

發表論文

## ON THE ORIGINS OF THE KOREAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fr. Juan Ruiz de Medina

Let me start by quoting a few lines written in Rome around 1700 by Polish historian, Dunin Szpot:

“To tell the truth, the Jesuits in Peking had already learned from the Korean ambassadors, as well as from the Tartars sent by the Emperor to the King of Korea, the greatness of that kingdom... Nevertheless, since he who loves something speaks of it and studies it with pleasure, our fathers in Peking... not yet satisfied after learning once and many times the things of Korea... whenever they found an opportunity, ardently looked forward to becoming better informed about Korean facts, in order that some day... the missionaries of our society would not be considered like ignorant strangers, unaware of Korean matters, both private and public.”<sup>1)</sup>

I would like to apply these words to myself. I have learned much about your country in the past four years, and yet, the things I do not know are countless. My wish though, is not to be considered as an ignorant stranger, but as a friend coming from afar to meet you.

You probably heard of, or read an article of mine, published in *The Korea Times* around February this year, which was commented upon by other vernacular newspapers. There I explained why I undertook my

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1) Thoma Ignatio DUNIN SZPAT, *Collectaneorum pro Historia Sinica* V, ARSI [Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu] *Japsin* 105 II 356, manuscript [Ms].

research on the beginnings of the Korean Church. Now it will be enough to share with you my surprise when, in a certain archive, I found an autograph of Gaspar Vilela, proposing to the general of the Jesuits, Francisco de Borja, in a confidential form, the enterprise of evangelising Korea. The letter was written in Goa, India, on the 3rd of November 1571. The last page of the letter says:

“At two days away, between China and Japan, there is another kingdom called Korea, which we call Tartans... Some five years ago, Father Cosme de Torres thought it convenient to send to it a father, to see what could be done there, and the [good] luck fell upon me. I departed, but I could not fulfill my wishes, because of the many wars that happened in the way, Japanese against Japanese, which were an impediment.”<sup>2)</sup>

Only professors Schurhammer and Schütte<sup>3)</sup> knew the existence of this manuscript, as far as I know, but they never refer to the paragraph dealing with Korea. And yet, the details provided by Vilela are so important that this letter should be the starting point for any objective research on the Korean Church.

Vilela tells us that Cosme de Torres, who was the Jesuit superior of the Japanese mission immediately after St. Francis Xavier, had nourished the idea of evangelising Korea by 1566. At his indication, we can imagine, Vilela obtained information about the land's circumstances, and he himself was elected to carry on the enterprise, after he had founded the difficult missions of Kyoto(京都) and Sakai(堺).

In 1566, possibly by the middle of the summer, he said good-bye to his superior Torres, who had his residence in Kuchinotsu(口之津), Nagasaki(長崎) province, and started his adventure toward some harbor in the island of Kyushu(九州).

We know nothing of his companions, but it is fair to think of a

2) ARSI *Japsin 7 III* 80vss, Ms.

3) SCHURHAMMER GS II 624; SCHÜTTE, *Mission Principles* I 201.

Jesuit brother, one interpreter and some baggage hands. The Japanese mission had started only 17 years before.

Vilela's expedition ended in failure, and he remained in Japan for four years, gathering a rich harvest of conversions in Bungo(豊後), Amakusa(天草) and Nagasaki. This was also the time when he became the closest confidant of Cosme de Torres and the only Jesuit to be at the deathbed of his superior on October 2, 1570, not far from the fortress of Shiki(志岐). Less than one month later, Vilela sailed to India, and from there he sent to Europe the letter I am commenting upon. This letter was a faithful echo of these confidential talks he had with his superior, and can be considered as the *Last Will and Testament of Cosme de Torres*. The last lines say:

"That treasure is preserved for him who will deserve it. If some fathers go there, it seems that it should be of great service for the Lord. And one can easily go there without much pain, with the help of the lords of Japan. I mean through letters [*of introduction*], because some lord is well known there, and that is enough to be able to enter the land."<sup>4)</sup>

Vilela was thinking of soon returning to Japan, and it is clear he expected a positive answer from Francisco de Borja appointing him to the Korean mission. But both, Borja and Vilela died the following year, 1572.

### **Earlier contacts of Jesuits with Koreans in Japan**

History writers usually give as a matter of fact that the idea of evangelizing Korea sprang up in the missionaries' minds as a result of the invasion in 1592. They forget that the Jesuits in Japan lived immersed in the Japanese society of the Muromachi(室町) and Azuchi(安土) epochs, and that this society was in close commercial and cultural contact with Korea. The number of Korean residents in some sections of Japan was very high. Professor Usuki Hanaomi(白杵 華臣) says that,

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4) ARSI *Japsin*, *ibid.*

when St Francis Xavier and Cosme de Torres were living in Yamaguchi city, a colony of 2,000 Korean and Chinese merchants had their shops in that town, mainly in the so-called Tojin Koji(唐人小路) Street.<sup>5)</sup>

It will be significant to recall that in some Catholic churches of Japan there were some Portuguese, Spaniards, Chinese, Bengalies and Africans mixed with the Japanese Christians. And also Koreans. We know, for instance, that Farher Pedro Gómez sent a Korean *dojuku*(同宿) to Omura (大村) to teach the Catholic doctrine to his fellow countrymen in their language when they were taken to Japan as prisoners of war in 1592 and 1593. This means that the said *dojuku*, and most likely his family, were Christians before the Japanese invasion.<sup>6)</sup>

#### **Did the Jesuits forget Cosme de Torres' legacy once Vilela died ?**

Luis Frois, the successor of Vilela in Kyoto, wrote about a conversation held by Oda Nobunaga(織田信長) with several Jesuits in 1580, during which Frois himself acted as interpreter. Nobunaga spoke in a relaxed mood on many topics, among them religion. He was in favor of spreading the Christian doctrine in Japan. But when the conversation reached the point of his own conversion, he turned aside to a new topic, saying that he wanted to conquer China and Korea, where his sons should become kings. At this point, Frois inserts in his report<sup>7)</sup> a good number of comments on Nobunaga's sons, sincere friends of the Jesuits, as if he would indirectly hint that the Jesuits commented among themselves about the possibility of establishing new missions in Korea and in China, a thing that, as far as China was concerned, the Jesuits were already trying from Macao, following orders of Father Visitor

5) USUKI Hanaomi(臼杵華臣), *Tairiku Bunka no Yunyu*(大陸文化の輸入), in *Yamaguchi Ken Hyakka Jiten*(山口縣百科事典) 105.

6) Being a foreigner, and considering the strong links within the Korean family, it is highly probable that the whole family of this Korean *dojuku* belonged to the Church. On the other hand, the formation of a *dojuku* required some time before starting his catechetical task.

7) ARSI *Japsin* 9 I 97v, Ms.

Valignano, who was present at the conversation with Nobunaga. Valignano himself was acting just according to the wishes of St. Francis Xavier, who had died at Sanshoan Island near Canton.

**When did the Christian Doctrine enter Korea for the first time ?**

From 1579, Father Miguel Ruggieri resided in Macao and dedicated full time to learning the Chinese language. Within a year and a few months, he was able to read and write some 12,000 Chinese characters, but his main task was to compose a Catechism in the Chinese language. Ruggieri foresaw that his Catechism would rapidly expand throughout China, and in fact so happened because, even before he completed it, its reputation had passed beyond the limits of the Canton province, and even that of Kiangsi, whence several Chinese scholars, attracted by Ruggieri's work, visited him during his stay at Canton city in 1581.<sup>8)</sup>

In November 1548, some 1,200 copies of that Catechism were printed, and soon afterwards the total number of copies became more than 3,000. Matteo Ricci, who had accompanied Ruggieri since 1582, wrote that, when in 1585 the ambassadors from Cochinchina to Peking arrived in Canton, the Jesuits "gave them many copies of the Catechism written in Chinese, a language they know very well. And the fathers provided them a gentle treat, *since they thought that some day, ours* [i.e. the Jesuits] *would go to their kingdom* to preach our faith, and by means of this good start, they could find them there in good temper". Historian D'Elia indicates that those "many copies" were brought to Peking by the autumn of 1585.<sup>9)</sup>

Ruggieri's foresight was not limited to China and Cochinchina: it was meant for all the tributary kingdoms as well. And as a matter of fact, his prevision was *fulfilled in Korea before the Japanese invasion*, some time between 1585 and 1592. Father Duarte de Sande wrote in

8) ARSI *Japsin* 9 I 51v, Ms. Letter of Pedro Gómez, Macao, October 25, 1581.

9) D'ELIA, *Fonti Ricciane* N. 317.

Macao, in 1596, these words:

"The books our fathers have made, which are the Catechisms, spread so much in China, that the Japanese, *going now to conquer Korea*... found there in Korea—which is very far from Canton province where our fathers are, and even from Kiangsi—*one of our Catechisms*... all dogeared from the many hands that used it. So they wrote me from Japan".<sup>10)</sup>

It is clear that Ruggieri is speaking of 1592, now, the year when the Japanese were *going to conquer Korea*, and that this now does not mean 1596, when everything was indicating a near withdrawal of the Japanese army. Since 1592 some time was needed to bring the Catechism from Korea to Japan, still more time to send a letter from Japan to Duarte de Sande in Macao, and again for him to redact his report while waiting several months till the departure of the ships going to Malacca first, and then to Europe.

The Catechism of Ruggieri was in Korea sometime before 1592, perhaps since 1585, when the ambassadors from Cochinchina took many copies to Peking. And nobody can affirm that, among those many copies received in Canton from Ruggieri himself, only one entered Korea. Moreover, it can be said that handwritten copies circulated soon among the avid readers of the upper class.

Quite possibly you know another fact which shows the Jesuits' interest for the evangelization of Korea before the invasion. It happened on the 4th of May 1586, six years before Hideyoshi's(秀向善) navy sailed from Nagoya(名護屋) to Pusan. That day, Jesuit vice-provincial Gaspar Coelho, 8 other Jesuits, 15 dojuku and a group of children from the Osaka Seminary, were welcomed by Hideyoshi in that city. Hideyoshi, like Nobunaga in 1580, spoke to them of his plan to conquer China and Korea, and promised to build churches and publish a decree that all the inhabitants of these countries accept the Christian faith.<sup>11)</sup>

10) ARSI *Japsin* 13 I 24v, Ms.

11) ARSI *Japsin* 45 II 86, Ms.

When we, today, in the 20th century, read this paragraph, we cannot help being overcome with astonishment. Can we imagine the reaction of Coelho and his companions when they heard it from the lips of Hideyoshi himself? On another occasion I wrote that even the over-optimistic Coelho could not have been deceived by just words, since he knew the man he was speaking with, nor could he accept as a fact the bizarre conquest of Korea. But this surely was an encouragement, rather than an obstacle, for those nine Jesuits, once the audience was finished, to let them comment upon the utopic possibility of the Christian future of Korea, although all of them opposed evangelization based on arms.

In the summer of the following year, Hideyoshi decreed the expulsion of all Jesuits. They then understood that the tyrant had fooled them, and that his plans about Korea, different from those of Nobunaga, were only a means to eliminate Christianity from Japan. And many of them, v.g. Pedro Gómez, made this clear in their letters.<sup>12)</sup>

In spite of it, Visitor Valignano, who strongly criticised Hideyoshi's plan to invade Korea, wrote the following words soon after the war started:

"It might well be that God will make of him [*Hideyoshi*] an instrument to open to the Gospel the gate also in Korea and in China, without *Hideyoshi* being aware of it".<sup>13)</sup>

I am now going to make *a few reflections on GREGORIO DE CESPEDES*. This Spanish Jesuit is unanimously considered to have been *the army chaplain of Hideyoshi's forces*. Unanimous with the recent exception of professor Park Chul.

Are we allowed to give Céspedes this appellation? Certainly not. And I found my negative answer upon these eight facts:<sup>14)</sup>

12) Cf. *ORÍGENES* 31ss. ARSI *Japsin* 11 II 288; 53 146 etc. Mss.

13) ALVAREZ-TALADRIZ quoting Valignano's letter. Cfr. *Sumario del Japón*, 375.

14) These 8 points are deducted from Céspedes' letters and from reports of Fróis and Pedro Gómez. See my work *ORÍGENES*, index.

1. Céspedes and his companion, brother Hankan León<sup>15)</sup> (erroneously called Fucan, Foucan, Eion) were official outcasts, by a decree of Hideyoshi, from July 25, 1587. This sentence not only was not retracted while Hideyoshi was alive, but was confirmed on March 20, 1597.

2. Céspedes and Hankan were sent to Komunkai(黑浦) by their superior, Pedro Gómez, following a request from the Christian officers *and soldiers* in Konishi Yukinaga's(小西行長) encampment, the reason being that, unlike some Japanese soldiers who returned to Japan in 1592 and 1593, they had not been able to comply with their religious annual duties. Neither Konishi, nor any other officer, much less Hideyoshi, nominated Céspedes chaplain of the army.

3. Céspedes and Hankan did not land in Korea with Konishi Yukinaga. They did not accompany the Japanese army during the invasion, nor in its march to Seoul and Pyongyang, nor during its retreat to Komunkai-Pusan. They simply arrived in Korea seven months after the soldiers were in place, on reserve as we could say, waiting for a peaceful solution through diplomatic channels.

4. Céspedes landed in Komunkai under cover and unknown, except to some Catholic friends, after sending notice of his arrival to Konishi Yukinaga's brother, through brother Hankan, who could easily conceal his real identity. Only after taking all precautions, did Céspedes set foot on the land.

5. After December 28, 1593, the day of their landing in Korea, Céspedes and Hankan remained hidden in the highest part of Komunkai's fortress. Only there could the Christians who wanted to receive the sacraments, approach the Jesuits, being admonished that they should keep secret the priest's presence in Korea.

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15) CHOI Andreas [o.c. p. 2] calls him Léon Fucan and adds in a note: "Les documents ne nous fournissent aucun renseignement sur sa vie". In fact Brother Hankan's life is very well described in original manuscripts, which can be consulted in my book *ORÍGENES* pp. 37~45, 48, 50.

6. On the rare occasions Céspedes and Hankan left the Komunkai fortress, for instance to visit Kuroda Yoshitaka(黒田孝高) and his son Nagamasa(長政) or to go to the living quarters of So Yoshitoshi(宗義智), they were surrounded with precautions in order that their presence be unknown to non-Christian soldiers.

7. When Yukinaga's critically sick men required the help of the priest, Céspedes came down *at night*, to avoid being identified.

8. Céspedes and Hankan did not fraternize with the soldiers at their encampments, contrary to what should be a normal gesture for any chaplain.

It is inconceivable, I believe, to give the title of army chaplain, at least as the word is understood today in Korea and elsewhere, to a priest who had to be concealed in order that the soldiers of that army not discover him.

And a further proof that Céspedes tried to stay out of sight is the fact that both Jesuits were forced to return to Japan in April or May 1595, when their presence in Korea was detected by Kato Kiyomasa Toranosuke(加藤清正處之助), and the fact was utilized to accuse Konishi and to arouse suspicion of him in the mind of Hideyoshi.

By the way, I would like to mention another false idea accepted in practically all books and articles dealing with the composition of Hideyoshi's armed forces. They say the majority was composed of Christians, as if the responsibility for the Korean invasion were to be linked with the Christian (Catholic) name. It is indeed a curious majority, because Céspedes himself speaks of *over 2,000 Christians*, while the army counted around 150,000 men, as the authors admit.

Some writers speculate about *Céspedes missionary work among the Koreans in Korea*. Johannes Laures and others, misguided by some short phrases of the Annual Letters, give a positive answer. But these and other reports clearly state that those converted by Céspedes and Hankan in Korea were Japanese officers, land-owners(殿) of Tsushima(對馬), Kyushu(九州) and Honshu(本州), particularly mentioning some

vassals of the persecutor Mori Terumoto(毛利輝元) of Yamaguchi(山口), and one Shinto(神道) priest(神主) of Usa Hachiman(宇佐八幡) called Tokieda(時枝).<sup>16)</sup>

Since there are not other written indications, we are only allowed to imagine that Céspedes, and mainly Hankan, could also talk with some Koreans, baptized in Japan and admitted to the Japanese army during the peace talks, like the future martyr Miguel and others.<sup>17)</sup>

### Did some other missionaries come to Korea during the war?

Yes, a second Spanish Jesuit, Francisco de Laguna, with another Japanese brother, probably Tamura Román, arrived in Korea, called there by Arima Harunobu Protasio(有馬晴信), daimyo of Arima.<sup>18)</sup> Their visit was reduced to two months, December 1597 and January 1598, surrounded by even more secrecy than that of Céspedes. Konishi forced the two Jesuits to return to Japan, although they wanted to remain a longer time in Korea. This is another proof that they were not chaplains, but pastors of their flock.

It is impossible to say more than this. Consequently, the four Jesuits who came to Korea in 1593 and 1597, were neither army chaplains nor Korean missionaries properly speaking, although they had in their hearts to spread the faith here, as is understood from Céspedes' intervention with the Chinese general Yukeki, in March 1594 in Komunkai, which for brevity sake I will now omit.<sup>19)</sup>

Let us next see the question of *mass conversions of Koreans in Japan*.

I do not know any monograph or complete study of these conversions. The old manuscripts are rather fragmentary regarding Korean themes, but offer us valuable documentation, although included in general reports.

16) ARSI *Japsin* 52 183. Ms. Cf. *ORÍGENES* pp. 42, 45.

17) ARSI *Japsin* 51 349; 58 72ss. Ms. Cf. *ORÍGENES*, index \*Miguel.

18) ARSI *Japsin* 54 2v, Ms. MHJ [*Monumenta Historica Japoniae*] I 410. *ORÍGENES* pp. 46~49.

19) A short explanation of the facts, taken directly from ARSI *Japsin* 12 I 182, Ms., can be read in *ORÍGENES* p. 34.

We can affirm with certainty that through many years, before and after the Imjin Waeran, several thousand Korean were baptized throughout Japan, from northern Akita(秋田) to the Goto(五島) islands. Historian Frois, referring only to Nagasaki city, wrote in 1596:

“This year many Korean prisoners received instruction [*to make their first confession*], men as well as women and children, who live here in Nagasaki. They say there are over 1,300, who were baptised two years ago [*i.e. in 1594*]. Our Lord wanted to receive *now, beforehand, these first fruits*(初穂) *of that kingdom of Korai* on the occasion of this war for the better gain of their souls.”<sup>20)</sup>

I selected this quotation among many others because in it you can see the ceaseless thoughts of the missionaries about the Christian future of Korea as *something apart from the Japanese mission*. Frois does not say that the Koreans' conversion increased the number of the faithful of the Japanese Church. These new Christians are called *first fruits* (初穂), *primitiae, received by Our Lord*, a word which does not match with the old harvest of the Japanese community. Frois, moreover, is *not speaking as a lonely voice*, because:

“The comments all make about them are that, if the preaching of the evangelic law would enter in Korea, and it seems it won't be difficult from Japan, they will easily accept the faith, and it will be much spread out in those kingdoms” [*Japsin 46 247*]. Frois and all, of course, expected a rapid peace treaty.<sup>21)</sup>

In my book on the *Origins of the Korean Catholic Church*, published in June last year, I indicated that the birth of your Church happened not in 1784 but in 1592. Soon afterwards, there came out some strongly

20) ARSI *Japsin 52 203v*, Ms.

21) After the visit of the Chinese and Korean ambassadors to Hideyoshi, the missionaries' hope dissappeared, giving place to a more radical solution, namely the desired death of Hideyoshi. There were insisting rumors of his being ill due to poison given to him by the Chinese ambassador, as it can be read in the manuscripts of ARSI *Japsin 12 II 362v; 12 II 364; 31 104; 53 146 y en MHJ I 412*.

negative criticisms<sup>22)</sup> about what some persons considered *my opinion*. Now you can see that the expression was not invented by me, nor is it a personal opinion of mine: it is just a repetition of what a historian, Frois, contemporary to the facts, expressed in writing. Because first fruits (primitise) is not a sporadic thing, but the beginning of a new harvest, and not something to be added to the last crop. And Frois, I repeat, does not say that these first fruits were admitted into the Church of Japan, although they were reaped on Japanese soil (and most welcomed by the Japanese community), because the Korean baptized there were members of the newly born Korean Church with full rights.

Strictly speaking, *your Church was born sometime earlier*, when the first Korean was baptized, but it is impossible to specify the date, as for instance the date of the baptism of the Korean dojuku(同宿) who was sent by father Pedro Gómez to Omura to teach his fellow countrymen.<sup>23)</sup>

On the other hand, we know perfectly when the baptism of the first Korean adult after the invasion, Kaun(佳恩?)<sup>24)</sup> Vicente, took place.

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22) It is unnecessary to indicate that the main criticisms were due to the mentioned article written by Fr. Choi Andreas and published by the *Katolik Shinmun*.

23) ARSI *Japsin* 52 94, Ms.

24) Some Korean authors read Kwon(權) for the Caun written in the manuscripts, thinking it corresponds to his monosyllabic *family name*. For historians acquainted with the missionaries' style and their *writings* it is evident that, if the lad's name would have been Kwon, he would have pronounced Kwon and the European missionaries would have written Quon instead of Caun, in a similar manner to their spelling of Quambaco and Quanto (Kwanbaku, Kwanto 關白, 關東). Kaun was the *first name* of the lad, a typical Korean name, as it can be understood from the toponimic of a town far from Seoul to the SE called Kaun(佳恩). Vicente's Korean name could have been written with these Chinese characters of beautiful meaning or with others. CHOI Andreas calls him Caun, but based on later authors becomes lost at the significance of the name Cafioye given to Kaun. Says CHOI: "Il-y-á une difficulté dans le fait que la traduction française parle de <Vincent Caun, ou Cafioye> tandis que l'original italien dit; <Vincenzo Caun, à Casiyose>. DALLET, comme les autres historiens

Historians and writers mistake him for the eldest of two brothers, sons of the secretary of the King of Korea, taken prisoner by So Yoshitoshi of Tsushima, and manumitted and adopted by his wife Maria, daughter of Konishi Yukinaga.<sup>25)</sup>

Strange as the story might appear, Kaun Vicente was not a prisoner of war. Pedro Morejón tells us that the lad spontaneously went to Konishi's encampment in Seoul. His father, of a noble family, was the commander of a division of 3,000 cavalymen. Knowing the imminent capture of Seoul, the King left the city on the first day of the fifth moon (June 10, 1592) and Vicente's father, with his family, escorted the King.<sup>26)</sup> Only Vicente, although he too could have gone, separated himself from them and remained in Seoul. According to father Morejon, "his Guardian Angel guided him to the encampment of Don Agustín [Konishi], and a relative of his received the boy, who looked like an angel".<sup>27)</sup>

This relative of Konishi was the excellent Christian, Hibiya Heiemon (日比谷平衛門) Vicente, Lord of Shiki(志岐). He took Kaun with him to Japan in the summer of 1592, and entrusted him to Father Morejón, who was then the rector of the Jesuit residence at Shiki. The brilliant boy received catechetical instruction, and spontaneously asked to be baptized. He was 13 years old, or perhaps only 12 if, as it is natural,

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coréens et japonaise, comprend <Cafiyoe> comme prénom japonais, en supprimant <ou> dans la traduction française. *Toutefois le problème reste posé.*" I am glad to inform author CHOI that the problem is not *posé* but solved. His Cafioye, Casyiose or Cafiyoe was Cafioye in the original documents, which were not Italian, as he says, but Portuguese and Spanish. Today we write it as Kahyōe, its Chinese characters being perhaps 嘉平衛. This name was adopted by Kaun in his last years in order to confuse his persecutors, when he was still a *Dojuku*, before he joined the Society of Jesus. But for the Jesuits he was always Caun Vicente.

25) ARSI *Japsin* 52 37v; 52 100, Mss. Cf. *Origenes* p. 57.

26) BRAH [Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid] *Jesuitas* 9/2666 461v. The date of the King's departure from Seoul is given by Fróis, *História* V 548ss.

27) BRAH *ibid.*

Kaun himself was counting in the old oriental way. According to the Japanese canons, this was the age marking adulthood, the boy being entitled to wear the katana(刀) and the wakizashi(脇差).<sup>28)</sup>

The baptism took place in December that year, quite possibly on Christmas Eve. His Christian name was the same one of his benefactor Hibiya. Some time later, Vicente was admitted to the Seminary, together with the Japanese seminarians. There he undoubtedly met his compatriot, the eldest son of the King's secretary, the boy adopted by Konishi Maria.<sup>29)</sup>

The Imjin Waeran, said to have ended with Hideyoshi's death, saw its last day only in January 1599.<sup>30)</sup> Five years later, in August 1604, the King of Korea sent his first embassy to Japan to ratify his friendship with Tokugawa Ieyasu. The ambassador was Most Reverend Samyong Taesa(大使). This was a chance the Jesuits would not let escape, and so they tried to meet the ambassador, a thing that Céspedes had done at Komunkai in March 1594, and Pasio and Organtino in 1596 in Kyoto.<sup>31)</sup>

Father Rodrigues Giram writes that a bonze, a great scholar, who

28) I do not say, of course, that Kaun Vicente used the swords, since he was at the service of the Church. Nevertheless, being of noble descent, he was entitled to do so.

29) ARSI *Japsin* 52 100, Ms.

30) ARSI *Japsin* 13 II 260, Ms. The date of the Japanese soldiers return to Japan, and consequently the *real end of the war*, is given by Valignano, who saw the fact with his own eyes and writes from Nagasaki, February 22, 1599. CHOI, quoting second hand sources, writes: "L'occupation dura jusqu'au mois de novembre de 1598, année où la Corée expulsa les troupes japonaises avec l'aide de l'armée chinoise" [o.c. p.2 note 2]. It is also strange in a Korean author as he is, not to know when the Japanese invasion started, as he himself admits: "Nous ne discuterons pas cette question. Nous nous rangeons du coté des historiens, dont l'opinion nous paraît plus acceptable" [o.c. p.3 note 5]. And yet, Fróis [V 548ss], *contemporary to the facts*, says clearly that the capture of Pusan occurred in the morning from the 12 to the 13 of the fourth moon, that is to say, May 24, 1592.

31) Cf. *ORÍGENES* pp.44-45 and 53.

came with that embassy, received a book made by the Jesuits, namely, a digest of the Buddhist teachings and its refutation. Says Giram:

“One of our brothers sent to him a compendium of the said sects, telling him that after studying them he had found that everything becomes nil, and that there was no salvation, nor soul, according to that doctrine. And since he [Samyong] was a great scholar, the brother invited him to inform him of his opinion on these points.”<sup>32)</sup>

The brother probably was the erudite Japanese physician and Jesuit Hoin(法印) Vicente, a man of around 64 years of age, then living in Kyoto. He received a written reply from Samyong Taesa, filled with praise, accepting the interpretation the Jesuits gave to the Buddhist doctrines.<sup>33)</sup>

The Korean embassy was also the happy occasion for a group of former prisoners to be repatriated to their mother-country, among them many Christians. When they landed in Tsushima Island on their way to Korea, one of them belonging to a high-class family, held in his hands the Chinese catechism written by Ruggieri. And writes Giram:

“The good Korean Christian made such efforts to bring it with him, that he did not stop day or night till he finished a copy of it... saying that with it he was to preach in Korea... since he, for the time being, could not take a father there, although he earnestly so wished”.<sup>34)</sup>

We do not know the name of this spontaneous catechist, but let us

32) ARSI *Japsin* 55 246, Ms.

33) *Ibid.*

34) *Ibid.* CHOI, inspired in an Italian translation, mentions the case of this nobleman. He is not totally exact when translates <non era stato fatto degno di condurre seco> as <ne s'était pas cru digne d'amener avec lui> [o.c. p.5], which, after all, was not an “attitude orientale de politesse” as CHOI indicates, but an ordinary European expression (written by Rodriguess Giram, Portuguese) tinted with modesty, usual in those times, to say just that “he could not” do as he wished. It is also curious that author CHOI *does* not identify Fuscima as Tsushima, in Korean language Daemado, adding [o.c. p.5 note 5]: “Il paraît que l'île de Fuscima se situait près du port de Facata, de la provincia de Chikuzen, au nord de l'île de Kioussiou selon L. PAGÉS...”

not forget that it was in 1605 when this group of Christians and a catechist returned to Korea.

We know other Korean Christians who spontaneously dedicated themselves<sup>35)</sup> to instruct their fellow nationals, and even Japanese, in spite of their condition as slaves. They showed this apostolic spirit, so remarkable in the Koreans in 1784, and we must take it into account when studying the first days of Christian community life and activity within the boundaries of their country from the beginning of the seventeenth century.

In 1610 the expatriated Koreans built in Nagasaki *the first Korean Church of history*.<sup>36)</sup> In 1612, Pak Marina, a Christian since 1606, joined the religious congregation for women called Miyako no Bikuni (京の比丘尼) or Beatas de Miyako, in Kyoto.<sup>37)</sup>

This same year, 1612, father Giovanni Battista Zola, Kaun Vicente and a Korean helper were appointed to go to Korea.<sup>38)</sup> They found it impossible to do so from Japan, but Kaun Vicente sailed to Macao, and from there he walked to Peking, where he waited for more than six years to set foot in his country as a catechist. The Tartar threat and their ensuing invasion of China forced him to go back to Macao. He had mastered the Chinese language, as he had earlier mastered Japanese and Portuguese, and of course, his mother-tongue. In Peking he had been instructing in the faith many Chinese mandarins (大官) and although there are no extant records, he could possibly have gotten in contact with the Korean ambassadors to the Imperial Court, or at least some of those in their company.

35) For instance, Paulo and Maria, in Goto(五島) islands, and Ota Julia in Nijima(新島), as written in GUERREIRO III 156~157 and APT [Archivo de la Provincia de Toledo, of the Society of Jesus in Alcalá de Henares, Spain] C-286 465, Ms.

36) APT C-286 134v, Ms. *ORÍGENES* 64-65.

37) COLÍN, Francisco S.J., *Labor Evangélica de los Obreros de la Compañía de Jesús en las Islas Filipinas*, edited by Pablo PASTELLS S.J. (Barcelona 1902) III 503~504.

38) *ORÍGENES* 70, 172.

Also in 1612, the well known Korean young lady Ota(大田?, 太田?) Julia was bannished from Suruga(駿河)(Shizuoka 静岡) to Oshima Island(大島), from there to Nishima(新島) and finally to Kozushima(神津島). I have compiled some unedited data about this remarkable woman. I think her baptism occurred in the spring of 1595, at the Uto(宇土) fortress, in Kumamoto(熊本) province, while in the service of Konishi Yukinaga's wife. Against the Japanese tradition and its Korean version,<sup>39)</sup> which marks Kozushima as Julia's burial place, there are trustful documents saying she was in Nagasaki in 1619 and 1620, once her exile had ended, and later in Osaka in 1622.

"Even a monkey can fall from a tree", says a proverb, and I myself have experienced it, metaphorically speaking. Until recently, I considered Miguel and Pedro, killed on November 22, 1614 in Kuchinotsu(口の津) as the protomartyrs of the Korean Church, but then I found that another old Korean man, called Hachikan Joaquín, was decapitated on August 16, 1613. His martyrdom occurred<sup>40)</sup> at Torikoe(鳥越), between Asakusa(淺草) and Edo(江戸), within the present city of Tokyo. For the moment, until I fall from the tree once more, Hachikan Joaquín must be considered the Korean Protomartyr.

But let us come back to the *question of the Church inside Korea*. Did the Christians baptized in Japan keep their faith alive once they were back in their country?

I read some autograph letters of Italian fathers Boldrino, Giannone and Eugenio, written between 1613 and 1628.<sup>41)</sup> They asked their superior generals Aquaviva and Vitelleschi in Rome, to accelerate sending missionaries to Korea, even suggesting that the Pope should promote this task with monetary help.

39) I would appreciate it very much if some person could indicate me the sources used by the authorities of the Museum of the Martyrs at Chol Du San, Seoul, to say that Ota Julia was entombed in Kozushima(神津島) and to consider her as a martyr, indicating even the date of her martyrdom.

40) ARSI *Japsin* 58 197, Ms. *Archivo Ibero Americano* 38 (1935) 388.

41) ARSI *Japsin* 34 I 133v; 139v; 144v; *Japsin* 17 112; *Japsin* 35 203, Mss.

In 1618, two Spanish Dominicans, guided by a Korean called Tomás, who was then living in Manila, arrived in Nagasaki with the purpose of crossing to Korea keeping away from Tsushima Island. Tomás was the son of a distinguished person of the Korean court, who, by means of another ambassador, tracked down the whereabouts of his son in the Philippine Islands, and called him back to Seoul. The Dominican fathers were not allowed to leave Nagasaki for Korea.<sup>42)</sup> They returned to Manila, while their provincial, the future martyr Francisco de Morales, soon after this first try from their part, considered logical to give up the impossible evangelization of that country.<sup>43)</sup>

But Tomás and his Korean companions, likely Catholics from Nagasaki or perhaps from Manila, sailed as they had planned, after promising Jesuit superior Mateo de Couros to obtain from the King of Korea, through Tomás' father, the license to admit a missionary into Seoul. If it was granted we do not know but it is certain that Tomás, educated by the Jesuits in Japan since his childhood, and his companions, composed once more a group of Christians determined to preach their faith inside Korea. Tomás was a qualified catechist, zealous as Dominican historian Aduarte wrote, since he had been trained as Dojuku by the Jesuits in Japan.<sup>44)</sup>

From all I have said, you can conclude that, from the Deginning of the 17th century on, there were in Korea one or several Christian communities. In addition I will confirm the fact with some explicit

42) The interpretation of the facts from the Dominican side can be confronted with that of the Jesuits, according with their own testimonies. Cf. *ORÍGENES* 75~80.

43) Diego ADUARTE O.P. omits the letter of Francisco de Morales, which can be read in a Japanese version in *Fukusha Francisco Morales O.P.*, *Shokan*, *Hokoku* (福者フランシスコ・モラレス, 書簡, 報告), edited by José DELGADO GARCÍA O.P. (Tokyo 1976) 140.

44) This fact is distorsioned in the narrative of Diego ADUARTE, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, Vol. 2 (Manila 1640, second edition Madrid 1963) 122.

testimonies.

In 1624, the Portuguese historian Rodrigues Tsuzu(通事), ousted from Japan in 1611, wrote in Macao that "the religious of the Society of Jesus sent to that country [*Korea*] two or three missions, and reaching there from Japan they took [*symbolic*] claim of it. Besides, in Japan, many thousands of Koreans became Christian, and *many of them returned to this country, where they keep their faith*".<sup>45)</sup>

In 1628, the above mentioned father Giannone, a future martyr, wrote thus in another letter to superior general Vitelleschi:

"Some years ago I wrote to Your Paternity to urge Father Visitor of these parts, that he undertake opening the mission of the Korean Kingdom... It looks like the Lord wants that the gate to that kingdom be open, *where there are many Christians who returned from this Japan to their kingdom*."<sup>46)</sup>

In 1637, the new superior of the Jesuits in northern China, Francisco Furtado, was thinking of founding a new residence in Shantung(山東), China, with the purpose of crossing, from there to Korea. Meanwhile he was studying the sea route taken by the Korean ambassadors after their land route via Shengyang, 奉天(Mukden) was blocked by the Tartars.<sup>47)</sup>

Three years later, the new Visitor Antonio Rubino decided to send from Macao three or four Jesuits to Seoul, but was forced to cancel his plan for lack of money.<sup>48)</sup>

This same reason and the scarcity of manpower obliged Francisco Furtado, in 1645, not to comply with the wishes of the King of Korea (Crown Prince Sohyon according to Korean sources, but King in the Jesuit records). The King was then in Peking after several years as hostage of the Tartars, and wanted a Jesuit in Seoul "to teach me and

45) BRAH *Jes. Leg.* 21 323v, Ms.

46) ARSI *Japsin* 37 272, Ms.

47) ARSI *Japsin* 161 II 177, Ms.

48) ARSI *Japsin* 38 218, Ms.

my vassals". The King understood the reasons of Furtado, and said that anyhow, one of the eunuchs just baptised by father Adam Schall would take the place of the Jesuit and preach at the Court. Korean authors speak of five eunuchs baptised and three Christian ladies, all of them Chinese, who went to Korea and then returned to China when the Korean Prince died. On the other hand, Christian sources seem to speak about *Korean vassals*,<sup>49)</sup> and do not limit their number to five. In any case, this group of Christians, having decided to preach Christ's doctrine, returned to Korea, and must be counted among the faithful of the Korean Church. How far and how long their preaching was effective is a matter which needs further investigation, but the fact cannot be denied.

It is not surprising, therefore, if another document of 1666 says that a certain non-Christian Chinese captain called Souqui affirmed in Manila, to Jesuits and others, that *in Korea there was a very beautiful church and many Christians, and that there were European fathers.*<sup>50)</sup>

This last assertion is neither confirmed nor denied in other documents I have read. However, there are some hints of its validity, because on the 11th of November of that year, 1666, father Matias da Maia wrote that thanks to the books the Koreans and others introduced into their countries, the Christian doctrine "was spread not only inside all China, but even in other neighboring tributaries, such as Korea, Tonkin and Cochinchina".<sup>51)</sup>

And although da Maia does not indicate the presence of European missionaries, Belgian Jesuit Antoine Thomas wrote from Coimbra, Portugal, on August 21, 1679, that a long time before, he had read that one Jesuit had arrived in Korea, sailing from China, and was well received by the Korean people, and that they listened to his preaching, and several hundred men received baptism.<sup>52)</sup>

49) *ORÍGENES* 87~89.

50) ARSI *Japsin* 70a, Ms without page numbering.

51) ARSI *Japsin* 22 390v, Ms.

I should add here some pages about fathers Sambiasi, Schall, Verbiest, Thomas, Gogeisl, Hallerstein and many others, personally acquainted with Koreans, but this and many other things will be in your hands by next year, when the Sogang Institute of East Asian Studies publishes the Korean translation of my book.

Nevertheless, I will anticipate a paragraph of an anonymous letter, written by a companion of father Verbiest on October 6, 1678. It says:

“Last month, a legate of the King of Korea came to this court. We spoke with him about soon opening the entry of the Society of Jesus in that country, little known in Europe... He said it seemed good to him that some of Father Ferdinand [*Verbiest*]'s brother go to that court. But he added: <Next year I will come back here, and I will bring positive news after clearly hearing the King's will>. And also: <In as much as it will be in my hands, [*I will take care*] that he assent to my request>.”<sup>52)</sup>

The legate was sincere, because he left for the Jesuits a most precise itinerary from Peking to Chausien, to the capital of Korea, through Shanghai, Shengyang and Icheu, by the Yalu River, a total of 316 leagues, about 1,264km. But the anonymous writer of the letter also added:

“The biggest difficulty... is that without explicit permission from the Emperor, which cannot be applied for without much difficulty, non of us can be sent there safely. Nor will the Korean King, because he is tributary and like a vassal, venture to have anyone [*of us*] by his side without permission from this court, of which he is very much afraid.”<sup>54)</sup>

On June 20, 1711, the borders between Korea and Manchuria were opened.<sup>55)</sup> The Jesuits got at last imperial permission to build a church

52) ARSI *Japsin* 187 17, Ms.

53) ARSI *Japsin* 164 11, Ms.

54) *Ibid.*

55) At the Symposium one of the participants argued that the border between Korea and Manchuria was not open June 20, 1711, as I indicated. I am

in Shengyang. After that time, the Korean ambassadors freely visited the Jesuits whenever they went to Peking, as Hallerstein said in 1754.<sup>56)</sup> It is obvious to think that during those years some Korean Christians took part, among the hundreds of merchants escorting the ambassadors, because the right to participate in the journey could be bought for 120 or 150 taels.<sup>57)</sup>

I will end this talk with a curious detail from father Antoine Thomas in 1704, seven years before the opening of the Korean-Manchurian border. Thomas speaks of the Christian community in Shengyang, sustained and taken care of by another spontaneous catechist, the Tartar mandarin, or better called Prince Té Ignacio, converted to the Catholic faith by means of books on religion. Thomas indicates that *the very proximity of Korea* was an invitation for *tactful missionaries who could see through the circumstances*. He added:

“Although at the present time absolutely nobody is allowed to pass there [*to Korea*] without explicit license of the Emperor, nevertheless, without setting foot on the land [*the opposite bank of the Yalu River*], which is forbidden, they ceaselessly barter to and fro on their boats. This is an enormous advantage, because although the language of the Korean is different from that of the Chinese... they perfectly understand our books on religion written in Chinese.”<sup>58)</sup>

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very much displeased that I cannot now indicate exactly my sources for this point, since all my notes are in Rome. Nevertheless, I can say they were the diary of the Jesuit scientists working for the Emperor of China. That was the date the Emperor published an Edict ordering the opening. I offer my apologies and my promise to answer any question once I am again at the Institutum Historicum by the middle of November.

56) Henri BERNARD, *En Mandchourie* 34.

57) D'ELIA, *Fonti Ricciane* N. 837. It must be noted I do not affirm a fact but a possibility. The fact is that among those diplomats and merchants of the embassies there were some at least who showed interest in Christianity and visited the Jesuits in Peking whenever they arrived in the Chinese capital. It could be considered normal that some of them would return there after being baptized by the missionaries.

58) ARSI *Japsin* 149 351v, Ms.

Now, we have before our eyes this "saintly commerce" conducted with Korean people on the waves of the Amnok River, even before the opening of the gates between the two countries. And Thomas knew that many people, in conditions similar to those of Prince Té Ignacio, were led to baptism before they were able to maintain a conversation with the missionaries.<sup>59)</sup>

We do not have records about the number of Koreans baptized by Sambiasi, Schall, Furtado etc., in Peking, Macao and elsewhere. Again, as far as I know, no thorough investigation has been made inside Korea about a possible phenomenon parallel with that of the Kakure Kirishitan(隠れキリシタン), the Japanese Christians hidden during the long Tokugawa(徳川) persecution, who passed on the Christian faith and baptism to their children and grandchildren until 1873. In my opinion, a similar deed must have occurred in Korea too.

The apparently sudden expansion of Christianity in Korea, starting from 1784, is a phenomenon which cannot be scientifically explained by spontaneous generation, as some authors pretend,<sup>60)</sup> and other writers copy without further study. The real reason for the real fact was a gradual and constant sowing of the doctrine, which up to now has remained untold.

Untold, but not unknown. Last July 7th I was invited to give a conference to a group of Spanish speaking people in Seoul, several

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59) A rather long compendium of the apostolic activities of Prince Té Ignacio and many biographical notes on him, unpublished as far as I know, are preserved in ARSI *Japsin* 125 200ss, Ms.

60) Those authors who invoke the favorable social conditions of the Yi society to explain the "sudden" conversions boom in 1784 forget that the same conditions, if not better, existed in the Korean society much earlier than that. At any rate, a rational and scientific explanation, whatever it might be, must be added to the expression *spontaneous generation* applied to that boom, to make it acceptable to a responsible historian. On the other hand they must prove that there were not Christians in Korea (as they assert and I deny) with something else than aprioristic affirmations which question their authors credibility.

Koreans included, and I had the pleasure to hear from one of them that his family has a long tradition of being Christians for twelve generations, to which we must add the age of that gentleman.<sup>61)</sup> A simple countback leads us to the middle of the 17th century, the time when, according to the Chinese captain Souqui, there was a most beautiful church and many Christians in Korea.

My work was to investigate and digest these testimonies left by our forgotten forefathers. They, indeed, were the unquestionable glory of your motherland, unlike the researcher of today, who is nothing other than a happy discoverer of the real treasure we inherited from them.

Today I offered you a limited, very limited part of these testimonies. Next year, I hope, you will be able to go through the whole body of information published in your own language.

There still remain to be investigated the Korean traditions, family records, temple archives, the architecture, pottery, ceramic and painting in towns and villages, the old tombs scattered through the country, etc.<sup>62)</sup> All this study is intrusted to you, and only you are qualified to unveil the secrets of a long-lived Church, the Church your forefathers started in December of 1592, and Cosme de Torres had conceived in 1566.

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- 61) That gentleman is His Excellence Mr. Tae Hyun Yoon, former Ambassador to the Republic of Ecuador. Some participant at this Symposium objected that his words are not a sufficient testimony unless proved. I am sure that both his excellence as well as President of Sogang University, Fr. Sye, who offers a similar case for his family, will gladly give any explanation to those who would like to consult them.
- 62) My own investigations in search of Christian tombs of the early Tokugawa Period in the Yamaguchi Province, Japan, carried on from 1976 to 1981, produced successful results. At the present moment, similar investigations are being conducted in other Japanese provinces.