
Document 1633

Letter from Governor Salamanca to the King, dated Manila 14 August 1633

Sources: AGI 67-6-8; translated in B&R 24: 285-290.

Letter from interim Governor Juan Cerezo de Salamanca to Philip IV

Government affairs

Sire:

I have informed your Majesty from Mexico that, in accordance with the regulations in regard to the vacancies in this government of the Philippines, the viceroy of New Spain entrusted me *ad interim* with it because of the death of Don Juan Niño de Tavora, the regularly-appointed incumbent. **I left Acapulco on 5 April, and entered these islands with the flagship and *almiranta* on 8 July, after a prosperous voyage,** although the great calms of this year have obliged the ships to make port in the island of Mindoro, at a distance of 25 leagues from this city, where they are awaiting suitable weather to enable them to get to this city of Cavite. Accordingly, I came in an oared vessel to take possession of this government, on the 2nd of the present month.

...

This government and the preservation of its provinces consist in that the commerce of Great China and Japan be current, and specially that of Japan. In truth this is more considerable, both as it is a powerful neighbor, and because they are wont to bring from that kingdom many products which are needed—namely, iron, copper, lead, saltpeter, flour, salt pork, vegetables, drugs, and silver—and which it costs your Majesty considerably to have to supply from New Spain.

Our **relations with Japan** are broken up, because the Dutch with their accustomed scheming, so much so that the king has been irritated on account of the religious who have preached the holy gospel from these provinces, and fearful of new conquest, they have converted into hate the old-time friendship. The Japanese employ extraordinary harshness toward the Catholics. Although your Majesty has ordered my predecessors

in so prudent and Christian a manner, by your royal decrees, not to allow the religious to go to Japan until the times change, they have been unable to prevent it; for the religious have imprudently embarked in secret, thereby causing more trouble than good. They have thus left a deficiency in the missions of these provinces, where they have sufficient in which to busy themselves, since whole nations are heathens. The measure that I believe to be practical is for your Majesty to command the provincials of the Orders not to allow any religious to go to Japan for the present; for they only serve to irritate one who, if placated, will some day, when undeceived in regard to the Dutch malice, grant the liberty which he now denies. Now and henceforth I shall endeavor to give Japan to understand your Majesty's desire of good friendship and relationship. In accordance with this I shall attempt the same with the provincials, and have them concern themselves in converting the Japanese and Sangleys who live among us, until your Majesty be pleased to order otherwise.

The trade with Great China has also declined, because the Portuguese of Macao have become masters of it, as they are so near...

...
The governors whom your Majesty shall provide for these islands should be as experienced in nautical matters as in those of the land; and should at the same time understand judicial and legislative matters.

...
The advice-ships from New Spain were wrecked [!] this year. The ships sailing hence have put back to port, and their despatches have not arrived...

...
Because of my having taken possession of this government so late, although your Majesty had ordered that the ships that sail annually to New Spain should depart on the 1st of June, I have found, on the 2nd of August, their despatch so delayed that it has been impossible to make it before now, although I have not endeavored to accomplish any other thing since my arrival. I desire to have your Majesty informed that this despatch is not chargeable to me.

May God preserve your Majesty, etc.

Manila, 14 August 1633.

Don Juan Cerezo de Salamanca.