
Document 1620A

Letter from the King to Governor Fajardo, dated Madrid 13 December 1620

Sources: AHN Cedulaario Indico, tome 38, folio 101, n° 80; translated in B&R 19: 173-182.

Letter from the King in answer to the Governor's letter of 1619

The King: To Don Alonso Fajardo de Tenza, my Governor and Captain General of the Philippine Islands, and President of my royal Audiencia residing there.

The letter which you wrote me on the 10 August of the past year has been received and examined in my royal Council of the Indies; and the resolutions adopted in regard to the matters discussed therein will be explained to you in this.

...

Your inform us that the king of Japan and several private persons—great vassals, and lords of ports of that kingdom—have usually had presents and valuable articles sent to them from your city at my expense, every year when a ship went to that country; and for several years this has not been done, and various religious persons have considered the matter, and say that those Japanese have observed this, and attributed it as a lack of esteem for their friendship; and this has aroused them to resentment, and to prefer the friendship of the Dutch, on account of the many presents which they give to the Japanese from the spoils they have taken. You say that since there are some advantages in retaining friendly intercourse with that country, and for other reasons, you give me an account of this that I may order what is most fitting for my service. This consists in the measures suggested by your own prudence, with the information that you have of the present state of affairs, and the ordinary relations with Japan; and to whom, how, when, and in what quantity it is best to make these gifts, in such manner that they shall only serve to win back their friendship, and not appear a regular and settled thing, in the manner of an acknowledgment [i.e. tribute]—for that, in the course of time, might be troublesome in other matters. Accordingly, examining into this in conformity with

your obligation for the benefit of my royal estate, you will do in this matter what, considering the time and occasion, you shall judge suitable for the interests of our religion, which is introduced into Japan, and for peaceful intercourse and friendship, and the greatest benefit to the trade and commerce of those islands.

...

There are none of your letters [of 1619] which have not been answered, and the same may be said of those from the Audiencia, the officials of my royal estate, and other officers.

Madrid, 13 December 1620.

I the King.

By command of the King, our Lord: Pedro de Ledesma.