

## Philippiniana Records

### LETTER OF FRAY DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P., TO THE INQUISITOR GENERAL OF MEXICO, DON PEDRO MOYA DE CONTRERAS

Mexico, No Date<sup>1</sup>, [1572]

#### *Introduction*

The Inquisition was established in Mexico in 1571. Don Pedro Moya de Contreras<sup>2</sup> was its first Inquisitor General. Domingo de Salazar was chosen *calificador* of the Holy Office in 1572. Before Salazar's appointment as *calificador* of the Holy Office he had to prove that he had no Jewish, Moslem or sectarian blood. During the time we are dealing with any person chosen as an official of the Inquisition had to prove that he descended from Old Christians. In the case of Salazar, in 1572 five Dominicans testified in his favour. A set of questions was presented to them dealing precisely with Salazar's purity of blood –*limpieza de sangre*– and that of his ancestors. It was also necessary to prove that nobody in his family had ever been penanced by the Holy Office for Judaizing practices or had been accused of heresy or of belonging to suspicious races and sects.

CARTA DE FRAY DOMINGO SALAZAR, O.P.,  
AL INQUISIDOR GENERAL DE MEXICO,  
DON PEDRO MOYA DE CONTRERAS,  
SOBRE SU LINAJE

Ilustrísimo Señor:

Aunque la humildad que mi hábito y profesión piden me obliga a tener en poco y olvidar estas cosas que el mundo en tanto estima, como es ser de linaje claro, porque pues vuestra merced y la obediencia de mi orden me mandan dé noticia de mi genealogía: digo que yo me llamé, antes que tomase el hábito, Francisco López de Salazar. Y cuando hice la profesión me mudaron el nombre y me llamo ahora Fr. Domingo de Salazar.

Soy natural de una villa que es en la Rioja, en Castilla la Vieja, que se llama La Vastida. Mi padre se llamó Diego López de Salazar, cuyo origen fue de la casa de Salazar, que es en las montañas y encartación de Vizcaya, dos o tres leguas de Bilbao, junto a Portugalete.

Mis abuelos paternos no me acuerdo bien cómo se llamaron, porque murieron antes que yo naciese, mas de que me parece que el padre de mi padre se debió llamar Pedro Ruiz de la Cerca y de Salazar, porque un hermano mio se llama deste mismo nombre por esta razón según creo.

Mi madre se llamó Ana de Careaga, cuya descendencia fue de una casa o solar que dicen conocido, que hoy está en pie, legua

LETTER OF FRAY DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P.,  
TO THE INQUISITOR GENERAL OF MEXICO,  
DON PEDRO MOYA DE CONTRERAS

Most Illustrious Lord:

The lowliness of my habit and profession demand me to have little regard for and forget the things the world has in high esteem, such as my coming from noble lineage. But, as your lordship and the obedience of my Order ask me to present my own genealogy, I will declare that before I received the habit, my name was Francisco López de Salazar<sup>2</sup>. My name was changed when I made my profession. My name now is Fr. Domingo de Salazar.

I was born in Labastida, a town in the Rioja, Old Castile. The name of my father was Diego López de Salazar. He stemmed from the house of Salazar, in the mountains and demarcation<sup>4</sup> of Vizcaya, two or three leagues from Bilbao, near Portugalete.

I cannot remember the names of my paternal grandparents, because they died before I was born. My father's father must have been called Pedro Ruiz de la Cerca y de Salazar, because a brother of mine carries the same name, due precisely to this fact.

My mother's name was Ana de Careaga. Her ancestors came from the house of Careaga, a well known house or place still stand-

y media de Bilbao, que se llama la casa de Careaga. Mi abuelo de parte de mi madre, aunque no le conocí, sé que se llamó Ochoa de Careaga.

El nombre de mis abuelas no sé que fue. Acuérdomme que estando yo en Bilbao conocí allí parientes de parte de mi padre y madre y ellos me conocieron a mi por su pariente y ser de su linaje, aunque el pariente de mi padre era fraile Francisco y el de mi madre seglar y casado en Bilbao.

En mi pueblo conocí yo hermanos de mi padre y madre y otros parientes más remotos, pero siempre entendí ser tenidos por hijos de algo, sin que jamás en mi linaje haya habido persona que sea de linaje sospechoso, ni aun pechero ni villano.

No siento en toda esta tierra persona que pueda dar testimonio de mi linaje, porque no se que haya quien los conociese mas de Vidasana, el platero, que dice conoció a un Salazar de La Bastida; y no pudo ser sino mi padre, que no había otro, pero no sabe que yo sea su hijo, mas de lo que yo digo.

Tomé el hábito de Nuestro Padre Santo Domingo en Santisteban de Salamanca, y allí hice profesión y viví muchos años, hasta que vine a esta tierra.

Y sé que en aquel convento no puede vivir ninguno que no sea christiano viejo, por una muy rigurosa excomunión papal que lo veda. Y en mi presencia echaron de aquel convento un religioso porque se le probó ser de linaje de conversos.

Antes que me diesen el hábito se hizo información de mi linaje, con cuatro estudiantes que a la sazón estaban en Salamanca, dos sacerdotes de misa y los dos legos. Y todos conocían a mis padres y linaje. Dende a dos ó tres años que hice profesión, fue un procurador de Santisteban, que se llamaba Fr. Steban de Miranda, a mi pueblo que está sesenta leguas de Salamanca, y hizo información de quién yo era y la trajo al convento. Y después viví muchos años en él lo cual no me permitieran si no fuera christiano viejo.

En esta ciudad está el P. Maestro Fr. Bartholomé de Ledesma y Fr. Marcos de Mena que me vieron hacer profesión y me conocieron en aquel convento vivir en él como hijo y morador.

ing today, a league and a half from Bilbao. My mother's father, although I never knew him, was called Ochoa de Careaga.

I cannot remember the names of my two grandmothers. I remember that while I was in Bilbao, I came to know some relatives of my father and my mother. They also came to know me as their relative and from their lineage, although my father's relative was a Franciscan Friar and my mother's relative was a layman, married in Bilbao.

I came to know in my village some of my father's brothers and some of my mother's and some other more distant relatives. I always understood them to be *hijosdalgos*<sup>5</sup> and that never was there found in our lineage a person of low birth, not even *pechero* or villain.

I think nobody in this land can testify about my lineage, for I do not know of anyone who knew my ancestors except Vida-sana, the silversmith. He affirms he knew a certain Salazar, from Labastida, who could be none other than my father, for there was no other. The silversmith, however, does not know I am that man's son. I alone know this.

I received the habit of our holy father St. Dominic in San Esteban of Salamanca. There I made my profession and lived for many years before coming to this land.

I know that nobody can live in San Esteban unless he is an Old Christian. There is a very strict papal excommunication in this respect. A religious was expelled in my presence because he was found to be of lineage of *conversos*<sup>6</sup>.

Before I received the habit an inquiry was conducted concerning my lineage. Four students from Salamanca were summoned, two of them priests and the two others lay-brothers. All of them knew my parents and my lineage. Two or three years after my profession Fr. Stephen de Miranda, a procurator of San Esteban, went to my village, sixty leagues from Salamanca. He inquired about who I was. He returned the facts to the monastery. After this I lived many years in the monastery. The authorities would have never allowed this were I not an Old Christian.

Fr. Maestro Bartolomé de Ledesma and Fr. Marcos de Mena, residents of this city saw me make my profession. They saw me live in that monastery as a son and resident.

Fuera de aquí hay muchos que tienen la misma noticia, como es el P. Fr. Pedro de Mata, prior de Oaxaca, Fr. Juan de Ozpina, vicario de Achiutla, Fr. Antonio de los Reyes, vicario de Tecomastlavaca, en la Misteca, y otros que nos criamos juntos en Santistevan de Salamanca.

Esta noticia he dado por mandármelo (como he dicho) vuestra merced y mi orden, que yo bien olvidado estaba de ésto; pero como es sucio y vanidad tratar sin necesidad de semejantes cosas así es christiano hacer de ellos mención cuando la obediencia lo manda o conviene al servicio de Dios y bien público.

Firmado de mi

FR. DOMINGO DE SALAZAR

Archivo General de la Nación (AGN)  
Ramo de Inquisición (RI)  
Tomo 62, No. 6

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<sup>6</sup> Matías de Paz, the famous theologian who wrote about the rights and duties of the conquerors and evangelizers of America, as Regent of Studies of San Esteban addressed a petition to Fr. Thomas Vio Cajetan, Master of the Dominican Order, asking him whether it was a mortal sin, or against charity, to reject as candidates for the Dominican life descendants of Jews. Cajetan in his answer from Siena in 1514 said that the Fathers were free to accept or reject such candidates as long as these descendants of *conversos* were not guilty of any personal infamy. John de Fenario, Master of the Dominican Order, in a visit to San Esteban, ordered on September 27, 1535 that descendants of Jews were not to be admitted to the religious life in San Esteban. This had become statutory by the time of Salazar's profession in 1546. (Fr. JUSTO CUERVO, O.P. *Historiadores de Salamanca*, (3 vols.) Vol. I, Salamanca, 1914, pp. 624-625)

There are many more outside this place who know this, such as Fr. Pedro de Mata, Prior of Oaxaca, Fr. Juan de Ozpina, Vicar of Ochiutla, Fr. Antonio de los Reyes, Vicar of Tecomostlavaca, in the Misteca, and some others; we all lived together in San Esteban of Salamanca.

I have given this information because your Lordship, as I have said, and my Order so ordered me. I could not care less, but as it is improper and vain to deal with this matter unless it is necessary, so it is Christian to deal with it when obedience so commands, or it is fitting for the service of God and the common good.

Signed by me

FR. DOMINGO DE SALAZAR

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The letter bears no date. But since it is attached to a piece of 'Information on the Genealogy and Origin of Fr. Domingo de Salazar' of February, 1572, we can safely say that it was presented by Salazar during 1572, to prove his genealogy and purity of blood -*limpieza de sangre*-.

<sup>2</sup> Don Pedro Moya de Contreras came to Mexico in 1571 to serve as the first Inquisitor General of the Holy Office. By October of 1573 he had become Archbishop of Mexico. In 1583 he was appointed visitador (i.e. inspector) of the courts in which office he was engaged during three years. In 1584 he was appointed Viceroy of Nueva España, surrendering this post, a year later, to Villamanrique. All these offices were held by him concurrently. In June, 1586, he returned to Spain, where he died at the close of the year 1591. In January of that year he had been appointed president of the Council of Indies.

<sup>3</sup> This is the first and only time where we see in the writings of Salazar the statement that his baptismal name was Francisco López de Salazar.

<sup>4</sup> I have translated the Spanish word *encartación* as demarcation, but the word *encartación* implies much more than geographical demarcation. In the case of Vizcaya it implies a territory with a special 'Charter of Rights'. The *señorio* of Vizcaya, even during the time of Philip II, had special privileges and *fueros* respected by the King, unique to Vizcaya and some other regions of Spain.

<sup>5</sup> *Hijosdalgos*, shortened to *hidalgos*, originally meant *hijo de algo*, sons of somebody. They were considered as part of the lesser aristocracy of Spain. "Hidalgos were distinguished from the run of citizens by their possession of family coats of arms, which they emblazoned on houses and churches and convents and tombs with a profusion proper to a world in which heraldry was the indispensable key to all subtleties of status" (J. H. ELLIOT, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*, A Mentor Book, 1963, p. 112).

LETTER OF FR. JUAN BAUTISTA<sup>1</sup>, VICAR OF  
THE SANGLEYES, TO BISHOP DOMINGO DE  
SALAZAR, O.P.

Miton<sup>2</sup>, March, 1582

*Introduction*

The presence of Chinese settlers in the Philippines before the arrival of the Spaniards in 1565 was minimal. Legazpi found only 40 Chinese residents in Manila in 1571. As the Spaniards took over the Philippines, the Chinese came in greater numbers as the years went by. What drew them in large numbers to Manila was the silver coming from Mexico in vast quantities. Most of these traders returned to China after their goods had been sold to the Spaniards or Filipinos in exchange for the highly appreciated silver of Mexico and raw cotton and wax of the Filipinos. Some of them, however, decided to stay and settle down in Manila. The Spaniards called them *Sangleyes*. A

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<sup>1</sup> Juan Bautista must have been an Augustinian friar in charge of the spiritual care of the Chinese living in Miton, the place wherefrom the letter was written. He might be the companion given to Fr. Diego Muñoz by the provincial Andrés de Aguirre to help him in the new ministry established in 1581. (Cfr. ISACIO RODRIGUEZ, *Historia*, XV, p. 64)

<sup>2</sup> We have not been able to identify the precise location of the village of Miton. From the letter of Andrés Aguirre it can be seen that it was half a league from Tondo and half a league from Manila and within view of the city, along the right bank of the Pasig River. I conclude it must have been the area of Binondo today, for Quiapo was already an important place during the period under study and Baybay was rejected as unsuitable. Why the name Miton disappeared from use so soon after is a mystery.

few of them intermarried with native Filipino women, thus giving origin to a mestizo class called *mestizo de Sangley*.

Due to their thriftiness and business acumen many of these Chinese became successful merchants and in the process became essential to the very life of the city. By 1581, the year of Salazar's arrival, the number of Chinese in Manila and surrounding areas had increased considerably. A figure of between six to ten thousand Chinese settlers and traders can be given without exaggeration.

The Augustinians (1565) and the Franciscans (1578), who had come to the Philippines before Salazar, had come in answer to Christ's call 'Go and preach the Good News to the whole of creation'. There was a need to take spiritual care not only of the natives of the Philippines but also of the Chinese. Most of them settled down in Tondo and lived together with the Tagalogs, the Filipino natives of the place. The Augustinians had opened a monastery in Tondo in 1572 to take spiritual care of the Filipinos. The Augustinian priests of Tondo tried to bring the Good News to the Chinese by teaching in Tagalog, for so far nobody had been found capable or able to learn the difficult Chinese language.

Sometime before the arrival of Bishop Salazar to the Philippines in 1581, the Augustinians petitioned the Governor, Don Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa, to transfer the Chinese of Tondo to a new place where they could be taught the Christian religion without any prejudice to their main intent: commerce and trade, but also to avoid the scandals and evils that followed the continued intercourse between the Tagalogs and the Chinese in Tondo. A suitable place was found not far from Tondo and not too far from Manila. In the local dialect the name was called Miton. The process of transfer and resettlement was going on when Salazar arrived in September of 1581.

A description of the efforts of the Augustinians to go ahead with the resettlement of the Chinese from Tondo to Miton is given by Andrés de Aguirre:

"Fr. Andrés de Aguirre, Provincial in the Philippine Islands. I declare that for twelve years or more the Chinese from the mainland of the great China have been in the habit of coming every year to these islands with their ships and merchandise. Many of them remain

behind every year. They have settled down in the village of Tondo, near the city of Manila where our Order has a monastery.

"As these intelligent people observed that a religious of that convent assigned by the Order to that ministry was trying with great zeal to preach the Good News of the Gospel and had tried to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, God favoured his good work. Many of them became converts from their idolatry to our holy Catholic Faith."

"Since they lived together with the natives at the village, they lacked a minister who could give them the instruction that was needed. Many inconveniences also followed from their living together with the natives. As I sought for a solution to this problem, I begged the Governor to separate the Chinese from the natives. I brought forth many reasons for this project. Since the Governor found these to be just and weighty for the spiritual welfare of those people, he charged me with the task to find the most convenient place for their resettlement as well as for the security of their ships and of themselves, on condition that it was within view of the city."

"If such a place were found he would order the project to be carried out. I made my inquiries and of all the places I saw, the most convenient in my view was the one called in the tongue of the Indians, Miton, less than half a league from this city and half a league from the monastery of Miton (sic) though within its own boundaries. The place is large enough for a village, situated along the banks of the great river of Manila.

I notified the Governor about this. He saw the place and liked it, and ordered the *principales* of the Chinese to transfer there right away, in order to live there. They rejoiced, as it was convenient to them. And, because the main aim of the project was to give them enough instruction, the Governor, as petitioned by me, to whom the thing seemed just and very necessary, gave me permission, in the name of His Majesty, to build a church and a monastery for the Chinese in that new village. I right away appointed as vicar of it a very learned religious and gave him a capable companion, so that the two of them would try to learn the Chinese language and busy themselves in their conversion and instruction...

A little after that, the Bishop of these Islands arrived..."

(*Letter of Fr. Andrés de Aguirre, Provincial of the Augustinians, to Philip II, Manila, February 20, 1582, in: AGI, Filipinas 79; in: ISACIO RODRIGUEZ, Historia, XV, 61-64.*)

With Salazar's arrival, greater efforts were made to preach to the Chinese. The letter under study was written from Miton.

The background to Juan Bautista's letter must also be given. In early 1582 Governor Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa decided to send an expedition to pacify the Cagayan region. Juan Pablo Carreón was appointed as leader, per recommendation of Salazar. It seems that men were lacking to man the ships of the expedition, even with pay. Some Chinese, compelled by the Spanish authorities, had to go to the expedition or send their servants or slaves. Others were paid by the Chinese to go in their stead. The Chinese complained to Salazar, and the Bishop, concerned as he was, begged his Vicar, Fr. Juan Bautista, to investigate all the facts. This letter to Salazar was the result.

CARTA DE FRAY JUAN BAUTISTA, VICARIO DE  
LOS SANGLEYES, AL OBISPO DOMINGO  
DE SALAZAR, O.P.

Yo procuré sacar a luz lo que V. Señoría me mandó por la boca de los mismos sangleyes; y digo cierto verdad que después de haber estado en esto quebrándome la cabeza dos o tres horas, por causa del ruin naguatato que cierto no los entiende bien, casi no pude entender cosa alguna, porque si veinte veces les pregunté tantas respondieron diferentemente; y al fin son indios, que hasta que yo traté de averiguar con todos la verdad, andaban dando voces cada uno por sí, diciendo que cuatrocientos pesos les había costado la ida de Cagayan, porque habian pagado para cuarenta hombres, a diez pesos a cada uno. Y venido a averiguar no les costó ciento y cuarenta, porque a los hombres, que fueron treinta y cinco alquilados, no dieron más de siete pesos, porque serían de estos veinte ó veinte y cuatro; los otros eran esclavos y criados de los mismos sangleyes, porque el que tenía hombre que dar no daba dineros.

Cuanto a lo de los indios que dejaron de poblar este año, dicen estos sangleyes que preguntando ellos a los capitanes de los navios qué gente traían que pudiese poblar en esta tierra, un capitán respondía que traía cincuenta, otro que traía veinte, otro cuarenta; todos los cuales venían con intento de poblar en esta tierra. Y hecha la cuenta venían a ser todos estos casi doscientos, pocos menos; los cuales, preguntando a los que acá estaban el tratamiento que se les hacía, y visto que unas veces los forzaban a

LETTER OF FRAY JUAN BAUTISTA, VICAR OF  
THE SANGLEYES, TO BISHOP DOMINGO  
DE SALAZAR, O.P.

I tried to bring to light, from the very mouth of the *Sangleyes*, what Your Lordship commanded me. I tell you frankly that, after having drained my brains for two or three hours, I could hardly gather anything, due to the crooked *naguatato*<sup>3</sup> who clearly does not understand them well. If I asked them twenty times they answered me always differently. In the last analysis they are Indios. Before I tried to get the truth from them, they were crying all over, saying that the expedition to Cagayan had cost them four hundred pesos, for they had paid ten pesos for forty persons. I came to know that it had cost them no more than one hundred and forty pesos for they had hired thirty five people at seven pesos. Of these, twenty or twenty four were really hired; the rest were slaves or servants of the Sangleyes, for the one who had a person did not give money.

In relation to the Indios Sangleyes who did not want to settle down this year, the same Sangleyes say that they asked the captains of the ships as to how many they had brought with them, who could have settled down in this land. One captain answered he had brought fifty, another twenty, still another forty. All of them had come with the intention of settling down. All together they came to be around two hundred people. These people asked those already settled down here how they were treated. They

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<sup>3</sup> *Naguatato* is a *nahuatl* word that means translator or interpreter. The Spaniards of Mexico and the Philippines used the word as a matter of fact. It became an ordinary word in the Spanish vocabulary overseas.

remar e ir jornadas, otras a dar o enviar gente o dineros para ellos, otros los molestaban en lo que comúnmente son todos los demás indios molestados, particularmente comprándoles su mercaduría a menos precio y por fuerza los alcaldes mayores, y a veces otros españoles, hasta subir a sus casas y ver lo que tienen debajo de la cama y en las cajas y petacas, abriéndoselas por fuerza y llevándoles lo que hay en ellas, o a menos precio o a ninguno, viendo éstas y otras muchas cosas, de que el portador dará relación a V. Señoría, se arrepintieron y se volvieron luego sin querer poblar aquí.

De los que habían ya poblado en este pueblo de Miton, de las casas había quedado vacías seis, en las cuales había como diez y ocho o veinte personas; de las demás casas se habrán ido de indios que habían poblado en esta tierra de dos y de tres años como cincuenta personas; éstos son de los que ya habían poblado en este pueblo de Miton, que de los que habían poblado en Tondo y querían ya poblar aquí, según dicen todos, faltan más de trescientos y aun dicen los indios pasan de trescientos hombres.

De otras muchas cosas se quejan, de algunas con razón, según yo he visto, lo cual podrá decir el que ésta lleva.

De Miton, hoy martes de 82. Ilustrísimo y reverendísimo señor, besa a V. Señoría los pies su humilde capellán y siervo.

Fdo. FRAY JUAN BAUTISTA

(Different handwriting)

Después de recibida esta carta parecieron los sangleyes aquí contenidos y se ratificaron en todo ello y dijeron muchas más cosas.

Fdo. EL OBISPO DE LAS FILIPINAS

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realized that they were sometimes forced to row and join in the expeditions, other times they had to give money or send people in their stead. Others received the same abuses as the rest of the Indians receive, especially through the *alcaldes mayores*; and sometimes other Spaniards who bought their merchandise for a lesser price, went up to their very homes to see what they had under their beds, in boxes and trunks, forcing them open and taking at a lesser price, or no price at all, what was inside. Having realized these and many other things, as the courier can tell Your Lordship, they changed their minds and returned very soon, not wanting to settle down here.

Of all those already settled down in this village of Miton, six houses, in which were found eighteen or twenty persons, had been left vacant. From the other houses around fifty persons may have left of all those who had settled down in this land since two or three years ago. These are of those already settled down in Miton. Of those living in Tondo and ready to settle down here, as everybody says, more than three hundred left and they say the Indians who left are more than three hundred.

They complain of many other things. Of some of them, very rightly, as I have seen and of which the Courier of this letter can tell you.

Miton, today, Tuesday, 1582. Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord, your humble chaplain and servant kisses your Lordship's feet.

Signed: FRAY JUAN BAUTISTA

After this letter was received, the Sangleyes herein included came to see me and stated the same and added many more things.

Signed: THE BISHOP OF THE PHILIPPINES<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>This last paragraph is written with a different handwriting. It is signed originally by Salazar. In the other available copy -transcript- the letter ends with the signature of Juan Bautista. After the Courier submitted to Salazar Juan Bautista's letter, some Chinese came to Salazar and complained to him. Salazar added the paragraph.

No names or signatures of Chinese are written in any of the two copies we have.



LETTER OF FRAY DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P.,  
TO PHILIP II, COMPLAINING AGAINST THE  
OPPOSITION OF THE AUGUSTINIANS

Manila, March 14, 1582

*Introduction*

The struggle between Bishop Salazar and the Augustinians started soon after Salazar's arrival to the Philippines. The problem is related to the privileges enjoyed by the religious in the mission fields vis á vis the authority of the bishops in the same mission fields. Prior to Salazar's arrival the Augustinians, the pioneers of the evangelization in the Philippines, who had enjoyed all ecclesiastical authority over the Indians, conceded it to the Franciscans in late 1578. Salazar tried to make his authority felt. The Augustinians resented this move and opposed Salazar. Hence the friction between the two.

The first spark came about when the Augustinian Diego de Múxica ignored the bishop's summons to hand an Indian over to him. The Indian, Amanicalao, had been imprisoned by Múxica.

More cases of friction occurred in the early part of 1582. By March 1582, the date of Salazar's letter, the mutual alienation and mistrust was deep. The rift was serious and prejudicial to the process of evangelization, but its solution was not easy. Hence Salazar's appeal to the King for a solution to the problem at hand.

CARTA DE FRAY DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P.,  
A FELIPE II, QUEJANDOSE DE LA OPOSICION  
QUE ENCUENTRA EN LOS AGUSTINOS

Manila, 14 de Marzo, 1582

Católica Real Majestad: La gracia de Dios Nuestro Señor sea siempre con Vuestra Majestad.

Pensado tenía dar a Vuestra Majestad muy larga relación de todo lo que en esta tierra he visto después que por mandado de Vuestra Majestad vine por obispo a ella, pero déjolo de hacer así porque el que ésta lleva, que es un religioso descalzo de San Francisco, hace su viaje por la China, que aunque está muy cerca de estas islas no sabemos el suceso que habrá en su navegación, como también porque pienso de hacer un mensajero propio, prebendado de esta iglesia, que en mi nombre y de los capitulares de ella bese a Vuestra Majestad sus reales manos y haga cierta y verdadera relación de lo que hay en estas islas y de lo que en ellas conviene remediar para que la conversión de estos infieles, que por la misericordia de Dios se van convirtiendo muchos, vaya adelante, y porque si Dios fuere servido dar a este religioso tan buen viaje que pueda parecer ante Vuestra Majestad le he dado una memoria firmada de mi nombre y de los capitulares de esta iglesia, por la cual podrá dar a Vuestra Majestad relación de lo que acá pasa y él, como testigo de vista, dar verdadero testimonio de lo que en ella va. Vuestra Majestad sea servido darle crédito a lo que dijere porque su buena vida y fama y el celo que lleva de procurar el bien de estas tierras temporal y espiritual lo merece.

LETTER OF FRAY DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P.,  
TO PHILIP II, COMPLAINING AGAINST THE  
OPPOSITION OF THE AUGUSTINIANS

Catholic and Royal Majesty:

May the Grace of God be always with you.

I had thought of giving your Majesty a long report of everything I have noticed since I came as bishop to this land in obedience to your command. I leave it for the moment because first the carrier of the letter, a Discalced Religious of St. Francis is making a journey via China, and although China is near these islands, we cannot know whether his journey will be successful or not; second, I hope to send a special messenger of mine, a prebendary of this church, who in my name and the name of the Chapter will kiss your Majesty's hands and make a certain and true report of what is happening in these islands and of what needs to be remedied, so that the conversion of these pagans, who through God's mercy are becoming converts in large numbers, may go ahead. If it please God to grant a safe journey to the mentioned religious, and to let him appear in the presence of your Majesty, I have given him a report signed by me and the Chapter of the church, by means of which he will be able to give an account to your Majesty of what is happening here. As he is a personal witness, he will give true testimony of what is written in the report. Your Majesty should give credit to what he may have to say because he deserves this on account of the fame and the zeal that moves him to work for the temporal and spiritual good of this land.

Una cosa de las que en el memorial hago mención quiero referir aquí a Vuestra Majestad, que por ser cosa que conviene mucho ser remediada y quizá por tener muchos contradictores y que a Vuestra Majestad procuraran persuadir lo contrario sería posible haber alguna dificultad en ella.

Y es lo que toca al modo que los religiosos de San Agustín, que son los primeros que en estas islas entraron, quieren tener en el tratar con los indios, porque antes que hubiese obispo en estas islas ellos hacían y deshacían a su voluntad; venido yo y queriendo entender en lo que a mi oficio me obliga, hánse puesto tan de veras a estorbármelo que en ninguna cosa de cuantas a mi oficio pertenecen me dejan usar en los pueblos donde ellos están, diciendo que, por privilegios apostólicos, son ellos en esta tierra más que el obispo y pueden tanto como el papa; y que el obispo, para con los indios que ellos tienen, no es parte para irles a la mano en cosa ninguna, ni quieren que acudan a mi, aunque de ellos sean agraviados, diciendo que de ellos no hay recurso sino para Roma. Y por el mismo caso que un indio se venga a quejar a mi lo echan en la cárcel y lo azotan.

Y el prior del convento de San Agustín de esta ciudad me dijo un día en mi cara que yo en sus pueblos no era más que obispo de anillo. Y sin duda tuvo razón, porque no soy más parte para hacer mi oficio en los pueblos que ellos tienen que si fuera obispo de anillo, como ellos dicen. Yo bien sé que sus privilegios no les dan autoridad para que se extiendan a tanto y cuando ésto les digo, y ven que no tengo otros ministros de quien me ayudar, hácenme fieros que lo dejarán todo.

He padecido acerca de ésto muchos trabajos y aflicciones y las pasaré mayores si Vuestra Majestad no lo manda remediar, porque si lo que hasta aquí ha pasado ha de ir adelante, ni Vuestra Majestad tiene necesidad en enviar obispos a esta tierra, ni yo tengo en ella más que hacer de ordenar y confirmar y meterme en un rincón, dejando todo lo demás a los religiosos, que pues ellos tienen todo lo que hay en este obispado y donde ellos están no

I want to refer your Majesty to one of the things I mention in the report which might create some difficulties, as it is something that needs to be remedied, and perhaps will have many who will oppose the remedy and who will try to persuade your Majesty otherwise.

And the thing is the way the religious of St. Augustine, who were the first ones to come to these islands, behave in dealing with the Indians. Before a bishop was appointed to these islands they did and undid things at will. When I came, and wanted to deal with matters pertaining to my office, they decided to hinder me in a such a way that they do not let me use my authority in any of the villages where they are. They say that by apostolic privileges they have more power than the Bishop and have as much power as the Pope. The Bishop has nothing to do with the Indians who are under their care and cannot call their attention in anything. They do not want the Indians to have recourse to me even though they might have been aggrieved by them. They say that after them the only recourse is to Rome. If an Indian were to come to complain to me he would be put in prison and scourged.

The prior of the convent of St. Augustine<sup>1</sup> in this city told me one day, to my very face, that in their villages I was a bishop with ring<sup>2</sup>. Truly he was right, for in their villages I can do nothing more than to be a bishop with ring, as they say. I know very well that their privileges do not let them go this far. When I told them this and they saw that I have no ministers to help me, they threatened me with abandoning everything.

On account of this I have experienced terrible sufferings and afflictions. I will suffer greater trials still if your Majesty will not command that a remedy be given. If what has happened heretofore is going to continue, your Majesty has no need to send bishops here, and I have nothing else to do than to ordain and confirm and withdraw to a corner, which is the only thing left open for me, and leave the rest to the religious, as they have every-

quieren que yo pueda entender en nada, no me queda otra cosa que hacer.

Y pluguiere a Dios que esto viniese de Roma determinado y Vuestra Majestad así lo mandase, que para mi ningún contento habría tan grande como verme sin el cargo que tengo. Y si Vuestra Majestad fuere servido que yo haga mi oficio será menester que estos padres entiendan cuál es el suyo, para que de aquí adelante no nos encontremos, pues a mi no me quieren creer.

Nuestro Señor la real persona de Vuestra Majestad guarde y por muchos años conserve en su santo servicio para defensa y amparo de su Santa Iglesia.

De Manila, 14 de marzo, 1582 años. Católica Real Majestad besa la mano de Vuestra Majestad, menor siervo y capellán.

Fdo. EL OBISPO DE LAS FILIPINAS

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thing in this bishopric and they do not want me to deal with anything.

May it please God to have this determined by Rome and may your Majesty command it so, for the greatest joy for me would be to be free from the office I hold. If your Majesty wishes me to fulfill my office, it will be necessary to make these Fathers realize what is their prerogative, so that from now on there will be no more disputes, since they do not believe me when I tell them.

May our Lord guard for many years the Royal Person of your Majesty and keep it in His holy service for the defense and protection of His holy church.

From Manila, March 14, 1582. Catholic Royal Majesty, your lesser servant and chaplain who kisses the hand of your Majesty.

Signed: THE BISHOP OF THE PHILIPPINES

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<sup>1</sup> The prior of St. Augustine was Fr. Francisco Manrique. Salazar opened an Inquiry on April 20, 1582 blaming Manrique for opposing the bishop openly. *Cfr. Testimony of an Inquiry about what Fr. Francisco Manrique, OSA, said against the bishop's authority*, (AGI, Fil. 84, duplicate).

<sup>2</sup> Probably by this is meant that Manrique said the bishop's authority in the Philippines extended only to ordain and confirm. The pastoral planning and care, the administration and exercise of episcopal authority was thus denied him.

LETTER OF FR. FRANCISCO PEREZ, O.F.M.,  
TO FRAY DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P.

Pila<sup>1</sup>, March 20, 1582

*Introduction*

The early Spanish missionaries of the Philippines faced serious difficulties in their efforts to evangelize the Filipinos. The evangelization has been pictured as an easy task. In the view of many historians the Filipinos did not oppose the preaching of the gospel.

We agree fundamentally with this view, but the early years of the evangelization, the period covered by the letter of Fr. Francisco Pérez, the years of initial preparation for the real evangelization, were not easy years. As we can see from the present letter, there were difficulties that obstructed and hindered the process of evangelization. The early Filipinos were very religious people, but their level of culture was relatively primitive. The natives pictured in the letter of Fr. Francisco Pérez tended to return to their ancient religious practices. The early missionaries were oftentimes 'compelled' by the concrete cultural and religious situation of the Philippines to impose upon the natives some demanding methods. It was inevitable that some pressure and sometimes certain penalties be imposed upon recalcitrant people to help them remain loyal to the promise given when they accepted baptism.

The situation of the early Philippines was radically different from that of ancient Christianity. Paul and Peter, and the rest

of the Apostles, were confronted in their apostolic journeys with a very learned and sophisticated world. The level of culture reached by the contemporaries of the apostles was high indeed. Paul was engaged in philosophical and religious dialogues wherever he went. The early Spanish missionaries in the Philippines were confronted with an entirely different religious, cultural and philosophical background.

Thus, Fr. Francisco Pérez, and with him his fellow Franciscans, and the pioneers of the Christianization of the Philippines, the Augustinians, put some pressure on the natives to maintain their word given. The temptation of the natives was to go back to the *tingues*, the hills, and fall back into their previous religious practices and beliefs.

The letter is dated from Pila. The region was the center of the Tagalog people and culture. Mount Makiling, Nagcarlan and Banahaw dominated the landscape. Even before the arrival of Christianity, these mountains were centers of peculiar religious native sects. Today, four hundred years after the initial impact of the Christianization, in Mount Banahaw are to be found dozens of religious sects with superficially Christian practices and beliefs, but below the surface there persists animistic native beliefs. These religious sects, known as *de colorum* religions, are experiencing a certain revival today. Catholicism has been accused of too much leniency in regards to these religious manifestations.

When Fr. Francisco Pérez complained to Salazar that the natives fled to the mountains and there gave up the new Catholic religion they had embraced, he is presenting a picture not too different from the present one. Salazar, with his experience of Mexico, and the liberating spirit of Vitoria and Las Casas behind him, felt the need to ask for an explanation.

In the view of the simple Franciscan, the bishop was pampering the natives who were not as well disposed to the practice of the new religion as the bishop may have been told. The clash between the old religion and the demands imposed by the acceptance of the new one was inevitable. This entailed sufferings, sorrows and anxieties. To give up one's own religion, however primitive that may be, in favor of a new religion, is always a difficult thing to do. The temptation, later on in life, to return

to the faith, is strong. In the case of the Philippines we even know of some revolts against the Spaniards for religious reasons, in protest and as a reaction to the demands and obligations of the new religion imposed by the missionaries and their fellow Spaniards. It was on this basis that the religious revolt of Apolinario de la Cruz, a Filipino of the XVIII century, took place. Though a pious Catholic for many years, Apolinario brought into his religion some pagan animistic manifestations unacceptable to the Catholic Church. It would probably be unfair to pass judgement on the early missionaries for putting the natives into prison and imposing monetary penalties upon such of them as proved unfaithful to the religion they had embraced or, who without rejecting the new religion kept together with the new religion some old practices as would seem incompatible, in the view of the missionaries, with the demands of Christianity. To repeat again, a degree of pressure was necessary to break down the barriers of resistance. The idyllic picture and method of appealing to the beauty and greatness of Christianity over and above the local religion did not work immediate miracles, for to the holders of the old religion it was as beautiful and appealing as the new one.



CARTA DE FRAY FRANCISCO PEREZ, OFM, AL PRIMER  
OBISPO DE FILIPINAS, FRAY DOMINGO DE  
SALAZAR, O.P.

Pila, 20 de Marzo, 1582

La de Vuestra Reverendisima Señoría recibí y por ella entendí tenía salud, la cual aumente nuestro buen Dios por largos años.

Los indios que trujeron la carta son unos indios que ha muchos días que les he mandado que deprendan la doctrina, y los he tenido reclusos a cerrojo para que deprendan la doctrina.

Yo no levo penas, porque adonde tomé el hábito que han doctrinado infieles y los doctrinan el día de hoy no les pasa por la imaginacion de llevarla. Yo así lo haré el poco tiempo que acá estuviere; tampoco quiero azotarlos, porque no me levanten alguna cosa, de manera que alguna cosa han de temer. Y así, visto esto delante del fiscal de Vuestra Señoría les pregunté por la doctrina y no me supieron persignarse. Y visto le mandé que no saliese del cepo hasta que supiesen rezar. Y con el favor que Vuestra Señoría les da, que entienden que me debe de reñir, o otra cosa semejante, no quiso hacer lo que le mandaba, más antes se vino para mí y me quiso dar de puñetes.

Mire V. Señoría que estoy aquí por amor de Dios, descargando la conciencia de su Majestad y la de Vuestra Señoría, y que no es justo que se les dé a éstos alas ningunas cuanto toca a la doctrina, porque de otra manera de ovejas se tornarán cabrones; y esto no

LETTER OF FR. FRANCISCO PEREZ, O.F.M., TO FR.  
DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P., FIRST BISHOP  
OF THE PHILIPPINES

I received the letter of your most reverend lordship<sup>2</sup>. I came to see through it that your Lordship was in good health. May our good God increase your good health for many more years.

The Indians who brought the letter are those whom I had commanded sometime ago to learn the Christian doctrine. I had them put in prison under bolts up to the time they learn the doctrine.

I do not impose pecuniary penalties, for where I received the habit there are people to be found who have preached to infidels and taught them till now who find that to do so is beyond their imagination. I will refrain from such impositions during the short time I am to remain here. Nor shall I flog them, lest they accuse me of something, of which they should be afraid. Having made this an open case before your Lordship's fiscal, I questioned the Indians about the doctrine, and they did not even know how to make the sign of the cross. Because of this I commanded them to remain in the stocks until they learned how to pray. With your Lordship's favor, for they believe that you have rebuked me or something similar, the Indian did not want to do what I commanded him, rather he jumped on me and tried to box me.<sup>3</sup>

Your lordship must realize I am here for the love of God, discharging his Majesty's and your Lordship's conscience. It is not just to give these people too much freedom in relation to the doctrine, otherwise from sheep they will become goats. And this

será a cuenta del fraile que aquí estuviere, sino a la de Vuestra Señoría.

Lo que toca al español, lo que dicen éstos que está conmigo, es falsedad, que yo no tengo criado ni mozo para que esté conmigo. Y así, delante de Don Juan, les pregunté qué hombre era el que yo tenía y dijeron que no había ninguno, y otras cosas que aquí no digo hay por acá de bellaquerías que éstos dicen porque les mandé deprender la doctrina.

Y si Vuestra Señoría es así contento, sea muy enhorabuena, que nada les diré que deprendan, ni hagan, ni vengán a misa; y así no mirar las ofensas que éstos hacen a Dios sobre mi, sino sobre cuyas son, que no son mías.

Y porque pienso verme pronto con Vuestra Señoría, para informar de lo que por acá pasa, no más de que nuestro Señor guarde su Señoría.

De Pila, hoy martes, a 20 de marzo, 1582; adonde quedo por de Vuestra Señoría Ilustrísima menor hijo como siempre.

Fdo. FRAY FRANCISCO PEREZ

Allá va el indio; no es mi fiscal sino *bilango* del alcalde mayor; y lo quiso llevar el fiscal, sino el oro que tenía, que no era suyo, sino de prendas que él tiene de los indios y así se usa en ésta tierra. Vuestra Señoría envió a un indio a llamar a los indios de los *tingues*, el mejor ladrón y bellaco que hay en la tierra; y así fue otro a llamarlos.

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will not be reckoned to the accounting of the friar who is here, but to your lordship's.

In relation to the Spaniard whom these people say is with me, that is false. I have neither servant no male helpers with me. In front of Don Juan I asked them who the man I had with me was, and they answered I had none. They said other things I do not mention here for they are knavish tricks, because I command them to learn the doctrine.

If your Lordship feels happy with these things, so be it. I will not command them to learn the doctrine, to do anything, or come to Mass. But the offenses these people will commit against God will not fall upon my shoulders, for they are not mine, they will fall upon the shoulders of the one responsible.

Since I hope to see your Lordship soon in order to inform your Lordship of what is happening here, I will add no more than to ask the Lord to protect your Lordship.

From Pila, today Tuesday, March 20, 1582; where I always remain your most illustrious Lordship's humble son.

Fdo. FRAY FRANCISCO PEREZ

I send you the Indian. He is not my fiscal but a *bilango* of the alcalde mayor and the fiscal wanted to impose pecuniary penalties upon the gold he had, for it does not belong to him but it is pawned with him from other Indians, as it is the custom in this land.

Your Lordship sent an Indian to call the other Indians from the *Tingues*<sup>4</sup>. He is the greatest thief and rogue to be found in this land. Thus somebody else was sent to call them.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Pila is situated on the south coast of the Laguna de Bay, the biggest inner lake in the Philippines. It had a sizeable settlement at the time of the Spanish arrival. The territory was given to the Franciscans in 1578 as their mission field. The people of the surrounding area were dependent for their living upon a kind of subsistence economy. It was from Nagcarlan, not too far from Pila, that Fr. Juan de Plasencia, the great Franciscan missionary, penned his valuable report addressed to Governor Santiago de Vera in 1589 on *The Customs of the Tagalogs*. The report is a first-class testimony of the religious, legal, cultural and social set up of the early Filipinos in the Tagalog region.

<sup>2</sup> We have not been able to find Salazar's letter to Fr. Francisco Pérez. Fr. Pérez's letter is the only reference we have.

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Francisco Pérez passes from the singular to the plural and from the plural to the singular oftentimes in the use of verbs. The sense of the letter, however, is clear.

<sup>4</sup> *Tingue* is the native word for hill or mountain. Sometimes the people were also called *Tingues*. *Tingue* should not be confused with *Tinguians*, the natives of the province of Abra, in the island of Luzon.

LETTER OF FRAY DOMINGO SALAZAR, O.P., FIRST  
BISHOP OF THE PHILIPPINES, TO THE  
GOVERNOR OF CANTON<sup>1</sup>

*Introduction*

The present letter of Salazar was given to Father Alonso Sánchez. Sánchez was the special envoy of Don Gonzalo Ronquillo, the governor of the Philippines, and of Salazar to the Portuguese of Macao to tell them the news of Philip II's succession and accession to the Portuguese throne. Taking advantage of that situation the governor and the bishop made Sánchez their personal ambassador to the Governor of Canton and the rulers of China. The purpose of the letter was to introduce Sánchez to them. Salazar hoped that friendly relations might be established between the Spaniards of Manila and the Chinese of mainland China.

It had always been the dream of Salazar to come to the East and establish contacts with the learned and cultured Chinese people. His main aim was to open the door of China to the Gospel of Christ. Salazar stated that one of the reasons that induced him to accept his appointment as Bishop of the Philippines was the possibility of preaching the Gospel to the Chinese of mainland China.

Father Chirino says that the governor convinced the superior of Sánchez, Father Antonio Sedeño, to agree to the plan and

“to Father Sánchez to accept it and be on the way. There was no need to move them because both the superior and the subject yearned for an entry into China, since they

were so near. At least Father Sánchez we know wished to stay there to bring the light of the holy Gospel to those blind gentiles, though, as he said afterwards, he never had any chance, neither from the powerful, because of their pride and arrogance, nor from the interpreters and translators, because of their malice and deception, for they do not say or dare to say what they are asked, nor from the ordinary people, for they are depraved, rotten, soulless and blind" (TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, p. CXLVIII).

The letter of Salazar reflects the fear that Sánchez, his and the Governor's ambassador, might not be welcomed. He knew of the Chinese suspicions towards foreigners. Rumours were spread in Manila that all foreigners visiting China were ill treated and thrown into prison. A law existed condemning under penalty of death the Chinese who helped foreigners enter China.

The Spaniards of Manila had tried during the governorship of Doctor Francisco Sande to establish commercial relations with the *Chinese of mainland China*. They had not been able to do so. In their opinion this was a violation of the *law of nations*, as explained by the Spanish theologian Francisco de Vitoria, who stated that no nation could block international trade and commerce. People of all nations were free to travel and trade with other people. So far the Spaniards had not been given this right by the Chinese.

Furthermore, the Chinese from mainland China, since the time of Legazpi, had been flocking to Manila in large numbers for purposes of trade and commerce. Many of them had already settled down in Manila and its environs. By the time of Salazar as many as seven thousand Chinese were living as residents in Manila. Why deny the right to the Spaniards of Manila to go to China and start trading with the Chinese? Why deny the same right to the Spaniards of Manila? From the point of view of the Spaniards, they were at a disadvantage compared with the Chinese. This, of course, was the trend of thinking of the Spaniards. Salazar's main and foremost interest was to open the door of China to Christianity. Since the time of Marco Polo, China had remained closed to foreign-

ers. Could this mysterious land of Grand Cathay be once and for all be opened to the Gospel of Christ?

Sánchez found in Canton some other Jesuits who, through via Portugal and India, had come to China in the hope of being allowed to stay there and start the preaching of the Gospel to the Chinese. These people were Michael Ruggieri and Francisco Pasio. Matteo Ricci was also trying to enter China. All of them were Italians. They all met at the gates of China, having come from totally opposing directions: the Italians by sailing east and the Spaniard by sailing west.

The result of Sánchez' visit to China was minimal. He personally achieved nothing regarding permission to enter China and preach the Gospel. Once he returned to Manila, Sánchez pressed the Governor and the Bishop, in view of the opposition of the Chinese to any kind of contact with the Spaniards, to prepare for a military conquest of China. For Sánchez that opposition was a clear *casus belli*. Even Salazar was influenced by Sánchez. His mission to Macao to bring the Portuguese to the obedience of Philip II was totally achieved, but there were no celebrations to honour the union of the two crowns because of the suspicions of the Chinese against the Spaniards.

In June of 1582, the Portuguese authorities of Macao accepted Philip II as their king, without any oath of allegiance, since they had not yet received the news from the King himself or from the Viceroy of India. Sánchez left Macao for Manila via Japan at the beginning of July. The Chinese would not allow him and his companions to sail straight to Manila. On the way to Japan the galleon encountered a terrible storm near the coasts of Formosa and many of the passengers got drowned or were killed by the natives of Formosa. Those who survived, among them Sánchez, returned once again to Macao. By December of 1582, the Portuguese of Macao took the solemn oath of allegiance to Philip II, since news had already arrived from the Viceroy of India to that effect. Finally the Chinese gave permission to Sánchez and his companions to leave Macao in a Portuguese ship straight for Manila. They arrived in March of 1583.

CARTA DE FRAY DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P., PRIMER  
OBISPO DE FILIPINAS, AL GOBERNADOR DE CANTON,  
ANUNCIANDO EL DESEO DE ESTABLECER  
CONTACTOS ENTRE ESPAÑA Y CHINA.

La gracia de Dios, que crió el cielo y la tierra y gobierna todo lo que en ella se contiene, sea en la guarda y amparo de vuestra merced.

Muchos años ha que he tenido noticia de esos reinos, que entre nosotros llamamos la China, y aunque estaba tan apartado de ellos, como lo están los reinos de Castilla de esos, siempre he tenido esperanza de poderme ver en ellos para tratar y comunicar con gente de tanta razón y pulicia, cuanto me dicen ser los naturales de ese reino.

Ansí este Dios que gobierna todas las cosas tuvo por bien de cumplir este mi deseo; y por orden del rey de Castilla y del Sumo Pontífice de Roma, a quien todos los cristianos estamos sujetos, me envió a estas islas de Luzón por obispo y pastor de todos los que en ella viven, y en todas las demás islas a ella comarcanas. Habrá como siete meses que llegué a esta isla, donde viven muchos naturales de ese reino de la China, y otros muchos que en sus navíos han venido a tratar y contratar con nosotros, los cuales procuro sean bien tratados, y que de nadie reciban agravios, y los trato y favorezco como propios hijos, según que de ellos podrá vuestra merced informarse, porque éste es mi oficio y no otro alguno.

Es el rey de Castilla uno de los más poderosos príncipes que el mundo tiene, riquísimo de oro, plata y perlas y piedras preciosas. Tiene a su mandar la más belicosa gente que hay en él,

LETTER OF FRAY DOMINGO DE SALAZAR, O.P., FIRST  
BISHOP OF THE PHILIPPINES, TO THE  
GOVERNOR OF CANTON

May the grace of God, Creator of heaven and earth and Ruler of the universe keep and protect your grace.

I came to know about that kingdom called by us *China* many years ago. Though I was far from it, as the kingdom of Castille is from China, I always entertained the hope of finding myself there one day to deal and communicate with the natives of that kingdom because I am told the people are reasonable and educated.

It pleased God, the Ruler of the universe, to fulfill my dream. The king of Castille and the Supreme Pontiff of Rome to whom all Christians are subject, sent me as Bishop and shepherd to all those who live in these islands of Luzon and other neighboring islands. It is about seven months since I arrived<sup>2</sup> to this island where many natives from that kingdom of China live. They and many others come with their ships to trade with us. I see to it that these people are well treated and will not be abused by anybody. I deal kindly with them and favour them as my own children, as Your Grace may be informed by them. This is one of my main obligations.

The King of Castille is one of the most powerful rulers of the whole world: very rich in gold, silver, pearls and precious stones<sup>3</sup> He has under his power the most warlike people to be

ansí por mar como por tierra. Y con tener su asiento más de cinco mil leguas de aquí es tan temido y obedecido de sus vasallos como si presente le tuviesen. Cuando acá me envió me mandó que tratase con los gobernadores de ese reino dejasen tratar y contratar a sus vasallos en él, para que de ésta manera nos conozcamos unos con otros, y lo que hay en aquél reino se comunicase con ése y lo de ése con él; de lo cual no puede dejar de venir mucho bien a entrambos los reinos.

Para tratar esto enviamos el gobernador, que aquí está en lugar del rey, y yo, que estoy en lugar del Sumo Pontífice de Roma, a un padre de mucha calidad y de quien acá hacemos mucho caso, para que trate lo arriba dicho y otras cosas que lleva por memoria, al cual dará vuestra merced tanto crédito como a nosotros mismos que fuéramos a tratarlo.

Y pues los mensajeros, entre todas las naciones del mundo, son libres, razón será que éste padre que lo es, sea de vuestra merced y de todos los de ese reino tan bien tratado como acá esperamos lo será. Y que, siendo con brevedad muy bien despachado, nos le han de tornar a enviar sano y salvo, como acá hacemos a los que de ése reino vienen.

El sumo Dios guarde la muy ilustre persona de vuestra merced y le conserve por muchos años con la felicidad que desea. De Manila.

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found, both at sea and in land. Even if he is five thousand leagues from here, he is respected and obeyed by his vassals as if he were present. When he sent me here he ordered me to establish relations with the governors of that kingdom in order to trade and deal with its vassals so that through this way we would come to know each other and what is found in that kingdom will be exchanged with the things of our kingdom and vice-versa. The result will be beneficial to both kingdoms.

In order to achieve this the Governor, who is here in place of the King, and I, who am in place of the Supreme Pontiff of Rome, sent a Father of great qualities and to whom we listen carefully, to discuss with you what has been specified above and many other things we have commended to him. Your Grace may give him as much credit as if we were the ones who are there.

Since the ambassadors among all nations of the world are free, it will be fitting that this Father, who is our ambassador, will be well received by Your Grace and by everybody else in that kingdom.<sup>4</sup> This is our hope. We also hope that he will be sent back to us, safe and sound, as we do here with those who come from that kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

May the Supreme God keep the most illustrious person of Your Grace for many years with the happiness we desire. From Manila.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The letter bears no date but it was written by Salazar in 1582, as credence letter for Alonso Sánchez. We see this from the very letter of Salazar where he says that it was seven months since his arrival to the Philippines. Furthermore, Sánchez left Manila for China in March of 1582. The letter has no signature because the present copy is only a transcript. The original letter was personally taken by Sánchez. We have not been able to find it.

We know that Sánchez was belittled by the Viceroy of Canton for presenting such a poor letter. Governor Ronquillo gave him a *chapa* written in Chinese, prepared by a trader from Manila and signed by the Governor himself. It read like this:

"Captains and guards of the coast of China: if you happen to come across this Father, let him proceed on his journey without any harm. He has been sent as an ambassador by the great Mandarin of Luzon to the Viceroy of the province of Canton. He is a good man. His profession is to preach the law of God and serve Him. All those in his company are good people. They are not armed. They will not do anything evil to anybody" (TORRES PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, p. CXLIX).

This was resented by the Viceroy for it was customary among high Chinese officials, when sending ambassadors to other people, to provide them with elegant letters, highly adorned, as befitting ambassadors of so high an Emperor or his representatives.

<sup>2</sup> Salazar took shelter in Ibalon Bay (Sorsogon) by the first of July 1582. He arrived in Manila on September 17, 1582. This letter, then, must have been written in March of 1582, just before Sánchez sailed for China as a special ambassador of Ronquillo and Salazar.

<sup>3</sup> One of the best means, in the opinion of the Spaniards, to establish friendly relations with the Chinese was by sending to them an embassy with rich and expensive gifts. The Augustinians, the very first ones to come to the Philippines and the first ones to enter China, though without any positive results, pressed Philip II to send an embassy. This happened in 1574 through the agency of Diego de Herrera. Juan González de Mendoza was appointed to supervise the embassy and to buy the expensive gifts to be sent to China. The gifts of the embassy were rich cloths, saddles, arms and armour, velvet of different colours; six barrels of excellent *añejo* wine from Jerez, of 27-1/2 arrobas each; two clocks and two pictures, one of emperor Charles I and another of Philip II, retouched by Alonso Sánchez Leonardo and a beautiful image of the blessed Virgin Mary.

The embassy and gifts were not ready until 1581 when everything was sent to Mexico. Unfortunately, just then the past Governor General, Doctor Francisco Sande, and the procurator of the Philippines, Gabriel de Rivera, arrived in Mexico and opposed the sending of the embassy and the gifts. In their opinion, the Chinese would not welcome the embassy nor accept the gifts; and if they were to do so, they would interpret the gifts as an act of vassallage, for they thought of themselves as the center of the world and their emperor as the king of heaven. Finally, orders were given to dispose by sale of everything and the proceeds of the sale were sent to Spain.

<sup>4</sup> Sánchez was bringing with him some gifts for the Chinese authorities. One of them was a clock. This is a story in itself. The two clocks prepared for the embassy of Juan González were not sold in Mexico for lack of buyers. Salazar, on his way to the Philippines, took them to Manila. One of them was now given to Sánchez who gave it to Michael Ruggieri, the Italian Jesuit who had come to Canton *via* Portugal, India and Macao. He later on gave it to Matteo Ricci who took it to Peking where, as the very first European since the Middle Ages, he was allowed to enter and reside. This clock and better ones brought later on shocked the Chinese from their complacency and helped them to realize that the men who created and assembled these machines were very learned people. Technology was knocking at the door of China. For the first time the Chinese came to see that other people, this time the Europeans, were as advanced and intelligent as they were, if not more. The welcome of Matteo Ricci and other Jesuits at the court of Peking has probably more to do with technological curiosity than with their interest in Christianity. (Cfr. TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, LI-LVIII).

<sup>5</sup> Sánchez and his companions faced extensive interrogations during their stay in China. At a certain moment, they were imprisoned and threatened with death. Finally they were forgiven and expelled to Macao "because they are foreigners and ignorant".

The Chinese authorities extended a *chapa* to Sánchez and his companions commanding them in the strictest terms to return to Luzon and never try again to enter China. They and the Spaniards of the Philippines were threatened with death if ever they attempted to enter China. The *Chapa* reads like this:

"By the will of God, a frigate with eighteen people arrived to a harbour called *Quechu*. It was apprehended by our fleet and

brought here. From the outset we wanted to condemn them to death. After further investigation we came to realize they were good people. Later on another frigate with twenty six persons came to a harbour called *Chana*. Our coastguards brought them to us here in Canton. After due investigation we came to know that the people of the frigate were men of God, all of them good. Thus we freed them and sent their *chapa* to the Tutan and he approved it. He ordered the Aytao and Conchinfu of Canton to send them to Macao.

Since this frigate came from the island of Luzon with letters and gifts, we looked at our laws and found that we could not receive those things, nor make friends with those people because they belong, in the parlance of our laws, to those who have cat eyes. We have to be afraid of these people. We sent notice to our Tutan and he answered: our laws welcome everybody except those who have cat eyes. He ordered the letters and presents to be returned to them and sent the people to Macao. Now we order the Spaniards to go back to Luzon and not let them be deceived by the Chinese who are there because we shall punish and kill them if they return here. This *chapa* given to them must be placed in a public place for the Chinese of Luzon to see, so that they will not advise the Spaniards to come here. Now, since we are good people, we let them return in peace. But let them tell those in Luzon never to come here, because we shall not tolerate this. Our coastguards shall kill them" (TORRES-PASTELLS, *Catálogo*, II, pp. CLVI).

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