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CHINESE IN 16th-17th CENTURY PHILIPPINES
Dr. Juan Gil

In 2011 I published in Lisbon a book where I tried to present the documentation found in Spanish archives, especially in the Archivo de Indias, on the Chinese who came to trade in the Philippines, or decided to stay there for some time or settle there for good, Chinese who were called *sangleyes* there. In this conference, I will try to make a summary of its content.

The relations started soon, in the wake of Legazpi's settling in Manila. Despite initial doubts, Chinese authorities never wanted to allow Spaniards to have a factory in their own land, as they had done with the Portuguese in Macao. This way, continuous trade between the continent and the Philippine archipelago began in 1572, with the Chinese always playing a major role. The ships, which came from the Fukien coast – especially Chang-chou and Amoy – although there was no lack of those coming from Canton, made the trip in 15-20 days.

When the ships arrived, a proper inspection of their cargo was made, the value of the goods assessed and tariff duties collected. These were of two types: one belonged to the Crown, as custom duties, consisting first in 3 % and, after 1610, in 6 % of the total value of the ship's cargo; and one going to the coffers of the city of Manila (the merchant tax and market commissions). Most of the cargo of Chinese ships was silk – silk from Chang-chou was reputed to be better than that of Canton, as it came from Lanquien [Nanjing], “which is famous in all that territory where a lot of very good silk is harvested, and where it is manufactured better than in any other place”-- satin, white and colored damasks, brocatels and textiles of different kinds. Neither were there a lack of other goods: various kinds of ceramics, wooden cases, writing desks, and in the beginning years, an endless series of foodstuffs: “Flour, sugar, cakes, butter, oranges, nuts, chestnuts, pine nuts, figs, plums, pomegranates, pears and other fruits, bacon, hams, and this one in so much abundance, that the city and outside areas have a year-long supply, as well as ships and fleets. They carry on board much supply of horses and cows for the land.” In the early years, the junks would supply Manila with gunpowder, which the Spaniards needed very much. But during the time of Governor General Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, Chinese authorities banned its export to the Philippines under pain of death, so that a possible enemy would not have weapons.

In the beginning of the 17th century, different commodities, according to export demand were being manufactured. The first Chinese junks only brought to Luzon “gift items”, succulent foodstuffs which François Wittert's fleet captured: “Capons... and good Chinese wine, and other gift items consisting of ham and fruits, although [the Dutch] left them behind for the wine.” The most exquisite clothes came later, when the galleon from Acapulco was arriving. In exchange, the Spanish government needed other goods, especially iron, wheat and flour.

What did Chinese merchants receive in exchange for their goods? According to our sources, they left Manila with “*reales*, gold, wax, cotton [which later, manufactured in the continent, would again be sold in the Philippines] and

dye sticks [*sibucaoa* or *palo de brasil*] and small snails, which is the currency in their land and of much value.” In the trade with Japan, deerskin was much valued. It was a product which, in Morga’s opinion, had to be prohibited to the Japanese and Chinese, as it would impoverish the hunting pool. But above all, the Sangleys took with them the much-desired *reales de a ocho*: China swallowed up all the silver from Nueva España. The Spaniards often complained about the trade anomaly: Chinese exchanged cheap commodities for good silver and gold. Governor General Sande excellently summarized the trade imbalance succinctly: “They bring silk of little value and the rubbish which they have over there, and in exchange they get gold and silver.” But Chinese goods were indispensable cargo for the Acapulco-bound galleon. Without a doubt, contraband existed. Buyers were also defrauded. The exceptional Chinaman’s industry invented a thousand ways to earn money fraudulently. There were merchants who tried to sell ham made of wood with such skill that they successfully deceive. But the fines, recorded in the section as “Chamber sanctions” in the accounting books, are conspicuous for their insignificance, and above all, for their rarity. For their part, not a few Spaniards enriched themselves using illegal use of their power and authority. The aggrieved Sangleys sent a letter of complaint to Philippe II in 1593 and again in 1594.

During the market period, Manila would be transformed. In a few months, the city would be flooded with Chinese. The first Audiencia was scandalized in 1584 upon realizing Manila’s defenselessness in the face of a possible attack from that wave of humanity: “When we arrived, there were more than 30 Sangley ships, and on them more than 3,500 men who... were enough to kill by beatings the more or less 200 soldiers who were in the city for its defense.” In 1636, more than 30,000 Chinese lived in the areas surrounding Manila. Evidently, trade promoted this clandestine immigration, whose networks and actions we usually do not know about. Neither do we know if in those centuries there were secret societies, like those which emerged later. Among the captains of Chinese ships who came to Luzon, the one of the few with self-confidence Guansan, the richest merchant who arrived in Cavite in 1599: his cargo was assessed at 137,761 pesos and 4 *tomines*, a huge sum. After the 1603 uprising, he, together with two other captains, Sinu and Guanchan, convinced the rest of the Chinese captains of the need to return to trade in the Philippines. He was also the one who in 1605 brought to Manila the letters of protest from the Mandarins from continental China and who brought back to Fukien Governor General Acuña’s response. In 1609, Guansan successfully pressed for the restoration of the Chinese settlement in Manila. He was truly one impressive character.

The annual trade indicates that in time, trade was moving from Fukien to several ports: Macao (during the Dutch siege), Taiwan, Canton, etc. Not all the Chinese came and went. Some stayed in Manila and its surroundings. Chinese residents made their first settlements in Baybay and Binondo and afterwards, at the parian, the first European Chinatown, which burned down— or was destroyed – in various occasions. They also had their own hospital, managed by the Dominicans (the San Gabriel hospital), as well as a church (the Santos Reyes) and a prison at the parian. For management of the parian, several officers were created. They were occupied by both Spaniards and Chinese. The Spanish officials were the *alcaide mayor*, the *guarda mayor*, the *alguacil*, the *escribano*, and the protector of the Sangleys. Chinese officials

were the Chinese governor, the *alguacil*, and the *escribano*, as well as interpreters and policemen.

The Spaniards soon decided to not meddle in the affairs of the community and let it have total autonomy, monitored, by a Spanish administrative body effectively assisted by some notable Chinese. This never-recognized surrender of authority meant in itself an admission of impotence: the dominant class was being dominated by the Chinese, who were essential in different aspects of life. No matter what they did or no matter how much they protested, how many orders be issued or how much they get mad at the Chinese, Spaniards could not live without the Sangleys, who were needed for all aspects of life. This circumstance, pleasant at the start, become to be odious.

The residents were subject to several fiscal impositions: the *tributo*, the permits, the *Caja de la Comunidad* (12 *reales* annually), the gambling gifts, and the *media anata*. Prominent Chinese were in charge of collecting payments, becoming the collector for their own compatriots.

How was the Chinese community? The scarce information we have refers to the big merchants. The traders of the parian, “where there is so much wealth, so many curiosities, and everything needed for food, clothing and other requirements of human existence” organized themselves into guilds based in a particular area of the market. Heading each of them was a “cabeza,” a Chinese chief named probably by the Spanish *alcaide* or their officials. The chief changed every year. It was the *cabezas*’ role to collect the money which guild members had to pay. From these guild leaders emerged the “cabezas del parian.” They do not seem to have been elected and they enjoyed great influence due to their money and prestige. Constituting a true and powerful Sanhedrin, feared and hated at the same time, these “cabezas” were almost always Christians, whether bonafide ones or for convenience’s sake. The common Chinese did not have much esteem for their “cabezas,” which were reminiscent in a way of Hong traders from 19th-century Canton: normally, they were considered thieves and corrupt. In the reform of the statutes of the *Caja de la Comunidad* which Diego Fajardo did in 1644, there is a very important provision. It specifies, no doubt at the instance of the Chinese, that “wages should be made with government decrees and paid to the Chinese themselves, not to their *cabezas*, because experience shows that there are among them who take some of [the money given].”

An important trader and collector at the start of the 17th century was the Chinaman Juan Bautista de Vera. Antonio de Morga described him as “rich and very favored by the Spaniards, feared and respected by the Sangleys, had been their governor many times, and had many godchildren and dependents, as he was very much Hispanized and with a lively personality.” He took care of the collection of tributes from the Sangleys in 1594, 1600 and 1603, and fought for them in 1599. He was one of the few Chinese who were given the privilege of sending goods aboard the Manila galleon, which he is recorded as having done in 1594. In 1600 he allowed himself the luxury of loaning 500 pesos to the royal *Caja de Manila*, for its lack of cash. But in 1603, this same Vera led the big rebellion against the Spaniards. His fortune, confiscated, was estimated at some 15,000 pesos. He had five slaves listed among his properties.

Let’s examine now a Chinaman who lived in Manila at the end of the 17th century. Don Juan Felipe Tiamnio – the Chinese, after acquiring a Hispanic veneer, no matter how tenuous, could not do without the “Don” – was born in Anhay around 1639. Once settled in Manila, he became a messenger, took up residence in Binondo and amassed a great fortune. He thus became a

“confidant and a familiar face” in the household of Governor General Juan de Vargas, who named him “chief and interpreter of the junks from China”. It was rumoured that “he made some purchases of Chinese goods” for the governor and his relatives, at prices lower than their value, we could presume; it was also said that he had imposed unjust collections from his compatriots. But nothing could be proved.

It was common for Chinese traders to form business ventures with the Spaniards. The former supplied the goods while the latter sent them to Acapulco. The names of several Chinese borrowers appear in the notebook left by the secretary Gaspar Álvarez, who died in 1620, and who had recorded the amounts they owed him.

Most of the Sangleys were artisans. Their undisputable industry produced much fruit. In 1576, the capital was a poverty-stricken city, with wooden structures and in need of almost everything. Francisco de Sande admitted this: “There is a great lack of all the professions, especially tailors and shoemakers, masons and carpenters.” Very soon, the Chinese took care of essential goods. The best and most lavish praise of their industry is found in a letter written by Bishop Salazar, although it also recounts the sad consequence of so much diligence -- the ruin of Spanish and native competition: “Spaniards have abandoned all mechanical work, because the Sangleys provide clothes and footwear for everyone, because they serve well Spain’s purposes and at a very cheap price.” As Fray Chirino would later write: “They are the tailors, the shoemakers, the iron workers, silversmiths, the sculptors, the locksmiths, painters, masons, weavers, and finally, all the services required by the nation, at so cheap a price, that a pair of shoes is worth not more than two *reales*. They make them in such abundance that there is no lack of one who orders them for Nueva España.” The construction and supply of Manila was in the hands of the Sangleys, and the Chinese themselves were involved in the introduction of the printing press. According to D. Aduarte, the first one to bring a printing press – a European invention, with moving types -- to Manila was the Chinaman Juan de Vera. There is in fact a book printed by Vera in 1604, *Ordinationes generales prouinciae Sanctissimi Rosarii Philippinarum* (Binondoc, per Joannem de Vera China Christianum, 1604).

Most of the small-time artisans lived as they could, crowding in the parian. The humble fishermen and boatmen slept in their small boats. There were also Chinese slaves. The clandestine trafficking of slaves from Portuguese controlled India and Macao to the Philippines reached significant proportions in the 16th and 17th centuries. On 9 August 1611, among the goods of the Lisbon-born ship repairer Miguel Fernandes auctioned off was a slave named “Miguel, of Chinese race, 20 years old.” There are more examples of this. Chinese immigration to the Philippines was, as was logical, essentially masculine. The sad solitude of the men led to marriages with women of all kinds, natives for the most part, but there were also from other races. There is a documented case – quite rare – of the marriage of a Chinaman to a Japanese woman. In Binondo, there were already some 500 mestizos in 1622, and their number ballooned in a few years.

Maternal influence was fundamental in the formation of this new caste, which inherited from the father the intelligence and the energy, and from the other the devotion, piety, and submission to the order established by the Spaniards. In 1667, Fray Juan de Polanco strongly praised their virtues: “These mestizos

are by nature, of good and beautiful disposition, and of great docility, of ready and fast understanding for trades, where they have an edge; they have talent for writing and talking; in the Arts and Theology, some are in no way inferior to the good ones from Europe. They are diligent and persevering in worship and in the Christian religion, and revere it with Catholic zeal and much fidelity to God.” The sons from these mixed unions integrated better in native society than in China. Over time, they formed a true social, political and cultural elite, who assumed municipal positions and even military careers: two of them rose to the rank of *maestre de campo general*, 22 to *maestre de campo*, 48 to *sargento mayor*, 145 to *capitán*, 13 to *ayudante*, 42 to *alférez* and 4 to *sargento*. When La Pérouse visited Manila in March 1787, a unit of 1,200 men was serving in the capital’s garrison. It is not by chance that the Philippines’ first saint, Lorenzo Ruiz, canonized in 1987, was one of these mestizos. Mestiza women also inherited the enterprising spirit of their parents and actively dedicated themselves to trade in the second half of the 17th century. They opened several stores in the towns surrounding Manila. Standing out among them, among other reasons, was Ignacia del Espíritu Santo, daughter of José Inca and María Jerónima. In time, she became Mother Ignacia, founder of the order’s convent.

Chinese Christians, who cut their long hair and wore hats, formed their own brotherhoods, in imitation of the Spaniards. During solemn feast days and funeral occasions, the organizations organized with much pomp as possible, trying to rival each other with displays of wealth and proofs of devotion. Archbishop Miguel de Poblete’s funeral on 10 December 1677, Sunday, saw the participation of "the brotherhoods, armed with their insignias and with many torches, the Sangleys, the Japanese and the natives, mestizos and brown-skinned ones, everyone in order and harmony.”

But the Chinese, appearing so fragile and weak, strongly resisted getting absorption by European civilization. For the first time in their vertiginous conquests, the Spaniards met a very great disappointment: a people of superior intelligence confronting them, resisting attempts at domination by other principles, customs, another morality and another religion. Converts were always few. After more than a century of Spanish rule, in 1682, according to Father Victorio Ricci, there were “some 1,000 or more Chinese Christians with their mestizos sons in the Philippines.” Fray Cristóbal Pedroche’s figures are more optimistic, estimating at 1,200 the number of converts in the Manila archdiocese and 300 in the other areas, although no more than 300 received appropriate catechetical instruction from a priest who knew their language.

The initial admiration felt by the colonizers gradually turned into painful stupor and very soon to rancor and resentment. Surprisingly, all the Spaniards, secular and regular priests, concurred on a prejudicial opinion on the Sangleys. They agreed about their excellent intellectual gifts, but they emphasized various defects and vices: greed, and duplicity, cowardice and cruelty, proclivity to sodomy, lust, inclination to gambling, propensity for suicides, insensibility, superstitions, and addiction to liquor. Undeniably, there was a cultural barrier between the Spaniards and the Chinese, seen in the insistence shown in cutting their long hair, a custom considered to be an idolatrous rite, and the prohibition of representations to which they were aficionados of. In the chronicles, there are no references to true friendships between a

Spaniard and a Chinese. Parian “leaders” were not friends, but fellow conspirators in criminal acts committed by the governors, their relatives and servants. The same conclusion is reached in the reading of ecclesiastical chronicles. A narrative on the spread of Christianity does not make any sense if it revolves only around the missionaries. The clearest sign that evangelization efforts have borne fruit is that the natives are at the center of the story and they are the ones, once converted, living a holy and exemplary life for the admiration of fellows and foreigners. The history of Japan is filled with cases of this type, as the success of the mission lies in the fervor and devotion of converts, not in the value nor in the sanctity of the teachers, no matter how pure, honest and virtuous they may be. Chronicles on the Philippines, on the other hand, cast an ominous veil on the existence of Chinese converts. There are no mention of important individuals which may attract our attention.

In Philippine historiography, there is no Chinese figure comparable to Don Justo Ucandono (Takayama Ukon), a *daimyo* forced to leave Japan in 1614, and whose death touched the entire Manila population. All the Spaniards, from the governor general up to the last soldier, toppled over each other to receive the Japanese exiled in the wake of the Tokugawa dynasty’s persecution of Christians. No similar gesture was accorded to the Chinese. When the chronicles talk about a Chinaman adopted by a Spaniard, it is to condemn his evil and the wrong reward he gave to his benefactor. An Agustinian, Fray Casimiro Díaz compared the two peoples: if the Japanese are brave, honest and observant of their religion, the Chinese are a complete opposite, being cowards, liars and weak in the faith; “the Japanese continue to be the difficult ones to convert to the true religion, but are faithful to the death in their convictions, while the Chinese are quick to accept baptism, more for temporary interests, and are very remiss in their duties.”

Curiously, the situation radically changes when the history of evangelization in China begins: the stories are filled with good examples, which the friar accounts embellish with an unreal air belonging to hagiographical legends. Only in the first book of the Dominican Baltasar de Santa Cruz do men and women of great importance emerge. We would search in vain for them in the annals of Philippine history. This strong contrast indicates the difference between one mission from another. The Chinese, who also occupied a secondary role in Spanish dominions, acquired a leading role in missions conducted in their own country.

Alfonso Félix and Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo were correct in comparing the fate of the Sangleyes during Spanish rule in the Philippines with that of the medieval Sephardic Jews. There was a fundamental difference: the Christian hatred for Judaism always came with a very strong religious component, a dimension absent in the case of the Chinese. Except for this detail, all stereotypes earlier assigned to the Jews were applied to the Sangleyes: intelligence and aptitude for business, cowardice, cruelty, uncontrolled sexuality and inclination to suicide. Both cultures stood out for their fascinating capacity for adaptation, which was put to test throughout the centuries. Another point in the rejection of evangelization efforts was the figure of the Chinaman, so recalcitrant to be assimilated by another culture, juxtaposed with the figure of the Hebrew, the hardline man who rejected Christ.

The reclusión in *ghettos* –the parian was definitely a *ghetto* – completed the parallelism. But the other side of the coin was the same: *pogroms* and expulsions. From here the description of Chinese read in narratives about the Philippines sounds a little typical: common places, trite phrases. Evidently, the Spaniards had a real basis to make a very extreme generalization. Suffice to recall that Bertrand Russell, a man who could not be suspected of bigotry or partiality, found three great defects in the Chinese character: avarice, cruelty, and the insensibility to suffering of others. Those same defects were noticed in the 16th and 17th centuries. But this handle made the Conquistadores apply to an entire people the preconceived classificatory label.

I think that the evil which vitiated the relations between the two peoples was corruption: the avarice and venality of both. To understand it in its own context, one has to see that as a beginning premise, the Philippines provided fertile soil for this virus to the social fiber and the common good to take root. Officials came to Manila – at the farthest confines of their worlds – accompanied by a big retinue of relatives and servants whom they had to put in positions of authority according to their rank. Salaries were not very high. Government coffers had little money to satisfy a big number of solicitants no matter how just their demands were. In extreme poverty, there was only one way to avoid ruin: make deals, though they may be illegal, with the true lone source of wealth in Manila: the Chinese community.

The Chinese, for their part, very aware of the power of money, knew how to play their cards. This way, they succeeded in getting their own official, although that concession was in violation of the laws of Manila. Human weaknesses and frailties are no secrets to these clever traders. "They know how to win the hearts of the Spaniards with presents and gifts, that nothing is implemented for more than two or three days", warned Fray Juan de San Pedro Mártir. Their bribes would save them from any incident, or at least as they believed: "They have so many ways of convincing individuals, the regulars and the seculars, with service and gifts that when they are asked to do a certain thing which they don't like, although it be to the service of Our Majesty, or for the common good, they can stop the implementation through a thousand ways through favors and negotiations." Thus wrote the governor general Niño de Távora on 4 August 1628. A similar thing happened outside Manila, observed Fray Plácido de Angulo: "When the Sangley arrives in the province, he gives a gift of chickens and fruits from China to the *alcalde mayor*, visits him a lot, promises him some money if he helps him settle in that province," so that, in the end, having enriched themselves from nothing "the Chinese, the foreigners, act as if they could do anything like natives; and the Spaniards, who are natives, do not know or could not do anything, as if they were foreigners."

Most of the time, the temptation to commit corruption would come from the Chinese themselves, as "they are people used to give large bribes so that their evil practices be allowed," observed the *oidores* Jerónimo Legazpi and Álvaro Mesa. Money, ably used, facilitated initially-prohibited practices like gambling or *comedia* performances. Corruption thus spread to all levels of society. It is not surprising that Spanish officials and moneyed Sangleys would reach an understanding based on mutual profit, many times at the cost of the more unfortunate sectors of the Chinese community who were oppressed and squeezed dry by their compatriots. They even in occasions went against the interests of the city of Manila.

Thus Spanish officials enriched themselves at the cost of the Chinese,

although Chinese leaders also made big business at the Spaniards' expense. Definitely, the blame goes to the Chinese for bribing the Spaniards, and the Spaniards for letting themselves be bribed. Both showed a lack of moral principles and the same lust for money. Unfortunately, corruption affected everyone. It gave the Chinese a false sense of security, even impunity, convinced that they could arrange everything with money. It prevented the Spaniards from making correct use of justice. It brought unfortunate consequences to the rest of the population, whether Chinese or Spanish.

Thus armed conflicts arose. In effect, the history of Chinese in the Philippines during the colonial period, after a long era of peace and tranquility, was marked with bloody uprisings (1603, 1639, 1662, 1686) and even general expulsions (1686, 1744, 1775). Nothing at the start made anyone think that these periodic episodes of uncontrolled fury on both sides would occur. We have seen how Spanish officials conspired with wealthy Chinese, and vice versa. But in both communities, apart from that privileged group united by interest, there was a big majority of poor and miserable people: hungry and poorly-paid soldiers, adventurers, rogues and scoundrels deported from Nueva España by Spanish authorities; fishermen, hagglers, porters, vagabonds and fugitives – the result of uncontrolled immigration – among the Chinese, the trash of society in both cases.

When one considers the four uprisings of the Chinese, some commonalities stand out.

Firstly, it is striking that in 1603, 1639, 1662 and in 1686, the leaders of the uprisings were mostly converts. It is possible that this rebellious temper was unwittingly given to the Chinese by the Dominican friars themselves. The same occurred in the 20th century: missionaries, who became spiritual reformers, soon found material improvements necessary, and with them, helped foment, unwittingly, the great Chinese revolution.

Secondly, the strong opposition to the uprising from other ethnic groups in the Philippines is surprising. The rebellious Chinese did not succeed even in getting the cooperation of the Japanese nor the Tagalogs in 1603. The “natives, Japanese, and the soldiers in the field” were the ones who maltreated the Chinese before the uprising, “calling them traitorous dogs, and now that they knew that these wanted to rebel, and they had to kill everyone first, which would be done easily.” The same thing occurred in 1639, when there were rumors of a new Chinese uprising. The joy among the Japanese and the natives at the news of an alleged Chinese uprising is described by a Jesuit in the following words: “They are very alert for any happening, which I believe they are waiting to present itself, to satiate the desire to kill Chinese.” To satiate themselves with the desire to kill Chinese! What hatred in those words!

Thirdly, it is obvious that there were deep divisions in the Chinese community: the power of the rich Chinese fuelled the resentments of their less fortunate compatriots. One of the leaders of the 1689 uprising, Lin Sanguan, told his comrade Bec: “I have a great hatred for the leaders of the parian, and we want to enter it to kill them.” It goes without saying that those important men, threatened, took an active part in crushing the rebellion: Don Pedro Quintero was given the task of arresting some of the conspirators. So strong were the divisions between the rich and the poor not only in 1684, but also in 1686, that one implicated in the rebellion told the judge that the charges against him were pure inventions by the leaders of the parian to make

accusations against them. Tortured, Juan Tençon implicated one of them as responsible for his ruin: "Juan Felipe makes me do bad things..., Juan Felipe wants to kill me..., Juan Felipe is a cuckold..., Felipe Tianio, slave, you want to kill me". Likewise, Yinco declared that the charges against him were "revenge of the leaders Don Pedro and Don Felipe". Some truth may be in there: as Casimiro Díaz said, "in similar revolutions, the same rich Chinese are victims of the multitude looking to gain profit, although at the expense of their countrymen."

Religion likewise contributed to build an irreparable divide between Chinese converts and non-Christian ones. During the 1639 uprising, Corcuera had no qualms in enlisting "all the residents, *indios* and mestizoas, Japanese and free black men": these Chinese mestizos generally joined the Spaniards and fought at their side. Fray Baltasar de Santa Cruz said in 1639 that it was "a thing worthy of admiration " that "in defense of the Faith [the Chinese mestizos] did not recognize sons or fathers, firing murderous bullets at them and killing many." Fray Juan de Polanco again highlighted that bizarre loyalty in 1667: "With the same drive they oppose the attempts, plans and invasions which the said gentiles have done in different times to become lords of Manila and all of the island... and in all of them the said mestizos have displayed much bravery and zeal in the defense of the Catholic faith, Your Majesty's dominion and vassals." On 18 June 1695, the Audiencia recognized this ("In the uprisings... the worst enemies for the Chinese have been the mestizos, which they call their children"), as the Archbishop of Manila did on 29 May 1700 (the mestizos are "by nature the declared enemies [of the Chinese] and whom they sought more in the uprisings"). One does not have to recall that the worst enemies of the Jews were always their descendants: the converts. The Spaniards did not stand out for their cleverness: this is seen in the repeated massacres, which immediately recalled the terrible outbreaks of medieval pogroms. In their defense, one can say that the residents of Manila lived in perpetual surveillance, in a state of permanently being surrounded by enemies. Every serious incident was seen as a prelude to an uprising; and an uprising happening a year of travel away from the mother country, and six months from the nearest viceroyalty was a very serious thing. In 1627, a Dominican, Fray Melchor de Manzano, enumerated the problems related to the Chinese living outside the parian: "The worst... that is being feared is that [in the event] of an uprising, they take refuge in the said towns, conducting secret meetings... where traps, false testimonies against each other and false witnesses emerge." Fray Plácido de Angulo agreed in 1662: "The worst enemies" of the Spaniards "are the Chinese in the Philippines."

The anguish over the distance and their scarce number no doubt influenced the Spaniards' cruel inflexibility in crushing those uprisings, thinking that their lives were threatened: as the old saying went, "il vaut mieux occire que être occis". [it is better to kill than be killed]. Conflicts, above all, generally came in moments of great tension: tragedies do not come on their own. The periodic succession of social unrest indicates the very deep tension which caused in Manila the endless immigration of industrious natives of the Celestial Empire, but at the same time reveals the importance of their presence in the Philippine archipelago: without the Chinese, without their business acumen and their fabulous and incredible industriousness, Manila would not have been able to sustain itself. And that is only the beginning.

Definitely, relations between the Chinese and the Spaniards painfully ended in multiple failures. In the first place, it was a failure of mission: the religious, who dreamt of preaching to cultures more civilized than the *indios* of the Americas, could not and did not know how to bring to the faith the Chinese nor the Japanese, people who particularly had the “policy” that the inhabitants of the New World lacked: proved by the fact that evangelization was only possible in the colonies thanks to conquest by the sword. The same rule of three applies: the Christian mission triumphed among the Filipinos, the subjugated people – this is attested by the fact that majority of Filipinos today are Catholics – but failed among the Chinese residents in Manila.

In the second place, a political and social failure: the integration of the Chinese, as converts or *infieles*, into Philippine society. The Sangleys who kept their traditional religion lived isolated in a ghetto, the parian; the converts lived in a separate town (Binondo) where they formed the majority. No assimilation happened, not even among the most wealthy Chinese, those who had adopted the most Spanish ways in their customs and in their way of dress.

In third place, an economic failure. As Diego Aduarte said, “the inhabitants of the said islands do not have any other way of sustenance than that of contracting, and the entire church is supported by that.” There were, yes, big Spanish traders. But the economy, whether one likes it or not, always depended on China. That progressive dependence on the Sangleys, becoming an essential factor in the life of Filipinos, but also a progressive obstacle to native development, led in much part to their ruin. Mutual exploitation and the persistence of the Chinese minority as a foreign and unassimilated group, embedded in society, led one way or the other to a stalemate, sadly resolved by means of force.

I want to end on a point of interest: the different attitude of the Portuguese vis-a-vis the Chinese in Macao, an attitude which led to a more pacific dynamic between both peoples. This more seamless and friendly situation was due to several factors. Evidently, the principal one was the radical difference in the right of settlement: the Portuguese established a commercial factory on Chinese land, while the Spaniards imposed their rule on some islands separated from the continent and not controlled by the Ming dynasty. The former were subjected to strict surveillance by the mandarins from Canton: the latter had a freer hand, no matter how deep their economic dependence was on the Sangleys. In 1591, Dr. Francisco de Sande, a former governor general of the Philippines, signalled the difference between the Portuguese and the Spaniards in the Far East: *The Portuguese who come to these parts only come to trade, and those who live in Macán [sic] are wealthy ones...and they tolerated the Chinese a lot; but the Spaniards are soldiers and they inevitably get into conflict [with the Chinese].*

In 1599 Fray Miguel de Benavides, correctly describe the difference between the two peoples: the Spaniards lacked the good qualities of the Portuguese: we “do not have that unity in negotiations, neither among ourselves, nor that patience and calm, and our spirits aim for big gains.” One cannot say more with less. But in Macao, neither did true integration occurred, as Tien-Tsê Chang wrote, “the avarice and pride of the Portuguese, as well as the frequently ungrounded suspicions of the Chinese, prevented the two peoples who had common trade interests to develop deep ties of friendship.” The same happened in Manila.