patronato 25.

6. "General Memorial" of the Spanish colony about the justice and right of the conquest of China (1586)

Salazar's opinion about the armed conquest of China and the reasons and causes — in his view — that justified this conquest have so far been dealt with. In spite of the general meetings of 1583, after Sanchez' return from his first embassy in China, and of the discussions held among the ecclesiastics taking part in the synod of Manila, nothing was done in concrete towards the planning of the "affair" of China. All remained in the field of possibilities. The Spaniards waited for an answer from the Spanish King to the queries they sent him in 1583 and 1584. They hoped that the Spanish authorities of Madrid would study the problem and would decide on what steps to take.

But the "affair" of China was ever present in the minds of the Spaniards of Manila, especially of the missionaries who had come to the Philippines with the hope of entering China and had tried again and again to establish a foothold in that domain. So far their dreams remained unfulfilled.

In 1586, due to the gravity of the situation in the Philippines, all religious and lay persons alike, decided to hold general meetings to discuss in depth, and in detail, the plan and feasibility of conquering China, and the sending of an ambassador extraordinaire to the Spanish King to present this plan of the Spanish residents of the Philippines.¹⁰⁵ The extraordinary ambassador was Fr. Alonso Sanchez, the Jesuit who twice had gone to Macao and from there had entered China.¹⁰⁶ That the choice fell on him was something logical and to be expected, as he was one of the most capable and most enthusiastic men as far as the affair of China was concerned.

The points discussed in the general gathering of 1586 were varied. They touched on all aspects of the colonial and missionary activity of Spain in the Philippines and the Far East. What is more interesting is the *General Memorial* of all the states of the Philippines in its relation to the conquest of China, the best means to achieve this, and the justice of the endeavor. The *General*

¹⁰⁵ COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor* I, 332, note 1; Cfr. BRPI, VI, 232; DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits*, 106.

¹⁰⁶ Cfr. COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 336, note 1; DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits*, 82-83

Memorial was signed by the governor, the bishop, the superiors of all the religious orders, the military, the encomenderos and others. It was, in fact, the *Memorial* of the whole colony. This topic has to be delved upon, not only for the importance of the problem itself — the conquest of China —, but because even today it strikes one as something too romantic. Furthermore, the bishop of the Philippines played a great role in its preparation and discussion. He signed with his own hand the *Memorial*, thus ratifying its contents.

To begin with, and in order to set the whole problem of the conquest of China in the proper perspective, the signatories of the *Memorial* protested forcefully against the false information being sent to Spain, regarding the spiritual fruits and missionary exploits in China and the neighboring countries. According to them, these information came from adventurous missionaries who abandoned their ministries in the Philippines, pulled by a strange love for the unknown and the exotic. The work of evangelization in China, Siam, Cambodia and other nations bore no fruits. Nothing had been achieved, not because there were no efforts exerted, but rather because the rulers of those nations were totally opposed to the entry of Christian missionaries and the preaching of the Gospel. These nations were closed to Christianity. The missionaries who went there had been scourged and finally expelled. They write:

"It can be counted as a harm, and a serious difficulty, the fame spread about in New Spain, Spain and Rome through certain letters that claim that in China, Cochinchina, Cambodia and Siam and other parts there are many conversions. It is necessary for your Majesty to be freed from this deception and come to know that after all these trips, an embassy was prepared by the governor, the bishop and the commonwealth and these kingdoms up to Malacca have been visited. And yet these are now more closed than ever and the religious who went by themselves have only been insulted and ill-treated and the gentiles have remained prouder than before and ever on their guards".¹⁰⁷

If this were so, what was to be done? The only solution was that the military concourse was necessary to introduce the faith and protect it against those opposed to it. Through peaceful means

¹⁰⁷ COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 436-437; BRPI, VI, 195-196.

nothing was achieved, nor could anything be achieved. The discussions between Sepúlveda and Las Casas, that had taken place over 30 years ago, still exercised an influence on certain spirits of the Philippines. This time the spirit of Sepúlveda gained the upper hand. He had defended the justice of conquering people first, submit them to Spanish dominion, to facilitate and speed up the conversion to the faith.¹⁰⁸ Las Casas had come against this method, as he considered it anti-Christian and prejudicial to the Faith.¹⁰⁹

In the Orient, like in Spanish America, the Spaniards recognized that the apostolic method, although it was the best and most in accordance with the Gospel, could not be applied in all cases. Given this fact, they started to advocate for the use of the sword as a protection, and only as a protection, for the missionaries in the lands whose rulers opposed the entry of the missionaries and did not tolerate the peaceful preaching of the Gospel.

Which were the causes adduced by the Spaniards of the Philippines to justify the conquest of China? It cannot be thought that the Spaniards were simply moved by imperialistic motives. In the Spanish conquest of America, and in this plan of conquest of China, the triumph and instauration of the Christian faith and justice, together with the desire for wealth, went oftentimes hand in hand.

According to them, before embarking themselves into such an adventure, and indeed it was an adventure, (and a most crazy one), they wanted to be sure of the right and justification for it. As Sanchez was the one chosen as the extraordinary ambassador to the King, no one better than him could defend the right behind the endeavour. The *Memorial* reflects this when it says:

"First, as for the right and justification our entering and conquering that kingdom, the father who is going to Spain has discussed it in depth and oftentimes with the Spaniards here, and with the Portuguese of India, China and Japan, and with learned persons of good conscience and experience. He knows what all of them feel regarding this point, what he has heard and knows and feels about the right and title there is, or there can be, both from the point of view of preaching the Gospel and

¹⁰⁸ JUAN GINES DE SEPULVEDA, *op. cit.*, 85.

¹⁰⁹ *Obras Escogidas de Bartolomé de las Casas. V. Opúsculos, Cartas y Memoriales*, Ed. Juan Perez de Tudela, Madrid, B.A.E., 1958, 295 and ff.

from the injuries committed everyday against us, both here in these islands, and much more in Macao to the Portuguese: from these two sources and root stem the many reasons and titles that justify this enterprise".¹¹⁰

Two titles can be seen here used to justify the war: (1) opposition to the Gospel, and, (2) the offenses received. The first title was to be found in Vitoria,¹¹¹ although the signatories of the *Memorial* did not stop to analyze whether this opposition to the Gospel was due to the hatred of Faith, or rather against the faith of some men who, in their opinion, had fame of conquistadores and could try to conquer their own country.

Ten years before this *Memorial* was penned, when the impetuous and romantic governor don Francisco de Sande proposed to the King the conquest of China, offering himself to direct the endeavour, he proposed as just causes the oppression against the weak and abuse of children, the prohibition to preachers and traders from entry into their domains and the sins against nature committed by the Chinese.¹¹²

These reasons were present in the minds of those who sent Sanchez to Spain as extraordinary ambassador of all the states of the Philippines. They did not go into detail to explain them, leaving that to Sanchez himself, since they had discussed them many times before.

They stress now the serious obligation the king has to start this conquest. They present it to the King as something inescapable. If the King starts the conquest now, it would be the greatest opportunity ever offered in the history of mankind to bring to the knowledge of the Christian religion millions and millions of people who live in darkness and the shadow of death, possessed now by Satan and his pinions.¹¹³

They had the obligation, as Spaniards and Christians, to advise the King to do this, and even take direct part in the task. Their

¹¹⁰ COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 438, BRPI, VI, 199-200.

¹¹¹ DE INDIS, I, 3, 8-11, pp. 87-90.

¹¹² *Letter of Governor don Francisco de Sande to Philip II*, June 7, 1576, in: BRPI, IV, 58-59; Cfr. Footnote 43.

¹¹³ "Let his Majesty come to a decision in this matter for we who dwell here know that either this matter must be left, and entirely given over, and lost forever, or it must be taken up now, because the chance is slipping by, never to return...", BRPI, VI, 198.

"It makes us sad here to think that if this opportunity be let slip, all hope will be lost of the greatest conversion of souls and acquirement of riches that ever lay within the power of man...", BRPI, VI, 216.

faith in Christ, and the loyalty to their country and king, impelled them to take part in the conquest. They would pass into history as cowards and traitors to their king, and unfaithful to God, to their consciences and their religion if they let this chance slip by.¹¹⁴

If one pays close attention to everything, one sees two aims, as have already been noted: one, the expansion of the Christian faith and the other the possibility of personal enrichment. Together with this, one finds, as a moving force, the aggrandizement of the Philippines, for it would be sheer cowardice, being at the threshold of so much wealth, to feel contented with the misery and poverty of the Philippines.

Mention is made also of "eternal fame". Again, at this time, the desire to leave behind glory and fame impelled many explorers and conquistadores to achieve super human deeds. It also brought them to doom and death. The imitation of the heroic deeds of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, and other great captains of history, was operative in many Spanish soldiers and explorers. They were men of their times, of the Renaissance. The hope of "eternal fame" became a dynamic historical force and induced many people, like Magellan, Cortés, Pizarro, Almagro, Valdivia and countless others to achieve deeds still today unequalled by generations that followed them. The three G's are here, which like in a capsule, resume the Spanish aims of their conquests: Gold, Glory and God.

They stress another cause to justify the endeavor concerning China, a cause that should not strike us as strange: to curtail, stop and destroy the influence of the Moslems in China and neighboring countries. The Moslems had spread far and wide in South East and Central Asia. If nothing was done now, if no stop was put to their expansion in China, before not too many years they

¹¹⁴ "There is offered to his Majesty the greatest occasion and the grandest beginning that ever in the world was offered to a monarch. Here lies before him all that the human mind can desire or comprehend of riches and eternal fame, and likewise all that a Christian heart, desirous of the honor of God and his faith, can wish for, in the salvation and restoration of myriad of souls, created for Him, and redeemed by His blood, and now deluded and possessed by the devil, and by his blindness and wickedness", in: BRPI, VI, 197-198.

would take permanent root there. Then it would be impossible to do anything with them.¹¹⁵

They did not deny the great difficulties of such a task, but they advised the King not to shy away from it. In the East, the Japanese people, a most brave and warlike race, declared enemies of the Chinese, would happily participate in the project. The Filipino people, already united to Spain, will wholeheartedly join in this expedition.¹¹⁶

In order to bring to a successful conclusion the expedition, a powerful army of ten to twelve thousand men must be sent from Spain, especially of Basque people.¹¹⁷ This war of conquest is not to be carried out with fire and sword as against Turks or Moslems;¹¹⁸ rather it is a war against a nation of an exquisite and high civilization, higher in many ways than the Spanish civilization. Not only should they enter without fire and sword, but rather with great respect for the Chinese people, and with a force good enough to expect the least possible opposition and achieve the main aim of the expedition with the least possible loss: the protection of the missionaries against the persecution of the Chinese leaders.¹¹⁹

The leader of the enterprise must be a Christian man, faithful, loyal and mature. His officers in command must have the

¹¹⁵ "It will result in time in preventing the entry of the cursed doctrine of Mohammed, which has already infected almost all the other realms, and its establishment there, which would be an easy thing as the Chinese are so sensual and full of vices; and if it once enter the country, the conversion of souls will be extremely difficult, and the conquest of the land almost impossible, for this wicked belief renders men obstinate in its retention, and ferocious in its defense", in: BRPI, VI, 216; Also p. 199.

¹¹⁶ BRPI, VI, 200: "If possible, the expedition will set out with an addition here of five or six thousand Japanese, and as many Visayans, who are subjects of his Majesty in our islands, and are a spirited and sturdy people."

¹¹⁷ BRPI, VI, 200.

¹¹⁸ BRPI, VI, 212: "Let it be known and understood that what has heretofore been said and decreed respecting preparations for war is not meant to convey the impression that we should or could act as if we were dealing with Turks, Moors and other races who are unfriendly and the declared enemies of our belief and our Kings."

¹¹⁹ BRPI VI, 212: "The forces are merely to be sent to escort and protect the preaching of the faith and subjects of the King who sends them, and to see that they are allowed to enter the land, and may preach where they choose and consider it needful and so that those who hold the government shall not hinder the others from hearing and receiving the doctrine. They will see to it that conversion shall go on without intimidation, and without danger that through threats of punishment any of those already converted should relapse or apostatize".

same qualities,¹²⁰ otherwise the destructions experienced in the Indies, where the natives were subjected to terrible sufferings, will also take place in China. This will mean the desolation of the richest and most marvelous realm on the face of the earth.¹²¹

One can detect in their reasoning, inspite of the conviction of the inevitability of the war, an inner desire to conduct the war with a degree of humanism, without putting into practice all the titles and rights that a cold declaration of war might imply.

7. Benefits to be derived from the conquest of China

The main aims, then, of the Spaniards were the opening of the door to the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of trade relations with China. In the *Memorial* they mentioned the enormous benefits to be followed if the conquest is achieved. They can be classified into three types: spiritual, material and socio-political.

a. Spiritual benefits

The proponents of the conquest of China believed that some spiritual benefits could be obtained from the undertaking. What spiritual realities could material arms bring about? We must not lose sight that the *Memorial* was signed by the representatives of all the states in the Philippines, among them bishop Salazar, the superiors of the religious orders, the ecclesiastical cabildo and other people. Both the ecclesiastical and lay sectors were fully convinced of the spiritual benefits that could be derived if the enterprise was brought to a successful end. Perhaps one has to recall what was

¹²⁰ BRPI, VI, 213: "... The commander of the expedition should be a man of approved Christian zeal and clemency; free from all covetousness, and eager for the honor of the service of God and his King; by nature humane and full of zeal for the common good, and for the salvation of souls. The same things should be looked for in so far as possible in the other leaders, counselors, and commanders; and they should be men who would be bowed with shame and dishonor at being guilty of deeds unworthy a Christian and a noble man"

¹²¹ BRPI, VI, 211: "If the Spaniards go into China in their usual fashion, they will desolate and savage the most populous and richest country that ever was seen; and if the people of China be once driven away, it will be as poor as all the other depopulated Indias, — for its riches are only those that are produced by a numerous and industrious people, and without them it would not be rich".

said before: the XVI century was a century of faith. During this time, every missionary had in him a certain crusading spirit and every layman had a missionary yearning in his heart. If the conquest were conducted with equity and justice, and if all the royal ordinances were observed, spiritual benefits could be reaped from the conquest.

The most important, the highest benefit, would be to open China and other neighboring nations to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. At that moment, it was only in the Philippines where Christianity was taking root. If the undertaking pushed through and were achieved, the knowledge of and faith in Jesus would spread far and wide, reaching other powerful and civilized nations. Immortal glory would be afforded the Spanish King for having achieved this aim for it was through his generosity and liberality that everything was realized.¹²²

The signatories of the *Memorial* did not foresee too many difficulties to achieve the conversion of China once the nation had been conquered. Given the high qualities of the ordinary man in China, his simplicity and humility, conversion will be a matter of time. Less difficulties will be found even among women. The only thing they lacked to be superior to Spanish women was faith.¹²³

Once the conquest is achieved, churches, dioceses and monasteries would be established in China.¹²⁴ The two nations would fuse. The end result of this union and fusion between the two

¹²² BRPI, VI, 214: "The first of the many and enormous benefits of this conquest, if it be rightly ordered and carried out, is that the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ His Son, our Lord, — which has commended in these lands so remote and distant from the Church and the support of the Catholic Kings; and which is at present so narrowly constrained and little disseminated in these islands and is in danger each day of coming to an end, if thus neglected — will not only be spread over great realms, but by these means will be so well founded, and so widely extended, that it shall never be ruined or extinguished; but it shall remain and persevere in this new world with the glory and fame, before God and man, of that King, who, by his zeal, diligence, and liberality, has accomplished what no other monarch of the world has done".

¹²³ BRPI, VI, 216: "There will be no difficulty in pacifying and converting the peasants, countrymen and villagers, who are so numerous that nearly all the land is covered with villages; for they are quite simple and unsophisticated, and suffer great oppression and tyranny. With the women, who are very numerous, there will be even less difficulty in introducing the faith, because of their virtue and great reserve, which is remarked by all who know of them — to such a degree that they lack only Christianity to be much beyond us in all matters of morality".

¹²⁴ BRPI, VI, 224; 216.

racés will be outstanding. Men will be born capable to occupy any job in the civil and ecclesiastical governments. This so far has not been achieved in the Indies, because all the officials of the government, missionaries and men of responsibility, have always been brought from Spain.¹²⁵

b. *Material benefits*

It cannot be denied that a desire to become rich impelled them towards the conquest. China, in comparison with the Philippines, appeared to them as a true paradise. The Spaniards came mainly as conquistadores and not as colonists. The Philippines was poor and underdeveloped. At the back of their minds there was always the hope of wealth, the acquisition of it and its enjoyment back home in Spain. The Philippines was a place of great possibilities but, at the moment, it was mainly forest, uncultivated, too hot and humid. It was sparsely populated. The people had reached a level of primitive culture. China was the most developed and richest country in the world. This was the belief of all the Spaniards of the time. The hope of sharing in that immense wealth moved them to embrace the "affair" of China with great enthusiasm and as something very personal. The excellent civilization of the Chinese, even of farmers and labourers, would facilitate the union. The Spaniards would be able to stay together with them and establish perpetual friendship. This could not be achieved in the Philippines. The social and economic state of China would favour greatly the process of Christianization and Hispanization

¹²⁵ BRPI, VI, 221-222: "From what has been said, it follows that there will be among those natives — whether purely blooded, or partly of Spanish blood, as has been said — after the two peoples have become united and connected persons suited to become priests and religious; and to assume the government and official posts of the state, and military offices; and to undertake all the other services and enterprises of the country. With these, it will be evident how well established, peaceful, and united the country will be..."

"In the other Indias all this has been lacking, and continually have been supplied from España or from pure Spaniards, all the priests and religious; the governors and judges both superior and inferior; with all the other positions and commands, both in peace and war — and even the mechanics, and the assistants and subordinates of the above mentioned persons".

of its inhabitants. It would invite the Spaniards to go and settle down there and live with the Chinese as brothers.¹²⁶

Since China possessed great wealth, it would offer many possibilities of employment to officers, encomenderos, soldiers and immigrants from Spain.¹²⁷ Once China is conquered all the other neighboring nations would easily fall.¹²⁸

c. Political and Social Benefits

According to the *Memorial* it will be necessary to open up schools and universities in China where the Chinese will be initiated into the Spanish language, literature and culture. The Chinese language will slowly be phased out due to its great difficulty in learning it and the ease with which Spanish can be learn.¹²⁹

The occupation of China by Spain would mean the hegemony of Spaniards over the French and the British people, who tried

¹²⁶ BRPI, VI, 223-224: "In China, conditions are altogether different, since its people are, as has been said, qualified for marriage, friendship, and union and equality; and they are fitted for offices and dignities and authority, both spiritual and temporal... To all this is added the results of the industry of so many people, so apt, thrifty, industrious, and well governed... All this, together with what has already been said of the people should, God willing, be cause enough to give us an entry into those realms, so that, in short, they may become pacified, intermixed and united, hispanized and Christianized. So that one cannot mention all the great benefits arising from this, both spiritual and temporal — a new light of the faith, good modes of life, salvation for the Chinese and many souls, and glory to God; wealth, honor and eternal fame for our King; great renown, prosperity, and multiplication for the Spanish nation, and through it, for all Christianity".

¹²⁷ BRPI, VI, 219.

¹²⁸ BRPI, VI, 226: "When his Majesty is lord of China, he immediately becomes lord of all the neighboring states of this coast, including Cochinchina, Canboxa, Sian, Patan, and even as far as Malacca; and it would be very easy to subject the islands of Samatra, Javas, Burney and Maluco, etc."

¹²⁹ BRPI, VI, 215: "It will be necessary to establish immediately a large number of schools, where our writing, language and literature may be easily and quickly learned, having them abandon their own, which are extremely difficult, so much so that they cannot understand them while still children. Once rid of it not only the children but even the grown persons of all ages will learn our letters, language, and literature — as well on account of the ease of our writing, and the relief from the burden of the other, as because of their natural aptitude, the gentleness of their dispositions, and their natural adaptability to guidance, when there is a hand to guide".

to pass to Asia through the peninsula of Labrador and the Strait of Anian.¹³⁰

New commercial routes between China and Spain could be opened across Central Asia and the Middle East, thus enormously shortening the trips.¹³¹

The Chinese would be free to travel to Mexico and Peru. Since the population of China reached into the millions, many people could come to the Philippines, settle down there and become rich; in the process the Philippines will also become richer. A political and racial union might take place. This will create a precedence since this would be something that had never yet happened in any part of the Indies. Only in the Philippines.¹³²

The Spaniards of the Philippines, moved by their romantic dreams and their utter lack of sense of reality, forgot all the inner difficulties inherent to an understaking of such nature. They only saw, or wanted to see, the possible effects of the fusion of the two races. The Chinese were, in their opinion, the most intelligent, and their women were the most beautiful chaste and virtuous. The Chinese people were better than the Spaniards in all things except religion and valour. There was nothing shameful to intermarry with Chinese women. On the contrary, it would be the best way to come out with a new people, sharing the same faith and the same values.

The Spaniards, overwhelmed with a certain superiority complex over the natives of America and the Philippines, sharers of a

¹³⁰ BRPI, VI, 226. For some years now it was believed that a shorter route to the East than the one from Nueva España could be found. This was through the Strait of Anian, which touched, it was believed, the north-east part of China. From there to the Philippines it was but a very short distance. The terrible and dangerous crossing of the South Seas would be avoided.

The first man to suggest this idea to the Spanish authorities was the famous Augustinian Martin de Rada, one of the greatest cosmographers of his time. Cfr. *Copia de un papel que se halló entre los que tenía Fray Martín de Rada después de muerto y trajo el P. Ortega que va a España y le dió al P. Buiza del qual le hube yo* (1580) in: *Ciudad de Dios*, XVIII, Valladolid 1889, 382-383; Cfr. COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 582-583; ISACIO R. RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, I, 240-242.

¹³¹ BRPI, VI, 225.

¹³² BRPI, VI, 226: "The Chinese will navigate the seas to the Indias of Peru and Nueva España; and their relations with us will be more settled and confirmed. The population of that country is so great and so dense that many of the Chinese can be brought to these islands as colonists, and thus enrich themselves and this land".

much higher civilization, and proud of their own perfection and achievements, had not dared, as a group, to intermarry with the natives of the Americas and the Philippines. All would be different with China. The union would be perfect, fruitful and lasting. It would be the best means to establish authentic friendship between East and West.¹³³ There would be no more conquerors or conquered, victors or vanquished, masters or servants. All would be equal, unlike in the vast fields of America and the Philippines where the Spaniard remained isolated from the natives, a conqueror and a master, a stranger and alien to the local people.¹³⁴ In China all the burdens and offices of public life could be carried out by the Chinese themselves, without any help from the Spaniards. The fusion would be perfect.

8. *Negative answer of Philip II to the conquest of China*

In reading the *Memorial* we see a certain anxiety and a sense of urgency in the Spaniards of the Philippines. This was the last and final chance to attempt this undertaking.

Time was fast passing away. The wheels of fortune would not return a second time. If the chance were left for the future, that chance would not pass by any more. The greatest possibility

¹³³ BRPI, VI, 220: "Since the people are so clever and intelligent, with agreeable fair complexions and well-formed bodies, and are so respectable and wealthy, and have nothing of the Indian in their nature, they have the advantage of us in everything except salvation by faith, and courage. And since the women are exceedingly virtuous, modest, and reserved, and are very faithful wives, very humble and submissive to their husbands; and as they are even more graceful, beautiful and discreet than are the women of Spain... it will be a very simple and ordinary proceeding, and very creditable and honorable, for them to marry... the Spanish captains, merchants, and men of all classes. These will become noble with their wives, and will be settled and established in China. Thus the two peoples will mingle, and they will propagate and multiply the race and all will be in short, united and fraternal and Christian".

¹³⁴ BRPI, VI, 219; 220 "This is something which has never occurred or been accomplished in any part of the Indies which has been discovered and settled since those people were so barbarous and brutal, so ugly, vile, and poor, that have seldom formed unions in the bonds of marriage... On this account, there has been among these nations neither friendship, unity, nor safety; on the side of the natives, neither confidence, nor increase in numbers, nor development, nor sincerity, and for the Spaniards, neither fixed residence nor industry... Nothing of this sort will occur in China, nor will there be room for these disorders, on account of the opportunity which such marriages will furnish for friendship, and for familiar intercourse as between equals...".

of conversion of souls and acquisition of wealth would fade away for ever.¹³⁵ The King had better come to a final decision.¹³⁶ Those who signed the *Memorial* were fully convinced of the ease of achieving the affair of China. A cursory reading of it makes one realize that the signatories of the *Memorial* never doubted that the King and Spanish officials of the Council of Indies would approve their plan. One observes a collective fever of conquest, so universal that not one single voice was raised against the under-taking which, seen by us today, sounds crazy and preposterous. They autosuggested themselves into believing that the affair would be like discovering a richer, more exotic and fabulous world than the one known in the Indies. The conquest, Christianization and Hispanization of China would be the unfading crown of glory of the Spanish nation for all historical ages.¹³⁷

We people of the XX century, so far in time from these events and from the people who shaped them, find it hard to believe that a handful of Spaniards, laymen and religious alike, could be overcome by these gross imperialistic dreams. The conquest was justified, in their view because China closed the door to Christianity and to commerce. The missionaries of the Philippines, like the missionaries of America, were convinced that the best way to bring to China the Christian faith would be by going there as the apostles had done in early Christian times: alone, unaided by soldiers, without the concourse of swords, trusting in God and in the power of His Word. And yet the times and the people of the

¹³⁵ BRPI, VI, 216-217: "And it makes us sad here to think of his opportunity be left slip, all hope will be lost of the greatest conversion of souls and acquirement of riches that ever lay within the power of man..."

¹³⁶ BRPI, VI, 198: "Let his Majesty come to a decision in this matter, for we who dwell here know that either this matter must be left, and entirely given over, and lost forever, or it must be taken up now, because the chance is slipping by, never to return. Thus, a few years ago, it might have been accomplished with no labor, cost, or loss of life; today it cannot be done without some loss, and in a short time it will be impossible to do it at any cost".

¹³⁷ BRPI, VI, 198: "If we, who are here, and see and hear these things, should neglect for any consideration whatsoever either to escape the labor, anxiety, danger, and cost or for any other reason — to advise his Majesty of this and to persuade him to undertake so grand a work, we would fulfil neither our duty to heaven, which we owe to God and to the souls of our kinsmen; nor the faith and loyalty, which in such a juncture we owe to our king, our religion, and our fatherland. Surely, we should all be known as vile-spirited cowards, and men of little valor since, standing on the threshold that bounds so much good, we are content with the little we now possess; and by dint of idling and amusing ourselves with the little that we have here, we fail to look or reach for an object so important for the world, for God, for our king, for ourselves, and above all for the people of this country".

New World and Asia were very different. The world of the apostles, the Judeo-Greco-Roman world was very distinct from the world of the Americas and Asia. The Chinese did not even want to give a hearing to the Gospel. And so the so called "apostolic" method, the most evangelical, no doubt, could not be applied in China. And this was precisely the bone of contention and the reason that divided the minds of missionaries and scholars. The problem had been discussed at length and in depth during the first half of the XVI century.

Sanchez, the extraordinary ambassador of the whole colony, left the Philippines for Spain in 1586. He brought with him the *Memorial* of all the states, and a voluminous correspondence of the different officials of the Philippines. Although he wrote many treatises about different points connected with the missions and missionary methodology, he did not write any special treatise about the justification of the conquest of China. The ideas and main points of the *Memorial* can, however, be attributed to him.

Since the attempt at conquest of China, and the steps the Spaniards took to justify the endeavor in their eyes and in the eyes of the Spanish King, and the feasibility of the "affair" have been explained, what should be clarified now is whether the titles they presented were accepted by all their contemporaries. The whole affair has to be judged from the stand-point of their contemporaries. One must try to see if during the XVI century, during the time the "affair" of China was being discussed, theologians and jurists criticized the attempt and found it theologically and juridically wanting. And indeed there were opponents to the plan.

Sanchez found serious opposition in Mexico. And he found this opposition from unexpected quarters, precisely from a member of his own order: Fr. José de Acosta, a missionary of long residence in America. Acosta denied all validity to Sanchez' arguments, and thus to the whole stand taken by the Spanish residents of the Philippines, both civil and ecclesiastical. The "affair" of China, in his opinion, could have no justification whatsoever.

As he understood the problem, four causes were presented by the defenders of the undertaking, namely: 1) Exclusion from China of foreigners and strangers, whether missionaries or traders. It

went against international law. Thus, it was a *casus belli*. 2) The many abuses and injuries committed against the Spanish and Portuguese, especially the latter. These abuses constituted a clear *casus belli*. 3) The Chinese opposed the preaching of the Gospel, thus hindering Christ's command: "Go and preach to all people". The denial of the entry of missionaries was in opposition to this injunction of Christ. They could be forced to let the missionaries preach. It was also a *casus belli*. 4) The Chinese rulers went beyond this by persecuting those who had become Christians. To defend and insure them, it was necessary to intervene by military force. It was a *casus belli*.

Some of those reasons, Acosta says, might be true. But had the Spaniards examined the motives behind the suspicion of the Chinese against the Portuguese and the Spaniards? The Chinese, in his view, had reasons to feel very suspicious of the Spaniards. Their fame as warlike people and conquistadores had come to the east. It had been proven by their deeds in Mexico, Peru and other parts of America during the last one hundred years.¹³⁸

The injuries received by the Portuguese and Spaniards at the hands of the Chinese were true, but these could not be exaggerated. They were almost insignificant. To declare war for that motive was beyond all proportion. It was not a *casus belli*.

Acosta explained the other two points with clarity and precision. Who were obliged to listen to the preaching of the Gospel: the individuals or the rulers of China? Who were the ones opposing the preaching of the Gospel: the pagan Chinese or the imperial authorities? Even conceding that the Chinese oppose the preaching of the Gospel, have the Spaniards intimated to them the freedom of preaching? Have they tried to do anything possible to induce the Chinese authorities to allow the necessary freedom for the preaching of the Gospel?

¹³⁸ "... for the Chinese have reason to fear the Spaniards, in particular as being a warlike nation and ambitious of rule; and because of the public record of the past ninety years with which the whole world is familiar, namely: that they have eventually acquired dominion over those nations where they first gained admittance under the guise of friendly intercourse and commerce. And if not, let me ask those who are so much in favour of the conquest of China if their purpose is any other than to make themselves masters of it, of its greatness and its wealth", *Parecer sobre la guerra de China*, México, March 15, 1587 in: P. TACCHI-VENTURI, S.J., *Opere Storiche del P. Matteo Ricci* (2 vols.), Macerata, 1911-1913, II, 450-455. Cfr. DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits*, 86.

The fourth reason was a very complex one. If it were absolutely true that the Chinese authorities persecuted the Christians, it would be just to intervene. But there was a need to clarify some points before an actual declaration of war. For one thing, were the Christians persecuted in *odium fidei*, that is as Christians? Second, it was necessary to consider whether a greater evil will follow from the declaration of war. Third, had they exhausted all other means to prevent the war? Fourth, that military intervention would have to aim at protecting the missionaries, at removing the obstacles to the preaching of the Faith. A war of fire and sword was unthinkable. It was an enormous injustice.¹³⁹

According to Acosta, in the concrete case of China, these conditions were not met. Thus, the attempt at conquest could not be justified in any manner. And he ends his reasoned study with these words:

"Someone may object that according to this view the Spaniards will not be able to make war at all on any pagan people, for one or other of the difficulties here proposed will always be present. My answer is that it is quite correct if the pagans referred to are not Moors or Turks, or any of that sort, but those that have recently come to the knowledge of Europeans. I say that they have no right to make war on these for the sake of spreading the Gospel, for it is not surprising that what holy Church has not done in fifteen hundred years, and which when attempted has always resulted in such grievous sins against God, and widespread harm to the neighbor, should seem to us objectionable.

"It will also be argued that if New Spain and Peru had not been acquired by conquest the faith would never have found in them a permanent lodgment; and that the same will be true of China unless some Christian King were to take possession of it and rule it. My answer is that this is a distinct possibility. I will go further and say that this is highly probable and to be expected. But what God, who can draw good and evil, suffers us to do is one thing, what He ordains and wants us deliberately to seek and procure is another. Unless some radical change takes place in my general attitude, I cannot pronounce such a war lawful, nor will I for anything in the

¹³⁹ Cfr. DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits*, 85-86.

world take upon my conscience the numberless evils that will follow upon it".¹⁴⁰

The plan to conquer China was too fantastic even for Sanchez' contemporaries. It was a mere utopia, a fiction impossible to realize and difficult to justify theologically and juridically. It was surely impossible to be realized at the moment when Sanchez was pleading its justification. First of all, Philip II did not take it too seriously. On top of that, the King had just received the shattering news of the defeat of the *Armada Invencible*, the Invincible Armada sent against England and Queen Elizabeth I.¹⁴¹ At that very juncture not even the discussion of the plan could be attempted. The plan was preposterous and absurd.

In order to understand the plan in all its true historical dimension it should be said once more, that the situation of the Philippines must be taken into consideration. It was a difficult moment. The Spaniards felt that the Philippines was poor and underdeveloped. China could open the way for massive conversions in the east. Even Francis Xavier had shared these ideas. Once this nation, the richest and most civilized, received the Faith of Christ, all other nations would follow suit. Also it must be remembered that Sepulveda, dead for many years, had some disciples in the Philippines. All these, coupled with the real opposition of the Chinese to the entry of foreigners, and the establishment of commercial and religious relations, impelled the Spaniards to think of an armed conquest of China.

9. Salazar changes his opinion. Return to his former theological and juridical view

We have studied at length the "affair" of China and the role played by Salazar. It was concluded that Salazar embraced this plan entirely, as have been seen from a detailed study of the documents. Sanchez' trips to China, and his strong and dynamic personality, convinced the whole Spanish colony of Manila of his train of ideas. It has also been shown that Salazar based the justification of the conquest of China from the Chinese opposition

¹⁴⁰ *Parecer sobre la guerra de China*, as quoted by DE LA COSTA, *The Jesuits*, 86-87. Cfr. LEON LOPETEGUI, S.J., *El P. José de Acosta y las misiones*, Madrid, 1942, p. 467.

¹⁴¹ COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor I*, 407.

to the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of peaceful trade relations. These two were just titles for war for men like his master Vitoria. But Salazar went beyond this on two counts: first, that even if the Chinese removed the obstacles, the undertaking was justified; and two, he did not truly study whether in fact the Chinese opposed the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of commercial relations, or whether it was a pure invention of the Portuguese and the Spaniards.

The spirit of Vitoria and Las Casas became dormant. Momentarily, he embraced strange ideas, strange and foreign to his juridical and theological formation, strange, above all, to a methodology of mission and way of life which he experienced in Mexico and Spain. This Dominican methodology was clearly opposed to the use of any military means for the sake of the Gospel. But he lived alone in the Philippines, far from Salamanca and the guiding light of his fellow Dominicans. These will not be long in coming. As soon as they came in 1587 they opened his eyes to see, once more, the total truth. Salazar's attitude between 1583 to 1587 is one of incertitude. It seems to be no more than a waiting time, a short parenthesis in his long life. It did not and could not last too long.

a. *Salazar's deception about the justice of the conquest of China*

In 1590, in a letter¹⁴² addressed to the King, Salazar recanted formally his ideas regarding the justice of the conquest of China. For years he had felt doubtful about his own stand. In a letter¹⁴³ of his, again addressed to the King in 1584, he dealt squarely with the problem of China. He confided to the King, just one year after the *Information* sent to him in 1583, that the doors of China were not as closed as people seemed to say. After re-

¹⁴² *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila June 24, 1590, in: AGI, Filipinas 74. Cfr. BRPI, VII, 212-214.

¹⁴³ "In the ship that left this port last year, around St. John's day, I wrote your Majesty at length about everything that had happened up to then. Since the affairs were varied, I wrote each thing in a different letter. Among them there was one regarding China. Together with that, I sent your Majesty an information about the hindrance put by the governors of that kingdom to the preaching of the Gospel, on which I based my opinion stated in the letter..." *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, April 8, 1584, in: AGI, Filipinas 74.

minding him of what he had written the year before, in 1583, about the justice of the conquest, based on the opposition to the preaching of the Gospel, he added:

"Since the things of that kingdom have been so hidden from us, due to the little communication between them and us, we have always been groping in the darkness, without ever being able to know with certitude, what happens among them. But our Good Lord, who in his divine designs has surely determined the time when that blind kingdom will come to see the light of the Gospel, seems to be opening the way for this to be done...

"Your Majesty knows already that the Portuguese came to China many years ago, and by agreements reached with the Chinese, they settled down in the city of Macao. When they came to know of the arrival of the Spaniards to these islands, immediately they became apprehensive that we would go to China and take away the trade they have in that kingdom, or at least, due to the quarrels and jealousies common between Spaniards and Portuguese, the latter resented the possibility of friendship between Spaniards and Chinese, pretending that China belonged to the demarcation of Portugal".

"To achieve this, they used very unchristian means: they spread the news among the Chinese that the Spaniards were robbers and pirates who went about robbing. They wanted to go to China with the only purpose of sacking cities. Those who went by themselves, did so to simulate, for they were spies of those already living in the Philippines. They made us understand that in China there was a law which said that any foreigner coming to that kingdom, without the license of the governor of the province would be put to death or be made a slave of the King. By this deception they kept us all scared".

"I would not dare to write this, if I were not sure to state it without scruples, for I have seen these two things realized since I came here, for some religious who went from these islands to China escaped with difficulty, because the Chinese took them spies of those of Luzon, and were told that we all were robbers. The citizens of Macao wrote me last year to dissuade people residing here from going to China, because all of them would be killed. This similar deception, which we and the Chinese have undergone, caused by the Portuguese or by other means,

has been destroyed by our Lord, bringing this ship in a storm to China where at the beginning, they were ill-treated, since they thought they were pirates, but seeing that the ship was without arms, and full of merchandise, they came to realize that they were traders and not pirates. Thus, they helped them to unload the cloth in order to repair the ship and had it loaded again. They let them go to Macao in peace. Some of those who went by land to Canton tell me that they were very well treated along the way, and once they arrived there, they were better treated by the Chinese than by the Portuguese, and with greater respect. They were told that as long as they paid to the King the prescribed taxes, they would rejoice over it.

"This is what has come into the open through the emergency arrival of that ship to China. It is clear that it is not true that the Chinese kill all those who go to their country without permission, and that there is no law prohibiting the entry into that domain. Were they to loose the bad opinion they have about us, they would rejoice over our trade with them"¹⁴⁴.

Had Salazar investigated at greater depth this problem of the opposition of the Chinese to the preaching of the Gospel this very year of 1584, he would have discovered some of the reasons for the Chinese opposition to the entry of foreigners into their kingdom. In this letter, which was quoted at length, he started to discover the deception under which he had lived. All this, due to the false reports given them by the Portuguese. This was a dirty trick played on them by the Portuguese. Love for truth, and the possibility of entering China, compelled him to write to the King. He gives the impression that his conscience was pricking him for what he had written just the year before, in 1583. Thus he continues:

"In the letter I wrote your Majesty regarding the affair of China, I say that the rulers have rigorously ordered that no foreigner may enter their kingdom, and due to this, the door has been closed to the preaching of the Gospel. Based on this, I said that war could be waged on them. I thought I was obliged to notify your Majesty about the new things we have come to know, less if I keep silent some evil may come to those who do not deserve it. I also do it for your Majesty to see that if,

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

at times, I write something else, I would be most ready to amend where I erred"¹⁴⁵

This sincerity of Salazar, showing great honesty and love for truth, is worthy of note. It is a pity that he was not able to discover, at that moment, the whole truth about the justification of the conquest of China. Perhaps he would never have signed the *Memorial* of 1586. Perhaps the *Memorial* would never have been written, for he had based the right of conquest on the opposition of the Chinese to the preaching of the Gospel.

He was able to see in this letter of 1584 that there was no opposition, as the Portuguese had told him. But he left the question at that, without going deeper into it. At the end of the letter, as if what he had written at the beginning of it, were only a dream and an illusion of his mind, he writes:

"If the hindrance and impediment put by the rulers to the preaching of the Gospel prove to be true, as far as we have seen up to now, in such a case your Majesty, to whom God and His Church have assigned and charged with the conversion of so many millions as there are in that kingdom, will see what must be done to fulfill that obligation. If things were in conformity with the information sent to your Majesty, I say once again, that not only can your Majesty enter China with armed hands, and open with arms the door through which the Gospel may enter, but if the affairs of Spain will permit, your Majesty is obliged to do so . . ."¹⁴⁶

In the letter of 1590, where he stated his solemn recantation, so to speak, he confesses himself guilty of the terrible deception under which he had lived for some years in relation to the "affair" of China. Thus he writes again:

"To discharge my conscience, and not die with this scruple, it is convenient for me to reject the deception I lived under for some time. With that I wrote your Majesty what I felt then, for, although according to the information I had, I wrote the truth, but later I came to

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*

know that it happened otherwise. And although as soon as I came to see the deception, I wrote your Majesty, it was not with the strength it ought to have been done, for I was not yet totally free from deception. Now that I am totally free from deception, I would take as a most serious problem if I were to do nothing to destroy the deception. And since I wrote your Majesty what I felt when I was deceived, based on that deception, now that I am free from deception, I write also what I feel."¹⁴⁷

Salazar, being freed from the big deception, returned to his original position. The change was final and definitive. It was a return to what was and had always been connatural to him. The acceptance of the conquest of China through military means -foreign to his theological background- was no more than an external force. It was rejected as soon as he came to realize the deception.

b. *The Lascasian man is reborn in Salazar*

Some relevant questions could be asked: what influenced him most in this final change? If Sanchez had exercised a great influence on him before, the Dominicans, his fellow religious and akin to his theological background, exercised an even greater one. This was normal. Many of the Dominicans who arrived in 1587 came from Salamanca, the very university and monastery where Salazar had studied and lived. The teaching of the master Vitoria was operative in them. In them he found men who shared with him the same theological and juridical education, and the same hopes and expectations for a peaceful evangelization of the nations of the East. These were men in whom he could confide, and from whom he could draw strength and advise, men who would be ready to take upon their shoulders any apostolic endeavor in his diocese and surrounding nations of the unknown East.

It is not difficult to see the spirit and influence of the Dominicans in the subsequent conduct and life of Salazar. In order

¹⁴⁷ Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 24, 1590, in: AGI, Filipinas 74. BRPI, VII, 212-213.

to see the change of attitude and approach of Salazar, it would be all right to study this influence of the Dominicans. Two of them especially exercised a great pull. Governor Gomez Perez Dasmariñas is a witness. In a letter to Philip II of 1591 it is written:

"Two friar students of his order, one called Diego de Soria, prior and very young, and the other called Fr. Juan Cobo, not so young, these two bring the bishop wherever they want. When the bishop was preaching, he read his bulls and some letters, and said he was a bishop through the pope and not through your Majesty, and other things along this line, keeping us on this for more than two hours. In other sermons he and Fr. Diego de Soria, who is a very restless student, and Fr. Juan Cobo say that your Majesty has nothing to do here and could not take tributes, because God had not entered Jerusalem demanding, but rather giving tribute. This is the number to be observed with the Gospel."¹⁴⁸

This influence of the Dominicans over Salazar is also emphasized by Father Sanchez when the latter, already in Spain and Rome, broke off with Salazar. In Sanchez' *Respuesta*, we read:

"It is true we used to notice that due to his goodness and zeal, sometimes one is ready to believe sooner than it is fitting and be carried away by the one who comes last. Thus, I suspect that as some men of his own order arrived after my departure, and with letters of some other people from Spain, not very solid and not very fond of our order, with some other things decided by the Council of Indies, they must have achieved that effect there and here, about which he is writing now..."¹⁴⁹

Strictly speaking, Salazar had no need of the support of the Dominicans to reach that opinion. Deep in his mind, he had never entirely embraced that method of armed conquest. When

¹⁴⁸ Letter of Governor Gomez Perez Dasmariñas to Philip II, Manila, (1591) in: COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 616-617.

¹⁴⁹ *Respuesta del P. Alonso Sanchez, S.J., a los puntos de una que el obispo de las Filipinas escribe a su Magestad*, [No date] In: *Archivo de la Provincia del N. Señora del Rosario* (APSR), Tomo 3, Dec. 2. Another copy in: *Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomas* (AUST), Mss. L, 188, 96-101.

he did so, as can be seen in some of his letters, it was because of his conviction that the opposition of the rulers of China to the preaching of the Gospel was enough reason for embracing such method. While Sanchez was in the Philippines, the fever of conquest remained high. As soon as he left for Spain, those utopic dreams passed away. Salazar came to see the problem in its logical and proper perspective. No doubt, the Dominicans gave him a hand to do so, but as can be seen later on, some of the letters of Salazar reveal now more than ever his fiery spirit, his Lascasian leaning, and the conviction that the only, exclusive, and unique method was the apostolic one, the one of the ancient church, not the one advocated by Sanchez and some supporters.

In the *Memorial* of 1586 the abandonment of the ministries of the Philippines was strictly forbidden. The signatories of the *Memorial*, and more especially Salazar, complained to the King against this crazy yearning to jump into China. As soon as the Dominicans arrived, with the main intent of proceeding to China -thus taking the Philippines also as a waiting station and a jumping-pad- Salazar gave them the go signal. Two Dominicans, knowledgeable in the Chinese language and culture, Fr. Miguel de Benavides, and Fr. Juan Castro, left the Philippines for China in 1589. Benavides, as far as can be gathered from contemporary testimonies, had come to learn pretty well the Chinese language. The two Dominicans gained nothing positive from the visit to China. Both of them were expelled soon after.

As soon as they arrived in Manila, back from China, they related to Salazar the events of their journey. Salazar became convinced that the missionaries could enter China without any danger to their lives. It would simply be a question of time before the Chinese will be convinced that the opinion they had about the Spaniards was wrong. It was a mere calumny from the part of the Portuguese. Once the Chinese realize about the good intention of the missionaries, they would welcome them into their kingdom. The doors of China would once and for all be opened, and they would be opened peacefully.

Let Salazar be the one to tell us the feelings at the moment:

"While I am writing this letter, two Franciscans who are here told me how, as soon as they reached China, they

were apprehended and handcuffed and were taken to the mandarin. When he came to know who they were, he ordered them to be freed, with all their expenses paid until their return here. And I came to convince myself entirely of the good treatment by the account I had of the good reception given to a ship that went to the province of Chincheo, sent by the Viceroy of Mexico to Macao... This ship, because of contrary winds, went to Chincheo, where all the people of the ship were well received, they came to know that they had gone there to trade. They encouraged them not to go ahead, that right then and there they would get goods for the ship... There were three Dominicans religious in the ship who were well and lovingly received by the mandarin of the province. He took them to the city and gave them shelter in his house and a room where they would celebrate the mass, which they did celebrate with so much peace and security as if they were in court. After having kept them for eight days; he let them go to their ship, and with it to Macao. I had this report from the very religious who found themselves there. At the moment, I have a person at home who came from Mexico in that ship, who witnessed all and has told me everything."¹⁵⁰

Salazar's conclusion from all this was the freedom with which the missionaries and Spaniards could enter China. So great was the freedom, according to him, that the religious of St. Dominic were allowed to celebrate the mass with as much freedom as if they had been in the Spanish royal court of Madrid.

He forgets, however, something very important. Just one week after their arrival, they were returned to Macao, without getting any permission to stay in China. He also forgot how Sanchez, during his first embassy of 1582, went to China and was welcomed by the Chinese. Feasts, banquets and other joyous festivities were held, but of the freedom to preach the Gospel and permission to stay behind nothing was granted. The Chinese would have nothing of it. Sanchez was well treated, like the three Dominican friars, but none of them was given permission to stay in China and start the preaching of the Gospel. In both cases, as far as can be gathered, they were welcomed, but in relation

¹⁵⁰ *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II, Manila, June 24, 1590, in: AGI, Filipinas 74. Cfr. BRPI, VII, 215.*

to the main aim that brought them there, the starting of the preaching of the Christian Faith, nothing truly happened.

Salazar now, totally immersed in his Lascasian ideas, rediscovered by him at the arrival of the Dominicans, only noticed the good treatment received by the three Dominicans. What has changed is his *approach*, not the reality. Once more, Salazar was carried away by his zeal. He does not analyze in depth the reality of China. Perhaps he hit the nail on the head when he wrote to the King:

"I also do it [write again] for your Majesty to know that, if at times, I write something, and I would come to know something else later on, I would not let it pass without amending whatever might be wrong..."¹⁵¹

He writes in another letter:

"Although I wrote your Majesty as soon as I came to realize I was deceived, but I did not do it with the firmness demanded, for I was not totally free from deception. Now that I am entirely free, I would have it as something most grave not to try to undo the deception. And since I wrote your Majesty what I felt when I was deceived, based on that deception, now I again write what I feel, because I am totally free from deception."¹⁵²

As a summary, the reasons that compelled Salazar to change his opinion can be reduced to three:

1. China was not as inaccessible to foreigners and missionaries as people have said.

2. The assumed opposition of the Chinese to the preaching of the Gospel and commercial trade was a pure invention of the Portuguese, fearful and apprehensive of the arrival of the Spaniards to the East and the possible loss of their profitable trade with China.

3. Experience taught that the entry into China was becoming easier, as the years went by.

The first was proven by Salazar thus:

¹⁵¹ *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, April 8, 1584, in: AGI, Filipinas 74.

¹⁵² *Letter of Domingo de Salazar to Philip II*, Manila, June 24, 1590 in: AGI, Filipinas 74. BRPI, VII, 212.

"I started to be free from deception and understand that the kingdom of China was not so inaccessible as the Portuguese said. I have said all this to destroy that evil opinion that people have of the rulers of China, for although it is true that they live with suspicion and caution for, as prudent people, they try to have their commonwealth defended, so that foreign nations will not be able to offend and perturb her, yet, without any doubt, what has been said about them is false testimony raised against them; for up to now, we do not know of any person killed by them or put into prison for having entered into their kingdom."¹⁵³

Salazar destroyed the false inventions of the Portuguese through the following:

"If any evil treatment has been done to Spaniards who have gone to that kingdom, it is due to the evil fame and name that the Portuguese have spread among them about us, telling them to beware of the Spaniards, for they are a people who go about stealing and robbing foreign kingdoms. And as they have become masters of New Spain, Peru and of the Philippines, they will try to become also masters of China. And since the people of this kingdom are the most cautious people to be found in the world, they have easily believed what the Portuguese have said about us; due to this they ill-treated the Spaniards going there...".

"From everything said above, it can be inferred that everything said about the kingdom of China, and of its rulers, as regards their not allowing strangers to enter there, was an invention and a lie perpetrated by the Portuguese, for their own peculiar interest, thinking that their trade with the Chinese would cease if the Spaniards would come to China, for to this we who are here have attributed their lies."¹⁵⁴

To support his third reason Salazar had nothing else to do but to mention the number of times the missionaries and traders had gone to China and had been welcomed there, if not with affection at least with deference and respect. The Chinese themselves came to realize that the Spaniards were not robbers and

¹⁵³ *Ibidem.* Cfr. BRPI, VII, 216-217.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibidem.* Cfr. BRPI, VII, 216-217.

pirates, as the Portuguese said, but men searching for commerce and trade and eager to establish commercial and religious contact with them. Thus he says:

"But since they have seen the contrary from the Chinese or Sangleys, for they are the same, who go from here, and speak about the respect with which they are treated and the freedom they enjoy among us, they have become more trustworthy and are not scared when they see us there, as we can gather from the two ships that were forced to go to that coast."¹⁵⁵

10. *Final Conclusion*

All that has been written up to now delineate the role played by Salazar in the so-called "affair" of China. Indeed, it was a very romantic and utopic plan that never went beyond the minds of the Spaniards of the Philippines. From 1583 to 1587 Salazar supported the plan. After that, he came to see the problem in all its depth, extension and complexity.

Las Casas, who had influenced him in his ideology and missionary methodology, rarely, if ever, changed his opinion when confronted with fundamental problems regarding the conquest and evangelization of the Indies. Salazar changed once, coming back again to what had always been his theological and juridical approach. Historical forces, and concrete demands in the Philippines in the early 1580's, impelled him to do so. Only to geniuses or fanatics is given the virtue to remain steadfast in their views and teachings throughout their entire lives, without being influenced by historical situations that may change the approach to the problem. Only the genius, because he is genius, can see the universal validity of his principle. This principle becomes the guide and horizon of his entire life.

It was not given to Salazar to remain steadfast in so vital a question as the justification of the conquest of China at the end of the XVI century. Salazar is a man of his time, with his theo-

¹⁵⁵ *Ibidem.* Cfr. BRPI, VII, 217.

logical and juridical ideas, imbibed during his formative years in Salamanca. He lived and defended them, but, as Alonso de Zorita had said of him, he maintained an ideological independence from Las Casas and Vitoria. And as he himself said in some of the letters addressed to the King, in order to judge and decide about the problems of the Indies, one needs to know them and must have also studied the concrete historical situation of the place.¹⁵⁶

Let the words of Salazar be the ones to bring this study of the so-called "affair" of China to a close:

"I say that if, at sometime, I was of the opinion that war could be waged against China, due to the false reports I had about the impediment and hindrance that the governors of that kingdom put to the preaching of the Gospel, not allowing the entry to those who wanted to preach it, now that I know the truth, I say that one of the most serious sins committed against God, and the greatest impediment and obstacle against the Gospel, would be to go to China with armed hand, or with violence, for up to now no cause, reason or right has been found, for they have not been told, and we have not made them understand, what we truly pretend, but simply they take us as people who try only to usurp foreign kingdoms. And having this opinion, it is good to guard themselves against us. In order to destroy the wrong opinion they have about us, it should not be by going there with big navies and strong armies. From this, no other effect can be followed but to disturb and scandalize the biggest and best kingdom on earth. By going into that kingdom in the manner God commands and wishes, and at the time His Majesty has ordered, (something men cannot know), we shall have one of the greatest conversions we have seen from the time of the primitive church to today."

"This, the demon tries to hinder, convincing people that, if it is not through arms, no other way can be found to enter into China.

"I know as something very certain that up to now no better people have been found than the Chinese in order to receive the Gospel, nor any other people of whom a greater fruit can be harvested if we go there to

¹⁵⁶ As he would oftentimes say, one needs to have *ciencia y conciencia del hecho y del derecho* of the problems of the Indies.

preach the Gospel as our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to do. If anyone, even an angel from heaven, were to have another opinion, let your Majesty have him as an instrument of the devil, and that with zeal, not in accordance with wisdom, wants to persuade that the Gospel of Christ must be preached like the Koran of Mohammed, with violence and force of arms. Let God remove this from the thought of all Christian princes, and of all those who have an honest understanding of the law of God and the evangelical truth. I am very sure that if this truth is known by your Majesty, you will allow only those things that will be in accordance with God's will."¹⁵⁷

With this letter, Salazar rejected totally and entirely the doctrine Sanchez was proposing back in Spain. Salazar condemned any type of military protection at the service of the Gospel.

What has been attempted here is to present objectively the plan of the Spaniards of the Philippines regarding the conquest of China at the end of the XVI century. As basis for this study, Salazar's own letters and those of his contemporaries were taken. It is not going to be judged now whether the plan would have positive or negative results, had it pushed through. It was defined as crazy and utopic, not only because, even as a plan, it went beyond anything ever planned by Spain, but also because, given the historical situation of the Philippines and Spain, it could have never been put into practice. There was nothing to favour the practical realization of such a plan. It cannot be denied that the plan embraced by Salazar at the end, the *naked* preaching of the Gospel, copied from Las Casas, was the most noble, apostolic, Christian and evangelical. It was the ideal he had always defended except that small parenthesis (for a parenthesis it was) during which the Jesuit Sanchez was in the Philippines. Yet, during his time, the second half of the XVI century, many Spaniards, missionaries and civil servants, did not find any faster and better way of implanting the Christian faith in foreign nations which opposed the preaching of the Gospel than to conquest them militarily, or at least give military protection to the missionaries in those countries where the preaching was proscribed. In the view of many of them, good, generous and zealous

¹⁵⁷ *Ibidem*. Cfr. BRPI, VII, 218-220.

missionaries, the only means to open the way to the preaching of the Gospel was by military concourse.

It is also good to clarify that when those missionaries proposed a military conquest, they did not think of a war by fire and sword. Rather, they thought of a kind of pre-emptive war, one that would remove the obstacles to the preaching and protect the missionaries against any untoward incident. The war would have to be directed by Christian leaders, whose only task would be to open the door and give protection to the missionaries. If this was not done, the Gospel of Christ would not be preached to people.

Sanchez met with a terrible opposition in Mexico and Spain, an opposition that came from within and from outside his own order. But a great deal of this opposition was due not so much because people thought his teachings were wrong, but rather because those military plans, and their proposal at the Spanish court, did seem unbecoming if presented by a religious.

When Salazar signed the *Memorial* and sent Sanchez as his own representative to the King and the pope, to recommend the conquest of China, he did not think in a war by fire and sword, but rather more a kind of a military protectorate.

Salazar received news from the Dominican Juan Volante, and from the Franciscan Jeronimo de Burgos, residents of Madrid, who were trying to obtain from Philip II large missions for China, that Sanchez opposed the sending of this mission as something useless. To support this, he said that Salazar, the bishop of the Philippines, held the same view. This was not true. When Salazar received this news he protested energetically. Salazar, then, disassociated himself totally and entirely from Sanchez. He even rejected that military protectorate. All kinds of military support must be condemned. He even went beyond Vitoria, and embraced the method of Las Casas: a purely apostolic and evangelical method. The Gospel must be preached as the Lord Jesus had commanded, as St. Paul and the Apostles did, and as the primitive Church always practiced.

Sanchez defended himself by saying that his doctrine had been taken from the great Spanish teachers, especially Vitoria.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ *Respuesta, Ibidem*

Furthermore, in his own life-time not even one single case could be found where the Gospel of Jesus was maintained without the support of arms.¹⁵⁹

Thus, the discussion of the "affair" of China came to an end. When Salazar left the Philippines for Spain in 1591, due to the many problems affecting the islands, he had other points in mind. They were related to the preaching of the Gospel and the incorporation of the natives of the Philippines into the fold of the Church. The "affair" of China had faded away with the departure of Sanchez for Spain in 1586. Of the many burning problems discussed by Salazar in Madrid in the presence of the King, and Council of Indies, during 1593-1594, the "affair" of China was never one of them. It had been "buried", with the many papers dealing with it, in the archives of history.

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¹⁵⁹ COLIN-PASTELLS, *Labor*, I, 397-398.