
Documents 1594B

Reports on the last embassy to Japan

Source: AGI 1-1-3/25; translated in B&R 9:140-141, 147-149.

B1. Letter from the Governor to the King, dated Manila 22 June 1594

Sire:

In the papers I send your Majesty by these vessels, I give an account of Japanese affairs and suspicions. In this letter I shall content myself with saying that when my father made answer to the second Japanese embassy, he sent with Father Fray Pedro Bautista, to accompany and take care of the fathers, and with further orders to treat with that king, one Pedro Gonzalez, a man who, by trade and commerce, had acquired some knowledge of that land, and acquaintance with some of its inhabitants. He went and performed his mission well.

The Japanese king, either because he is a man of unusual good-will, or because he harbors designs, tells me in his original letter that he wishes to have your Majesty see it, and to have the same Pedro Gonzalez, who brought it, take it with him to Spain, together with an account of what he saw in that kingdom. He indicates with some insistence that he wishes this, and I am advised by letters from there that, if he be not sent, as he knows everything that is done here, he will be vexed and take it as a pretext for making an earlier declaration of war. Therefore in my opinion his wishes ought to be observed since no harm will be done. Pedro Gonzalez carries the original letter and its translation, together with the reply which was sent from here. Although, as I say, the bearer goes ostensibly only to comply with the wishes of the king of Japan (for I have already written to your Majesty respecting this matter), yet your Majesty may, if such be his pleasure, hear from Pedro Gonzalez certain peculiarities of that kingdom which he has observed. So, because he is an honorable man, prudent, straightforward, of good reputation and abilities, and because he labored and incurred heavy expenses on these voyages, kindly grant him some favor; for he has deserved it, on account of the affection, good-will, and care that he has been ordered to do in your Majesty's service.

May our Lord preserve your Majesty for many prosperous years.

Manila, 22 June 1594.
Luis Pérez Dasmariñas¹

B2. Report from Pedro Gonzalez de Carbajal to the King, ca. 1595

Sire:

It is well known that the emperor of Japan is powerful in men and weapons, and that his people are of great courage. He is making ready 200 ships, and casting quantities of artillery. Japan is distant from the realms of the Philippines 400 leagues, which is a voyage of 15 or 20 days by sea. On his friendship depends the preservation of the Philippines, and of 200,000 Christians in that same kingdom of Japan, as well as of the rest of its people, who are being christianized from day to day. We have great hopes that all of them will become Christians, because it is known surely that many of the principal people of Japan would become Christians, if they were not hindered by their fear of the said emperor's indignation. He ordered me to say to your Majesty, on his part, that if your Majesty would make friends with him, he would always provide the governor of the Philippines with what assistance was necessary, even to 10,000 men. When the governor of Meaco (who is the person who governs all that kingdom) delivered me the letter which he brought for your Majesty, he told me to tell your Majesty that the emperor was your friend, and that on his part the friendship would not fail; and that your Majesty should not, because he was so far away, consider it as of little account.

Gómez Pérez de Las Marinas [sic], Governor of the Philippines, sent me with Father Fray Pedro Bautista and three other fathers of St. Francis, to take a letter to that emperor in response to the one which he had written. We went with this arrangement, that the fathers would remain in Japan (as they did) and that I should return with the answer that the Governor desired. Having delivered the letter to the emperor, when he learned from the letter that the Governor of the Philippines wished to notify your Majesty of this emperor's intentions, he said, without giving me an answer, that since the Governor wished to advise you, he could not do it better than through me. That I might be the better able to do so, he ordered that I should examine his fortresses, cities, and rich palaces, and the indications of his great power, so that I could give your Majesty a good account of it all, as well as of the kind treatment that was always given to me, and to the Franciscan fathers who remained there. These fathers asking him for a small piece of ground on which to build a house and church, he told them that he would give them a large piece in the place where they were, and also furnish them food. Then he ordered

1 Ed. note: The next day, the Governor wrote a small letter, by way of a post-scriptum: "After despatching a letter to your Majesty in the vessel **San Felipe**, which it was thought best to send first, as it was in Cebu, I had other letters from Japan from Father Fray Pedro Bautista, the originals of which I send herewith. From these letters, and from one from the emperor of Japan, a copy of which is enclosed, we can easily infer how little security is assured us by his friendship and promises, and be sure that any slight occasion would induce him to break them." [AGI 67-6-18.]

that the site and house that they might select should be given to them. And because the land was so cold, he ordered the fathers (who are discalced) to be given shoes and [warm] clothes; and said that he would give them these things and would treat them as his children if they would obey him as their father.

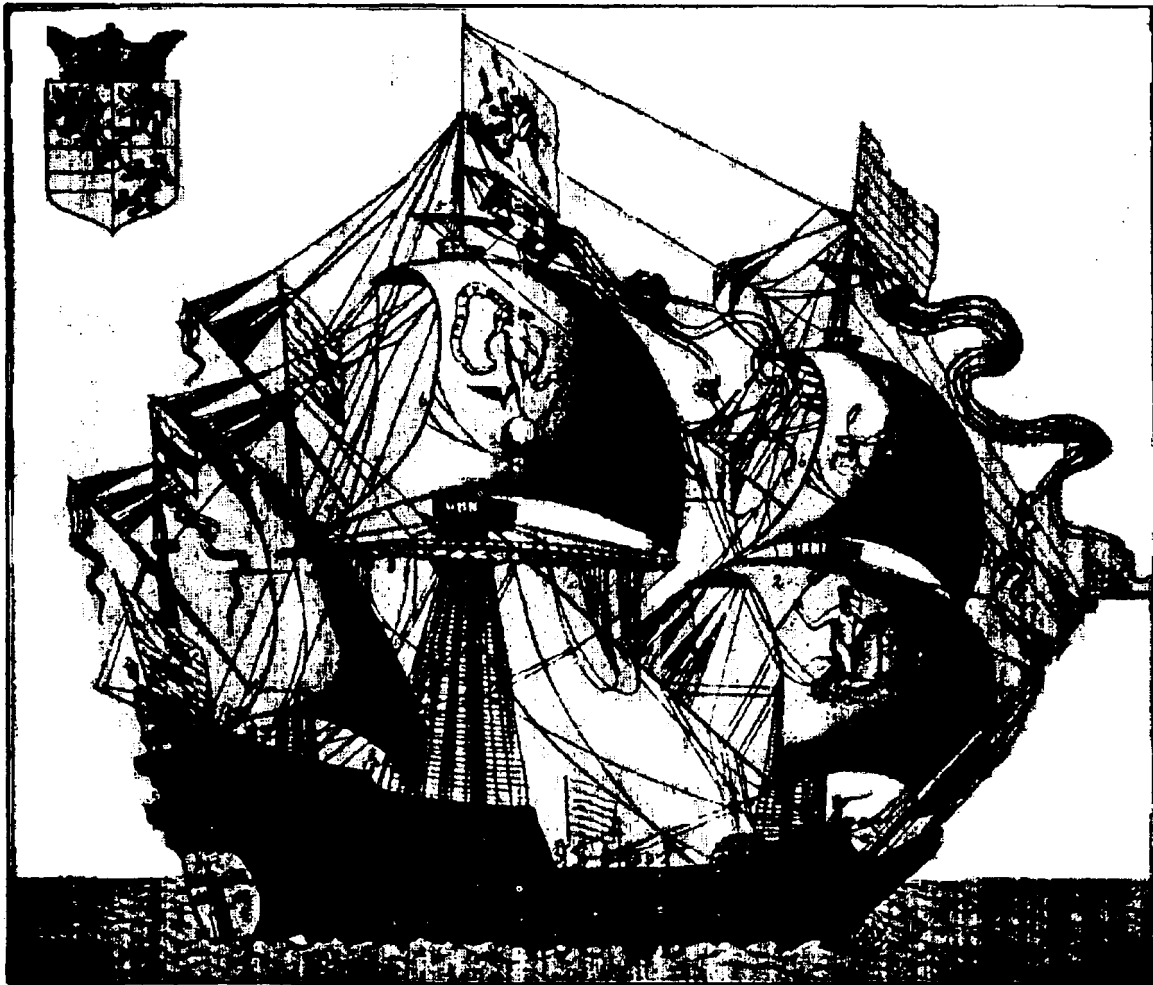
He sent me word to say that he would await your Majesty's answer. While we were in Japan at that time, the fathers and myself knew for certain that some of the Japanese chiefs asked the emperor's permission to go to subjugate the Philippines, and make him lord of them, without any cost to him. The latter replied that he would have nothing to do with it, until he saw your Majesty's response.

It is quite necessary that your Majesty should send an order to the Bishop of Great China at Macao; and the fathers of the Society of Jesus, to the effect that all the ships should leave there and go to Japan. These should investigate, and look to it that they carry no people who have not a good understanding of Christianity and fidelity; because that emperor is desirous of meeting people who will teach him to construct ships and artillery in our manner. All this will be of considerable harm and inconvenience; for, although he has artillery and ships, they are less effective than ours.

They tell me that on this [Spanish] coast is Father Fray Miguel de Benavides¹ of the order of St. Dominic, by whom your Majesty can be very well informed of all these matters, because he has dealt with some Japanese, and has gone through Great China.

Pedro Gonzalez de Carbajal

¹ Ed. note: Fr. Benavides had arrived at Manila in 1587 but had left in 1592 in the company of Bishop Salazar.



A galleon of 1594. (From a Dutch engraving)